

December 2013

Role of the Food Sustainable Consumption and Production Round Table (RT) in the governance of the pilot test of the European Commission Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) Methodology for food, feed and drink products

1. The European Food Sustainable Consumption and Production Round Table

The **European Food Sustainable Consumption and Production Round Table** (RT) is an industry-led initiative co-chaired by the European Commission and food chain partners and supported by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and European Environment Agency. There are 24 member organisations representing the European food supply chain including civil society organisations

The RT's unique structure, with participation of food chain members at European level on an equal footing with the Commission as co-chairing organisation, enables it to take a food chain representative harmonised, life cycle approach and facilitates an open and results-driven dialogue among all players along the food chain.

Since its creation in 2009, the RT has delivered on its objectives according to its initial work programme:

- Publication in 2010 of the ten "Guiding Principles" on the voluntary provision of environmental information along the food chain, including both business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumers (B2C)
- Adoption in 2011 of the Report on "Communicating environmental performance along the food chain", which identifies suitable tools and good practices for communicating the environmental performance of food and drink products and other related environmental information
- Adoption in 2012 of the report on "Continuous Environmental Improvement"
- Release in 2012 and testing in 2013 of the first draft of the ENVIFOOD Protocol, the harmonised framework assessment methodology for the environmental assessment of food and drink products

2. The European Commission Product and Organisation Environmental Footprint methodologies

The European Commission published in April 2013 a Communication on Building the Single Market for Green Products. This Communication was jointly published with a Recommendation on the use of the so called Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) methodology and Organisational Environmental Footprint methodology (OEF).

The Communication introduces two voluntary methods for measuring and a set of principles for communicating the environmental performance of products and organisations. Furthermore, in order to encourage stakeholders to use the methodologies, the Commission proposes a related Recommendation issued together with the Communication.

The PEF methodology provides guidance on how to calculate a PEF and how to develop product category - specific methodological requirements for use in Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCRs).

The OEF Guide provides guidance on how to calculate an OEF, as well as how to create sector-specific methodological requirements for use in Organisation Environmental Footprint Sector Rules (OEFSRs).

3. Pilot test phase of the PEF methodology on food, feed and drink products

The European Commission DG Environment launched in May 2013 a pilot test phase ending in 2016 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)

In the first call for the PEF pilot test, food, feed and drink products are excluded. It is foreseen to include them in a second call in the 2nd 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 for food, feed and drink, in particular by:

- Participating in the governing bodies ruling the PEF pilot test phase
- Contributing to the selection of the pilots to be tested without an active role in the decision-making process itself and respecting the confidentiality commitments taken by the Commission regarding the applications
- Providing technical advice in the development and evaluation of results, such as the coordination of synergies amongst different PEFCRs. (for more details, please, see point 3.2 below)
- Regular reporting back to all RT members regarding the pilot testing, so that non-participating organisations are informed as well

3.1. Common objectives between the PEF pilot test phase and the RT

Following the close alignment of the ENVIFOOD Protocol and the PEF methodology, both based on existing international standards and developed with the involvement of the JRC, the RT is very supportive of the PEF pilot test phase for food, feed and drink products and shares its objectives, including:

- Testing the applicability of the PEF to different food, feed and drink product categories
- Testing the ENVIFOOD Protocol as a sectorial guidance for the application of the PEF methodology for food, feed and drink products
- Defining the PEFCRs for the products tested in line with the PEF and the ENVIFOOD Protocol.
- Testing communication vehicles in line with the recommendations set by the PEF and through the consultation processes within the EF Pilot Phase, taking into account, the RT guiding principles and report on environmental communication tools
- Testing different compliance and verification systems

3.2. Contribution of the RT to the PEF pilot test phase

The contribution of the RT will be framed under the following premises:

- Governance

- The RT is represented in the PEF Pilot phase Steering Committee by the Industry RT Steering Committee Co-chair or by the Secretary of the Steering Committee Industry Co-Chair. In its capacity of representative of the food chain the RT should be able to have a relevant weight in the decision making process in the EF Steering Committee concerning the pilot test phase of the PEF for food, feed and drink products.
- The RT is represented in the Technical Advisory Board to the PEF Pilot Phase Steering Committee by the Industry Co-chair of the WG1 (or by its vice co-chair) or the WG2 Industry Co-chair. The representative to this board might change depending on the content of the topics for discussion by this Board.

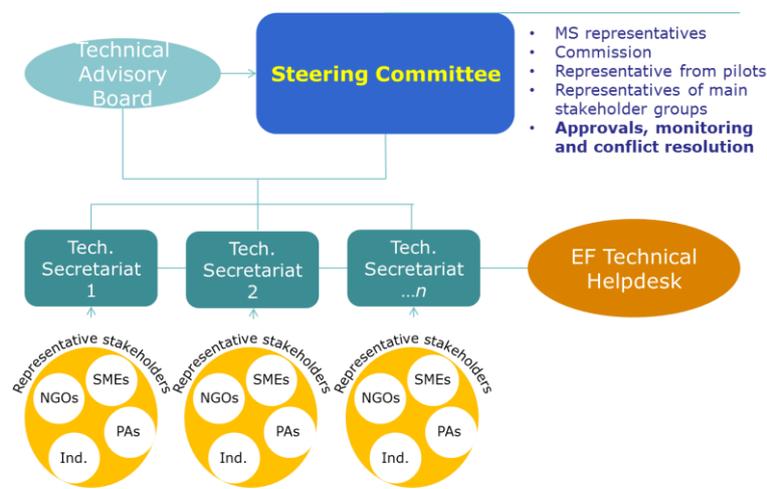


Figure 1 - Scheme of the Governance of the PEF Pilot Test phase of– DG Environment

- Furthermore, according to the Guidance related to the Environmental Footprint pilot phase, each pilot will nominate a representative to the Steering Committee, thus, food, drink and feed related pilots will be represented both in the Steering Committee and the Technical Advisory Board.
- **Technical contribution of the RT to the PEF pilot test phase**
 - Pilots could be led by European sector federations that take part in the RT or the sub-sectors covered by these members. In this way, it can be assured that several selection criteria established by the European Commission will be met (representativeness, interaction with other food chain members, inclusion of SMEs,...). 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.
 - Identification, review and coordination of different PEFCRs (i.e. definition of scope and boundaries, allocation rules of by-products).
 - Representatives of the PEF Pilot Technical Secretariats (see Figure 1) belonging to organisations members of the RTs shall be present in the meetings of the RT WG1 and WG2 in order to ease the coordination of the different Pilots.

- Development of guiding documents for the development of PEFCRs addressing especially interactions and possible synergies in the production chain of the product categories under testing (e.g. relation amongst feed stuffs, relation between milk and further processed products like yoghurt, etc.)
- Support in the development of PEFCRs for the selected pilots.
- Support the pilot test phase of the communication vehicles in line with the RT guiding principles and report on environmental communication tools and Commission’s principles.¹
- Participation in the evaluation of the results of the pilot test phase regarding PEFCRs, verification and communication and draft recommendations
- Regular reporting back to all RT members regarding the pilot testing, so that non-participating organisations are informed as well

3.3. Preliminary programme for the pilot test phase (first steps and follow up)

- January 2014: Official call for participants to the pilot test phase
- January-February 2014:
RT to support members in the application process in order to ensure participation of related food chain federations in each pilot, according to the mapping of the product categories developed in Jan-March 2014
WG1 to:
 - Provide a description and definition of product categories
 - Develop a product category list and mapping of connections between categories
 - Analyse synergies and possible needs of coordination along the food chain for potential pilots
- Mid-March 2014: Deadline for applications
- March-April 2014: RT to contribute to the assessment of the applications received in the call for proposals, without an active role in the decision-making process itself and respecting the confidentiality commitments taken by the Commission regarding the applications. The RT will pay special attention to applications from organisations outside the RT, at European and international level. RT to submit its opinion for the pilot selection to the European Commission’s Selection committee for final decision
- May 2014: Communication of the selected pilots. Set up of different Technical Secretariats (see fig. 1 above) with participation of the RT with special attention to the participation of the food chain sub-sectors involved per pilot previously identified in the call for volunteers
- 1st June: Starting date for all the selected pilots
- July 2014: Contribution of the RT to a workshop organized by the Commission on the coordination of different pilots focusing on:

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

- providing the specific guidance on synergies between PCRs of categories for the pilots selected
- recommendations on the testing of communication vehicles following RT report on communication
- September 2014 - End 2016: Contribution of the RT to workshops/meetings organized by the Commission ,as necessary, with pilots for the technical follow up, questions and answers, etc.
- End 2016: RT to contribute to the analysis of the pilot results

During the pilot test phase process: Regular review of progress, identified challenges and guidance on possible solutions during Technical Advisory Board and PEF/OEF Steering Committee meetings.

4. Testing of the Commission OEF methodology on food, feed and drink products

The pilot test phase of the OEF for food, feed and drink industry will also be launched in 2014. The RT understands that the OEF is specifically related to the performance of individual companies, given that the OEF method applies to all activities associated with the goods and/or services the organisation provides from a supply-chain perspective.

The RT could support in the following manner the OEF pilot test phase once it is launched:

- The RT and its members will promote the call for participants amongst their constituencies
- The RT will contribute to the selection of pilot testers without an active role in the decision-making process itself
- The RT will strive to ensure consistency between the PEF and OEF pilot test phase
- The RT will review the possible links between the PEF and OEF pilot phase test results
- The RT will contribute to the evaluation by the Commission of the results of the OEF once it is finalised