



## The Switchmed Project Product Environmental Footprints (PEF) in Brief

### Introduction

The Product environmental Footprint procedure is a methodology that aims at evaluating the environmental footprint of products throughout their entire life cycle from the extraction of resources to the end of life of products.

PEF procedure is unified methodology to assess the environmental footprint of products manufactured in the EU or exported to it, in a way to avoid the confusion of both producers and consumers from the various assessment methods and labels related to the environmental footprint of goods.

The European Union has taken the first step in providing reliable, meaningful and verified information about the environmental footprint of products to its consumers by testing whether such information can be generated at reasonable cost and effort. In 2012, the EU invited industries sectors to pilot the approach. Industry groups and associations could apply if they represented 50% of the market volume in the EU. More than 120 pilots were proposed, signalling the very positive attitude of many industries and industry associations. Due to budget restrictions, the EU selected 27 of these to test the approach. These pilots started in 2013 and 2014 and are now in a final stage. In 2017/18 the experiences will be evaluated and the EU will develop policies that could range from voluntary or obligatory labelling to even taxation (as many countries did with energy using products and cars).

### Vision and objectives of the project

Although the EU has not decided what the policy measures will be, this development can have big impacts on companies that export to Europe. A key challenge will be to develop the understanding needed to provide detailed environmental data on the supply chain, use and disposal of a product. Being able to supply such information may become an important element in the competition in Europe.

### Stakeholders invited

For the success of this project, a wide range of stakeholders needs to be involved:

- Lebanese policy makers who are connected to export promotion, economic development and environmental protection;
- Lebanese industries and their industry associations as well as exporters to Europe;
- Academics and consultants that are interested to become more aware of the use of lifecycle assessment in policy and product development;
- Academics and consultant that want to develop expert knowledge and are ready to be the experts in the pilot project;
- The industrial service providers (consultancy firms).



## Structure of the project

The EU funded Switched Program on Sustainable Consumption and Production aims to prepare Lebanese industries for these developments, and has thus developed a three step approach whereby the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) will:

1. Invite all relevant policy-makers, associations and companies that have a direct interest in the export of Lebanese products to Europe for an awareness raising event, where the potential policies and the consequences for companies exporting to the EU are presented and discussed. Part of the discussion will be on how to define a similar pilot project in Lebanon from the industrial sectors which took part in the PEF project in EU (e.g. wine or paper), in order to get a direct comparative result and enable better understanding of the future competitiveness of Lebanese industries in the EU market.
2. Organize two trainings to create the capacity needed to provide correct information on environmental footprints of products. The trainings will be focussed on Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) as the Environmental Footprint methodology is based on the LCA principle.
  - The first training will be a generic or basic training on product Environmental Footprint (PEF) and Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) training: its objective is to give an understanding of the basics of LCA and will comprise a short exercise using an LCA software. This training will last 5 hours and will be provided the day after the awareness raising event. The target audience for this training covers researchers, consultants and experts in government and industry or civil society working in the environmental field or in related fields of relevance to LCA.
  - The second training is an in depth and very specific training on the detailed (and often quite complex) rules that are specific for the product groups that will be in the national pilot. This training will be given to a preselected group of qualified experts in LCA over 1.5 days.
3. Develop a pilot to test how PEF rules will work for Lebanese products from one product category. The pilot will be closely supported by UNIDO and the selected local LCA experts. A pilot project will be initiated by Switchmed if the following conditions are fulfilled:
  - There is sufficient interest from at least one industry group or association that exports one of the relevant product groups to the EU, and this group has committed to provide the data needed for the project, noting that such data will be protected by strict confidentiality rules
  - There is a group of experts with sufficient technical expertise in the country to run a pilot project lasting up to 3 months, and that is willing to provide this expertise and perform the work at reasonable cost. This group should also have the confidence of the industry association.



The Switchmed UNIDO PEF project is currently selecting the Product Group that will be used in the pilot together with industry associations, industries and policy makers. Currently, a pre-selection was made by mapping the list of the current 27 EU pilots with the most relevant export products from Lebanon to the EU. The most promising candidates for a pilot are:

1. Wine: in the EU pilot this refers to all colours, including sparkling wine
2. Paper products: in the EU pilot the focus is on Graphic paper, Packaging paper and Tissues

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**Regional Activity Centre  
for Sustainable Consumption  
and Production**