PRESS RELEASE

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European Composites Industry Association launches survey to guide future path of Eco Impact Calculator

The European Composites Industry Association (EuCIA) is launching a survey aimed at guiding the next stage of development of its Eco Impact Calculator for composites. This free online resource is being used by companies to support the business case for the selection of a composite product based on its overall life cycle performance.

The Eco Impact Calculator was launched in July 2016. The number of users of the tool – including designers, manufacturers and end-users of composite products, materials suppliers and researchers – has been steadily increasing and feedback has been extremely positive. The new survey will assist EuCIA in identifying future industry needs and direct its long term development programme for the tool. The survey is open to all composites industry professionals.

EuCIA developed the Eco Impact Calculator as an aid for companies increasingly facing customer requests for detailed information on the environmental impact associated with the production of their composite product or component. The easy to use tool can be employed to quickly calculate the environmental impact of products from cradle to gate, from the raw materials up to the point of sale. Users do not need any in-depth knowledge of life cycle assessment (LCA) techniques and an Eco Report detailing three fundamental environmental indicators can be generated. This data can also be used as input for further life cycle calculations.

EuCIA strongly believes that sustainability is a key driver for the future growth of the composites industry.

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"Communicating the sustainability of composites is a long term strategy for EuCIA and the Eco Impact Calculator is an important component of this," states Roberto Frassine, EuCIA's President. "It is a 'living' tool which must continue to develop as composites technologies advance and business and legislative landscapes evolve. We encourage all interested parties to submit their feedback and opinions so that we can determine the future path for this resource and further increase its value to the composites industry."

Jan Verhaeghe, Business Development Manager at VDL Fibertech Industries, the Netherlands, supports EuCIA's sustainability initiatives and believes the Eco Impact Calculator has a valuable role to play in a broader LCA approach.

"VDL Fibertech is developing ISO shipping containers based on Acrosoma composite sandwich panels," he explains. "Lightweight composite containers offer significant benefits such as lower fuel consumption or higher load capacity over steel alternatives. We intend to employ the Eco Impact Calculator in determining the LCA of our composite container for comparison with the LCA of a steel ISO container, with the objective of demonstrating that composites offer the better material solution."

The survey is available here: www.eucia.eu/p/ecocalculator-survey

The Eco Impact Calculator is available free of charge at ecocalculator.eucia.eu

VDL Fibertech Industries plans to employ EuCIA's Eco Impact Calculator in determining the LCA of its composite container to demonstrate that composites offer a more sustainable solution than steel.

Notes to Editors

Sustainability is becoming an ever more compelling argument in the materials selection process and it is a key driver for the use of composite materials. Composite parts are extremely durable and have a long service life combined with low maintenance requirements, and lightweight composites result in lower energy consumption throughout a product's life. However, the life cycle assessments (LCAs) frequently used to evaluate the environmental impact of a product are complex, time consuming and expensive, often requiring specialised software and consultancy services. The results are also dependent on the LCA system employed and the data used, which can often be out of date. For small composites companies this approach is not affordable, especially if they produce a diverse range of products in low volumes. To address this issue, EuCIA designed the Eco Impact Calculator as a low cost, fast and easy to use tool which enables composites manufacturers to clearly communicate the environmental impact associated with the production of their products.

The Eco Impact Calculator incorporates a pre-defined set of materials and processes, based on data EuCIA has collected over the past three years. Users are also able to enter their own data to generate a more precise result for their individual products and processes. A report in pdf format can be generated that summarises the impact of the product under study. The materials and processes included in the tool are under continuous review to ensure quality and consistency, and new data is regularly added to extend and improve its scope and accuracy.

A video introduction to the Eco Impact Calculator is available on YouTube: https://youtu.be/GHlon_tC9WI

About EuCIA

The European Composites Industry Association (EuCIA), headquartered in Brussels, represents European national composite associations as well as industry-specific sector groups at EU level. With the support of its members EuCIA is promoting a good trading environment in an innovative and growing European composites industry.

The mission, objectives and activities of EuCIA are structured under three key pillars:

We Know – Industrial education and sharing of best practices;

We Show – Being active at EU level and influencing decision-making;

We Grow – Industrial growth and membership expansion across Europe.

More than 10,000 companies and an estimated 150,000 employees are actively involved in composites production across Europe.

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