

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT TO THE STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this document is to explain to stakeholders and the public the rationale underlying the various possible actions and to ask for targeted feedback on:

- Sustainable Consumption and Production and Sustainable Industry policies
- Green Public Procurement
- Actions for improving the environmental performance of products (Product Environmental Footprint – PEF)
- Action for improving the environmental performance of organizations (Environmental Footprint of Organization – OEF).

The **first section** of the questionnaire relates to the policies and instruments that can be taken in consideration to pursue an effective contribution of *SCP and SIP* to the objectives of the Communication on a resource-efficient Europe, one of the Flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The main focus of this section is to support the definition of policy options that respond to the following challenges:

- A. Ensuring better **products** on the EU market in order to promote the access to market and the uptake and competitive success of more sustainable products;
- B. Promoting sustainable **consumption**, i.e. supporting demand for “green” products and assist consumers to consume differently, in order to reduce the resource use and associated environmental impacts.
- C. Promoting sustainable **production**, i.e.: stimulating and supporting the efforts by industry to improve resource efficiency and competitiveness while reducing the environmental impact

The **second section** should generate input for the European Commission to devise future *GPP policies* and strengthen its contribution to the “Resource Efficiency” targets.

Stakeholders are, in particular, invited to express own opinion on the following options:

Baseline scenario, i.e.: strengthen the current GPP approach, discontinue EU GPP policies. This policy option could consist of, for example, the revision of existing GPP criteria for product groups, the continuation of the provision of the GPP helpline; the continuation of the provision of guidance and information, including the Handbook; the continuation of awareness raising; and maintaining the political target of 50% use of GPP.

- The second option deals with the introduction of voluntary or legislative measures.

The voluntary measures could include strengthening the ambition level of common GPP criteria for products and services; Enlarging the scope of the priority sectors/product groups; developing Life Cycle Costing (LCC) methodologies for relevant product groups. The legislative measures could include the setting a mandatory target for the uptake of GPP at EU level, the inclusion of certain environmental criteria in EU Funding programmes, and making the inclusion of certain environmental criteria in tendering procedures obligatory in sector specific legislation, as it is already the case for the Energy Star Regulation or the Clean Vehicles Directive.

The **third section** aims at analyzing how the Commission could use the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) methodology to improve the environmental performance of products. In other words, the objective is to select the most suitable options to harmonise and

strengthen the way in which the environmental performance of products is communicated along value chains and to final consumers, in such a way to create a “level playing field” for a fair competition that is based on verified performances and not on vague green claims, and on the possibility to provide the market with high quality and relevant environmental information. Besides the baseline scenario, the selected policy options involve strengthening the EU SCP regulatory instruments and policy measures by integrating the PEF methodology or adopting new voluntary measures such as a voluntary scheme on communication and benchmarking of product environmental performance or a voluntary agreement with key stakeholders. An additional option is to rely on regulatory measures. This option proposes a new legislative framework to promote a single market for sustainable products. Mandatory measures could be applied to priority products only or to all product groups. It could take the shape of a framework directive setting up the main requirements at EU level, and sector/product-specific regulations to support it.

Implementing actions of the Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe, the SCP/SIP intends also to stimulate organisations (companies, public sector, etc) to systematically assess, display and benchmark their environmental performance as measured by the organisations' environmental footprint methodology. The **last section** of the background document aims to provide information on how to support a more systematic assessment, display and benchmarking of organisations' environmental performance (OEF). This includes the implementation of incentives for the measurement and reporting of environmental performance, but also incentives for improvements in environmental performance. The considered actions include the promotion of an OEF common methodology on a voluntary basis, the adoption of a regulatory instrument such as a Directive or a Regulation and the expansion and/or strengthening of existing EU SCP regulatory instruments and policy measures to drive increased measurement and reporting of environmental performance.