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Eco Design

Contents

<input type="checkbox"/> Foreword	
<input type="checkbox"/> What is Eco-design?	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmentally friendly design.	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Choice	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental labels : Consumers Union Guide	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Consumer Products: Green Labels and Claims	3
<input type="checkbox"/> EU Eco-labeling	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Czech Eco-labeling Agency	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Eco-Friendly Products- Some Samples	9



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Eco-labelling and Eco-friendly Products

Foreword

Product design encompasses the most crucial decision-making aspect of industrial activities. Till recently the environmental objectives were never considered in product designing work. With a new push in eco-design settings both in the United States and European Union manufacturers, it appears that quite some changes in the design criteria are likely to emerge in the years to come. Increasingly, product design is being viewed as a possible catalyst in transforming the existing products and goods of consumption to eco-oriented design patterns. Though the concepts of "green design" has started gathering momentum, a number of technical, behavioral, aesthetic and economic barriers have yet to be addressed before product designs reach any reasonable standards in business environment.

As far as conditions in our country matter, we have a very long way to go. Even the idea of eco-design products is yet to emerge as a desired alternative to existing patterns of product design in case of a very large number of manufacturers. With globalization of economy getting into the groove, it is only to be hoped that the patterns of change in product design will also change the way it is changing in US and EU manufacturers.

A glimpse of these changes in product design and labeling is shown in this issue of CERC-ENVIS.

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WHAT IS ECO-DESIGN?

The environmental impacts of Energy-using Products take various forms, such as energy consumption and related negative contribution to climate change, consumption of materials and natural resources, waste generation and release of hazardous substances. **Eco-design**, which means the integration of environmental considerations at the design phase, is arguably the best way to improve the environmental performance of products.

The creation of a coherent framework for environmental product policy avoids the adoption of uncoordinated measures that could lead to an overall negative result; for example eliminating a toxic substance from a product, such as mercury from lamps, might lead to increased energy consumption, which on balance could have a negative impact on the environment. A Community framework also ensures that no divergent national or regional measures that could hinder the free movement of products and reduce the competitiveness of businesses are taken.

Businesses and consumers will benefit greatly not only from better products and an improved environment, but also economically, because of a more rational use of resources. Easier access to an enlarged EU single market will help enhance



competitiveness in the global market place, where environmental concerns are becoming increasingly important. The environment will also gain from this Commission initiative, which tackles all environmental considerations holistically.

The [Directive 2005/32/EC](#) shows the determination of the Commission to integrate environmental aspects in enterprise policies. Its structure (clear framework given by Council and Parliament, technical measures adopted by the Commission) and scope (environmental aspects of products with a view to safeguarding the internal market) present many new

elements. Mechanisms for rapid, efficient and participatory decision-making are provided, which at the same time leave sufficient room for innovation and initiative to manufacturers of products. Widespread application of environmentally-friendly processes and more environmentally-friendly products is among the goals of both the [6th Community Environment Action Programme](#) and of the Commission [Communication on Industrial Policy in an Enlarged Europe](#).

The introduction of eco-design measures that include requirements for improved energy efficiency of products is also an important and long-lasting contribution to combating climate change, securing energy supply and achieving sustainable development.

Environmentally-Friendly Design of Energy-using products: FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE FOR SETTING ECO-DESIGN REQUIREMENTS FOR ENERGY- USING PRODUCTS (EUP)

The **Directive 2005/32/EC on the eco-design of Energy-using Products (EuP)**, such as electrical and electronic devices or heating equipment, provides coherent EU-wide rules for eco-design and ensure that disparities among national regulations do not become obstacles to intra-EU trade. The Directive does not introduce directly binding requirements for specific products, but does define conditions and criteria for setting, through subsequent implementing measures, requirements regarding environmentally relevant product characteristics and allows them to be improved quickly and efficiently.

Products that fulfil the requirements will benefit both businesses and consumers, by facilitating free movement of goods across the EU and by enhancing product quality and environmental protection. The Directive constitutes a breakthrough in EU product policy and introduces many innovative elements together with concrete application of the principles of the "better regulation" package.

By encouraging manufacturers to design products with the environmental impacts in mind throughout their entire life cycle, the Commission implements an [Integrated Product](#)

Policy (IPP) and accelerates the move towards improving the environmental performance of energy-using products. After adoption of the Directive by the Council and the European Parliament, the Commission, assisted by a Committee, will be able to enact implementing measures on specific products and environmental aspects (such as energy consumption, waste generation, water consumption, extension of lifetime) after impact assessment and broad consultation of interested parties.

There are no obligations for all energy-using products, but only for those meeting criteria such as important environmental impact and volume of trade in the internal market and clear potential for improvement, for example where market forces fail to make progress in the absence of a legal requirement.

This policy initiative is expected to increase the effectiveness and synergies of other EU legislative acts and initiatives concerning environmental aspects of products. Examples of related measures are the Directives regulating the management of waste from electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) and the use of certain hazardous substances used in this equipment (RoHS) as well as Directives related to the energy efficiency of appliances such as the Energy labelling Directive. Existing Directives on minimum energy efficiency requirements shall be considered as implementing this Directive for the products that they cover with regard to energy efficiency during use.

Products which have been awarded the Eco-label will be considered as compliant with the implementing measures in so far as the Eco-label meets the requirements of the implementing measure. Although the EMAS registration on its own does not grant presumption of compliance to the



products manufactured by the enterprise, enterprises which have an EMAS registration, which includes product design, may use directly their environmental management system for demonstrating that their product complies with the applicable implementing measure.

The text of the EuP Directive 2005/32/EC, as adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in July 2005 and published in the Official Journal of the European Union (L 121 22.7.2005), is available on the web site. See also the Press Release on the adoption of the Directive for environmentally friendly design of energy-using products (13/04/2005).

Ref : http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/ecodesign/index_en.htm

Environmental Choice (Canada)

Canada's "Environmental Choice" Eco-Logo symbol of certification features three stylized doves intertwined to form a maple leaf, representing consumers, industry and government working together to improve Canada's environment. Established in 1988, the program helps consumers identify products and services that are less harmful to the environment.

A product or service may be certified because it is made or offered in a way that improves energy efficiency, reduces hazardous by-products, uses recycled materials or because the product itself can be reused. Product manufacturers, importers or purveyors of services may apply for a license to use the Eco-Logo once a guideline containing criteria relevant to the product or service type has been approved. Environmental Choice guidelines are based on the best information available at the time and are upgraded as new information and technology

make higher standards possible. Guidelines are developed in consultation with industry, environmental groups, universities and independent technical and scientific advisors.

Environmental Choice issues kits to potential licensees, and Environment Canada's independent Technical Agency assists companies through the application process. Agreements granting use of the Eco-Logo are renewed annually and continued compliance with the guideline is monitored. Certified products and services must continue to meet all applicable safety and performance standards; specifically, they must be as good in every other respect as is generally expected of that type.

Currently, Environmental Choice has more than 1400 approved products, with 119 licensees and 29 guidelines under which companies may be licensed and their products certified.

The Consumers Union Guide to Environmental Labels

What you should know about chemicals in your cosmetics

BACKGROUND:

An excerpt from Consumer Reports ShopSmart

You slather, spray, and paint them on and rub them in. Cosmetics are so much a part of your daily regimen that you probably never think twice about them. If they're on store shelves, it seems reasonable to figure that they're safe to use, despite those unpronounceable ingredient lists.

But at least some of what's in your cosmetics might not be so good for you. One example is the family of chemicals known as phthalates (pronounced THAL-ates), which may be linked to developmental and reproductive health risks. The industry says phthalates are safe, but some companies have dropped them in response to public concern. Essie, OPI, and Sally Hansen, for example, are removing dibutyl phthalate (DBP), which is used to prevent chipping, from nail polishes. Other big-name brands that have reformulated products to remove some phthalates include Avon, Cover

Girl, Estée Lauder, L'Oréal, Max Factor, Orly, and Revlon. If you're trying to cut back on phthalates, however, sticking with these brands may not make much of a difference. You'll find phthalates in too many other personal-care products, including body lotions, hair sprays, perfumes, and deodorants. The chemicals are used to help fragrances linger and take the stiffness out of hair spray, among other reasons. They're also in detergents, food packaging, pharmaceuticals, and plastic toys. And they have turned up in our bodies.

Although phthalates show up in so many places, they're often absent from labels because disclosure is not always required. That's the case with fragrances. We tested eight fragrances and although none of the products included phthalates in its ingredient list, they all contained the chemicals. Some were made by companies that specifically told us their products were free of phthalates, and two even say as much on their Web sites.

Getting your nails done or spritzing on your favorite perfume obviously isn't going to kill you. But the health effects of regular long-term exposure, even to small amounts, are still unknown.

Ref : <http://www.eco-labels.org/focus.cfm?FocusID=24>

Consumer products and the environment: green labels and claims

Why green labels?

Most products make some impact on the environment at different stages of their lives. Many companies and organisations are working to develop greener products.

At European level, for example, the European Commission adopted a Communication on Integrated Product Policy (IPP) in 2003 aimed at improving the environmental performance of products and services throughout their life-cycles. As part of this work it has launched a project to identify those products or product groups that have the greatest environmental impact from a life-cycle perspective.

Labels are a way of helping consumers to recognise products which meet specific environmental criteria to address environmental impacts. Well-known schemes include the Commission's own European Ecolabel.

Labels may serve several functions, in terms of providing information to consumers, and in marketing products, and may benefit companies, their customers, society generally, and the environment specifically.

These aspects depend on the kind of organisation which develops the label, the type of business that the label is aimed at, and who is intended to take notice of the label (a business or a domestic consumer, for example).

The main uses of green labels are that:

- they can act as a catalyst in promoting better environmental standards within a specific product sector or geographical area
- they may raise awareness of environmental issues
- they can help consumers to identify products which meet certain standards
- they can promote the image of the company as one which cares about the environment and the consumer
- they can help products to stand out in a competitive marketplace

- they can be used in advertising
- meeting a specific standard can help manufacturers when tendering for contracts (public procurement contracts cannot normally require products to have been awarded a specific label, but they can specify standards which are the same as a label)

Types of labels

Green labels are not always easy to define, and there is no simple way of categorising all green labels according to what they cover. But the **International Organization for Standardization (ISO)** has developed a classification system for environmental product claims and labels, based on the nature of the claim:

ISO 14024 is for what are known as **Type I claims** - declarations which meet criteria set by third parties (not by the manufacturer or retailer themselves), and are based on life cycle impacts, like the EU Ecolabel and national ecolabelling schemes. These are award-type labels. As they require the product to meet independently set criteria, they should in theory be fairly demanding, but this depends on how strict the criteria are, and on the body which controls the criteria.

ISO 14021 covers **Type II claims**, which are manufacturers' or retailers' own declarations, sometimes called "green claims". These can be useful, but much depends on the type of claim that the manufacturer or retailer makes.

ISO 14025 is for **Type III claims**, which consist of quantified information about products based on life cycle impacts (or Environmental Product Declarations EPDs). Type III claims should enable products to be compared easily, for example for public procurement purposes, because they consist of quantified information about aspects such as energy output.

The many studies of these different types of labelling systems include one in 2000 for the European Commission by Charles Allison and Anthea Carter on ISO Type II and III labels, now on the studies page of the [Commission's website](#).

Several international voluntary organisations exist to coordinate information about each type of labelling system and to promote good practice, and they can provide further advice. These include **GEN** (the Global Ecolabelling Network), for Type I labels; and **GEDnet** (the Global Type III Environmental Product Declarations Network) for Type III labels. For more information on the latter, visit **EPD** (the international site for Environmental Product Declarations).

Less formally, the following categories can also be useful as a way of differentiating the different types of labelling scheme. Some schemes fit into more than one of the following categories, and the categories themselves are not mutually exclusive - a sector-specific label may be a valid Type I ecolabel, for example - but these categories may be helpful to consumers:

- **Ecolabels** (here used to mean schemes for a wide range of products)
- **Energy labels** (which focus on the energy impacts of products)
- **Sector-specific labels** (which apply to one kind of product, like textiles)
- **Organic labels** (which cover food, drink and other products)
- **Food labels** (including drink)
- **Social and "wider world" labels** (which primarily address specific ethical or environmental issues associated with the places where products are sourced)
- **Green claims** (Type II labels in the ISO classification above).

There are many variations. Some large companies use a range of labels, or have their own **company-specific labelling schemes**, such as Philips' Green Flagship. Current trends include moves to reflect the **carbon footprint of products** on labels, and to develop new **environmental labelling for food**. For recent developments, see [Defra's green labelling news](#).

Ref : <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/glc/why.htm>

Global Eco-Labelling Network



European Union Eco-label

The Flower is the symbol of the European Eco-label your guide to greener products and services.

It is a voluntary scheme designed to encourage businesses to market products and services that are kinder to the environment and for European consumers - including public and private purchasers - to easily identify them.

You can find the Flower throughout the European Union as well as in Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland. The European Eco-label is part of a broader strategy aimed at promoting sustainable consumption and production.

Ref : http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/index_en.htm

The European Eco-label scheme: part of a wider strategy on Sustainable Production and Consumption

The Flower scheme is part of a broader strategy aimed at promoting sustainable production and consumption. This aim can be achieved in the context of a "framework for an integrated life-cycle oriented product policy", as indicated in the **Environmental Action Programme "Environment 2010: Our Future Our Choice"**.

Being a market-based instrument, the primary function of the EU Eco-label is to stimulate both the supply and demand of products with a reduced environmental impact. With respect to supply, the EU Eco-label has a clear objective of encouraging businesses to market greener, officially licensed products. On the demand side, the scheme gives you as a European consumer the means to make informed environmental choices when purchasing. The Flower is your assurance of European green authenticity.

The objective to "provide guidance to consumers" has considerable implications with regard to economic efficiency and the flow of information. In fact, the Flower will reduce costs for consumers manufacturers and retailers by lowering the time and effort needed to obtain and provide reliable information on life-cycle considerations, green products and specific European know-how on IPP.

At the same time, products eco-labelled in the EU scheme can give you the guarantee that their compliance with established ecological criteria has been tested by independent third parties, the national and regional Eco-label Competent Bodies.



Information, as used by the scheme, is one key character of a market-based environmental policy. Diffusing information about the environmental effects of a product during its whole life-cycle will be essential in order to support sustainable consumption patterns.

The Main Elements of the Scheme

It has a European dimension

A manufacturer, retailer or service provider who meets the criteria for a product group and who applies for the award of the Eco-label, can market his eco-labelled product throughout the 25 Member States of the European Union. The Flower is also accepted and present in those countries which are signatories to the EEA Agreement (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein). Links to **Candidate and non-EU Countries** are being built up. The European approach avoids having to make an application in every country and thus avoids time-consuming and costly procedures. The same logo is used regardless of the product group in question, thereby eliminating consumer confusion prevalent at the moment given the numerous self claims and green logos in existence.

It is selective

The label is awarded only to those products with the lowest environmental impact in a product range. Product categories are carefully defined so that all products that have direct "equivalence of use", as seen through the eyes of the consumer, are included in the same product group.

The **European Union Eco-labelling Board** (EUEB)

develops ecological criteria for product groups in close collaboration with the Commission. Criteria are voted upon by the Regulatory Committee. Indeed, the Commission cannot adopt criteria before governmental experts of the Member States have given their opinion by voting in this Eco-label Regulatory Committee by qualified majority.

It is transparent

Transparency and widespread participation are further enhanced by the considerable input of representatives of industry, commerce, environmental and consumer organisations and trade unions. International observers are regularly invited and informed by the Commission and by the members of the EUEB. Article 14 of the new eco-label Regulation stipulates how these European-level interest groups are consulted as the Eco-label Consultation Forum within the framework of the European Union Eco-labelling Board.

At present, non European manufacturers are represented by the organisation Eurocommerce. The final consumer, therefore, will increasingly recognise that the Flower logo represents demanding ecological criteria which have been established according to scientific and technical guidelines with widespread participation from independent and neutral bodies.

It works with a multi-criteria approach

Eco-label criteria are not based on one single parameter, but rather rest on a studies which analyse the impact of the product or service on the environment throughout its life-cycle, starting from raw material extraction in the pre-production stage, through production, distribution and disposal of the product or service.

It is voluntary

The scheme is NOT establishing ecological standards which all manufacturers must meet. It is for the producer, retailer or service provider to decide whether or not to apply once the criteria are published in the Official Journal. Given the underlying rationale of the scheme to provide incentives for green manufacturers and public purchasers, the success of the scheme will offer a considerable pull effect for retailers, SMEs and manufacturers to better promote and market their products and contribute to the European IPP.

The Voluntary nature of the scheme means that it does not create barriers to trade. Foreign and Community producers may apply for the logo if they meet the criteria and want to market their products in the EU/EEA. Of course, they may sell their products within the EU/EEA markets also without the flower.

Applying for the Eco-Label.

Each Member State of the EU has designated a **Competent Body** which is responsible for receiving applications from manufacturers, retailers, service providers or importers for the award of the Eco-label to their products and services.

The Competent Body decides on standard application forms with explanatory notes based on the product group definitions and ecological criteria which have been adopted. Each decision to award an Eco-label is in the hands of a Competent Body who in the case of the same product marketed in other countries will consult other Competent Bodies.

A successful applicant is required to sign a contract with the Competent Body for the use of the Flower for the remaining period of validity of the ecological criteria. The Competent Body charges a certain **fee** for the application and the annual use of the Flower logo.

The **award of the Eco-label** means that successful applicants are permitted to use the official Flower logo on their approved product in a market of more than 375 million consumers. Thus a consumer in a supermarket who is faced with a line of different brands of laundry detergents (for instance) will be able to pick out, by checking the Eco-label logo, the ones which achieve a high standard of environmental performance compared with the rest of the field.

How to apply

Procedural Guidelines for Development of EU Eco-labels

In practice, the functioning of the Eco-label scheme consists of distinct phases: the preparatory work and establishment of new criteria, the award of the label to products and services and the revision and prolongation of existing criteria. Whereas responsibility for establishing and revising the criteria lies mainly with 1 or 2 so called "Lead" Competent Bodies and the Commission, the award of the label to products is solely a matter for the national Competent Bodies. The decision whether or not to award the label will always be taken by a Competent Body and never by the Commission (Article 7 Awarding the eco-label).

The Eco-label Competent Bodies, which are independent and neutral, have been designated by the Member States to implement the Community Eco-label scheme at national level or regional level.

The initiative for selecting a group of products is taken either by the Commission or by the **EUEB**.

Some wishes of the Member States, the interest groups and the European institutions for greater consistency in the application of the scheme have been drafted into the revision and have led to the new **Eco-label Working Plan**. Therefore interest groups, ie. industry, SMEs, traders, retailers, importers commerce, environmental protection organisations and consumer organisations, trade unions etc are all consulted on the Working Plan and on the choice of future product groups. As decisive stakeholders of the EUEB they are also invited to actively support and promote the scheme.

Preparatory work

The new EUEB procedures foresee a certain amount of preparatory work led by a Competent Body to determine whether the product group falls within the scope of the scheme, notably representing a significant volume of sales, involving a significant environmental impact and equivalent potential for improvement and a significant sales volume.

A feasibility and market study is carried out to collate data on the following aspects: the market structure and the various types of product groups on the Union market, the opinions of all interested parties, the key environmental impacts and key elements relating to the product's fitness for use, an inventory of eco-labels, standards, test methods and studies. Consumer perception, functional differences between types of products and the need for identifying subgroups will be assessed. Generally the interests of the main parties and SMEs concerned and the overall impact are key for the selection of a product group and the development of the scheme.

The *ad hoc* working group is led by a lead Competent Body. Composed of experts from the Member States and representatives of all interested parties concerned, the group evaluates the preparatory phase. On the basis of these results and consultations, the EUEB will request the Commission to initiate the second step.

Mandate to develop or revise criteria

The proposal for ecological criteria is carried out as a second step and takes into account all results from relevant environmental studies. On the basis of mandates drafted by the Commission, the EUEB develops a proposal for eco-label criteria.

Work is carried out by a lead Competent Body. This includes an opinion of all the necessary analyses, investigations and preparatory work which has been carried out. Work on revising criteria will usually take less time than launching new product groups. The lead Competent Body (for information see the appropriate product group) will present the draft proposals to one or more EUEB meetings.

The final proposal is also officially presented to the EUEB and discussed with all stakeholders before being voted upon by a Regulatory Committee of national authorities. A formal Commission Decision concludes the adoption procedure.

Also under the new Regulation, the Competent Bodies are responsible for awarding the label. The new scheme has streamlined and facilitated the application procedure (Article 7).

Revision

The next revision of the scheme is scheduled for before September 2005 (Art. 20). (The Commission will review the scheme in the light of the experiences gained during the 3 years of the joint working plan and consult national consumer associations represented in the Consumer Committee.)

Work schedule

An overview of all the Eco-label meetings.

Ref : http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/whats_eco/scheme_en.htm

Czech Ecolabelling Agency

The Czech Ecolabelling Agency, one of the units of CENIA, is the body responsible for the Czech National Eco-labelling Programme.

- it receives proposals from producers, importers, institutions and relevant organisations, as well as the public, and issues written standpoints to the applicants,
- it prepares and publishes technical reports and draft Directives,
- it provides application forms, relevant materials, information and guidelines to the applicants,
- it registers and administers the applications and prepares reports on products which are to be labelled as environmentally friendly,
- based on a resolution of the Ministry of the Environment it enters into license agreements with applicants and collects registration fees for this service,
- with respect to draft Directives, the Agency must maintain records of experts and professional units, authorised and accredited laboratories and test rooms to recommend to an applicant,
- the Agency submits reports of its activities to the Minister of the Environment and to the Council twice a year and biannually organises inspection dates of its activities,
- based on the requirements of the guidelines, the Agency may verify compliance with its conditions before granting a trademark to an Eco-label holder.

The Czech Ecolabelling Agency offer the information in this spheres:



National Eco-labelling Programme

- Information on a performed environmental assessment of a product and its properties,
- state guarantee of a minimised negative environmental impact,
- a wide range of labelled products there are 50 different categories of products, which have set criteria for the evaluation of products and services,
- the eco-label Environmentally Friendly Product/Environmentally Friendly Service (if awarded) increases the competitiveness of the producer in the domestic market.

Eco-labelling Scheme of the European Union (The Flower)

- is a voluntary system focusing on both products and services,
- was set up pursuant to Council Regulation (EEC) No. 880/92 of 23 March 1992 on a Community Eco-label Award Scheme as revised by Regulation (EC) No. 1980/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council,

all manufacturers and service providers may apply for the EU Eco-label, whose products or services, as appropriate, are available in the EU market the body authorised to award the eco-label in the Czech Republic is the Czech Ecolabelling Agency a unit of CENIA, the Czech Environmental Information Agency.

The Czech Ecolabelling Agency is the executive body responsible for eco-labelling programmes which are being implemented in the Czech Republic in accordance with the standard EN ISO 14024 Type I Environmental Labelling and Declaration, and the Regulation (EC) No. 1980/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Community eco-label award scheme, "The Flower"

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