



Working Group 1

Road Map

**for the development and dissemination of the
Harmonised Framework Methodology for the
environmental assessment of food and drink products
[Deliverable 0.5]**

Updated 3 December 2010



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0. Introduction

The Members of the Round Table recognise the need to establish a scientifically reliable, practical and harmonised environmental assessment methodology for food and drink products across Europe – including, as appropriate, product category specifications– to form the basis for voluntary communication of environmental information along the food chain, including consumers.

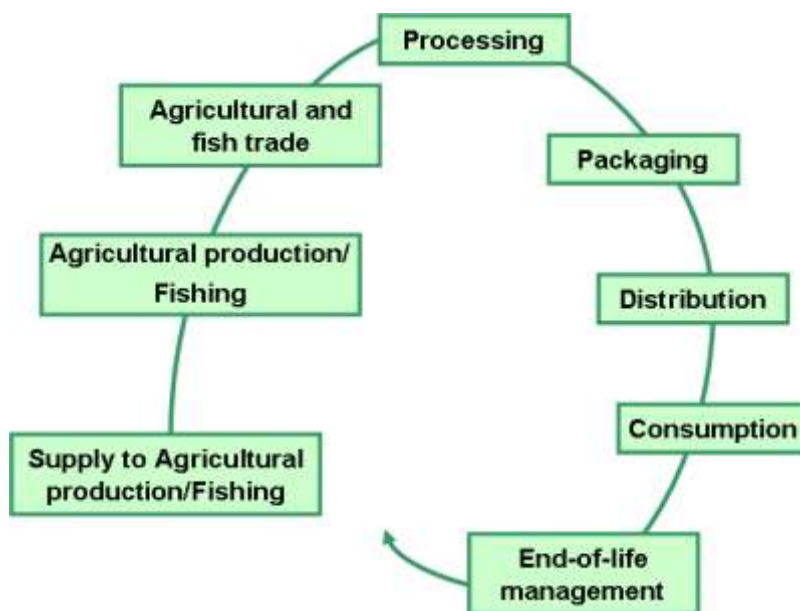


Figure 1. Generic food and drink supply chain¹

An increasing number of operators as well as public authorities have introduced a widening range of different initiatives to inform consumers and other stakeholders about various environmental characteristics of food and drink products and to support continuous improvement in associated environmental performance. These include various labels, statements, product declarations and other means addressing different environmental aspects or impacts of a product.

This ongoing proliferation of different initiatives is highly diverse in terms of the chosen scopes, assessment methodologies and means and tools of communication.

There is at present no commonly applied methodology to assess and communicate environmental information along the food chain, including to consumers, in a practical and reliable way.

This situation has the potential to confuse or even mislead consumers and other stakeholders and to lead to unnecessary burdens for food chain operators. It should be borne in mind, however, that the assessment and communication of the environmental performance of food and drink products must comply with all existing Community rules laid down in the EU Treaty, including those on the free movement of goods², and in secondary EU legislation, such as the rules aimed at protecting consumers against misleading and deceiving information³.

¹ The flow diagram is only intended to illustrate key phases of a generic supply chain that may include/neglect on a case-by-case basis one or some irrelevant/relevant operators of specific supply chains.

² Articles 34 and 35 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

³ Including, inter alia, Directive 2000/13/EC on food labelling, Regulation 767/2009 on the marketing and use of feed, and Directive 2005/29/EC on Unfair Commercial Practices and the recently published European Commission

In this context, the Round Table has established a common set of 10 principles for the assessment and communication of the environmental performance of food and drink products. This document outlines how Working Group 1 of the Round Table will develop a Harmonised Framework Methodology to support the assessment of the environmental performance inline with these principles.

1. General aim of Working Group 1

Working Group 1 (WG1) of the European Food Sustainable Consumption and Production Round Table will develop and disseminate a Harmonised Framework Methodology (HFM) for the environmental assessment of food and drink products.

According to the 2009-2010 WG1 mandate, the HFM development process shall follow the following steps:

- Establishment of the inventory of existing and emerging methodologies at the national, EU and – where relevant – international level
- Assessment of existing/emerging methods against the RT principles and identification of possible shortcomings, gaps and inconsistencies
- Elaboration of a concrete methodological concept to overcome these shortcomings and to arrive at a reliable, complete and EU-wide methodology
- Evaluation of the need for further methodology specifications for individual food and drink product categories.
- Delivery of an interim report on the achieved progress and key recommendations by the end of 2010 with a view to finalising the methodology by the end of 2011.

In conducting the above steps, the WG shall take into consideration the assessment related aspects of the report from WG4 produced in the first half of 2010 concerning initiatives outside the EU and other aspects of sustainability.

The HFM shall be developed according to the Guiding Principles jointly developed by WG1 and WG2 during the first phase of the work of the Round Table⁴. The lead principle and the 10 guiding principles are as follows:

The lead principle:

Environmental information communicated along the food chain, including to consumers, shall be scientifically reliable and consistent, understandable and not misleading, so as to support informed choice.

I. Principles for the voluntary environmental assessment of food and drink products

Principle 1: Identify and analyse the environmental aspects at all life-cycle stages

Principle 2: Assess the significant potential environmental impacts along the life-cycle

Principle 3: Apply recognised scientific methodologies

Principle 4: Periodically review and update the environmental assessment

II. Principles for the voluntary communication of environmental information

Principle 5: Provide information in an easily understandable and comparable way so as to support informed choice

Principle 6: Ensure clarity regarding the scope and meaning of environmental information

guidance on its implementation (SEC(2009) 1666).

⁴ http://www.food-scp.eu/files/Guiding_Principles.pdf

III. Principles for both voluntary environmental assessment and communication

Principle 7: Ensure transparency of information and underlying methodologies and assumptions

Principle 8: Ensure that all food chain actors can apply the assessment methodology and communication tools without disproportionate burden

Principle 9: Support innovation

Principle 10: Safeguard the Single Market and international trade

2. Road map: preliminary goal, scope and key contents

In the framework of the HFM development process, the present road map supports WG1 members in identifying roles and planning, implementing, and monitoring tasks, expected deliverables and deadlines.

Figure 2 presents a general overview of the project key phases. Some phases beyond the 2010-2011 WG1 mandate, whose end has been marked with a dashed line in Figure 2, are part of the road map as they may be necessary in order to fine-tune and validate the HFM after its development phase as well as to support further developments for coherence, quality assurance, and information availability along the supply chain.

A more specific overview of the time sequence related to the project key phases is given in the Gantt diagram (Figure 3). Tasks under the 2010-2011 mandate and possible future steps to be discussed are marked in green and yellow, respectively. Annex 1 provides the detailed project plan in terms of: objectives, tasks, main inputs, expected deliverables, task force compositions, starting dates and deadlines.

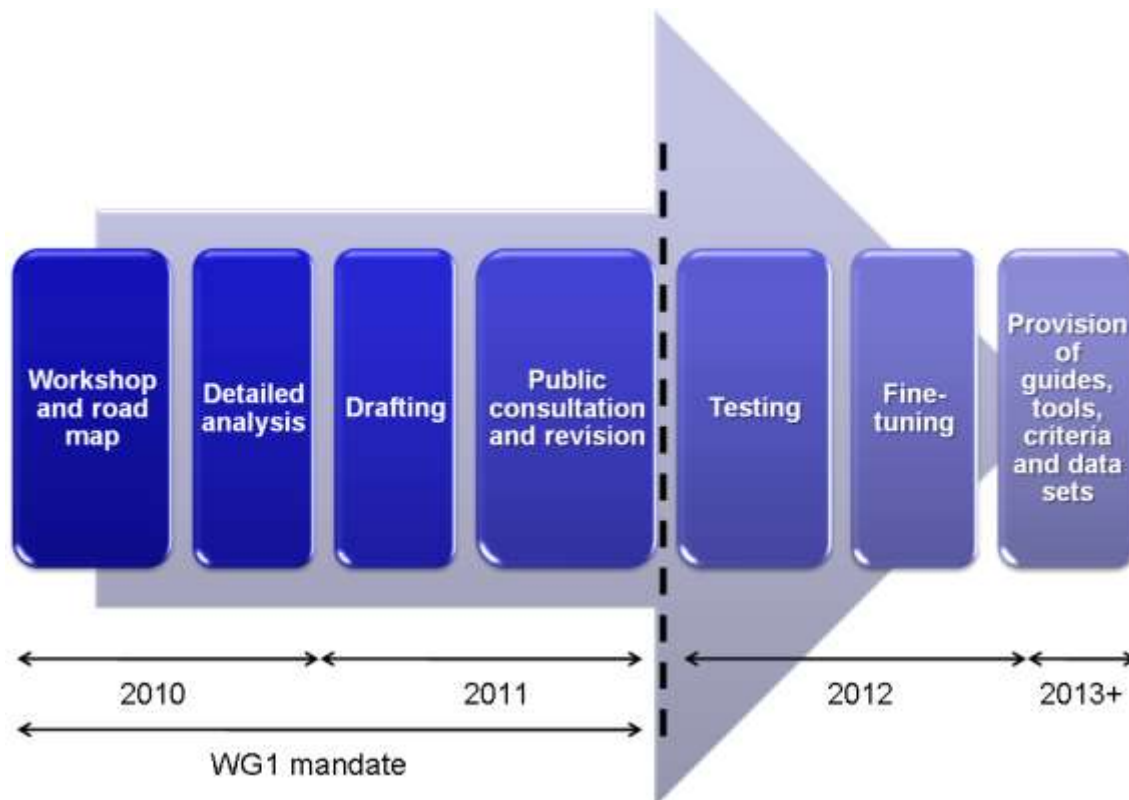


Figure 2. Road map key phases

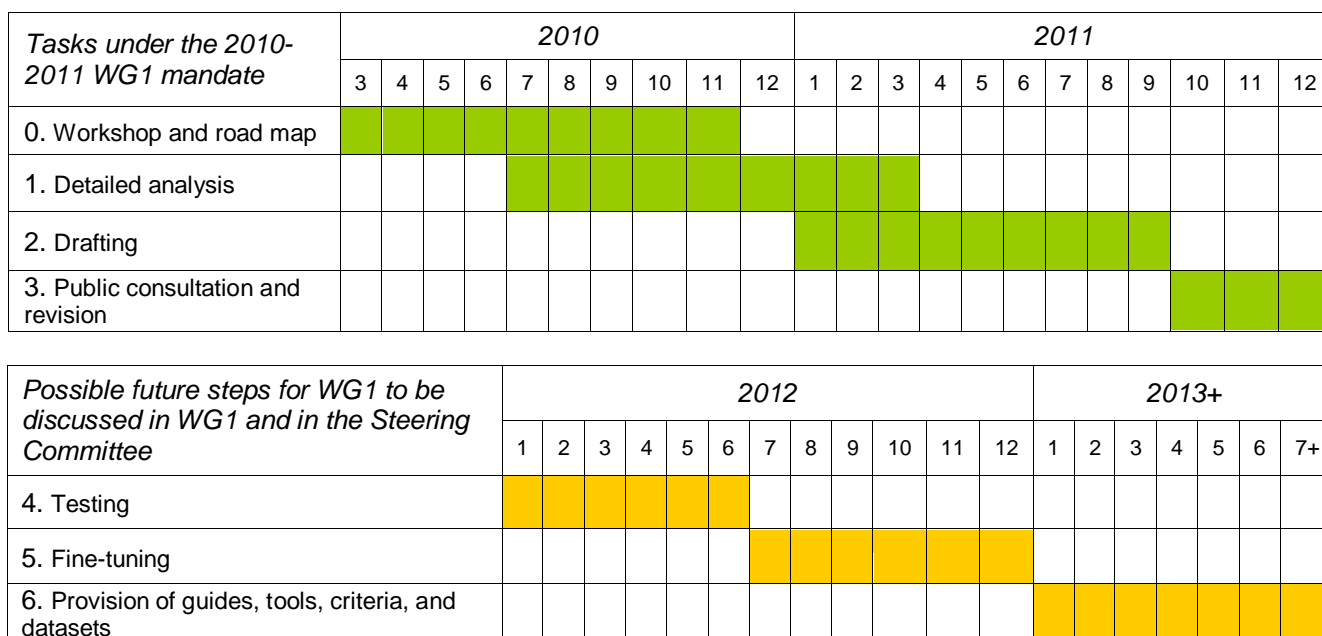


Figure 3. Gantt diagram

2.1 Harmonised Framework Methodology (HFM)

The Harmonised Framework Methodology (HFM) will be a set of common rules to assess the environmental issues associated with food and drink products along their supply chains.

The main purpose of the HFM is the development of a common framework facilitating that environmental assessments of food and drink products are scientifically reliable and consistent in supporting informed choice. In particular, this will support environmental assessments conducted in the context of business-to-business as well as business-to-consumer communication (focus of WG2), and the identification of environmental improvement options (focus of WG3).

The HFM will be:

- Food and drink product focused;
- Voluntary;
- User friendly;
- Scientifically reliable and consistent;
- Life cycle oriented;
- Overarching in terms of issues and environmental instruments involved;
- Capable of assessing the significant potential environmental impacts;
- Built on existing international, European and national standards and guidelines on life cycle-oriented methodologies and food-related legislation⁵;
- Fair in terms of avoiding disproportionate costs or administrative burden on the various food chain operators;
- Baseline in providing environmental information, which is scientifically reliable and consistent, understandable and not misleading, so as to support informed choice;

⁵ For example the ISO 14020 and 14040 series, EU Guidelines on Making and Assessing Environmental Claims, ICC International Code of Environmental Advertising, General programme instructions for Environmental Product Declarations (EPD).

- Updateable;
- Transparent.

2.1.1 Major inputs

As presented in Figure 4, the HFM is envisaged to be developed in accordance with EU legislation and built on the Guiding Principles of the Food SCP Round Table. Other major inputs are expected to be:

- Existing and upcoming international standards on life cycle assessment, environmental labels and declarations, and eco-design (e.g. ISO 14040/14044, ISO/CD 14067, ISO1402X, ISO/TR 14062);
- International Reference Life Cycle Data System (ILCD) Handbook⁶;
- Emerging national standards and technical agreements (e.g. PAS 2050, AFNOR BP X 30-323);
- Critical reviews of data availability and requirements;
- Emerging methodologies⁷;
- Guidelines⁸;
- Critical review of environmental assessment case studies.

2.1.2 Contents

The HFM will provide, inter alia, guidance for:

- Ensuring continuous harmonisation in relation with new standards, technical agreements, and recommendations;
- Identifying product groups and evaluating the need for further product-group specific guidelines;
- methodological considerations;
- information/data quality and availability issues;
- Selecting the most relevant environmental impact categories;
- Avoiding misleading goal and scope definition, using appropriate methods (e.g. attributional vs. consequential assessments), and results interpretation in relation to supporting information/communication tools (WG2) and continuous environmental improvement (WG3);
- Ensuring transparency and confidentiality;
- Producing environmental information that may be linked with other issues for holistic assessments;
- Setting up basic requirements for straightforward environmental assessments;
- Deriving straightforward criteria⁹ and tools¹⁰ from detailed assessments;
- Updating / revising requirements for the HFM and linked documents.

⁶ <http://ct.jrc.ec.europa.eu/pdf-directory/ILCDHandbook.pdf>

⁷ In this context, an “emerging methodology” is a set of rules intended to outline a general/sectorial/sub-sectorial framework for the environmental assessment of food and drink products. A methodology can be contained in: technical standards, legislative acts, and/or sectorial/sub-sectorial guidelines.

⁸ In this context, a “guideline” is meant to be a set of rules to outline a product-specific framework for the environmental assessment of food and drink products (e.g. Product Category Rules (PCR) of Type III Environmental Product Declaration schemes).

⁹ See section 2.1.3 for a definition.

¹⁰ See section 2.1.3 for a definition.

2.1.3 Applications supported

The HFM is expected to support a number of environmental instruments for use in communication and to support the identification of environmental improvement options. In particular, as presented in Figure 4, HFM might be the baseline for developing:

- Tools;
- Criteria;
- Product group/sub-group specific guides;
- Data sets.

“Tools” can be defined in this context as those instruments providing science-based quantification of environmental impacts (e.g. sector/product group specific LCA software, environmental performance calculator).

“Criteria” are meant to be those qualitative requirements for eco-design, green procurement, eco-label (ISO 14024)¹¹, and Product Oriented Management Systems (POEMS).

“Product group/sub-group specific guides” (PSG) are, in this context, sets of specific rules to assess the environmental issues of food and drink product groups. According to the HFM, PSGs might also refer to product sub-groups. PSGs are expected to complement the HFM and be similar even if not limited to Product Category Rules (PCR) (ISO 14025). PSGs might be instrumental for Type III Environmental Declarations and environmental footprint programmes (e.g. Carbon Footprint). Finally, PSGs might also be the baseline for detailed assessments enabling to provide findings for defining environmental indicators and criteria as defined below.

“Data sets” are Life Cycle Inventory data sets as defined in the ILCD Handbook. The availability of quality-ensured data sets is essential for facilitating robustness, coherence and cost-savings in environmental assessments of food and drink products.

It should be noted that, to the extent that is appropriate/feasible, the HFM will provide the basis for methodological coherence and quality assurance. Product group/specific guidelines will only complement this, providing details on specific issues that are necessary for the development of associated tools and criteria.

¹¹ The EU Ecolabel Regulation has recently been revised and the scope has been extended such that the labelling scheme can now, in theory, cover food, drink and feed products, which was not the case in the previous Regulation. However, during the process of revision of the scheme, concerns were raised that setting Ecolabel criteria for such products might not be feasible and also that the use of the Ecolabel on such products might be misleading or misunderstood in relation to other labels and in relation to what the label actually stands for. Of particular concern is potential overlap or conflict with the organic label. It was therefore agreed that before any such products could have criteria developed for them, a study would be carried out to investigate these issues (DG ENV tender No. ENV.C.1/ETU/2010/0025: “EU Ecolabel for food and feed products - feasibility study”).

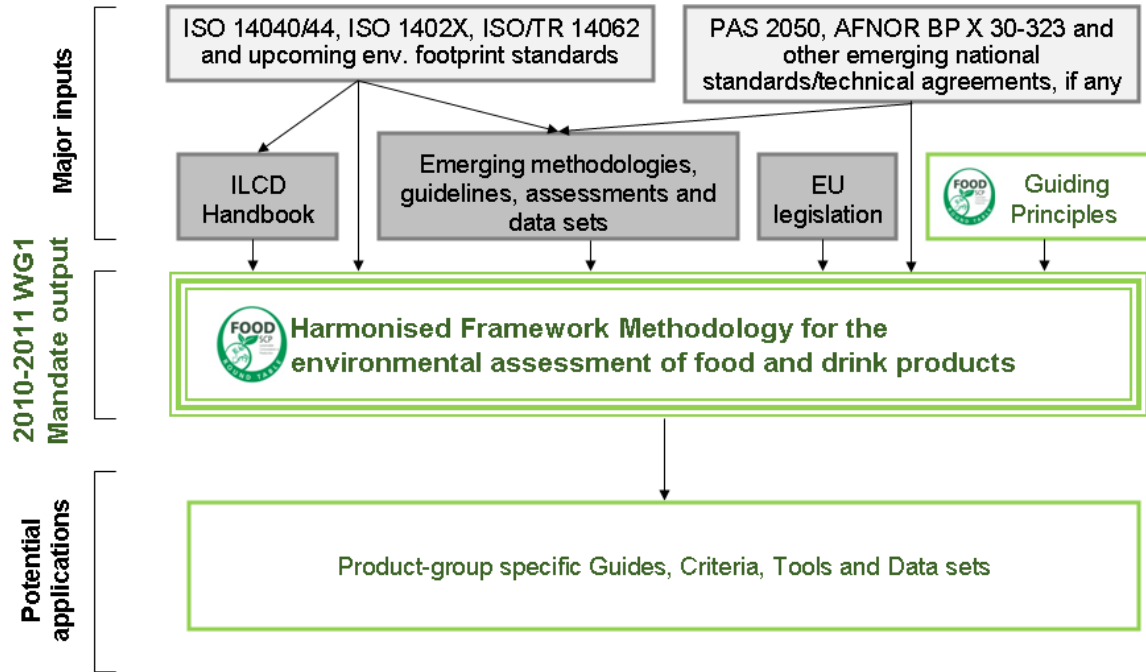


Figure 4. Inputs and outputs of Harmonised Framework Methodology

Annex 1. Detailed project plan

A1.0. Workshop and road map

Objective	Inputs	Task	Deliverable (No.)	Starting date	Deadline
1. Providing a common understanding of what is involved in reliable and robust environmental assessments of supply chains, current limitations, and how to go towards more straightforward/focused criteria/guidance/tools from detailed assessments; 2. Definition of the road map for the development of the HFM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food SCP RT guiding principles • Mandate of WG1 • Minutes of WG1 meetings 	Two day workshop	0.1: Workshop	01/03/2010	15/06/2010
			0.2: Workshop minutes, presentations slides online, and summary	16/06/2010	25/06/2010
			0.3: Post workshop draft of the road map	28/06/2010	12/07/2010
	Deliverable 0.3	Consultation with WG1 and revision	0.4: Advanced draft of the road map	13/07/2010	05/11/2010
	Deliverable 0.4	Approval	0.5: Final road map	08/11/2010	19/11/2010



A1.1. Detailed analysis of existing/emerging environmental assessment methodologies, guidelines and assessments

Objective	Inputs	Task	Deliverable (No.)	Starting date	Deadline
Search, collection and screening of environmental assessment methodologies, guidelines and assessments for food and drink products at the national, EU and – where relevant – international level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WG4 analysis on existing environmental assessment methodologies • Further inputs from RT members • Food SCP RT guiding principles • Literature on guidelines and assessments 	Search and collection of methodologies, guidelines and assessments for food and drink products	1.1: Draft inventory of methodologies, guidelines and assessments	28/06/2010	13/09/2010
		Drafting of criteria to characterise existing/emerging methodologies following the RT principles	1.2: Draft list of criteria	14/07/2010	31/08/2010
	Deliverables 1.1	Consultation with WG1 and revision	1.3: Final inventory of methodologies, guidelines and assessments	13/09/2010	05/11/2010
	Deliverables 1.2	Consultation with WG1 and revision	1.4: Final list of criteria	31/08/2010	05/11/2010
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELCD database • LCI databases • Data from associations • ... 	Gap analysis on data availability and quality in the food and drink sector	1.5: List of existing data sets according to their key characteristics	13/07/2010	30/11/2010



A1.1. Detailed analysis (continued)

Objective	Inputs	Task	Deliverable (No.)	Starting date	Deadline
Analysis of environmental assessment methodologies, guidelines and assessments	Deliverables 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5	Characterisation of environmental assessment methodologies, guidelines and assessments in order to identify key issues to be tackled in the HFM	1.6: Technical report and/or journal paper submission	05/11/2010	22/12/2010*
			1.7: Interim report on the achieved progress and key recommendations for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlining the HFM from existing methodologies; • overcoming possible shortcomings, gaps and inconsistencies; • defining the governance system for the framework methodology 	05/11/2010	22/12/2010

* Deliverable 1.6 might undergo some changes/integrations, if necessary, and be revised by 31/03/2011 in order to provide inputs to the drafting task as best as possible.

A1.2. Drafting the Harmonised Framework Methodology

Objective	Inputs	Task	Deliverable (No.)	Starting date	Deadline
Definition of the HFM for the environmental assessment of food and drink products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food SCP RT guiding principles • Retailer Forum's Issue Papers • ISO 14040/44 • International Reference Life Cycle Data System (ILCD) • Other relevant standards, policies and guidelines for food and drink products • Deliverables 0.2, 1.5, 1.6 and 1.7 	Drafting the HFM	2.1: HFM draft	07/01/2011	26/09/2011



A1.3. Public consultation and revision of the draft Harmonised Framework Methodology

Objective	Inputs	Task	Deliverable (No.)	Starting date	Deadline
Achieving consensus with roundtable stakeholders on the HFM	Deliverable 2.1	Consultation with WG1, WG2, WG3 and WG4	3.1: Table of comments and suggestions	26/09/2011	14/10/2011
	Deliverable 3.1	Revision	3.2: Second draft	26/09/2011	28/10/2011
	Deliverable 3.2	Public consultation, including a one day presentation of the HFM	3.3: Table of stakeholder comments and suggestions	28/10/2011	30/11/2011
	Deliverable 3.3	Revision	3.4: Version 1.0 of the HFM	28/10/2011	22/12/2011

Possible future steps for WG1 beyond WG1 mandate for 2011 (to be discussed in WG1 and in the Steering Committee)

A1.4. Testing the Harmonised Framework Methodology

Objective	Inputs	Task	Deliverable (No.)	Starting date	Deadline
HFM testing through pilot case studies	Deliverable 3.4	Testing of the HFM based on product/product group specific case studies (e.g. development of guides, straightforward criteria and tools)	4.1: Table of comments on the deliverable 3.4	09/01/2012	30/06/2012



A1.5. Fine-tuning of the Harmonised Framework Methodology

Objective	Inputs	Task	Deliverable (No.)	Starting date	Deadline
Fine-tuning of the HFM first version by WG1	Deliverables 3.4 and 4.1	Comments and suggestions from the pilot case studies will be addressed, where appropriate, in the HFM document	5.1: Version 2.0 of the HFM	30/06/2012	31/12/2012

A1.6. Provision of guides, criteria, tools and data sets

Objective	Inputs	Task	Deliverable (No.)	Starting date	Deadline
Setting up of guides, criteria, tools and data sets/bases for different product groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliverable 1.5 and 5.1 • ILCD Data Network 	Provision of guides, criteria, tools and data sets/bases for different product groups	...	01/01/2013	2013+

