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General Programme Instructions for the Environmental Declaration Programme

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GENERAL PROGRAMME INSTRUCTIONS

SCOPE OF THE PROGRAMME

The programme will support the development and publication of Type III environmental product declarations (EPDs) for uncompounded polymer resins, or reactive polymer precursors.

EPDs from this programme are not intended for comparative assertions.

The programme is open to any party wishing to develop an EPD under the rules of the Plastics Europe EPD programme.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

The objective is to develop credible and consistent EPDs for business to business.

PROGRAMME OPERATOR

The programme operator is *PlasticsEurope*, the association of plastics manufacturers in Europe. The association represents more than 60 member companies, producing over 90% of polymers across Europe's 27 member states plus Croatia, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. Further information can be found at www.plasticseurope.org.

Note: Plastics Europe can authorise a third party with the programme management and execution.

The programme operator prepares, maintains and communicates the general programme instructions. The programme operator is responsible for setting up and inviting experts for the PCR development as well as third party panel for the PCR review. The programme operator also appoints the third party verifier(s) for the verification of the EPD.

INVOLVEMENT OF INTERESTED PARTIES

The programme operator is responsible for inviting the interested parties involved in the development of the programme instructions and of the PCR document and facilitates their participation. In addition to the work of the PCR experts and review panels, an open consultation with interested parties is conducted. Interested parties typically are authorities, science including LCA experts, environmental NGO, polymer resin producers and their associations and other stakeholders like manufacturers using polymer resins.

DEFINITION OF PRODUCT CATEGORIES

The product categories are defined by the PCR experts and become part of the respective PCR.



COMPLIANCE WITH RELEVANT STANDARDS

EPDs developed under this programme shall comply with the international standards on Type III environmental declarations, ISO 14025 (Environmental labels and declarations – Type III environmental declarations – principles and procedures). EPD data shall be calculated and documented in accordance with ISO 14040 series of standards (Environmental management — Life cycle assessment).

DATA MANAGEMENT

Data quality

Under this programme consistency of the data as well as data quality according to the PCR is assured by developing LC-Inventory (LCI) data and LC-Impact Assessment (LCIA) data for the LCA underlying an EPD from the *PlasticsEurope* database. New LCI data and LCIA data from any EPD published within the *PlasticsEurope* EPD programme is collected and maintained by *PlasticsEurope*.

Data confidentiality

In principle, the data underlying an EPD is confidential. It shall however be made available to the third party verifier of the EPD who in turn shall keep this data confidential. LCIA data and additional information is published in the EPD according to the selected parameters listed in the PCR document.



PROCEDURE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF PCR — STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION PROCEDURES

The PCR experts prepare the draft PCR document. The programme operator invites the PCR experts. This includes experts from the Plastics industries, preferably Plastics Europe members. This expert group can also include external experts. It prepares the draft documents for any revision of the PCR.

The PCR development includes an open consultation with the interested parties to support practical and consistent data acquisition and calculation for the EPD and a fair and complete selection of environmental aspects to be addressed in the EPD.



PUBLICLY AVAILABLE LIST OF VALID AND VERIFIED PCR

The programme operator maintains a publicly available list of all valid and verified PCR documents issued by the programme. The list and PCR documents are accessible via the website (www.plasticseurope.org).



MONITORING CHANGES IN RELATED EPD PROGRAMMES AND THEIR RESPECTIVE PCR AND REVISING DOCUMENTS WHEN NECESSARY

The programme operator strives to keep up-to-date about PCRs and the general instructions of programmes related to the PCR of this programme. The intention is to make EPDs of the same product category from different programmes as comparable and consistent as possible. When it improves comparability and consistency, without compromising the data quality, PCR from the same product category but from different programmes should be aligned.



PROCEDURE FOR THIRD PARTY VERIFICATION OF THE PCR

A third party panel reviews the PCR. The programme operator shall ensure a reasonable mix of interested party perspectives and competencies in the panel. It shall not include any producers of polymer resins, nor any other member economically dependent on *PlasticsEurope*. The programme operator invites the review panel.

The review panel shall at minimum consist of two members and a chairperson. The combined competencies of the PCR review panel should include:

- General background knowledge of relevant sector, product and product-related environmental aspects;
- General background knowledge of LCA;
- Awareness of relevant standards in the fields of environmental labelling and declarations and LCA;
- Knowledge of the regulatory framework within the scope of the PCR;
- Knowledge of the programme for Type III environmental declarations.

A review statement is prepared by the person chairing the PCR development and then reviewed by the third party review panel. The review statement may also be prepared in its entirety by the review panel. The review statement and any additional response to recommendations made by the reviewers shall be included in the PCR document.

The PCR review shall ensure that:

- the PCR support credible and consistent EPD;
- the rules of ISO 14040 are followed, especially the provisions for defining scope and goal of a LCA study. Care should be taken that the provisions e.g. for functional or declared unit or allocation and calculation rules are adequate for the product category;
- the PCR are based on experience with LCA studies carried out in compliance with ISO 14040ff.
- the selection of LC-Indicators and additional information to be reported is adequate for the product category under study e.g. no relevant information is missing;
- the additional information is based on scientifically sound methodology.



PROCEDURE FOR THIRD PARTY VERIFICATION OF EPDS

To enhance the efficiency of the verification process, the party developing the data for the EPDs (e.g. the LCA practitioner) shall generate a report that sums up how the LCA and additional information was produced and how compliance with the PCR was achieved.

One or more independent third party expert(s) shall verify the underlying LCA and the EPD for the product category under study. The verification procedure shall be transparent. The independent verifier shall generate a report documenting the verification process, while adhering to his obligations for data confidentiality. This report of the verifier shall be available to any person upon request.

The verification procedure shall confirm whether the information given in EPDs accurately reflects the information in the documents on which the declaration is based. The verification procedure shall also confirm whether this information is valid and scientifically sound. Independent verification of data from LCA, LCI and information modules, and of additional environmental information shall at minimum confirm:

- conformance with the PCR;
- conformance with ISO 14040 series of standards;
- conformance with general programme instructions for the Type III environmental declaration;
- plausibility, quality, accuracy and completeness of the LCA-based data;
- quality and accuracy of additional environmental information;
- quality and accuracy of the supporting information.

The programme operator appoints the verifier(s). Members of the third party review panel can also act as verifiers for the EPDs. The minimum requirements for the verifiers in terms of competence are the following:

- knowledge of relevant industry, product and product-related environmental matters;
- process and product knowledge of the product category;
- expert on LCA and methodology for LCA work;
- knowledge of the relevant standards in the field of environmental labelling and declarations, and life cycle assessment;
- knowledge of the regulatory framework in which requirements for environmental declarations have been prepared;
- knowledge of the programme for Type III environmental declarations.



MAINTAINING A PUBLICLY AVAILABLE LIST OF VALID AND VERIFIED EPD

The programme operator maintains a publicly available list of all valid and verified EPDs published by the producers within this programme. The list is accessible from www.plasticseurope.org.

The short and/or long version of the EPD can be made available by the programme operator via the Internet, if the producers agree.



PROGRAMME OPERATION FEES

Information about the programme operation fees can be requested from the program operator.



ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES TO AVOID MISUSE OF REFERENCES TO THE PROGRAMME AND ITS LOGO (IF RELEVANT)

The general legal requirements for the protection of rights on intellectual property apply. The programme operator should follow up misuse of references to the programme and its logo (if relevant), coming to his knowledge. However, the operator is not required to keep track of all applications of EPDs developed under this programme.