Hard flooring

Criteria
All hard floor coverings meet at least one of the following criteria:
• are reused;
• if new, are manufactured with 25% recycled content;
• have an A or A+ rating in BRE’s The Green Guide to Specification for the retail scheme;
• have an A or A+ rating in BRE’s Green Book Live database for the retail scheme;
• if new, have a Cradle to Cradle® Gold or Platinum certificate; or
• are supplied with an environmental product declaration (other than that written for the Green Book Live), written in accordance with ISO 14025 standards.

And:
• if timber, meet the criteria of good practice measure D20 Timber.

Scoping
This measure applies if hard flooring is specified or installed.

Assessment
At design stage: check specifications explicitly reference the 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 hard flooring.
At occupancy stage: if hard flooring has been changed or added then carry out the handover stage assessment. If this measure was achieved at handover stage and hard flooring 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, for example BRE’s The Green Guide to Specification.
Guidance

The elimination of hard floor coverings by simply sealing concrete floors is the most sustainable option. If however floor coverings are required for aesthetic, comfort or acoustic reasons reuse of existing hard floor coverings either from the stripping out of existing floors on site or from the purchase of second-hand floor coverings is the preferred option.

The target for the recycled content of hard flooring is based on the targets set for hard flooring by WRAP and can be met by selecting an increased recycled content version of a range of flooring products including tiles, linoleum, rubber and resin bonded tiles. See Choosing construction products: Guide to the recycled content of mainstream construction products, Reference guide, GB Version 4.1, WRAP, June 2008.

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.

Calculating and declaring recycled content in construction products, ‘Rules of Thumb’ guide, WRAP.
The Green Guide to Specification, BRE.
GreenSpec – a directory of sustainable construction products in the UK.
The Cradle to Cradle™ program lists all the products that have been certified.