

## Environmental handprints in SMEs

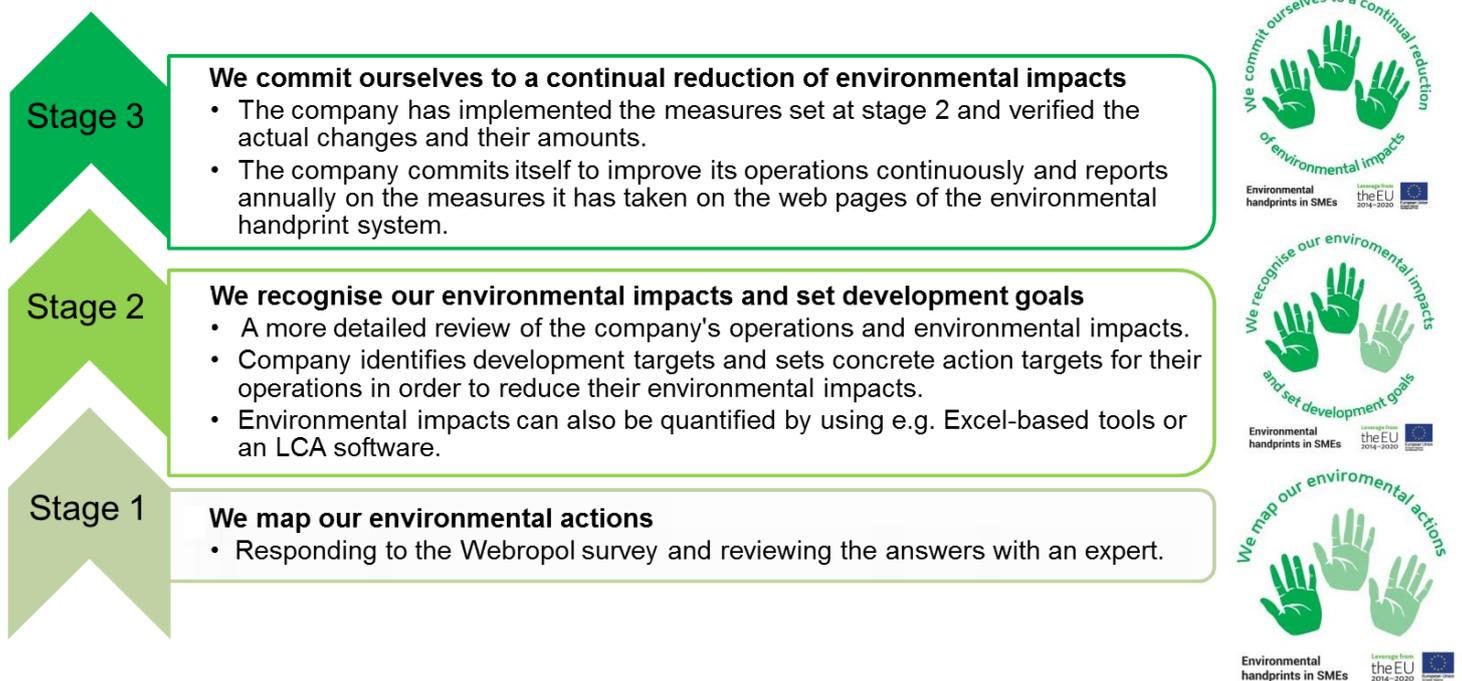
Environmental handprint means that a product or a service is a lesser environmental stress than its so-called traditional counterpart. The difference between the environmental burden(s) caused can be accounted as an environmental act. Environmental handprint describes the environmentally positive factors by which resource efficiency is improved and environmental burden is reduced while producing a product, providing a service or running business more competitively than before. With this information customers can affect their *environmental footprint*, and thus, the environmental handprint of an enterprise should be publicly known.

**Environmental handprints in SMEs** is a three-stage scheme especially for small and medium sized enterprises for promotion of their environmental work. The concept aims to promote enterprises to decrease their environmental impacts and to identify the positive climate actions, so called environmental handprints, of their actions. First, enterprises map their own environmental impacts and already achieved positive climate actions. Second, improvement targets for the near future are set. Third stage of the concept includes commitment to continuous emission reductions.

Companies are provided support for

- **environmental thinking** (how to take environmental aspects into account in decision making)
- information and support to develop business in an **environmentally aware way**
- support in **product development** (e.g. comparisons of material and transportation options)
- **a tool** to inform customers and stakeholders about environmental actions: The participating companies and their goals will be listed in www-pages dedicated for the systems. In addition, the company is given the right to use the environmental handprint logo.
- The scheme is **free of charge** (costs from implementing changes are on the company).

The scheme is also a tool for making the environmental work visible: participating enterprises will inform their development objectives in the system's web pages and enterprise may use a logo in communication with customers or third parties.



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