

Pitching Green

– green labels and credentials: a guide to the options



The European Ecolabel Flower on a mattress cover / Bob Ryder

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
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This is an informal note for businesses and other organisations about choosing and using environmental labels and other credentials for green products and services.

Many companies want to make the most of their product's green credentials. Some do this by using a **voluntary environmental award-type label**, like the European Ecolabel, and this note explains how to go about this. The range of products covered by the Ecolabel and other mainstream schemes is growing, but many types of products are not yet covered, so this note lists a number of other labelling schemes (the annexes include an index of green labels), and suggests some alternative ways of promoting environmentally responsible products (and firms' own green achievements) in the marketplace. At the end there's a note about things to consider when setting up new labelling schemes, for organisations which may be thinking of doing this.

For those **looking for greener products**, this note also suggests where to start and what to look for.

The note is occasionally updated, but makes no claim to be comprehensive. Inclusion of any initiative or publication does not imply recommendation by Defra. Defra is not responsible for the content of non-Defra sites.

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1. Designing greener products

The formal labelling schemes described in this note provide useful guidance about the different standards that green products might be expected to meet in the first place – and what standards your purchasers might be looking for – so are a good first step in designing greener products .

But there are other useful sources of advice about **providing sustainable goods and services** – for example, the UK Government’s Business Link pages on how to provide sustainable goods and services at www.businesslink.gov.uk, and the European Commission’s webpage about **eco-design of energy-using products** - http://ec.europa.eu/energy/demand/legislation/eco_design_en.htm

On **ethical trading**, the Ethical Trading Initiative at www.ethicaltrade.org has an extensive range of resources, and Business Link also has useful advice at www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?topicId=1074297694.

2. Green labels and claims in the UK

The UK operates the **European Ecolabel scheme (called the Flower)**, which currently applies to more than 20 product groups (These are mainly domestic goods, and include fridges, paints and textiles (not food). It is a voluntary scheme, and requires applications to be independently checked.

You can see a full list of what the scheme covers at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/product/index_en.htm and a list of ecolabelled products available in the UK at www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/ecolabel/.

The UK does not have its own national ecolabelling scheme of the kind that exists in some other countries (such as Germany and Scandinavia), covering a wide range of products, and requiring independent third party certification. However, a successful UK ecolabelling scheme for tourist accommodation and campsites, the **Green Tourism Business Scheme**, operates in Scotland and in some parts of England (www.green-business.co.uk/scotland.html).

Other environmental labelling schemes in the UK with independent third party certification tend to apply just to a single type of product (such as food or timber), or to certain types of environmental impacts on a particular type of product (such as schemes covering different aspects of textiles). The main schemes are illustrated in **Defra's Shopper's Guide to Green Labels** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/), and Annex 1 of this note lists many other schemes which may not be so well known.

These labels are voluntary award-type schemes, which are normally intended to mean that the product has achieved a particular level of environmental credibility, depending on the reputation of the scheme. The label identifies the scheme, and should mean that the product has been checked.

The **European Energy Label** is a different kind of label, because it is compulsory on certain types of products (such as washing machines), and because it presents information in a format which enables consumers to make an easy comparison of the product's energy efficiency with that of similar products (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/energylabels/). The **UK Fuel Economy Label** for cars has a similar layout, but is actually a voluntary scheme which has been adopted across the UK industry (www.lowcvp.org.uk/).

All these schemes vary in aspects such as the strictness of their standards and visibility in the marketplace, but the UK has strict legal requirements about the accuracy of claims made about products.

Green claims are a recognised way for companies to explain the environmental credentials of a product, though they are not usually labels in the sense of having a recognised logo (though some large companies do use their own labelling schemes, with logos). The Government and other bodies have issued advice on the best ways of making such claims (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/glc/claims.htm).

New environmental labelling and certification schemes on the way in the UK include a Government **Quality Assurance Scheme for carbon offsetting** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/carbonoffset/codeofpractice.htm).

Other new moves include the **Carbon Trust's own experimental Carbon Reduction Label** which is currently being piloted on a number of products (www.carbontrust.co.uk/News/presscentre/29_04_08_Carbon_Label_Launch.htm). The carbon footprint of the labelled products is measured using the draft Publicly Available Specification (PAS) 2050 methodology, a single standard to measure the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from a product or service. This draft standard is being developed by the Carbon Trust and Defra in collaboration with BSI British Standards.

The Carbon Trust launched a new green standard called the **Carbon Trust Standard** in June 2008 which it says will challenge businesses to end so-called "greenwash" and demonstrate conclusively that they are taking genuine action on climate change by reducing their carbon emissions. The Trust says that the Standard will be viewed as the definitive stamp of approval for all organisations that are genuinely committed to reducing their own carbon emissions, and will help organisations looking to reduce carbon emissions in their supply chains.

The Government is not considering **the development of an environmental label for food** as such. The Secretary of State, Hilary Benn, has written to the National Farmers' Union expressing the view that "the development of new labels is a matter entirely for the market". However, Defra has an interest in the way that the environmental credentials of food products are presented to consumers, and is still looking into the possibility of developing environmental or sustainability standards for farming which could be linked in some way to industry assurance labels.

Up to now there has been no straightforward form of labelling which can present an accurate picture of a product's climate change impacts. Before agreement can be reached on final proposals about labelling, the crucial first step is to get a widely agreed method of measuring the greenhouse gas emissions which are "embedded" in a product before it reaches the consumer. The work by the Carbon Trust and BSI British Standards and Defra is aimed at establishing a method that can be used across a whole range of consumer items.

3. Thinking about using a labelling scheme

What's available

As stated above, the UK operates the **European Ecolabel** scheme (the Flower). The Ecolabel is regulated by the European Commission, and is Europe's premier green labelling scheme, which gives it significant advantages in terms of reputation and credibility. Defra's website explains the advantages of participating in the scheme and what's involved (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/ecolabel/).

Defra is the Ecolabel Competent Body for the scheme in the UK, and oversees the running of the scheme by a body called UK Ecolabel Delivery, which was appointed by Defra in October 2008 to handle all enquiries and applications on its behalf. For more information, please contact UK Ecolabel Delivery +44 (0)1355 593930, or ecolabel@tuvnel.com.

The Flower currently covers the product groups shown at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/product/index_en.htm, so it does not yet extend to various types of products – for example, in the construction sector it currently applies only to indoor paints and varnishes and to hard floor coverings, though it is being extended to outdoor paints. In 2004 the UK completed an extensive prioritisation study about new product groups for the Commission, which identified possible new product groups for inclusion - http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/ecolabel/product/pg_prioritisation_en.htm.

However, the European Commission has decided not to develop new product groups at present because of its plans for major changes to the scheme (see http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/revision_en.htm). If these changes are agreed by the Member States of the European Union, they will include new arrangements for developing a wider range of product groups from about 2010 onwards. In the meantime, existing product groups will continue to be individually revised as criteria come up for review, and the Commission has said that when this happens there are opportunities to consider extending the scope of existing product groups to take in similar types of product.

Although the UK does not have a national ecolabelling scheme, several reputable ecolabels or eco-mark symbols from other countries appear on products in the UK. Some of these schemes cover many different kinds of products, so there is potentially a wide range of options for companies considering using voluntary labelling and certification schemes. Defra has recently published a study it commissioned from consultants ERM about the sustainable product standards available, called *Mapping and analysis of sustainable product standards*, which assesses what different schemes cover (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/pdf/MTP-ProductAssessmentStandards.pdf).

A good starting point for information about ecolabelling schemes is the website of the **Global Ecolabelling Network** (GEN), which lists product groups covered by schemes around the world (<http://globalecolabelling.net/>). Two of the most well-known schemes are the **Nordic Swan** (www.svanen.nu/Eng/) and the **Blue Angel** (www.blauer-engel.de/englisch/navigation/body_blauer_engel.htm). The Nordic Swan includes a special category for innovative products.

The **North American Environmental Choice** scheme (www.environmentalchoice.com/)

is widely known and respected, and through its Panel Review Process it will consider developing criteria for product categories where criteria do not yet exist, if it receives a formal application.

National schemes are separate from the European Ecolabel. They exist in various countries, including some which also operate the EU scheme (see http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/other/int_ecolabel_en.htm.) The European Ecolabel is developing closer ties with other reputable labelling schemes in Europe, and investigating ways in which future work on criteria development can be shared; so applying for one of these labels may be a good alternative where the European Ecolabel is not applicable to certain types of products.

There are many types of products for which ecolabels are not available.

Ecolabels normally work by distinguishing products which have better environmental performance than their competitors, so by definition they tend to be relevant to products which belong to a recognised group, like household goods such as paints, or certain types of electrical appliances. They are not normally available (or suitable) for specialist or innovative products, because criteria cannot be developed for a product which has hardly any competitors. For these types of products, environmental awards may be a more productive avenue to explore, as mentioned further on in this note.

The label is not available for additives or ingredients for products like soaps or detergents or paints. However, the European Commission operates an online database of green suppliers at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/product/green_suppliers_en.htm - these are intermediate products like chemical additives which are not eligible for the Ecolabel in their own right, but which can be sourced by manufacturers wanting the Ecolabel for their cleaning products (or whatever) in the knowledge that the ingredients or additives will comply with relevant requirements in Ecolabel criteria documents. The Commission's Ecolabel Helpdesk can provide more information about how to be featured in the database - its details are on the page at the link above.

There are also several respected certification schemes for specific types of products – for example, for timber and organic products – and other quality labelling schemes which include environmental considerations, like the **TCO label** (www.tcodevelopment.com/).

Annex1 of this note lists many examples of schemes covering everything from food and flowers to construction products and coffee.

Whether your special selling point is that your product is **non-allergenic**, or made of recycled materials, there's an organisation that would like to know. Allergy UK (www.allergyuk.org/) can give the British Allergy Foundation Seal of Approval to products which specifically restrict or remove high levels of allergens from the environment. **RecycleNow** is the UK campaign started by WRAP (the Waste & Resources Action Programme) to promote recycling, which includes promoting recycled goods: www.recyclenow.com/, while the **National Recycling Awards** (www.nationalrecyclingawards.com) could put your company in the limelight.

Aspects to consider

No single green label covers all aspects of sustainability. Different kinds of labels address different issues, and use different ways of communicating. Some labelling schemes focus on a symbol (such as the European Ecolabel flower) to identify a product as achieving the scheme's high environmental standards; so these labels may be particularly suitable for instant communication with consumers, where the expectation is that the consumer will identify the symbol, and be encouraged to buy the product on account of it, but may not be seeking more information at the point of purchase about the product's specific impacts. Other labels set out more detailed data about a product in a standard easy-to-read format.

When considering the value of any labelling scheme to your company, relevant factors might include:

- the needs and environmental specifications of your major purchasers;
- where your product sells;
- how much a specific label might help to generate sales in that area;
- the level of public recognition of the label, if this is important to you;
- the label's promotional strategy;
- the standards, credibility, and reputation of the label in question;
- the costs and effort of applying for the label;
- the rules of the scheme.

★ Please think carefully before signing up to any labelling, award or certification scheme. There are many hundreds of schemes around the world, and new ones are set up all the time. Any organisation can set up its own scheme – Annex 1 includes many examples. Such schemes may be excellent in their own right, but they will be of limited value to participants unless they are recognised in the marketplace as credible schemes and are useful to you. Glossy websites and the involvement of universities or celebrities are not guarantees of usefulness. The Annex shows that there is often a choice between schemes. Some are much better value than others.

A sensible step is to talk to your customers and stockists before applying – many retailers have environmental policies about which products they will stock. Public procurement specifications are not allowed to require tendering companies to have been awarded a particular label, but specifications may include criteria from individual labelling schemes in whole or in part. So labels can be helpful to companies applying for public contracts. Some major commercial equipment suppliers also feature the environmental credentials of products in their catalogues.

The European Commission is working with ICLEI, the international association of local governments and national and regional local government organisations, to develop public procurement criteria for local government across Europe for a range of product groups, based on Ecolabel criteria, but using only a few of the key Ecolabel criteria. The Commission's Ecolabel Unit hopes that this will soon start to have an impact on green procurement across Europe, so there should be a perceptible dividend for companies which meet Ecolabel requirements.

These and other advantages of the European Ecolabel, as we see them, are set out Defra's guidance about the scheme, which is available from us. But we also make it clear that the Ecolabel is a green label, and doesn't yet cover other aspects of a product, apart from its fitness for use. And although the label can be used wherever in the world the product to which it has been awarded is sold, it is a European label, so offers the greatest advantages on products with a significant market in Europe.

So different labelling schemes are suitable for different products. Green labels are essentially product enhancers, so can add particular value in certain situations – for example, they can add an extra something to retailers' "own-label" brands, and help to differentiate them from heavily advertised brand-name products. The marketing advantages of having any label depend very much on how it is used. It is essential to think about this aspect and discuss it before applying for a label, or before entering into commercial arrangements to market products with a label which has been awarded to another party.

Some firms may want to use labels as a high-profile statement (perhaps as part of a broader company strategy of making a positive green declaration), with accompanying explanatory material. Others may prefer to use labels in a less direct way (for example, for public procurement purposes, or business-to-business communication, where the fact of having the label may be more important than actively publicising it). Generally, to get the most out of labels, products need to display them, and need to explain on the product or in the product advertising what the award means.

4. Exploring other options

There are several key sectors where there is no good voluntary labelling scheme, or in which well-known standards or labels do not address all the issues which matter to buyers, or do not meet market needs in other ways. But there are other ways of highlighting a product's green credentials.

Using green claims

You don't have to use an official green label. As mentioned above, Defra produces a comprehensive range of advice for business and consumers about **using green claims and labels in advertising** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/glc/claims.htm), including the Green Claims Code, which helps businesses to present the environmental credentials of their products accurately and appropriately, especially in advertising. Many companies have announced their own innovative environmental labelling policies or programs – for example, the UK retailer **Tesco** (www.tesco.com/climatechange/speech.asp) and the US footwear manufacturer **Timberland** (www.timberland.com/corp).

*** Please** ... keep it factual, and don't overstate your case. It's better not to imply that your competitors are evil maniacs bent on contaminating the globe, because (a) they're probably not, and (b) they may complain to the Advertising Standards Authority. The ASA gets many complaints by other manufacturers about competitors' advertising that goes way over the top, with the result that expensive advertisements sometimes have to be withdrawn. The ASA issued useful advice on green claims in June 2007, and runs a helpful pre-publication advice service: www.asa.org.uk.

The Consumer Protection Regulations 2008 brought into law the European Unfair Commercial Practices Directive, which states that "a commercial practice shall be regarded as misleading if it contains false information and is therefore untruthful, or in any way, including overall presentation, deceives or is likely to deceive the average consumer".

Writing an environmental policy

Another way to publicise what your company is achieving is to produce an **environmental policy**. It should make your company even more efficient and up to date, besides improving your image and making your website more complete, and informing and reassuring your customers. And it's easier than you might think –

www.envirowise.gov.uk/page.aspx?o=Ref012

Putting in place an environmental management system, or EMAS

An **environmental management system** (EMS) is simply a system for ensuring that your company is committed to improving all aspects of its environmental efficiency. There are many advantages to putting an EMS in place, such as risk reduction (see www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/444251/466235/?version=1&lang=e).

ISO 14001 is the international management systems standard, while **EMAS is the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme**. EMAS focuses on an environmental management system, by integrating the requirements for international standard EN/ISO 14001 (as the environmental management system component), which applicants apply to all aspects of their operations to ensure that they are continuously improving their environmental efficiency. EMAS also requires participants to publish an environmental report about what they have achieved.

Undertaking either ISO 14001 or EMAS would help you to ensure that your business really is run in an environmentally responsible and efficient way in every respect (and should help to save money on energy and other costs). EMAS in particular would enable you to publicise this to your customers.

For more on both environmental management systems and EMAS, see *Taking the first steps in environmental management* by Martin Baxter, at www.iema.net/readingroom/c169 on the website of **IEMA**, which administers EMAS in the UK for the Government.

As both EMAS and the European Ecolabel are European Commission schemes, and operate in some similar areas such as tourist accommodation, Annex 2 of this note explains the differences, and what each has to offer.

Please note that the European Commission is currently carrying out a review of the future of the European Ecolabel and EMAS which may not be completed for some time; so if you are considering EMAS, a sensible first step would be to start with ISO 14001.

Environmental awards

Ecolabels distinguish products which have better environmental performance than their competitors, so they are mainly relevant to products which belong to a recognised group, whether household goods such as paints, or certain types of electrical appliances. They are not normally available or suitable for specialist or innovative products, because criteria cannot be developed for a product which has hardly any competitors.

Manufacturers of specialist or innovative products could consider environmental awards schemes instead. There are now many such schemes in Europe and the UK which can provide excellent publicity for manufacturers.

In response to public demand for better information on awards in the fields of environment and sustainable development, the Royal Society of Arts has launched **EnvironmentAwards.net** (www.environmentawards.net/), an online resource bringing together sponsors, organisers and entrants of over 400 individual environmental and sustainable development award schemes across the globe, to help those interested decide which awards are best suited to a company or product. See also www.ec.europa.eu/environment/awards/ for details of **European Business Awards for the Environment**.

Green media

Several magazines focus on business and the environment generally, or about green products for business users or for consumers – Annex 3 lists some of these. Most run news stories about new products, and accept advertising.

★ In April 2007, the Financial Times reported that women were more concerned about the environment than men, and had a key role in influencing male partners and families to become greener, according to a poll of 10,000 consumers by Emap Advertising: over half of women said they were influenced by concern about the environmental impact of supermarkets when buying groceries, compared with only 38 per cent of men.

Read all about it

Your Ethical Business by Paul Allen, published in 2007, is a practical guide covering all aspects of launching ethical products or services (www.yourethicalbusiness.co.uk/).

Forum for the Future and Business for Social Responsibility produced **Eco-promising: communicating the environmental credentials of your products and services** in April 2008, which is helpful about the bigger issues involved (www.forumforthefuture.org.uk/files/Ecopromising_160408.pdf).

Communicate green

Display your commitment by using environmentally accredited stationery - paper certified to Ecolabel or Forest Stewardship Council standards – or an environmentally responsible printer for your leaflets and publicity.

The PPE website (Paper. Print. Environment) at www.ppe.uk.net/ can help you to make informed choices about reducing the environmental impact of printed materials.

Digital printing produces very high quality results and is an environmentally preferable form of printing – printing direct from file to paper, with no intermediate processes, can virtually eliminate the solvents, chemicals and water used for traditional print.

And you can use window envelopes which tell the recipient that the window film can go into paper recycling bins.

Drive green

TransportEnergy, a division of the Energy Saving Trust (EST), has published a **Best Practice Fleet Management Guide**, which details the basics for implementing a green fleet policy, and the EST offers free green fleet reviews (www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/fleet/). The annual **GreenFleet Awards** can help you to promote what you have achieved (www.greenfleetawards.co.uk/awards/).

Make your event green

If you're organising an event, Defra's **Sustainable Events Guide** can help you to make it really green – www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/advice/documents/SustainableEventsGuide.pdf

Sector-specific guidance

Many organisations can provide information and advice about how those with an interest in specific sectors can green up their act – for example:

- the **Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges**, www.eauc.org.uk
- the **Environmental Transport Association**, www.eta.co.uk

Go to green shows

Major environmental and ethical shows and events offer opportunities for retailers and other businesses and are often open to the general public.

The European Commission's Ecolabel Helpdesk staff regularly attend trade fairs around Europe to promote the Ecolabel, and can provide details of what's coming up if you have a product which has been awarded the Ecolabel and would like to feature it - contact them on 00 33 1 56 20 28 98, or e-mail ecolabel@biois.com.

Other resources

DTI's Business Link - www.businesslink.gov.uk - offers practical advice to business and includes ideas on sales and marketing, exploiting your ideas and international trade.

5. Sourcing green products

What standards should I be looking for?

- **For consumers**, a useful starting point for guidelines about choosing greener products is the Directgov (www.direct.gov.uk/en/Environmentandgreenerliving/) suite of pages about the environment and greener living. Besides advice on choosing products which make less impact on the environment (by using less resources, for example), they also give advice about using products in environmentally responsible ways (for example, by recycling where possible).
- **For professional purchasers**, the UK Government's Quick Wins initiative on green public procurement provides useful advice about basic criteria for green products. The initiative requires all central government departments to apply minimum environmental standards when buying certain types of products, and covers aspects like energy efficiency, recycled content, and biodegradability, using simple specifications derived from Energy Labels, and in some cases from Ecolabel criteria. You can find a list of what the criteria are for individual types of products on the OGC (Office of Government Commerce) website. For more about Quick Wins, contact OGC (www.ogcbuyingsolutions.gov.uk).
- **Green labelling schemes** such as the European Ecolabel provide assurances that all types of products covered by the scheme meet high environmental standards with detailed specifications (see section 1 above). Defra's Shopper's Guide to Green Labels provides a handy fold-out guide to the main schemes (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/).

★ Where **electrical products** with an Ecolabel aren't available – such as a washing machine or dishwasher, for example - you could look for one with the Energy Saving Recommended label (www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/myhome/efficientproducts/), or one with the Waterwise Marque (www.waterwise.org.uk). Other sites worth considering include www.topten.info/, a consumer-oriented online search tool which aims to present the best **appliances** in various categories, using criteria of energy efficiency, impact on the environment, health and quality. For **cars**, you could visit the Department for Transport's page about buying a new car - www.dft.gov.uk/ActOnCO2/index.php.

Where should I look for greener raw materials?

One source of help is the European Commission's Ecolabel Helpdesk, whose Database of Green Suppliers is intended to help producers to find raw materials that will comply with the Ecolabel criteria for final products. More information is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/product/green_suppliers_en.htm

The Database will be updated twice a year as the Helpdesk starts to receive enquiries and requests to be included in the database on a regular basis.

Where should I look for greener products?

- **The green media** listed in Annex 3 to this note give guidelines about greener lifestyles generally. Some carry out comparative tests of greener products, and most include advertising by retailers and suppliers of green products.
- **Local retailers** should also be able to say what products they stock meeting greener credentials. Some big retailers are launching new initiatives like carbon labelling for their products, and “green aisles”, so ask shop managers if you are looking for environmentally responsible cleaning products or textiles. You could make a difference!
- **Green and ethical events** - see the earlier section on green events.
- **The websites of reliable labelling schemes** for products which meet high environmental or ethical standards should help you to find energy-efficient electrical goods, organic food, ecolabelled textiles, or whatever you are looking for. Defra's Shopper's Guide to Green Labels (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/) gives details of the main green labelling schemes, the issues they address, and what types of products they cover, while many other schemes are covered in Annex 1 of this note. If you visit the UK website for the European Ecolabel (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/ecolabel/) for example, there's a full list of ecolabelled products available in the UK, including textiles, cleaning products, and paints, together with details of stockists. Similarly, the Organic Directory lists organic products (www.whyorganic.org/involved_organicDirectory.asp). Many such schemes have online catalogues. Most labelling schemes' sites also run news pages, which cover new product lines coming onto the market.

- **Some environmentally responsible products are not independently certified under such schemes**, but the manufacturers or retailers should be able to provide information if they claim that their products are “green”. Many companies of all sizes include details on their websites about how their products meet environmental criteria – look for links to pages about the environment or corporate social responsibility.
- **Major suppliers of commercial equipment** are increasingly providing information about the environmental credentials of their products.
- **Online portals, retailers and wholesalers** offer many kinds of green products, some sector-specific and others covering a wide range of products. Some provide news and directory features. Examples include:

British Eco - www.britisheco.com

ecolabelling.org - www.ecolabelling.org

Ethical Superstore - www.ethicalsuperstore.com

Green Building Store – www.greenbuildingstore.co.uk

Green Choices - www.greenchoices.org

Green Guide - www.greenguide.co.uk

GuideMeGreen - www.guidemegreen.com

Ideal Trading - www.idealtrading.co.uk

Mondomundi - www.mondomundi.com

- In addition to the many commercial sites selling green goods, some of the big **environmental organisations and charities** provide useful shopping advice on their websites, and some have green stores where you can shop online – WWF’s Earthly Goods range for example (www.shop.wwf.org.uk/).
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Index of green labels

This informal list of green labels provides information about a number of environmental labels, certification schemes and logos, and what they cover, as well as related initiatives (or organisations which run them) which are sometimes mentioned on labels.

The index also includes a number of assurance schemes which are not essentially “green labels”, in order to provide clarification or context.

For example, ethical schemes such as fair trade initiatives are often associated with environmental schemes, and some of these, such as Fairtrade itself, do include some environmental requirements. For the same reasons, the index also includes several non-environmental labelling initiatives, as well as some environmental initiatives which are not labels.

★ Most of the schemes listed here are included because they have attracted publicity, but the sheer number of environmental labelling schemes around the world inevitably means that some are better (and better value) than others. Inclusion does not imply recommendation by Defra about a scheme’s quality. Defra is not responsible for the content of non-Defra sites.

Please think carefully before signing up to any label, award or certification scheme. Any organisation can set up its own scheme, citing aims such as helping small businesses or saving the planet. The involvement of academics and celebrity endorsement are not necessarily guarantees of quality, and schemes will be of limited value unless they are recognised in the market as credible, and benefit users.

What this index covers

The main labelling schemes or types of schemes visible in the UK are shown in **Defra's Shopper's Guide to Green Labels** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/), so are not included in detail here again, but the index does include major labels launched since the Shopper's Guide was last reissued (in January 2007), such as the Carbon Trust's **Carbon Reduction Label** (www.carbon-label.co.uk) which is currently being piloted.

It doesn't include labelling schemes still in the pipeline. **New developments** include:

- a new Quality Mark for carbon offsetting products, appearing in 2008: www.defra.gov.uk/news/latest/2008/climate-0219.htm);
- a proposal by the British Retail Consortium and WRAP for a new simplified logo for recyclable packing to replace the current range of symbols and messages: www.brc.org.uk/details04.asp?id=1278

For news of **current developments**, see also ecolabelling.org at www.ecolabelling.org/about, an online database launched in January 2008 by the Vancouver-based Big Room Inc.

Most of the big national and international ecolabelling schemes like the **European Ecolabel** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/ecolabel/) are not listed here, because they cover many different product types: more information is available from the **Global Ecolabelling Network** (<http://globalecolabelling.net/>).

This index makes no claim to be comprehensive, as there are so many labelling schemes around the world (over forty schemes for textiles operate in Austria alone, for example). Instead, the aim is to include a range of schemes which may be of interest to UK organisations and companies. Some schemes which operate outside the UK have been included to show what labelling schemes can address and how they work.

As yet, there is no simple way of comparing the requirements and advantages of the many labelling schemes (and other certification-type schemes such as formal product standards) around the world, though some international work is being done on comparing different ecolabelling schemes.

The index is arranged in alphabetical order by the name of the scheme or organisation, not by type of product, because many labelling schemes apply to more than one kind of product: so to find schemes covering paper, for example, enter relevant key words in the “search” feature on your PC.

Reproducing labels

Labels and logos are shown on the websites and in the online guides listed, and the main ones are illustrated in **Defra’s Shopper’s Guide to Green Labels** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/) with the relevant website for each scheme, but logos are not reproduced here.

Defra runs the European Ecolabel scheme and can supply a file of the logo which is suitable for reproduction, together with rules about its use.

Some labels are protected by trademark or other restrictions, and those wishing to reproduce them should contact the enquiry point for that label, not Defra. For example, the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) logo is copyright, and those wishing to obtain a copy and permission to use it should contact FSC UK – see www.fsc-uk.org.

For details of where to obtain blank EU Energy Labels for products, visit www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/glc/types.

The Mobius loop is not copyright. The basic versions of it are described at www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/pdf/genericguide.pdf, pages 20-21. For more information, visit www.recycle-more.co.uk/ and <http://www.biffa.co.uk/getrecycling/symbols.php>. Downloadable versions of the loop are available at www.recycle-more.co.uk/nav/page529.aspx.

Who looks after which labels

General product labelling policy in the UK is coordinated by **the Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (BERR)** (www.dti.gov.uk/consumers/buying-selling/Adprice/Product-labelling/), which has sponsored several reports on the subject.

Defra (www.defra.gov.uk) has policy responsibility for green labelling – hence this index. Defra is directly or indirectly involved with a number of schemes relating to farming, fishing, energy and the environment, though food and drink labelling is the responsibility of the **Food Standards Agency** (www.food.gov.uk). Much of the Agency’s advice on food labels is now on its consumer advice and information website, **Eatwell** (www.eatwell.gov.uk/foodlabels/), where you can find a sample label illustrating the various symbols appearing on food labels.

The **Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MRHA)** (www.mhra.gov.uk) looks after the labelling of medicines and provides best practice guidance.

Other guides to labelling schemes

ecolabelling.org is a helpful index: www.ecolabelling.org/about

In the UK, **Defra's green labelling website** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/glc/) explains how green claims and labels operate, and **Defra's Shopper's Guide to Green Labels** lists the main labelling schemes and types of schemes (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/pdf/shoppers-guide.pdf). Also helpful is the **Environmental Information Exchange** at Oxford Brookes Partnership (www.brookes.ac.uk/eie/ecolabels.htm) which covers a wide range of logos and labels.

Defra's "Green Claims – Practical Guidance", produced in 2003, gives guidance on how to make valid green claims in the UK, and explains the proper use of a range of symbols and logos, including the Green Dot and the Mobius loop. Sectoral guides covering claims on aerosols, cleaning products, decorative coatings, greetings cards and growing media are also available (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/glc/claims.htm).

At European level, the **European Commission's website** provides a selective list of some national and private green labels around Europe europa.eu.int/comm/environment/ecolabel/description/ecolabel.htm, which reflects its work on developing closer ties between the European Ecolabel and other reputable labelling schemes in Europe through initiatives such as shared work on criteria development. **Other European guides to labelling schemes** include www.label-online.de, a German site providing guidance on environmental labels on products, and www.labelinfo.ch, a Swiss site about different environmental labels (both in German).

Internationally, the **US Consumers Union guide to environmental labels** is at www.eco-labels.org/. **The Global Ecolabelling Network** is the voluntary organisation for most of the major national ecolabelling schemes, and lists ecolabel schemes around the world and the product groups they cover (<http://globalecolabelling.net/>). One of the most comprehensive surveys of the different schemes for its time (2000) was the US Environmental Protection Agency's book **Environmental Labelling: Issues, Policies and Practices Worldwide** (www.epa.gov). It remains very useful as a history of different schemes and provides an evaluation of their success.

Sites providing guidance about specific types of green labelling include:

Eggs: for terms used in the UK to describe and classify eggs, see www.consumereducation.org.uk/shopping/english/labelling/

Energy: www.natenergy.org.uk - a UK guide

Food: www.food.gov.uk/foodlabelling/ - the UK Food Standards Agency's guide to claims and logos;

www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/guidancenotes/labelregsguidance/

- UK guidance about using labels on food;

www.grinningplanet.com/2004/07-20/food-labels-article.htm.

- US guide to food labels other than organic

Textiles, cotton: www.pan-uk.org/Projects/Cotton/ - "My Sustainable T-shirt".

Non-use of child labour:

www.eldis.org/static/DOC6509.htm

www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/gb/docs/gb271/sdl-1-1.htm

www.unicef.org.uk/publications/clrg/app6.asp

www.wasteonline.org.uk/resources/InformationSheets/Plastics.htm#_Types_of_plastic

Packaging symbols:

www.biffa.co.uk/getrecycling/symbols.php

www.recycle-more.co.uk

What other labelling symbols mean

The "CE" mark stands for "**Conformité Européene**", which means "European Conformity". It is the manufacturer's declaration that the product carrying it complies with all essential European requirements about health, safety and environmental protection, and means that the product may be legally placed on the market in Europe. For more information, visit www.ce-marking.org/what-is-ce-marking.html.

But of course labels contain more than just information about the environment. Much of this is to do with **weights and measures**, such as the large lower case "e", known as the **e-mark**, which is a guarantee by the packer or importer that the weight shown on the pack is an accurate average. Leicester County Council's useful guide to this symbol and other information on weights and measures that packs should display is online at www.leics.gov.uk/average_system.pdf.

The various **symbols appearing on food labels** are illustrated on a sample label on the Food Standards Agency's consumer advice and information website, Eatwell, www.eatwell.gov.uk/foodlabels/.

For information about **symbols on paint** visit <http://www.coatings.org.uk>.

Index of environmental and ethical labelling schemes

4C Association

The Common Code for the Coffee Community Association, set up as a group of stakeholders taking “the first steps on the road which leads to sustainability for the entire coffee world”: www.sustainable-coffee.net

Aircraft labelling

Initiative started by Flybe, Europe's biggest regional airline, in June 2007 using colour-coded stickers grading each aircraft for criteria including noise, fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions, so that passengers can decide whether they want to offset their flight: www.flybe.com/news/0706/04.htm

Banana Link

Not a logo but a movement working for “a socially just, environmentally sound and economically viable banana industry”: www.bananalink.org.uk

BASF AG

International label for general products evaluated by an Eco-Efficiency Analysis which involves the results being published on the internet: corporate.basf.com/en/sustainability/oekoeffizienz/label.htm?id=V00-AtFvP5VC-bcp3oa

BBA (the British Board of Agrément)

The UK's major approval body for new construction products and installers, whose Agrément Certificates are recognised by specifiers and others as proof that the products covered by them have been rigorously assessed and will allow compliance with Building Regulations to be achieved: www.bbacerts.co.uk/

BCA Green Mark Scheme

Singapore's green building assessment scheme to promote sustainability in the built environment and raise environmental awareness among developers, designers and builders, from concept to construction: www.bca.gov.sg/GreenMark/green_mark_buildings.html

Blue Angel

German ecolabel scheme (often seen elsewhere) for a wide range of product types, which was the world's first ecolabel - see Defra's **Shopper's Guide to Green Labels** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/)

bluesign®

Swiss-based international independent standard for textiles which assesses components and processes to ensure a range of environmental, health and safety requirements: www.bluesign-tech.com

BRE Environmental Profiles

UK scheme providing life-cycle assessment of **construction products** in a standardised way (aimed at architects and building professionals rather than end-consumers): materials and components can be registered on BRE's Environmental Profile: www.cig.bre.co.uk/envprofiles/document.jsp

BRFC Window Energy Rating (British Fenestration Rating Council - see **Energy schemes**)

British Allergy Foundation Seal of Approval

Allergy UK's endorsement scheme for a **wide range of products** (from air conditioners and bedding to cars and cleaning products) which specifically restrict or remove high levels of named allergens from the environment: www.allergyuk.org

Carbon schemes

Carbon reduction label

UK product label launched in March 2007 to show that the maker is measuring the **carbon footprint** of its product and is working on lowering the carbon footprint emitted in making it. The label and methodology were initially trialled by major brands including Walkers Crisps, Boots and innocent, to test and build consumer understanding. The label is currently being piloted more widely, for example in Tesco stores: www.carbon-label.co.uk

Voluntary Carbon Standard (VCS)

International carbon offset standard providing quality assurance for certification of **voluntary carbon offsets**. Launched in UK in November 2007, following consultation with industry, NGOs and market specialists, led by the Climate Group, the International Emissions Trading Association (IETA) and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). <http://www.v-c-s.org/news.html>

Chlorine Free Products Association

US-based certification programme for **paper** and other products using logos denoting Totally Chlorine Free and Processed Chlorine Free: www.chlorinefreeproducts.org

Club Green

UK scheme with three levels to help **furniture** companies lessen their environmental impacts, run by the Furniture Industry Research Association (FIRA): <http://www.fira.co.uk/>

Compostable Logo

International labelling program of the US Biodegradable Products Institute, which promotes **biodegradable products**. Products with the symbol, such as cutlery, are designed to **compost** quickly, completely and safely, without leaving plastic residues: www.bpiworld.org

Association for Organics Recycling Certification Scheme

(The Association changed its name from the Composting Association on 1 August 2008.) British third-party assessment of compliance with the British Standards Institution's Publicly Available Specification for **Composted Materials**. Certified biodegradable plastic **packaging** can use a symbol (a leaf growing up through a curved piece of packaging) meaning that the packaging has been tested and that consumers can put the packaging into local authority compost collection boxes or bags where these are provided: www.organics-recycling.org.uk

The Central Point of Expertise on Timber Procurement (CPET)

UK Government service set up by Defra, and operated by ProForest, of interest to those sourcing **timber and timber derived products such as pulp and paper**. It provides information about the Government's timber procurement policy and on how public sector buyers and their suppliers can meet these policy requirements in practice, and on which timber certification schemes demonstrate legality and sustainability: www.proforest.net/cpet

Cradle to Cradle

US certification scheme to evaluate a material or product's ingredients and complete products for impacts on human and environmental health, and their capacity **to be recycled or safely composted**: www.mbdc.com/certified.html

David Bellamy Conservation Awards

UK scheme for conservation projects in **camping, caravan and holiday home parks**: www.davidbellamyconservation.org.uk/home/

Demeter "Biodynamic" label

US **food** label, going beyond organic, for products produced without the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilisers, and without animal by-products: www.demeter-usa.org

Dolphin Safe

US-based international **dolphin protection labelling scheme for tuna**, promoting sustainable fishing and operating in UK: www.earthisland.org/immp/

Ecocert

International certification scheme for **organic and natural cosmetics** worldwide: www.ecocert.com

eco info Mark

Sony Corporation's **own green label scheme** highlighting specific environmental information about aspects of **its electrical and electronic products**, in catalogues, user manuals and advertising, and on packaging: www.sony.net/SonyInfo/Environment/environment/eco/

EcoLogo^M

The symbol awarded to products meeting the environmental criteria of the **Environmental Choice^M Program** – see separate entry below.

Eco-Rail Mark

Japanese **transport certification scheme** to reduce CO₂ emissions, for products and companies which actively introduce rail transportation, aiming to encourage companies to shift to rail transportation and help raise consumers' awareness of environmental action in this field:

www.japanfs.org/db/database

Equitrade

Ethical trading scheme aimed at ending poverty, through sustainable commercial international trade, with a Mark to identify qualifying products such as **chocolate** from developing nations: www.equitrade.org

EMAS (the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme)

Not a green logo or product certification scheme, but a voluntary European Commission registration scheme for organisations which continuously improve their environmental efficiency by using an **environmental management system** and which publicly report their achievements. In the UK it is run by IEMA: www.iema.net/index.php/emas

Energy Performance Certificates

The **energy efficiency rating for UK homes**, which uses the colours familiar from the EU Energy Label. EPCs are a key part of the Home Information Packs which were introduced on a phased basis from 1 August 2007, meaning that house hunters will get information about energy efficiency and practical steps to cut energy bills and reduce carbon emissions:

www.homeinformationpacks.gov.uk/

Energy schemes

In addition to the **EU Energy Label** (which by law must be used on all refrigeration appliances, electric tumble dryers, washing machines, washer dryers, dishwashers, electric ovens, air conditioners, lamps and light bulb packaging - see Defra's **Shopper's Guide to Green Labels** at www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/), there are similarly designed labels for **boilers** and **windows**:

- In the UK, **boilers** use the **SEDBUK label** (Seasonal Efficiency of Domestic Boilers in the UK). The rating enables comparison to be made between the energy efficiency of different boilers, according to the familiar A to G scale, with A as the most efficient and G the least: <http://www.boilers.org.uk/>
- The British Fenestration Rating Council uses the **BRFC Window Energy Rating**, a voluntary scheme in which the whole **window** (the frame and glass) is assessed according to its efficiency at retaining heat, again using the A to G bands: <http://www.bfrc.org/>

For information about the **Energy Saving Recommended** scheme (which endorses a wide range of energy efficient products) and the **Energy Star** (which appears on some types of office equipment), see Defra's **Shopper's Guide to Green Labels** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/)

Environmental Choice^M Program

Environment Canada's widely respected **ecolabel scheme**, operated by the TerraChoice environmental marketing agency, with the EcoLogo^M certification mark. The Panel Review Process enables consideration of requests to develop criteria for new product categories: www.environmentalchoice.com

Environmentally Preferable Products and Services

US EPA's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) federal-wide program to encourage Executive Agencies in greener public procurement across **many product types**: www.epa.gov/epp/

EnviroStars business certification program

US regional program **to help businesses to reduce hazardous waste**, while giving consumers an objective way to identify environmentally sound businesses: www.envirostars.org

EPEAT

US procurement tool to help institutional purchasers choose **computers and related IT products** based on their environmental attributes: www.epeat.net

Ethical Tea Partnership

UK-based **ethically focused association of tea packing companies** working in partnership with tea producers to monitor and improve conditions of workers and ensure that tea bought by members is produced in a socially responsible way: www.ethicalteapartnership.org

Ethical Trading Initiative

UK-based **ethical alliance** of companies, non-governmental organisations and trade union organisations aiming to improve conditions of workers producing for the UK market: www.ethicaltrade.org

ETL Listed Mark

A **safety mark** from Intertek which indicates that a product has been tested by an accredited third party testing laboratory, and meets relevant safety standards and minimal requirements for sale or distribution in North America: www.uk.intertek-etlsemko.com

EurepGAP

European partnership aiming to develop standards and procedures for global certification of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), covering **flowers, fruit and vegetables**: www.eurep.org

European Ecolabel (the Flower)

The Europe-wide environmental labelling scheme for a wide range of product types - see Defra's **Shopper's Guide to Green Labels** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/)

Fair Flowers Fair Plants

European initiative to encourage production of **flowers and plants** in a sustainable manner respecting people and the environment: www.fairflowersfairplants.com

Fairtrade / Fair Trade Certified™ / fair trade

- **Fairtrade** is the name for the **ethical trading certification and labelling** system used in the UK by the Fairtrade Foundation: www.fairtrade.org.uk - see Defra's **Shopper's Guide to Green Labels** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/)
- **Fair Trade Certified™** is the US scheme: www.transfairusa.org
- **fair trade** is the term usually used to describe the fair trading movement as a whole, and covers both labelled and unlabelled products and the work of Alternative Trade Organisations (ATOs)
- **IFAT** is the International Federation for Alternative Trade, a global network of fair trade organisations: www.ifat.org

Fair Wear Foundation (FWF)

Netherlands-based association of businesses, trade unions and NGOs, which aims to promote **decent labour conditions in the garment industry** and operates elsewhere in Europe and in Asia: www.fairwear.nl/

Florimark

Netherlands-based quality seal of approval for suppliers of **flowers and plants**: www.florimark.nl

The **Flower** – the symbol and alternative name for the **European Ecolabel**

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

Trademark of the international certification scheme for **timber and timber derived products like paper** - see Defra's **Shopper's Guide to Green Labels** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/)

Freedom Food

UK ethical-type logo on **food from animals** reared in line with RSPCA standards: www.freedomfood.co.uk

FSC – see **Forest Stewardship Council**

Future Friendly

UK product logo developed in partnership between **Procter and Gamble brands** and the Energy Saving Trust, Global Cool, Waterwise and Waste Watch to help consumers save energy and water and reduce waste: www.futurefriendly.co.uk

Gas energy labels

Labelling for **gas space heaters** has not yet been adopted in the UK, but countries which have done so include Australia: www.energyrating.gov.au/gas.html

Global Organic Textile Standard

International and influential **textile** standard: www.global-standard.org

Good African Coffee Company

Fair trading scheme for a range of African **coffees**, with a “Trade not Aid” message: www.goodafrican.com

Green Dot

Used on packaging in many European countries to indicate that the producer has made a contribution to **recycling of packaging** within those countries – see Defra's **Shopper's Guide to Green Labels** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/)

Green Dragon

Not a green labelling scheme, but a **Wales-based environmental management system** initiative with a stepped approach relevant to the specific needs of companies of any size: www.greendragonems.com

Green Flagship

Philips company's **own green label scheme**, used for some of its **electrical products** which offer better environmental performance:

www.philips.com/about/sustainability/

Green Globe

Worldwide benchmarking and certification program facilitating **sustainable travel and tourism** for consumers, companies and communities through economic, social and environmental management: www.greenglobe.org

Greenhouse Friendly™

Australian government scheme whose logo means that a product or service's **greenhouse gas emissions** have been offset through approved greenhouse gas reduction projects: www.greenhouse.gov.au/greenhousefriendly/

Green Mark

An **independent UK environmental management systems** recognition scheme providing assistance for small manufacturing businesses based within the M25, and offering the services of environmental consultants from the London Environment Centre: www.green-mark.co.uk/

Green Seal

US label for **products and services**, including household goods, **Government purchasing** and facilities management, and **tourist accommodation**:

www.greenseal.org

Green Shopping Guide Ethical Company Accreditation Scheme

UK certificated scheme with logo, covering environment, animals, people, and more across **many product types**: www.thegoodshoppingguide.co.uk/the-ethical-company-accreditation-scheme.htm

Green Start

Not a labelling scheme, but VisitBritain's entry-level programme helping **tourism businesses** (from accommodation providers to attractions) make themselves more sustainable by working towards good practices in nine key areas before moving on to a validated scheme:

www.visitbritain.com/en/campaigns/green/index

Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS)

Scotland's environmental accreditation scheme for **tourist accommodation and related facilities**, with gold, silver and bronze standards, now expanding in England: includes **Green Tourism for London** for **London's hotels, attractions and event venues**: www.green-business.co.uk

GREENGUARD™ Environmental Institute Certification Program

US certification scheme to establish acceptable **indoor air standards** for indoor products, environments, and buildings: www.greenguard.org

Green WoolSafe Mark

International mark for environmentally responsible **carpet cleaning products** with the US Green Seal or Canadian Environmental Choice EcoLogo^M:

www.woolSAFE.org

GUT Label

European scheme for environmentally responsible **carpet production**, which awards a licence (which appears on the back of the carpet) to show that it has been tested by a certified testing institute: www.gut-ev.de/

Humane Cosmetics Standard / Humane Household Products Standard

International standards operating in the UK (where they are managed by the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, BUAV) and other European countries, as well as the USA and Canada, which use the Leaping Bunny logo, the only logo which offers the assurance that a company complies with the standards, meaning that its products and ingredients are **not tested on animals** at any stage of bringing the product to market: www.gocrueltyfree.org

IFAT – see Fairtrade

Intertek Quality & Performance Mark™

A general private mark from Intertek covering **durability, functionality, workmanship, usability and life cycle**, which is intended “to give manufacturers a point of differentiation in the marketplace and consumers peace of mind about their product purchases”: www.intertek.com

Keep Britain Tidy logo

British variation of the International Tidyman logo **to discourage litter**, which is copyright of the environmental charity, Environmental Campaigns (ENCAMS): www.encams.org/home/home.asp

Label Social Belge

Belgian **social labelling scheme** which has made a start on labelling products whose production respects good social practices

www.social-label.be

LEAF Marque

UK **food and farming label** – see Defra’s **Shopper’s Guide to Green Labels** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/)

Leaping Bunny – see Humane Cosmetics Standard / Humane Household Products Standard

LEED Green Building Rating System®

US voluntary, consensus-based national standard by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for developing high-performance, **sustainable buildings**: www.usgbc.org

MADE-BY Track & Trace

Netherlands-based **social and environmental label for sustainably produced fashion**, using a code which enables purchasers to find where garments were produced and by whom: a blue button near the care label is its symbol: www.made-by.nl

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

International **sustainable fish label** – see Defra’s **Shopper’s Guide to Green Labels** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/)

Mobius Loop

Logo meaning that a product or part of it can be **recycled** where facilities are available – see Defra’s **Shopper’s Guide to Green Labels** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/). The loop is not copyright. The basic versions of it are described at www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/pdf/genericguide.pdf, pages 20-21. For more information, visit www.recycle-more.co.uk/ and <http://www.biffa.co.uk/getrecycling/symbols.php>. Downloadable versions of the loop are available at www.recycle-more.co.uk/nav/page529.aspx.

MPS

international certification organisation which assesses and certifies environmental, quality and social aspects of the **flower, vegetables and growing industries**: www.st-mps.nl

MSC – see Marine Stewardship Council

“N” labelled

Means that a product is classified as **dangerous for the environment (N)** according to the European Dangerous Preparations Directive (1999/45/EC): ec.europa.eu/enterprise/chemicals/legislation/dangerous/directive_en.htm

NAPM Approved Recycled Marks

The UK National Association of Paper Merchants (NAPM) Recycled Paper Mark only appears on **paper and board** manufactured from a minimum of 50% genuine recovered fibre, no part of which should contain mill produced waste: http://www.napm.org.uk/recycled_mark.htm

natureplus

European environmental quality label for sustainable **building materials**, introduced in July 2002: www.natureplus.org

Nordic Swan

Scandinavian ecolabel scheme operating in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden (and often seen elsewhere) for a wide range of product types - see Defra’s **Shopper’s Guide to Green Labels** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/)

Ocean Wild Mark of the “Frozen at Sea Fillets Association” (FASFA): UK-based scheme covering range of issues including **fishing** in well managed waters of Iceland and Barents Sea: www.fasfa.co.uk

Oeko-Tex Standard

International certification scheme for **textiles and garments** covering all stages of production – see Defra’s **Shopper’s Guide to Green Labels** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/)

Organic labels - see Defra’s **Shopper’s Guide to Green Labels** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/) and the Organic Directory listing **organic** products (www.whyorganic.org/involved_organicDirectory.asp). A compulsory EU organic logo is due to be introduced by 2010.

Peak District Environmental Quality Mark

UK **regional certification mark**, started in 2003 for “businesses that actively support the best environmental practices in the Peak District National Park”: www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/index/looking-after/eqm.htm

PEFC – see **Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes**

Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC)

European certification scheme for **timber and paper products** - see Defra’s **Shopper’s Guide to Green Labels** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/)

Protected Designation of Origin (PDO)

One of three terms used in the European Union since 1992 for schemes with similar looking logos designed to protect **regional or traditional food products** with well-known reputations from unfair competition by products which pass themselves off as the genuine article using the same name:

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/foodqual/quali1_en.htm

- **PDO (Protected Designation of Origin)** is for foods which are produced, processed and prepared in a given geographical area using recognised know-how;
- **PGI (Protected Geographical Indication)** requires the geographical link to occur in at least one of the stages of production, processing or preparation;
- **TSG (Traditional Speciality Guaranteed)** does not refer to the origin but highlights traditional character, either in the composition or means of production.

Rainforest Alliance

International certification scheme promoting environmentally and socially responsible production, for **timber, paper, bananas, coffee, and tourism products** - see Defra’s **Shopper’s Guide to Green Labels** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/)

RecycleNow

UK campaign started by WRAP (the Waste & Resources Action Programme) to promote **recycling**, whose symbol appears on recycling boxes, bottle banks, and collection lorries: www.recyclenow.com/

Red Tractor

Not a “green label”, but a UK National Farmers Union **farm assurance scheme** guaranteeing that food using it is 95% British and meets a wide range of good farming standards: www.redtractor.org.uk

Responsible Print™

UK based trade marked standard to certify that a **printed publication** has been specified and produced in an environmentally sensitive and sustainable way, covering the whole life cycle: www.responsibleprint.info/

RugMark

Global non-profit organisation working to end illegal child labour in the **carpet** industry and offer educational opportunities to children in South Asia: www.rugmark.org

SEDBUK (Seasonal Efficiency of Domestic Boilers in the UK) – see **Energy schemes**

SEE Companies accreditation

UK **social, environmental and ethical** (SEE) accreditation scheme to facilitate soundly based purchasing, employment and investment decisions. Accredited companies can display the SEE Companies Logo on packaging and marketing materials: www.seepotential.com

Slow Food

International eco-gastronomic organisation aimed at counteracting fast food, and awakening interest in **local food** and how choices affect the rest of the world: www.slowfood.com

Smartwood

A global **forest management certification program** of Rainforest Alliance, and the world’s leading FSC certifier. Products made from SmartWood-certified operations include **timber, paper, furniture, flooring** and **musical instruments** and non-timber forest products such as maple syrup and Brazil nuts: www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/forestry/smartwood/

Soil Association

One of the approved organisations in the UK which can certify products as **organic** - see Defra’s **Shopper’s Guide to Green Labels** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/)

RIAS Sustainable Building Design Accreditation

Scottish scheme for accrediting architects to try to improve the **energy efficiency of buildings**, recognising four levels of skill in built work, with star* recognition of innovation within each level: www.rias.org.uk/content/

Swedish Falcon (The Good Environmental Choice scheme)

Swedish Ecolabel run by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, on different lines to the Nordic Swan, covering a wide **range of goods and services**: www.snf.se/bmv/english-more.cfm

Tartan Quality Mark

Scheme for quality **Scottish salmon** to help improve environmental performance and protect marine resources:
www.scottishsalmon.co.uk/aboutus/tqm.asp

TCO labelling system

Swedish-based labelling scheme covering the ergonomics and ecological aspects of **office products**, now found on several thousand items including **computers, printers, phones and furniture**: <http://www.tcodevelopment.com/>

Timber Procurement Assessment Committee (TPAC)

Body which assesses certification systems for the Dutch procurement policy for **timber**, and invites stakeholders to share knowledge about certification systems: <http://www.tpac.smk.nl/>

Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG) - see Protected Designation of Origin (PDO)

UK Fuel Economy Label

UK initiative showing how much CO₂ a **car** emits and estimated fuel costs – see Defra's **Shopper's Guide to Green Labels** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/)

Utz Certified™

International social responsibility certification scheme for **coffee**, formerly known as Utz Kapeh: www.utzkapeh.org

Vegan and vegetarian labelling

- Primarily used to designate food content and production processes. Official criteria for use of the terms "**vegetarian**" and "**vegan**" on **food labels** in the UK was published by the Food Standards Agency in April 2006 to improve food labelling, after consulting stakeholders including The Vegetarian Society and The Vegan Society:
www.vegsoc.org/business/corporate/symbfaq.html
- For guidance about the Vegetarian Society's seedling symbol, visit www.vegsoc.org/business/corporate/symbfaq.html

VeriFlora™

US programme for agricultural, environmental, and socially responsible aspects of **cut flower and ornamental growing** operations:
www.scscertified.com/csrpurchasing/veriflora/

VOC labels

Labels indicating the relative content of VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds) in **paints and associated products** – see Defra’s **Shopper’s Guide to Green Labels** (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/)

Voluntary Carbon Standard (VCS) – see **Carbon schemes**

Waitrose Foundation

The UK store’s own sticker for **ethically traded food** from around the world: www.waitrose.com/about/thewaitrosefoundation.asp

Waterwise Marque

UK scheme, with the Marque awarded each year to products which best enhance **water efficiency** or reduce water wastage: www.waterwise.org.uk

WEEE logo (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment)

Electrical and electronic equipment covered by the WEEE Directive must carry a crossed out wheelie bin logo to show consumers that it should not be thrown in the general waste bin:

www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/topics/electrical/

Whole Trade™ Guarantee

North American **fair trade, quality and environmental food label** developed by Whole Foods Market for socially responsible produce from developing countries: www.wholefoodsmarket.com/products/wholetrade/

The European Ecolabel and EMAS – what's the difference?

The **European Ecolabel** and **EMAS** are different but complementary European Commission schemes.

EMAS is a registration scheme for organisations which continuously improve their environmental efficiency by using an environmental management system and which publicly report their achievements. **The Ecolabel** is a logo awarded to products which have been independently certified as meeting high environmental criteria agreed by all member states for that type of product.

Both are voluntary initiatives which can significantly enhance the environmental credibility of participants.

The European Ecolabel (“the Flower”), is an award-type label for products which meet demanding environmental standards in any of the twenty-three categories covered by the scheme. Products (which include goods and services) must be independently certified to meet the published criteria for that product group. Companies may then display the Flower logo on their product and can enjoy the marketing benefits of participating.

The key advantages of obtaining the Ecolabel are that it is:

- **Europe’s premier green label** - if you make a quality product which provides value for money, the Ecolabel can enhance its appeal and help it to stand out in the market;
- **public and credible** - products with the Ecolabel must be independently certified to meet strict published criteria, so consumers can buy with confidence;
- **comprehensive** – it applies to all the main environmental impacts of a product, over its whole life through to disposal, and the criteria are developed by a multi-stakeholder approach;
- **wide-ranging** – the scheme uses one logo for many different kinds of products, from electrical goods to paints to cleaning products, so the logo is becoming increasingly visible in the marketplace;
- **Europe-wide** – one label covers the whole of Europe: the scheme is backed by the European Commission, and all EU member states, so it has the potential to influence the behaviour of millions of consumers.

EMAS is the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme. It focuses on an environmental management system, by integrating the requirements for international standard EN/ISO 14001 (as the environmental management system component), which applicants apply to all aspects of their operations to ensure that they are continuously improving their environmental efficiency. EMAS also requires participants to publish an environmental report about what they have achieved.

The key advantages that EMAS offers are:

- **opportunities for increased profits and marketplace advantages** – EMAS can help organisations to run more efficiently, enhance business opportunities, access new markets and safeguard existing ones where green production processes are important;
- **regulatory incentives** – EMAS can be used to demonstrate compliance with national and European legislation (such as the EUP Directive and Climate Change Levy) as well as to achieve cost savings by paying lower fees and charges to the regulator through the Environment Agency’s risk-based regulation EP OPRA;
- **responsible risk management** – EMAS directly involves regulators at the time of registration, and provides an additional level of assurance that participating organisations are managing their liabilities responsibly and comply with relevant legislation: regulators effectively have a veto over registration;
- **independently validated environmental information** – participants can use data that has been independently checked and verified to support green claims about their products, services and activities: this is fully in line with requirements for environmental labelling in international standard ISO 14021;
- **enhanced employee involvement** – EMAS helps to motivate and stimulate the commitment of staff to making environmental improvements: EMAS can help to unlock the potential of staff;
- **flexible reporting** – EMAS allows organisations to tailor their environmental reports to specific stakeholder groups and decide what and how much information to include in a report;
- **better relations with all stakeholders** – EMAS shows stakeholders that participating organisations are open and transparent, and gives confidence to customers and investors that participants are serious about environmental issues, and that the information they provide is both credible and reliable.

Both schemes demonstrate your company’s commitment to creating a better environment, and show that you have taken action.

Green media

General

Many UK newspapers and journals run regular features whose writers watch the green marketplace and report news about new products. For example:

- **The Guardian's** regular **"Ethical Living"** feature
- **The Times's** **"Eco-worrier"**, Saturdays
- **The Independent** property supplement's **"Green House"**, Wednesdays

Examples of London media features about green living include:

- **The London Evening Standard's** **"A Greener Life"**, Mondays
- **Time Out's** **"Green Scene"**
- **Metro's** **"GreenMetro"**

Some magazines for specific sectors, such as computers, have regular or occasional features on green issues which may be useful to those wanting to advertise or to source green products. They should be able to provide information about advertising possibilities and planned special issues – many mainstream magazines now have a regular "green issue" once a year or so.

Environmental media

Most of the following magazines and journals carry advertising geared to their target readership.

BabyGROE (www.babygroe.co.uk) – annual UK magazine delivered to all expectant mothers during that year, covering green and organic issues relevant to mothers and babies.

Building for a Future (www.buildingforafuture.co.uk) - the Green Building Press's quarterly sustainability journal for the construction industry, published since 1989.

The Ecologist (www.theecologist.org) - environmental news, features and advertising about greener lifestyles and products, for consumers, academics and policy makers. Defra has advertised the Ecolabel in it.

Ecotextile News (www.ecotextile.com) - new monthly magazine for the sustainable textile and apparel industries.

The ENDS Report (www.ends.co.uk) – detailed environmental news and analysis for environmental policy-makers and professionals.

Energy, resource, environmental and sustainable management (www.eaem.co.uk) – Defra’s own specialist magazine for energy and environmental managers and professionals, circulation 25,000: includes news and ads about products for professional use.

Ethical Consumer (www.ethicalconsumer.org) – campaigning ethical and environmental magazine appearing every two months, focusing on the power of consumers to effect change, with “Which?”-type surveys of product ranges, with lots of advertising by small businesses.

Green Hotelier (www.greenhotelier.com) – magazine produced by the International Tourism Partnership "for people who care about a more environmentally and socially responsible hotel industry and its contribution to sustainable travel and tourism": circulation of 4,000.

Green Parent (www.thegreenparent.co.uk) – ethical lifestyle family magazine, with readership of 100,000, selling in supermarkets, newsagents and health food shops; also sells in US and Canada.

New Consumer (www.newconsumer.com) - pocket-sized upmarket ethical glossy describing itself as the “UK’s leading ethical lifestyle magazine”.

Pure Living (www.greenguide.co.uk/taxonomy_menu/17/141/213) – green lifestyle magazine, appearing every two months, relaunched in March 2007: takes advertising and press releases.

Sublime (www.sublimemagazine.com) - “the first international ethical lifestyle magazine”, launched January 2007.

Sustain’ magazine (www.sustainmagazine.com) - focus is on the built environment, but wide target readership, from retailers to policy-makers: every two months. earthBorn Paints have advertised their Ecolabel in it.

Sustainable Business (www.edie.net/ebm) – monthly magazine previously called Environment Business Magazine, with news and features, targeted at environmental policy makers and business professionals, including those working in green procurement. Fedrigoni UK papers have advertised their Ecolabel in it, and Defra has advertised the Ecolabel in it.

Other media

greentv (www.green.tv) – set up in 2006, focus on news: a partner project of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and supported by Defra among other organisations.

Also broadcasting are **Greenzone TV** (www.greenzone.tv), and **Ethical TV**, an internet TV channel (www.handupmedia.co.uk/newmedia.html).

Setting up new environmental labelling schemes

General

Labels are meant to provide a simple way for consumers to identify environmentally responsible products. However, the growing number of labelling schemes also causes problems. New schemes are constantly being set up around the world. The new ones face the challenge of trying to make themselves visible in a crowded global marketplace, and run the risk of confusing rather than helping consumers.

There are regular calls for greater coordination between labelling schemes, but cooperation and coordination have so far proved difficult to achieve, even in areas where labels are broadly doing the same thing (such as tourism schemes, or the European Ecolabel and national ecolabels). This is one reason why the UK has not set up its own national ecolabelling scheme, and focuses instead on strongly supporting the European Ecolabel.

National ecolabelling schemes are expensive to set up and run, take time to make their mark, and inevitably compete with each other to some degree. In effect, creating a new label is creating a new brand, with the huge costs and marketing implications which that involves; so any new labelling scheme needs careful thought, particularly about whether the new label would actually break new ground or replace existing labels, and about the marketing considerations, which normally need to be designed in from the outset.

The bottom line, though, is that there are many gaps in the marketplace, so some sectors and organisations have opted for setting up their own new schemes, rather than using or working with an existing label. No single label covers all aspects of sustainability. There are several key sectors in which well-known standards or labels do not address all of the issues which matter to buyers, or where there is no good labelling scheme, or where existing labels don't meet market needs in other ways.

So there is room for labels which address issues not covered by other labels. Even if other labels cover similar territory, a degree of choice can help industry. The first-rate schemes obviously help to encourage better environmental standards, and stimulate other organisations to create better schemes. At present it seems likely that there will continue to be a core range of good green labels in the market. Defra therefore aims to encourage businesses to use the best schemes, and to help consumers to recognise them, through initiatives such as the Shopper's Guide to Green Labels - see www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/index.htm.

If you are thinking about setting up a new scheme, a good starting point for an analysis of the pros and cons of setting up and running national environmental labelling is the Global Ecolabelling Network's "*GEN Guide to Ecolabelling*", first produced in 1999 to provide guidance on how to design and establish an effective and credible ecolabelling scheme.

Two key questions to be addressed before embarking on creating a new scheme are:

- first, is an information scheme really one of the tools that will deliver the policy concerned, and bring about changes in the market concerned?
- secondly, just what type of information suits the particular product and its particular market circumstances?

Over the last few years there has been some growth in the number of industry-based labelling schemes for specific sectors (as opposed to national schemes covering a portmanteau of sectors). Several are very professionally run, and the support they command from industry gives them potential to achieve significant environmental gains.

A report which brings together all the issues associated with setting up a labelling scheme and making a success of it is Forum for the Future's *Fishing for Good*, by Jonathon Porritt with James Goodman, published in 2005. It analyses the issues which led to the setting up of Unilever's Fish Sustainability Index, and the work the company has done with and through the Marine Stewardship Council scheme (enquiries to j.goodman@forumfortheuture.co.uk, 020 7324 3661).

Factors to consider

The following are some of the factors to take into account when considering setting up a new labelling scheme – essentially the key aspects are policy, procedure, professional expertise, promotion, and participation:

- the direct environmental benefits that it might achieve, through actual participation by industry;
- indirect benefits, through aspects such as greater consumer interest in labelling, or use of criteria by non-participating manufacturers as a benchmark for their products;
- whether other schemes are already achieving the same results, or might be willing to extend or franchise their schemes to cover what you have in mind – even if you do decide to set up your own scheme, compatibility with other schemes may help it to expand internationally at a later date;

- whether a particular industry itself might be willing to run a credible scheme;
- the success (or lack of it) of similar schemes;
- what the demand and potential support for labelling is, from policy makers, industry (especially the specific sectors most affected), consumers, and other stakeholders;
- the scheme's likely relationship with other industry or Government policies and initiatives, especially on products and green purchasing;
- what types of products the scheme might cover – consumers and manufacturers might want green labels for certain types of goods or services, but be less interested in labelling for other kinds of products;
- legal issues (national and European) about trade and protectionism, and compliance with the Rules of the World Trade Organisation - whether the label might be regarded as a Technical Barrier to Trade, for example;
- what geographical area the scheme might cover – markets are global, and national schemes have a natural limit, but national schemes may have more influence locally than international schemes;
- what aspects the scheme might address - environmental issues; health issues related to the environment; or the full range of sustainability issues, including ethical issues;
- the nature of the approach – life cycle analysis, or something more informal;
- how demanding the criteria would be - whether they would be so tough that take-up (and hence visibility) might be limited; or less strict, which might mean affect the label's ability to address key environmental impacts;
- whether the criteria and the operation of the scheme can keep pace with the market – manufacturers of products whose specifications change quickly may prefer to use the criteria as guidelines, rather than applying for a label for a product which will be going out of production soon after the label has been awarded;
- the type of environmental label (Type I, II or III), in terms of the ISO classification;

- how simple and streamlined the application process will be, and how long the process of applying for the label will take;
- the cost of developing criteria, keeping them up to date, administering the scheme, promoting and policing it – and whether this can be financed from application fees, or if some form of subsidy will be necessary, at least initially;
- the process of assessment for applicants wanting to obtain the label – the intention to carry out inspections will have economic and other implications if inspectors have to travel around the world, and may affect decisions about the geographical area covered by the scheme (see above);
- marketing, branding, and visibility issues, which should include how the scheme will be publicised, and whether companies would be willing to put their logo on their products, or would prefer to mention it only in company literature;
- creating a logo that will become quickly recognised by consumers, and making sure that it is not confused with other logos;
- creating the brand identity of the label – its credibility and what it stands for;
- the extent of market penetration needed to make the scheme a success, environmentally and financially.

Good luck!
