**Level(s) testing - Frequently asked questions**

**1. Is there consolidated information about the design of Levels and intended use?**

There are different kinds of information on the Level(s) website.The recent "Level(s): A Guide to Europe's New Reporting Framework for Sustainable Buildings" sets the scene for sustainable buildings and Level(s) in a short and concise format.

**2. What information is available in what languages?**

Already, much of the communication material, see the Level(s) webpage is available in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian and Polish. The main technical documents (part 1, 2 and 3), available on the same webpage, will be translated as well and uploaded on the same webpage in May.

**3. Is Level(s) a simplified certification system?**

Level(s) is a reporting tool, but it is not a certification system. There are no European benchmarks attached to it, and hence no different labels indicating different levels such as A, B, C. The European Commission would however encourage e.g. Member States and even individual organisations to set benchmarks or targets on their side, to drive change and improvement.

**4. What is the value of testing Level(s)?**

Those participating in the testing of Level(s) will be marking themselves as frontrunners with a key role in shaping and informing the development of Europe's first pan-regional policy that considers the whole life cycle of a buildings environmental performance.

Moreover, testers of Level(s) can be assured that the buildings they are designing and building are helping to deliver on global and regional priorities in areas including climate change, resource efficiency, water efficiency, resilience and health.

Level(s) offers a simple entry point for users to develop their knowledge and skills in emerging policy areas such as Life-Cycle Assessment (LCA) and Life Cycle Costing (LCC). This will assist in improving business development acumen and further their understanding of green building tools.

**5. What kinds of buildings are within the scope of Level(s)? Can it be used and hence tested on a school building or on a warehouse?**

The Level(s) scope when it comes to the building types are residential buildings and offices. This was decided early on in the process, in discussion with stakeholders. Together they are the most common building types in the EU.

Considering the test phase of Level(s), depending on what a school building looks like, and how much it differs from the buildings in the scope, it may work very well to use it to test Level(s). We encourage you to contact us to discuss potential test projects.

A warehouse is however distinctly different in form and patterns of resource use and servicing from a residential or office building and would not fit the current scope.

**6. Can Level(s) be used/ tested on public buildings such as social housing?**

Yes indeed, residential buildings are a main target for Level(s) and social housing projects fit perfectly within the scope.

**7. Is Level(s) only targeting new building projects or existing buildings as well?**

Level(s) is targeted at new buildings as well as existing buildings at the point of major renovation. In both cases, it can be used from design through to occupation.

**8. What is a building project for Level(s)? Does it take into account the earthmoving work before construction of the building? Are the CO2equivalent emissions emitted by construction machines taken into account?**

For the purpose of Level(s), a building project is defined in terms of life cycle stages – from the manufacturing of construction materials to eventual deconstruction and the end of life of the constituent construction materials. The system boundaries for each life cycle stage are defined with reference to those described in EN 15978. Module A5 of EN 15978 'construction installation process' includes within its system boundary 'ground works and landscaping' which can be understood to take into account earthmoving work. Depending on the Level(s) indicators worked with, the framework thus takes this aspect into account.

Regarding emissions emitted by construction machines, yes, these emissions are to be included if the construction life cycle stage is modelled and assessed.

**9. What are the suitable life cycle stages of a building project to use Level(s) on? Design? Construction? As-built? In-use?**

Level(s) can be used at defined project stages – design, construction, post-completion, occupation – and defined life cycle stages – production, construction, use, end of life.

It is recommended to use Level(s) as early as possible in the conception of a project in order to model and identify possibilities for improvements in performance. In reality, the timeframe for the test phase will limit how many project stages can be tested. If a project is quite well advanced, then

there could be value in comparing the performance predicted at earlier project stages with the completed and occupied stages.

The European Commission encourages the modelling of all life cycle stages, in order to avoid trade-offs and the shifting of environmental burdens between life cycle stages. However, given that life cycle assessment requires specific expertise and is a relatively new tool for the sector, the Level(s) guidance does present the opportunity to focus on a limited number of life cycle stages and indicators, in order to get started.

For further guidance, see the *'Simplified options based on an incomplete life cycle'* that are provided in [part 3 of the Level(s) documentation](#), for both indicator 1.2 Life cycle GWP and the overarching assessment tool: cradle to cradle LCA.

**10. Is the European Commission developing a list of approved LCA tools?**

The JRC has published, in [part 3 of the Level(s) methodological guidance](#), a list of LCA tools that have been identified in the market and which could be used. There is no approval process for these tools, however, the JRC is working to keep providing up-to-date information on tools which will enable testers to make an informed choice, taking into account their budget and needs.

**11. Will there be a formal procedure for the European Commission to accept companies submitting test projects? Do testers have to sign any official document? What is the timing for projects submission and acceptance? Is there funding available for testing?**

The European Commission will not evaluate potential test projects using any formal criteria for acceptance. Anyone interested is more than welcome to test Level(s). Those seeking to test Level(s) will, however, be asked to make a written commitment to participate in the evaluation of their experience testing Level(s).

The European Commission is not providing funding support to test projects, but it is however providing different kinds of technical support, to make the test phase as smooth as possible to take part in, but also for the European Commission to analyse the results.

**12. What kind of commitment is expected by companies participating in the test phase? Which kind of feedback is due? Which format should be used?**

The documentation that will be required from testers comprises information on the indicators worked with via a completed reporting spreadsheet (the common reporting format), together with any other supporting technical information that is required as indicated in the Level(s) guidance. Feedback related to the general experience of working with the framework via a completed Level(s) survey (to be published in June) will also be required.

If your project is amongst the sample that will be verified later on, you may be asked to share more detailed project technical documentation that will help JRC verifying how the Level(s) guidance has been used.

**13. What support is the European Commission providing to organisations taking part in the testing of Level(s)?**

The European Commission provides technical support to testers in the form of a helpdesk, regular webinars and an electronic platform for information exchange between testers. This will allow testers to get feedback and advice.

**14. Will the results that a testing organisation feed back to the European Commission become public?**

The results that the testers are expected to feed back to the European Commission will not be made public. However, results will be presented on an aggregated level as part of the final analysis.

Moreover, the European Commission will provide an electronic platform for testers to share information as they wish. This will be accessible to all testers as of July 2018.

**15. What are the possibilities to quickly test the LEVELS label for one or two development or eventually one or two existing buildings?**

For residential developments, performance could be assessed for a representative sample of house or apartment types. Developments with a number of office buildings, or even mixed use office/residential blocks can also be supported.

**16. Will project be clustered by type? Will the European Commission appoint focal points by type of projects?**

The European Commission will not make any formal clustering of projects, as testers are free to test Level(s) on any residential or office building projects. The Commission is, however, interested in contrasting the experiences of applying Level(s) to the two building types, as well as taking into account other factors such as the type of client, the scale/form of development and the location in the EU. Formal focal points are not proposed.

**17. Is there information on costs, application and timing?**

A key aim of the test phased is to learn more about the cost, application and time implications of using Level(s) at different project stages and levels. There is however no information available ahead of the test phase.