

**Convening Assessment Summary of Findings  
EPEAT Standards Development Roadmap (EPEAT SDR)  
April 8, 2007**

## **1.0 Introduction and Methodology**

A convening assessment was performed at the beginning of the project. The purpose of the convening assessment was to gather very preliminary information about major issues. The information was used to aid in the design of the project and the stakeholder input process and identify key individuals that should be involved. Phone interviews were conducted with selected stakeholders during January and February 2007 to get their input on key items including:

- Overall feedback on EPEAT
- Product categories that should be considered
- Key issues relating to product prioritization/sequencing
- Timing issues for each product (timing to be relevant)
- Transformation technologies on the horizon
- Participants and elements of a successful process
- Categories (“buckets”) of criteria should be included in the future development of standards
- Their interest and availability in participating in the dialogue
- Ideas for funding of future standards development

A total of 28 interviews were conducted by Pamela Brody-Heine/Eco Stewardship Strategies, Vicky Salazar/EPA and John Katz/EPA. A list of participants is provided in Appendix A. Stakeholders represented a range of groups including:

- Manufacturers
- Purchasers (government and other organizations)
- Non-profit environmental organizations
- Retailers
- Recyclers
- Others

The interviewers generally followed an interview guide to create a consistency in the topics covered in each phone conversation.

## **2.0 Findings**

### **2.1 Overall Feedback on EPEAT**

Interviewees, in general, indicated that the EPEAT process was successful and the EPEAT tool is working well. Additional specific comments included:

- Makes purchasing decisions easy
- The stakeholder process took too long; for future standard development processes we should be aware of the amount of time commitment for small businesses and NGOs

- The current standard does not set the “bar” high enough
- The standard should include more criteria for end of life management
- Interest in revising the current standard (IEEE 1680) sooner rather than later
- Need to get current version of EPEAT working well before considering expansion

## 2.2 Product Categories

A list of possible product categories was provided to the interviewees during the conversation (cell phones, communications and cabling, copiers, fax machines, multi-function devices, PDAs, printers, servers and televisions).

Interviewees were then asked:

- What other products do you think are candidates for future standards?
- What products should not be included?
- Are there products that are similar enough that they could be grouped together?
- What do you think are the top couple of candidates for future standards?

Most of the participants indicated that these products were the appropriate set for future standards. A few additional products were suggested including gaming devices, set top boxes, home entertainment electronics (VCRs, stereos, DVD players, etc.), telephones, telecom and software.

Many interviewees gave suggestions on grouping products together. The following **four product category groupings emerged as being of highest interest for future standards development** (in alphabetical, not priority order):

- Cell phones and PDAs
- Imaging devices (printers, copiers, faxes, scanners and multi-functional devices)
- Servers
- Televisions and other display devices

Other products identified by stakeholders included gaming devices, set top boxes, home entertainment electronics (VCRs, stereos, DVD players, etc.), digital converters, communications and cabling, telecom, telephones and software.

Other notable comments and suggestions included:

- Incorporating TVs into IEEE 1680 because they are so similar to monitors
- Copiers vary tremendously in size and large copiers may not fit well with other imaging devices
- All major electronic devices should be within EPEAT scope

Stakeholders were divided on whether EPEAT needed to include consumer products. Some interviewees felt that EPEAT is working well as it is and doesn’t need to be extended to the consumer market. Some indicated a concern that the current EPEAT system needs to be well established before expanding into the consumer market, while others suggested that consumers do not value environmental attributes. However, others

indicated the desire to see EPEAT include consumer electronic products because of the large market and potential for environmental impact.

### **2.3 Product Category Prioritization/Sequencing**

The majority of stakeholders contacted felt that additional standards should be developed. In discussing the criteria that should be used to prioritize or sequence product categories, many participants indicated the **environmental footprint** of the products was a key component. Additionally, we heard that an effort should be made to develop an environmental profile for the products being considered for future standards development to help prioritize among the product categories.

Other comments that we received included:

- Focus on whatever consumes the most energy
- Use a self-selection process – prioritize the products with interested manufacturers
- Need to focus on what the purchasers are interested in and shouldn't develop standards just for the sake of developing them
- Criteria should include volume sold in US, toxicity impact, inability to recycle, and hazardous items that fly under the radar screen for RCRA – e.g. mercury in flat screens
- Need to consider the inherent value of the product (is it a \$90K product or \$350 product?)
- Lifespan of the product
- Consider “retail purchasing”, not consumer purchasing (e.g., the retailer is the consumer, not the individual consumer)

### **2.4 Other Considerations**

We asked interviewees about other considerations such as transformational technologies in the horizon and timing issues in certain products sectors (e.g. TVs going from analog to digital in 2009). We heard a range of considerations including:

- Cell phones becoming mini computers or multi-media device. Notion of screen size (4 inches or more) defining what a “computer” is.
- TV analog switch to digital
- Microsoft Vista software generating lots of hardware obsolete
- Focus on upcoming technologies rather than just look at technologies that exist now
- Possible that over next couple years much higher energy efficiencies will be possible - don't too aim too low
- Mobile products becoming increasingly function laden – generally the more functions it has, the more energy it tends to consume
- Use of nanotechnology
- New technology that eliminate mercury in screens
- Timing of Energy Star specifications for servers and TVs
- Trend towards convergence of products, so merge products when possible
- Gaming industry – platforms that are extremely complex - all-in-one home entertainment system

- Huge influx of RFID
- Video/Camcorders – moving to digital/hard drive format
- Imaging device consumables and their inclusion, or not, in a standard

## **2.5 Participants in Process**

We asked stakeholders who should be included in this dialogue. Many interviewees indicated specific groups including manufacturers, retailers, recyclers, purchasers, suppliers and environmental organizations, but the most common response was that the process needed to be balanced and inclusive of all stakeholder groups.

## **2.6 Successful Process**

We also asked what it would take for them to consider the process a success. In general stakeholders indicated that they were looking for a time efficient, balanced process using credible information in the decision making process.

Several participants indicated that there needed to be sophisticated understanding of what is technically possible now or soon in the design of these products.

Several participants said that there needs to be “strong credible information about the environmental footprint of these products and definitions of products.”

Another participant indicated that it was “critical that new standards take into consideration long-term financing and sustainability, so that standards have a long term future.”

A couple participants expressed a desire to develop a standard with internationalization in mind – OEMs develop products for a global market, need to think about a global market.

## **2.7 Future Standards Development**

In looking forward towards future standards development, we asked participants what categories (“buckets”) of criteria should be included, and what should not be included, in future standards. Overall, we heard that the existing criteria categories are the right ones to include in future standards.

A few additional comments included:

- Keep it reasonable! Don’t create something where only the deep pockets can participate creating an even deeper divide in the marketplace
- Take back component is critical
- Energy use in all products should be looked at because has the highest environmental impact
- Include noise emissions, particularly in printers
- Look at longer warranties – set a higher standard
- More options for end of life management
- Need to put greater emphasis on extending life and reuse. The greatest benefit comes from the machine “not bought.” Need to look at software licensing as an impediment to improving product longevity and reuse.

We heard comments both for and against including criteria on health and safety. An issue for several stakeholders was ensuring effective and appropriate recycling of electronics.

There was very little input on SDO organization that we should use for developing standards, save one comment that we should “Make sure that the SDO can go international very quickly and easily.”

### **2.8 Interest in Participating in the Process**

At the time of the convening assessment, the project plan included two in-person stakeholder meetings and at least one conference call to create the standards development roadmap. Overwhelmingly, interviewees expressed interest in staying informed on the project progress but were not eager to attend the two in-person stakeholder meetings for developing a roadmap. Stakeholders expressed interest in actively participating during the standards development process itself, but were less interested in the roadmapping process.

There seemed to be agreement that additional standards should be developed, and the actual sequencing appeared to not be very controversial. That said, many participants indicated product categories that they felt were the top candidates, as discussed previously in Section 2.2.

### **2.9 Funding of Future Standards Development**

We asked interviewees if they had ideas for, or an interest in, funding development of future standards as EPA is prepared to provide some support, but other partners will be essential. The following suggestions were provided:

- Foundation grants
- Corporate contributions via trade associations for partial funding

## **3.0 Summary**

In summary, the input we received during the convening assessment indicated that:

- Four product categories were of greatest interest to stakeholders (in alphabetical, not priority order):
  - Cell phones and PDAs
  - Imaging devices (printers, copiers, faxes, scanners and multi-functional devices)
  - Servers
  - Televisions and other display devices
- There is general support for developing standards for additional product categories
- There is substantial interest in actively participating in the actual standards development process, but marginal interest in participating in in-person meetings for the roadmapping process itself.
- There is a strong interest in development of environmental and energy profiles of the product categories of highest interest.

Based on the input we received, the work plan was modified such that in-person stakeholder meetings were replaced with conference calls and public comment periods. Additional effort will be put into collecting information on environmental and energy impacts of products.

## Appendix A – Convening Assessment Participants

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Basel Action Network	Sarah Westervelt
Center for Environmental Health	Sue Chiang
Cingular	Liz McCleskey
City of San Francisco	Chris Geiger
Clean Production Action	Alex McPherson
Computer TakeBack Campaign	Barbara Kyle
Consumer Electronics Association	Parker Brugge
Consumer Electronics Retail Coalition	Marc Pearl
Department of Homeland Security	Bill McGovern
Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Acquisition & Materiel Management	Barbara Matos
Electronics Industry Alliance	Rick Goss
Energy Star	Katharine Kaplan
Epson	Shelby Houston
Google	Bill Wehl
Green Hospitals Association	Patti Griffith
Healthcare Without Harm	Sarah O'Brien
Hewlett Packard	Paris Decker
International Association of Electronics Recyclers	Pete Muscanelli
Kodiak Finance	Ronalda Meson
Microsoft	Ken Jennings
NERC	Lynn Rubenstein
Nokia	Ed Butler
Panasonic	David Thompson
Product Stewardship Institute	Scott Cassell
Sony	Doug Smith
State of California, CIWMB	Kathy Frevert
Walter Alcorn Consulting	Walter Alcorn
Xerox	George Lundberg