

# Environmental Product Declarations

## What is an Environmental Product Declaration (EPD)?

Previously, the only way of supporting the claims of manufacturers regarding the environmental worthiness of their products has been to commission a full life cycle assessment (LCA). Unfortunately, life cycle assessment documents are extremely complex documents, which are only really fully understood by academics and other LCA practitioners.

An EPD is based upon LCA calculations, but is a simplified document stating only the important results of the underlying study.

An EPD is verified by a third party and is designed to conform to a set of international rules so that they are transferable from country to country and also represent a level playing field within product types or “categories” (e.g. Wood Panel Products).

- Environmental product declarations (EPDs) are being adopted as the standard way of describing the environmental impacts associated with a product
- EPDs in the construction industry have been developed to meet with the increasing demand by architects, designers and specifiers for consistent and transparent information about the impact that construction materials and products have on the environment

## Why do You Need an EPD?

Manufacturers are under increasing pressure to both report and, where possible, reduce the environmental impacts associated with a product or process. Construction tendering rules often include stipulations regarding the minimisation of environmental impacts associated with the component parts and their performance in-service, this will become the norm. Suppliers will be expected to provide this information and those that are unable to do so, will not be included in the procurement process.

- The Construction Products Directive (305/2011) states that EPDs should be used for the declaration of environmental impacts
- EPDs remove any doubt about the environmental impacts of a product, because they meet with rigorous international standards
- An EPD helps a manufacturer communicate the environmental impact of a product

## Why Should You Choose Renuables to Provide Your EPD?

We have been engaged in LCA work for over a decade and conducted environmental assessment projects for many European government organisations and prestigious clients, such as the World Bank. We have been advising governments and organisations about developments in LCA and EPD science for many years and are now providing a EPD production and verification service to the commercial sector. We were the first organisation in the UK to be accepted as an individual EPD verifier under the International EPD® System ([www.environdec.com](http://www.environdec.com)).

We do not just supply you with an EPD and leave it there. Part of the service that we provide is an educational one, where we explain the procedure and the implications of the results. We will examine the underlying LCA to determine where the 'hot spots' are and work with you to see if they can be reduced, prior to supplying the finished EPD.

You will be supplied with a verified EPD which has been produced according to internationally agreed rules and standards. In addition to this you will own the database that underpins both the LCA and the EPD. We can then provide a short report or presentation outlining what the results mean and how to communicate them to your clients. You own the data and we will help you to understand and use it.

## What is Involved in Producing an EPD?

Once you have contacted us and the necessary confidentiality agreements are in place, we will speak with you in order to understand more about your product and its manufacture. This usually involves a number of conversations and normally a site visit. We then prepare an enquiry document that describes our understanding of the process and gives a list of information or data that we require from you. It is important that we have a thorough understanding of the product and so we will work closely with you to ascertain all the inputs and outputs involved with manufacture of your products. We then discuss the results of the analysis with you before compiling the EPD. Only when you are satisfied with the work will it then be signed off and the EPD be released for publication.

## The future

As Building Information Modelling (BIM) becomes more widespread, it is anticipated that the data from EPDs will end up providing information straight to the architect or designer via links from EPD databases. This means they will be able to model future buildings at their desk and instantly get feedback on the environmental impact of the project as well as the technical performance. At Renuables we currently work with a number of companies involved with the development of such systems and will keep you informed of what this means to you and your products.