

## ECOPlatform EPD – A success story 06.10.2016 Press release

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Europe is making significant steps towards a common quality standard for life-cycle oriented data from construction products. In an impressive event at Solvay Bibliothèque in Brussels, organized by the European ECOPlatform, participants from all over Europe witnessed the presentation of the achievements in the harmonization of the European EPD. In his welcome address, the President of ECO Platform AISBL, Sven-Olof Ryding, remarked that *“Great achievements are reached in defining a common core EPD with quality and verification guidelines as well as an audit procedure for the Programme Operators. The main obstacle for the harmonization of EPD is eliminated.”*

Some of the achievements and future solutions were presented during the event, together with the partners. Notably, Green Building rating schemes like the DGNB, BNB, HQE, BREEAM and LEED use EPD in their building assessment. Representatives of these schemes presented how the ECOPlatform EPD is considered and/or rewarded in their rating. This means true added-value for all products with ECOPlatform EPD. Further, national databases like Germany’s ÖKOBAUDAT and France’s INIES are now including data from ECOPlatform EPD. Good news!

Did you know, what EPD are used for?

*“We need environmental data for construction products to better inform the design, construction and use of more sustainable buildings.”* (Owen Abbe, BRE). And Nicolas Kerz (BBSR) added: *“Due to the fact that building products have a high diversity in their functionality, the evaluation makes sense on the building level only.”*



Applications of EPD are diverse. Life-cycle assessments (LCA), green building rating, databases, public or private procurement, eco-labelling (type I), green communication, building information modelling (BIM). They all request for information from products. And all these applications request for different information in different data formats, which results in an enormous effort for the manufacturers. EPD are seen as the solution as a neutral data-set. Industry provides their product-specific data once and it can be used for various applications. Benchmarks or specific use-scenarios are applied for evaluation then. With this approach, we can facilitate the provision of data for all relevant applications. Green Building and Green Procurement can become reality with acceptable effort for the industry.

*“However, we are still far from 100% harmonization”,* as Marc Bosmans stated in his keynote. There are more barriers that need solutions. ECOPlatform is seen as an important party in developing these solutions. And we are working already – for a further harmonization of the product category rules (PCR), common content overviews in all EPD or to define a digital exchange format. *“There is a lot to do at the next level, we know it, work on it and will tackle it!”* promised Christian Donath (Managing Director of ECOPlatform).

“Balance between reward and effort to issue an EPD is decisive for the producers.” (Miguel Pérez Navarro) Full recognition in Europe could be helped by coherent legislation based on EPD. This would also reduce related cost and promote environmental friendly production. Manufacturers have products & production variations that may need flexible solutions, in particular, smaller manufacturers with a big variety of different products need easier and cheaper systems. Some of the EPD Programmes already offer software-supported EPD, which need to be developed for all products. “We have worked hard on several EPD types and can offer different solutions for manufacturers of all sizes” explained Burkhart Lehmann (IBU).

Gonçalo Ascensão, from CEN summarised the recent request of the European Commission to align part of the content of EN 15804 to the Product Environmental Footprint. Eva Schminke, convenor of CEN/TC 350 WG3 dealing with product standards, said “The work has already started, however the alignment is a moving target. But the standard is only the core of the EPD, its interpretation is as diverse as Europe is, and ECOPlatform is here to bridge the gap.”

It is apparent that: “ECOPlatform EPD help facilitating the provision of data for industry.” (Oyvind Skarholt) And many of the manufacturers, who decided to issue an ECOPlatform EPD, travelled to Brussels to participate in the event and receive their EPD in the handover ceremony. A European picture in the end of a brilliant event. Congratulations!

