

PREPS Printer Process Document

Issue 2

12th March 2012

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February 2012

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 What is PREPS?

PREPS is a joint initiative between twenty three leading publishers. Together, these companies have set up a database to hold technical specifications and details of the pulps and forest sources for each of the papers they use. Based on this information papers are awarded a grade of 1, 3 or 5 stars using the PREPS Grading System. This considers whether material has come from low risk sources (or recycled sources) and how the forest sources have been managed.

PREPS members are able to share this information and take it into account when making buying decisions. However, the way in which each member uses this resource is at their own discretion.

The acronym '**PREPS**' stands for the **P**ublishers' database for **R**esponsible **E**nvironmental **P**aper **S**ourcing.

PREPS has no affiliation to any non-governmental organisation, campaign group, paper manufacturer or merchant. Its primary purpose is to provide its members and users with objective information on the papers they use.

1.2 History

Created in September 2006, PREPS is a group of global book and journal publishers who came together to further develop their understanding of paper supply chains and, in particular, the related issue of responsible forest sourcing.

Each Publisher was working independently on this issue, including Egmont UK who had developed a process with external CR consultancy, Acona Partners LLP (Acona), to assess forest sources in their papers. Egmont then approached a wider group of publishers to invite them to share their process, known as the Egmont Grading System. The 10 founding publishers then set up PREPS.

Since this time the membership of PREPS has grown to 23, and PREPS and the grading system itself has continued to evolve and react to changes in the sector. Today the PREPS database holds information on fossil fuel CO₂ emissions and water consumption at the paper mill level, as well as continuing to hold information on the forest sources that go in to each paper.

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In 2012, PREPS access has been extended to allow Printers interested in the information to access the PREPS database. This will allow printers to work in conjunction with the PREPS Publishing members in understanding forest source risks in paper sourcing.

If you are a printer and are interested in joining PREPS, please contact us. If you have any questions about how we grade papers, read through this document or browse our frequently asked questions on our website www.prepsgroup.com.

1.3 Secretariat

Acona acts as Secretariat to the group, organising meetings, collating information, managing the PREPS database and building relationships with stakeholders such as mill groups and NGOs. The duties of the Secretariat are set out in the Terms of Reference (Appendix I).

For more information about the PREPS database or any questions please contact the secretariat:

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2.0 Printer Access

2.1 Printer access features

Printers have access to the PREPS database, which is available over the internet via a password protected website. The database is centrally managed by Acona and subject to a rolling programme of review and update; and is subject to verification by an external forestry expert.

Printers who join PREPS receive the following database features:

- One Printer user account to the PREPS database
- Access to paper technical specifications from mills who have approved access
- Visibility of the PREPS grades of papers from mills who have approved access
- Full database search facility allowing searches by technical specifications and PREPS grade

2.2 Enrolling a New Printer

Any new printer wishing to join PREPS is asked to fill out the **New Printer Conditions and Sign Up Form** (Appendix II). Once the completed form and the paid access fee are received, the printer is regarded as a User. The Secretariat then sets up the database account with an appropriate username and password which are then sent to the named contact.

2.3 Fees

The yearly printer membership and database access runs from 1st April to 31st March.

- Printers joining PREPS at any point in the first half of the year (April 1st to October 1st) pay a fee of £450 + VAT (in the UK).
- Printers joining PREPS at any point in the second half of the year (October 2nd to March 31st) pay a fee of £225 + VAT (in the UK).

The access is renewed annually on 1st April regardless of the original joining date and at a fee of £450 + VAT (in the UK).

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3.0 Paper and mill information

This section explains how the PREPS grading system and data gathering process works to give users a clear understanding of how to interpret the information on the database.

3.1 Grading of Papers

Papers are awarded a grading of 1, 3 or 5 stars based on a system known as the PREPS Grading System¹. Each forest source is graded according to the System (see section 4.2). These are then used to award the whole paper a grade (see table below). These are regularly reviewed and amended to keep pace with developments in forest sourcing.

Paper Grading Criteria	
Grade	Criteria
★★★★★ Recycled, FSC or 100% PEFC certified	<p>Awarded if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the paper is certified and labelled FSC 100%, FSC Mix or FSC Recycled; OR the paper content is 100% recycled;² OR the paper is entirely made of a combination of recycled, FSC and PEFC certified material; OR for PEFC certified papers all the forest sources are from a certified source i.e. the non certified portion must be made up of FSC and/or FSC Controlled Wood forest sources.
★★★ Known and Responsible	<p>Awarded if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all material comes from a low risk source, as defined by the Country Forest Risk Tool, and is not originating from within a WWF-defined Ecoregion³ (see Appendix III); OR all high risk material is verified by either FSC or PEFC but the paper is not certified. OR there is a PEFC certified paper with material originating from low risk uncertified sources. <p>If a forest source is high risk, or is from within a WWF Ecoregion, the source must be <i>verified</i>. <i>Verified</i> means that a source is either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> certified as meeting the FSC Controlled Wood standard (FSC-STD-30-010); AND/OR certified by a recognised forest certification scheme.⁴
★ Unknown or unwanted material	<p>Awarded if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> any portion of the paper is known to, or suspected to, come from a high risk source; OR any of the material is from an unknown source. <p>Material from a controversial source, which is not certified under an acceptable forest certification scheme, would also be considered high risk.</p>

¹ Please see history in section 1.2 to read about the evolution of the PREPS grading system from the Egmont Grading system.

² By *recycled* fibre we mean fibre that has been recovered from post consumer waste (including domestic, distribution, retail, industrial and demolition waste). Fibre from pre-consumer waste, that is secondary and subsequent manufacturing, is treated as virgin fibre.

³ WWF's Ecoregions

⁴ Accepted schemes are: FSC and PEFC (PEFC includes endorsed schemes such as AFS, SFI, CSA, MTCC, Cerflor, and Certfor).

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3.2 Grading of Forest Sources

As described in section 3.1 the PREPS Grade of a paper is based on the grade awarded to each of the forest sources, which make up each pulp. Forest sources are graded according to the criteria in the table below.

Forest Source Grading Criteria	
Grade	Criteria
★★★★★ Recycled, FSC or PEFC certified	Awarded if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the forest source is certified by an FSC or PEFC⁵ Forest Management licence OR the forest source is made up of 100% recycled material⁶
★★★ Known and Responsible	Awarded if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the forest source material comes from a low risk country, as defined by the Country Forest Risk tool, and does not originate from within a WWF-defined Ecoregion⁷ (see Appendix III).
★ Unknown or unwanted material	Awarded if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> any portion of the paper is known to, or suspected to, come from a high risk source; OR any of the material is from an unknown source. Unwanted material is material from a controversial source which is not certified under an acceptable forest certification scheme.

Controversial Sources - Definitions

The Acona country forest risk assessment tool (see Appendix III) takes various indices into account to assess whether a country is a high risk source of timber.

- We use many sources of research to constantly update this list, including the website <http://www.illegal-logging.info/> run by Chatham House.
- The Secretariat updates this list periodically and the latest list can be found in Appendix III of this document.

High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF):

- We use FSC's definition of a HCVF⁸: High Conservation Values (HCVs) include environmental and social values that are considered to be of outstanding significance or critical importance. Examples may include concentrations of endangered species, protection of a stream that is the sole source of water to a local community, or a site with special religious significance. HCVFs are those forests that contain or are essential to maintaining High Conservation Values.

⁵ Accepted schemes are: FSC and PEFC (PEFC includes endorsed schemes such as AFS, SFI, CSA, MTCC, Cerflor, and Certfor).

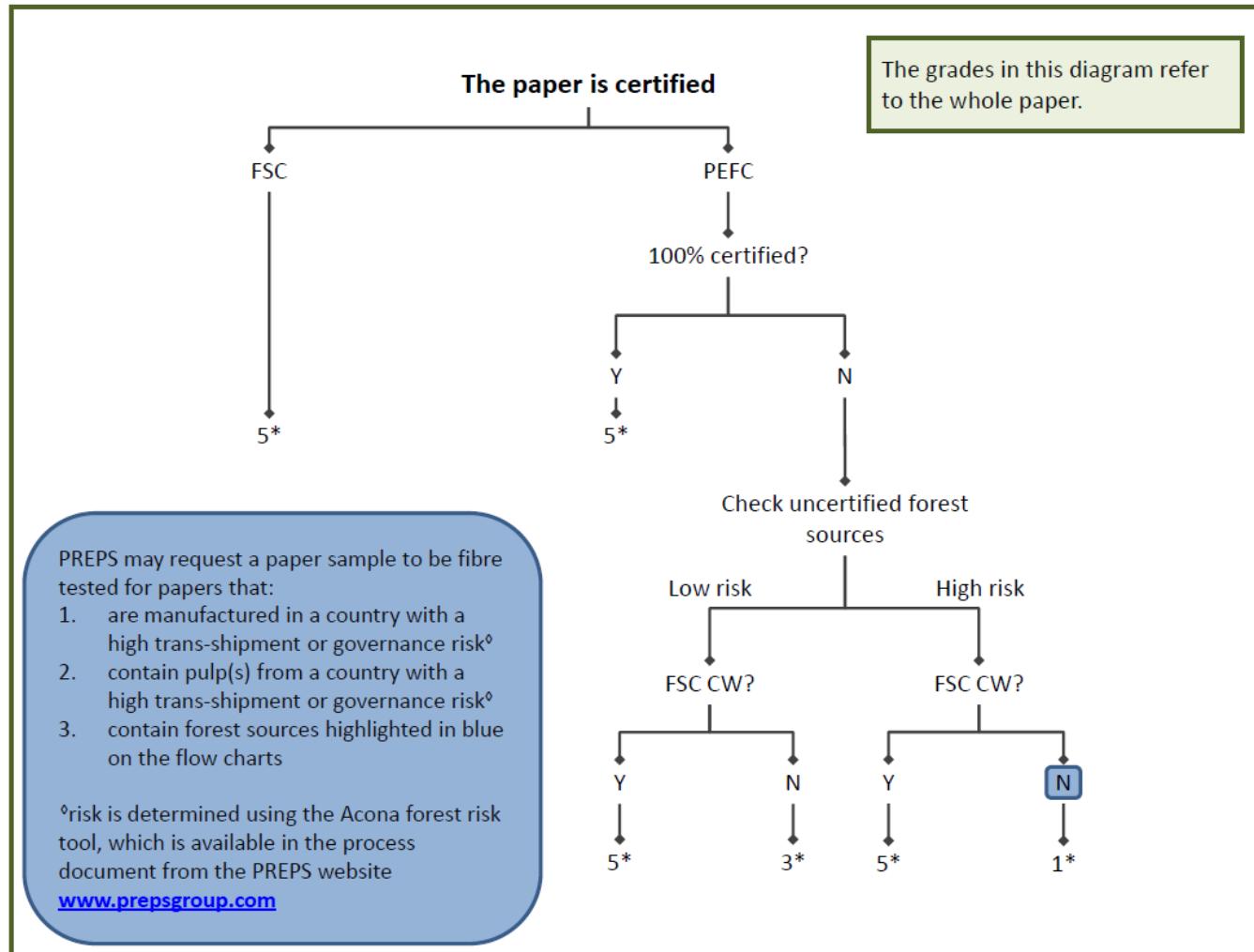
⁶ By *recycled* fibre we mean fibre that has been recovered from post consumer waste (including domestic, distribution, retail, industrial and demolition waste). Fibre from pre-consumer waste, that is secondary and subsequent manufacturing, is treated as virgin fibre.

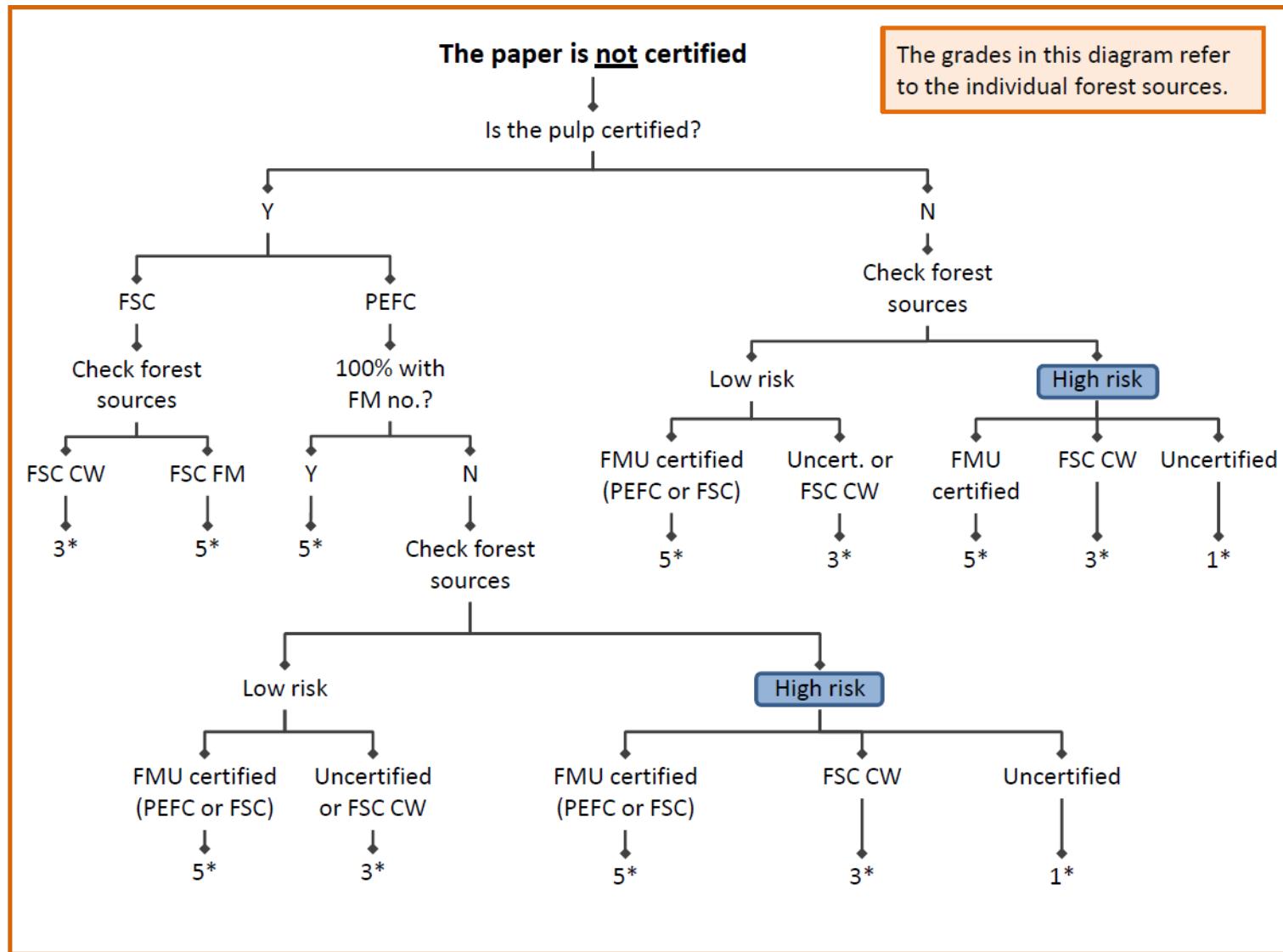
⁷ WWF terrestrial forest Ecoregions

⁸ FSC & High Conservation Value Forests, September 2005 http://www.fsc.org/keepout/en/content_areas/45/2/files/fs_hcvf_web.pdf

3.3 Grading flow diagram

The two diagrams below show the process we go through to grade papers following the rules above. The first diagram shows how we grade certified papers and the second uncertified papers.





3.5 Forest Source Data Capture

Once the brand name and mill company have been identified, the Secretariat gathers information on the paper. This collects two sets of information:

- The paper's technical specifications; and
- Forest source data

In both cases, **information is only accepted from the mill itself.** Information from other sources is not used in the database.

Technical Data

Generally, a paper's technical details are publicly available and easy to access. They are normally posted on the mill's website or available through the company's sales and marketing teams.

As a result, papers are often entered in the database along with technical specifications before forest source data is available. Some papers held within the database therefore have yet to receive a grade (star rating).

If technical specifications are not readily available, the Secretariat requests these details from the mill. This data, whether from the website or direct from the mill, is not verified.

Forest Source Data

Information on a paper's forest sources is much harder to come by. Some mill companies do provide some detail, for example through their involvement in the paper profile initiative (www.paperprofile.com). In most cases publicly available data is not sufficient to allow grading of the paper.

The Secretariat will contact the mill directly to gather the forest source data. They do this via telephone calls, e-mails or letters to establish dialogue with the appropriate individual(s). The Secretariat then requests the data using a standard Proforma or inviting the mill to submit data online. Mills will have 2 months to supply the forest source information.

If there is no response the Secretariat will chase the contact for one month before informing the publisher members that no progress has been made. The publishers will then have an opportunity to supply an alternative mill contact for the Secretariat to engage. The new contact will have one more month to establish contact and supply the forest source information.

Information is accepted in two forms:

- Forest source information specific to the paper itself
- Forest source information relating to the whole of the mill's production including the paper in question

The forest source information is added to the database when sufficient data has been received. The paper is then graded according to the PREPS grading system.

The information supplied by mills varies in detail and often requires follow up by the Secretariat. If complete data has not been received by the deadline the paper is graded as 1* unknown.

This grade is not final and can be revised if and when the mill supplies forest source data.

Internal Review

The papers held in the database are subject to an internal review, which aims to confirm the accuracy of the PREPS Grade compared to the forest sources. The internal review is carried out by an Acona member of staff not involved in the original grading of the paper. Once complete and successfully reviewed, the papers will have their 'Not Audited' tag removed.

The Secretariat will engage with mills to update the forest sources of Active papers every 12 months.

3.6 Data checking

The PREPS Secretariat uses a desk based approach to gathering and checking data we receive from mills. As a first step we ensure the information received is directly from the mill; this reduces the risk of third party manipulation of the data and potential inaccuracies. We check FSC and PEFC certification claims against the relevant websites.

To add an extra level of rigor, we have established relationships with two fibre testing houses which are able to analyse paper samples and identify the tree species present.

We select a sample of papers for testing based on the trans-shipment risk of the country where it is manufactured (see Appendix III for detail on the Acona Country Forest Risk Assessment Tool). Papers are sampled from mills that are located in countries with a high trans-shipment risk. The results of the analysis are compared with the information that has been provided to us by the mill to check that they are consistent.⁹

The Secretariat will contact mills to discuss the results where appropriate.

⁹ In some cases the test results identify 'traces' of certain species which are not considered to have been intentionally used in the production of the paper. According to Tappi T401, the testing methodology used by the testing houses, the presence in the paper

Appendices

I PREPS: Terms of Reference

- This document outlines the terms of reference (ToR) for PREPS (Publishers' database for Responsible Environmental Paper Sourcing).
- PREPS was formed in September 2006 - initiated by Alison Kennedy at Egmont UK, who, having established an in-house approach to paper sourcing recognised the benefits in collaborative working across the industry.
- Full membership of PREPS is restricted to companies in publishing, however printers can subscribe to the system to access the top level information held in the database.
- It is a membership-based initiative with annual fees funding a third party Secretariat. Acona Partners LLP acts as Secretariat to the group, organising meetings, collating information, managing the PREPS database and building relationships with stakeholders such as mill groups and NGOs.
- Activity is focused around the PREPS database which:
 - is available to Members and Printer Users over the internet via a password protected website;
 - holds details of papers each of which will be rated according to the PREPS Grading System;
 - is centrally managed by Acona and subject to a rolling programme of review and update; and
 - is subject to process verification by an external forestry expert.
- PREPS has no affiliation to any non-governmental organisation, campaign group, paper manufacturer or merchant. Its primary purpose is to provide Members and Printer Users with objective information on the papers they use. Key to this is the application of the PREPS Grading System, awarding all papers a star grade of 1, 3 or 5.
- Membership or access is not dependent on any minimum standards being met.

sample of 2% or less of fibres from an individual species is defined as 'trace'. In cases where trace is from a species considered to be

- The terms of reference are agreed by the Steering Group and are subject to change.

Printer Access Fees

- At the date of the latest version of this document Printer Access fees for 2012/13 (1st April to 31st March) are £450 + VAT (in the UK).
- The membership fees enable one individual (IP Address) from the printer to access the PREPS database.

Revised: March 2012

high risk, this information will not be used to reassess the grade of the paper.

II New Printers Conditions and Sign Up

Conditions for Membership and Access

PREPS is a membership-based initiative with annual membership and access fees funding a third party Secretariat. In order to protect the integrity of PREPS, the relationships and trust developed between Members, Acona and the Paper Mills, and the information to which Members and Printer Users have access, a set of **Conditions for Membership** have been agreed.

Conditions for Membership

The Printer User agrees not to disclose outside the PREPS membership or Secretariat data available on the PREPS database and information discussed with Acona, including, but not limited to:

- Database user names and passwords
- PREPS grading

Any breach of these conditions will be raised with all PREPS members and Acona, a consensus of whom will decide an appropriate course of action, which may result in termination of membership or access without return of fees.

In turn, subject to permission received orally or in writing from the disclosing party, **Acona agrees** not to disclose information received from a Member or User:

- to other Members or Users
 - into the public domain.
-

Sign up

If you wish to have access to the database and agree to the Conditions of Membership as described above, please complete the short form below.

Company:

Primary Contact Name:.....

Computer's IP address (for database access):

Signed:

Position:

Tel:

E-mail:

Address:

Invoicing Address:

VAT registration number (if invoicing address in the EU):.....

Do you have any PO/other requirements for invoices?:.....

III The Acona Country Forest Risk Assessment Tool

This tool has been developed to assess risks associated with the sourcing of timber from countries. By risk we mean the likelihood of:

- the timber coming from forests that have been illegally harvested;
- timber coming from forests that have a high conservation value;
- timber coming from plantations that have been recently converted from natural forests;

A full overview of the tool can be found in the PREPS Process document, which is available from the PREPS website (http://prepsgroup.com/_media/documents/process.pdf).