

Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) for Softwood Plywood Produced in British Columbia

According to
EN 15804
ISO 21930
ISO 14025



ASTM INTERNATIONAL

Program Operator	ASTM International 100 Barr Harbor Drive PO Box C700 West Conshohocken, PA, 19428-2959 USA www.astm.org			 ASTM INTERNATIONAL Helping our world work better
General Program Instructions and Version Number	ASTM Program Operator for Product Category Rules (PCR) and Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) - General Program Instructions, version: 6.0			
Declaration Number	EPD 397			
Declared Product	Plywood			
Functional Unit	Production of one cubic metre (1 m ³) of plywood produced in British Columbia			
Reference PCR and Version Number	ISO 21930:2017 Sustainability in Building Construction — Environmental Declaration of Building Products. [7] UL Environment: Product Category Rules for Building-Related Products and Services Part A: Calculation Rules for the Life Cycle Assessment and Requirements on the Project Report, v3.2 [11] Part B: Structural and Architectural Wood Products EPD Requirements, v1.0 [12]			
Description of Product's Intended Application and Use	Plywood is an engineered wood product with high structural strength and stability. It can be used as a building material for panel construction.			
Markets of Applicability	Construction Sector			
Date of Issue	February 20, 2023			
Period of Validity	February 20, 2028			
EPD Type	Product-specific EPD			
EPD Scope	Cradle-to-Gate			
Year of Reported Manufacturer Primary data	2018			
LCA Software	SimaPro v8.5			
LCI Databases	USLCI [9], ecoinvent 3.5 [15], Datasmart [8]			
LCIA Methodology	TRACI 2.1 [3]			
The Sub-Category PCR Review was Conducted by:	Dr. Thomas Gloria (chair) Industrial Ecology Consultants	Dr. Indro Ganguly University of Washington	Dr. Sahoo University of Georgia	
LCA and EPD Developer This life cycle assessment was conducted in accordance with ISO 14044 and the reference PCR by:	Athena Sustainable Materials Institute 280 Albert Street, Suite 404 Ottawa, Ontario Canada K1P 5G8 www.athenasmi.org  James Salazar			 Athena Sustainable Materials Institute

This declaration was independently verified in accordance with **ISO 14025:2006[4]**.
The **UL Environment “Part A: Calculation Rules for the Life Cycle Assessment and Requirements on the Project Report,” v3.2** (December 2018), in conformance with **ISO 21930:2017**, serves as the core PCR, with additional considerations from the **USGBC/UL Environment Part A Enhancement (2017)**.

INTERNAL x EXTERNAL

Independent Verifier

This life cycle assessment was independently verified in accordance with ISO 14044 [6] and the reference PCR by:

Dr. Thomas Gloria
Industrial Ecology Consultants



Limitations

- Environmental declarations from different programs (ISO 14025) may not be comparable.
- Comparison of the environmental performance using EPD information shall consider all relevant information modules over the full life cycle of the products within the building.
- This PCR allows EPD comparability only when the same functional requirements between products are ensured and the requirements of ISO 21930:2017 §5.5 are met. It should be noted that different LCA software and background LCI datasets may lead to differences results for upstream or downstream of the life cycle stages declared.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

Softwood plywood is a wood-based structural building material or product that is commonly used for commercial and residential construction. Plywood is used as structural sheathing for roof, wall and flooring, and for subflooring applications in home construction, furniture, and cabinet panels. Structural plywood is categorized by United Nations Standard Products and Services Code (UNSPSC) 111220 01 and Construction Specifications Institute (CSI) codes for sheathing 06 16 00, subflooring 06 16 23 and underlayment 06 16 26. Softwood plywood falls into the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code 321212, softwood veneer and plywood manufacturing. Plywood is comprised of softwood plywood and resins.

INDUSTRY AVERAGE EPD

This industry average EPD was developed based on primary data from two production facilities in British Columbia, West Fraser Ltd. and Thompson River Veneer Products Ltd. The surveyed data represents 36% of total annual production in BC (556 million sq ft. 3/8" basis of 1543 million sq ft 3/8" basis)¹. Based on the data availability for common unit processes across the cradle to gate product system, a "horizontal averaging" approach using average weighting factors was applied to the primary data.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Type of EPD and Life Cycle Stages

The underlying LCA [5] investigates the product system from cradle-to-gate. This comprises the production stage including the information modules "A1 Extraction and upstream production", "A2 Transport to factory" and "A3 Manufacturing" (Figure 1).

Building Life Cycle Information Modules (mnr = module not reported)																
Production stage			Construction Stage		Use stage							End-of-life stage			Substitution Effects	
Extraction and upstream production	Transport to factory	Manufacturing	Transport to site	Installation	Use	Maintenance	Repair	Replacement	Refurbishment	Operational energy use	Operational water use	De-construction/ demolition	Transport to waste processing or disposal	Waste processing	Disposal	Benefits outside system
A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	C1	C2	C3	C4	D
X	X	X	mnr	mnr	mnr	mnr	mnr	mnr	mnr	mnr	mnr	mnr	mnr	mnr	mnr	mnr

Figure 1: Life Cycle Stages and Information Modules per ISO 21930:2017

¹ Annual production of plywood in BC: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/forestry/fibre-mills/mill_list_report_2020.pdf

System Boundaries and Product Flow Diagram

The product system is presented in Figure 2 below and shows the information modules that are included in the system boundary. The product system includes the extraction of logs from the forest and the production of resins in Module A1. Module A2 includes the delivery of logs and resin to the production facilities. The manufacturing Module A3 includes the production of veneer and plywood.

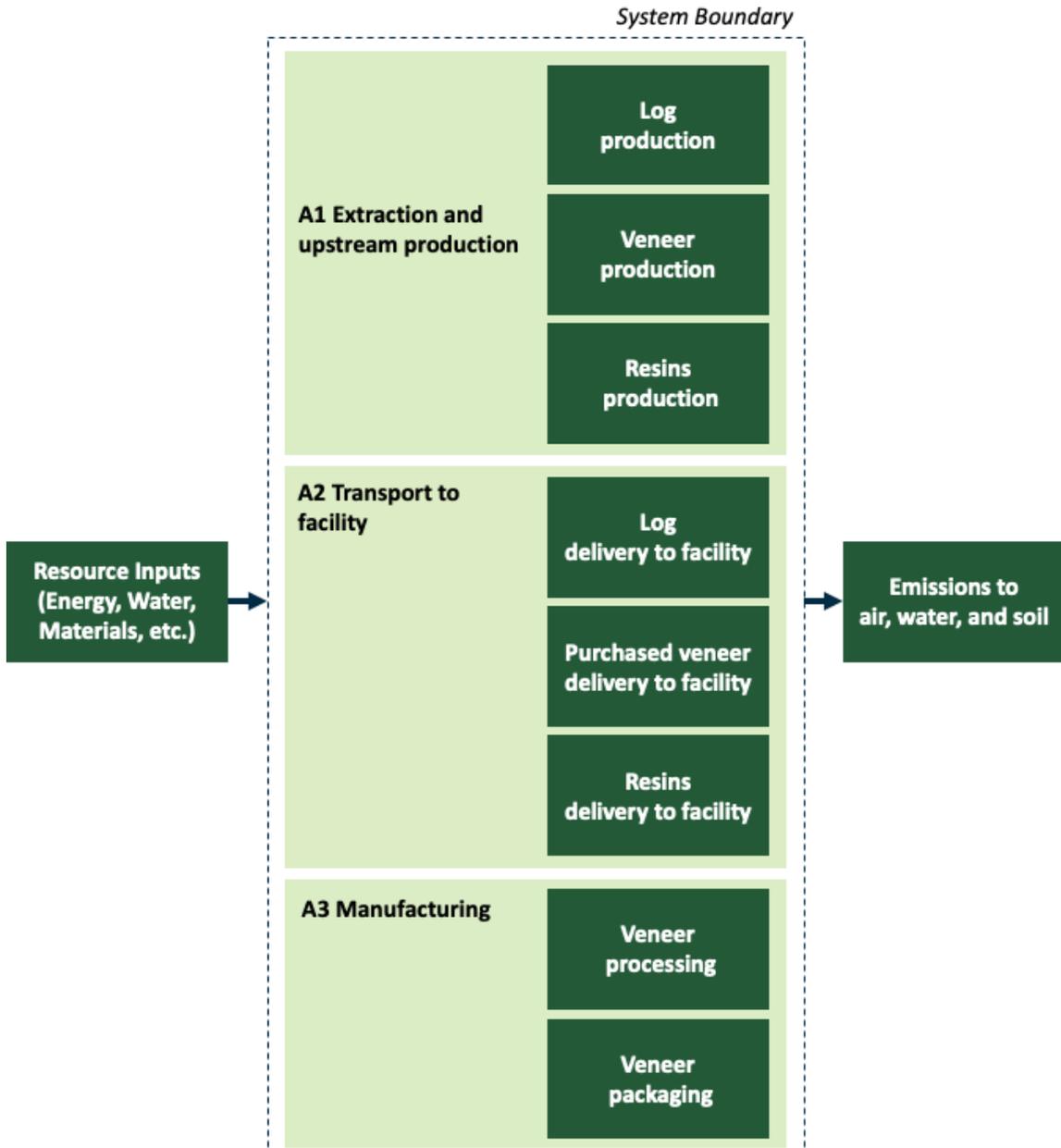


Figure 2: Cradle-to-Gate Plywood Product System

Declared Unit

The declared unit for plywood is “(1 m³) of softwood plywood produced in British Columbia”. The product properties associated with the declared unit are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Product Properties of 1 m³ of Plywood

Product Properties m ³ of	Unit	Value
Softwood plywood mass	odkg (oven-dried kilograms)	428.62
Softwood plywood mass	kg	462.91 (@ 8% MC)
Resin mass	kg	14.48
Total mass	kg	477.33

Packaging

Packaging materials represent less than one percent of the mass of the product. Common packaging materials include lumber wrap, steel and plastic strapping, cardboard protectors, and replacement sticks. The packaging is allocated 100% to the primary product.

Allocation Methods

Allocation is the method used to partition the environmental load of a process when several products or functions share the same process. In accordance with UL PCR Part B 2020 [12], “mass” was selected as the parameter for allocation of the total inputs/outputs of the production system.

Cut-off Criteria

ISO 14040: 2006 defines the “cut-off” criteria, as a specification of the amount of material or energy flow or the level of environmental significance associated with unit processes or product system to be excluded from a study. The cut-off criteria for input flows to be considered within the system boundary were defined as follows:

- a. Mass – if a flow is less than 1% of the cumulative mass of the model flows it may be excluded, providing its environmental relevance is minor.
- b. Energy – if a flow is less than 1% of the cumulative energy of the system model it may be excluded, providing its environmental relevance is minor.
- c. Environmental relevance – if a flow meets the above two criteria, but is determined (via secondary data analysis) to contribute 2% or more to any product life cycle impact category (see below), it is included within the system boundary.

No material or energy input or output was knowingly excluded from the system boundary.

Data Sources

Primary and secondary data sources, as well as the respective data quality assessment are documented in the underlying LCA project report [2] in accordance with UL PCR Part B 2020 [12]. This EPD estimates the impacts of forest management by the use of average data for Canadian log production. Third-party verified ISO 14040/44 secondary LCI data sets contribute more than 67% of total impact to any of the required impact categories identified by the applicable PCR.

Treatment of Biogenic Carbon and Sustainable Forest Management Certification

UL PCR Part B 2020 [12] adopts the accounting of biogenic carbon from ISO 21930. As per UL PCR Part B 2020 [12], Canadian forests are assumed have neutral forest carbon stocks. The biogenic carbon dioxide emissions during the product life cycle (i.e. combustion of biomass fuel during kiln-drying the lumber feedstock) are thus considered but do not contribute to the overall global warming potential.

No long-term biogenic carbon storage is considered in this cradle-to-gate LCA as the use phase and end-of-life processes are outside the system boundary. Instead, the biogenic carbon stored in the product are included in this LCA so that they may be used to calculate the complete cradle-to-grave biogenic carbon balance in future LCA studies. The carbon sequestered in 1 m³ plywood at the manufacturing gate is:

428.6 oven dry kg = 214.3 kg C (50% carbon content) = 785.7 kg CO₂ eq. (44/12 molecular weight ratio)

ENVIRONMENTAL PARAMETERS DERIVED FROM LCA

The impact categories and characterization factors (CF) for the LCIA were derived from the U.S. EPA Tool for the Reduction and Assessment of Chemical and Other Environmental Impacts -TRACI 2.1 [6]. SimaPro v8.5 [10] was used to accumulate the LCI data and to calculate the LCIA results.

The total primary energy consumption is tabulated from the LCI results based on the Cumulative Energy Demand Method published byecoinvent [15]. Lower heating value of primary energy carriers is used to calculate the primary energy values reported in the study. Other inventory parameters concerning material use, waste, water use, and biogenic carbon were drawn from the LCI results. ACLCA's Guidance to Calculating non-LCIA Inventory Metrics was followed in accordance with ISO 21930:2017 [1].

Table 2 shows the results for the *cradle-to-gate* (A1-A3) Plywood product system. The cradle-to-gate results align with the North American industry average EPD for Plywood developed by the American Wood Council and Canadian Wood Council in 2020. In the cradle-to-gate results, the biogenic carbon stored in the primary product is conservatively accounted as an emission in Module A3 as the end-of-life modules (C1-C4) are not considered.

Table 2: Results Summary for 1 m³ Plywood Cradle-to-Gate Scope

Core Mandatory Impact Indicator	Impact Categories	Units	Total	A1 – Extraction and Upstream Production	A2 – Transport to Facility	A3 - Manufacturing
Global warming potential – TRACI 2.1	GWPTRACI	kg CO ₂ e	131.68	88.16	12.78	30.75
Global warming potential – w/ biogenic CO ₂	GWPBIO	kg CO ₂ e	131.68	-680.99	12.78	799.90
Depletion potential of the stratospheric ozone layer	ODP	kg CFC11e	2.08E-06	6.92E-07	5.39E-10	1.38E-06
Acidification potential of soil and water sources	AP	kg SO ₂ e	1.34	0.91	0.15	0.28
Eutrophication potential	EP	kg Ne	0.13	0.08	0.01	0.04
Formation potential of tropospheric ozone	SFP	kg O ₃ e	15.27	8.23	3.77	3.26
Abiotic depletion potential (ADP _{fossil}) for fossil resources	ADPf	MJ, NCV	2672.52	2028.99	183.31	460.22
Fossil fuel depletion	FFD	MJ Surplus	378.72	283.01	27.09	68.62
Use of Primary Resources						
Renewable primary energy carrier used as energy	RPRE	MJ, NCV	1205.02	214.72	0.00	990.30
Renewable primary energy carrier used as material	RPRM	MJ, NCV	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Non-renewable primary energy carrier used as energy	NRPRE	MJ, NCV	2901.00	2190.78	194.32	515.90
Non-renewable primary energy carrier used as material	NRPRM	MJ, NCV	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Secondary Material, Secondary Fuel and Recovered Energy						
Secondary material	SM	kg	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Renewable secondary fuel	RSF	MJ, NCV	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Non-renewable secondary fuel	NRSF	MJ, NCV	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Recovered energy	RE	MJ, NCV	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mandatory Inventory Parameters						
Consumption of freshwater resources	FW	m ³	0.33	0.07	0.00	0.25
Indicators Describing Waste						
Hazardous waste disposed	HWD	kg	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Non-hazardous waste disposed	NHWD	kg	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
High-level radioactive waste, conditioned, to final repository	HLRW	m ³	6.60E-09	1.34E-09	0.00E+00	5.26E-09
Intermediate- and low-level radioactive waste, conditioned, to final repository	ILLRW	m ³	6.25E-08	1.27E-08	0.00E+00	4.98E-08
Components for re-use	CRU	kg	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Materials for recycling	MR	kg	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Materials for energy recovery	MER	kg	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Recovered energy exported from the product system	EE	MJ, NCV	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

INTERPRETATION

Based on established LCA practices, contribution analysis was applied for the interpretation phase of this study. Contribution analysis examines the contribution of information modules, groups of processes or specific substances to the total results [2]. In this section, the contribution analysis was focused on the contributing information modules and the examination of the major contributing flows for each of the selected impact category indicators.

Note that third party verified ISO 14040/44 secondary LCI data sets contribute more than 67% of total global warming potential, acidification potential, abiotic resource depletion (fossil), and fossil fuel depletion.

Table 3: Contribution Analysis for Core Mandatory Impact Indicators

Core Mandatory Impact Indicator		Total	A1 – Extraction and Upstream Production	A2 – Transport to Facility	A3 - Manufacturing
Global warming potential – TRACI 2.1	GWPTRACI	100%	67%	10%	23%
Depletion potential of the stratospheric ozone layer	ODP	100%	33%	0%	67%
Acidification potential of soil and water	AP	100%	68%	11%	21%
Eutrophication potential	EP	100%	61%	7%	33%
Formation potential of tropospheric ozone	SFP	100%	54%	25%	21%
Abiotic depletion potential (ADP _{fossil}) for fossil resources	ADPf	100%	76%	7%	17%
Fossil fuel depletion	FFD	100%	75%	7%	18%

LIMITATIONS

Comparability

Environmental declarations from different programs (ISO 14025) may not be comparable. Comparison of the environmental performance using EPD information shall consider all relevant information modules over the full life cycle of the products within the building.

This PCR allows EPD comparability only when the same functional requirements between products are ensured and the requirements of ISO 21930:2017 §5.5 are met. In addition, to be compared EPDs must comply with the same core and sub-category PCRs (Part A and B) and include all relevant information modules. It should be noted that different LCA software and background LCI datasets may lead to differences results for upstream or downstream of the life cycle stages declared.

Forest Management

While this EPD does not address landscape level forest management impacts, potential impacts may be addressed through requirements put forth in regional regulatory frameworks, ASTM 7612-15 guidance, and ISO 21930 Section 7.2.11 including notes therein. These documents, combined with this EPD, may provide a more complete picture of environmental and social performance of wood products.

While this EPD does not address all forest management activities that influence forest carbon, wildlife habitat, endangered species, and soil and water quality, these potential impacts may be addressed through other mechanisms such as regulatory frameworks and/or forest certification systems which, combined with this EPD, will give a more complete picture of environmental and social performance of wood products.

Scope of the EPD

EPDs can complement but cannot replace tools and certifications that are designed to address environmental impacts and/or set performance thresholds – e.g. Type 1 certifications, health assessments and declarations, etc.

Data

National or regional life cycle averaged data for raw material extraction does not distinguish between extraction practices at specific sites and can greatly affect the resulting impacts.

Accuracy of Results

EPDs regularly rely on estimations of impacts; the level of accuracy in estimation of effect differs for any particular product line and reported impact when averaging data.

Toxic Substances

No substances of very high concern are present or emitted in the product system considered in this EPD.

REFERENCES

1. American Center for Life Cycle Assessment (2019) ACLCA Guidance to Calculating Non-LCIA Inventory Metrics in Accordance with ISO 21930:2017
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11. UL Environment (2018) Product Category Rule (PCR) Guidance for Building-Related Products and Services, Part A Life Cycle Assessment Calculation Rules and Report Requirements V 3.2.
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14. Wernet, G., Bauer, C., Steubing, B., Reinhard, J., Moreno-Ruiz, E., & Weidema, B. (2016) The ecoinvent database version 3 (part I): overview and methodology. The International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment, 21, 1218–1230.