

December 2013

Target audience: Food SCP RT Steering Committee

Final scoping document on the Governance of the ENVIFOOD Protocol and related technical activities of the RT WG1, WG2 and WG4

1. Introduction and context

Since 2009, the WG 1 of the Food SCP Sustainable Consumption and Production Round Table has developed the ENVIFOOD protocol, the European harmonised methodology to assess the environmental performance of food, drink and feed products based on internationally accepted Life Cycle Analysis standards, such as ISO 14040 & 44. Within this process RT members have provided input to the needed specification at each step of the food chain. The RT has opened the ENVIFOOD Protocol for public consultation and a pilot testing phase during 2013. The Protocol is to be finalised at the end of 2013 once the specialists of the WG1 have integrated the relevant revisions suggested by the consultative and testing processes. The Protocol will then be used as guidance for the application of LCA analysis for food, feed and drink products.

The RT has now to devise the scope for the application of the Protocol in the European and international current context on Life Cycle Assessment and policies on product sustainability.

The upcoming activities of the governance of the protocol will also be related to:

- the tools used to communicate the results of the application of the protocol
- the international promotion of the protocol.

Therefore it is relevant that the RT WG2 (Environmental information tools) and WG4 (International initiatives and non-environmental aspects of sustainability) actively contribute to the future governance of the ENVIFOOD Protocol.

The aim of this paper is to provide a proposal for the future governance and uptake to the RT Steering Committee and Plenary members

2. Governance options

2.1. Short term scenario:

- Relation between the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) Methodology and the ENVIFOOD Protocol

The European Commission issued in April 2013 the Communication on Building the Single Market for Green Products. The Communication was published together with a Recommendation on the use of the so called Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) methodology and Organisational Environmental Footprint (OEF) methods. The PEF method provides guidance on how to evaluate a PEF and how to

develop specific methodological requirements for use in Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCRs).

The development of the PEF method has been based on the existing international standards (ISO 14040 & 44, etc.). Given the participation of the European Commission and the JRC in the development of the ENVIFOOD Protocol, both methodologies share many common points and they can be used jointly. Indeed, the ENVIFOOD Protocol complements the PEF by providing further sectors specific guidelines for the environmental assessment of food, drink and feed products. **Therefore, the PEF methodology should make clear reference to the ENVIFOOD Protocol as the sectorial guidance to use when applying the PEF methodology to food, drink and feed products.**

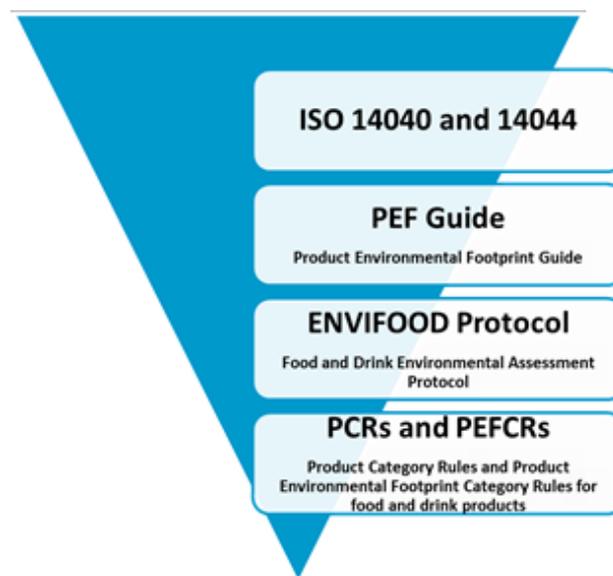


Figure 1. Inputs to the ENVIFOOD Protocol and its potential developments

- The role of the RT and the ENVIFOOD Protocol in the PEF Pilot phase 2 including food, feed and drink products

The European Commission DG Environment launched in May 2013 a 3 year-long pilot test phase with the following objectives:

- Test the development process of PEFCRs and OEFSRs
- Test different approaches for compliance and verification systems (embedded impacts, traceability)
- Test communication vehicles (3-4 vehicles per pilot)

A second PEF pilot test phase open to food, feed and drink products will be launched in the 1st quarter of 2014 in order to benefit from the results of the on-going testing of the ENVIFOOD Protocol. Within this context the RT has a key role to play for the success of the pilot test phase of the PEF, in particular by:

- Participating in the governing bodies ruling the PEF pilot test phase as foreseen by the Guidance on the PEFCR and OEFSR Pilots. Each pilot delegates one representative to the Steering Committee; furthermore, the Food SCP Roundtable has a seat on the Steering Committee already from the beginning of the Pilot phase. As all members of the Steering Committee, the Food SCP Roundtable representative – and later on, the representatives of food, drink and feed related pilots – can rely on the advice of an expert, member of the Technical Advisory Board.
- Contributing to the selection of the pilots to be tested without an active role in the decision-making process itself, whilst respecting the confidentiality commitments taken by the Commission regarding the applications.
- Providing technical advice for the development and evaluation of results, such as the coordination of synergies amongst different PEFCRs.
- Regular reporting back to all RT members regarding the pilot testing, so that non-participating organisations are informed as well

Specific terms for the collaboration between the RT and the European Commission have been laid out in the Proposal for the role of the RT in the governance of the pilot testing of the European Commission Product Environmental Footprint Methodology for Food, Feed and Drink Products. The proposed WG1 and WG2 activities related the developments of the PEF pilot phase in this document are as follows:

- Pilot applications from RT members will be discussed by the RT, in particular regarding technical issues such as category definition and coherence with other pilots
- Participation to the identification, and coordination of different PEFCRs (i.e. definition of scope and boundaries, allocation rules of by-products)
- Development of guiding documents for the development of PEFCRs addressing specially interactions and synergies in the production chain of the product categories under testing (e.g. relations amongst relation amongst feed stuffs, relation between milk and further processed products like yoghurt, etc.)
- Support in the development of PEFCRs, in line with the PEF and the ENVIFOOD Protocol
- Support to the pilot test phase of the communication vehicles in line with the recommendations set by PEF and through the consultation processes within the EF Pilot Phase, taking into account the RT guiding principles and report on environmental communication tools and Commission's principles¹.
- Participation in the evaluation of the results of the pilot test phase regarding PEFCRs, verification and communication and draft recommendations

¹ As laid down in the Communication (COM(2013) 196 final) on Building the Single Market for Green Products section 4.4 Communicating the environmental performance of products and organisations

- Regular reporting back to all RT members regarding the pilot testing, so that non-participating organisations are informed as well

2.2. Medium term scenario: The ENVIFOOD Protocol as a European and International Standard

The conversion of the ENVIFOOD protocol into a European and/or international standard context would represent a relevant option in order to assure the harmonization of the application of the protocol at European Level and its periodical revision based on methodological developments and food chain stakeholders' needs. This process would allow adapting the Protocol to a European standardised format.

As a first step, the adaptation of the Protocol into standard would be launched at European level with the support of the standardization body CEN. Given that the Protocol is already at an advanced stage of development it is estimated that the duration of this work would be less than 3 years. The adoption at international level under ISO standards could be done in parallel or after the CEN standard has been finalised.

In any case, the standardisation process of the ENVIFOOD Protocol shall be done so as to ensure its full alignment with the PEF methodology.

Hence, any actions towards the uptake of the ENVIFOOD Protocol by standardization bodies should therefore wait until the PEF/PEFCR pilot testing for Food, Feed and Drink Products has been finalised, take into account the experience gained through the testing of verification systems in the PEF pilot phase for food and drink products and consider The future policy options for the PEF methodology, including a potential European Commission initiative to transform the PEF, PEFCRs and related guidelines into CEN standards.

After the finalisation of the PEF Pilot Phase the RT WG1 will assess these options and decide on the actions to follow on the standardization process of the ENVIFOOD protocol.

2.3. Parallel activities: Uptake and promotion of the ENVIFOOD Protocol at European and international level

The RT should as an organization promote the uptake of the ENVIFOOD Protocol as the tool to assess environmental performance of food and drink products at both European and international level.

Even though the Protocol is already a reference methodology thanks to the activities of the members of the RT, further efforts should be devoted to the promotion of the Protocol.

Actions to be undertaken to accomplish by the WG1 and WG2 this aim should be:

- Promotion of the Protocol for the uptake by international organizations such as FAO, UNEP, etc
- Representation of the RT at international level whenever it is required by third countries
- Support projects and conferences related to LCA assessment for Food, Feed and Drink Products where the ENVIFOOD Protocol plays a relevant role
- Link the promotion of the Protocol with the promotion of the PEF/OEF

Given that the promotion of the protocol will also require information on the on-going initiatives at international level, the RT Working Group 4 could possibly be reactivated in order to provide with a comprehensive mapping of the projects, conferences, tools, etc. to be taken into account in this context. A work programme containing the activities for the uptake of the protocol should be developed by the WG1 by the 1st quarter of 2014.