



FACTSHEET The EU Ecolabel

What is the EU Ecolabel?

The EU Ecolabel, established in 1992, is a Europe-wide **voluntary** label for products and services with better environmental performance than average products. Products and services which meet the Ecolabel criteria, after approval by a national authority, can carry the flower logo - which helps consumers to easily identify these 'greener' products.

The Ecolabel is available for over 35 different categories of products and services. The decision to add new types of products is taken by the European Commission and the Ecolabel Board (gathering the Member States representatives and stakeholders).

Over **22,000** products and services on the EU market displaying the Ecolabel Flower, from cleaning products, TVs, paints, textiles to, shampoos, copying paper, campsites and hotels. The increase has been rapid.



Why should consumers prefer the EU Ecolabel over private environmental labels?

The EU Ecolabel – as well as other ecolabels such as the German Blue Angel or the Nordic Swan – has significant added value when compared to other environmental private labels for products:

- It helps shoppers make a contribution for the protection of the environment, as it covers the main environmental impacts of products throughout its life cycle; It helps to reduce the environment and consumers' exposure to toxic chemicals, aiming at substituting hazardous substances by safer alternatives, wherever technically possible;
- The criteria are revised regularly to take technological improvements into account and guarantee that only the best environmentally performing products will be rewarded at any point in time;
- Compliance with all criteria is verified by independent organisations (the national Competent Bodies).

Against the proliferation of misleading green claims, which only confuse consumers, the EU Ecolabel is a good and reliable tool to help consumers make sustainable choices in their purchasing. However, more marketing and promotional activities are needed to increase consumers' awareness on the label



🗨️ Why is the EU Ecolabel important?

- It can drive innovation in to improve resource efficiency, boost the circular economy and create a non-toxic environment.
- The criteria are an important reference of environmental standards for producers worldwide;
- It can be a signpost for future legislation. The Ecolabel requirements could be used as guidelines for the development of mandatory requirements for products (e.g. Ecodesign);
- Ecolabel criteria are often used in tenders for green public procurement, helping to increase the ambition level of environmentally-friendly public procurement.

🗨️ How does a product get an Ecolabel?

EU Ecolabel criteria are developed for a specific product group and specify the types of products which are applicable. For instance, the Ecolabel criteria for personal computers cannot apply to game consoles. No criteria, no Ecolabel.

A producer can apply for the EU Ecolabel via the [national authority](#) of their Member State (the Competent Bodies), which then verifies the product meets the required standards.

🗨️ How are the criteria developed?

The development of the criteria usually takes 1 to 2 years. It starts with a study that analyses the environmental impact throughout the entire life cycle of the product or service. The study also provides relevant market data (sales, variety of products on the market, etc.) and information concerning the potential improvements of the product. The second step are the technical working group meetings organised by the Commission where the relevant findings of the study and the criteria proposals are discussed. These meetings are attended by Member States' representatives, industry and NGOs.

🗨️ Who decides on the criteria?

The final decision on the EU Ecolabel criteria is taken by a Regulatory Committee, where experts from Member States have the exclusive right to vote the proposals made by the Commission. After this vote and within 3 months, the European Parliament and the Council can veto the decision, but this has never happened so far. However, the Regulatory Committee take account of the views expressed previously by the EU Ecolabelling Board (EUEB), where in addition to Member States other stakeholders participate, thus increasing the transparency and legitimacy of the process.

🗨️ What is BEUC doing?

We officially represent consumer organisations in the EU Ecolabelling Board and the technical working groups - where the criteria for each product group are discussed. Our aim is to ensure that the EU Ecolabel fulfills its promises i.e. that only products of environmental excellence can be awarded the EU flower.