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| EPD Square, s.r.o |
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| General Programme Instructions |
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| EPD square |

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This document, including its annexes, constitutes the General Program Instructions (GPI) for the purpose of operating a program according to ISO 14020, ISO 14021, ISO 14025, ISO/TS 14027, ISO 14040, ISO 14044, ISO 14067. For the field of construction products and services, the scheme is in accordance with the European standard EN 15804+A2+AC and ISO 21930. The Type III environmental statement produced under the scheme is referred to as the Environmental Product Declaration (EPD).

The programme is operated by EPD Square, s.r.o., which aims to support the sustainable development activities of companies, businesses, and individuals, in particular by providing consultancy services on the environmental impacts of activities, the registration and publication of Environmental Product Declarations and the carbon footprint of products.

EPD square is a programme operator designed to provide transparent and credible data on the environmental impact of products through environmental indicators.

The operation of this programme is the core activity of the company and is funded by the revenues from the processing, registration, and publication of the Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) and Carbon Footprint (CFP).

# 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

The main objective of the programme is to enable and support organisations in any country to report quantified environmental information on the life cycle of their products in a credible, comparable, and understandable way. This objective is achieved through:

* a voluntary programme for Type III environmental declarations according to ISO 14025, ISO 14040/14044 and other relevant standards or guidance documents, as well as EN 15804 and ISO 21930 for construction products (including both goods and services),
* the processing of product category rules (PCR) according to ISO/TS 14027
* a voluntary programme for the calculation of the carbon footprint in the sense of ISO 14067
* a voluntary programme for the calculation of the water footprint according to ISO 14046

The program aims to enhance the utility of standardized, validated, and life-cycle-based environmental information across diverse fields. This includes its application in the production of building materials, the design of low-carbon or carbon-neutral buildings, and its integration into various applications, such as the digitalization of the construction industry.

The scope of the programme includes any type of product from any organisation in any country where there is a market demand for the reporting of environmental life cycle information. The Programme Operator reserves the right to refuse registration of EPDs for certain product categories or countries, e.g. in the case of current or future sanctions regimes initiated by the United Nations, the European Union or others.

EPDs and CFPs are primarily intended for business-to-business communication but may also be used in business-to-consumer communication. The responsibility for the compliance of any claims with national laws or regulations in the relevant geographic area is the responsibility of the company making the claims by way of affidavit. The scope of the EPDs in the programme may be for a single company's product or as an average product for a given sector and geographical area, i.e. 'sectoral EPDs'. Similar products of the same company may be included in the same EPD if the requirements are met. EPDs are based on PCRs that provide rules, requirements and guidelines for a defined category of products.

# 3. PROGRAMME ORGANISATION AND TASKS

## 3.1 Management

**Programme Manager**

* Professional management and approval of internal and external verifiers
* final verification decisions on behalf of EPD Square, Ltd. as the third party verifier and fulfilling the obligations set out in ISO 14025
* actively communicating with the Secretariat, the Technical and Verification Committees
* is responsible for maintaining and improving the quality standards of the programme's operation through regular review and periodic monitoring of the GPI
* be responsible for carrying out investigations into complaints, complaints and appeals from the public

**Secretariat**

* prepare, maintain, publish, communicate the GPI and ensure compliance with the GPI
* monitor changes in procedures and documents, and modify the programme and the GPI where necessary
* publish the PCRs and EPDs produced under the Programme and maintain accessible lists of these documents
* manage the registration and deregistration of EPDs
* maintain a list of independent verifiers and guide the organisation in the selection process
* manage and maintain the programme's website
* manage the membership of the Technical Committee to ensure competent independent members of the PCR Review Panel and facilitate its work and meetings
* handle complaints or feedback on published EPDs or other documents
* respond to requests and queries relating to the programme

**The Technical Committee**

* The Technical Committee shall act as the evaluation committee for the PCR
* A group of external third-party experts to review the PCR and provide feedback on the draft PCR and expert advice on the operation and future development of the programme
* Their role is to read the draft PCR and GPI and provide comments on them during the open consultation
* Provide a view to the Secretariat on technical issues, suggestions and complaints
* Establishes a transparent review process for the PCR
* Approves competent, independent verifiers
* Monitors procedural changes in other EPD programmes and proposes revisions to procedures and documentation as necessary
* Ensures compliance with all EPD requirements

**Verification Committee**

* Supports third-party EPD verification experts with experience in a variety of industries, who are approved by EPD Square, Ltd.
* Performs the duties of a third-party verifier under the responsibility of the program as outlined in Chapter 8 of ISO 14025.

Verification may only be performed by approved individual verifiers or accredited certification bodies, completely independent of the manufacturers, institutions, or persons who created the LCA and EPD, without conflict of interest. The Technical Committee is responsible for the assignment of verifiers for verification.

**Information Technology Committee**

* Advice on technology development and automation

**EPD owners**

EPDs are developed by manufacturing companies, retailers, or trade associations for their products, either by themselves or with the assistance of a consultant to perform LCA or other tasks.

The EPD owner has the responsibility to:

* To be the sole owner and be responsible for the EPD,
* collect and calculate LCA-based information/indicators and other information to be included in the EPD as prescribed in the GPI and PCR,
* prepare the LCA report (referred to as 'project report' in EN 15804),
* have the LCA-based data, other environmental, social and economic information and the EPD independently verified by either - verification of the EPD by an accredited certification body or an approved individual verifier, or - certification of the EPD process by an accredited certification body,
* during the period of validity of the EPD, as defined during the initial verification, to establish and maintain follow-up procedures,
* apply to the Secretariat for registration and publication of the EPD by submitting the prescribed documentation,
* provide the Secretariat with correct billing information and pay the fees on time,
* inform the Secretariat if contact or billing details are updated,
* use the International EPD® square logo based on the guidelines in Annex A and in accordance with applicable laws, rules and standards; and
* inform the Secretariat when an EPD is to be cancelled and is no longer published.

## 3.2 Documentation of the programme

The following document constitutes the general guidelines of the Programme. It is expected that this programme will be updated approximately every 3 years. The latest version can be found on the website. The latest version is valid until a new version is published on the website.

PCR Document - The Program currently has a single PCR, which can be found on the website at www.epdsquare.com.

List of Type III Environmental Declarations (independently verified) - A list of all valid EPDs can be found on the website www.epdsquare.com.

Terms and Conditions - For further information, please visit info@epdsquare.com.

EPD Program Privacy Policy - Please refer to the website at [www.epdsquare.com](http://www.epdsquare.com).

## 3.3 Website

The official website of the International EPD Square Database is www.epdsquare.com. This website always contains up-to-date information about the programme. The website is maintained by the Secretariat. The functions of the website include:

* GPI publication,
* searching for published PCRs,
* publication of PCRs approved by the Technical Committee,
* searching for published EPDs/CCPs in the database,
* publication of EPDs/CCPs,
* search for all relevant documents.

## 3.4 Fees

There are fees associated with the registration and publication of EPDs in the EPD square programme, which is one of the main sources of funding for the operation of the programme. The fees include a one-off registration fee.

The fees and their amount are reviewed periodically and approved by the Board of Directors of EPD Square, Ltd.

The fee system is divided into the following main types:

Registration and Publication Fee for each approved and registered EPD/CFP.

Current fee information is available on the website [www.epdsquare.com](http://www.epdsquare.com).

## 3.5. Logo

The logo of the EPD square programme is shown below.



The logo has been developed to provide a well-known identity for EPD square. The logo should be used on all official printed materials and statements associated with the program to avoid confusion with other types of environmental labels and product-related statements.

An EPD with the EPD Square logo, EPD number, validity date and signature is considered a verified and registered EPD. An EPD with the EPD Square logo and a reference to the EPD Square programme shall not be used for marketing before the EPD Square has registered the declaration.

When using EPDs from EPD Square as input data in studies for both academic and commercial purposes, the relevant EPD must always be cited as the reference source, and EPDs and information from EPDs must not be used for misleading communication.

When using EPDs for comparison, it is advisable to include the following statement according to EN 15804: 'The comparison of the environmental performance of construction products using information from EPDs shall be based on the use of the product in the building and its impact on the building and shall take into account the whole life cycle. An EPD that is not considered in the context of a building is not a tool for comparing construction products."

False or misleading use of the EPD Square logo declaration may lead to confusion with Type I environmental labelling and is prohibited.

The logo is available for download in various file formats at www.epdsquare.com. The logo may be used for different purposes:

* In the EPD, the logotype appears on the cover page and as part of the programme-related information.
* On products and packaging materials, the logo can be used together with the registration number given in the EPD, the date of validity and a link to the website www.epdsquare.com where the EPD, and other information, can be found.
* In information material in which the EPD holder wishes to use selected information from the EPD for different purposes, he must indicate that the data originates from the EPC, use the logotype together with the registration number of the EPD, the date of validity, and link to the website (www.epdsquare.com) where further information can be found.

Other use of the logo is only permitted under specific agreements with the programme operator. The EPD may only be used with reference to the registration number on the EPD with the date of validity and the EPD square programme website ([www.epdsquare.com](http://www.epdsquare.com)).

# 4. DEVELOPMENT OF PRODUCT CATEGORY RULES

The Product Category Rules (PCR) contain specific instructions detailing the collection of data based on the LCA method, the collection of data for the different product groups, the conversion of the collected data into predefined indicators, and the format for presenting the information. PCRs allow EPDs to have a consistent framework for calculating and presenting results for different products within the same product group. The PCRs within the EPD Square are produced in Slovak and English.

EPD Square shall ensure that the rules set out in ISO 14025 are followed in the development of the PCRs associated with the programme. During the development of the PCRs, efforts shall be made to align the PCRs with the objectives of the programme. The development of the PCRs shall be led by a PCR coordinator appointed by the EPD Square.

The PCR coordinator shall have sufficient knowledge of LCA. A PCR group composed of experts and stakeholders within the relevant product group shall be established. As a first step, a survey will be carried out to determine whether national or international PCRs exist for the product. In some industries there are standards in place for the preparation of PCRs, for example EN 15804 - Basic rules for the construction product group.

PCRs shall be based on one or more LCA studies representing the entire life cycle of the product, carried out in accordance with ISO 14044, and on other relevant LCA-based footprint studies, including any supporting studies carried out in parallel with the preparation of the PCR. The PCR Committee (Technical Committee) should review relevant scientific documents available or submitted during the preparation, as appropriate. The final PCR should refer to supporting studies, which may not be publicly available. PCRs produced within the EPD square database should be as usable as possible to avoid creating unnecessary trade barriers. PCRs should aim to take into account all environmentally relevant aspects of the life cycle of the product. PCRs shall be developed with the intention of making EPDs public and enabling others to make EPDs public. The development of the PCR should be carried out under the guidance of a PCR facilitator (a subject matter expert), with the programme operator guiding and supervising the process. The Technical Committee gives its approval to the final version of the PCR before it is published. The Programme Operator may terminate the processing of the PCR, e.g. in case of repeated delays or failure to comply with review comments.

The elaboration of the PCR will be carried out in an internationally recognised manner, based on an open, transparent, and participatory process through:

* the company in collaboration with other parties such as trade associations and interest organisations,
* an institution that includes LCA/EPD experts in close cooperation with companies or trade associations and interest organisations; or
* individual companies or organisations where they have the necessary in-house competences or decide to involve external LCA/EPD experts.

Reasonable efforts should be made to reach consensus throughout the process. The Programme Operator retains the copyright on the draft and final version of the PCRs to ensure that they can be published, updated if necessary, and made available to all organisations for the development and registration of EPDs. Stakeholders involved in the development of the PCR should be acknowledged in the final document and on the website.

The preparation of proposals for PCRs should follow the following steps:

* Initiation
* Preparation of proposals
* Open consultation
* Review and approval by the Technical Committee
* Publication

## 4.1 Initiation

A request for PCR proposals may be initiated by a single company, a group of companies, the EPD Forum in EPD square or industry interest groups. In some cases, a PCR is initiated by a single company. In these cases, it is particularly important to secure support from manufacturers of similar products.

Companies with similar products will be contacted and offered the opportunity to participate in the development of the PCR.

If the PCR is to be approved and published within the EPD square, the programme will identify a lead (PCR coordinator) for this work. The coordinator will ensure that the development of the PCR follows the requirements of ISO 14025 and relevant PCR harmonisation initiatives. For construction products, the guidance given in EN 15804 will be followed.

The market acceptance and credit of verified EPDs depends on the credibility of the system. An important way to ensure such credibility is to give different stakeholders the opportunity to submit their views and influence the design of the PCRs that apply to different product and service groups. To ensure this requirement, stakeholder meetings will be held prior to the adoption of the PCR. Another important purpose of stakeholder meetings is that they serve as a notification of a declaration within a particular product group or service type that it will soon be available on the market.

The company/organisation or project team preparing the draft PCR will organise the meetings of the affected stakeholders and will also send invitations to the affected stakeholders. One of the important applications of verified EPDs is supporting evidence-based environmental documentation in public and private procurement. Such documentation will be an advantage when dealing with professional purchasers in industry and public administration.

All participants in stakeholder meetings will receive a full description of the proposed PCR and will have the opportunity to comment. The meetings should be tailored to the intended application of the EPD, i.e. whether it should be used for raw materials and other inputs in relation to the buyer/supplier or for general information and marketing of the finished product. The meetings should also be tailored for each company that has prepared a draft PCR.

Invitations will be sent to all interested parties, authorities, governments, ministries, industry associations, companies, and organisations (occasionally international groups) associated with the current product range, as well as environmental organisations and other parties interested in participating. An opportunity should be given to submit written views. A simple description of the EPD system should be provided so that participants can see how the system is structured and how it works.

Opinions that are submitted at the meetings will be documented and submitted with the presentation of the proposed PCR to the Technical Committee (TC).

## 4.2 Preparation of proposals for the PCR

The preparation of proposals for PCR includes the following items (in accordance with ISO 14025, ISO 21930 and EN 15804 for construction materials):

* selection and definition of the product group or service type,
* the objective, scope and definition of the LCA of the product according to the ISO 14040 set of standards,
* selection and definition of the functional unit,
* selection and description of the system boundary,
* selection of boundary criteria,
* selection of allocation rules,
* selection of specific parameters to describe the environmental behaviour (in addition to the mandatory parameters listed in the template),
* description of the type of information that should be provided at the stage of use of the environmental performance statement,
* the choice of units in which the results should be expressed.

If one or more of these items are omitted, a justification should be given. In some cases, it may be necessary to emphasise compliance with the PCR for the LCA-based calculation methodology. This may relate to different phases of the LCA or include some aspects related to packaging, transport, etc. Other areas that may require clarification are cases where it is difficult to quantify and where there is a consensus that it is important to describe additional information in general terms to increase the understanding of the environmental properties.

It is recommended that a list of common materials and hazardous substances, such as alloys and additives, that are relevant to the product group be developed in the PCR. This should be based on knowledge of the environmental characteristics of the substances. If there is a product information sheet that also contains a list of substances, then these inventories should be treated in the same way.

## 4.3 PCR approval

The Technical Committee will approve the proposed PCR and consider the views of the contributors. The PCR submitted to the Technical Committee must contain the items listed in Section 4.2. During the development of the PCR, feedback on the draft text may be requested from the Technical Committee.

**Approval of a PCR developed by one company**

Special considerations apply when determining PCRs in cases where they have been developed by a single company. This is because the assumptions made when several companies within an industry collaborate and agree on common rules are not necessarily applicable. PCRs developed by one company may lack a consistent view compared to those developed by multiple parties who have a broader knowledge of the PCRs involved. The Technical Committee should analyze the motives of a single company or organization when reviewing a draft PCR. This may take the form of a "questionnaire" when the proposal is presented to the Technical Committee. Company representatives should have appropriate expertise in answering the Technical Committee's questions.

## 4.4 Validity of the PCR

To achieve stability in the market, the PCR is valid for three years unless otherwise stated. The PCR may be revised as necessary. Companies or organisations that have an EPD may demonstrate the need for revision, but other companies may also do so. Shorter review periods may be necessary if one PCR is prepared by one company. Notification of the need for changes within the validity period is addressed by the Technical Committee. An expired PCR document may still be valid for a reasonable period if the PCR is under revision.

## 4.5 Publication of the PCR

Once a decision has been made to accept a PCR, the Technical Committee shall promptly inform the Secretariat of the publication of the PCR on the EPD square website www.epdsquare.com.

The Technical Committee shall make all meeting records available to anyone who requests them. Copies of more detailed supporting documentation may be obtained from the person or persons who prepared them.

## 4.6 Review of the PCR

The PCR should be reviewed before the end of its period of validity. One year prior to the deadline, EPD square, through the Secretariat, initiates a discussion with PCR stakeholders on how to proceed with updating the document and renewing its validity if there is market demand or a need to update the EPD due to the addition of optional lifecycle phases.

The preparation of proposals for revision of the PCR should be carried out according to the following principles:

* Initiation and anchoring
* Preparation of proposals
* Meetings (usually 1 to 3) with stakeholders
* Internal consultation and language check
* External consultation
* Approval by the Technical Committee
* Publication

EPD square will appoint a PCR convenor for the PCR document update process. At the beginning, 1 or 2 persons (ideally an expert in PCR development or an expert in the relevant product group) will write the draft PCR. The draft PCR will be based on the latest version of the GPI, the latest developments in LCA methodology and indicators, standardisation, alignment with other PCRs published by EPD square and sector PCRs (if available) developed and published by the trade organisation.

Once a draft updated version of the PCR is available, a full PCR team will be established. The same principles as for a new PCR will apply. The PCR team will jointly discuss and revise the draft PCR. Internal consultation and language checking will take place prior to external consultation.

The updated draft will be reviewed and approved by the Technical Committee prior to publication.

The Secretariat will prepare the final editorial changes and publish the updated PCR on the website www.epdsquare.com with the updated validity period and new version number.

# 5. ENVIRONMENTAL PRODUCT DECLARATIONS

## 5.1 Supported types of environmental product declarations

The programme targets the following sectors, products and services:

1. Construction products

2. Electronic and electrical products

3. Mechanical products

4. Energy Systems

5. Environment, civil and infrastructure

## 5.2. System boundary for the declaration

An EPD can be developed with the following system boundaries, provided that the standard allows the scope to be applied to the EPD for a given product.

Cradle to gate

EPDs apply only to the phase from raw material extraction to production (A1-A3). EN 15804+A2:2019 significantly limits the application of EPDs from cradle to gate. The same module definitions are also applied for EN 50693:2019 and ISO 14067:2019.

Cradle-to-gate with options and end-of-life phase

The EPDs cover the phase from raw material extraction to production (A1-A3) and end-of-life (C1-C4) and impacts beyond the system boundary (D), and optional modules (A4, A5, B1-B7) may be included.

## 5.3. Processing and publication of the EPD

The processing of the EPD includes the following main steps:

* Identification of a relevant, valid PCR. A PCR for a new product group must be developed according to Chapter 4 if no valid industry or product-specific PCR is available.
* Conduct the LCA study in accordance with the applicable PCR, ISO 14025, ISO 14044 and all other applicable national, national and international standards. The organization may perform the LCA study in-house or with the assistance of an external consultant with expertise in LCA.
* Preparation of the LCA report and EPD
* verification of the LCA report and EPD by an independent third party approved by the EPD square programme. The verification report shall be prepared according to the EPD square template and updated according to the baseline PCR.
* The LCA report, EPD and verification report shall be submitted to the Secretariat; the EPD shall be assigned a unique declaration number.
* The EPD shall be registered and published on the EPD square database website. The published EPD may be corrected and revised. An EPD will normally remain published until the EPD owner requests that it be deregistered or until it expires.

## 5.4 Ownership, liability and responsibility for the EPD

The right to use the EPD rests with the owner of the EPD. The manufacturer or group of manufacturers shall be the sole owner and shall be responsible for the EPD. The verifier of the LCA and EPD reports shall be an independent third party recognised by the EPD Square PO. Stakeholders in the processing of LCAs and EPDs must ensure that the information (including data and materials) and related evidence submitted is authentic and reliable. The Technical Committee will organize annual spot checks and audit reports of published EPDs, and the audit can be online or on-site. When the committee investigates and confirms that a company, consultant or verifier has intentionally falsified or cheated in the LCA and EPD reporting process, EPD Square will suspend the participating organization from the programme. They may not register or use the EPD Square platform to support any environmental declaration activities for a period of three (3) years. If the same case is repeated, the organisation's membership will be permanently revoked.

## 5.5 Types of EPD

Under the EPD square programme, producers or groups of producers may declare their products with the following types of EPDs:

**Specific, and average EPDs**

* Declaration of a specific product from a specific production site
* Declaration of a specific product as an average of several production sites
* Declaration of an average product from a specific manufacturing plant
* Declaration of average product as an average of several production sites

**Sectoral EPDs**

* Declaration of a specific product as an average over several production sites
* Declaration of average product as an average of several production sites

Similar products included in the average EPDs should not differ in their environmental impact by more than ±10 %. Where larger differences in impacts are found for the products assessed, these should be declared in separate EPDs.

## 5.6 Content of the EPD

The content of the EPD must be structured to meet the requirements of the PCR. The EPD must contain the following mandatory information:

* Basic information: EPD programme operator, declaration number, name and address of the EPD owner, PCR reference, date of publication, validity period, scope of the EPD, third party verifier, etc;
* product information: product description, use, technical parameters, composition of the product/material;
* life cycle phase information: product phase, transport, packaging, product installation, use phase, end-of-life phase, reference service life (RSL);
* LCA calculation rules: declared unit/functional unit, system boundary, estimation and assumptions, allocation rules, data sources and data quality, allocation, LCA scenarios and other technical information;
* LCA results: resource use, output flows and waste production, environmental impacts;
* interpretation of results: analysis of LCA results;
* transparency information: other environmental information not derived from LCA results, calculations;
* references.

## 5.7 Validity of the EPD

The validity of an EPD registered in EPD Square is five years. In case of interest, the EPD owner should initiate a review of the EPD before it expires. If one or more impact categories change by more than 10% during the validity period, the EPD owner must update the EPD.

## 5.8 Updating the EPD

The company owner shall declare by means of an affidavit that the content of the EPD during the validity period will remain consistent with the company's production. The owner of the EPD is obliged to update the EPD if the environmental impact changes by more than 10 % since the data was published (e.g. due to a change in the production process, energy source, material use or choice of supplier, etc.). A company or organisation may also request an update of the EPD due to a significant improvement in the environmental performance of a product.

If an EPD needs to be modified, the verifier shall submit an EPD square verification report with the revised EPD attached. It is not necessary to carry out a full LCA, it is sufficient to verify only the changes.

When updating the EPD, the same requirements as for the original declaration must be met.

The verifier shall send the EPD square notification of the changes made to the EPD (verification report).

In addition, the owner of the EPD may make editorial changes to the published EPD, such as a logo change or spelling corrections, by sending the revised EPD directly to the Secretariat without verification.

## 5.9 Withdrawal of the EPD from the database

An EPD is registered and published on the EPD square website until the EPD owner contacts EPD square by email or in writing to request that the EPD be withdrawn from the database. EPD Square may also withdraw an EPD if the fees have not been paid on time or if the EPD contains errors that the EPD owner fails to correct. The withdrawn EPD cannot be used anymore because it is no longer managed by the programme operator and therefore does not meet the requirements of ISO 14025. The EPD owner may choose to keep the EPD published after the expiry date. This may be relevant in the case of products that have been discontinued but are still available on the market or in use. In such cases, the organisation shall not use the expired EPD for marketing unless an exemption is granted by the programme operator. EPD Square shall maintain a list of withdrawn EPDs.

## 5.10. Feedback or suggestions/complaints

EPD Square, Ltd. may be contacted with feedback or complaints regarding registered and published EPDs, PCRs, other documents published by the Program, or about verifier approvals. Such complaint:

* Must be in writing and sent to: info@epdsquare.com,
* it must not be anonymous,
* include the subject matter, description, and scope of the complaint; and
* include a reference to a rule under the Program's General Guidelines, ISO 14025 or other standards or reference that is relevant to the subject of the complaint.

EPD Square shall respond to all complaints as soon as possible and contact the organization involved. Further, it may temporarily withdraw the document in question from the www.epdsquare.com website pending investigation or corrective action by the owner of the document. If corrective action is necessary but not taken within a reasonable time, then the affected document or information is withdrawn from EPD square.

## 5.11. General rules of the programme

EPD documents that comply with the EPD square programme shall be based on LCA in accordance with the ISO 14040 suite of standards, PCR and GPI. The data and relevant evidence of the inputs and outputs used in the LCA analysis shall be clearly documented in the LCA report and EPD and made available to verifiers, programme participants and all interested parties upon request, with full respect for confidentiality of the data.

The basic quality criterion is the geographical, temporal and technological coverage of the data. Under the programme, Life Cycle Inventory (LCI) data, whether produced by the company or provided by the manufacturer, shall meet the technical specifications detailed in the PCR.

Scientifically accepted software and databases for calculating environmental impacts are accepted by the EPD square program. A company wishing to publish an EPD under the EPD Square programme must ensure and demonstrate that the tool and database comply with the reference standards and requirements set out in the PCR.

The LCA report must include substantiated information:

* The source of the primary data used in the LCA (on-site readings, measurements, etc.),
* source of secondary data (life cycle inventory database, version, date),
* bibliographical references,
* modelling assumptions,
* peer review and validation,
* suitability of the data for the purpose of the analysis,
* models for electricity generation, raw materials, transport,
* assumptions and scenarios for the different phases of the life cycle.

## 5.12. General verification rules

Verification of the information in the LCA report and the EPD consists of confirming that the requirements set out in the PCR, ISO 14025, GPI and other normative references have been met throughout the process of developing the EPD.

The verification shall be performed by an external verifier pre-approved by the EPD square programme and independent of the EPD generation process.

The role of the verifier is to ensure that the EPD complies with the requirements of the relevant PCR, ISO 14025, GPI and any other relevant standards. In accordance with ISO 14025, the verification focuses on:

* confirming that the information is provided as required by the PCR,
* the LCA methodology (accompanying validated report, software, procedures used),
* the validity of the results,
* the accuracy of the published information.

## 5.13. Requirements for verifiers

The verifier must not have a conflict of interest due to his/her position and must not belong to the same organisation as the owner of the EPD. The verifier should not belong to the same organisation that implements and produces the LCA report and should not be involved in the implementation or processing of the EPD. If the verifier and the person producing the LCA report belong to the same organisation, they should operate in separate departments. Independence is ensured, for example, by accreditation to ISO 17021 or ISO 17065. In such a case, the alternative internal verification checkbox shall be ticked in the EPD. An alternative is also possible if the independence of the verifier can be demonstrated and if the procedures comply with the requirements of ISO 14025.

Minimum competence requirements for verifiers:

* General knowledge of industrial production and services, as well as of the environmental impacts of products and waste,
* knowledge of processes and products for specific product groups,
* knowledge of the LCA method,
* knowledge of relevant environmental labelling, declaration and life cycle standards such as ISO 14040-44, ISO 14020, ISO 14025, ISO 14067 and product specific standards,
* knowledge of the EPD programme for independent verification and knowledge of regulations and standards for EPD processing,
* knowledge of the regulations of the countries concerned,
* academic or equivalent education in a technical or scientific field\*,
* at least three years of experience in industrial and environmental issues, of which experience with the LCA method should be a significant part\*,
* at least three LCA analyses and EPDs for three different product groups\*.

\* documented in the verifier's CV

**Approval of the external verifier**

The approval of external verifiers is based on an application submitted by the verifier to EPD square. The verifier shall request an application form from the Secretariat, which shall be completed and submitted together with a CV. The applicant must meet the minimum requirements set out in Chapter 5.13.

The Technical Committee (TC) will review the applications of individuals wishing to be approved as a verifier and approve those who are qualified. Once approved by the Technical Committee (TC) and after consultation with the Secretariat, the verifier will be issued with a certificate of approval for a period of three years.

# 6. MUTUAL RECOGNITION WITH OTHER PROGRAMME OPERATORS

In order to promote mutual recognition of EPD programmes, EPD square seeks to cooperate and communicate with other EPD programme operators. A Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) is a bilateral agreement between two EPD operators that ensures that EPD operators recognize each other's practices and policies.

The purpose of an MRA is to:

* Enable greater efficiency by harmonising PCRs (making better use of available PCRs and reducing the number and risk of developing PCRs for the same product groups),
* increase the operational efficiency of the programme,
* increase the comparability and reliability of EPDs provided from different programmes,
* promoting international harmonisation leading to a structured and cost-effective way of working together; and
* reducing barriers to market access.

Where relevant, the MRA includes:

* GPI alignment,
* the appropriate level of compatibility and consistency required between programmes,
* the scope of EPDs, carbon footprint, water footprint and PCR recognition, and any other requirements,
* PCR harmonisation and PCR development procedures,
* the equivalence of data quality and data integrity used in the EPD, carbon footprint and water footprint,
* harmonisation of verification and quality assurance procedures,
* registration and disclosure procedures, including additional requirements if specified in the MRA,
* procedures to ensure that mutual recognition conditions are maintained (e.g. monitoring procedures); and
* fees.

EPDs published by Program Operators who have signed an MRA with EPD square may be concurrently registered under the EPD square Program if all requirements under the MRA are met and all applicable fees are paid between the parties.

An MRA does not necessarily mean that the information contained in different EPD programs is comparable, as EPDs from different programs may not be comparable.

Use of another program's logo is subject to the terms and conditions specified by the other program.

A list of current EPD programme operators with signed MRAs and EPD squares is available on the website (www.epdsquare.com).

MRAs must comply with the requirements listed below:

ISO/TS 14029:2022 Environmental statements and programmes for products. Mutual recognition of environmental product declarations (EPDs) and footprint communication programmes

ISO/TC 207/SC 3 N 665, ISO/NP TS 24375 Mutual recognition agreements between Type III Environmental Declaration (EPD) Programme Operators -- Principles and procedures