

# Putting the metrics behind sustainability at the European Commission.



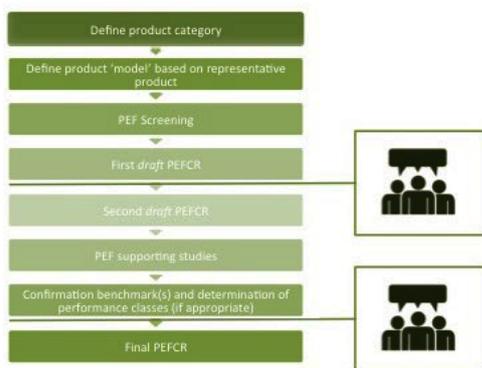
## European Commission

### Review of Supporting Studies for the Environmental Footprint Pilot Phase

#### The Challenge

At the end of 2013, the European Commission started the Environmental Footprint pilot phase. The aim of the pilot phase was to test the development of product environmental footprint category rules (PEFCR) and organisation environmental footprint sector rules (OEFSR), intended to standardise LCA. A secondary goal was to explore solutions for practical challenges such as access to and quality of life cycle data, cost-effective verification methods, and communication.

27 pilot groups volunteered to develop specific PEFCRs/OEFSRs. Once the draft PEFCRs/OEFSRs were available, these needed to be tested with so-called supporting studies for at least three 'real' products or organisations. The supporting studies then needed to be reviewed, in a very short time. Because of the time pressure, the Commission contracted PRé and fellow sustainability consultancy Ecomatters to do the review of 40 supporting studies. The goal: to learn from the development of PEFCRs and OEFSRs and about horizontal issues (cross-cutting technical issues common to multiple pilot groups). These learnings would serve as input for the final guidance in the technical issue papers and for the further development of these and future PEFCRs and OEFSRs.



#### PRé Solution

##### Task 1: Reviewing the supporting studies

We [reviewed 40 supporting studies](#) from 14 pilots, using a review template with 65 specific questions and 1 overall review statement. The specific questions in the review template addressed not only mandatory items from the supporting study template, but also supplementary analyses and specific horizontal issues. From these reviews, we derived conclusions and recommendations about the PEFCRs and horizontal issues.



##### Task 2: Deriving learnings about PEFCRs/OEFSRs

In a process-oriented approach, we focused on what needs to be improved to ensure compliance with the guidance documents. Companies doing the supporting studies did not only set out to follow the rules described in the reference documents, but also to apply alternative approaches they selected. Consequently, the supporting studies served as excellent input for refining the development of PEFCRs/OEFSRs, leading to a summary of key learnings about PEFCRs/OEFSRs and reporting.

##### Task 3: Deriving learnings about horizontal issues

The Commission also used the pilot phase to further elaborate on technical issues not sufficiently described in the PEF and OEF guide. Since the start of the pilot phase, many technical issue papers have been written about horizontal issues. The supporting studies were a great opportunity to test the application of these papers in practice. For that reason, the review of the supporting studies focused on deriving learnings from the following horizontal issues:

- Impact assessment methods
- End-of-life formulas
- Application of the hotspots issue paper
- Application of the paper on data quality requirements
- Benchmarking and classes of performance
- Application of the issue papers on biodiversity, use stage, biogenic carbon, and electricity modelling
- Level of granularity of the PEFCR

#### Business Value

##### Insights to improve the development of PEFCRs and OEFSRs.

To meet the objective of comparability within a product group, the rules for developing PEFCRs and OEFSRs need to be improved on multiple aspects. The [reviews of the supporting studies](#) provided clear recommendations for that.

**Alignment on horizontal issues.** Generally, the reviews provided the Commission with a comprehensive view of what elements have been implemented in the right way and which have not, not properly or not fully. This insight helps to determine which elements need further instructions or simplification.

**Clearer reporting requirements.** A key outcome was that the reporting requirements could be made more explicit and operational. For instance, by using reporting tables and specific examples.



## Creating Business Value Through Sustainability Metrics

### Sustainability Metrics Consulting

Sustainability in business has become a core business concern and a driving factor in creating business value. PRé offers a range of consulting services, provided by a team of experts who will work with you to choose, create and deliver the right metrics for your sustainability goals.

### **PIONEERING** Developing Innovative New Metrics For New Challenges

Societal and stakeholder expectations for implementing sustainability in business are becoming more demanding. Sometimes, off-the-shelf metrics cannot help you answer their questions. PRé has extensive experience in life-cycle-based metrics pioneering: implementing cutting-edge new product metrics and developing completely new, scientifically sound and robust metrics. PRé has been the driving force behind many ground-breaking initiatives like ReCiPe or the Handbook for Product Social Impact Assessment.

### **INTEGRATION** Integrating Sustainability Metrics In Your Business

To create business value from sustainability, your business needs to integrate sustainability metrics across its business functions. You can't improve what you can't measure. PRé has the expertise required to help you choose the right metrics and to integrate sustainability into your day-to-day operations. PRé also supports you in increasing the efficiency of your LCA work and in empowering your LCA practitioners.

### **DELIVERY** Expert LCA Knowledge To Measure Sustainability Performance

LCA has proven to be a robust and science-based way to measure and communicate your sustainability performance. PRé can review your LCA studies, deliver EPDs, footprints and other metrics, and provide you with completely new LCA studies to measure your impact. Our consultants are renowned for their expertise in specific topics, such as impact assessment, uncertainty, normalisation, toxicity, social sustainability and databases. PRé offers training courses and in-house training that build a solid knowledge base to help you conduct LCA studies yourself.

**Get In Touch With PRé**  
We're always happy to discuss your sustainability challenges with you. If you have any questions, feel free to contact our offices in the Netherlands and the US.

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*We look forward to being your partner in putting the metrics behind sustainability.*

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### Those Who Have Gone Before – Market-leading Businesses That Are Creating Value From Sustainability Metrics

PRé has built a worldwide reputation as a leader on environmental and social impact assessment. We work with organisations and institutes such as the European Commission, European Space Agency, Heineken, BASF, Philips, L'Oréal and DSM.



### About PRé

PRé has been a leading voice in sustainability metrics and life cycle thinking, since 1990, pioneering the field of product and supply chain sustainability metrics. We've developed some of the world's most widely recognised and applied environmental impact assessment methods, as well as the world's leading LCA software, SimaPro. From the very first, we have not only focused on developing the science of LCA, but also its application – helping companies create value by using state-of-the-art measuring, monitoring and analysis methodologies to improve their sustainability performance.

Find out more about what we can do for your organisation at [www.pre-sustainability.com](http://www.pre-sustainability.com)

