

# Environmental Footprint (EF) methods: Benefits for companies

## Overview of the Environmental Footprint methods

The Environmental Footprint (EF) methods consider the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) and Organisation Environmental Footprint (OEF) methods. Those methods are comprehensive approaches designed to measure **the environmental impacts** of products and organisations.

## Life Cycle Assessment principles at the core of the EF Methods




By employing life cycle assessment (LCA) principles, these methods evaluate the **entire journey of a product or organisational process**—from raw material extraction to end-of-life disposal—allowing for a thorough understanding of environmental footprints.



## Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCRs) and Organisation Environmental Footprint Category Rules (OEFCRs)

PEFCRs and OEFCRs are specific rules that provide detailed guidelines for applying the general PEF and OEF methods to specific product categories or sectors.

### ? Why LCA?

-  Helps businesses support more sustainable practices across the value chain
-  Indicates where companies can reduce resource consumption and emissions
-  Shows companies how to minimise their impacts

## What's in it for companies?

Adopting the PEF or OEF methods offer significant benefits for companies by providing a framework to **assess and improve the environmental impacts of products, services and their operations.**

Integrating these methods in business activities enhances **market competitiveness, allows cost savings, and supports compliance with environmental regulations.**

## Key advantages:

-  Improved environmental performance and sustainability
  -  Better compliance with environmental regulations and standards
-  Reliable data for making informed business decisions
  -  Potential cost savings through efficient resource use and waste reduction
-  Identification and management of environmental issues
  -  Enhanced market competitiveness and brand reputation
-  Access to new markets and eco-conscious customers
  -  Fair competition and limiting risk of greenwashing
-  Favourable financing terms linked to a strong environmental profile











**Development Manager**  
at a family-owned food production business

"We think that PEF is the best way to understand, explain, and calculate the contribution of using specific raw materials in our production processes to lower the carbon footprint of our products. PEF is essential for providing comparable information."

## Implementing EF methods in your company

Checklist

-  Determine if and why you want to carry out a study on your product or organisation
-  Identify internal or external experts and training materials that can guide you through the process
-  Explore if there's any existing PEFCRs or OEFSRs relevant to your study
-  Launch the PEF or OEF study based on the general EF methods and any applicable PEFCR/OEFSR.
-  Clearly define the goals of the study (e.g., application, reasons, target audiences) and its scope (e.g., functional unit, system boundary)
-  Identify data needs and ensure they meet quality requirements.
-  Conduct a Life Cycle Impact Assessment
-  Interpret the results to identify hotspots, analyse assumptions and quality of the study, and provide recommendations for improvement.



**R&D engineer**  
at textile manufacturer

"PEF is extremely helpful in assessing our environmental impact and provides valuable insights to identify hotspots and areas for improvement. This has enabled us to take concrete actions, such as replacing inefficient equipment."



### Contact Information

If you have questions regarding PEF and OEF, here's who to reach out to:

#### General Inquiries:

For any technical information or questions about the development of the methods, you can email:  
[env-environmental-footprint@ec.europa.eu](mailto:env-environmental-footprint@ec.europa.eu).

#### EF Datasets:

For specific questions about EF datasets, contact the data provider directly.

#### PEFCR or OEFSR Information:

For details about a specific PEFCR or OEFSR, reach out to the corresponding Technical Secretariat. Contact details are included in the PEFCR and OEFSR documents.