

The EU Organisation Environmental Footprint applied to the Retail sector

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ABSTRACT

On April 9th 2013, the European Commission published a communication to the European Parliament and the Council to Build a Single Market for Green Products to facilitating better information on the environmental performance of products and organisations. An open call for volunteers was announced by the European Commission for the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) and the Organisation Environmental Footprint (OEF), inviting companies, industrial and stakeholder organisations in the EU to participate in the development of product-group specific and sector-specific rules. A group of public and private organisations has been selected by the European Commission to develop the guidance for surveying and reporting environmental impacts in the European retail sector. The Technical Secretariat which is responsible for developing the OEF sector rules in two years (official launch in November 2013), is composed by four retailers: Carrefour SA, Colruyt Group, Oxyrane Group (Decathlon) and Picard; three public agencies: Environment Agency Austria (EAA), French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME) and Italian National agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development (ENEA); one non-governmental organization: Global 2000; one association PERIFEM; and one Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) consultant: Quantis. The project, challenges and preliminary results and benefits of this pilot test will be presented highlighting feedback in reference to specific modelling issues related to the application of LCA to a sector as vast as the retail sector such as defining system boundaries (e.g., direct, as well as upstream and downstream indirect contributions) and choosing life cycle impact assessment methods (e.g. which indicators are relevant, which weighting scheme to use). These points also include the issue pertaining to consistency with the product approach for a sector as interdisciplinary as the retail sector.

Keywords: Organisation Environmental Footprint (OEF), Sector rules (SR), Product category rules (PCR), European Commission (EC)

1. Introduction

On April 9th 2013, the European Commission (EC) published the following: "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Building the Single Market for Green Products, facilitating better information on the environmental performance of products and organisations" [1].

An open call for volunteers was announced by the EC for the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) and the Organisation Environmental Footprint (OEF), inviting companies, industrial and stakeholder organisations in the EU to participate in the development of product-group specific and sector-specific rules.

A group of public and private organisations has been selected by the EC to develop the guidance for surveying and reporting environmental impacts in the European retail sector [2]. The Technical Secretariat which is responsible for developing the OEF sector rules in two years (official launch in November 2013), is composed by three retailers: Carrefour SA, Colruyt Group and Oxyrane Group (Decathlon); three public agencies: Environment Agency Austria (EAA), French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME) and Italian National agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development (ENEA); one NGO: Global 2000; and one LCA consultant: Quantis.

2. Methods

The approach used to develop the OEFSR will encompass the four following principles: (1) life cycle-based approach; (2) multi-criteria; (3) physically realistic modelling; (4) reproducibility /comparability.

This pilot will test how approaches such as Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCRs) and the “Chain OEF” (approach covering the indirect/upstream part of the value chain) will interact with or benefit the proposed OEFSR. The Chain-OEF aims primarily to allow the assessment of the environmental footprint based on the product portfolio of retailers, produced or not by them, using a cascade system; and to involve progressively more and more companies in the supply chain, enhancing primary data collection and building transparent partnerships. This sub-pilot strives to develop a cost-efficient approach to analyse, link and reduce the impact of each player in the value chain.

3. Results

Table 1 presents the preliminary results in terms of scope of the OEFSR.

Application	Use of an OEFSR		
	Optional “May”	Recommended “Should”	Mandatory “Shall”
In-house: improvement of the organisation's environmental performance	✓		
Reporting <u>without</u> comparisons or comparative assertions		✓	
Reporting <u>with</u> comparisons or comparative assertions			✓
Any OEF study declared to be in compliance with the OEF Guide	✓		

Table 1: Preliminary scope of the OEFSR (scenarios that does and does not necessitate the use of OEFSRs)

Building upon OEF studies already carried out, several aspects are identified as being challenging, including the definition of (i) the representative organisation model, (ii) benchmark and classes of environmental performance, or (iii) a weighting scheme different from the one proposed by the EC.

Figure 1 presents the system boundary of the OEFSR in general.

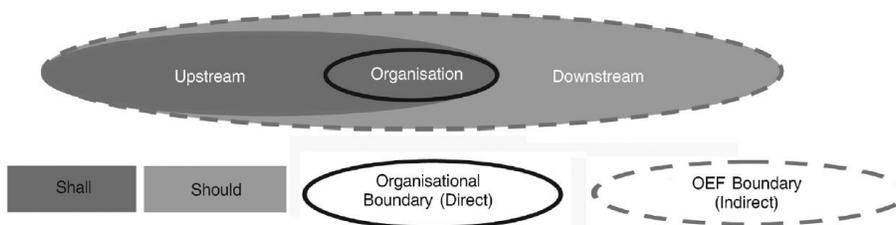


Figure 1: System boundary of the OEFSR in general

Figure 2 presents the system boundary of the OEFSR adapted to the retail sector (initial proposal for discussion).



Figure 2: System boundary of the OEFSR adapted to the retail sector

4. Conclusion

The project, challenges, preliminary results and benefits of this pilot test will be presented highlighting feedback in reference to specific modelling issues related to the application of LCA to a sector as vast as the retail sector such as defining system boundaries (e.g., direct, as well as upstream and downstream indirect contributions) and choosing life cycle impact assessment methods (e.g. which indicators are relevant, which weighting scheme to use). These points also include the issue pertaining to consistency with the product approach for a sector as interdisciplinary as the retail sector.

Numerical results of overall retailer OEF as well as proposed rules to assess the OEF of retailers will be available for public consultation for four weeks starting around December 2014. Final rules and generic results should be available by February 2015. Preliminary results and rules will be presented at LCAFood2014 (but not presented here as they are being calculated until end of September) to invite interested experts to engage in the public consultation that will occur at the end of the year and allow them to start considering strength and weaknesses of the proposed approach as well as technical, political, reputational and financial implication for the different economical sectors.

5. References

- [1] <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/>
- [2] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/pdf/Fiche_retail.pdf

This paper is from:

Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Life Cycle Assessment in the Agri-Food Sector



8-10 October 2014 - San Francisco

Rita Schenck and Douglas Huizenga, Editors
American Center for Life Cycle Assessment

The full proceedings document can be found here:
http://lcacenter.org/lcafood2014/proceedings/LCA_Food_2014_Proceedings.pdf

It should be cited as:

Schenck, R., Huizenga, D. (Eds.), 2014. Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Life Cycle Assessment in the Agri-Food Sector (LCA Food 2014), 8-10 October 2014, San Francisco, USA. ACLCA, Vashon, WA, USA.

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ISBN: 978-0-9882145-7-6