

# QUICK GUIDE TO ENVIRONMENTAL PRODUCT DECLARATIONS (EPD)

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## WHAT ARE EPD?

EPD are the environmental equivalent of technical data sheets. They present the results of a life cycle assessment (LCA) carried out on a product (or service) to quantify its environmental impacts. In construction, EPD can be used to assess the environmental credentials of a building at the design stage. EPD are prepared according to strict rules defined by the EPD Programme Operator. Programme Operators are often country-based and/or sector specific.

## HOW DO WE GET AN EPD?

Most businesses do not have the in-house expertise to prepare their EPD and will need some external assistance.

In brief, preparing an EPD involves the following activities:

1. **choosing an EPD Programme and identifying the relevant Product Category Rule (PCR)** according to which EPDs are prepared
2. **deciding on the EPD scope** (i.e. the life cycle stages to cover) which can cover raw material extraction through manufacture only, or include installation, use, removal, disposal and even include recycling potential
3. **gathering relevant data** on product manufacture, delivery, installation, use etc., as appropriate to the EPD scope. This data encompasses material inputs, energy use in manufacturing, transport distances, etc
4. **conducting the LCA** which will produce the indicator values to be shown in the EPD
5. **compiling a formal LCA report**, which documents the whole LCA process and explain the results. The LCA report is critical for the third-party verification of the EPD
6. **preparing the actual EPD document** following the Programme's style and content rules
7. **identifying a third-party verifier** accredited with the Programme and responding to any issues raised by the verifier
8. **publishing the EPD** (via the Programme's website) on completion of the verification

## WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?

Having identified an EPD/LCA specialist who will help you choose a Programme and guide you through the process, you will need to gather all necessary data for the LCA. Depending on the amount of freedom the Programme allows in the presentation of EPD, you may also design the document to fit your house style.

## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

Steps 1 & 2 are handled at the inception of a project. Step 3 is invariably the most time-consuming. In our experience the length of time taken to collect data for any LCA project varies enormously; the client's commitment and the resources they're able to devote to it are critical. On average at EuGeos we complete the LCA, project report and EPD draft (steps 4, 5 & 6 above) within 4 weeks of data collection being completed.

### HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Generally, the costs of preparing EPD depend on the scope chosen for the EPD, the number of EPD required, the complexity of the products and their manufacturing, the number of manufacturing sites and the availability of good data - which affect the data gathering process.

For publication, EPD programmes have different fees and charging structures, and the third-party verification is charged separately by the verifier.

### IN SUMMARY

The graphic below summarises the process, and who does what at each stage. At EuGeos, we prepare EPDs and provide 3rd-party verification; we've been working on LCA, carbon footprints and EPDs for over 15 years. We guide our clients through every step of EPD preparation. Contact us at the address below to discuss your specific needs.

