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EU Ecolabel - label of environmental excellence

The **EU Ecolabel** is a label of environmental excellence that was established in 1992 and recognized across Europe and worldwide. The EU Ecolabel is a label of environmental excellence that is awarded to products and services meeting high environmental standards throughout their life-cycle: from raw material extraction, to production, distribution and disposal. The EU Ecolabel promotes the circular economy by encouraging producers to generate less waste and CO2 during the manufacturing process. The EU Ecolabel criteria also encourages companies to develop products that are durable, easy to repair and recycle.

The EU Ecolabel criteria provide exigent guidelines for companies looking to lower their environmental impact and guarantee the efficiency of their environmental actions through third party controls. Furthermore, many companies turn to the EU Ecolabel criteria for guidance on eco-friendly best practices when developing their product lines.

The label has been awarded to thousands of different products across Europe, including soaps and shampoos, baby clothes, paints and varnishes, electrical goods and furniture, as well as services, like hotels and campsites.

So the next time you're grocery shopping, booking a hotel, looking for a TV or computer, buying baby clothing or purchasing paint, look out for the official EU Ecolabel logo. The EU Ecolabel makes green choices easy.

EU Ecolabel for Businesses

With more than 72,000 products and services on the market, the EU Ecolabel is recognized across Europe. If you want to market your green products, the EU Ecolabel is the right choice.

Six reasons to opt for the EU Ecolabel:

1. On the **B2C level**, increased awareness about the benefits of environmentally friendly products creates a favorable climate for the green market as consumers are increasingly mindful of purchasing environmentally friendly products. The EU Ecolabel facilitates consumer choice in favor of your product as the EU Ecolabel is a trusted and recognizable label across the EU.
2. Public procurers on the B2B level are facing increasing pressure to work with manufacturers of products that bear ecolabels in accordance with ISO 14024 (Type I) in order to meet procurement requirements. As the scheme involves compliance checks by independent, qualified certifiers, the EU Ecolabel can be the key to **open new business opportunities**.
3. Within the process of checking whether your product(s) comply with the EU Ecolabel criteria you can find ways of optimizing your products and production processes. This will increase your **company's profitability and reputation**, and **your brand** stands out amongst your competitors.
4. The criteria have been developed to ensure that the most environmentally friendly 10% to 20% of the products currently on the market can meet them. The EU Ecolabel works

in accordance with the ISO standard 14024 and is therefore a Type I label, one of the most reliable ways to communicate environmental information to consumers. To help you with your **application process user manuals are provided** for most product groups.

5. Special discounts for SMEs, micro-enterprises and applicants from developing economies facilitate compliance.
6. The **step-by-step explanation of the application process** makes your application as simple as possible.

Product Groups and Criteria

The EU Ecolabel covers a wide range of product groups, from major areas of manufacturing to tourist accommodation.

Key experts, in consultation with main stakeholders, develop the criteria for each product group in order to decrease the main environmental impacts over the entire life cycle of the product. Because the life cycle of every product and service is different, the criteria are tailored to address the unique characteristics of each product type.

Every four years on average, the criteria are revised to reflect technical innovation such as evolution of materials, production processes or in emission reduction and changes in the market. Because of this, you and your customers can be sure that EU Ecolabel continues to stand for the highest environmental performance.

You can find out the criteria for your product group, helpful guidance for applying for the label and other relevant documents from the list below:

PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

Rinse-off Cosmetic Products
Absorbent Hygiene Products

CLEANING UP

Hard Surface Cleaning Products
Detergents for Dishwashers
Industrial and Institutional Automatic Dishwasher Detergents
Hand Dishwashing Detergents
Laundry Detergents
Industrial and Institutional Laundry Detergents
Indoor Cleaning Services

CLOTHING AND TEXTILE PRODUCTS

Textile products
Footwear
Textile products

DO-IT-YOURSELF

Paints and Varnishes

ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

Electronic Displays

COVERINGS

Wood-, cork- and bamboo-based floor coverings

Hard Coverings

FURNITURE AND BED MATTRESSES

Furniture

Bed Mattresses

GARDENING

Growing Media, Soil Improvers and Mulch

LUBRICANTS

Lubricants

PAPER PRODUCTS

Graphic paper, Tissue paper and Tissue products

Printed Paper, Stationery Paper, Paper Carrier Bag Products

HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION

Tourist Accommodation

How to apply for EU Ecolabel

If you have decided to market your green products with the EU Ecolabel you can apply for the EU Ecolabel in the following seven steps.

Pre-application: Understanding the EU Ecolabel

Every product or service supplied for distribution, consumption or use in the European Economic Area market (European Union plus Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway) and included in one of the established non-food and non-medical product groups, is eligible for the EU Ecolabel. Check the list of established product and service groups and their related product and service criteria to find out if your product or service fits within the scope of any of the established product or service groups and complies with the respective specific criteria. If your product or service is not included in this list, you can consider applying for a new product group proposal. Producers, manufacturers, importers, service providers, wholesalers and retailers that produce products or provide services that fit within any of the established product and service group criteria are eligible to apply. Retailers can apply for products placed on the market under their own brand name.

Step 1: Contact Your Competent Body

Once you have found the criteria relevant to your product or service and are ready to start your application, contact your Competent Body. Your Competent Body is the independent organization responsible for assessing, awarding, and managing EU Ecolabel applications and licenses on the national level. Your Competent Body provides guidance on the documents needed for your dossier, such as declarations, data sheets, and test results. Recommendations on product testing laboratories that are ISO 17025 accredited or equivalent are shared, along with any relevant technical expertise needed to complete your application.

How to identify your Competent Body?

Case One:

Your product or service is made or located within the European Economic Area (European Union plus Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway) contact the Competent Body from the country in which the product originates or where your service is located.

Case Two:

Your product or service is made or located outside the European Economic Area contact the Competent Body in one of the countries where your product is marketed or will be placed on the market.

Step 2: Product and service registration on the online EU Ecolabel Catalogue, ECAT

The EU Ecolabel product and service catalogue is a database that is designed to provide stakeholders with the lists of valid services or products per producer and retailers, along with its corresponding product or service information. This catalogue is also a marketing tool to promote products and services to consumers.

The ECAT is the reference point for stakeholders to check license validity. All license holders are responsible for registering their products and services on the online EU Ecolabel product and service catalogue (ECAT) to ensure license traceability.

To register products and services, follow the instructions on the ECAT User Manual.

Step 3: Product and service testing to build application dossier

An application dossier is required from all applicants in order to assess criteria compliance. The list of relevant declarations, data sheets and test results is laid out in each product or service group User Manual which can be found under the respective tabs in the full list of established product groups. Your Competent Body will verify that all submitted information is accurate and substantiated and will carry out any further tests if necessary.

Whenever the assessment and verification of EU Ecolabel criteria requires product tests, please note the general guidance:

All test and independent verification costs for criteria compliance must be met by you as the applicant. Ask your Competent Body for more information about verification costs.

Whenever the assessment and verification of EU Ecolabel criteria requires product tests, those tests should be preferably performed by laboratories that meet the general requirements of EN ISO 17025 or equivalent, for that specific test. More information on testing methods can be found in the “Guidelines for a procedure for checking the criteria in respect of applications: use of test laboratories”. A list of accredited laboratories for most European countries is available on the European Accreditation Corporation’s website.

Contact your Competent Body if you need any additional information concerning which laboratory to use.

Step 4: Application submission and fees

At this stage, you will have submitted your paper application to your Competent Body and have completed your online EU Ecolabel catalogue registration.

Fees

The EU Ecolabel is designed to be as low cost as possible. However, as the costs of running the scheme vary between Competent Bodies and from one product to another, fees may vary accordingly.

Visit the Competent Body [EU Ecolabel Fees](#) page for exact fares per [Competent Body](#) or contact your Competent Body for a more precise cost estimate. Reduced fees are available for SMEs, micro-enterprises and companies from developing countries**.

The table below presents the requirements on maximum fees established in the EU Ecolabel Regulation.

Type of applicants*	One-off application fee (€)**	Annual fee (€)***
Micro-enterprises	200-350	Maximum 18 750
SMEs and firms from developing countries****	200-600	Maximum 18 750
All other companies	200-2 000	Maximum 25 000

* Refer to the Commission Recommendation of 6 May, 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

** 30% reduction for companies registered under EMAS or 15% reduction for companies certified under ISO 14001 can be applied. Reductions are not cumulative and only the higher reduction applies where both systems are met.

*** Annual fees can be a flat fee or a fee based on the annual value of sales within the EU for the product awarded the EU Ecolabel. Where the annual fee is calculated as a percentage of the annual sales value, it will not be more than 0,15 % of that value. In the case of SMEs, micro-enterprises or applicants from developing countries, the annual fee is reduced by at least 25 %.

**** Discover the [complete list of developing countries](#). Please note that Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau are not eligible for a fee reduction.

Step 5: Assessment

After receiving your application, your Competent Body examines all submitted documentation, including any material sent directly by your suppliers and gives initial feedback within a two month period. At that time, additional documentation may be requested. Competent Bodies can reject an application if sufficient documentation is not received within 6 months of any request for further information.

After all documentation has been approved, your Competent Body may carry out an on-site visit to your or your suppliers' sites. The Competent Body judges the necessity of this on-site visit on a case-by-case basis and may charge a fee for it. Contact your Competent Body for more information.

Step 6: Application approval and license award

Application approval:

Your Competent Body issues your contract and license upon approving your application. This contract sets out the services or range of products covered within the license, including any trade names or manufacturer’s internal reference numbers. It will also lay out the terms of use of the EU Ecolabel, following the standard contract in Annex IV of the [Regulation \(EC\) No 66/2010 of 25 November 2009](#).

Once you have signed the contract, a certificate can be asked for/will be sent, depending on the Competent Body. This certificate will detail:

- the license number that can be used with the EU Ecolabel logo;
- the legal name of the applicant;
- the services or range of products awarded the EU Ecolabel;
- all relevant trade names under which the product is sold or the service is marketed.

Your Competent Body will give you the final validation on when the EU Ecolabel logo and your license number can be used on your EU Ecolabel services and products that have met the criteria.

Compliance monitoring:

As a license holder, it is your responsibility to ensure criteria compliance throughout the entire validity of your license(s). Your Competent Body will explain how often test samples of your product should be conducted in order to proactively verify criteria compliance.

Based on the discretion of your Competent Body, they may carry out factory inspections and product tests or visit your service. These inspections are intended to ensure that the environmental excellence is maintained for consumers.

You or your supplier will need to keep a journal of all tests conducted along with their results. This documentation should be available at all times and may be requested by your Competent Body.

If the Competent Body receives evidence that your product or service no longer complies with the criteria during the validity period, the Competent Body will request an immediate Corrective Action Plan or will prohibit the use of the EU Ecolabel on that product.

Step 7: Communicate about your EU Ecolabel products and services

Logo use

Take full advantage of the EU Ecolabel through advertising and communication by ensuring that the EU Ecolabel logo and your license number are visible on your product or service and on all related promotional material.

Digital presence

Clear digital presence about your EU Ecolabel license on your company **website** (by visibly presenting the EU Ecolabel logo and license number on your homepage along with a dedicated page on your environmental commitment), can offer heightened visibility of your environmental and quality commitment via the EU Ecolabel. **Social media** (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) is an optimal portal to multiply communication about your EU Ecolabel logo.

EU Ecolabel product and service catalogue

Ensure that you have registered your products on the EU Ecolabel [Product Catalogue](#) or [Tourist Accommodation Catalogue](#). This database, which is designed to provide stakeholders with lists

of valid services or products per producer and retailers, is also a viable marketing tool to promote products and services to consumers.

Refer to “Step 2: Product and service registration on the online EU Ecolabel Catalogue”, on this page for guidance on how to register your products and services on the ECAT.

Get featured on official EU Ecolabel publications and website

[Success Story](#) publications are created to give a focalized spotlight on all aspects of a license holder’s journey with the EU Ecolabel; focusing on quantitative returns on investment along with energy, water, and resource savings.

The EU Ecolabel [Videos](#) page is a collection of videos about the EU Ecolabel, including license holder company videos where the EU Ecolabel is highlighted.

Ask your Competent Body to share any relevant marketing, promotional and communication material available on the national level for further assistance in marketing your product or service.

Retailers and the EU Ecolabel

How retailers can support the EU Ecolabel:

- Ecolabelling products sold under their own brand name;
- Strongly encouraging or requesting suppliers to apply for the EU Ecolabel for their products;
- Increasing the number of EU Ecolabelled products on the shelves and placing them in visibly prominent places so shoppers take notice;
- Integrating the EU Ecolabel into their communication campaigns and promotions;
- Informing the consumer so they can make green choices.

Retailers have a key position in the product value chain because they can choose which products to put on their shelves. They can influence both consumer and producer behavior.

According to a study led by BEUC (the European Consumers' Organization), "Consumers are drowning in green claims made by producers of different articles on the European market. The result being that consumers do not know which labels to trust or they have given up trying to understand the difference between them."

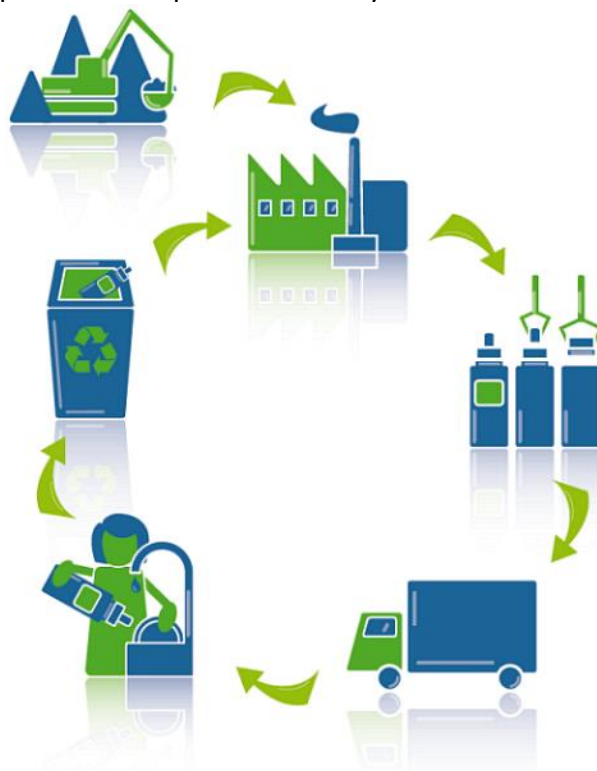
EU Ecolabel guarantees a high level of transparency, reliability and scientific credibility, which meets customers’ green demands. And, unlike other environmental information or labelling, no technical understanding is required to read and understand the label. By choosing Ecolabelled products, consumers automatically make an environmentally friendly choice.

Supporting the EU Ecolabel is a winning choice for you as a retailer. Not only do you boost your corporate image, you can fulfil consumers’ increasing demand for truly environmentally sustainable products. Your action will also support manufacturers that make credible green choices.

More about the EU Ecolabel

The functioning of the EU Ecolabel is set through a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council. Its daily management is carried out by the European Commission together with bodies from the Member States and other stakeholders.

The EU Ecolabel is a voluntary scheme, which means that producers, importers and retailers can choose to apply for the label for their products. The life cycle of a product begins with extraction – the mining or cultivation of the raw materials, such as cotton (for textiles) or wood (for paper products). It continues with manufacturing and packaging, distribution, use and finally the “end of life” stage, when the product is disposed of or recycled.



When developing EU Ecolabel criteria for products, the focus is on the stages where the product has the highest environmental impact, and this differs from product to product.

Taking a look at textiles, for instance, fabrics have strong environmental impacts when they are dyed, printed and bleached. So, experts have designed the criteria for textiles in order to make sure harm at the manufacturing stage is reduced as much as possible. For other products such as detergents, the substances that go into the products are one of the key priority areas. Other products, such as electronic equipment, have a very high environmental impact during their use phase, so criteria will focus on the efficiency of their energy consumption.

In addition, product-specific criteria ensure that any product bearing the EU Ecolabel is of good quality with high performance.

Other Ecolabels

There are a number of other ecolabelling schemes in Europe. The EU Ecolabel Regulation indicates that it is necessary to enhance the coherence and promote harmonization between the EU Ecolabel scheme and national ecolabelling schemes in the EU.

When a product or service has been awarded both the EU Ecolabel and another ecolabel, you will find the two logos displayed side by side on the product or service. The EU Ecolabel and other ecolabels coexist well.

Useful Documents and links

- [Strategic EU Ecolabel Workplan 2020-2024](#)
- [EU Ecolabel Logo Guidelines](#)
- [ECAT User Manual for License Holders](#)
- [Product group development form](#)
- [Marketing Guide](#)
- [Presentation: EU Ecolabel Masterclass by Solitaire Townsend, Futerra Sustainability Communications Ltd. \(September 2009\)](#)
- [Eurobarometer Survey “Europeans’ attitudes towards the issue of sustainable consumption and production” \(April 2009\)](#)
- [EU Ecolabel – Better for the environment, better for you](#)
- [Circular Economy tools and instruments](#)
- [EMAS \(Eco-Management and Audit Scheme\)](#)
- [European Business Awards for the Environment \(EBAE\)](#)
- [EASME - Executive Agency for SMEs](#)