



National playbook for implementing whole life carbon assessments

March 2024

National playbook for implementing whole life carbon assessments

Whole life carbon assessments underpin our sector's mission to make near-zero emission and resilient buildings a new normal in all regions by 2030.

Implementing a consistent methodology for these assessments is therefore paramount. RICS has developed a playbook with seven actions for governments to take with support from sectoral stakeholders to implement a robust and sound ecosystem for whole life carbon assessments.

Underpinned by our 2nd edition of the Whole life carbon assessment professional standard, the playbook is designed to assist countries in strengthening their existing WLCA ecosystems or begin crafting one methodically.

The playbook addresses essential components of the ecosystem, such as policy, regulation, methodology, data, targets, and capacity building in a simple architecture. With this playbook, RICS invites the international community to come together to adopt a harmonised whole life carbon assessment methodology.



'We can achieve net zero buildings, but we must move rapidly from principles to practice. The seven recommended actions in this playbook set out what's needed to deliver whole life carbon assessment nationally. The RICS, as the world's leading professional body in the built environment is ready to support governments and businesses to deliver consistent measurement, informing decisions and evaluating progress on decarbonisation.'

Tina Paillet FRICS

CEO and Co-Founder of Circotrade, and RICS President 2024

7 recommended actions

1. Define national WLCA methodology
2. Develop local capacity and knowledge
3. Set decarbonisation pathways for buildings
4. Establish a national data repository and reporting platform
5. Make WLCA mandatory for all buildings
6. Update regulations, building codes and public procurement
7. Track progress and update targets



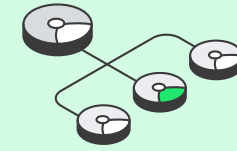
1

Define national WLCA methodology



Government role

- Convene relevant national bodies.
- Create or adopt a national WLCA methodology.
- Ensure inclusion of embodied and operational carbon.
- Run a public consultation.
- Adopt, publish and maintain the agreed methodology.
- Implement on public buildings.



Stakeholder role

- Provide input, and share experience and best practice.
- Contribute technical knowledge.
- Respond to consultation.



Resources

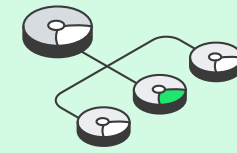
- ➔ RICS' Whole life carbon assessment for the built environment, professional standard, 2nd edition
- ➔ RICS' Global harmonisation framework for whole life carbon assessment
- ➔ International Cost Management Standard, 3rd edition (ICMS Coalition)

2 Develop local capacity and knowledge



Government role

- Establish a national WLCA knowledge hub.
- Increase overall awareness of sustainability and environmental impact.
- Increase public officials' literacy on national WLCA methodology.
- Develop skills and competency framework.



Stakeholder role

- Increase staff literacy.
- Integrate whole-life thinking into working practices.
- Upskill professionals on sustainability.
- Offer certification programme for sustainability and WLCA assessors.



Resources

- ➔ RICS WLC assessor certification programme (2024)
- ➔ RICS' Capacity building playbook

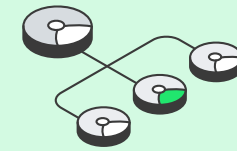
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Set decarbonisation pathways for buildings



Government role

- Establish an expert working group for decarbonisation pathways.
- Consider major building types.
- Identify pathways for embodied and operational carbon.
- Consider new-builds and retrofits.



Stakeholder role

- Share data and expertise, and proactively support pathways.
- Collaborate with and support the expert working group.



Resources

- ➔ RICS' Decarbonising the built environment: policy reform reports

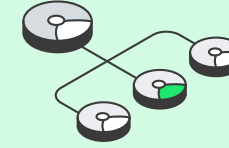
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Establish a national data repository and reporting platform



Government role

- Create a digital platform aligned with the national WLCA methodology.
- Gather project-level WLCA results.
- Promote development of consistent and open environmental product declarations (EPDs).
- Make data accessible to all stakeholders, including small and medium enterprises.



Stakeholder role

- Create EPDs for products and materials.
- Share project data.
- Make data sharing a part of best practice.



Resources

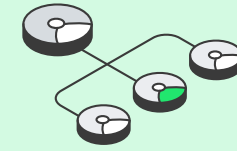
- ➔ Built Environment Carbon Database
- ➔ International Cost Management Standard, 3rd edition (ICMS Coalition)

5 Make WLCA mandatory for all buildings



Government role

- Use (or establish) building codes to mandate WLCAs.
- Develop guidance for embodied carbon and operational energy.
- Mandate declaration of whole life carbon.
- Integrate with relevant climate action policies and programmes.



Stakeholder role

- Create and adopt private sector requirements.
- Start WLCA on projects.
- Use the reporting platform for assessing and submitting data.



Resources

- ➔ RICS' Decarbonising the built environment: policy reform reports

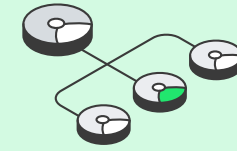
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Update regulations, building codes and public procurement



Government role

- Develop planning policies to favour building reuse and retrofit over new construction.
- Convert decarbonisation pathways into carbon targets.
- Require meeting carbon targets for new-builds and retrofits via building codes.
- Begin with public buildings, then extend to all buildings.
- Include carbon impact criteria in public procurement.
- Encourage use of low-carbon materials and products.



Stakeholder role

- Design buildings for repairability and adaptability.
- Align practice with regulations requirements in advance.
- Promote research and development.
- Increase learning and awareness among professionals.



Resources

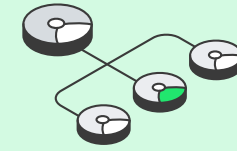
- ➔ RICS' Decarbonising the built environment: policy reform reports

7 Track progress and update targets



Government role

- Use datasets from the reporting platform to track progress.
- Update national carbon budget and resulting building-level targets every three to five years



Stakeholder role

- Be prepared for increasing regulatory requirements.
- Maintain industry benchmarks.
- Publish detailed emissions data.
- Promote exemplary buildings and products.



Resources

- ➔ RICS member case studies on sustainability
- ➔ RICS Awards



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