



American hardwood industry aims to become the first provider of environmental life cycle data with every consignment

The American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) has initiated a project with PE International to develop a system to allow U.S. hardwood exporters to provide a comprehensive American Hardwood Environmental Profile (AHEP) with every individual consignment of product delivered to any market in the world.

Each AHEP will combine output from the AHEC/PE Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) project underway for the last 2 years, with information derived from other credible data sources to demonstrate the legality and sustainability of U.S. hardwood lumber and veneer delivered into export markets. These data sources include:

- The U.S. Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program, a Federal Government program which regularly monitors the condition of the nation's forests.
- The independent peer-reviewed "Assessment of Lawful Harvesting and Sustainability of U.S. Hardwood Exports" commissioned by AHEC from Seneca Creek Associates LLC. The study demonstrates a negligible risk of any U.S. hardwood being derived from illegal logging or other controversial forest sources.
- The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Risk Register, a free source of information on the risk of sourcing controversial timber throughout the world covering more than 150 countries.

The structure and content of the AHEPs will align to the requirements of the EU Timber Regulation and closely follow the European Commission's informal "Guidance Document for the EU Timber Regulation" issued in February 2013. The AHEP will provide, for every consignment, access to information on the name of the U.S. supplier, product description, quantity of wood, commercial and scientific species name, place of harvest, and documents demonstrating negligible risk of illegal harvest.

In addition, the AHEP will provide access to information on the sustainability of the U.S. hardwood species contained in the consignment, together with quantitative data on the environmental impacts associated with delivering each specific consignment to an individual customer.

The data will cover all the environmental impact categories required by manufacturers to prepare formal Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) in line with the EN 15804 standard for environmental assessment of construction materials in the EU (such as Global Warming Potential, Acidification potential, and Eutrophication potential).

A key aim of the project is to ensure that credible environmental data specific to individual consignments – adjusted according to key parameters such as kilning efficiency and transport routes and modes – can be delivered quickly and efficiently without significant cost.

In achieving this aim, the AHEP concept builds on PE's "GaBi Envision" software tool developed to easily communicate environmental impacts and integrate LCA into the product design process.



In announcing the project, AHEC's Executive Director Mike Snow said, *"Through this project, U.S. hardwood suppliers will be the first wood suppliers, possibly the first suppliers of any mainstream commercial material, to provide comprehensive environmental impact data with every delivery"*.

Snow emphasises the wider implications: *"The provision of data tailored individually to each consignment would have been unheard of only a few years ago. However, considerable progress has been made in recent years by PE International and other LCA experts, to develop the databases and computer modelling tools needed to make it possible."*

AHEC's European Director David Venables added, *"AHEC has combined this expertise with the U.S. hardwood industry's knowledge of sustainable forestry, wood processing and distribution, together with the work carried out over many years by U.S. agencies to monitor the forest resource. The resulting American Hardwood Environmental Profile will be a unique tool which we believe has great potential to assist EU customers to conform to new regulations and to improve environmental performance in product design and construction"*, says Venables.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors

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The **American Hardwood Export Council** (AHEC) is the leading international trade association for the US hardwood industry, representing the committed exporters among US hardwood companies and all the major US hardwood production trade associations. AHEC concentrates its efforts on providing architects, designers and end-users with technical information on the range of species, products and sources of supply.

Website: www.americanhardwood.org

PE INTERNATIONAL is the international market leader in strategic consultancy, software solutions and extensive services in the field of sustainability. PE regularly prepares Environmental Product Declarations for a wide range of clients and guarantees highest quality due to an internal EPD-quality management and a standardized approach. PE INTERNATIONAL provides decision-making aid for sustainable product development with customized tools based on the leading LCA software GaBi.

Website: www.pe-international.com

The **EU Timber Regulation** (EUTR) requires all operators that first place timber on the EU market to implement a due diligence system (DDS) to minimize the risk of any illegal wood entering their supply chains. The EUTR goes some way to define the content of the DDS, for example it must include risk assessment and mitigation procedures, and "access to information" on the composition and sources of wood products. The latter information includes the species composition of all wood products, country of harvest and "where applicable" more detailed information on "concession of harvest", and "documents or other information indicating compliance of those timber and timber products with the applicable



legislation”. To drive implementation of the DDS, EUTR imposes a prohibition on operators trading products derived from illegally harvested timber within the EU. For more information: <http://www.americanhardwood.org/sustainability/responsible-sourcing/eu-timber-regulation/>

An **Environmental Product Declaration (EPD)** – referred to in ISO standards as a Type III environmental declaration - includes information supplied to both industrial and private consumers. It provides quantified environmental product information for the entire life cycle of a product, issued by a supplier. It is based on independently verified, systematic data and is presented as parameters in a set of categories describing the environmental performance of the product or the service. It is relevant to all products and presents the information in a format that facilitates comparison between products. ISO 14025:2006 establishes the principles and specifies the procedures for developing Type III environmental declaration programmes and Type III environmental declarations. EN 15804 provides core rules for the creation of EPDs for building products and materials in the EU.

Draft American Hardwood Environmental Profile – additional notes

A sample copy of the American Hardwood Environmental Profile (AHEP) is attached. It is divided into 3 pages. The first page provides species specific information required for the EU Timber Regulation and other data on sustainability. The second page summarises in graphic form the LCA data required for formal EPDs. The third page contains notes.

Individual U.S. hardwood companies will be provided access to the “Gabi-Envision” software tool to allow preparation of the profiles necessary to cover wood export consignments. The software may be made accessible on-line or as a desk top version.

Each environmental profile for U.S. sawn hardwood will be specific to an individual species and users will be able to select from any one of 19 U.S. hardwoods which together account for over 95% of all U.S. hardwood production and for which comprehensive LCA data has been compiled during the AHEC/PE project.

In the attached sample AHEP, all data refers to 1 m³. In practice, profiles will show the data for the volume contained in a specific consignment (which might be, for example, 5 m³ of 1" lumber, 15 m³ of 2" lumber, and 10 m³ of 3" lumber). If data is only entered for one thickness of lumber then the Profile will suppress charts for additional thicknesses.

The user has the option of adjusting various other key parameters – such as lumber thickness, kiln efficiency, kiln energy mix, and transport distance and mode from point of extraction through to final delivery in the export market. This will allow environmental profiles to be generated which accurately describe individual consignments.

However in order to ensure that preparation of profiles is not overly burdensome, users will also be given the option to select default values for key parameters. These parameters will be averages calculated for the whole U.S. hardwood industry and for typical supply routes into major export markets.