Eco-Platform, EPDs and natureplus
EU developments commented by Peter Thoelen, VIBE, natureplus board member

Since years now, the EU Commissions’ DG Enterprise has been working on a harmonized method to calculate the environmental impacts of building products. This work has been done in the CEN Technical Committee (TC) 350 and is not finished. CEN TC 350 has been working close together with the building products industry, being the first stakeholders. In the mean time, product data sheets with calculated information on certain environmental impact categories have commonly become known as Environmental Product Declarations (EPD’s). The data of these EPD’s cannot be used to compare building products between each other, nor to rank them. They only allow to compare on impact category level (e.g. the contribution of each material to climate change or land use transformation), and primarily are to be used in calculations on building level. They are called ‘type III declarations’, and have a completely different goal than ‘type I labels’ like natureplus, which set strict limit values, e.g. on the maximum impact per impact category. (contin. p. C)

VIBE op Batibouw 2014
Batibouw building fair in Brussels (20/02 – 02/03 2014)
Na een paar jaar van afwezigheid op Batibouw, zal VIBE opnieuw deelnemen aan de grootste bouwbrouwer van België. Onlangs vroeg FISA (de organisator van Batibouw) VIBE expliciet om hierop deel te nemen in 2014, dit keer in Hal 10. We beslisten om hierop in te gaan onder bepaalde voorwaarden.
VIBE, Cluster Eco-construction & Co
De stand die we dit jaar bemannen is uniek. Het gaat om een L-vormige stand van 147 m2, een behoorlijke oppervlakte, met vier zijden aan de gangen. Dit jaar realiseerden we ook opnieuw een intensieve samenwerking met de Waalse partners van Cluster Eco-construction. De stand bevat informatieve panelen van leden van de
(continued p. B)
ASBP
The Alliance for Sustainable Building Products

natureplus partner organisation ASBP

Many activities to bring up Sustainable Building in the UK

Building fairs
UK natureplus-partner ASBP will participate at the circular economy building fair ‘Resource’, 4th and 5th March in London. This fair is co-located with the major building fair Ecobuild.

www.resource-event.co.uk

Inverness, 18th March 9:00-17:00: Sustainable Building Materials, Scotland.

Conferences

The day before, they also had a meeting with DEFRA (Dept. of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), where they explained how the Austrian government was using natureplus performance criteria to embed sustainability within government procurement. They also discussed ASBP’s call for a nationally described standard for building materials.

Visit Vlas & hennep met Grow2Build
Bezoek ook de demo-caravan (type ‘streamer’) met informatie en een model uit het project Grow2Build. De caravan bevat verschillende bouw- en afwerkingsmaterialen uit vlas en hennep en toont u wat u daar zelf mee kan doen.

natureplus

PEF-Pilots required by EU
VIBE and IBO collaborate for ‘insulation materials’

During 2013, The EU Commissions’ DG Environment called for experimental ‘PEF pilots’ (Product Environmental Footprint). This is another LCA-based way of presenting environmental impacts for products. Some building products are also subject to pilot PEF studies: paints, plastic piping and insulation materials. VIBE and 3 other CAP’EM partners won the bid for insulation materials. We invited the IBO colleagues to assist in a Technical Secretariat for the PEF pilot ‘insulation materials’. In the Technical Secretariat, the methodological discussions will take place. This PEF will be harsh, because we have to align the CEN method with the PEF guidelines, which differ considerably. The PEF will officially start in June 2014. Extensive stakeholder consultation is programmed.

Summary Batibouw

natureplus and natureplus-labeled products will be displayed at the Batibouw building fair in Brussels (20/02 – 02/03 2014). Natureplus representative will have a large stand, together with the Walloon partners of Cluster Ecoconstruction. The stand will also include the presentation of the Interreg IVB-project ‘Grow2Build’, which deals with building materials from flax and hemp.

www.batibouw.be

The permanent natureplus presentation at Umweltarena Spreitenbach (CH). Photo: np

The new office of natureplus Switzerland in Zurich (CH). Photo: np

VIBE opnieuw aanwezig op BATIBOUW

Continued from Page A

Cluster en bouwpartners van VIBE. U kan op deze stand terecht voor model-opbouwen van een muurtje uit leemstenen, doorsnedes van dik geïsoleerde muren en daken, een ‘luchtdichtingsdoos’, permanente demonstraties van warmtedoorslag doorheen, en geluidsisolatie van een aantal isolatiematerialen, schetsen van bio-ecologische opbouwen enz.

VIBE and IBO collaborate for ‘insulation materials’

http://apres.lboro.ac.uk/conf05.php

On the 5th of February ASBP started a series of events focusing on how to create ‘Healthy Buildings’. How can we reduce the risks of toxicity and moisture both in new build and retrofit buildings? How to support the market for healthy building products? Leading experts like Marcella Ucci and Derric Crump from UK Internal Environment Group (UKIEG) and Lynne Sullivan, sustainableBydesign, spoke at the London evening event ‘Healthy Buildings, Healthy People’.

http://apres.lboro.ac.uk/conf05.php


The day before, they also had a meeting with DEFRA (Dept. of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), where they explained how the Austrian government was using natureplus performance criteria to embed sustainability within government procurement. They also discussed ASBP’s call for a nationally described standard for building materials.
ECO-Platform, EPD‘s and natureplus

Continued from Page A

The first problem: each country uses different methods, system boundaries, cut-off rules, impact categories... So the EPD results from different countries are not at all comparable: a German EPD doesn’t look at all like a French EPD, for instance. And what is worse: the results and numbers differ... No wonder that the EU is trying to harmonize the EPD formats and methods. Since the official EU policy procedures to harmonize takes years of time, EPD program operators in different countries and the most important building material producers’ federations joined forces in the ECO Platform. On 24/09/2013 ECO Platform organized a ‘launch event’ in Brussels, aimed at explaining ECO Platforms first goals, intentions and structure to a specialized audience. Also natureplus was represented by its partner VIBE. The Board of ECO Platform is composed of representatives of Construction Products Europe (CPE) and 12 national EPD program operators. CPE is supporting ECO Platform with logistics and administrative tasks. ECO-Platform wants to operate in a ‘lean structure’. All the content work is done voluntary by specialists in working groups.

Objectives of the ECO Platform

As they put it themselves: ‘The objective of the ECO Platform is to support the provision of unbiased credible and scientifically sound information in form of a type III Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) for construction products in form of a European-wide accepted Core-EPD. The

This objective should be achieved by the following steps:

• develop a common EPD Core System for construction products based on ISO 14025
• develop consistent content of EPD according to EN 15804
• develop a common European EPD format based on the standards
• develop a common quality management and verification procedures...

Working Groups are formed by all ECO Platform members with a specific expertise.

ECO Platform and natureplus

As type I label, natureplus cannot become a member of ECO Platform, but can however become ‘stakeholder’. The natureplus Board has not yet decided about that. But VIBE (as representative of LCA practitioner CAP’EM) and IBO, also a core natureplus-partner and LCA practitioner, are following the developments within ECO-Platform and actively take part in the methodological discussions. If the ECO Platform core EPD is sufficient and useful for us, we can adapt our criteria accordingly. A lot of work is still to be done, so ECO Platform has started with the ‘mutual acceptance’ of all EPD schemes. Since all these schemes differ, complete alignment of the EPD schemes will not be for tomorrow.
Messe "Bauen & Energie" in Wien
Unser Partner IBO präsentiert natureplus und veranstaltet den Kongress "DICHT"


Auch auf der letztjährigen „Bauen & Energie“ informierte IBO an seinem Stand die Besucher über nachhaltige Bauprodukte und die natureplus-Zertifizierung. photo: natureplus

VIBE: Eco office building
Brussels: Office building & demonstration centre planned

Together with other NGO and small sustainable business partners, VIBE has been searching for a new joint office building. Taken into account the partners (a.o.: VIBE and Passiehuis Platform), the ambitions reach top levels: we will have a bio-ecological passive office building. The architectural teams who competed in a contest previous summer, are selected according to their ability to meet our high standards. At 19th February, the 3 remaining bureaus will present their definitive proposals for a jury, consisting of VIBE, Passiehuisplatform, the city of Antwerp and investor Ethical Property.

It goes without saying that VIBE is demanding natureplus labeled building products wherever they are available. This will also be a natureplus demo building! The official opening of the building is foreseen at the end of 2015 or at the beginning of 2016.