

European Project



Discover FOOTPRINT in 11 questions

1 - What is Footprint?

FOOTPRINT is a research project funded by the European Commission as part of its 6th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP6).

The projet aims at developing computer tools to evaluate -and reduce- the risk of pesticides impacting on water resources in the EU (surface water and groundwater). The project started in January 2006 and benefits from DG Research support for 3 years, i.e. until the end of 2008.

2 - Who are the target users of the tools?

The tools which are being developed are designed to operate at different scales and are optimised for use by different end-user communities :

- FOOT-NES : this tool allows risk assessments to be undertaken at the large scale (EU and member states scale). FOOT-NES is designed to meet the needs of EU and national policy- and decision-makers, of Environment Ministries and Agencies. The tool is also likely to be of interest to pesticide registration authorities.
- FOOT-CRS : the tool is designed for scales ranging from small catchments to regional levels and for use by 'water managers', may they be local authorities, environment agencies, water companies or stewardship managers.

- FOOT-FS : this tool is being developed for use at the local (farm scale) by agricultural advisers and farmers.

3 - Why develop 3 tools rather than a single one?

To best meet the needs of the diverse end-user communities (see above). Note that all 3 tools share the same underlying principles and science and are therefore fully consistent across scales.

4 - What can the FOOTPRINT tools do?

Each of the three tools allows:

- 1) The identification of pesticide contamination pathways in the landscape;
- 2) The estimation of levels of pesticides being transferred towards surface water and groundwater;
- 3) Specific recommendations to be made to reduce the contamination of water resources by pesticides.

5 - Are the tools being validated as part of the project?

The FOOTPRINT tools rely on validated methodologies and approaches and will be evaluated in the third year of the project. Still, the FOOTPRINT tools will clearly need to be evaluated beyond this first validation exercise.

6 - When will the tools be available?

The tools will be distributed for free at the end of the project (end of 2008). Beta versions of the tools are already being circulated among FOOTPRINT partners.

7 - What is the 'FOOTPRINT PPDB' ?

The 'FOOTPRINT PPDB' is a comprehensive database holding data on environmental fate and ecotoxicological properties for a large number of pesticides and their metabolites, including all those registered in Europe. The [FOOTPRINT PPDB](#) has already started to become a reference, not only in Europe, but throughout the world.

8 - How can I keep aware of the latest project developments?

Register with the email-based [FOOTPRINT announcement list](#).

9 - Who is behind FOOTPRINT ?

15 partner institutions representing 9 EU countries. The project is coordinated by Dr Igor Dubus.

10 - What will happen at the end of the EC funding in late 2008?

FOOTPRINT partners have already taken steps to create a self-financing FOOTPRINT support structure to: i) provide help and long-term support for the deployment of the FOOTPRINT tools across the EU; 2) evaluate the performance of the tools at their scale of application; and, 3) develop bespoke (e.g. national, regional) versions of the tools to meet request from specific end-users and stakeholders.

11 - What is ARVALIS'S task in Footprint?

ARVALIS was involved in constructing FOOT-FS, including defining decision trees for the different ways in which water circulates and different risks of pesticide transfer, depending on soil type and the nature of geological substrates. Decision trees were constructed in conjunction with Cranfield University and BRGM, by combining the British HOST method and the decision-making guidelines of the CORPEN approach, as they were interpreted for the Aquaplaine diagnostic tool. The solutions proposed for each soil type and associated pesticide transfer risks, were drawn up by ARVALIS, based on its diagnostic experience in the field. In collaboration with GEOSYS, Arvalis helped prioritise risks in FOOT-CRS, drawing on its diagnostic experience with the Aquavallée diagnostic tool.

Arvalis will be involved in the trial and validation phase of those tools, which will start soon.