

# Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

## What is an EPD?

An EPD is an objective report based on [Life Cycle Assessment \(LCA\)](#). It is used to communicate information about the potential environmental and human health impacts of a product. It states what a product is made of and how it impacts the environment across its entire life cycle, from raw material extraction through disposal. EPDs are developed in accordance with the requirements of ISO 14025 (and ISO 21930 for construction products).

## What is the connection between Product Category Rules (PCR), LCAs, and EPDs?

EPDs are generated based on the findings of an LCA conducted in conformance with international standards. In addition, Product Category Rules (PCRs) provide more precise instructions about conducting LCAs for a particular product category. Each PCR describes the impact categories that must be quantified and reported, ensuring that all EPDs in the same product category report the same types of information. Examples of industries for which product-specific PCRs have been developed include:

- Steel Construction
- Concrete and Cement
- Wood Construction Products
- Roofing
- Insulation
- Office Furniture
- Paints
- Building Sealants
- Flooring

Many more PCRs are being developed for additional categories. [Contact us](#) today to see if a PCR is available for your product.

## What steps are involved in generating an EPD from the LCA?

Once the LCA is completed, it is critically reviewed by an independent expert for conformance to the relevant ISO standards. After this review, an EPD is prepared that summarizes the findings of the LCA. The EPD is then verified by a third-party to ensure that it accurately reflects the LCA report and follows the PCR requirements. The verified EPD is registered through the Program Operator website and is made publicly available.

### How long is an EPD valid?

The validity period for the EPD depends on the PCR but is typically five years.

### How are EPDs used?

EPDs qualify products for credit towards buildings under LEED v4.1, LEED v5, and other procurement systems. Having an EPD can help a manufacturer become a preferred supplier for designers and architects who specify for green building projects. Manufacturers also use the data from EPDs to identify areas of improvement within their manufacturing processes, helping them become more efficient and set realistic sustainability goals.

### What LEED v4.1 credits do EPDs qualify for? What about LEED v5?

EPDs qualify for up to two points following the LEED v4.1 Materials and Resources credit [Building product disclosure and optimization - environmental product declarations](#).

Under Option 1, manufacturers can earn either one-half point by participating in an industry-wide (generic) EPD, or one full point by working with a Program Operator such as SCS to create a product-specific EPD.

Under Option 2, manufacturers can earn an additional point either by: 1) demonstrating reduced impact with a product-specific EPD against an industry-wide EPD (provided that the manufacturer was part of the study and the two conform to the same PCR); or 2) by demonstrating reduced impact for the same product over time, based on two product-specific EPDs.

In LEED v5, EPDs contribute to the Material and Resources Credit Pre-Requisite to Quantify and Assess Embodied Carbon. EPDs can also be used in LEED v5 to qualify for points under the Material and Resources Credit for Reduced Embodied Carbon. In this credit, EPDs are used to evaluate the embodied carbon reduction of a project compared to industry average values. Visit [USGBC's website](#) for the full details.

### I am a manufacturer and would like to get an EPD for my product(s). How do I get started?

First, determine if there is a suitable PCR for your product category. Next, identify a qualified LCA practitioner to conduct the LCA for your product. [Contact us](#) to discuss the scope of your project and next steps.