

NERC

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**Questions & Answers
Procuring Green Computers Teleconference
June 20, 2006
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During the teleconference held on June 20, 2006 to introduce the Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT[®]), there were many important questions and answers shared by the participants. Following is a summary of that discussion. NERC also received some follow up questions from participants that are included below.

PRICING

Question: Will there be a cost differential for EPEAT[®] products?

Answer (Mark Schaffer, Dell): For bronze level products, the plan is for cost parity with existing products. Dell is still researching whether there would be price differentials for silver and gold level products; this would depend on the design changes or service offerings that would need to be incorporated into the product to achieve those higher levels.

PRODUCT LINES

Question: Will Dell offer EPEAT and non- EPEAT[®] versions of the same product?

Answer (Mark Schaffer, Dell): No. Products will either be EPEAT[®] eligible or not. We will not manufacture different versions of the same product line. For example, Dell will offer EPEAT[®] and non-EPEAT[®] products, but not within same product line. The Latitude line is geared towards business purchasers and this business line is working towards EPEAT[®] registration. The Inspiron line, which is more focused on the consumer side, has chosen not to register to EPEAT[®] at this time. There are different market drivers for different product lines.

Question: What if Dell is building custom systems for a University that is not one of its standard EPEAT[®] -registered product offerings, will EPEAT[®] -registration be available?

Answer (Mark Schaffer, Dell): I would expect so, or the sales representative would offer alternative systems that meet the operating requirements and are EPEAT[®] -registered.

RELATIONSHIP OF EPEAT[®] TO OTHER NATIONAL PROGRAMS: NEPSI, F.A.R.

Question: Can you provide a brief synopsis of how EPEAT® relates to NEPSI?
Answer (Scot Case, Green Electronics Council): NEPSI was an attempt to develop a national electronics recycling program. By contrast, EPEAT is an environmentally preferably *purchasing* program.

Question: Can you provide some more detail about the use of EPEAT® in the F.A.R.?

Answer (Scot Case, Green Electronics Council): The Federal Acquisition Regulation (F.A.R.) Subpart 23.703 requires federal agencies to buy environmentally preferable products and services based on EPA-issued guidance. EPEAT® certainly fits this criteria, since EPA sponsored its development.

MANUFACTURER INVOLVEMENT

Question: Does the list of participating manufacturers include the big names?

Answer (Mark Schaffer, Dell & Scot Case, Green Electronics Council):

Yes. In addition to Dell, Hewlett Packard (HP), Sharp, Panasonic, and Apple participated in the development of EPEAT® and are expected to be registering products.

Question: Dmitriy Nikolayev stated that EPEAT® requirements should not be a surprise to manufacturers. Do you think manufacturers have been undertaking efforts to communicate about EPEAT® with their vendors?

Answer (Mark Schaffer, Dell): Dell has been in communication with its direct suppliers for at least two years in anticipation of EPEAT®. Because HP, Apple, IBM, Sharp, and Panasonic were involved in EPEAT® from the beginning, they have also been aware. In addition, the trade association, Electronics Industry Alliance (EIA), participated in the development of EPEAT® and has kept its members informed about its evolution. Recently, EIA has undertaken a more specific outreach effort to ensure that manufacturers are aware of EPEAT® and positioned to use it to their advantage. So, the message is getting out there.

END-OF-LIFE MANAGEMENT

Question: Do you have to specify a take-back option when you purchase a product or can you request it after the fact?

Answer (Scot Case, Green Electronics Council): It should be built into the specification at the time of procurement. EPEAT® requires that manufacturers *offer* take-back, but it does not require that it be free nor does it define the details of the system. So, as part of the procurement you should detail what you want. Or, if you have a separate procurement process for end-of-life management of electronics, manufacturers of EPEAT®-registered products could submit separate responses.

Question: Is end-of-life management limited to a take-back requirement or are there additional requirements such as adherence to the Basel Convention that raise a product to silver or gold level?

Answer (Scot Case, Green Electronics Council): This was discussed in the development of EPEAT[®]. The EPEAT[®] take-back provision (4.6.1.1) requires that the service provided by the manufacturer meet US EPA's Plug-In to E-Cycling Guidelines for Materials Management. There is also an optional point (4.6.1.2.) available to manufacturers for conducting annual audits of recycling vendors to ensure that the recycler complies with the Plug-In Guidelines and with all applicable regulations and laws. The audit provision applies to first, second and third tier recyclers.

SCOPE OF EPEAT[®]

Question: Will EPEAT[®] move beyond computers to other products?

Answer (Scot Case, Green Electronics Council): It is very likely. There will be a process similar to the one engaged in for developing the standards for desktop computers, laptop computers, and monitors for any additions to the program. Every product type has unique environmental attributes and so has to be considered separately. No timeline has yet been established for adding additional products.

Question: How would you suggest that purchasers incorporate social responsibility concerns into EPEAT[®] specifications?

Answer (Dmitriy Nikolayev, MA OSD): The Center for the New American Dream has developed supplemental procurement language that can be used in conjunction with EPEAT[®] to address these issues.

Answer (Scot Case, Green Electronics Council): This is an issue of concern to many people. EPEAT[®] has a built-in review process in which attributes and environmental criteria are re-examined and I would expect this issue to be one of the ones that will be addressed in that review. Keep in mind, however, that EPEAT[®] was funded and developed by EPA, so environmental attributes are the focus of EPEAT[®]

Question: We already require some environmental performance criteria (e.g., limiting or eliminating the use of PVC in computer cases) that are optional criteria under EPEAT[®]. How can an organization move optional criteria to mandatory requirements? Is it counterproductive for a cooperative purchasing organization to move optional criteria into the mandatory category?

Answer (Mark Schaffer, Dell): One of the reasons that manufacturers were involved in the development of EPEAT[®] was the belief that consistent and clear environmental standards will make environmental advancements in computer products more timely and cost effective. So, it is our advice and hope that purchasers use EPEAT[®] as it stands without modifying its requirements.

Answer (Scot Case, Green Electronics Council): One of the strengths of the EPEAT[®] database is that you can focus on specific criteria. For example, eliminating the use of PVC in large parts is one of the optional criteria. You can do a search that looks for silver level products that meet this criteria and determine how many products are available that meet your needs. You can then limit your procurement to these products. By using the EPEAT[®] database you will be able to assess the viability and competitiveness of the marketplace, and the ability of the marketplace to provide the environmental criteria that you have prioritized.

