

Green Guide to Specification BRE Materials Industry Briefing Note 1

Context

The Green Guide to Specification requires an update to better align the tool to the growing needs for environmental performance information and to meet the industry agenda vis-à-vis initiatives such as the Code for Sustainable Building (CSB), the EU Construction Products Directive, Building Regulation changes, ISO and CEN standardisation, BREEAM and EcoHomes development and the recent draft bill on sustainability and security. There is also a clear need to broaden the content in the Guide, update the information that underpins it, expand its accessibility and create a delivery system that is flexible to future update and developmental needs.

With these goals in mind BRE have initiated a Green Guide to Specification Update Project that will culminate in the publication of a new Green Guide to Specification in June 2006 (e-publish), January 2007 (paper publish).

The Green Guide to Specification will not change in focus and will remain a specifiers tool reviewing the environmental performance of building elements and specifications. The concept of Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) and the multi criteria based approach to environmental impact assessment will remain. The Green Guide to Specification will remain separate of the BRE whole building assessment tool *envest2* (<http://envestv2.bre.co.uk/>). This parallel approach will provide the Industry with the means to review specific embodied impact at elemental level in the Green Guide but also to investigate whole building performance in *envest2*.

The Green Guide Steer Group

The Green Guide Update Project was initiated in June 2004 but the delivery programme was not in a position to move forward on task related activity until full sponsorship for the project had been assured. By early 2005 necessary funding was in place and BRE set up a Project Steering Group (PSG). This group consists of Industry sponsors with the additional membership of the CPA as representatives of the materials sector. Project sponsors and PSG members are:

BRE Trust	Willmott Dixon
CPA	WRAP
DTI	NHBC
DfES	Royal Bank of Scotland
OGC	EST
HSBC	English Partnerships

It is important to acknowledge that BRE has not asked the CPA or its members to provide funding to the project. The reasons are two fold:

1. It avoids potential conflict of interests
2. The material sector makes a contribution to the project by paying for the processing of new Environmental Profiles LCA data

The CPA Green Guide Working Group

BRE first announced its intentions to update the Green Guide at a materials sector communication day on 7 July 2004. More recently this message was reiterated at a second event on 4 March 2005. This second meeting was called by the CPA with BRE's assistance due to the strong sentiments expressed by the materials Industry to have a stronger consultation process within the Green Guide update work.

A key outcome of the 4 March meeting is the establishment of the CPA Green Guide Working Group: CPA-GGWG. BRE and the CPA are currently establishing the Terms of Reference for this group.

The role of the CPA-GGWG is to provide feedback and Industry perspective on the Green Guide Update Project. The group will provide a forum through which consultation and communication between the BRE and Industry can take place.

Consultation items

BRE are updating the Green Guide through the delivery of a number of key work items. On all these items BRE will be seeking Industry consultation. They include:

1. Materials Industry Briefing Note 1 (this document)
2. Green Guide format and content
3. LCA methodology
 - a. Characterisation
 - b. Normalisation
 - c. Weighting
4. Specifications
5. Energy model
6. Whole life performance
7. End-of-life and waste models

In addition a further Briefing Note on existing LCA data requirements for the project and anticipated provision by Industry will be provided for information.

Feedback process

The consultation process will work through a Briefing Note system. This summary Briefing Note itself sets the context through which these will be provided. The aim of the Briefing Note will be to inform Industry of BRE's intended approach and expected conclusions. This process will enable the Industry to consider potential implications and provide the basis for their input to the project.

Through the period 1 April - 31 July 2005, BRE will be issuing separate Briefing Notes on each of the items listed above. Briefing Notes will be disseminated to:

- The CPA and its members (including the CPA-GGWG)
- Trade Associations which are not affiliated to the CPA
- Industry participants in the BRE Environmental Profiles Certification Scheme

For each item a timetable will be set for Industry feedback and response to BRE. The CPA is the channel through which feedback must be directed. Depending on feedback and where appropriate, BRE will set up working groups for those topics which require more intensive discussion. The need for a working group will be decided through discussion between the CPA and the BRE. The aim of such a meeting will be to reach full understanding of the positions of each party regarding the project item.

Following the process described above a decision will be made by BRE and a way forward concluded. The aim through all the above process is to move forward based on a consensus that has been reached across all Industry groups, and in particular to respond to the CPA and its members needs.

Decision criteria

The feedback process will establish the extent of Industry support or concern for BRE's intended approach. Ultimately BRE will be required to make a concluding decision. The following hierarchy of criteria will be used in forming this decision:

- State-of-art LCA technology and practice by the LCA community as defined by guidance in ISO and the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC).
- Implications to all Industry stakeholders and the level playing field approach already established by the UK Construction Products Environmental Profiling Methodology (Howard, N, Edwards, S, Anderson, J. 1999. *BRE Methodology for Environmental Profiles of Construction Materials, Components and Buildings*. CRC: London).
- Practicality and cost implications of the decision outcome.

In addition to the above, the final methodology will also be subject to a peer review process involving leading construction LCA practitioners.

Timetable

The Green Guide Project programme is scheduled to conclude in June 2006 (e-publish) and January 2007 (paper publish). The project is influenced by two principal time lines. These are:

- Environmental Profiles Methodology update (scheduled completion 31 July 2005)
- LCA data requirements and provision of new data by Industry (scheduled completion 31 October 2005)

These represent a reschedule of timelines against original objectives. These changes have been implemented at the suggestion of the CPA-GGWG which raised the point that it would be difficult for the materials sector to respond to an earlier LCA data information deadline. The extent of Industry involvement on this data item has yet to be fully determined. In this context the final timelines will be confirmed once BRE has had an indication from Industry as to the extent of their intended involvement. Such an opinion will be formed from the publication of the LCA data requirements Briefing Note.



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