environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose."

The guidance proposed below is designed to help Executive agencies meet their obligations under this Executive Order to identify and purchase environmentally preferable products and services.2 It is intended to draw on the extensive procurement experience of the Executive agencies and on the environmental expertise of EPA and others both within and outside of the government. EPA believes that this guidance provides the first step in bringing forward the key issues surrounding the acquisition of environmentally preferable products, allowing Executive agencies to make the necessary choices more effectively. EPA recognizes that this proposed general guidance, however, will not answer many of the questions which may arise in acquisition of a particular product category or service and thus is not intended, although it will be

informative, for use by individual procurement officials.

The guidance attempts to implement the goals of the National Performance Review and procurement reform objectives of making Federal purchasing a simpler and not a more complex process. This guidance also recognizes that defining what is an environmentally preferable product and service may require a complex balancing of different environmental factors. In sum, the guidance does the following:

- Focuses on all types of acquisition, from supplies and services to buildings and systems.
- Establishes a general, umbrella guidance and requests Executive agencies to select voluntary pilot acquisitions or demonstration projects.
- Establishes a framework for issuing more detailed guidances on specific product categories that are related to current or future pilot acquisitions.
 - Establishes a set of guiding principles.
- Outlines a number of steps for Executive agencies' short-run and medium-run implementation.

II. Broad Principles and Approach

A. Overall Approach

In implementing section 503 of the Executive Order, EPA proposes an approach that has two components. The first is the publication of this general, umbrella guidance. Following this, additional guidances will be issued that will focus on

specific product categories. These will be linked to the pilot acquisitions selected by Executive agencies. A more detailed discussion of how these pilot acquisitions might work is included in Section III.B.

Although both components are meant to address multiple audiences (e.g., acquisition community, companies, environmental organizations, etc.), each has a slightly different target audience in mind. The first component, which sets a broad policy framework, is aimed primarily at policy makers and others, both in the public as well as in the private sector, who may be interested in EPA's first comprehensive statement on "green" products. The second component, which will result in more detailed and practical guidance on specific product categories, will be aimed at the procurement and the acquisition personnel. By making clear its goals and directions, both the general and product category specific guidances (PCSGs) should also provide pragmatic direction for companies who desire to produce more environmentally preferable products and services, and who seek to sell those products and services to the Federal government. The consideration of environmental factors in purchasing needs to be put in the context of other important considerations such as performance, health and safety issues and price.

Figure 1 illustrates the approach which is described above.

BILLING CODE 6560-50-M

² Section 401 of Executive Order 12873 requires Executive agencies to consider the use of environmentally preferable products in acquisition planning for all procurement and in the evaluation and award of contracts, as appropriate. Section 501 of the Executive Order requires Executive agencies to "review and revise federal and military specifications, product descriptions and standards to enhance Federal procurement of products" that are environmentally preferable. Section 503(b) of the Executive Order requires Executive agencies to use the guidance developed by EPA "to the maximum extent practicable" in identifying and purchasing environmentally preferable products.