

EBS Public Consultation

EBS Methodological guidelines executive summary

March 2024

Purpose of the Document

This document compiles methodological principles for the EBS Consortium, including environmental footprinting and scoring methodologies, to enable stakeholders' review and comments.

Introduction to EcoBeautyScore

In September 2021, several cosmetic manufacturers united to form the EBS Consortium in response to increasing demands for transparency from consumers and regulators.

The EBS Consortium aims to provide a common method for environmental footprint measurement, a shared database for life cycle inventories, a common tool for environmental impact assessment, and a harmonized consumer-facing scoring system.

To serve consumers' interest and support comparability, the EcoBeautyScore scoring system will work for all Cosmetic Products and enable companies, on a voluntary basis, to inform consumers in a clear and effective manner about the environmental assessment of their cosmetic products.

Framework of the Methodological Principles of EcoBeautyScore

Objectives: Develop a common environmental impact measurement and scoring system, a shared methodology database and tool, and a harmonized layout for communicating environmental impacts to consumers.

Fundamental Principles: The Consortium adopts a science-based approach, a Life Cycle Assessment methodology aligning with the EU Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) method, that will be usable and accessible to non-experts.

Phased Development: A phased approach aiming for cost-effectiveness and scalability has been taken to launch the first version of the tool in 2024, with ongoing development and improvement planned beyond this initial launch.

Review and Verification: To ensure the quality of the deliverables produced by EBS, the methodology undergoes a critical review by independent experts and a public consultation for transparency and verification, as well as lay out consumer testing across 3 continents to ensure robust communication to consumers.

Environmental Footprinting: Methodological Choices and Rationale

The EBS aligns with the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) method with adaptations when required to adapt to the specificities of cosmetics products and ingredients.

The functional unit relies on the "use dose" to ensure comparability of the assessment across different products.

The Life Cycle Stage includes all steps from the production of formula ingredients, and packaging, to their end of life, including production of final product, distribution and use by consumers, through a cradle-to-grave approach.

The impact assessment relies on all 16 midpoint PEF (EF 3.1) indicators, with specific adaptations, for instance, regarding freshwater ecotoxicity assessment method to ensure a proper coverage and therefore be suited for cosmetics ingredients assessment.

Some **specific calculation rules** include propositions for handling solid waste end-of-life, types of allocation, carbon release at end-of-life, land use occupancy, focusing on aligning with the PEF method while addressing industry-specific contexts.

Finally, the **normalization and weighting method** to aggregate individual impact category footprints into a single score aligns on the PEF methodology.

Environmental Footprinting: Harmonized database development strategy

The harmonized database is a key pillar of the measurement system and provides environmental impacts on a wide range of activities and materials. It covers two main types of data:

- **Life Cycle Inventory data:** most of the effort lies in developing priority cosmetics ingredients LCI, as packaging materials already have good coverage in existing LCA databases.
- **Activity data** (e.g. *use phase* parameters): a common set of generic parameters is developed.

The EBS tool will ultimately allow companies to include company-specific data, however clear methodological rules and a substantiation process for allowing this are still to be defined and will be available in a future iteration of the methodology.

Consumer Facing Scoring: Methodology and Rationale

The scoring methodology aims to develop a harmonized product scoring system that enables consumers to make sustainable choices, transforming environmental footprint assessment results into relatable consumer scores. The scoring method should allow for **meaningful differentiation** between products within the same segment (i.e. a group of products that deliver the same or similar benefits, for example 'washing the hair').

A series of **consumer consultations** have been conducted to gauge reactions and capture input to the scoring lay-out revealing interest in the initiative, demand for transparency and confirming the clarity of a rating in 5 performance classes.

Testing phase and tool development

The EBS consortium is currently undertaking a “Real Data Testing Phase (RDTP)” using a pilot calculation tool to validate the operational aspects of the methodology on a sample of products that are representative of the selected market segments. This testing phase focuses initially on four product segments: Hair Wash, Hair Treat, Face Moisturize & Treat and Body Wash.

The scope of this testing focuses on products sold in Europe, given the advanced developments on environmental labelling in this region.

However, the differences between European and global environmental footprints will be analyzed as part of this test, as well as comparing product rankings for those only sold in Europe versus globally. The outcomes of this analysis will inform the regional scope of the EBS model.

This summary reflects the main EBS document's comprehensive approach to developing a standardized method for assessing and communicating the environmental impact of cosmetic products. It emphasizes the Consortium's commitment to scientific rigor, stakeholder engagement, and continuous improvement to enhance transparency and sustainability in the cosmetics industry.