

Communication from the Commission — Establishment of the working plan setting out an indicative list of sectors for the adoption of sectoral and cross-sectoral reference documents, under Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 on the voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS)

(Text with EEA relevance)

(2011/C 358/02)

1. INTRODUCTION

On 16 July 2008 the Commission adopted the Sustainable Consumption and Production and Sustainable Industrial Policy Action Plan ⁽¹⁾. The Plan called for the revision of the Community Eco-management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), an important instrument in order to deliver its objectives on Sustainable Consumption and Production.

The revised EMAS Regulation, (EC) No 1221/2009 of 25 November 2009 ⁽²⁾, entered into force on 10 January 2010. The objective of EMAS is to promote continuous improvements in the environmental performance of organisations by:

- the establishment and implementation of environmental management systems by organisations,
- the systematic, objective and periodic evaluation of the performance of such systems,
- the provision of information on environmental performance,
- an open dialogue with the public and other interested parties,
- the active involvement of employees in organisations and appropriate training.

Among other innovations, the revised Regulation introduces the concept of sectoral reference documents (SRD) that identify best environmental management practices, sector specific environmental performance indicators and set benchmarks of excellence and rating systems identifying environmental performance levels, where appropriate.

Though the primary aim for developing sectoral reference documents is to help and guide EMAS companies in a specific sector, contributing to a harmonised and enhanced application of the EMAS Regulation, the help and guidance provided in these documents can also be used in a given sector to improve environmental performance independently of an EMAS registration.

EMAS Sectoral reference documents will also help pave the way on resource efficiency, through the definition of sector specific benchmarks and indicators of good performance.

The revised EMAS Regulation provides for the establishment of a working plan setting out an indicative list of sectors, for which sectoral reference documents will be considered priorities, in this framework.

⁽¹⁾ COM(2008) 397 final.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 342, 22.12.2009, p. 1.

2. INDICATIVE LIST OF SECTORS

The indicative list of sectors, presented in Annex, was established using a combination of inputs and data sources which in turn took into account several factors and approaches. The main criteria taken into account were the following:

1. The environmental impact of the sector within the Community.
2. The level of EMAS uptake in the sector.
3. The potential for environmental improvements in the 'value chain' of the sector.

2.1. The environmental impact of the sector within the Community

One aspect of the analysis was a comparison of the environmental impacts of the different economic sectors that could be covered by reference documents. Data was used that had been validated by the Environmental Data Centre on Natural Resources and Products (Eurostat). This exercise resulted in a list of 'top 20' sectors, ranked based on their overall aggregated environmental impacts⁽¹⁾, calculated on the basis of four indicators: Global Warming Potential (GWP), Acidification Potential (AP), Photochemical Ozone Creation Potential (POCP) and Marine Eutrophication Potential (MEP).

Findings from the report 'Environmental Impact of Products (EIPRO) — Analysis of the Life Cycle Environmental Impacts related to the final Consumption of the EU-25' from May 2006⁽²⁾ were also taken into account. The results of this study are based on Life Cycle Analysis, including the life cycle stages of extraction, transport, production, use and waste management, of the products consumed in the European Union by private households and the public sector.

The report *Key messages on material resource use and efficiency in Europe: Insights from environmental extended input-output analysis and material flow accounts*, from ETC/SCP — European Topic Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production for the European Environmental Agency⁽³⁾ was also considered. This report makes use of material flow accounts and identifies final product groups with the higher share of total resource use induced by domestic final use.

This assessment suggested that the environmental impact criterion was particularly important for the following specific sectors: Agriculture, Construction, Food and beverage manufacturing, Waste management and manufacture of electrical and electronic equipment.

2.2. EMAS uptake

The data on EMAS uptake in the various sectors was also taken into account, as one of the main elements of the prioritisation exercise. According to recital 25 of the EMAS Regulation the rationale for producing sectoral reference documents is 'the aim of ensuring a harmonised application of this Regulation'. It is important that sectoral reference documents cover sectors where the EMAS uptake is higher, thereby contributing to a faster harmonised application of the Regulation. For the purposes of prioritisation, higher uptake was defined as more than 100 EMAS-registered organisations active in the sector in the EU.

The following sectors have more than 100 EMAS registered companies: Construction, Food and beverage manufacture, Public Administration, Tourism, Waste management and manufacture of fabricated metal products.

⁽¹⁾ http://www.eu-smr.eu/infocenter/documents/IH_2010-004_Reply_Environmental-pressure-by-NACE-Code_15112010.pdf

⁽²⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ipp/pdf/eipro_report.pdf

⁽³⁾ <http://scp.eionet.europa.eu/publications/1234>

2.3. The potential for environmental improvements in the 'value chain' of the sector

Value chain commonly refers to a sequence of related activities stemming from design and product/service development, manufacturing, marketing and sales, after sales service, disposal and recycling.

EMAS is already a good platform for Life cycle thinking by taking into account both direct and indirect aspects, providing a more comprehensive approach to environmental management that has the potential to look into the whole value chain.

Therefore the selection of sectors with good opportunities to drive environmental improvements through their value chain was considered, as it will also help to pursue sustainability in a broader sense, taking into account possible direct and indirect effects in different sectors.

In particular, large companies and public authorities are in a strong position to influence the market through the implementation of environmental management systems in the value chain, suggesting that, for the purpose of this exercise, the sectors with a good potential for environmental improvements in the value chain were: Car manufacturing, Telecommunications, Wholesale and Retail, Tourism and Public Administration.

3. CONCLUSION

The choice of priority sectors for which sectoral reference documents will be elaborated was established according mainly to the environmental impact of the sector, the EMAS uptake and the potential for environmental improvement in the value chain.

This resulted in a shortlist of indicative sectors, presented in Annex, for which sectoral reference documents can add value, contribute to minimise environmental impacts, ensure a harmonised application of the EMAS Regulation, promote positive synergies with existing instruments and policies; and act as a driving force to increase sustainability in a broader sense.

As some of these sectors are marked by the presence of large numbers of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the sectoral reference documents will take into account the structure and the working methods of micro and small businesses, which are generally not as formal and documented as in large companies, as a way to help SMEs to implement EMAS according to their size, financial capacity and organisation culture.

This working plan indicates the sectors on which the Commission will elaborate EMAS sectoral reference documents within the next five years. The Commission may review this list at any time, based on the experience gained with its implementation. Furthermore, and in accordance with Article 46.3 of the Regulation, this working plan shall be made publicly available and regularly updated.

ANNEX

Indicative list of priority sectors ⁽¹⁾

- Wholesale and Retail trade,
 - Tourism,
 - Construction,
 - Public Administration,
 - Agriculture — Crop production and Animal production,
 - Manufacture of electronical and electric equipment,
 - Car manufacturing,
 - Manufacture of fabricated metal products, except machinery and equipment,
 - Food and beverage manufacturing,
 - Waste management,
 - Telecommunications.
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⁽¹⁾ It should be stressed that this list is indicative, as laid down in paragraph 3 of Article 46 of Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009. At any time, the Commission may review this list.