

Module D mandatory in Environmental Product Declarations (EPD): efficiently recycled building materials are crucial for Circular Construction

Important changes to European environmental certification now recognise the contribution an infinitely recyclable material like copper can make to the circular economy, and will help specifiers to select the most sustainable materials.



*Maersk Building, Copenhagen,
Photo: Adam Mork*

The standard EN 15804 defines the core rules to develop Environmental Product Declarations (EPD) in Europe and its A2 amendment was officially released on 30 Oct 2019.

The standard provides core product category rules (PCR) for environmental declarations for any construction product and construction service. It describes which stages of the product's life cycle are considered in the EPD. It is now mandatory to cover the end of life (EoL) stage and to report the additional benefits and burdens resulting from EoL reuse or recycling. This positive evolution will help to get higher market acceptance of the environmental credentials of copper building products at end of life and to position them as sustainable solutions for building applications.

This standard uses a modular approach of product life cycle stages: production (Module A), in use (Module B), end-of-life stage (Module C) and end-of-life recycling (Module D). In the new standard the mandatory Module D provides an overview of the recycling performance and benefits for the full product life cycle. Hence, it is a key element in supporting an environmentally-sound circular economy in the building sector.



Photo: Aurubis

The life of copper is infinite and does not have an end of life phase. This renewable resource can be recycled over and over with no loss of properties. Copper recycling saves not only significant abiotic resources but also huge amounts of energy since it requires 85% less energy than primary production. With the current focus on resource efficiency and circular economy, the proper consideration of recycling aspects within Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) is essential.

The revised standard comes with many improvements, significant changes to ways of working with EPDs as important next step to encourage designing for recyclability, incorporating impacts and benefits of recycling and recovery or reuse of building materials.

Read more about [environmental performance of copper in building construction](#) and [sustainability credentials](#).

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