

# Position Paper on the review of the Methodology for Ecodesign of Energy-related Products (MEErP) following the stakeholder meeting of 23 June 2022

Brussels, 4 August 2022

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) is assessing a revision of the Methodology for Ecodesign of Energy-Related Products (MEErP). A second Interim Report was presented by the JRC and discussed with stakeholders at a meeting on 23 June 2022.

The European Ventilation Industry Association (EVIA) supports the EU ecodesign and energy labelling policies and agrees with the need to keep the legislation up-to-date and in line with the latest technological developments. Ecodesign is a tool that has delivered considerable energy efficiency savings across Europe. Nonetheless, we have concerns with the options that have been proposed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> JRC Interim Report for the MEErP review.

This paper provides EVIA's position following the stakeholder meeting of 23 June 2022. We explain our concerns and offer recommendations on the coverage of sustainability requirements, the material efficiency scoring, Lifecycle Assessment methods, and alignment with building sustainability.

- **Maintain a phased approach to introducing sustainability requirements**
- **Adapt the material efficiency scoring to the specific product groups**
- **Allow flexibility to adopt the most appropriate Lifecycle Assessment methods**
- **Interface with the sustainability performance of buildings**

The European Ventilation Industry Association (EVIA) welcomes the opportunity to provide comments to the 2<sup>nd</sup> JRC Interim Report on the revision of the Methodology for Ecodesign of Energy-related Products (MEErP) following the stakeholder meeting of 23 June 2022. EVIA is an ardent supporter of the EU's legislative framework for energy-related products (ErP), as it contributes to the realisation of energy efficiency and Europe's climate objectives.

Nonetheless, we believe that various aspects could be further optimised. Please see our recommendations with more detailed explanation below.

## 1. Maintain a phased approach to introducing sustainability requirements

EVIA supports a phased approach to the integration of sustainability considerations into ErP implementing legislation, including Regulation (EU) 327/2011 (ENER Lot 11 on industrial fans) and Regulation (EU) 1253/2014 (GROW Lot 6 on ventilation units) and their successors in respect to their ongoing revisions. As such, the ongoing revisions should be finalised in the framework of the current Ecodesign Directive.

In respect to the Commission’s proposal for an Ecodesign Regulation for Sustainable Products (ESPR), the broader sustainability objectives that the proposal seeks to regulate more thoroughly should be addressed in the revisions of ENER Lot 11 and GROW Lot 6, after the entry-into-force of the ESPR. EVIA strongly urges the Commission to pursue a logical policy development process that is realistic as to what can be achieved within deadlines.

EVIA recommends that following the entry-into-force of the ESPR, the Commission should prioritise establishing calculation methodologies for material efficiency scoring and Product Environmental Footprints (PEF) in the first revisions of ENER Lot 11 and GROW Lot 6. However, this should not apply to the ongoing revisions of these two files (which are performed under the current Ecodesign Directive). As a first phase, these could serve as the basis for information requirements and, if sufficiently mature, for classes of performance and labelling schemes. EVIA would advise against introducing minimum requirements linked to material efficiency score or PEF until a second phase (i.e., the revisions the files under the ESPR). This is essential to ensure thorough analysis based on a robust dataset derived from the information requirements or implementation of classes of performance and labelling schemes.

As outlined in more detail below, to facilitate the phased integration of sustainability requirements, the ESPR will need to maintain a provision for a degree of flexibility in the application of sustainability methodologies that are sensitive to the differences between product categories. Considering the ESPR’s expanded scope to also include non-ErP products, EVIA stresses the importance of maintaining a MEErP dedicated to ErP.

EVIA believes that it is an open question as to whether the ongoing MEErP review will be futureproof in respect to the final form of the ESPR following co-decision. It is important that the Commission communicates as to the whether the MEErP revision is fit-for-purpose for the ESPR, following the latter’s entry-into-force or that preferably the Commission’s waits for the ESPR to enter-into-force before adopting the MEErP revision. This is essential to ensure a firm legal basis for requirements and thus legal certainty.

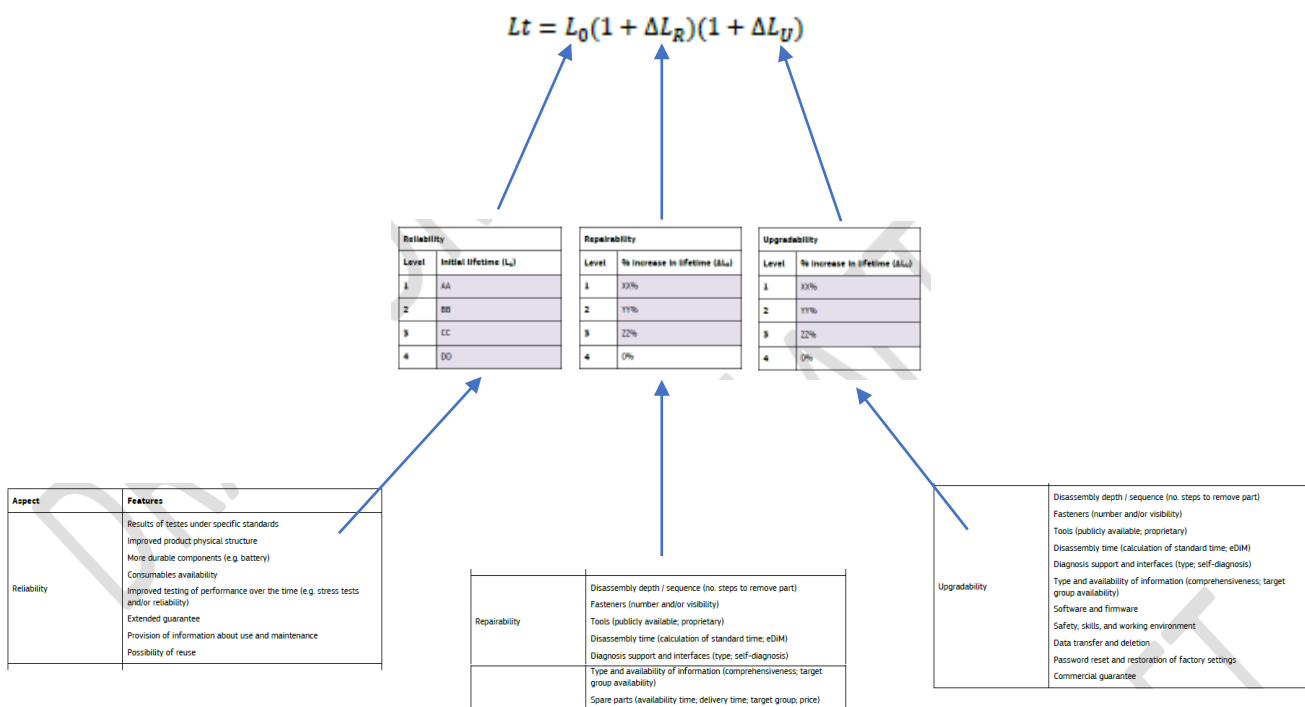
## **2. Adapt the material efficiency scoring to the specific product groups**

Elements of the MEErP revision are firmly targeted at the broader range of aspects on which broader ecodesign requirements could be set under Article 5 of the ESPR proposal; for example, durability, reliability, reusability, upgradability, reparability, recycled content, and environmental impacts, including carbon and environmental footprint.

EVIA notes that the direction on durability, reliability, reusability, upgradability, and reparability is moving towards a durability and reparability scoring. Evidenced at the EU level by the Commission’s development of a scoring scheme in the context of the preparatory work for GROW Lot X on smartphones and tablets, but also by national initiatives embodied by the French Reparability Index, which looks set to be adopted in full by Belgium. With national measures proliferating, thus raising Internal Market barriers, EVIA welcomes the MEErP revisions intention to harmonise such scoring in the context of the ecodesign framework. Figure 14 suggests that under MEErP the durability score of a product would be determined as a function in combination of scores for reliability, reparability, and upgradability. The individual and discrete scores would be determined on a level 1-4 basis (see figure below), comprised of design features and strategies that contribute to and have an impact on reliability, reparability, and upgradability.

In a simplified example for a single reparability design strategy, if a manufacturer provides universal and unrestricted access to spare parts, then the product would achieve level 1 on the reparability score. On the other hand, if the design strategy provides access to spare parts only to qualified or professional repairers, the product would achieve level 2. This score or level would then be aggregated with the score or level for other reparability design strategies, e.g., publicly available tools, to give the products reparability score.

EVIA notes that the outlined scoring approach would provide manufacturers with flexibility and choice in designing a material efficiency strategy, both within the individual and discrete scores for reliability, reparability, and upgradability, but significantly also across the three scores when aggregated in an overall durability score. This has been illustrated in the below diagram.



EVIA cautiously welcomes the flexibility and choice inherent in the suggested approach to material efficiency scoring. Under this approach manufacturers would theoretically have the freedom to choose from a wide menu of design strategy combinations, with a view to maximising the overall score. A manufacturer could for example chose to preference reliability at the expense of reparability, for example by using sealing techniques to improve the physical structure of a product improving reliability but reducing reparability. The manufacturer could then improve the reparability score by using publicly available tools or making the spare spares and/or Repair and Maintenance Information (RMI) available to a professional repairer, rather than using proprietary tools or keeping repair in-house.

EVIA gives a cautious welcome to the suggested approach; as is ever the case, the devil is in the detail, which under the ecodesign framework implies the implementation of the approach at the level of product groups in the product-specific ecodesign implementing regulations, e.g., ENER Lot 11 and GROW Lot 6.

The suggested approach will only be successful if it is tailored to the specificities of individual product groups. This means that in implementing the approach the following must be product-specific:

1. Weighting of Reliability, Reparability and Upgradeability aspects in the Durability Score.
2. Weighting and classification level for design strategies/choices in the individual/discrete scores.

To illustrate, the logic from the suggested approach is that repair by the consumer of a product would be level 1 of the reparability score, i.e., by having an RMI and spare parts would be readily available free of charge and disassembly depth would be limited with the use of publicly available tools. However, for ENER Lot 11 consumer repair, level 1 would be inappropriate from both safety and energy efficiency standpoints. Permanent magnet motors in the fan present a serious risk of injury and as the component with the most significant aspect on the efficiency of a final product in which it is incorporated, e.g., a ventilation unit, non-professional repairer could significantly reduce the energy efficiency of the final product. As such, level 1 for ENER Lot 11 cannot be consumer repair, it must be professional repair.

### **3. Allow flexibility to adopt the most appropriate Lifecycle Assessment methods**

EVIA understands from comments made by a Commission representative at the 15 April 2021 Introductory Stakeholder Workshop on the Sustainable Products Initiative (SPI), that parties in the Commission consider the body of work conducted by DG Environment on Product Environmental Footprints (PEF) to be “the best lifecycle assessment available today.” The Commission has since confirmed its conviction that PEF is considered the primary LCA, with the Member States, trade associations, and companies urged to conduct PEFs in the Commission’s 2021 Recommendation on the use of the Environmental Footprint methods. The expected publication of the Commission’s legislative proposal for an initiative on Substantiating Green Claims in Q4 2022 is anticipated to further solidify and codify the use of PEF to verify commitments on sustainability performance.

However, it is important to note that Technical Building Systems (TBS) covered under ErP were not among the pilots developed and tested between 2013 and 2018. As such, we would suggest substantiating this claim and publish a benchmark comparing PEF and existing EPDs programmes for HVAC equipment. Until the publication of such a benchmark, it should not be assumed that PEF methodologies are the “best lifecycle assessment available today” or that will be available in the future for TBS.

In this regard, EVIA notes that the EcoReport Tool makes use of a streamlined Lifecycle Assessment (LCA) and Lifecycle Cost as part of MEErP. EVIA welcomes consideration of how the EcoReport Tool can be successfully adapted to consider sustainability aspects more thoroughly in the context of the ongoing MEErP revision. Allowing these discussions to mature and for the outcomes to be considered against PEF as options, would guarantee more informed decision-making on the which LCA methodology is most suited to ErP.

### **4. Interface with the sustainability performance of buildings**

Beyond the TBS covered by future sustainability requirements under the ESPR and construction products under the Construction Products Regulation (CPR), the sustainability performance should be aggregated at the building or system level. In this respect, EVIA notes positively that the Commission’s proposal to revise the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) seeks to introduce a requirement to declare the lifecycle Global Warming Potential (GWP) of a new building from 2030.

EVIA notes that the EPBD revision proposal seeks to legislate the Commission's Level(s) framework as the methodology for calculating the lifecycle performance of buildings. It is essential that the interface between the PEF/LCA methodologies for TBS under the ESPR are harmonised with the Level(s) LCA methodology at the building level. In essence, the GWP performance of a TBS should be harmonised with the declared performance data from ecodesign data sheets so that it can be aggregated with the GWP values of other TBS and building elements to derive the lifecycle GWP of the building.

For this interface to function smoothly, it is essential that the LCA methodologies for TBS are in place under the ESPR before the reporting requirement for the lifecycle GWP of new buildings is applied under the EPBD. As such, EVIA firmly supports 2030 as the EPBD reporting deadline.

## About EVIA

The European Ventilation Industry Association's (EVIA) mission is to represent the views and interests of the ventilation industry and serve as a platform between all the relevant European stakeholders involved in the ventilation sector, such as decision-makers at the EU level as well as our partners in EU Member States. Our membership is composed of more than 40 member companies and 6 national associations across Europe, realising an annual turnover of over 7 billion euros and employing more than 45,000 people in Europe.

EVIA aims to promote highly energy efficient ventilation applications across Europe, with high consideration for health and comfort aspects. Fresh and good indoor air quality is a critical element of comfort and contributes to keeping people healthy in buildings.