

Publication of methodology to calculate buildings' total carbon emissions

The ability to calculate the total carbon emitted for a building, known as embodied carbon, across the entire property lifecycle from construction through to demolition, is crucial for carbon accounting. The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) has published such a methodology.



Martin Russell-Croucher, RICS
director of Special Projects and
Sustainability

For building professionals, most notably chartered surveyors, the methodology provides a fuller understanding of the impacts of decisions made at the design and construction stage on the whole life carbon emissions for a building.

Often embodied carbon levels reach up to 70% of the total carbon in very low energy thermal mass buildings, (buildings made up of materials such as brick, concrete, stone and tile), which reduces the operational energy. If embodied carbon was not considered, properties such as these might not become carbon positive for over 40 years, spoiling the savings made during their operation and making them unsustainable in the long term.

Martin Russell-Croucher, RICS director of Special Projects and Sustainability, comments, "Our newly published methodology is an exciting step in the world of carbon accounting; measuring the total carbon emitted for a building across the property lifecycle.

"Embodied carbon is an increasingly significant part of the overall carbon burden in properties and should be considered as part of the design and construction phases of a building.

"By focusing on the carbon-significant items, surveyors, particularly quantity surveyors, will be able to advise on the different design options - looking at carbon as well as the cost - to provide the best, balanced solutions. These will

increasingly become a vital tool in the surveyor's armoury for reducing CO2 emissions in order to combat the effects of climate change."

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