

TTA SUSTAINABILITY WORKING GROUP

GLOSSARY – TO HELP YOU NAVIGATE THE SUSTAINABILITY JUNGLE

There is a daunting amount of jargon, acronyms and technical terms associated with the topic of sustainability in the tiling sector. This Glossary can help you learn the difference between your Scope 1 and your Scope 3, between your EPD and your embodied carbon.

B Corp – a certification scheme for businesses measuring standards of social and environmental performance, transparency and accountability.

<https://bcorporation.uk/b-corp-certification/what-is-a-b-corp/>

BREEAM – the Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method is the world's first sustainability rating scheme for the built environment and has contributed much to the strong focus in the UK on sustainability in building design, construction and use. A BREEAM assessment is voluntary but may be required for some planning approvals.

www.breeam.com

Carbon neutral - Carbon neutrality means having a balance between emitting carbon and absorbing carbon from the atmosphere. This matters because carbon dioxide (CO₂) is the major greenhouse gas (causes global warming). Deforestation and any burning of fossil fuels (as in transport or manufacturing) releases CO₂ into the atmosphere. The UN's main climate goal is to reach carbon neutrality by 2050, in order to limit temperature rise to 1.5C.

www.un.org/sq/en/content/sq/articles/2020-12-11/carbon-neutrality-2050-the-world's-most-urgent-mission

Carbon Offsetting - businesses can buy permits – or Carbon Credits – generated by projects that are cleaning up our atmosphere, to compensate for the emissions they haven't yet eliminated.

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/voluntary-carbon-markets-and-offsetting/>

Circular economy - the concept of keeping materials within the economy at the highest level of value for the longest time possible. Although recycling is part of the circular economy, it also aims to reuse products as much as possible, which is why product design to facilitate reuse is important.

Climate Change Act – The UK passed its Climate Change Act in 2008, and was the first country to do so. The Act aspired to an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050. In 2019 this was changed to 100% reduction by 2050, compared to 1990.

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents

Co2nstruct Zero - the Construction Leadership Council's response to the Government's Green Industrial Revolution proposals set out in November 2020. The Co2nstruct Zero programme includes nine priorities, covering Transport, Buildings and Construction Activity.

<https://www.constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk/workstream/co2nstructzero/>

COP 27 – the 27th, and most recent, Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held in Egypt in November 2022.

<https://cop27.eg/#/>

Cradle to cradle – cradle to cradle (C2C) certification is the global standard for products that are safe, circular and responsibly made. Certification is carried out by the Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute.

<https://c2ccertified.org/get-certified>

Cradle to grave – the principle that the originator of a product is responsible for a product right the way from its creation through to its disposal. This is therefore the principle that underlies end of life recovery schemes which exist in some industries (such as the vehicle industry).

www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Cradle-to-grave

Embodied carbon – the CO₂ emissions associated with materials and construction processes throughout the whole lifecycle of a product or building. It includes any CO₂ created during the manufacturing of building materials (material extraction, transport to manufacturer, manufacturing), the transport of those materials to the job site, and the construction practices used.

www.carboncure.com/concrete-corner/what-is-embodied-carbon/

EPD – an Environmental Product Declaration is a report which provides a ‘life cycle’ description of a product, focussing on its environmental impact. EPDs fit within an international EPD system which itself operates within ISO and EN standards. EPDs are logged on an international website. An EPD is generated based on data obtained through Life Cycle Assessment (LCA). An LCA is performed using a peer-reviewed Product Category Rules document (PCR) in line with EN 15804 (the European Standard for the generation of EPD for construction products), ISO 14025, and other related international standards.

www.environdec.com

EPR for Packaging - Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging (EPR) will be phased in from 2024 and will move the full cost of dealing with packaging waste on to the packaging producers, applying a ‘polluter pays principle’ and making producers responsible for the costs of their packaging throughout its life cycle. This will encourage producers to reduce their use of packaging and use types of packaging which are easier to recycle. Packaging producers will pay more for less sustainable packaging, incentivising types that use less material and are easier to recycle. Producers will also be expected to meet ambitious new recycling targets and use clear unambiguous labelling of recyclability to assist consumers.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1063589/epr-consultation-government-response.pdf

EPR for Construction Products – there has been discussion regarding the suitability of Extended Producer Responsibility for construction products. The goal would be to incentivise manufacturers to consider durability, reparability and end of life as part of the product design. The topic features in one of the CPA’s Sustainability Discussion Papers.

<https://www.constructionproducts.org.uk/our-expertise/sustainability/resource-efficiency-zero-avoidable-waste-and-the-circular-economy/applying-epr-in-the-construction-products-sector-discussion-paper/>

Future Homes Standard – a UK Government initiative which involves changes to Part L (energy conservation) and Part F (ventilation) of the Building Regulations as they apply to new buildings. The new regs are designed to ensure that new homes produce 75-80% less carbon emissions than current regulations permit. Currently the housing stock is reckoned to be the fourth largest emitter of greenhouse gases, after transport, energy supply and business. The target will be achieved mainly by making the insulation standards more rigorous. It involves a ‘fabric first’ approach, which means that poor building insulation cannot be compensated for by the addition of heat pumps etc. The first change, a 31% carbon reduction, has already come into effect, with the full Future Homes Standard coming into effect in 2025.

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-homes-standard-changes-to-part-l-and-part-f-of-the-building-regulations-for-new-dwellings

Future Homes Hub – an industry-driven response to the Future Homes Standard which provides resources for housebuilders to enable the sector to become environmentally positive.

<https://www.futurehomes.org.uk>

Greenwashing - advertising or marketing in which marketing activities are deceptively used to persuade the public that an organization's products, aims and policies are more environmentally friendly than is the case.

<https://nbs.net/how-to-avoid-greenwashing/>

Heat & Buildings Strategy – the Heat and Buildings Strategy came out in October 2021. It forms part of the Government's plan to deliver net zero by 2050.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/heat-and-buildings-strategy

ISO Net Zero Guidelines – published at last year’s COP27, these Guidelines from the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) are designed for all organisations working to deliver net zero pledges and are intended to improve international alignment and combat greenwashing.

<https://www.iso.org/netzero>

ISO 14001 – the original ISO Environmental Standard

ISO 50005:2021 – an ISO Standard which provides guidelines to support and simplify the implementation of an energy management system for SMEs.

<https://www.iso.org/standard/76428.html>

ISO 9001 - the international Standard for Quality Management.

LEED - Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design is the most widely used green building rating system in the world.

www.usgbc.org/leed

Linear economy – at its most basic in a linear economy we mine raw materials that we process into a product that is thrown away after use. This is what we are trying to move away from!

Net zero – achieving net zero would mean that the amount of greenhouse gas emitted to the atmosphere is balanced by the amount removed.

www.un.org/en/climatechange/net-zero-coalition

Net Zero Review – published in January 2023, this report led by MP Chris Skidmore sought to make the link between opportunities for economic growth and net zero aspirations. It took evidence from the construction sector.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/net-zero-review-uk-could-do-more-to-reap-economic-benefits-of-green-growth>

Operational carbon - the amount of carbon emitted from a building during its use.
Operational carbon currently accounts for 28% of global greenhouse gas emission.

<https://www.renewableenergyworld.com/energy-efficiency/embodied-carbon-vs-operational-carbon-whats-the-difference-and-why-does-it-matter/#gref>

Paris agreement – COP 21, held in Paris in 2015, agreed the target of limiting global warming to 1.5C compared to pre-industrial levels. This is a United Nations agreement and is legally binding. It is hoped to achieve this goal by attaining Net Zero by 2050.

<https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

Part L – part of the UK Building Regulations which relates to energy efficiency. A new 'Interim Part L' came into effect in England in June 2023, which states that the average home will need to produce 75% - 80% less carbon emissions than one built under the previous regulations.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1057372/ADL1.pdf

Plastic Packaging Tax – this came into force on 1 April 2022. Companies need to register for the tax if they have manufactured or imported ten or more tonnes of finished plastic packaging components within the last 12 months. The tax has to be paid at the rate of £200 per tonne if the packaging contains less than 30% recycled plastic.

www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-need-to-register-for-plastic-packaging-tax

Pre-Consumer Recycled Material - material or by-products generated after manufacture of a product is completed but before the product reaches the end-use consumer. Examples include trimmings and faulty products.

Post-Consumer Recycled Material - finished goods that are used and then recycled.

Scope 1, 2 & 3 – these refer to different types of emissions caused by industrial processes, categorised according to the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol.

Scope 1 are emissions directly caused by a company's business, such as fuel combustion, company vehicles and emissions caused by manufacturing.

Scope 2 are emissions caused by power generators from whom a company acquires its energy.

Scope 3 emissions include all those caused further down the supply chain. For many companies in our sector this is where the majority of their emissions come from, since it includes emissions caused by raw material extraction and the fabrication of bought-in components. These are also the most difficult emissions to monitor and to minimise, since they are not within the company's direct control.

www.carbontrust.com/resources/briefing-what-are-scope-3-emissions

SKA rating is a Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) environmental assessment method, benchmark and standard for non-domestic fit outs.

<https://www.rics.org/uk/about-rics/responsible-business/ska-rating/>

Sustainability – as far back as 1987 the United Nations defined sustainability as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” It is about more than the environment. A definition put forward in the 2022 NBS Sustainability Report is the “Ability to sustain a comfortable human life without compromising the environment”

<http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>

www.thenbs.com/sustainable-futures-report-2022/

SDGs – the UN has set out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), covering everything from Poverty to Sustainable Cities and Communities and from Gender Equality to Climate Action.

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>