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METHODS FOR GREEN CONCRETE DESIGN

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Abstract

Concrete is the most widely used construction material in the world and causes a substantial environmental impact, mainly during cement manufacture. Portland cement contributes greenhouse gases both directly through the production of carbon dioxide when calcium carbonate is thermally decomposed, producing lime and carbon dioxide, and also through the use of energy, particularly from the combustion of fossil fuels. The use of superplasticizers and blended cements as well as optimization of particle-size distribution and reduction in water content allows a significant reduction in Portland cement clinker in the concrete.

As the demand for eco-friendly construction spreads over developed countries, it is necessary to increase and quantify the contribution of concrete to the environmental sustainability.

Accordingly, several methods for environmental sustainable assessment are presented and discussed in this paper. A lack of consensus about the most adequate impact criteria to be considered is observed. Simplified indexes combined with public life-cycle inventories require a minimum effort and can be useful as a first evaluation of concrete formulations or OCP replacement by supplementary cementitious materials. However accurate comparisons and new low-energy embodied cements evaluations can only be performed through a detailed review of all the materials and processes involved in the life cycle of the concrete.

1. INTRODUCTION

About 25 billion tons of concrete are produced each year in the world, making concrete the most widely used construction material [1]. Concrete demand and production is expected to increase 2.5 times between 2005 and 2050 [2]. The largest share of this growth will take place in China, India and other developing countries on the Asian continent [3]. Concrete causes a substantial environmental impact, mainly during cement manufacture, because of such huge quantities [4].

Concrete is manufactured from hydraulic cement, aggregates and water. It usually contains a small amount of some chemical admixture and it often contains a mineral admixture replacing some part of the cement. Most of these constituents are themselves manufactured products, byproducts or materials extracted by mining. In order to assess the

The definition of a performance indicator (e.g. compressive strength) allows comparing the efficiency of concretes with different performances which in turn collaborates in the search for an optimum mix design.

Simplified indexes as cement or binder intensity combined with updated life-cycle inventories require a minimum effort and can be useful as a first evaluation of concrete formulations or OCP replacement by supplementary cementitious materials. Nevertheless accurate comparisons and new low-energy embodied cements evaluations can only be performed through a detailed review of all the materials and processes involved in the life cycle of the concrete.

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