Measuring the environmental performance of construction materials:
The Green Guide to Specification – Flooring and Internal Partitioning

BREEAM Materials, BRE Global

February 2009
Overview

- Sustainability context and buildings
- LCA and Environmental Profiles Methodology
- The Green Guide to Specification
- Impacts of flooring and internal partitioning
Sustainability – Why are we here?
Construction industry and buildings

• Large impacts
  – Construction and demolition waste alone represents **32% of total UK waste** (DEFRA)
  – the energy used in constructing, occupying and operating buildings represents approximately **50% of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK**. (Environment Agency 2007)
  – Passenger transport vehicles account for a further **15% of CO₂ emissions**. (EST)
Sustainability: How does this apply to buildings?

- Sustainability is a complex & political agenda
- Generally no agreed consensus
- Likely to always change depending upon context
- Lots of Greenwash
- No single tool for measuring sustainability
- Industry using many tools/methods/systems;
  - Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)
  - BREEAM
  - Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH)
  - Carbon Labelling & Footprinting
  - Whole Life Costing (WLC)
  - Environmental Product Declarations (EPD’s)
  - Many others…
Looking at the product level...

How do we measure environmental performance?

Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)
Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)

Extraction

Environmental impacts

Creation

Maintenance

Disposal
How can LCA be used in the Industry?

- To measure existing performance and monitor improvements
- To assess benefits of innovative processes
- To compare materials which offer the similar functions, eg external wall constructions
- To compare building designs over their expected lifetimes
- Used in the BRE Environmental Profiles Methodology
What is an Environmental Profile?

Measurement of the **environmental performance** of a material, product or system over a set time period.

- Extraction of raw materials & transport (“cradle to gate”)
- Production (“gate to gate”)
- Transport, installation and end of life (“gate to grave”)

Achieved using Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)

Used in BRE 2007 Environmental Profiles Methodology

- **Level playing field for assessing construction products**

Outcome is a Type III Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) compliant with ISO 14025 (externally audited by UKAS)

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## Environmental Profiles 2008 Impact categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Issue</th>
<th>Weighting (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Climate Change</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water extraction</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mineral resource depletion</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratospheric ozone depletion</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human toxicity</td>
<td>8.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ecotoxicity to water</td>
<td>8.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nuclear waste</td>
<td>8.2</td>
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<td>Ecotoxicity to land</td>
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<td>Waste disposal</td>
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<td>Fossil fuel depletion</td>
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<td>Eutrophication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photochemical ozone creation</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acidification</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Derivation of Ecopoints

Issues  Measurement  Weighting

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The Environmental Profile – An independent product declaration
BRE Global: Certified Environmental Profiles

- Sister company to BRE (previously BRE Certification)
- Data verification process – evidence
- Supports external claims
- Environmental Profiles valid 3 years
- An independent environmental product declaration

Whole process revolves around:
- Product manufacture data
- Data verification (Factory site audit)
- Data modelling – LCA methodology
What do you do with an Environmental Profile?
Comparison at a building element level

Bricks vs bricks

Blocks vs blocks

Wall specifications
The Green Guide to Specification

- Ecopoints for building materials placed into specifications
- Environmental impacts of building elements
- Based on LCA
- A+ to E rating

www.thegreenguide.org.uk
The Ecopoint and A+ to E ratings

- **Ecopoints per m²**
- **Years (1 to 61)**

- **Ecopoint rating**
- **High relative environmental impact**
- **Low relative environmental impact**

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Protecting People, Property and the Planet
The Green Guide to Specification

- **Green Guide update**
  - Online & Paper publication

  [www.thegreenguide.org.uk](http://www.thegreenguide.org.uk)
  - 1500+ generic specifications each with summary Ratings
  - Ratings A+ to E
  - 13 impact category ratings
  - Six building types

- **FREE access**
- **Ongoing development**
Welcome to The Green Guide to Specification Online

Green Guide online provides designers and specifiers with easy-to-use guidance on how to make the best environmental choices when selecting construction materials and components.

In the Green Guide online, building materials and components are assessed in terms of their environmental impact across their entire life cycle – from ‘cradle to grave’. The accessible and reliable information will be of great assistance to all those involved in the design, construction and management of buildings as they work to reduce the environmental burden of their properties.

The specifications shown throughout the Green Guide should not, however, be used as a basis for on-site construction. They are of generic nature only and are used to illustrate a range of typical materials. Although every effort has been made to ensure that the information given here is accurate, our knowledge and understanding continues to evolve. The Green Guide ratings shown here represent our best efforts to provide objective, helpful guidance to enable the specifier to make more informed choices based on the data and methodologies available at this present time.

The Green Guide online has been developed alongside the printed version which will be published later this year. The Green Guide online offers a flexible and adaptable medium and will be updated on a regular basis.
Building Type?

Green Guide 2008 ratings

The Green Guide 2008 ratings can be accessed by following a series of steps to allow you to select the most appropriate range of ratings, starting with the type of building in which the element will sit.

Some ratings apply to more than one building type and this will be stated at element selection stage.

The ratings can be viewed on screen or printed.

Note that ratings are copyright BRE and should not be reproduced in any publicly accessible format without the express permission of BRE. Please email the Green Guide Helpdesk.

Please select a building type

- Domestic
- Health
- Industrial
- Commercial
- Retail
- Education
Element details

Green Guide 2008 ratings

Building type: Domestic

Category: External Wall Construction

External Walls

External wall ratings are the same for the following building types:
Domestic, Health, Commercial, Retail, Industrial, Education

Functional unit for External Walls:
1m² of external wall construction, to satisfy current building regulations, and a U value of 0.3 W/m²K. Where relevant, the specification will also include an internal wall finish.

Variation for retail/industrial
1m² of external wall construction, to satisfy current building regulations, and a U value of 0.3 W/m²K.

Perhaps more than any decision facing the designer, the choice of the external wall specification is subject to the widest range of practical, economic and visual considerations, some of which may be beyond the control of the design team.

External walls can have a significant contribution to the impacts of
Sub-Section of Elements

Please select the element type of
External Wall
Construction ratings you wish to review:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blockwork Cavity Wall</th>
<th>Rendered or Fairfaced Blockwork Cavity Wall</th>
<th>Brickwork on Framed Construction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rendered or Fairfaced Blockwork</td>
<td>Cladding on Framed Construction</td>
<td>Cladding on Masonry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainscreen Cladding</td>
<td>Insulated Cladding</td>
<td>Insulated Render Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtainwalling</td>
<td>Loadbearing Precast Concrete</td>
<td>Element</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sub-Section
### Green Guide 2008 ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building type</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sub-category</th>
<th>Element type</th>
<th>Summary rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>External Wall Construction</td>
<td>Loadbearing Precast Concrete</td>
<td>Brick faced precast concrete cladding panel, insulation, light steel studwork, plasterboard, paint</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brick faced precast concrete cladding panel, insulation, medium dense solid blockwork, plasterboard, paint</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brick faced precast concrete sandwich panel, plaster skim, paint</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Imported Chinese granite faced precast concrete cladding panel, insulation, light steel studwork, plasterboard, paint</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Imported Chinese granite faced precast concrete cladding panel, insulation, medium dense solid blockwork, plasterboard, paint</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Imported Chinese granite faced precast concrete sandwich panel, plaster skim, paint</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Limestone faced precast concrete cladding panel, insulation, light steel studwork, plasterboard, paint</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Limestone faced precast concrete cladding panel, insulation, medium dense solid blockwork, plasterboard, paint</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Limestone faced precast concrete sandwich panel, plaster skim, paint</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reconstructed stone faced precast concrete cladding panel, insulation, medium dense solid blockwork, plasterboard, paint</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reconstructed stone faced precast concrete cladding panel, insulation, light steel studwork, plasterboard, paint</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reconstructed stone faced precast concrete sandwich panel, plaster skim, paint</td>
<td>C</td>
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</table>
### Green Guide 2008 ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building type: Domestic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category: External Wall Construction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-category: Loadbearing Precast Concrete</td>
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<tr>
<td>Element Type: Loadbearing Precast Concrete Systems</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Element Number</td>
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<td>Summary Rating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Climate Change</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water Extraction</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mineral Resource Extraction</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratospheric Ozone Depletion</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Toxicity</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecotoxicity to Freshwater</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear Waste (higher level)</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecotoxicity to Land</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste Disposal</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fossil Fuel Depletion</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eutrophication</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photochemical Ozone Creation</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acidification</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The Use of the Green Guide to Specification

- Architects and building specifiers

- Part of BRE’s Environmental Assessment Methods for buildings
  - BREEAM & EcoHomes (BRE)
  - Code for Sustainable Homes (BRE & DCLG)
  - Materials specification credits
  - www.breeam.org
What is BREEAM?

- **BRE - Environmental Assessment Method**
- Voluntary Certification scheme for Buildings (but often specified as part of planning)
- Provides an environmental label for buildings
  - Pass, Good, Very Good, Excellent, Outstanding
- Independent & credible
- Holistic and Issue based – broad range of environmental concerns
- Ensures best environmental practice above regulatory minimum
- Large scope – many different types of buildings assessed
- Used mainly in UK but also growing Internationally
The Code for Sustainable Homes

- The Sustainable Buildings Task Group (SBTG)
- Set up by DEFRA, DTI, DCLG, EA, EP and others

- Launched April 2007, revised May 2008
- A single national standard for England
- Based on BREEAM - EcoHomes
  - (replaces EcoHomes in England)

- Mandatory rating for all new homes in England (May 08) and now for Wales too!
Materials Specification

- One of the many issues assessed in BREEAM and The Code
- Credits available - variable
- Whole life environmental impact
- Key building elements assessed
- Green Guide to Specification
  - Ratings A+ to E
  - www.thegreenguide.org.uk
- Higher scores for better rated elements
- Code – Minimum D rated specifications
- Based on LCA and Environmental Profiles Methodology
- Bespoke ratings – Certified Environmental Profiles
How are internal finishes assessed within BREEAM and The Code?

- Points available within the materials specification credit
  - floor finishes
  - Internal walls/partitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements assessed</th>
<th>Non Domestic schemes</th>
<th>Domestic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BREEAM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bespoke</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Offices (design)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Offices (fit out)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retail (design)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retail (fit out)</td>
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<td>NEAT (H+S)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
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<td>Prisons</td>
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<td>Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Courts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Industrial</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Further Education</td>
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<td>EcoHomes (2006)</td>
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<td>Multi-Residential</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Code For Sustainable</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Upper Floors</td>
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<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ground Floors</td>
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<tr>
<td>External walls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roofs</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Floor Finishes</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Windows</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal walls/partitions</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard landscaping</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundary protection</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Green Guide performance for internal finishes: Floor finishes

• Currently Flooring ratings undergoing consultation following feedback from Industry

• New 2008 Green Guide ratings imminent

• Currently BREEAM & Code use 2002 Green Guide ratings
  – 1999 Environmental profiles methodology
  – Generic A to C ratings

• 2002 Green Guide ratings
  – Floor finishes have highest range of impacts
  – ~ 40% whole building impact
2002 Green Guide performance for internal finishes: Floor finishes

- **2002 Green Guide ratings**
- **Hard floor finishes**
  - Linoleum, ceramic / marble / cork tiles, Timber = A
  - PVC = B (high toxicity levels)
  - Synthetic rubber = C (higher climate change impacts)
- **Soft floor finishes**
  - Wool, nylon carpet = A
  - Foam backed carpets = C (high climate change impact)

- This may all change with new methodology!
  - New data from TA’s
  - Industry has changed
  - Different impact categories
  - More detailed groupings of flooring types
  - Stronger focus on service lives and maintenance
2008 Green Guide performance for internal finishes: Internal walls / partitions

• Framed partitions
  – Best performing (A+): softwood framed and timber stud
    • Lower climate change impacts
  – Steel stud, hardwood framed and timber cassette panels = A
    • Higher climate change impact

• Masonry partitions
  – Range of specifications and ratings
  – Fairfaced brick/block and glass blocks perform well
  – Thick precast concrete panels performs poorly
  – Rating depends on finish
    • Plasterboard has higher impact than plaster finish
    • Plasterboard has high climate change and water extraction impacts
Conclusions

• Sustainability becoming increasingly important for the construction industry

• LCA and Environmental Profiles are tools for assessing environmental performance

• The Green Guide to Specification is a useful tool for architects and specifiers

• Green Guide increasingly being used in the UK due to BREEAM and The Code for Sustainable Homes
Any Questions?

Thank you

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www.thegreenguide.org.uk
www.breeam.org