

PURPOSE

This resource provides answers to frequently asked questions about the Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT™), the required method of product environmental assessment for desktop computers, laptops and monitors for all federal entities, including Federal Electronics Challenge (FEC) Partners.

ELECTRONIC PRODUCT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT TOOL (EPEAT)

EPEAT is an easy-to-use evaluation tool that allows for the comparison and selection of electronic products based on environmental attributes, in addition to cost and performance considerations. EPEAT-registered products meet minimum performance standards in areas such as energy efficiency, toxicity reduction and material selection. EPEAT standards are currently available for computer desktops, monitors and notebook computers.



A multi-stakeholder team comprised of industry, government, non-governmental and other experts, developed the EPEAT computer standard over several years, culminating in its acceptance as an American National Standard in April 2006, known as Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) 1680, Standard for Environmental Assessment of Personal Computer Products, including Notebook Personal Computers, Desktop Personal Computers and Personal Computer Monitors.

EPEAT is the required method of product environmental assessment for desktop computers, laptops and monitors for FEC Partners and federal agencies. As of January 2008, at least nine federal agencies, purchasing a combined \$40 billion in information technology products, are committed to purchasing EPEAT-registered products. As federal entities, FEC Partners must require EPEAT-registered products in contract specifications for the purchase or lease of personal computer products, or purchase from agency Blanket Purchase Agreements or Government-Wide Acquisition Contracts that provide EPEAT-registered products.

How does EPEAT Work?

The EPEAT system evaluates electronic products according to three tiers of environmental performance – Bronze, Silver and Gold. The complete set of criteria includes 23 required criteria and 28 optional criteria in eight performance categories:

1. Reduction/Elimination of Environmentally Sensitive Materials
2. Materials Selection
3. Design for End of Life
4. Life Cycle Extension
5. Energy Conservation
6. End of Life Management
7. Corporate Performance
8. Packaging

To be registered under EPEAT, a product must conform to all the required criteria. A manufacturer can pick and choose among the optional criteria to boost their EPEAT total "score" to achieve a higher-ranking level as follows:



Bronze: Product meets all required criteria

Silver: Product meets all required criteria plus at least fourteen optional criteria

Gold: Product meets all required criteria plus at least twenty-one optional criteria

The three-tier system provides purchasers with the flexibility to select equipment that meets the minimum performance criteria or to give preference to models with more environmental attributes by specifying a higher EPEAT level.

The assessment tool is structured to allow manufacturers to self-declare that their specific products meet EPEAT requirements. The Green Electronics Council (GEC) operates a web-based product declaration system for manufacturers; implements a verification system to ensure accuracy and credibility; and provides a listing of all registered products for purchasers. Manufacturers are required to sign a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) before they can register products with GEC. The MOU commits manufacturers to provide accurate product and company information and provides for remedies should inaccuracies be discovered. Manufacturers must provide a specified set of verification data to demonstrate EPEAT conformance, at the request of the GEC. To ensure that the self-declaration system functions in a transparent and verifiable manner, GEC randomly selects a subset of registered products each year to verify their conformance. More information about the verification process, including the Round One Verification Results Statistical Report, is available on the EPEAT Web site: <http://www.epeat.net/ProductVerification.aspx>.

How do I purchase EPEAT-registered electronic products?

EPEAT simplifies the process of purchasing environmentally preferable computer products for federal agencies and other institutional purchasers.

- EPEAT defines specific environmental attributes of computer desktops, laptops and monitors. For purchasers, this eliminates the complex and time-consuming process of deciding what constitutes a "green" computer and how to evaluate bids against environmental criteria.
- A searchable database of EPEAT-registered products allows federal agencies to quickly survey the market to determine product availability and if there are a sufficient number of EPEAT product offerings that meet agency performance requirements before issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP).

- EPEAT establishes an **evaluation and verification system** to assure purchasers that a registered product meets the EPEAT standard. Purchasers only need to verify that a product is in the EPEAT database of registered products, and leave the evaluation and verification process to EPEAT third-party certification organizations, such as the GEC.
- EPEAT's **three-tier rating system** allows federal agencies to select equipment that meets minimum performance criteria or to give preference to models with additional environmental attributes by specifying a higher EPEAT level.

FEC Partners have several options for purchasing EPEAT-registered products, depending on their agency procurement methods:

- Purchase computer equipment from your agency **Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPA)** that provide EPEAT-registered products. A list of Federal contracts citing EPEAT is maintained at the EPEAT web site: <http://www.epeat.net/RFP.aspx>.
- Utilize a **Government-Wide Acquisition Contract (GWAC)** that provides EPEAT-registered products. A list of Federal contracts citing EPEAT is maintained at the EPEAT web site: <http://www.epeat.net/RFP.aspx>.
- Require EPEAT-registered products in facility or agency Request for Proposals (RFPs) and purchasing contracts using **Model Contract Language**, which is available at the FEC web site: http://www.federalelectronicschallenge.net/resources/docs/epeat_contract.pdf.
- Purchase EPEAT-registered products through **Computer Resellers who identify EPEAT-registered products** in their catalogues. A list of participating Resellers is maintained at the EPEAT web site: <http://www.epeat.net/ParticipatingResellers.aspx>.

How does use of EPEAT meet FEC and other federal requirements?

The FEC encourages Partners to improve the life cycle management of electronic products, including equipment procurement. EPEAT is the required method for environmental assessment of computer desktops, laptops and monitors under the FEC. In the future, the EPEAT system will cover additional electronic products.

By purchasing EPEAT-registered products, Partners can meet one of the FEC award mandatory activities:

- Ensure that 95 percent of computer desktops, laptops and monitors purchased or leased this year are EPEAT-registered products.

Using EPEAT also fulfills other federal requirements for environmentally preferable purchasing, including:

- The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), which requires the use of EPEAT when acquiring personal computer products.

- Executive Order 13423, *Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy and Transportation Management*, which requires federal agencies to meet at least 95 percent of acquisition requirements for electronic products with an Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT)-registered electronic product, unless there is no EPEAT standard for such product.
- One of the Electronics Stewardship standards in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Executive Management Scorecards for Environment, Energy and Transportation.
- The National Technology Transfer Advancement Act (NTTAA) and the OMB Circular A-119, which direct federal agencies to use voluntary, consensus standards for regulatory and procurement activities. The EPEAT system is based on an American National Standard, known as IEEE 1680, Standard for Environmental Assessment of Personal Computer Products, including Notebook Personal Computers, Desktop Personal Computers and Personal Computer Monitors. IEEE is an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited organization, and any standard developed by this organization is verified as meeting the ANSI essential requirements in following an open and consensus based standards development process, thus in compliance with NTTAA requirements.

How do I quantify the environmental benefits of purchasing EPEAT-registered electronic products?

The Electronics Environmental Benefits Calculator is available to assist in estimating the environmental benefits of purchasing EPEAT-registered products. This information can be used in the planning phase to justify EPEAT purchases or periodically to document the results of Partner efforts to improve the life cycle of electronic products.

To run the Calculator, at a minimum, Partners need the number of EPEAT-registered products purchased, and if possible, the number of products meeting each of the three EPEAT rating tiers (bronze, silver, gold). To easily obtain this data, EPEAT and FEC program staff recommend that Partners include a requirement in contracts that vendors periodically report on the quantity of EPEAT-registered products purchased to document program results.

The EPEAT program utilized the Calculator to determine the environmental benefits that were the result of all EPEAT-registered purchases between July 2006 and December 2006. This report is available online at the EPEAT Web site:

<http://www.epeat.net/docs/EPEAT%20Env%20Benefits%20Report%202006.pdf>.

REFERENCES

For more information about EPEAT, please see the EPEAT web site at <http://www.epeat.net/>. The EPEAT web site includes information about the EPEAT standard, a Product Registry of EPEAT-registered products, and guidance for purchasers and manufacturers.



Answers to Frequent Questions: EPEAT and the FEC

Updated: 01/17/2008

Information regarding the Federal Electronics Challenge awards process is available online, at the FEC web site: <http://www.federalectronicchallenge.net/recognition.htm>.

The text of Executive Order 13423 and the Implementing Instructions are available at: http://ofee.gov/eo/eo13423_main.asp.

The Federal Acquisition Regulations are available online from the Office of Federal Procurement Policy, at: <http://www.acqnet.gov/far/>.

Information regarding the National Technology Transfer Advancement Act is available online from the National Institute of Standards and Technology, at: <http://ts.nist.gov/Standards/Conformity/nttaa.cfm>.

The text of OMB Circular A-119 is available online from the National Institute of Standards and Technology, at: http://standards.gov/standards_gov/a119.cfm.

Information about the American National Standards Institute is available online at their web site: <http://www.ansi.org/>.

Information about the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers is available online at their web site: <http://www.ieee.org/>.

The complete Electronics Environmental Benefits Calculator is available for download as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, along with instructions and answers to frequent questions, from the University of Tennessee's Center for Clean Products and Clean Technologies: <http://eerc.ra.utk.edu/ccpct/eebc/eebc.html>.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions related to this resource or need other assistance with the Federal Electronics Challenge, please contact your Regional Champion. The list of FEC Regional Champions is available at <http://www.federalectronicchallenge.net/champions.htm>.

Partners may also request technical assistance via email to partner@electronicschallenge.net.

FEDERAL ELECTRONICS CHALLENGE

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