

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Context: Building the Single Market for Green Products

Giving people reliable and comparable information about the environmental impacts and credentials of products and organisations will enable them to choose the most resource-efficient and environmentally-friendly products.

Hence as part of the Communication *Building the Single Market for Green Products*¹, the Commission is proposing two EU-wide methods **the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF)** and **the Organisation Environmental Footprint (OEF)** to measure the environmental performance of products and organisations, and encouraging Member States and the private sector to take them up. A three-year testing period will now start to develop Environmental Footprint (EF) product- and sector-specific rules through a multi-stakeholder process based on a number of pilots (henceforward: EF pilot phase).

What is the aim of the pilots?

The Commission is issuing an open call for volunteers to undertake a 1st wave of pilots.

The EF pilot phase aim to test:

- a process for the development of Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCR) and Organisation Environmental Footprint Sector Rules (OEFSR). These are product group and sector-specific rules for calculating Product Environmental Footprints and Organisation Environmental Footprints;
- the development of a "product benchmark" for a given product group or a an "organisation benchmark" for a given sector;
- the application of PEFCRs and OEFSRs to concrete cases;
- different compliance and verification systems, in order to set up such systems in an proportionate, effective and efficient way;
- how to communicate life cycle environmental performance information to various target audiences (e.g. PEF information through business-to-business and business-to-consumer communication tools; OEF information in sustainability reporting) in collaboration with stakeholders.

What will be the governance structure?

For the whole duration of the Environmental Footprint pilot phase a Steering Committee will be set up with the tasks of monitoring the work done in each pilot, approving the technical documents produced, and resolving any potential conflicts.

¹ COM(2013) 196

The Steering Committee will be constituted by the following stakeholders: one representative of each Member State (MS)², one representative of each Technical Secretariat, one representative of environmental NGOs, one representative of consumer NGOs, one representative of European SME associations. The Commission will chair the meetings and will be responsible for all activities related to its organisation and management.

Will there be funding available?

Participation is primarily on a voluntary basis. Funding will not be available to cover the costs of the participation of organisations for the EF pilot phase.

Some technical support could be provided by the Environmental Footprint Technical Helpdesk to the Technical Secretariat, as described in the *Guidance for the implementation of the EU Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) during the Environmental Footprint (EF) Pilot Phase* or the *Guidance for the implementation of the EU Organisation Environmental Footprint (OEF) during the Environmental Footprint (EF) Pilot Phase* (henceforward: Guidance documents). This service includes trainings and e-learning packages.

Furthermore, the Commission expects to support the organisation of face-to-face meetings and provide funding for the test of verification schemes.

Who can apply?

Any organisation or group of organisations (companies, professional bodies, trade unions, NGOs, governmental actors etc.) of all sizes and from any sector can apply. Non-European organisations or governments are equally welcome to propose or participate in the pilot. There is no geographical restriction. The only requirement for companies that would like to lead a pilot is that they shall have operations on the EU market (sale of products, offices, etc.).

In this first wave of pilots, no pilots from the food or drink sector/ product group will be selected. These product groups or sectors will be subject to testing in the 2nd wave of pilots, expected to start in the first half of 2014.

What is the role of applicants?

When you apply, you propose a product group or sector for piloting. You can propose this in two ways:

- as a leader of a pilot (role: Technical Secretariat), responsible for leading the whole development process of a PEFCR or OEFSR or
- as a stakeholder without a leading role.

The role of the Technical Secretariat and other actors is described in detail in the *Guidance for the implementation of the EU Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) during the Environmental Footprint (EF) pilot phase* and the *Guidance for the implementation of the EU*

² The Commission intends to rely on the already existing members of the IPP/SCP Regular Meeting - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ipp/ipp_wg.htm

Organisation Environmental Footprint (OEF) during the Environmental Footprint (EF) pilot phase.

The stakeholders who will decide to lead in a pilot will play a critical role in shaping the process and leading the discussion. However, the transparent approach promoted in the pilot, the control role played by the Steering Committee and the representativeness requirements established in the Guidance rules will ensure that all players will have equal rights to influence the process.

In a limited number of cases, the development of rules will be led by the Commission; in all other cases, industry or other stakeholders will take a leading role.

What are the deadlines?

Applications have to be submitted by 26 July 2013, 17:00 CET.

The Commission will communicate the selected Pilots by 30 September 2013 at the latest.

The pilots will have to be completed by 31 October 2016 at the latest and according to the description provided in the Guidance documents.

Further expected milestones include:

October/November 2013	Start of 1st wave of pilots
April-June 2014 (expected)	Start of testing verification processes
April 2015 (expected)	Start of tests of communication vehicles
31 October 2016 (expected)	Conclusion of the Pilots
Last quarter 2016 – First quarter 2017 (expected)	Start of the evaluation of the Pilots

Will there be only one call for volunteers?

No. A second call for volunteers will be issued for the 2nd wave of pilots. That second call is expected for the second quarter of 2014.

Can I still participate in a pilot if I don't apply to this Call for Volunteers?

In case you don't apply, you cannot participate as a leader of a pilot (role: Technical Secretariat).

However, you can still participate in the process of creating the PEFCRs or OEFSRs as a stakeholder. In order to do so, you should wait until the list of selected pilots will be

communicated on the environmental footprint web pages (<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/index.htm>) and follow the instructions on how to participate.

The participation to each pilot is fully open to all stakeholders, even those not directly interested in the specific product/service/sector developed in a certain pilot.

All the information and documents concerning the different pilots, including draft versions, will be published as available. This will allow all stakeholders, also those not based in Europe, to follow the development of the work and to contribute in the form they will consider most appropriate (participating at the meetings, sending comments or technical papers through the web-commenting tool that will be used for each pilot).

How to respond to this call for volunteers?

- Read the two Guidance documents. They provide detailed information on the process of developing PEFs and OEFs, on testing verification and communication tools, and on the role of different actors throughout the process.
- Complete the PEF and/or OEF Application Form and include a short market analysis.
- In case you apply as a leader (role: Technical Secretariat), please sign the Letter(s) of Commitment and add a scan of this to the application (originals will have to be sent to the Commission in case the pilot proposal is selected). In case you apply as a group of proponents, each member shall sign a Letter of Commitment.
- Send the completed PEF/OEF Application Form, market analysis and the scan of the signed Letter(s) of Commitment to the email address: env-environmental-footprint@ec.europa.eu.

Selection of a limited number of volunteers

Applications received by 26 July 2013, 17:00 CET will be examined by the Commission services. The number of case studies will be selected based on the resources available.

If needed, a selection will be made based on criteria such as the capacity of the proponents to involve a representative percentage of the market, the diversity of product groups and the sectors covered (in terms of type of product or sector, whether products are final or intermediate products, environmental impacts, complexity and dynamics of the value chain, etc.), availability of good quality secondary life cycle data, availability of already existing Product Category Rules (PCR) or similar documents.

Evaluation of the pilots

After the conclusion of the pilots, an evaluation will take place, including an external independent review of the results of the pilots. As part of this evaluation, companies participating might be requested to provide information related to the costs and benefits of their participation.

The evaluation will also look at alternative approaches to Environmental Footprinting. Anyone who develops uses or promotes alternatives to Environmental Footprint will be able to participate in the pilot, can monitor the process on the pilot website³, or can suggest alternative approaches to be subject of the final independent review and compared to the Environmental Footprint methodology adopted by the European Commission.

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/index.htm>