The development of the Product Environmental Footprint in 4 phases

Preparatory Phase

2008-2013: Already in 2008 the European Commission was commissioned to develop a methodology for the Carbon Footprint. A study on reporting the environmental impact of companies showed that for some products and sectors greenhouse gas emissions were not the most important aspect. Hence the decision to extend the work to other environmental aspects in order to consider all important environmental impacts.

In this preparatory phase the Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCRs) and Organisation Environmental Footprint Sector Rules (OEFSRs) were defined and the importance of life cycle thinking in the EU was further established.

Pilot Phase

2013-2019: The pilot phase of PEF is currently nearing its end. It consists of 25 PEF pilot projects in various sectors with the aim of specifying the PEFCRs. By testing in the field, we wanted to find out which data sets work and which do not. The data sets and PEFCRs should represent products as realistically as possible. The ifu Hamburg was also involved in this phase. After completion of the pilot phase, the European Commission will release the PEFCRs, the model of representative products and the data sets for all those who wish to conduct a PEF study.

Transition Phase

2019-2021: The transition phase has not yet started but will eventually allow a broader professional public to test the PEFCRs in concrete applications. Further PEFCRs are also to be developed. This phase should lead to a clear, uniform labelling and implementation of PEF studies.

Implementation and Communication Phase

From 2021 onwards: The implementation or communication phase is the regulation phase. In this phase, the European Union will determine in which cases compliance with the PEF regulations is mandatory in order to assert the environmental impact of products. The results of the process will also be shared with the public.