

Expansion of EPA's Recommendations of Specifications, Standards and Ecolabels: Webinar for Interested Applicants

Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics (OPPT), Data Gathering and Analysis Division (DGAD), Sustainability and Pollution Prevention Branch (SPPB)



Today's Speakers

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Colleagues in the chat:

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Agenda

- Overview of EPA's sustainable marketplace and the Recommendations of Specifications, Standards and Ecolabels (Recommendations) for Federal Purchasing
- Expansion of the Recommendations
 - Timeline
 - Why you should apply
 - Who should apply
 - How to apply
- Overview of the Framework for the Assessment of Environmental Performance Standards and Ecolabels
- Questions & Answers

Sustainable Marketplace

Defining Green. Buying Green. Measuring Green. www.epa.gov/greenerproducts



Take a lifecycle, multi-attribute approach to defining “environmentally preferable”



Engage in the development or update of private sector product & service sustainability standards & ecolabels



Assess and recommended standards and ecolabels for federal purchasers



Assist feds (and others) in buying environmentally preferable products and services



Assist small businesses in selling their greener products and services to the federal government



Measure compliance and benefits of buying green

The Recommendations of Specifications, Standards, and Ecolabels for Federal Purchasing (Recommendations)

Leveling the playing field & bringing clarity to the marketplace

Global Marketplace
460+ Standards/Ecolabels



1) Based on review and use by another federal agency
OR


2) Based on an assessment against the multi-stakeholder developed Framework for Environmental Performance Standards and Ecolabels

The Recommendations
34 product categories, 40+ private sector standards/ecolabels, 3 specifications


Recommended Private Sector Standards/Ecolabels

1st Choice Private Sector Standards/Ecolabels:
Multi-attribute with confirmed accredited or conforming certification body:

Cradle to Cradle Certified™ Product Standard^{1,2}

 [Access standard.](#)
[Find products.](#)

Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) Floor Coverings^{1,2}

 [Access standard.](#)
[Find products.](#)

Sample Carpet Category

Product Categories Covered by the Recommendations

*Standards/ecolabels in these categories were assessed against an earlier version of the Framework in 2016

Cafeteria

- Food Service Ware: Containers, Cutlery, Dishware
- Commercial Dishwasher Detergent

Construction

- Adhesives
- Carpet*
- Ceiling Tiles-Acoustical
- Fiberboard, Gypsum Panels, and Wallboard
- Flooring*
- Insulation
- Interior Latex Paint*
- Other Miscellaneous Building Finishes*

Electronics & Associated Services

- Computers
- Cloud Services
- Electronics Recycling Services
- Energy Savings Performance Contracts
- Imaging Equipment
- Mobile Phones
- Network Equipment
- Print Management Services
- Photovoltaic Modules and Inverters
- Power Purchase Agreements
- Seat Management Services
- Servers
- Televisions
- Wireless Services

Machine Shop Operations

- Parts Wash Solution

Custodial

- Cleaners: Carpet, Glass, Multipurpose
- Floor Care
- Hand Soap
- Bathroom Tissue
- Paper Towels
- Trash Bags

Grounds/Landscaping

- Deicer

Office/Furniture

- Copy Paper
- Furniture*

Timeline for Expansion

January 1, 2023

- Deadline for interested applicants to submit scoping questions to epp@epa.gov.

January 1 – April 30
(120 days)

- EPA will develop a prioritization plan to determine sequencing of assessments by purchase category.
- Prioritization plan will be published in the federal register and announced via listserv message.
- Prioritization and number of assessments will depend on alignment with administration priorities, number of applicants, and available resources.

Spring 2023:
Begin Phase 1 Assessments

- EPA will announce purchase category(ies) and conduct outreach to standards and ecolabels to begin full assessments against sections I – IV of the Framework.
- An information collection tool will be distributed to applicants.
- Applicants will have 120 days to respond to all applicable sections of the Framework and send responses to epp@epa.gov.

Timeline for Expansion Continued

Summer 2023

- EPA will review Phase 1 applicant responses to the Framework.

Fall 2023

- EPA will notify the Phase 1 applicants of the results of their assessment.
- Standards/ecolabels that meet all applicable Framework criteria will be added to the Recommendations.

Late 2023

- Begin Phase 2 of assessments as needed and depending upon resources.

Why should you apply?



Large Federal Footprint = Opportunity for Feds to Lead by Example and Influence the Sustainable Products Market

The U.S. Federal government:

Is the single largest purchaser in the world spending **~\$650 billion annually** on goods and services

Procurements represent roughly **2.5% of USGDP** and influence much more

Manages over **350,000 buildings, 600,000 vehicles**, and nearly **1 of every 5 acres** in the U.S.

Spends **~\$90 billion annually** on IT equipment and services

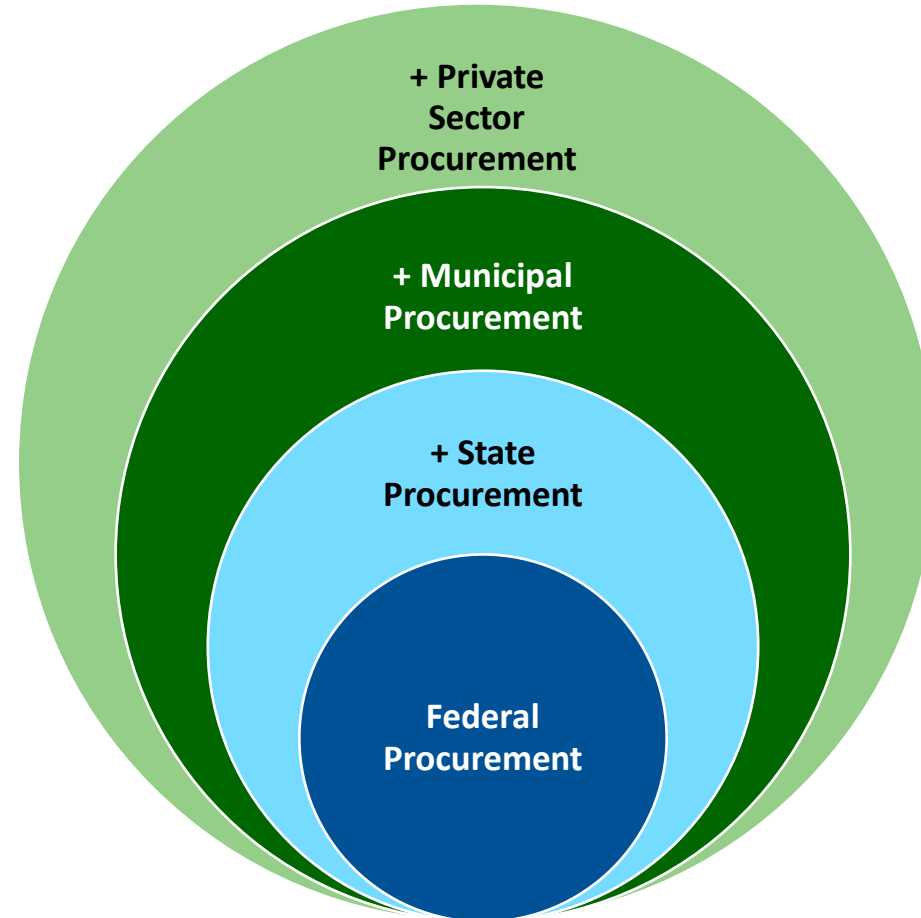
Is the largest energy consumer in the nation, spending **~\$18 billion annually**

Uses **renewable energy** to power 8.6% of its facility electric energy needs





Sustainable Federal Procurement as a Force Multiplier



Help Us Implement New Authorities & Programs*

- E.O. 14057 & Implementing Instructions
- Federal Sustainability Plan
- OMB Memo 22-06

- Set a Net-Zero Emissions Procurement Goal for the U.S. government by 2050.
- Purchasers must maximize the procurement of sustainable products and services identified or recommended by EPA.
- Directs federal purchasers to prioritize products and services that address multiple environmental impacts.
- Direct agencies to prioritize substitutes for products that contain perfluoroalkyl or polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

Inflation Reduction Act

- Allocates \$350 million to the Pollution Prevention program to:
 - establish a labeling program for lower embodied carbon construction materials, and
 - establish new grants, technical assistance, and tools for reducing, standardizing, measuring, and reporting the embodied carbon of construction materials and products.
- EPA seeks to understand the current state of private sector standards and ecolabels in addressing embodied carbon and other key sustainable acquisition priorities in the construction sector.

Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act

- Invests \$100 million in the Agency's Pollution Prevention program.
- New grant opportunity focused on encouraging products, purchasing, and/or supply chains that are safer, more sustainable, and environmentally preferable.
- The Recommendations, along with the standards and ecolabels incorporated in the Recommendations, will be referenced and utilized in the implementation of these new grants.

Incorporation into Major Federal Contracts



- New initiative (Sustainability Check) jointly led by the EPP program, OMB, CEQ and GSA.
- Ensure all relevant sustainability clauses are incorporated into the largest federal contracts.
- This includes the incorporation of the sustainable purchasing requirements within E.O. 14057, which includes procurement of products/services meeting the recommended standards and ecolabels.

Who should apply?

- Standards development organizations, ecolabel programs, and associated conformity assessment bodies that recognize environmental performance leadership.
- Priority given to standards/ecolabels that:
 1. Are multi-attribute
 2. Support federal goals and mandates such as:
 - **Climate:** e.g. net-zero emissions procurement or low embodied carbon construction materials.
 - **Safer chemicals:** e.g. products that do not contain PFAS.
 - Other Administration sustainable acquisition priorities.
 3. Cover new sectors of interest.
- Additionally, standard/ecolabel organizations that address purchase categories already included in the Recommendations.

Sectors of Interest:

- Building/Construction
- Infrastructure
- Landscaping
- Food and cafeteria services
- Uniforms / clothing
- Professional services
- Laboratories and healthcare

How to Apply

1. Familiarize yourself with the Framework which will be used to assess all eligible applicants.
 - Section I: Standards development process
 - Section II: Effectiveness in addressing human and environmental health
 - Section III: Conformity assessment procedures
 - Section IV: Ecolabel program management
2. Submit responses to the 10 scoping questions to epp@epa.gov by **January 1st, 2023**.

Note: Applicants are not being asked to submit responses to the Framework criteria at this time. EPA will send further notice and instructions to Phase 1 applicants when it is time for them to be assessed.

Scoping Questions

- Responses will help EPA understand the level of interest from the standard/ecolabel community and will be used to confirm if an applicant is eligible for a full assessment against the Framework.

Questions include:

- Contact information
- Applicable purchase categories
- Which sections of the Framework the respondent is planning to be assessed against
- Whether there is sufficient certified product or supplier availability*
- Whether there is a publicly available and current product registry*
- If the standard/ecolabel includes criteria that meet or exceed the existing statutory sustainable acquisition mandates relevant to the product or service category(ies)**
 - Statutory requirements include: CPG, ENERGY STAR/FEMP, BioPreferred, and SNAP

* Responses to these questions will be used to determine eligibility for implementation in federal purchasing, however standards/ecolabels not yet meeting these criteria are still welcome to apply and can be recognized as conforming to the Framework.

** Responses to this questions may be used by federal purchasers when determining if/how to use the standard/ecolabel to meet the existing statutory sustainable purchasing mandates.

The Framework for the Assessment of Environmental Performance Standards and Ecolabels

Section I: Standards development process

Section II: Effectiveness in addressing human and environmental health

Section III: Conformity assessment procedures

Section IV: Ecolabel program management

- Provides a transparent & consistent approach to assessing environmental performance standards & ecolabels for incorporation into the Recommendations.
- Aligned with USG standards policy (OMB A119, NTTAA) and relevant international guides and protocols
- Encourages best practices for environmental performance leadership standards & ecolabels.
- Initially developed in 2011 - 2015 through an interagency & multi-stakeholder, consensus-based process (included public comment and pilot testing).
- Updated version published in March 2022 based on lessons learned during the pilot and to ensure alignment with USG policies.

For more on the Framework Development History:
<https://www.epa.gov/greenerproducts/framework-development-overview>

Framework Criteria Details

- Each section contains baseline (required) and leadership (optional) criteria.
- Each criterion has associated example sources of evidence and key decision parameters for how to meet that criterion.
- All applicants must respond to and meet the following criteria in order to be added to the Recommendations:
 - **Section II Environmental Effectiveness:**
 - II.1: Transparency of weighting methodology
 - II.2: Effectively addressing environmental hotspots/lifecycle stage impacts
 - Plus**, *when chemical substances of concern are a key hotspot for the purchase category*
 - II.3: Approach(es) to reducing toxicological hazard(s)
 - II.4: Disclosure of chemical substances of concern
 - **Section III Conformity Assessment:**
 - III.1: Most direct pathway to confirm there is a competent certification program
 - If a standard/ecolabel cannot provide supporting evidence for III.1, they can respond to the alternative path via criteria III.1.1 – III.1.21.

Framework Criteria Details

What about Sections I and IV?

- **Section I Standards Development Process:**
 - I.1: Most direct pathway to confirm if a Voluntary Consensus Standard (VCS) per OMB A119
 - If standards/ecolabels cannot provide supporting evidence for I.1, they can respond to the alternative path via criteria I.1.1 – I.1.14
 - **Note: Although existing federal authorities give preference to the use of VCS, it is not a requirement to be included in the Recommendations. We do, however, indicate on our website whether a standard uses another process.**
- **Section IV Management of Ecolabeling Programs:**
 - It is not required to respond to this section.
 - Where applicable, responses to this section are encouraged to inform potential federal users and other interested parties about the governance and implementation of the ecolabel.
- Opportunities to provide "attestations" in lieu of documentation.

Questions

- **If my standard/ecolabel is already included in the Recommendations, can I apply to be assessed in additional purchase categories? Do I have to re-submit my information?**
 - Answer: Yes, you are welcome to apply. If you are requesting to be added to additional product/service categories, you will be asked to re-submit your information to all applicable sections of the Framework.
- **If I'm interested in getting my standard/ecolabel added to the Recommendations but it does not fall under any of the sectors of interest or administration priorities, should I still apply?**
 - Answer: Yes. We will review responses to all scoping questions submitted. If a standard/ecolabel is determined to be outside our current priorities or if we're not able to perform an assessment due to resource constraints, we will notify applicants when we release the Phase 1 prioritization plan.
- **If I own or manage a single-attribute standard/ecolabel can I still apply?**
 - Answer: Yes, however, priority may be given to multi-attribute standards/ecolabels that can help us meet several administration priorities at once.

Questions

- **What happens after I submit my responses to the scoping questions?**
 - Answer: After the application deadline closes on January 1, 2023, EPA will issue an estimated timeline for full assessments against the Framework by product/service category within 120 days. For each category being assessed, EPA will provide further notice and instruction to applicable applicants.
- **Will my assessment responses be made publicly available?**
 - Answer: Yes, all assessments (including responses to both baseline and leadership criteria) will be made publicly available upon request. Information you identify as CBI will be excluded.
- **Why does the Framework include Leadership criteria? Does my organization have to respond to those?**
 - Answer: You are not required to submit responses to the leadership criteria within the Framework and EPA will not be assessing those responses. They are intended to encourage continuous improvement of approaches in standardization and ecolabeling and signal areas that may become baseline criteria over time. If you do choose to respond to the leadership criteria, that information would also be available for anyone to see upon request.

Additional Resources

- Email: epp@epa.gov
- [Sign up for the EPP listserv](#)
- [EPA's Sustainable Marketplace: Greener Products and Services](#)
- [EPA's Recommendations of Specifications, Standards and Ecolabels](#)
- [EPA's Framework for Assessing Environmental Performance Standards and Ecolabels](#)
- [EPA's Framework Development Overview](#)
- [Listen to the March 2nd webinar that explains the changes and updates to the Framework](#)
- [How EPA's Recommended Standards and Ecolabels Address PFAS](#)
- [E.O 14057 & Federal Sustainability Plan](#)