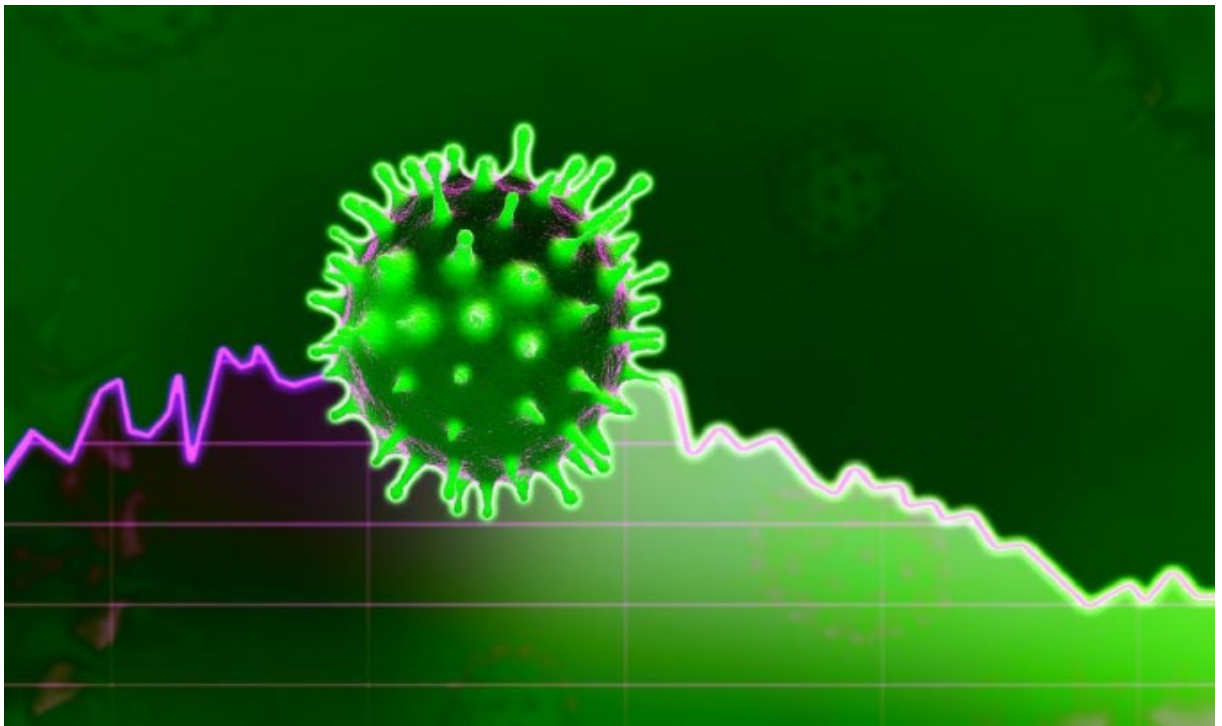

Dear Reader,

We are all experiencing strange and unexpected times. COVID-19 is dominating our professional and private life. There is no precedence for a situation like this. This crisis is not limited to a region or a specific sector, it affects us all, worldwide. In between all the concerns and problems, we see a lot of promising and good things. People standing together, taking care of each other, cutting their own needs back for others.

ECO Platform's members will be affected by economic impacts as well. It is not yet clear to what extent. We are preparing to help members in critical situations. It is time to stand together and prepare for whatever may come.



Corona virus impacts economy, while accelerating the digital transformation

We are full of hope when seeing indications that there are responsible preparations to return to normal. People are not forgetting about the need to protect our planet and our climate over the virulent Corona-issues. Instead, politicians are requested to consider environmental aspects, when driving-up the economy again. And we are demanding that funding is preferably offered for sustainable projects and products.

To document and prove their sustainable concept, public projects could and should be requested to perform a building LCA and achieve a Green Building Certificate, following the

LEVEL(S) approach or one of the existing Rating Schemes. The methods exist, expertise is available as well as the required life-cycle data from products.

With ECO Platform we are working to facilitate and mainstream building LCA, by provision of harmonized and third-party verified life-cycle data from construction products. With the ECO EPD we have a solution in place. Together with InData we are currently realizing an open digital EPD data exchange network. Alignment with other stakeholder groups is now needed to overcome some last barriers. Especially different approaches in legislation. We are very close to achieving our objectives fully.

Now would be the time to make use of our achievements. We are asking you all to promote our solutions to decision-makers in policy and the economy.

Let's make the best out of the current crisis and gain strength for a good future.

Sven-Olof Ryding
President

Christian Donath
Managing Director

General Assembly in Corona-times

Our General Assembly on May 19 will be held as web-conference this year, due to COVID-19 restrictions. Even if a web-conference can't fully replace the physical meeting, we are prepared to cover the relevant reporting, discharges and decisions as required per statutes.

Since the economic impacts from the Corona-crisis are not yet known, we propose to hold an extraordinary General Assembly on November 11, to evaluate the situation and decide about necessary adjustments or help for some of our members.



General Assembly will be hold online due to COVID-19 restrictions

Ensuring a sustainable recovery from COVID-19

by Jane Anderson

Around the world, Governments are looking to invest in infrastructure to bring about recovery after the COVID-19 crisis. But COVID-19 is also generating a new approach to the built environment. At a recent meeting of the Mayors of [C40](#) cities to address the implications of COVID-19, [measures discussed](#) ranged from huge retrofitting programmes to make buildings more energy efficient, to mass tree planting and investment in solar and wind power. Milan is pedestrianizing its streets, Paris is building a network of cycle routes, and in London, boroughs are widening pavements and closing roads to improve walking and cycling.

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COVID-19 RESOURCES FOR CITIES

C40 KNOWLEDGE HUB

The C40 Knowledge Hub is being regularly updated with resources and articles for cities seeking to better understand and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The expanding library includes policy briefs, profiles of city solutions, commentary from mayors and city decision-makers, and an index of relevant media, data sets, peer-to-peer support, and more.

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GLOBAL MAYORS COVID-19 RECOVERY TASK FORCE

C40 mayors released a statement of principles to build a better, more sustainable and fairer society out of the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

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NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT!

Deadline 2020

DEADLINE 2020

Deadline 2020 is a commitment from the world's leading cities to urgently pursue high ambition climate action, demonstrating how we can deliver on the Paris Agreement. Now is the time to act!

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I know that the construction industry has the potential to make significant reductions in built environment impacts today, yet many countries, my own included, have limited regulation in the construction sector, particularly environmental regulation, to encourage new building. But every building constructed or retrofitted today to anything but the highest environmental standards is “locking in” operational carbon emissions for many years to come, bringing the climate tipping point every closer. And the same is true of the embodied impact of new build and retrofit projects and particularly of infrastructure projects - we can never reduce the embodied impact of materials that have already been made and installed; the sooner we start to reduce these impacts, by reducing the impact of materials production, by increasing the resource and energy efficiency of construction through design and better construction processes, and ensuring buildings have both low operational and embodied impacts, the more likely we are to avoid the consequences of excessive climate change.

The need for action is clear, and construction must play its part. Environmental Product Declarations (EPD) are central to addressing the challenges we face. Already, with over [7300 registered EN 15804 EPD](#) available, they provide the data on the impacts of construction products that is needed to evaluate and reduce the embodied impact of buildings and infrastructure. The majority of EPD are also now available in digital format, so they can be easily integrated into LCA tools and used to ensure building designers can more easily measure and reduce embodied impacts, and the earlier embodied impact is considered in the design process, the greater the reduction that is possible.

In this article, I want to look more closely at the different approaches to regulation in the area of embodied impacts that are already being used around the world, as these may provide the blueprint to address embodied impact as construction is used as a route to recovery in a Post-COVID world.

In the Netherlands, public procurement of infrastructure strongly values the reduction in embodied carbon impacts. Rijkswaterstaat, the Department of Public Works (RWS) uses the DuboCalc LCA tool which calculates 11 life cycle environmental impacts converting them into an environmental cost indicator

(ECI), and a tool known as the “CO2 performance ladder” which assesses the efforts of a company to reduce CO2 emissions caused by the project. RWS provides organisations who have expressed an interest in bidding for any infrastructure project with the functional specifications including a maximum ECI value and access to the DuboCalc assessment tool to calculate the ECI value for their proposed solution. Bidders submit an offer with a description of the solution, their price, the ECI value generated by DuboCalc and the rung of the CO2 performance ladder their offer would correspond to. Each bidder’s quote is then reduced according to the ECI values of their designs and their CO2 performance ladder rung chosen. The project is awarded to the bidder with the lowest adjusted quoted price. The materials proposed and the measures to address CO2 reduction then become performance requirements for the winner’s contract and the ECI value of the final project is checked upon completion of the work.

In Italy, [Green Public Procurement criteria](#) have been set for buildings, for example that buildings must have 15% recycled content by mass, all concrete must have 5% recycled content, EAF steel must have 70% recycled content and integrated steel 10% recycled content. EN 15804 EPD are highlighted in the criteria as the means to demonstrate this.

Both France and Belgium require any construction product manufacturer making an environmental claim about a product which is covered by the information given in EPD, to register an EN 15804 EPD for the product within the respective national programme and database ([inies](#) in France and [B-EPD](#) in Belgium). Both countries have provided more detailed National Product Category Rules (the [Complement Nationale to EN 15804+A1 of June 2016](#) in France, and the National Supplement to EN 15804+A1, [NBN DTD B 08-001:2017](#) in Belgium). These provide information on mandatory life cycle modules that must be reported, the gate to grave scenarios to be used for products, and additional mandatory environmental indicators that must be used for EPD to be accepted. In both countries, the EPD are then incorporated into the national database which is then made available for use in Building LCA.

In the Netherlands, there are no requirements at product level, but the Government has legislated at building level since 2012, requiring all new housing and office buildings over 100 m² to assess Building LCA. Like France and Belgium, the Netherlands developed national methodology, the [Milieuprestatie Gebouwen in de grond-, weg- en waterbouw \(GWW\)-werken \(MPG\)](#), for building and construction product LCA which complies with EN 15798 and EN 15804+A1 and provides further requirements, and a national database, the [Nationale MilieuDatabase \(NMD\)](#) which includes EPD from the [MRPI](#) EPD programme which follows the MPG. Both [free and commercial LCA tools](#) have also been approved to use the MPG and NMD. In January 2018, the Government introduced a [limit value](#) on the embodied impact of buildings, though most buildings assessed since the introduction in 2012 would already meet this limit – however the limit is expected to be reduced over time.

In France and Belgium, building on the work at product level, both countries have developed national methodologies to undertake Building LCA – in France, the [Référentiel «Énergie - Carbone»](#), and in Belgium, the [Milieugerelateerde Materiaalprestatie van Gebouwelementen \(MMG\)](#).

In France, the Government has so far approved [eight commercial Building LCA tools](#) for “l’évaluation de la performance environnementale” (assessment of embodied carbon) that follow the Methodology and use the inies database. In Belgium, the Government has made available a free tool, [Totem](#), to undertake Building LCA using the approved methodology and database.

France has been piloting a regulation, [Bâtiments à Énergie Positive et Réduction Carbone](#) (known as E+C-) requiring the increase of building renewables and reduction of Operational and Embodied Carbon measured using the Methodology and inies database, and has proposed [embodied carbon benchmarks](#) used to

award the E+C- label for different building types as part of this work. The pilot is currently being evaluated and the final regulation was planned to come into force later in 2020.

In Belgium, again building on the work at product level, the Government has piloted the MMG approach and is currently encouraging the construction industry raise awareness by using the Totem tool, whilst also researching benchmarks to support policy makers in the definition of environmental targets for buildings.

Outside of Europe, in the USA, California, under the [Buy Clean California Act](#), EPD can be used to demonstrate that key building products (steel, glass and insulation) purchased by Public Bodies meet maximum greenhouse gas emissions intensity limits. From January 2021, it will be mandatory for public bodies to require submission of EPD for these products. Minnesota's [B3 Guidelines](#) passed July 2017 require whole building LCA for state funded new buildings and major renovations. And in Oregon, [Executive Order 17-20](#), which was signed in November 2017 states new state buildings will need to be carbon neutral in operation and will need to analyse feasible options that will lower embodied carbon impacts from 2022.

In Vancouver in Canada, the city passed a [policy](#) that the embodied emissions for all rezoned buildings must be reported, using an LCA process consistent with LEED v4.

We know other countries, regions and cities are looking to regulate in this area, and we would encourage them to look at the work that has already been done so they can learn what works well and avoid some of the pitfalls. We would encourage authorities to come together, and ensure that LCA and the data from EPD are at the heart of any future policy for infrastructure and the built environment.

Mainstreaming sustainable buildings with LIFE Level(s) project

by Benjamin Petrovic (Croatia Green Building Council)



In light of joint efforts being implemented by national governments, international organizations and stakeholders from various fields with a goal of preventing the damage caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, the area of sustainable development is gaining more recognition as one of the key aspects in reaching recovery but also add value to the future. Actions, projects and initiatives that are being rolled out by NGO's, policymaking bodies and different organizations are setting up subjects such as environmental and health performance of buildings on the front line, by that directly addressing health concerns that the world is currently facing.

One such projects, directed towards mainstreaming sustainable buildings in Europe, is LIFE Level(s). Under the full name Life for LCA LCC Level(s), the project is directed towards raising greater awareness of the importance of use of the specified indicators within the framework of Level(s), a set of common European Union indicators to address life cycle environmental performance of buildings. The key indicators within Level(s) are Life cycle assessment (LCA), Life cycle costing (LCC) and Indoor air quality (IAQ). The idea behind the LIFE Level(s) project is to work with stakeholders from the public and private sector and certification schemes to explore how the key Level(s) components mentioned above can be implemented on a pan-European scale. Another significant objective, especially concerning the global awareness of the threats coming from pandemics and pollution, is raising the awareness of the main actors across the industry and governments on the necessity of recognising Level(s) and a lifecycle approach framework in addressing climate environmental risk.

The LIFE Level(s) project kicked-off in October 2019 and will be rolling out until September 2022. With the funding received from the LIFE Programme of the European Union, the project is being executed by a consortium of some of the most recognised Green Building Councils across Europe, notable for their success in governance, inclusiveness and market impact. In line with that, the partnership is made up of Green Building Council España (GBCe), Croatia GBC, Dutch GBC (DGBC), Alliance HQE-GBC, GBC Finland (FiGBC), GBC Italia, German Sustainable Building Council (DGNB) and Irish GBC (IGBC).

The first few months of of 2020 presented a great deal of progress when it comes to the Life Level(s) project and the successful development of its actions.

As one of LIFE Level(s) goals is integration of Level(s) components into existing European rating schemes, with an idea of encouraging the uptake of these components in the markets where these rating tools operate, a careful and precise data mapping was necessary to consider uptake. Relevant green rating schemes which should be linked to Level(s) needed to be selected according to the criteria of maturity, regional coverage, activity level, future potential and conformity with relevant European standards. Accordingly, a mapping procedure to be used in assessing compliance of green building rating schemes with Level(s). With a precise mapping tool developed by DGNB, the conformity level, detailed for LCA, LCC and IAQ, could be assessed, based on the compliance of rating schemes with Level(s).

Additional steps regarding the assessment and development of quality data are being moved forward by the Irish GBC. An important aspect is the analysis of the existing data that meets the requirements of Level(s), and the existence of Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) programmes and how such data is accessed when it comes to construction products and materials. By collecting such data, development of recommendations to drive uptake of EPD would be possible, focused on improving the quality of data in countries where Life Cycle Assessment is not yet mainstream.

Also, with the leading beneficiary Alliance HQE-GBC, progress was made in creating a strong platform for the implementation of Level(s) into public procurement by working hand in hand with public authorities and national governments. Such an outcome will be achieved by identifying the requirements

of procurers who want to use Level(s) indicators, and developing recommendations in order to establish training programmes for relevant construction sector stakeholders to be rolled out in future actions.

The significance of the LIFE Level(s) project lies within its approach towards hundreds of potential collaborators from various sectors such as industry, governments and public sector and non-governmental organizations with an encompassing purpose of creating a foundation for the development of future European and national sustainable development policies, improvement of environmental and climate performances and creation of positive socio-economic shifts.

LIFE Level(s) website: <https://lifelevels.eu/>

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