1 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – PCR AND PCR DEVELOPMENT

This document aims to answer some of the most common questions about Product Category Rules (PCR) and the process to develop a PCR in the International EPD® System (www.environdec.com).

If you have any further questions that are not answered by this document, please contact the Secretariat at pcr@environdec.com.

1.1 WHAT IS A PCR?

PCR documents are the basis for Environmental Product Declarations (EPD) – voluntary, quantified and verified communication of environmental information for a product in accordance with ISO 14025. The PCR define the calculation rules for the underlying life cycle assessment (LCA), additional information and the format for presentation in an EPD.

PCR are developed in the framework of a programme operating in accordance with ISO 14025, such as the International EPD® System.

1.2 WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL EPD® SYSTEM?

The International EPD® System is a global programme for voluntary and transparent communication of the life cycle environmental impacts of goods and services. See www.environdec.com for more information.

1.3 WHO PREPARES THE PCR DOCUMENTS?

The PCR development shall be done in an internationally-accepted manner based on an open, transparent, and participatory process either by:

- companies and organisations in co-operation with other parties, such as trade associations and interest organisations,
- institutions involving LCA/EPD experts in close cooperation with companies or trade associations and interest organisations, or by
- single companies or organisations in the event they have the necessary in-house competence or choose to engage outside LCA/EPD experts.

The programme operator shall maintain the copyright of the document to ensure that it is possible to publish, update when necessary, and available to all organisations to develop and register EPDs. Stakeholders participating in PCR development should be acknowledged in the final document and on the website.

1.4 WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE FOR APPROVING PCR DOCUMENTS?

The final draft PCR shall be reviewed by the Technical Committee functioning as the PCR review panel, supported by the Secretariat. The review shall address:

- whether the choices regarding LCA-based content (system boundary, allocation rules, etc.), parameters/indicators, and additional environmental information are made according to the General Programme Instructions,
- whether the PCR development process has been done according to the General Programme Instructions, and
- how the PCR moderator and PCR Committee handled the feedback received during the open consultation.

The results of the review should be documented in a PCR review report and shall lead to:

- the full acceptance of the draft PCR
- the acceptance of the draft PCR with comments to be fulfilled, or
- the need for further clarification and amendments.

The PCR moderator and PCR Committee shall ensure that the review comments are considered in the preparation of the final version of the PCR document. In the event the TC needs further clarifications or amendments to the text, the PCR moderator is responsible for providing a new draft version of the PCR.

1.5 WHAT IS THE VALIDITY OF A PCR?

A PCR is valid for a pre-determined period of time to ensure that it is updated at regular intervals. This period is normally five years.

An expired PCR shall not be used to develop and register new EPDs, and shall not be used to update a published EPD to give the EPD a prolonged period of validity. To be possible to use for these purposes, the expired PCR shall first be updated or have its period of validity prolonged.

1.6 HOW TO FIND EXISTING PCR DOCUMENTS?

All PCRs in the International EPD® System may be found in the database published at www.environdec.com/PCR. The Secretariat may assist you in finding the correct document.

Existing PCRs available at www.environdec.com shall be considered before starting the development of a new PCR to avoid overlaps in scope. Existing PCRs that cover a part of the life cycle of the product in question, e.g. agricultural products for processed food items, should be referenced for harmonisation across product categories and in supply chains.

Existing PCRs available in other programmes shall also be considered. A sub-page to www.environdec.com/PCR is available to assist in global PCR harmonization.

1.7 HOW TO COMMENT ON PCR DOCUMENTS?

During PCR development, or during the PCR validity period, any stakeholder is welcome to provide comments on the document via the PCR Forum on this website (accessible on the page of each PCR) or sent directly to the PCR Moderator via e-mail.

1.8 WHERE CAN I FIND THE PCR TEMPLATE?

The Secretariat and Technical Committee have developed PCR Basic Modules for a number of divisions (two-digit level) within the UN CPC scheme. The PCR Basic Modules are not PCRs in themselves – unless otherwise stated – but serve as a template and contain the information required to develop a PCR. The PCR Basic Module shall be used as a PCR template, when available.

They are available by browsing the PCR library or via the advanced PCR search function.