Wall covering

Criteria
All wall coverings meet at least one of the following criteria:
- if new, are manufactured with at least 40% recycled content;
- if new, have a Cradle to Cradle™ Silver – Platinum certificate; or
- are supplied with an environmental product declaration, written in accordance with ISO 14025 standards.

And:
- where paper-based wallpaper is specified, meet the criteria of D20 Timber.

Recycled content claims must comply with ISO 14021:1999 Type II Self-declared Environmental Claims and state knowledge of IAQ emissions.

Scoping
This measure applies if wallpaper is specified or installed.
The criteria apply to paper, paper backed vinyl, vinyl and woven and non-woven fibre fabric-backed wall coverings.

Assessment
At design stage: check specifications explicitly reference at least one of the above criteria or specify a product that meets the criteria.

At handover stage: collate manufacturers’ data for installed products responding to the criteria or provide a statement of retention/reuse of existing wall coverings.

At occupancy stage: if wallpaper has been changed or added then carry out the handover stage assessment. If this measure was achieved at handover stage and wallpaper has not been changed or added, this measure will be achieved by default.

Rationale
The aim is to reduce the embedded lifetime environmental impacts of materials that can be estimated using life cycle analysis (LCA). LCA takes account of environmental impacts over the lifetime of a product, for example the impact arising from mineral extraction, manufacturing, transport and end-of-life disposal. LCA is the basis of environmental product declarations and environmental preference methods for materials selection.

Guidance
The term ‘recycled content’ includes both post-consumer waste and secondary materials (defined as a waste by-product from a different industry). Processing waste recycled in-house should not be included in the recycled content calculations for the product.
Where recyclable content is identified, a confirmed route for recycling into new products of a similar quality must be identified. The manufacturer must clearly demonstrate and state that the ‘recyclable’ material does not degrade in quality after recycling and can be re-used for a similar application.

Adhesives
A number of European countries have introduced labelling schemes to show the VOC emissions of various products used within the indoor environment:
- **Blue Angel** is a German voluntary environmental product label, whose category RAL-UZ 113 covers adhesives.
- **M1** is a Finnish classification for low emissions.
- **Eurofins** is a label operated by Eurofins, a testing company. The ‘gold’ standard demonstrates compliance with all European VOC labels.
- **EMICODE** is a testing and classification of products based on emissions. The tested products include primers, levelling compounds, insulating underlays, mortars, adhesives, joint sealants and parquet coatings.
- **Émissions dans l’Air Intérieur** is compulsory VOC emission labelling in France only. It covers construction products installed indoors, floor and wall coverings, paints and lacquers. Products are rated from C to A+ ratings.

The UK has a set of standards for testing various construction products. One of the test requirements for these products is to test the formaldehyde emission levels. The standards for testing VOCs in adhesives (EN 13999-1:2007, and BS 3046:1981) also cover other VOCs.

**Calculating and declaring recycled content in construction products**, ‘Rules of Thumb’ guide, WRAP.

Guide to understanding the embodied impacts of construction products, Construction Products Association.

The Cradle to Cradle® program lists all the products that have been certified. ISO 14025:2006
ISO 14021:1999

Useful information about more sustainable types of wall covering can be found in the following publications:


Cranfield Institute of Environment and Health

Indoor Air Quality UK.