

1 *Type of the Paper (Article, Review, Communication, etc.)*

## 2 **Use of steel and polyolefin fibres in the La Canda** 3 **Tunnels: applying MIVES for assessing** 4 **sustainability evaluation**

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14 **Abstract:** Construction involves the use of significant quantities of raw materials and entails high-  
15 energy consumption. For the sake of choosing the most appropriate solution that considers  
16 environmental and sustainable concepts, tools such as the integrated value model for sustainable  
17 assessment (*Modelo Integrado de Valor para una Evaluación Sostenible*, MIVES) used in Spain, plays a  
18 key role in obtaining the best solution. MIVES is a multi-criteria decision-making method based on  
19 the value function concept and the seminars delivered by experts. Such tools, in order to show how  
20 they may work, require application to case studies. In this paper, two concrete slabs manufactured  
21 with differing reinforcement during the construction of the La Canda Tunnels are compared by  
22 means of MIVES. The two concrete slabs were reinforced with a conventional steel-mesh and with  
23 polyolefin fibres. The results showed that from the point of view of sustainability, the use of  
24 polyolefin fibres provided a significant advantage mainly due to the lower maintenance required.

25 **Keywords:** concrete sustainable evaluations, steel-mesh, polyolefin fibres.

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### 27 **1. Introduction**

28 Concrete, as is widely known, is manufactured by merging cement, aggregates, water and, in  
29 some cases, chemical additives. The diversity of cements since developed and combination of such  
30 cements with certain chemical additives with other components have enabled numerous types of  
31 concretes to be manufactured that are suitable for a wide variety of uses. Based on the reduced cost  
32 of the concrete components, and their availability and adaptability, in the last century it became the  
33 most used construction material. Hence, concrete structures for buildings and infrastructure can now  
34 be found across contemporary society. One reason for the success of concrete is that the total amount  
35 of cement consumed, which is mainly used as a raw material for concrete, has not stopped rising  
36 since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, the economic importance of cement consumption  
37 has reached such a point that it has been widely accepted as a parameter linked to the economic  
38 growth countries [world report August 2013]. Nevertheless, the cement production process is one of  
39 the main impacts of humankind in the environment and contributes to global warming with 5-6% of  
40 the total share of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Mehta, P. K. (2009) *Global Concrete Industry Sustainability, Tools*  
41 *for moving forward to cut carbon emissions*, Concrete International, ACI, pp.: 45-48, February).  
42 However, there are ways to soften the impact of infrastructure construction, maintenance and  
43 management on society and the environment alike.

44 One of the most studied options entails incorporating by-products or waste materials as  
45 aggregates. Some authors claim that it is possible to develop a sustainable recycled concrete by  
46 incorporating ceramic waste as a coarse aggregate; they even consider the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint and  
47 consumption of volume of raw materials (1). Others have sought to use waste from thermal power  
48 plants (marble aggregates, marble dust and fly ash) as fillers in concretes for replacing natural  
49 aggregates, consequently reducing the impact on mountains and extending the exploitation period  
50 of quarries (2). Numerous factors, such as the mechanical properties of concrete with recycled  
51 aggregates (3), their long-term properties (4), the optimization of formulation by means of packing  
52 models (5), the effect of such type of aggregates in the fracture properties of concrete (6) or even the  
53 correct methodology for introducing recycled aggregates in the concrete formulation have been  
54 studied (7). Another way to reduce the environmental impact of infrastructure involves trying to  
55 soften the impact of cement production. Some researchers have done so by substituting or reducing  
56 the amount of cement used. There are studies that tried to change cement microstructure by using  
57 nanoparticles (8). Another approach entails use of a by-product such as fly ash in high volumes as a  
58 way to obtain a sustainable product (9). Similarly, waste glass powder has been another partial  
59 replacement of cement considered (10). As can be seen, while this research field is blooming these  
60 approaches have dealt only with the impact of the production of the constituents of concrete and use  
61 of recycled aggregates, ignoring other aspects of the matter that are of importance.

62 Recently, study of sustainability in the developed world has considered not only the economic  
63 point of view but also the environmental (Brundtland Report, 1987). [United Nations (1987): Report of  
64 the World Commission on Environment and Development Our Common Future. UN General  
65 Assembly Resolutions 42/187.]. With such an approach, given that sustainability covers human  
66 activity in all its various forms all associated advantages and disadvantages should be considered  
67 before taking any decision. If applied to civil engineering, it could involve infrastructure which (from  
68 a technical and economic point of view) could be beneficial. However, if its impact on society and the  
69 environment were considered it would be discarded due to an ensuing negative influence.. One of  
70 the most effective ways to achieve sustainable solutions in the building industry is by designing and  
71 building durable infrastructure projects with the goal of obtaining a long service life. Moreover, after  
72 finishing such a service life, infrastructure still need to be demolished and transported to a landfill  
73 site where the debris produces a remarkable impact on the surrounding environment (11). Following  
74 this rationale, the later the demolition of a structure occurs the greater is the degree of sustainability  
75 of the infrastructure. The importance of the social, environmental and economic costs that the  
76 construction phase, maintenance, refurbishment and the eventual demolition and transport to a  
77 landfill site generate during the entire life cycle of the structure can be determined by using  
78 multivariable methods.

79 The main objective of the present work is to apply a method, such as MIVES, which permits  
80 multi-criteria methods to be used in the assessment of sustainability in a case study. In the mentioned  
81 application, the parameters chosen (as well as the life cycle and maintenance cost) play a major role  
82 in the decision-making process and change the optimum alternative from a conventional reinforced  
83 concrete option to another where reinforcement has been substituted by polymeric fibres.

## 84 **2. The integrated value model for sustainable assessment (*Modelo Integrado de Valor para una*** 85 ***Evaluación Sostenible*, MIVES) method**

86 Construction has a significant impact on the environment. It should be highlighted that around  
87 40% of the total energy consumption in European Union corresponds to this sector and civil works  
88 and building construction consume 60% of the raw materials extracted from the lithosphere [12]. The  
89 production, transport and installation of materials such as steel, concrete and glass require large  
90 amounts of energy. Nonetheless, this implies a minimal part of the cost of construction which leads  
91 to new policies being required (12). New solutions and materials could provide environmental  
92 benefits. Tools such as the integrated value model for sustainable assessment (*Modelo Integrado de*  
93 *Valor para una Evaluación Sostenible*, MIVES) are required to assess the sustainability of each  
94 construction alternative. Given that any construction project can be built with several alternatives,

95 comparing such alternatives by means of an index of sustainability that evaluates the whole life cycle  
96 of the structure is of significant interest.

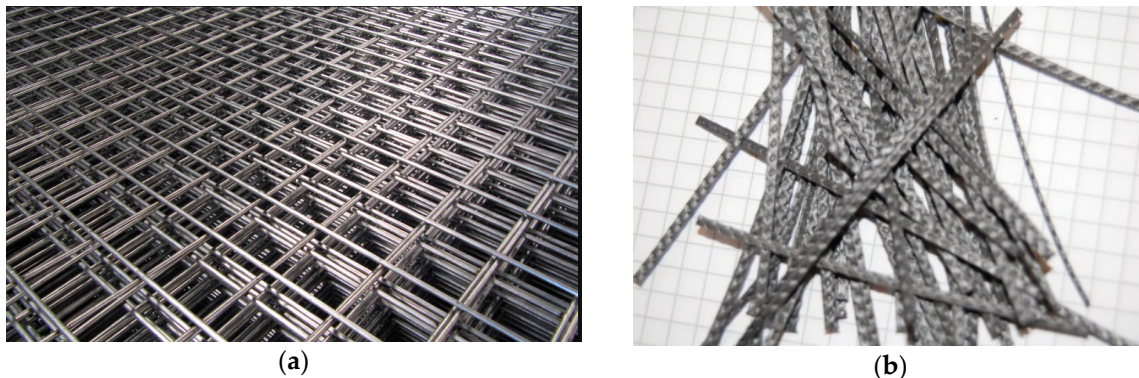
97 MIVES combines use of a discriminatory tree of requirements, the assignation of weights and  
98 use of value functions. This methodology involves defining the three previously mentioned aspects  
99 with several seminars of experts in the field. These seminars should provide accuracy and objectivity  
100 to the definition of the indicators, criteria and requirements. The steps defined in reference (13) could  
101 be summarised in seven:

- 102 1. Define the problem
- 103 2. Produce a basic diagram
- 104 3. Establish the value functions
- 105 4. Define the relative weights
- 106 5. Define alternatives
- 107 6. Evaluate the alternatives
- 108 7. Decide on the optimum alternative

### 109 3. Description of the case study in the La Canda Tunnels

110 During the construction of the La Canda two twin tunnels for the high-speed rail link that  
111 connects Madrid and Galicia, two concrete slabs were built at the same time. Both slabs were  
112 subjected to the same loads during their service life. However, one of them was reinforced with the  
113 conventional steel-mesh reinforcement and the other was reinforced with polyolefin fibres.  
114 Therefore, a substitution of the conventional reinforcing bars was performed. This allowed an  
115 unadulterated comparison of the two solutions in terms of economic, environmental and social  
116 impact as all design and operative conditions were the same. That is to say, it provided an  
117 opportunity to assess sustainability by means of MIVES. Figure 1 shows the visual aspect of the steel-  
118 mesh and the polyolefin fibres. The steel-mesh was made of by B500S steel bars (150 x 150 x 6mm)  
119 and the fibres were commercial fibres called SikaFibre T-48 which are available in the construction  
120 market.

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122 **Figure 1.** Visual aspect of the two different reinforcement: (a) steel-mesh; (b) polyolefin fibres

123 Given that the main differences were based on the reinforcement type, some of the parameters  
124 remained similar. The data related to the reinforced concrete (steel and synthetic fibres), dimensions,  
125 weight, reparation and waste come from the La Canda Tunnels case study were supplied by Sika as  
126 a contractor. Some specifications varied given the variation of the reinforcement and the dimensions  
127 and are shown in Table 1. The synthetic fibres were modelled based on data collected for the  
128 polypropylene fibres produced according to a standard polypropylene fibres producing process. In  
129 this case, the synthetic fibres used were SikaFibre T48 which are produced in Spain. Global Warming  
130 Potential (GWP) measures the potential contribution to climate change, focusing on emissions of  
131 greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), which enhance the heat radiation absorption of the  
132 atmosphere, causing the temperature at the earth's surface to rise and the values supplied can also  
133 be seen in Table 1.

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**Table 1.** Specifications considered for the two systems

	Polyolefin fibre reinforced concrete slab	Steel mesh reinforced concrete slab
Dimension (m)	200 x 50 x 0.20	200 x 50 x 0.20
Concrete type (I3)	HA-25/B/20/IIa	HA-25/B/20/IIa
Reinforcement (kg/m <sup>2</sup> )	0.80	3.11
Global Warming Potential (kg CO <sub>2</sub> eq)	2.39	5.30

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One of the major variations are based on the costs of the slab maintenance. The appearance of both alternatives after three years of service can be seen in Figure 2. In such figure it is easy to perceive that the conventional construction has suffered from a cracking process while the polyolefin fibre reinforced slab show no hints of cracks. The construction and maintenance costs per square-metre can be seen in Table 2. The fibre-reinforced solution involved the same thickness, 0.20m, though the maintenance costs were remarkably lower than those of the steel-reinforced concrete.



(a)



(b)

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**Figure 2.** Visual aspect of the slabs after three years of service: (a) steel mesh reinforced concrete slab; (b) polyolefin fibre reinforced concrete slab.

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**Table 2.** Costs for one square-meter of reinforced concrete

		Polyolefin fibre reinforced concrete slab	Steel mesh reinforced concrete slab
Purchase cost (€/m <sup>2</sup> )	Reinforcement	3.2	3
	Concrete	60	60
Maintenance cost (€/m <sup>2</sup> )	Reinforcement	0	6
	Labour	0	348
	Energy	0	70

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### 149 3. Results of the application of MIVES

150 The use of MIVES for the sustainability assessment in building and civil engineering  
151 applications was carefully described in reference (14). Therefore, the economic, environmental and  
152 social impact have been assumed to be those stated in the reference. The indicators were adapted to  
153 this case and increasing linear value functions were chosen in order to evaluate each criteria. The  
154 weights and the requirements tree, as well as the main criteria and the description of the indicators,  
155 can be seen in Table 3.

156 The maximum, minimum and slope of each criteria were chosen in a seminar given by the  
157 authors. The maximum of cement per square meter was fixed at 150 kg/m<sup>2</sup> and the minimum at 55  
158 kg/m<sup>2</sup>. The aggregates ranged from 240 kg/m<sup>2</sup> and 600 kg/m<sup>2</sup> and the water-to-cement ratio was  
159 considered between 0.3 and 0.8. The data supplied assumed that 10% of the slab was being  
160 reconstructed every year, although it was considered for the method that 3% would be needed for  
161 such a period. Contrary to what Table 2 shows (compiled from the data supplied), in the method it  
162 was considered to be 10% of steel-mesh reinforced concrete slab maintenance-cost in the polyolefin  
163 fibre-reinforced concrete slab.

164 The results of the application of the MIVES method to this case study can be seen in Table 4  
165 which supplies final and partial scores for each of the solutions. The score for the steel-mesh  
166 reinforced slab was 75 in contrast with a final score of 45 in the case of the slab made from polyolefin  
167 fibre-reinforced concrete.  
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Table 3. Requirements tree and weights

REQUIREMENT	(R. weights)	CRITERIA	(C. Weights)	INDICATORS	(I. Weights)		
R1. Economic	50%	C1 Total costs. Direct + Indirect	40%	I1 Total costs including construction time	100%	100%	
		C2 Quality	10%	I2 Non-quality costs	100%	100%	
		C3 Dismantling	10%	I3 Dismantling costs	100%	100%	
		C4 Service life	40%	I4 Cost of service. Maintenance. Energy. Change of use.	80%	100%	
				I5 Resilience. Risk of disaster x cost of reconstruction + lack of use	20%		
			100%				
R2. Environmental	30%	C5 Material consumption at construction time	20%	I6 Cement	25%	100%	
				I7 Aggregates	10%		
				I8 Reinforcement (steel mesh, steel fibres, polyolefin fibres)	15%		
				I9 Water	25%		
				I10 Auxiliary materials	15%		
				I11 Reused materials	10%		
		C5 Material consumption for maintenance	20%	20%	I6 Cement	25%	100%
					I7 Aggregates	10%	
					I8 Reinforcement (steel mesh, steel fibres and polyolefin fibres)	15%	
					I9 Water	25%	
					I10 P Auxiliary Materials	15%	
		C6 Emissions at construction time	20%	20%	I12 Global warming potential	80%	100%
					I13 Total waste	20%	
		C6 Emissions for maintenance	20%	20%	I12 Global warming potential	80%	100%
					I13 Total waste	20%	
		C7 Energy	20%	20%	I14 Embodied energy.	20%	100%
I15 Construction energy.	40%						
I16 Service and maintenance energy.	40%						
			100%				
R3. Social	20%	C8 Third parties	50%	I17 Comfort. Thermal, air and , among others, noise	10%	100%	
				I18 Noise pollution. Construction	15%		
				I19 Particles pollution. Construction	15%		
				I20 Traffic disturbances. Construction	15%		
				I18 Noise pollution. Maintenance	15%		
				I19 Particle pollution. Maintenance	15%		
		C9 Risks	50%	50%	I20 Traffic disturbances. Maintenance	15%	100%
					I21 Health and safety during construction	40%	
					I22 Health and safety during maintenance	40%	
					I23 Occupational safety. Risk of disaster x cost of life disruption	20%	
			100%				

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Table 4. Results of the MIVES application

REQUIREMENT	INDICATORS	Steel Mesh				Polyolefin fibres			
		Score*Rweights	Score*Cweights	Score*Iweights	Score (0-100)	Score*Rweights	Score*Cweights	Score*Iweights	Score (0-100)
R1. Economic	I1 Total costs including construction time	40,03	28,80	72,00	72	22,47	28,67	71,67	72
	I2 Non quality costs		7,20	72,00	72		4,55	45,50	46
	I3 Dismantling costs		8,00	80,00	80		3,00	30,00	30
	I4 Cost of Service. Maintenance. Energy. Change of use.		36,05	76,80	96		8,73	8,48	11
	I5 Resilience. Risk of Disaster x cost of reconstruction + lack of use			13,33	67			13,33	67
R2. Environmental	I6 Cement	13,87	4,65	3,00	12	8,37	3,27	3,00	12
	I7 Aggregates			3,17	32			3,17	32
	I8 Reinforcement (steel mesh, steel fibres, polyolefin fibres)			9,30	62			2,40	16
	I9 Water			4,03	16			4,03	16
	I10 Auxiliary Materials			3,75	25			3,75	25
	I11 Reused Material		0,00	0	0,00		0		
	I6 Cement		4,92	9,22	37		0,98	1,84	7
	I7 Aggregates			4,92	49			0,98	10
	I8 Reinforcement (steel mesh, steel fibres, polyolefin fibres)			1,55	10			0,31	2
	I9 Water			5,76	23			1,15	5
	I10 P Auxiliary Materials			3,13	21			0,63	4
I11 Reused Material	0,00	0	0,00	0					

	I12 Global warming potential		11,13	42,40	53		5,02	19,12	24
	I13 Total waste			13,25	66			5,98	30
	I12 Global warming potential		11,13	42,40	53		5,02	19,12	24
	I13 Total waste			13,25	66			5,98	30
	I14 Embodied Energy.		14,40	20,00	100		13,60	20,00	100
	I15 Construction Energy.			40,00	100			40,00	100
	I16 Service and maintainance energy.			12,00	30			8,00	20
R3. Social	I17 Comfort. Thermal, air, noise, etc	20,00	50,00	10,00	100	13,20	32,00	10,00	100
	I18 Noise pollution. Construction			15,00	100			15,00	100
	I19 Particles pollution. Construction			15,00	100			15,00	100
	I20 Traffic disturbances. Constuction			15,00	100			15,00	100
	I18 Noise pollution. Maintainance			15,00	100			3,00	20
	I19 Particles pollution. Maintainance		15,00	100	3,00		20		
	I20 Traffic disturbances. Maintainance		15,00	100	3,00		20		
	I21 Health and Safety during construction		50,00	40,00	100		34,00	40,00	100
	I22 Health and Safety during maintainance			40,00	100			8,00	20
	I23 Occupant Safety. Risk of Disaster x cost of life disruption			20,00	100			20,00	100
		74			44				



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#### 175 4. Discussion

176 Table 4 shows the partial and final results of each of the indicators. The final score of the  
177 conventional solution for the slab, with steel-mesh reinforced concrete, received a total score of 74  
178 points out of 100. This production manner can be considered as standard and the total score shows  
179 the solution is accurate in most of the terms. Nevertheless, one of the major drawbacks is the need of  
180 continuous maintenance works in order to keep the operational requirements of the structure. This  
181 shows how the conventional decision-making procedures in construction projects lacks the  
182 consideration of future costs of conservation and sustainable exploitation.

183 Regarding the final score of the polyolefin fibre reinforced concrete slab, it showed a significant  
184 improvement. The final score was 44, representing 68% of reduction and considering the three main  
185 requirements. If the table is observed, it can be found that the economic requirement shows the most  
186 considerable reduction of the score with 78% less score. Hence, in all probability this shows that this  
187 study was possible mainly because it was profitable for the contractor. However, it should also be  
188 highlighted that reductions of 45% and 52% of the requirements in environmental and social issues  
189 were achieved and should be considered in future works.

190 Although some further studies might enhance the conclusions, the use of MIVES has been shown  
191 to be a powerful tool in order to take the best decision as a comparative model. It considers the most  
192 relevant parts of the works and supports the final solution. Nonetheless, it is true that further works  
193 could enhance the use of this type of multi-criteria decision-making method based on the value  
194 function concept and the seminars given by experts. That is to say, the development and availability  
195 of enhanced data basis and life-cycle analysis of construction materials and procedures may supply  
196 more accurate results. In addition, the continuous use of MIVES could also supply accepted rules for  
197 the seminars provided by experts. Moreover, this case study shows how the applicability of those  
198 ideas and weights accepted as general in reference (14) and EHE-08 (13) meets those expected with  
199 reliable results.

#### 200 5. Conclusions

201 The use of a multi-criteria decision-making method based on the value function concept and the  
202 seminars provided by experts, such as MIVES, has proved to be a powerful tool in assessing the  
203 sustainability of several construction options. The conventional solution for the slab, with steel-mesh  
204 reinforced concrete, received a total score of 75 points out of 100, showing that one of the major  
205 drawbacks is the need for continuous maintenance works in order to keep the operational  
206 requirements of the structure.

207 The final score of the polyolefin fibre-reinforced concrete slab was 45, representing 63% of  
208 reduction and considering the three main requirements. The economic requirement showed a  
209 significant reduction of the score with 78% less score. The reductions of the requirements in  
210 environmental and social issues were 45% and 52%. The development and availability of enhanced  
211 data basis and life-cycle analysis of construction materials and procedures may supply more accurate  
212 results. In addition, the continuous use of MIVES could also supply accepted rules for the seminars  
213 provided by experts.

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221 **References**

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