

Construction Products Europe welcomes the publication of the European Commission's tool LEVEL(S)¹, which has been developed by JRC for DG Environment, with intensive stakeholder involvement including from Construction Products Europe and its members.

LEVEL(S) offers, for the first time, an official EU vision on sustainable buildings. It sets the assessment at the level of the building, rather than the individual construction product, which is the appropriate approach that Construction Products Europe has called for over many years.

This initiative will not only improve the knowledge of the environmental performance of buildings but also increase the awareness and expertise of stakeholders in the building value chain.

Support LCA and LCC

The most relevant outcome of the framework is the importance of life cycle information in the assessment of the building both Cycle Assessment (LCA) based on the standards developed by CEN/TC 350 "Sustainability of Construction Works" and Life Cycle Cost (LCC).

The possibility to assess buildings following three different levels will help stakeholders to grow step-wise in these approaches where those tools are not yet used in the market;

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Three pillars of sustainability

Other important outcome of the study was the need to complement the assessment with additional indicators. Performance indicators reflect characteristics of the building that cannot be fully covered by LCA and LCC.

Construction Products Europe welcomes the introduction of the three pillars of sustainability – social, environmental, economic – in a single methodology.

Towards a large uptake of the methodology

Construction Products Europe considers that this is the first step towards more sustainable buildings but to reach this goal the methodology needs to be implemented. The Framework will need testing to check its feasibility, ease of use on the ground and consistency with national requirements.

The industry commits to facilitate the testing phase of the framework, by encouraging companies within its membership to be involved and providing information. Construction Products believes it is key that EC actively supports and funds stakeholders for testing the methodology.

With regard to the eventual uptake of the finished scheme in the market, the success or otherwise will depend on

- ▶ the political will of the European Institutions and Member States to implement the methodology and to harmonise with national requirements;
- ▶ the use of the methodology by professionals (e.g. architects, designers and engineers) as part of the design process of buildings;
- ▶ how it relates to existing commercial rating schemes;
- ▶ the promotion of the methodology to be made "marketable," including through branding and training.

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/buildings.htm>