



Funded by  
the European Union

# EU4Environment

Green Economy in Eastern Partner Countries



## GUIDELINE

# Ecolabelling system in the Republic of Moldova

2022



Action implemented by:



## Acknowledgments

This guideline was prepared by the Public Association EcoContact experts/ authors: Ms. Irina Punga - legal expert, Ms. Natalia Guranda - environmental expert, Ms. Larisa Cupcea - sustainable development expert, Ms. Tatiana Gumene - editing and proofreading, under the supervision of United Nations Environment Programme: Ms. Lesya Nikolayeva, Ms. Laetitia Montero Catusse.

**The report is available on the EcoContact website.**

### Disclaimer

This document has been developed within the framework of the project on the “European Union for Environment Action” (EU4Environment) funded by the European Union and implemented by the OECD, UNECE, UNEP, UNIDO, and the World Bank. The guide was prepared by the EcoContact, UNEP’s implementing partner in Moldova, under the guidance of UNEP, with support from the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova.

The views expressed herein are those of the authors only and cannot be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union, its members, the Governments of the Eastern Partnership Countries, or the implementing partners.

This report and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries, and the name of any territory, city, or area.

This report was produced with the financial assistance of the European Union.

It is permitted to use the text of this report on the condition that proper reference to the source is provided.

The sale of this document is prohibited.

Please cite this publication as EU4Environment (2022), *“Guideline on the ecolabelling system in the Republic of Moldova”*.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS .....	4
INTRODUCTION .....	5
TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS .....	7
<b>CHAPTER I</b>	
<b>GENERAL ASPECTS REGARDING THE ECOLABELLING SYSTEM.....</b>	<b>8</b>
1.1. Ecolabel Classification .....	9
1.2. The Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN) .....	12
<b>CHAPTER II</b>	
<b>NATIONAL ECOLABELLING SYSTEMS APPLIED WORLDWIDE .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>CHAPTER III</b>	
<b>ECOLABELLING SYSTEM IN THE EUROPEAN UNION.....</b>	<b>22</b>
3.1. Legislation and application of the EU ecolabel.....	22
3.2. Procedure for the design and revision of the EU Ecolabel criteria .....	24
3.3. European Union Ecolabel (EU Ecolabel) .....	26
3.4. Authority responsible for the application of the ecolabelling system .....	28
3.5. The costs of ecolabelling services.....	30
<b>CHAPTER IV</b>	
<b>ECOLABELLING SYSTEM IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA.....</b>	<b>32</b>
4.1. Premises for the creation and establishment of an ecolabelling system at the national level.....	32
4.2. Suggested Ecolabelling Certification Bodies (ECB) .....	33
4.3. The suggested procedure for Assessing the Conformity of Services and Products .....	40
4.3.1 Suggested application procedure for issuing the certificate of conformity.....	40
4.3.2. The suggested procedure for conformity assessment of products and services.....	41
4.3.3. Ecolabel criteria for products and services.....	42
4.4. Records of economic operators and their obligations.....	42
4.5. Costs of Ecolabelling Services.....	43
4.6. Conditions of Use and Control of the Ecolabel.....	43
4.6.1. Conditions for the use of the ecolabel .....	43
4.6.2 Inspection of the eco labelled products and services .....	44
<b>ANNEXES.....</b>	<b>45</b>
Annex 1 .....	45
Annex 2 .....	46
Annex 3.....	47

# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>CEL</b>	China Environment Labelling
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>ECB</b>	Ecolabelling Certification Body
<b>EEC</b>	European Economic Community
<b>EMA</b>	Eco Mark Africa Programme
<b>GD</b>	Governmental Decision
<b>GECA</b>	Good Environmental Choice Australia
<b>GEN</b>	Global Ecolabelling Network
<b>GENICES</b>	GEN Internationally Coordinated Ecolabelling System
<b>HKGLS</b>	Hong Kong Green Label Scheme
<b>ISO</b>	International Organization for Standardization
<b>LCA</b>	Life-Cycle Assessment
<b>MOLDAC</b>	National Accreditation Centre of the Republic of Moldova
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>UBA</b>	German Environmental Agency
<b>UNECE</b>	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nation Environment Programme
<b>UNIDO</b>	United Nations Industrial Development Organization

# INTRODUCTION

An ecolabelling system is a positive measure of environmental policy and is in favour of sustainable development. It is a system where priority is given to the product that, based on an objective analysis, presents qualities with a lower environmental impact than the average of similar products on the market.

As such, products and services placed on the market and containing an ecolabel have a reduced impact on the environment compared with other conventional products from the same category that do not meet the criteria of eco-certification. That way, for the consumers, it is essential to find out what effect a product and service can have on the environment and human health throughout its entire life cycle, starting with raw material extraction and finalizing with waste disposal and management.

Lately, on products and services, appeared many different labels, legends and symbols, that intend to place them in a higher place on the market and consumer selection. These „labels” have the first purpose of informing or communicating a series of environmental attributes in favour of respect for the environment, making the lives of those who consume them safer and more aligned with their own values. In this way, with the environmental symbols, consumers have their say, associating themselves with the environmental values that the product and the entire distribution chain commit.

In general, these environmental labels should guarantee that if a consumer decides to purchase a product, they are sure that they are favoring the prevention of pollution associated with said product and, ultimately, they are contributing to protect the environment and collaborating with the final goal, which is to achieve sustainable development.

In this sense, ecolabelling systems are a marketing tool that has the role of increasing the flow of information. Among the different systems of environmental labelling, it is worth highlighting type I Ecolabel which is based on lifecycle analysis and is third-party certified. As there are many products that can display very different environmental labels and symbols, it sometimes creates more confusion and leads to disinformation among consumers. In recent years and due to excessive ecological marketing, there has been some abuse of prefixes such as eco-, bio-, etc. It is true that the indiscriminate use of unclear messages or half-truths in certain products can lead to greenwashing. In this sense, it is necessary to differentiate within the environmental labelling systems the different marks, logos, companies' self-declaration and authentic type I Ecolabel with a specific regulation and scheme that defines standards and involves an independent third party to certify the product.

*Ecolabels are a set of environmental regulation, management and verification instruments, which serve as a verifiable and accurate information tool on the environmental aspects of products and services. They have the objective of promoting and satisfying the demand of those consumers who want to purchase products and services that cause less impact on the environment. Sursa: EU4Environment (2021), “[Evaluarea sistemului de etichetare Ecologică existent în Republica Moldova, în conformitate cu cerințele UE].”*

Sources: EU4Environment (2021), “Assessment of the Eco Labelling system in the Republic of Moldova, in line with the EU requirements.”

Ecolabels are requested voluntarily by the producer and manufacturer of products that have a lower environmental impact. For each product category a set of criteria are defined based on the main environmental impact of the product or service; these criteria can be related to the impacts of the use of natural resources or energy; emissions to the atmosphere, water and soil pollution; deposition of waste; noise and effects on ecosystems. Today the ecolabels that can be found on the market cover a wide range of products and services, with the groups expanding continuously. These product groups include cleaning products, household appliances, furniture, paper products, textiles, and home and garden products, lubricants, environmental information on appliances, vehicles, agri-food products, and services such as tourist accommodation, for example.

The current *“Guideline on the ecolabelling system in the Republic of Moldova”* has the purpose of providing an informative background on ecolabelling, certification mechanism and existing instruments at the national, regional and international levels.

# TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

In this Guideline, the terms and definitions below are used with the following meaning<sup>1</sup>:

**Accreditation** - attestation by the National Accreditation Centre (MOLDAC) that an ecolabelling body meets the requirements set out in the standards and, where appropriate, any other additional requirements, including those set out in the relevant specific accreditation schemes, for carrying out specific conformity assessment activities.

**Market surveillance authorities** - specialized central bodies or administrative authorities subordinated to them, empowered, within the limits of its competencies, with the implementation of the state policy in the field of market surveillance.

**Accreditation certificate** - an official document or set of official documents confirming the granting of accreditation for a defined area.

**Certificate of conformity** - a document certifying that a properly identified product or service has undergone conformity assessment procedures and that, at the time of assessment, the product or the service is in conformity with the applicable specific requirements.

**Product life cycle** - the successive and interconnected stages of the production system from the purchase of raw materials or the formation of natural resources to the final disposal of products.

**Ecolabelling criteria** - the environmental requirements used by the certification body in the conformity assessment process that a product or service must meet in order to be eco-labelled.

**Ecolabel** - is a symbol applied to the product, packaging, brochure, or other information document accompanying the product or service and which provides the necessary information regarding the criteria for applying the ecolabel to products and services on the market.

**Conformity assessment** - attesting that a product or service meets the ecolabel criteria specific to a group of products or services.

**Environmental impact** - any change to the environment that results in whole or in part from a product, good, or service during its life cycle.

**Product group** - goods and/or services which are used for similar purposes, and that are equivalent in terms of their use and perception by consumers.

**Economic operator** - any manufacturer, producer, importer, service provider, wholesaler, or retailer who is the holder of the conformity certificate and using the ecolabel.

**Ecolabelling body** - an independent, neutral, and reliable legal person that in its activity of assessing the conformity of products and services based on environmental criteria applies the requirements of the ISO 14024 international standard: 1999. "Environmental labels and declarations. Type I environmental labelling. Principles and procedures".

**Environmental performance** - the result of the management by a manufacturer of those characteristics of products that have an impact on the environment.

<sup>1</sup> The definitions were collected from the national laws, governmental decision and other national documents.

# CHAPTER I

## GENERAL ASPECTS REGARDING THE ECOLABELLING SYSTEM

### What is ecolabelling?

Ecolabels are a specific type of product labelling that certifies the environmental performance of products and services. To be certified with an ecolabel, the product or service must demonstrate that it has a reduced overall environmental impact throughout its life cycle by fulfilling specific, predefined criteria. Not least important ecolabels promote substitution of hazardous chemical substances by excluding or restricting them ahead of legislation, and to a wider extent than it requires<sup>2</sup>.

Ecolabels are voluntary schemes and can be linked to multi-attribute certification or a single attribute (type I like Ecolabel). When a product or service is certified, the ecolabel confirms that rigorous quality standards have been achieved. Likewise, an ecolabel serves as an acknowledgement that the certified product is both more sustainable and more environmentally friendly than other conventional products of comparable function.

According to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the overall objective of the ecolabel is “...through the communication of verifiable and accurate information, that is not misleading, on environmental aspects of products and services, to encourage the demand for and supply of those products and services that cause less stress on the environment, thereby stimulating the potential for market-driven continuous environmental improvement”.

### Specific objectives of the ecolabel are:

- ▶ to promote environmental protection and reduce the environmental impact of products or services;
- ▶ to inform and encourage manufacturers to produce environmentally labelled products and services;
- ▶ to encourage and apply environmental principles in the design and development of products and services;
- ▶ to improve the sales and/or image of a product as an “eco-marketing” strategy and a strategy to distinguish them between non-distinctive products.

The benefits of ecolabelling are numerous, still, the final goal of it is to have products with better environmental performance on the market and thus contribute to protecting the environment and use the resources in a sustainable manner. Also, specific benefits of the ecolabelling can be those related to:

- ▶ introduction of eco-friendly processes and technological equipment;
- ▶ improvement of the management of economic and other activities;
- ▶ reduced environmental impacts from improved processes;
- ▶ increased awareness of environmentally responsible activities;

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nordic-ecolabel.org/nordic-swan-ecolabel/environmental-aspects/chemicals-nano-and-microplastic/chemicals-harmful-to-health/>



- ▶ development of markets that cater to evolving consumer interests;
- ▶ integration of the country's economy into the worldwide green market and fulfilment of international obligations.

Main stakeholders in an ecolabelling system are:

1. **Government institutions and agencies** that provide inputs (directly and/or indirectly) in system development, management, and delivery areas and/or exert significant influence and demand through their procurement initiatives and activities.
2. **System management authorities**, independent bodies which typically oversee and direct the system delivery activities (such as technical, marketing, and administrative aspects) and that coordinate and liaise among different delivery agencies to perform the actual day-to-day operational tasks.
3. **Industry and commercial associations, retailers and companies** that produce, provide, supply products and services.
4. **Consumers** (corporate and individual) that choose and purchase products and services.
5. **Other interested parties** (academy, experts, NGOs, individual consumers etc.) that promote, advocate, motivate, present ecolabelling to a broader public society.

### To which products does the ecolabel apply?

The ecolabel is awarded by a third party to a wide range of product groups, from major areas of manufacturing to tourist accommodation services that meet established primary environmental criteria. The ecolabelling criteria encourage the application of best practices for the protection of the environment and public health as well as the recycling of products. Respectively, the ecolabel shall be awarded to groups of products and services that meet the following conditions:

- ▶ high potential for environmental protection, which determines the choice made by the buyer;
- ▶ competitive advantages for producers of goods and/or service providers;
- ▶ high consumer demand or end use through sales volume.

### Who can apply for the ecolabel?

Manufacturers, importers, and service providers may apply for the ecolabel. Traders, wholesalers, and retailers may apply for an ecolabel only for products marketed under their own brands.

## 1.1. ECOLABEL CLASSIFICATION

There are many types of environmental labels in the world being used or designed. ISO has thus endeavoured to try to standardize the principles, practices and main features attributed to voluntary environmental labelling schemes. The following ISO standards are important to be mentioned:

- ▶ ISO 14020: 2000. Environmental labels and declarations. General principles;

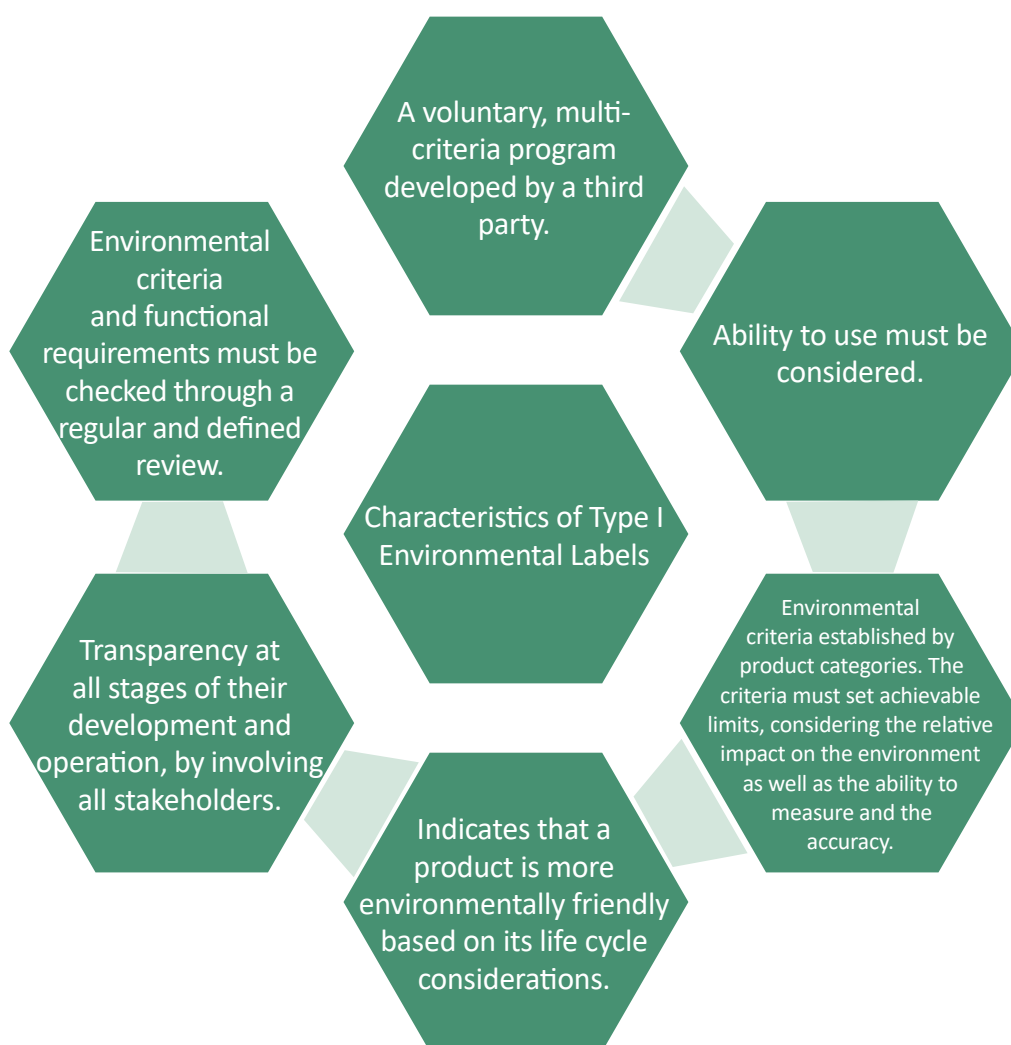
- ▶ ISO 14024: 1999. Environmental labels and declarations. Type I environmental labelling. Principles and procedures;
- ▶ ISO 14021: 2016. Environmental labels and statements. Self-declared environmental claims (type II environmental labelling);
- ▶ ISO 14025: 2006. Environmental Product Declaration Labels and environmental statements. Type III environmental statements. Principles and procedures.

These international standards identify three environmental labelling schemes and three major types of environmental labels respectively:

### Type I environmental labels (ISO 14024: 1999)

**Type I environmental labels** aim to provide a “certified seal” standardized, credible, and easily recognizable, which distinguishes the first 10-30% of products in terms of environmental performance. They meet the requirements of EN ISO 14024. Type I environmental labels are based on selective criteria established and certified by a third party. The third party or awarding body may be a governmental organization or a private non-commercial entity.

Figure 1. Characteristics of Type I environmental label.



Source : <https://www.iso.org/standard/72458.html>

### Advantages of Type I environmental labelling system:

- ▶ certified by an accredited third party;
- ▶ it is based on scientific methods (i.e., Life-Cycle Approach);
- ▶ the logo on the product packaging provides a major visibility of the type of products and services;
- ▶ certification ensures that the functionality of the products and services subject to it is the same as those other products that have a greater impact on the environment;
- ▶ for public and private buyers, an ecolabel easily displays the requirements that are met by products and services to be procured, including under public procurement;
- ▶ promote green purchasing;
- ▶ for the Environmental Management System, the ecolabel criteria can be used as significantly improved environmental aspects.

### Type II environmental label (ISO 14021: 1999)

**Type II environmental label (self-declared environmental claims)** means environmental statements of manufacturers, importers, distributors, or other interested parties, made on their own responsibility, which take different forms: symbols, diagrams or inscriptions which are mentioned on the product or on the packaging. This international standard (EN ISO 14021) specifies the requirements for environmental self-declarations, including symbols and diagrams relating to products. It describes the terms selected and commonly used for the products to be labelled (e.g., 'compostable', 'designed for disassembly', 'recyclable', 'biodegradable', 'recovered energy', 'rechargeable', 'recycled', etc.) and provides qualifications for their use. In addition, this standard prohibits non-specific statements, such as 'ecological', 'green', 'sustainable' or 'emission-free'.

As the producers themselves can determine how many and which characteristics of the products they choose to emphasize, consumers need to check carefully whether the selected criteria have any connection with the desired properties. In fact, practice shows that in the process of selecting characteristics, manufacturers may sometimes overlook other criteria that would be much more informative for environmental and health reasons. Manufacturers, importers, distributors, or other interested parties bear full responsibility for false or misleading product claims. However, the fact that this standard lacks a methodology for testing and assessing independent compliance with established criteria, the degree of consumer credibility decreases significantly compared to other types of ecolabels.

The type II label has advantages and disadvantages in its usage and resumes to the following:

- ▶ **advantages:** provides visibility; more cost-effective because they do not require certification or validation by third parties;
- ▶ **disadvantages:** reduces credibility due to lack of certification /validation; consumers confuse the meaning of the labels, or their interpretation is difficult; low information content.

**Type III environmental label** includes quantitative product information, based on predetermined indices, established by a third party after product life cycle analysis. The objective of Type III environmental label complying with the requirements of EN ISO 14025 is to provide quantified life cycle information (in accordance with EN ISO 14040) and to compare it with other products having the same function. To be a source of comparable information, calculation methods are common and credible thanks to inspection, review, and monitoring by an independent verifier. Unlike the ecolabels described above, (type I and II) the specific properties of the product are not assessed here, no certificate is issued, the environmental preference of the products is not defined, and no minimum requirements are set. The basis of these so-called “*environmental statements*” is the assessment of the life cycle, which determines the “*ecological footprint*” of a product. Unlike type I labels, type III does not define the environmental preference of products, nor does it set minimum requirements to be met.

Type III environmental label has the following **advantages**:

- ▶ *for manufacturers, importers, and suppliers*: provide quantitative, objective, and reliable information (Life-Cycle Assessment (LCA) methods are used) and are open to all products/services;
- ▶ *for buyers, retailers, and customers*: to be a source of comparable information, calculation methods are common and credible thanks to inspection, review, and monitoring by an independent verifier.

## 1.2. THE GLOBAL ECOLABELLING NETWORK (GEN)

GEN is a non-profit association of type I environmental label organizations and their supporters around the world established in 1994 and it currently includes members from around 60 countries (see Figure 2). The network promotes ecolabelling and facilitates access to information on global ecolabelling standards.<sup>3</sup>



GEN provides a complete list of ecolabels for all types of product categories in the world awarded based on multiple criteria, which can then be considered by consumers, manufacturers, service providers and procurement specialists when looking for a true label.

GEN **objectives** are to:

- ▶ help its members, other ecolabelling systems and the public by promoting and developing ecolabelling of products and services;
- ▶ encourage the cooperation, exchange of information and harmonization of its members' ecolabelling schemes;
- ▶ facilitate access to information on global ecolabelling standards;
- ▶ encourage demand for and supply of preferred products and services thanks to their low environmental impact.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.globalecolabelling.net/>



## CHAPTER II

### NATIONAL ECOLABELLING SYSTEMS APPLIED WORLDWIDE

Ecolabelling has evolved since the late 1970s when German certification Blue Angel (Der Blaue Engel) became the world's first ecolabel in 1978.

**Blue Angel** (see Annex 1) is an ecolabel awarded by an independent jury to products that are greener than other products designed for the same purpose (see Annex 1). The label is also designed to act as a guide to sustainable purchasing for consumers and purchasing departments.

Another ecolabel is the official sustainable ecolabel for products from the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden) - **Nordic Swan** (see Annex 2). It was introduced by the Nordic Council of Ministers in 1989. The logo is based on the Nordic Council logo adopted in 1984, which symbolizes trust, integrity, and freedom. Nordic Swan covers 67 different product groups, from hand soap to hotel furniture.

Over the years, many countries have created their own national ecolabels to provide consumers with a range of sustainable products. The table below shows the ecolabelling schemes applied worldwide and which have been presented by the competent bodies of each country as nationally and regionally recognized type I environmental schemes compliant with EN ISO 14024 standard.




Table 1. National Ecolabels existing worldwide








Country	Name of Ecolabel	Ecolabel Logo	Products/services awarded	Official webpage
AFRICA				
Kenya	Eco Mark Africa Programme (EMA)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Fisheries</li> <li>• Aquaculture</li> <li>• Forestry.</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.arso-oran.org/">https://www.arso-oran.org/</a> <a href="https://www.ecomarkafri-ca.org/">https://www.ecomarkafri-ca.org/</a>
Tunisia	Tunisian ecolabel		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourist, accommodation services</li> <li>• Textile products.</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.citet.nat.tn/portail/ecolabel.aspx?_lg=en-US">http://www.citet.nat.tn/portail/ecolabel.aspx?_lg=en-US</a>
ASIA				
China	China Environment Labelling (CEL)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Materials</li> <li>• Textiles</li> <li>• Vehicles</li> <li>• Cosmetics</li> <li>• Electronics</li> <li>• Packaging, etc.</li> </ul>	<a href="http://en.meecec.com/home/certification/environmental-labeling/index.shtml">http://en.meecec.com/home/certification/environmental-labeling/index.shtml</a>





Country	Name of Ecolabel	Ecolabel Logo	Products/services awarded	Official webpage
Hong Kong	Hong Kong Green Label Scheme (HKGLS)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General packaging materials</li> <li>• Common paper products with recycled content</li> <li>• Common plastic products with recycled content</li> <li>• Common cleaning content</li> <li>• Stationery</li> <li>• Another common consumable</li> <li>• Computer products; electronic and electrical appliances</li> <li>• Construction materials</li> <li>• Common paper products without recycled content</li> <li>• Automotive products.</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.greencouncil.org/hkgls">https://www.greencouncil.org/hkgls</a>
India	Ecomark		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food items, Electrical/Electronic Goods</li> <li>• Paper</li> <li>• Lubricating Oils</li> <li>• Packing Materials</li> <li>• Architectural Paints and Powder Coatings, Batteries</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Additives</li> <li>• Wood Substitutes, Cosmetics</li> <li>• Aerosol Propellants, Fire extinguisher</li> <li>• Plastic Products</li> <li>• Leather, Soaps &amp; Detergents</li> <li>• Textiles.</li> </ul>	<a href="http://cpcb.nic.in/eco-scheme/">http://cpcb.nic.in/eco-scheme/</a>
Indonesia	Ekolabel		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Printing paper</li> <li>• Magazine paper</li> <li>• Wrapping paper</li> <li>• Tissue paper</li> <li>• Detergents</li> <li>• Textiles and textile products</li> <li>• Processed leather</li> <li>• Leather casual shoes</li> <li>• Powder detergents</li> <li>• Dry batteries</li> <li>• Wall paints</li> <li>• Ceramic tiles</li> <li>• Plastic shopping bags.</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.env.go.jp/policy/hozen/green/kokusai_platform/symposium/01Indonesia.pdf">https://www.env.go.jp/policy/hozen/green/kokusai_platform/symposium/01Indonesia.pdf</a>

Country	Name of Ecolabel	Ecolabel Logo	Products/services awarded	Official webpage
Israel	Israeli Green Label		<p>It is awarded for about 100 products and services from different categories, like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Cleaning Products</li> <li>• Lipid Removal Cleansing Products</li> <li>• Cement-based Street furniture</li> <li>• Recycled Plastic Products</li> <li>• Natural Growing/Minerals</li> <li>• Electrical accessories</li> <li>• Home Air Conditioning Systems</li> <li>• Green IGTD for nurseries</li> <li>• Gypsum Panels and Blocks</li> <li>• water taps</li> <li>• Innovative Environmental Products</li> <li>• Dry blends for construction</li> <li>• Thermal insulation products for buildings</li> <li>• Hard Pallets</li> <li>• Low-emission paints and coatings</li> <li>• Water-Based Sealing Products</li> <li>• Windows</li> <li>• Recycled Textile Products</li> <li>• Restaurants, cafes and pubs</li> <li>• Medical institutions</li> <li>• Recycled infrastructure and construction materials.</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.sii.org.il/385-en/SII_EN.aspx">https://www.sii.org.il/385-en/SII_EN.aspx</a>
Japan	Eco Mark		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bags and suitcases</li> <li>• Printing Ink</li> <li>• Clothing</li> <li>• Household products</li> <li>• Textile products</li> <li>• Textile products for industrial use</li> <li>• Printing paper</li> <li>• Sanitary paper</li> <li>• Biodegradable lubricating oils</li> <li>• Construction materials</li> <li>• Glass products</li> <li>• Cleaning services</li> </ul>	<p>公益財団法人 日本環境協会 エコマーク事務局 (ecomark.jp) <a href="https://www.ecomark.jp/">https://www.ecomark.jp/</a></p>
Malaysia	SIRIM Ecolabelling		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Products</li> <li>• Buildings</li> <li>• Cleaning products</li> <li>• Cosmetics</li> <li>• Personal Care products</li> <li>• Electronics</li> <li>• Forest products / paper</li> <li>• Appliances</li> <li>• Packaging.</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.sirim-qas.com.my/our-services/product-certification/eco-labelling-scheme">https://www.sirim-qas.com.my/our-services/product-certification/eco-labelling-scheme</a>









Country	Name of Ecolabel	Ecolabel Logo	Products/services awarded	Official webpage
Philippines	Green Choice		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laundry detergent</li> <li>• Cement</li> <li>• Natural in fill material</li> <li>• Engine oil</li> <li>• Ceramic tile</li> <li>• Water-based paint</li> <li>• Led light</li> <li>• Paper hand towel</li> <li>• Tissue papers</li> <li>• Induction lamp</li> <li>• Electronic ballast</li> <li>• Organic liquid disinfectant</li> <li>• Fibre cement board</li> <li>• Photocopier</li> <li>• Tissue paper products</li> <li>• Household batteries</li> <li>• Engine oils</li> <li>• Printing and writing paper products</li> <li>• Crayons</li> <li>• Fire extinguishers</li> <li>• Fluorescent lamps, electronic ballasts</li> <li>• Paints</li> <li>• Writing instruments</li> <li>• Paper envelopes</li> <li>• Paper boards</li> <li>• Inkjet and toner cartridges</li> <li>• Desktop and laptop computers</li> <li>• Multifunction printing devices</li> <li>• Printers</li> <li>• Photocopiers</li> <li>• Facsimile machines</li> <li>• Liquid disinfectants</li> <li>• Bath soaps</li> <li>• Hair shampoos</li> <li>• Fibre cement board</li> <li>• Liquid dishwashing products</li> <li>• Food services.</li> </ul>	<a href="http://pcepsdi.org.ph/programme/green-choice-philippines/aboutgreen-choice-philippines/">http://pcepsdi.org.ph/programme/green-choice-philippines/aboutgreen-choice-philippines/</a>
Singapore	Singapore Green Label		<p>Thousands of products are certified belonging to the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Materials</li> <li>• Lighting</li> <li>• Cleaning Products</li> <li>• Office supplies and equipment</li> <li>• Interior Products</li> <li>• General Products</li> <li>• Household Products</li> <li>• Personal Care Products</li> <li>• Electrical Products Solar Powered.</li> </ul>	<a href="http://sec.org.sg/">http://sec.org.sg/</a>
Sri Lanka	Eco Label – Sri Lanka		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dairy Products</li> <li>• Tea products</li> <li>• Construction Chemicals.</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.ncpcsrilanka.org/eco-labeling/">https://www.ncpcsrilanka.org/eco-labeling/</a>

Country	Name of Ecolabel	Ecolabel Logo	Products/services awarded	Official webpage
Korea	Korea Ecolabel		<p>Certification of 165 product categories including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal care products</li> <li>• Office supplies/ machines, furniture</li> <li>• Electric and electronic products</li> <li>• Construction materials</li> <li>• household items</li> <li>• Goods for automobiles, etc.</li> </ul>	<a href="http://el.keiti.re.kr/enser-vice/enindex.do">http://el.keiti.re.kr/enser-vice/enindex.do</a>
Taiwan	Green Mark		<p>There are around 160 product categories which are marked with the Green Mark.</p>	<a href="https://greenliving.epa.gov.tw/newPublic/Eng/GreenMark/First">https://greenliving.epa.gov.tw/newPublic/Eng/GreenMark/First</a>
Thailand	Green Label		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Household products</li> <li>• Appliances</li> <li>• Building Products</li> <li>• Cleaning Products</li> <li>• Cosmetics/Personal Care</li> <li>• Electronics</li> <li>• Energy</li> <li>• Forests Products/Paper</li> <li>• Health Care Services and equipment</li> <li>• Textiles</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Water, etc.</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.tei.or.th/greenlabel/">http://www.tei.or.th/greenlabel/</a>
<b>EUROPE</b>				
Austria	Umweltzeichen		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• products and tourist services</li> <li>• schools and other educational institutions</li> <li>• "Green Meetings and Green Events"</li> <li>• Forestry products</li> <li>• Paper products.</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.umweltzeichen.at">Das Österreichische Umweltzeichen Umweltzeichen.at</a>
Croatia	Prijatelj Okoliša		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building products</li> <li>• Cleaning products</li> <li>• Forest and paper products</li> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Wastes management and recycling</li> <li>• Biodegradable lubricating oils</li> <li>• Others.</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.mzoip.hr/">http://www.mzoip.hr/</a>
Czech Republic	Ekologicky šetrné výrobky a služeb/ Environmentally Friendly Product and Service		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper and paper products</li> <li>• Personal hygiene products</li> <li>• Construction</li> <li>• Office</li> <li>• Apartment and garden detergents</li> <li>• Industrial chemistry</li> <li>• Shoes and textile</li> <li>• services.</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.ekoznacka.cz/">http://www.ekoznacka.cz/</a>
France	NF Environnement		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Products and services intended for consumers</li> <li>• Intermediary products and services</li> <li>• Products and/or services with functions contributing to environmental protection.</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.ecolabels.fr/quest-ce-quun-ecolabel/">https://www.ecolabels.fr/quest-ce-quun-ecolabel/</a> <a href="http://cdn.afnor.org/download/reggen/FR/Marque%20NF%20Environnement.pdf">http://cdn.afnor.org/download/reggen/FR/Marque%20NF%20Environnement.pdf</a> <a href="http://www.marque-nf.com/">http://www.marque-nf.com/</a>

Country	Name of Ecolabel	Ecolabel Logo	Products/services awarded	Official webpage
Germany	Blue Angel		It is attributed to about 12 thousand environmentally friendly products and services from around 1,500 companies.	<a href="https://www.blauer-engel.de/en/our-label-environment">https://www.blauer-engel.de/en/our-label-environment</a>
Hungary	Környezetbarát Termék		There are around 54 groups of various products which cover a range of 623 products.	<a href="http://okocimke.kvvm.hu/public_eng/?ppid=2200000">http://okocimke.kvvm.hu/public_eng/?ppid=2200000</a> <a href="http://okocimke.kvvm.hu/public_hun/index.html?ppid=1200000">http://okocimke.kvvm.hu/public_hun/index.html?ppid=1200000</a>
Netherlands	Millieukeur/ / Planet-Proof <sup>5</sup>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food plant products</li> <li>• Food animal products</li> <li>• Food products</li> <li>• Consumer products and services, ranging from vegetables, potatoes, fruit, beer, pork, trees and plants to concrete products, fire extinguishers, florists, butchers, green electricity and car washes.</li> </ul>	Home - Milieukeur
Nordic countries (Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland Iceland)	Nordic Swan (Iebăda nordică)		<p>It is attributed to 60 different groups, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaning products</li> <li>• Printing products</li> <li>• Textiles</li> <li>• Alternative dry cleaning</li> <li>• Baby products with textiles</li> <li>• Car, boat and train care products</li> <li>• Construction chemicals.</li> <li>• Construction and faced panels and mouldings</li> <li>• Copying and printing paper</li> <li>• Cosmetic products</li> <li>• Dishwashing detergents and rinsing agents</li> <li>• Disposable bags, tubes and accessories for health care</li> <li>• Food services and conference facilities,</li> <li>• Furniture and fitments</li> <li>• Printing companies and printed matter</li> <li>• Small houses, apartment blocks and buildings for schools and pre-schools</li> <li>• Textile services</li> <li>• Textiles and leather; tissue paper; etc.</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.nordic-ecolabel.org/the-nordic-swan-ecolabel/">https://www.nordic-ecolabel.org/the-nordic-swan-ecolabel/</a>

5 *Millieukeur was rebranded into PlanetProof in 2018 for food/agri-products.*

Country	Name of Ecolabel	Ecolabel Logo	Products/services awarded	Official webpage
Poland	Znak ekologiczny EKO		It is awarded to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cosmetics</li> <li>• Animal care products</li> <li>• Wooden toys</li> <li>• Fertilizers, textiles and chemical.</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.pcbc.gov.pl/en/">https://www.pcbc.gov.pl/en/</a>
			Cosmetics for body care.	
			Organic plant cultivation and animal maintenance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production: vegetable and animal</li> <li>• Seed and/or vegetative propagating material</li> <li>• mushroom production</li> <li>• Apiculture</li> <li>• Aquaculture products and seaweed</li> <li>• Processing of organic products and production of feed and yeast.</li> </ul>	
Slovakia	Environmentálne vhodný produkt		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction materials</li> <li>• Cleaning products</li> <li>• Paper/Stationary</li> <li>• Textile</li> <li>• Waste management and recycling</li> <li>• Others.</li> </ul>	<a href="http://SAŽP.sk">SAŽP.sk (sazp.sk)</a>
Spain	AENOR		Currently are applied for 436 products in 12 product groups, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Materials</li> <li>• Electronics</li> <li>• Food products</li> <li>• Medical products and services</li> <li>• Machinery and Equipment</li> <li>• Professional, scientific and technical services</li> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Transportation.</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.en.aenor.com/certificacion/medio-ambiente">https://www.en.aenor.com/certificacion/medio-ambiente</a>
Ukraine	Green Crane		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Materials and products for construction and decoration</li> <li>• Chemical industry products (sanitary and hygiene products, textiles, mattresses, wooden furniture and floors, health and beauty products)</li> <li>• Food products</li> <li>• Drinks and water</li> <li>• Alcoholic beverages</li> <li>• Electrical equipment and household appliances.</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.ecolabel.org.ua/en/">https://www.ecolabel.org.ua/en/</a>

Country	Name of Ecolabel	Ecolabel Logo	Products/services awarded	Official webpage
<b>NORTH AMERICA</b>				
Canada	Environmental Choice		<p>There are 122 Certification Criteria Documents addressing over 250 product types. Currently over 7,000 products are Eco Logo certified, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paint</li> <li>• Insulation</li> <li>• Flooring</li> <li>• Cleaning</li> <li>• Products</li> <li>• Paper</li> <li>• Tissue</li> <li>• Electricity</li> <li>• Printing inks</li> <li>• Office furniture and equipment.</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/oca-bc.nsf/eng/ca02742.html">http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/oca-bc.nsf/eng/ca02742.html</a></p> <p><a href="https://greenterrafirma.com/EcoLogo.html">https://greenterrafirma.com/EcoLogo.html</a></p>
United States	Green Seal		<p>Green Seal has certified thousands of products and services in over 450 categories such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction materials</li> <li>• Building equipment</li> <li>• Food packing &amp; paper</li> <li>• Household cleaning products</li> <li>• Industrial and institutional cleaning products. etc.</li> </ul>	<p><a href="https://greenseal.org">https://greenseal.org</a></p>
<b>OCEANIA</b>				
Australia	Good Environmental Choice Australia		<p>GECA has over 2000 individual products and services certified across their standards. The product categories applied to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building products</li> <li>• Cleaning products</li> <li>• Cosmetics</li> <li>• Personal care</li> <li>• Electronics</li> <li>• Forest products</li> <li>• Paper furniture</li> <li>• Packaging</li> <li>• Textiles.</li> </ul>	<p><a href="https://geca.eco/about-us/">https://geca.eco/about-us/</a></p> <p><a href="https://geca.eco/?gclid=EAlalQobChMI07L-sx-He9AIVDtUYCh1ofQ-GIEAAYASAAEgKs-PD_BwE">https://geca.eco/?gclid=EAlalQobChMI07L-sx-He9AIVDtUYCh1ofQ-GIEAAYASAAEgKs-PD_BwE</a></p>
New Zealand	Environmental Choice		<p>Around 27 products and services in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building and construction products, flooring products</li> <li>• Cleaners and detergents</li> <li>• Recycled products and services</li> <li>• Toiletry and personal hygiene products</li> <li>• Offices products and services.</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://www.enviro-choice.org.nz/index.html">http://www.enviro-choice.org.nz/index.html</a></p>
<b>SOUTH AMERICA</b>				
Brazil	'Qualidade Ambiental'		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Furniture</li> <li>• Construction</li> <li>• Steel</li> <li>• Fire protection</li> <li>• Safety</li> <li>• Electrical</li> <li>• Automotive components</li> <li>• Cosmetics and personal care products</li> <li>• Textiles</li> <li>• Tyres</li> <li>• Shoes</li> <li>• Diapers.</li> </ul>	<p><a href="https://www.abntonline.com.br/sustentabilidade/Rotulo/Default#">https://www.abntonline.com.br/sustentabilidade/Rotulo/Default#</a></p>

# CHAPTER III

## ECOLABELLING SYSTEM IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

### 3.1. LEGISLATION AND APPLICATION OF THE EU ECOLABEL

The first attempt to introduce a single ecolabel mechanism at the EU Community level was made in 1992 with the approval of EEC Regulation no. 880/1992<sup>6</sup>. The purpose of this Regulation was to establish an ecolabelling scheme that: promotes the design, production, marketing, and use of products that have a low environmental impact throughout the life cycle, and provides consumers with accurate information on the product's impact on the environment, but without compromising the safety of the product or workers or significantly affecting the properties that make a product suitable for use.

Article 18 of Regulation (EEC) no. 880/92 provided that, within five years of its entry into force, the European Commission should review the system in the light of the experience gained during its application and propose the necessary amendments to the Regulation, on 17 July 2000, the Regulation (EC) no. 1980/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council Regulation, on establishing ecolabel award procedure<sup>7</sup> entered into force. Several important issues have been considered in drawing up and approving this Regulation, including:

- ▶ ensuring the compatibility and coordination of the Community ecolabel award scheme with the priorities of Community environmental policy and with other Community quality labelling or certification schemes, such as those laid down in Council Directive 92/75 / EEC of 22 September 1992 on the indication by labelling and standard product information of the consumption of energy and other resources by household appliances and by Council Regulation No 2092/91 of 24 June 1991 on organic production of agricultural products and indications referring thereto on agricultural products and foodstuffs;
- ▶ ensuring coordination between the Community ecolabel and other ecolabelling systems in the Community to promote the common objectives of sustainable consumption.

Guaranteeing transparency in the application of the ecolabelling system and ensuring compatibility with applicable international standards to facilitate access to and participation by third country producers and exporters in that system.

The experience gained in the context of the implementation of Regulation (EC) no. 1980/2000 demonstrated the need to modify this ecolabelling system to increase its effectiveness and simplify its operation. In this regard, for reasons of clarity and legal certainty, Regulation (EC) No. 1980/2000 was replaced by Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council (EEC) of 25 November 2009 on the EU Ecolabel. According to this Regulation, the European Union's ecolabelling system is part of the sustainable consumption and production policy, which aims to reduce the negative impact of consumption and production on the environment, health, climate, and natural

<sup>6</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31992R0880&from=EN>

<sup>7</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32000R1980&from=RO>

resources. The system is intended to promote those products that have a high level of environmental performance using the ecolabel.

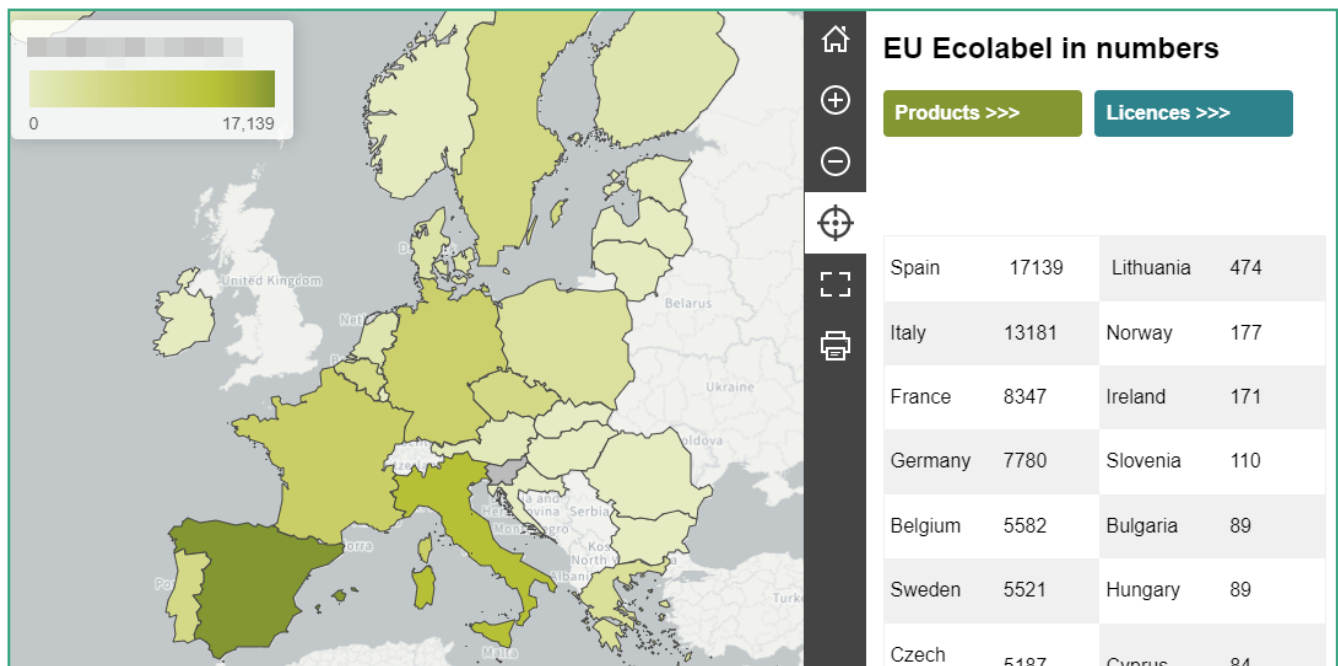
Regulation (EC) No. 66/2010 on the ecolabel applies to all goods or services provided for distribution, consumption, or use on the Community market, except the following products:

- ▶ medicinal products intended for human use;
- ▶ veterinary medicines;
- ▶ medical devices;
- ▶ food and feed;

Substances and preparations classified in accordance with EU legislation as toxic, harmful to the environment, carcinogenic and products manufactured by processes harmful to humans or the environment and/or which may harm the consumer under normal conditions of use.

The number of EU eco-labelled products has increased gradually and steadily, reaching in September 2021 the unprecedented level of 83,590 eco-labelled products. Most licenses are granted in Germany (17%), France (16%) and Italy (15%). Similarly, most products are labelled in Spain (21%), Italy (16%), France (10%), and Germany (9%).

**Figure 3.** Licenses and products by country.



Source : [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel-facts-and-figures\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel-facts-and-figures_en)

Out of the 2,057 licenses issued and registered in September 2021, most belong to the following product groups:

- a. tourist accommodation services (22%);
- b. hard surface cleaning products (14%);
- c. tissue paper and tissue products (9%).

Table 2. Licenses by product group.

DISTRIBUTION OF LICENSES GRANTED BY GROUP OF PRODUCTS		
No.	Product group	No. licenses
1.	Tourist accommodation services	451
2.	Hard surface cleaning products	278
3.	Tissue paper and tissue products	177
4.	Indoor and Outdoor paints and varnishes	161
5.	Hand dishwashing detergents	148
6.	Rinse-off cosmetics products	118
7.	Printed paper	107
8.	Laundry detergents	86
9.	Industrial and institutional dishwasher detergents	83
10.	Textiles	70
11.	Lubricants	70
12.	Indoor cleaning services	66
13.	Graphic paper	64
14.	Detergents for dishwashers	60
15.	Furniture	28
16.	Industrial and institutional laundry detergents	25
17.	Absorbent hygiene products	17
18.	Growing media, soil improvers and mulch	17
19.	Hard coverings	14
20.	Converted paper	9
21.	Wood-, cork- and Bamboo-based Floor Coverings	3
22.	Footwear	2
23.	Electronic displays	2
24.	Bed mattresses	2
25.	Printed paper, stationery paper and paper carrier bag products	1
26.	Televisions	0

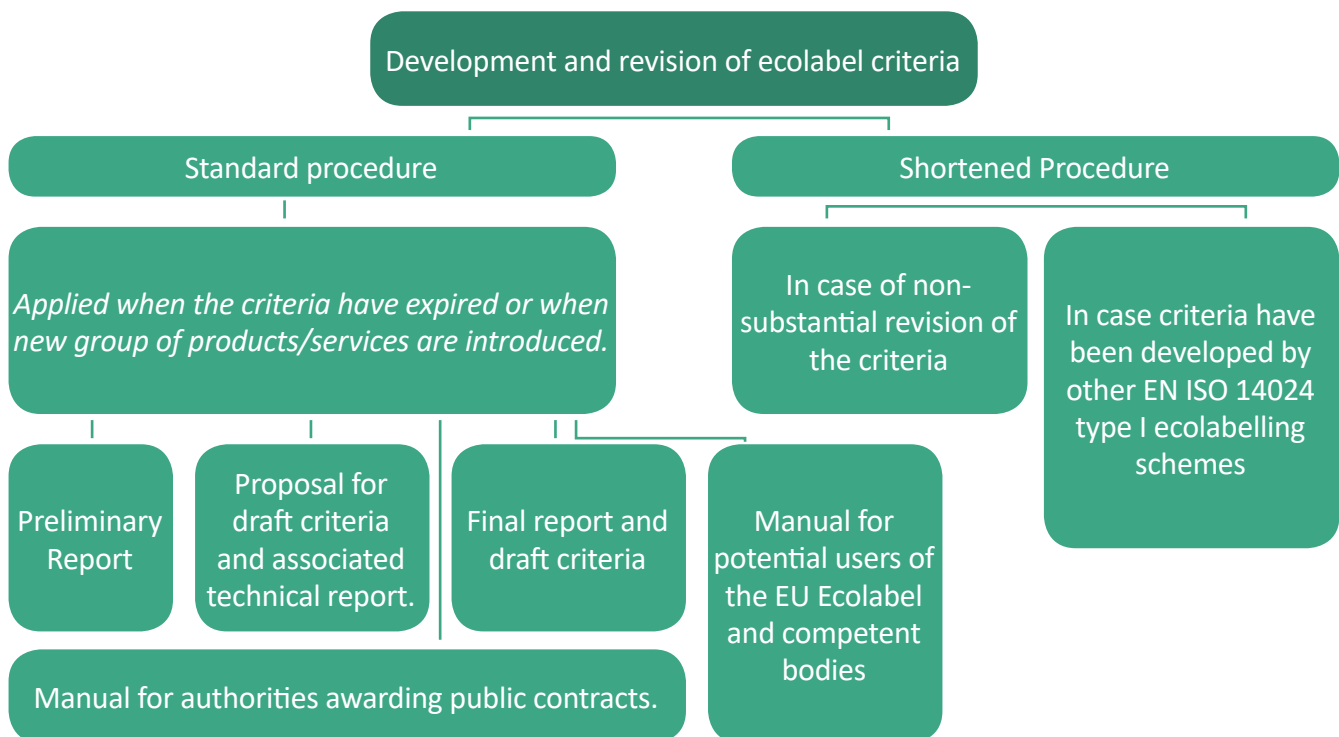
Source: [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel-facts-and-figures\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel-facts-and-figures_en)

### 3.2. PROCEDURE FOR THE DESIGN AND REVISION OF THE EU ECOLABEL CRITERIA

The criteria that products must meet to carry the EU Ecolabel shall be established based on the best environmental performance of products on the Community market. In developing these criteria, their simple applicability should be ensured. The criteria must be based on scientific evidence, considering the latest technological developments. These criteria are market-oriented and are limited to the most significant impact of products on the environment throughout their life cycle. The procedure for developing and revising the EU Ecolabel criteria is shown in Figure 4 below.



Figure 4. Procedure for development and / or revision of EU Ecolabel criteria. Source: Author's elaboration.



Source: Author's elaboration.

The procedure for development or revision of the EU Ecolabel criteria generates a set of documents. The number and complexity of the documents to be prepared depends on the procedure applied.

### Standard Criteria Development Procedure

Thus, in case **the standard ecolabel criteria development procedure** is applied, the following documents will be prepared:

1. preliminary report;
2. proposal for draft criteria and associated technical report;
3. final report and draft criteria;
4. manual for potential users of the EU Ecolabel and competent bodies;
5. manual for authorities awarding public contracts.

The content of each document is set out in Annex 3.

While developing the criteria, the preliminary report is being available for comments and references on the official website of the European Commission. Following the publication of the preliminary report, a draft proposal on the criteria is prepared, as well as a technical report in support of it. The draft proposal on criteria provides the justification for each criterion and explains in an accessible way the environmental benefits specific to each criterion. The draft proposal must highlight the criteria that correspond to the main environmental characteristics.

The **shortened procedure** involves the preparation of a smaller set of documents of less complexity as follows:

- ▶ **The report demonstrates** that the technical and consultation requirements set out in Regulation (EC) No. 66/2010 have been fulfilled.

### **The report must include:**

- a justification explaining why there is no need for a full revision of the criteria and why a simple updating of the criteria and their stringency levels is sufficient;
  - a technical section updating the previous market data used for the setting of the criteria;
  - a quantitative indication of the overall environmental performance that the revised criteria are expected to achieve in their totality when compared to that of the average products on the market.
- ▶ **Annex to the Report:**
    - a proposal for draft revised criteria;
    - a revised manual for potential users of the EU Ecolabel and competent bodies;
    - a revised manual for authorities awarding public contracts.

If the EU Commission considers that the report, the draft proposal, or the criteria, as appropriate, meet the requirements set out in Regulation (EC) No. 66/2010, they are subject to public consultation, for 60 days, on the Commission's official website dedicated to the EU Ecolabel. Following the public consultations, the EU Commission examines the comments received from the public concerned, indicating whether they are accepted or rejected, as well as the reasons for the decision taken.

At the same time, it is important to note that, at the request of any Member State, an open meeting of the working group is held to discuss the proposal for the criteria, with the participation of all stakeholders, such as competent bodies, industry (including Small and medium-sized enterprises), trade unions, retailers, importers, environmental associations, and consumer organizations. The EU Commission also participates in these meetings.


The period of validity of the criteria, as well as the assessment and verification requirements, shall be determined in the process of establishing the criteria for awarding the ecolabel to each product group. This varies from 3 to 5 years.

### 3.3. EUROPEAN UNION ECOLABEL (EU ECOLABEL)

The European Union's concerns about the development of a unitary ecolabelling system for products have led to the establishment of a community ecolabelling system. Established in 1992 and recognized in Europe and around the world, the European Ecolabel is an ecolabel of excellence for those products and services that meet high environmental standards throughout their life cycle: from raw material extraction to production, distribution, and disposal.

The ecolabel symbol is another benchmark for buyers who want to reduce their environmental footprint and at the same time not give up buying quality products.

Table 3. EU Ecolabel

 <p><b>EU Ecolabel or EU Flower</b> (European Union Ecolabel or European Union Flower)</p>	<p>Year of establishment: 1992</p>
<p><b>Website</b></p>	<p><a href="https://ec.europa.eu/">https://ec.europa.eu/</a></p>
<p><b>Short description</b></p>	<p>The Ecolabel is a system of voluntary certification for certain goods and services in the EU, Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland. It brings together producers who want to have a lower impact on the environment at all stages of production compared to non-certified competitors.</p>
<p><b>Country of origin</b></p>	<p>European Union</p>
<p><b>Field of application</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Dishwasher detergents</li> <li>▶ Hand dishwashing detergents</li> <li>▶ Sanitary detergents</li> <li>▶ Tissue paper</li> <li>▶ Printed paper and Graphic paper</li> <li>▶ Growing media, soil improvers and mulch</li> <li>▶ Hard covering products</li> <li>▶ Paints and varnishes</li> <li>▶ Bed Mattresses</li> <li>▶ Lubricants</li> <li>▶ Heat Pumps</li> <li>▶ Tourists' accommodation services</li> <li>▶ Textiles</li> <li>▶ Footwear.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Duration</b></p>	<p>3-5 years. For cleaning products and household detergents, the label is usually valid for 4 years, after which the criteria are revised<sup>8</sup>.</p>
<p><b>Environmental requirements</b></p>	<p>Ecolabel criteria are set for each product group to reduce the potential negative environmental impact throughout the life cycle of the product. Because the life cycle of each product and service is different, the criteria are adapted to address the unique characteristics of each product type.</p>

Source : <https://ec.europa.eu/>.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.rektis.com.ua/>

The EU Ecolabel Regulation indicates the need to increase coherence and promote harmonization between the EU Ecolabelling scheme and national ecolabelling schemes in EU countries. For this reason, when a product or service has been awarded both the EU Ecolabel and another national ecolabel, both logos are displayed side by side on the product or service.

### 3.4. AUTHORITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE APPLICATION OF THE ECOLABELLING SYSTEM

Each country in the European Economic Area designates a competent body, an independent and impartial organization that implements the EU Ecolabelling system at the national level. Competent bodies play a central role in the work of the EU Ecolabel system and are the first contact point for applicants. They specifically assess applications and award the EU Ecolabel to products that meet the criteria set for them. They are usually responsible for ensuring that the verification process is carried out in a consistent, neutral, and reliable manner by a party independent of the verified operator, based on international, European, or national standards and procedures for bodies operating products certification systems.<sup>9</sup> In table no. 4 some examples are reflected in this respect:

*Table 4. Competent authorities for the EU Ecolabel.*

No.	Member States of the European Economic Area (EEA)	Competent authority
1.	<b>Germany</b>	The certification system is managed by the Umweltbundesamt (UBA; Federal Environment Agency) and RAL gGmbH as the competent authority. This independent body checks whether products and services that are labelled with the EU ecolabel meet strict environmental and use criteria. To do this, all stages of a product's life cycle, from manufacturing to use and to disposal, are considered. <sup>10</sup>
2.	<b>Italy</b>	In Italy, the body responsible for implementing Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 on the ecolabel is the Italian Ecolabelling Department of the Ecolabelling and Eco-Audit Committee. <sup>11</sup> This department consists of a president and six members appointed by a decree of the Ministry for the Environment and for the Protection of the Territory and the Sea for a period of 3 years. The President may be appointed by the Minister of the Environment or the Minister of Economic Development, while two members shall be appointed by the Minister of the Environment, two by the Minister of Economic Development, one by the Minister of Economy and Finance, and one by the Minister of Health.

<sup>9</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/faq.html>

<sup>10</sup> [www.eu-ecolabel.de](http://www.eu-ecolabel.de)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.minambiente.it/pagina/ecolabel-ue>

3.	<b>Poland</b>	In Poland, the EU Ecolabel body is a Polish testing and certification centre with the status of a notified body number 1434, recognized by the European Commission in the field of medical device directives and Regulation no. 305/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council. <sup>12</sup>
4.	<b>Denmark</b>	In Denmark, the competent authority is the non-profit organization “Ecolabelling Denmark” <sup>13</sup> . This organization provides certification services for the use of the EU Ecolabel. According to its statute, the proceeds gathered are used to process the applications and manage the certifications - and to increase the supply and demand for eco-labelled products and services, to reduce the negative impact on the environment for the benefit of people and the Earth’s resources.
5.	<b>Romania</b>	<p>The competent authority for granting the EU Ecolabel in Romania is the Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests.</p> <p>The EU Ecolabel Commission under the Ministry of the Environment operates as an advisory body with a role in assessing the dossier required for the award of the Ecolabel.<sup>14</sup></p> <p>Structure of the EU Ecolabel Commission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ three representatives of the Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests;</li> <li>▶ one representative of the Ministry of Economy, Energy, and Business Environment;</li> <li>▶ one representative of the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism;</li> <li>▶ one representative of the National Environmental Protection Agency;</li> <li>▶ one representative of the National Authority for Consumer Protection;</li> <li>▶ a representative of the National Environmental Guard;</li> <li>▶ three representatives of environmental research institutes;</li> <li>▶ two representatives of employers, and two representatives of non-governmental organizations in the field of environmental protection.</li> </ul>

Source: Author’s elaboration

**Based on the experience** of European Economic Area countries, it was found that authorities responsible for the implementation of the EU Ecolabelling system at the national level can be both public and private bodies. **In the context of comparing the advantages between the competent body** belonging to the private or public sector in the process of implementing the ecolabelling system, the following points can be highlighted:

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.pcbc.gov.pl/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.ecolabel.dk/en/become-certified/what-does-it-cost/eu-ecolabel>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.mmediu.ro/>

## 1. In the case of public authorities:

- ▶ improving the economic stability of the ecolabelling system, legal protection, and credibility in the eyes of producers and consumers;
- ▶ reasonable costs for examining the application and monitoring the compliance;
- ▶ the possibility of incorporating international standards into national ones;
- ▶ ensuring public involvement in setting ecolabel standards/criteria.

## 2. In the case of private authorities:

- ▶ reduced vulnerability to changing political priorities and budgetary constraints;
- ▶ the possibility of setting stricter standards than that of government agencies in certain product sectors, as they do not have to consider the impact on the employment rate.

### 3.5. THE COSTS OF ECOLABELLING SERVICES

Compliance with ecolabel criteria requires the application of technological innovations, the best available techniques in each field that streamline the company's technological process and reduce resource use and waste generation as well as the impact on the environment.

According to the experience of the European Union, economic operators wishing to obtain the right to use the ecolabel must pay the competent authority a single dossier analysis fee and, subsequently, an annual fee.

Single dossier analysis fee<sup>15</sup>:

- ▶ EUR 200-350 for micro-enterprises;
- ▶ EUR 200-600 for Small and mid-size enterprises and enterprises in developing countries;
- ▶ EUR 200 - 2 000 for all other undertakings.

A maximum ceiling for the annual fee has also been set for the use of the ecolabel. This ceiling is:

- ▶ EUR 18 750 for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries;
- ▶ EUR 25 000 for all other enterprises.

However, each Member State has set national fees, either in euro or in national currency, which are between EUR 215 and EUR 2000<sup>16</sup>.

The costs collected vary depending on the services requested by the economic operator:

- ▶ *examination of the applications for the certificate of conformity* - the examination of the application for the issuance of the conformity certificate and of the attached documentation is carried out against cost. The cost does not include the costs of testing or evaluating the products in the process of analysing their performance, in accordance with the specific ecolabel criteria;
- ▶ *conformity assessment of products and/or services* - costs of necessary testing and verification of product performance in accordance with specific ecolabel criteria;

<sup>15</sup> [https://europa.eu/youreurope/business/product-requirements/labels-markings/ecolabel/index\\_ro.htm](https://europa.eu/youreurope/business/product-requirements/labels-markings/ecolabel/index_ro.htm)

<sup>16</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/documents/eu-ecolabel\\_fees.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/documents/eu-ecolabel_fees.pdf)

- ▶ *supervision of certified products/services* - after being subject to the initial certification, the annual planned procedure for the supervision of a certified product/service is carried out for the next 3 years. Supervision aims to confirm the stability of a certified product/service in accordance with the ecolabel criteria. The cost of the supervision shall be determined in the contract concluded between the economic operator and the ecolabelling body. Typically, this cost represents 30-50% of the initial certification cost;
- ▶ *extension of the scope of the certificate* - in cases where the economic operator using the ecolabel intends to extend the scope of the certificate to additional items of products in the same category, the cost of the evaluation of components and consumer packaging elements depends on the degree of homogeneity of the product group and packaging;
- ▶ *additional assessment* – is carried out in case the suppliers, components, consumer packaging elements, technical specifications, production technology, etc. are changed and if such changes may affect the compliance of certified products with the requirements of environmental criteria. The user of the conformity certificate should notify the ecolabelling body in writing at the early planning stage. Based on the results of the planned changes, the ecolabelling body shall decide whether a further assessment is required;
- ▶ *repeated certification* - is carried out no more than 3 months before the expiry of the validity of the conformity certificate. The cost of repeated certification is usually about 80% of the cost of the initial certification work.

The costs of the services mentioned above are determined by the ecolabelling body. This approach allows the ecolabelling body to set reasonable prices depending on national criteria and the workload at all stages of the granting, monitoring, and renewal of the conformity certificate.

## CHAPTER IV

### ECOLABELLING SYSTEM IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

#### 4.1. PREMISES FOR THE CREATION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ECOLABELLING SYSTEM AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

The need to legislate and establish an ecolabelling system at the national level, by transposing into national legislation the provisions of Regulation no. 66/2010 of 25 November 2009 on the EU Ecolabel has been conditioned by the applicable policy documents and international commitments assumed by the Republic of Moldova, such as:

- a. *The Environmental Strategy for 2014-2023 and the Action Plan (GD no. 301 / 2014)* - according to point 20 paras. (5), there is a lack of a well-defined legal framework for the implementation of green public procurement mechanisms<sup>17</sup>, ecolabelling, and certification, and environmental insurance, which is a negative factor given the lack of economic instruments for environmental protection. To this end, according to point 35 of the *above*, the introduction of the ecolabelling system is planned (by transposing Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 of 25 November 2009 on the EU Ecolabel);
- b. *Strategy in consumer protection for the years 2013-2020 (GD no. 560/2013)*. The strategy states that one of the consumer protection components is market surveillance, the purpose of which is to prevent placing on the market of goods and services which do not meet the prescribed and/or declared requirements, and the lack of a system to ensure the safety of goods and services placed on the market and mainly lack of a functional mechanism for implementing the requirements for the safety of goods and the cooperation of market surveillance authorities;
- c. *The Association Agreement* between the Republic of Moldova, on the one part, and the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, and their Member States, on the other part, *ratified by the Law no. 112/2014*, namely Title V, Trade and trade-related matters, Chapter 13 "Trade and sustainable development", Art. 375, which states that, "*The Parties recognize the importance of cooperating on trade-related aspects of environmental and labour policy in order to achieve the objectives and shall cooperate with a view to promoting private and public certification, traceability and labelling systems, including ecolabelling*";
- d. *National action plan for implementing the EU – Republic of Moldova Association Agreement* for the years 2017-2019, approved by Government Decision no. 1472/2016 (Title V "Trade and trade-related issues", Chapter 13 "Trade and sustainable development", point 367, action 13) which provides for the introduction of the ecolabelling scheme and the certification system for goods obtained from natural resources".

Another premise for the creation of the ecolabelling scheme was the introduction of the sustainable component in the public procurement process. In 2017, the first steps were taken towards the implementation of green public procurement mechanisms. The Guide to Sustainable Public Procurement for the Republic of Moldova has been developed and pilot

<sup>17</sup> In 2017, first steps were taken towards the implementation of green public procurement mechanisms, namely: the Guide on Sustainable Public Procurement for the Republic of Moldova was developed, and pilot procedures were launched that include sustainability criteria for 2 selected groups - fruits and organic vegetables, and energy / environmentally efficient windows and doors.



procedures have been launched that include sustainability criteria for 2 selected groups - organic fruits and vegetables, and energy / environmentally efficient windows and doors.

At the national level, the Republic of Moldova intends to extend the application of ISO environmental standards by creating a legal framework and establishing an ecolabelling scheme in the Republic of Moldova, by partially transposing Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the EU ecolabel which is the basis for the creation of a voluntary national ecolabelling scheme based on the criteria set out in the international standard SM SR EN ISO 14024: 2018.

**The national ecolabelling scheme shall meet the requirements of the international standard ISO 14024 and be like that of the EU ecolabelling system, being based on the same basic principles.**

### The basic principles of the ecolabelling system suggested for Moldova

1. Ecolabel is accurate, verifiable, relevant, and not misleading;
2. the procedure and requirements for ecolabels do not create unjustified barriers to international trade;
3. information on the ecolabel procedure, methodology, and any criteria shall be made available and accessible to interested parts upon request;
4. ecolabels do not stand in the way of innovation that maintains or has the potential to improve environmental performance;
5. any administrative requirements or requests for information on labels and environmental claims must be limited to those necessary to establish compliance with the criteria and standards applicable to ecolabels;
6. information on the environmental aspects of eco-labelled products and services must be available to actual and potential consumers.

## 4.2. SUGGESTED ECOLABELLING CERTIFICATION BODIES (ECB)

Industry, government and consumers, traders, the scientific community, standardization bodies, ecolabelling certification bodies, and industry associations are all vital actors in the national ecolabelling scheme.

*The ecolabelling certification body (ECB) is the legal entity independent, neutral, and reliable of the economic operator subject to verification, which in its activity of assessing the conformity of products with the ecolabel criteria applies the requirements of the international standard ISO 14024.*

Thus, while assessing the products and services conformity the interested legal entity from the public or private sector must:

- ▶ obtain the accreditation certificate from the National Accreditation Centre of the Republic of Moldova (MOLDAC);
- ▶ be registered by the Environmental Agency.

## Accreditation process of ecolabelling certification bodies

Accreditation of ECBs shall be carried out in accordance with Law no. 235 on accreditation and conformity assessment activities from 01.12.2011 by the National Accreditation Centre of the Republic of Moldova (MOLDAC), at the request submitted by the applicant. Upon request, the applicant shall attach a set of legal documents confirming the field of activity based on which he may carry out his certification activity (see Table 5).

*Table 5. Legal documents required to be attached by the applicant to the accreditation application.*

Title of documents	
1.	Registration code / Deed of incorporation / Statute and / or other documents proving the legal status of the CB.
2.	Documents regarding the identification of shareholders, the percentage of shares and other relevant information,
3.	The association / shareholding contract and other relevant documents,
4.	Relevant information on associated (related) bodies, including a description of their activities (identification of risks, associated risks, potential conflicts of interest, activities to minimize or eliminate such conflicts, etc.).

Following the analysis of the application and the attached documents, National Accreditation Centre may invite the applicant, if it deems it necessary, to clarify any issues related to the application submitted. The evaluation of the competence of an ecolabelling body implies its evaluation based on the accreditation criteria according to the reference standards and requirements of the documents of European organizations and international specialized organizations, adopted at the national level on the following aspects:

- ▶ competence of all activities carried out by this body;
- ▶ staff competence;
- ▶ the validity of the conformity assessment methodology;
- ▶ validity of conformity assessment results.

In accreditation process, the MOLDAC, by the case, can rely on the following reference documents<sup>18</sup>:

- a. Law no. 235 of 01.12.2011 regarding the accreditation activities and conformity assessment;
- b. SM SR EN ISO / IEC 17000: 2006 - Conformity assessment. Vocabulary and general principles;
- c. SM SR EN ISO / IEC 17020: 2013 - General criteria for the operation of different types of inspection bodies;
- d. SM EN ISO / IEC 17025: 2018 - General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories;
- e. SM SR EN ISO / IEC 17021: 2012 - Conformity assessment. Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems;
- f. SM SR Guide ISO / IEC 17067: 2011 Conformity assessment. Fundamentals of product

<sup>18</sup> [https://acreditare.md/public/files/docemente\\_de\\_referinta/4-DR-OCpr-04-17065-ed-2.pdf](https://acreditare.md/public/files/docemente_de_referinta/4-DR-OCpr-04-17065-ed-2.pdf)

- certification and guidelines for product certification schemes;
- g. SM SR ISO / IEC Guide 23: 2011 Methods for assessing compliance with standards in certification systems by the third party;
- h. SM SR EN ISO / IEC 17030: 2011 Conformity assessment. General requirements for third party conformity marks;
- i. SM SR ISO Guide 27: 2011 Guidelines for corrective actions to be taken by a certification body in case of misuse of its certification mark;
- j. SM SR ISO / IEC Guide 53: 2011 Conformity assessment. Guidelines for using an organization's quality management system in product certification;
- k. SM SR ISO / IEC Guide 28: 2011 Conformity assessment. Guidance on a third-party product certification system;
- l. Other applicable EA, IAF documents;
- m. Rules and internal procedures of the National Accreditation Body.

One of the basic standards applicable by MOLDAC **in the ECB assessment process** is: *SM EN ISO / IEC 17065: 2013: Conformity assessment. Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes, and services*. It contains requirements for the competence, consistent operation and impartiality of bodies certifying products, processes, and services.

**Standard SM EN ISO / IEC 17065: 2013: Conformity assessment. Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes, and services include:**

- ▶ general requirements relating to legal and contractual matters, impartiality management, legal liability, and funding, non-discriminatory conditions, confidentiality, and publicly available information;
- ▶ structure requirements (organizational structure, top-level management, mechanisms for ensuring impartiality);
- ▶ resource requirements, respectively for staff and resources for evaluation;
- ▶ process requirements: application issues, application analysis, evaluation, certification decision, certification documentation, certified product register, supervision, changes affecting certification, termination, reduction, suspension or withdrawal of certification, registrations, complaints, and appeals;
- ▶ the requirements of the management system regarding the general documentation, the control of documents, the control of records, the analysis performed by the management, internal audits, corrective actions, and preventive actions.

The standard also contains two informative annexes:

- ▶ Annex A (information) Principles for product certification bodies and their certification activities;
- ▶ Annex B (information) Application of this international standard for processes and services.

In addition to the requirements set out in the standards mentioned above, the ECB must ensure that the principle of impartiality is respected. To this end, as per the provision of the legal framework, the ecolabel certification body shall submit to MOLDAC at least the following documents:

- a. organization chart;
- b. committee Regulations;
- c. identifying the management at the highest level and the leader of the ecolabelling body;
- d. list of Committee members with relevant information about them;
- e. highest level management's commitment on their impartiality;
- f. identification, analysis of risks and how to remove or minimize / reduce them to an acceptable level;
- g. the means by which the Ecolabel obtains financial support (to demonstrate that it does not affect its impartiality);
- h. other documents required by MOLDAC.

If the applicant ECB meets the accreditation criteria, MOLDAC issues **the accreditation decision**. Based on the accreditation decision, the applicant is receiving **an accreditation certificate** for a period provided in the reference standard. The accreditation domain approved by the MOLDAC is an integral part of the accreditation certificate.

In the evaluation process, the MOLDAC may, as appropriate, perform on-the-spot checks. If the MOLDAC detects any irregularities, it shall request their removal by the requesting ECB and shall provide it with a reasonable time limit. If the ECB does not remove the breaches within the pre-established deadline, the MOLDAC shall take a decision not to grant accreditation.

The MOLDAC oversees the ecolabelling certification bodies for which it has issued an accreditation certificate. Supervision is performed to monitor the continued compliance with accreditation requirements by accredited certification bodies.

Confirmation of the validity of the accreditation is approved by a **decision to maintain the accreditation**, issued by the MOLDAC, considering the positive results of the supervisory assessments.

The extension, restriction, or renewal of the accreditation shall be carried out at the request of the ECB. *Renewal of the accreditation* is carried out by re-evaluating the ecolabelling certification body regarding compliance with the accreditation criteria. *Re-evaluation* of the conformity assessment body is like an initial assessment, except that the experience gained during previous evaluations is considered. *Restriction of the scope of accreditation* shall also be carried out if, following the surveillance assessment, the ECB does not repeatedly meet some of the accreditation criteria. If it is found that the certification body that has received the accreditation certificate is no longer competent to carry out a specific conformity assessment activity and does not comply with the accreditation criteria set out in the applicable reference standard, the MOLDAC shall take all appropriate measures for the *suspension or withdrawal of its accreditation certificate*. At the same time, the MOLDAC, in a proper time from the date of issuing the decision to suspend, withdraw, restrict, renew, or extend the accreditation certificate, notifies the Environmental Agency about this.

### Registration of ecolabelling certification bodies

At the same time as the application for accreditation, the eco-labelling CB shall apply to the MOLDAC for recognition for notification in accordance with Act No 235/2011 on

accreditation and conformity assessment activities. The application for recognition for the purpose of notification shall be accompanied by the following documents:

1. a brief presentation of the certification body's work in the field of eco-labelling, showing its experience in conformity assessment;
2. the conformity assessment plan and method, including a detailed description of the inspection measures that the ecolabelling certification body undertakes to impose on the economic operators it inspects;
3. the measures that the ecolabelling certification body will apply to the economic operators it inspects in the event of non-compliance with the legal provisions on ecolabelling;
4. the methodology for substantiation of inspection and conformity assessment costs applicable to economic operators;
5. list of staff;
6. list of equipment;
7. list of subcontracted activities.

The Environment Agency shall recognise the ECB by orders of its head in accordance with Act No 235/2011 on accreditation and conformity assessment activities and shall notify these bodies. Eco-label CB shall be registered in the electronic Register of Eco-label CBs and the Register shall be published and maintained on the official website of the Environment Agency.

Ecolabelling CB accreditation and registration shall involve compliance with conformity requirements (See Table 6).

*Table 6. Accreditation and registration requirements for applicant CBs.*

<b>Requirements to be met by the CB to obtain the ecolabelling authorization</b>	Have a headquarters in the Republic of Moldova.
	Have at least one year of experience in conformity assessment.
	Have its own laboratory accredited in the National Product Conformity Assurance System, or to have a collaboration contract with such a laboratory, to perform all the analyses and determinations useful for the control and certification of products and / or services.
	Have qualified staff with sufficient technical knowledge and experience to perform the conformity assessment tasks.
	Be independent of all parties involved, impartial and integral and free from any pressures and incentives, in particularly financial, which may affect their ability to assess or an interest in the results of those activities.
	Have an approved methodology for carrying out the conformity assessment procedure, ensuring transparency and the possibility of reproducing the procedures in question.
	Have appropriate policies and procedures in place that clearly distinguish between the tasks performed as an ecolabelling authority and any other activities.
	Have internal regulations regarding the procedures necessary for carrying out the activity, considering the size of the undertaking, its field of activity and its structure, the degree of complexity of the technology used for the product concerned, and the mass or mass production process.
	Have the necessary means to perform properly the technical and administrative tasks related to the conformity assessment activities and have access to all necessary equipment or facilities.
	Have the necessary capacity to draw up certificates, records and reports demonstrating that the assessments have been carried out.

The principle of impartiality of the ecolabelling CB assumes that both it and its staff must meet a set of requirements:



**Should not be** the designer, manufacturer, supplier, installer, purchaser, owner, user, or maintenance operator of the products they assess nor the authorized representative of either Party, except for their own consumer products.

**Should not be** involved directly in the design, manufacture or construction, marketing, installation, use or maintenance of those products and may not represent the parties engaged in those activities.

**Should not** engage in any activity that may affect the impartiality or integrity of the conformity assessment activities for which they have been assigned, in particular, the provision of consulting services to the economic entity whose production is required for certification.

Therefore ECB, which is part of a business association or a professional federation representing the enterprises involved in the design, manufacture, supply, assembly, use or maintenance of the products it evaluates, is accredited only if it demonstrates its independence and the absence of conflicts of interest. Furthermore, the ecolabelling CB shall ensure that the activities of its subsidiaries or subcontractors do not affect the confidentiality, objectivity or impartiality of their conformity assessment activities.

### The suggested rights and obligations of ecolabelling CBs

#### Ecolabelling CBs have the following obligations:

- ▶ to comply with the requirements of the reference standards and of the European and international documents regarding the operation of the CBs and the requirements established by the National Accreditation Centre regarding the areas for which the accreditation is granted;
- ▶ to perform all conformity assessment tasks for which accreditation is sought and have the necessary means to properly perform the technical and administrative tasks related to the conformity assessment activities, including access to all necessary equipment or facilities;
- ▶ to carry out the activities of conformity assessment to the highest degree of professional integrity and technical competence required in that field and to be free from any pressure and incentive, in particularly financial, which might influence the results of their work;
- ▶ to ensure a fair, consistent assessment of the conformity of the products with the national ecolabelling criteria, in accordance with the requirements of international, and regional standards for product conformity assessment authorities;
- ▶ to respect the confidentiality and prevent the disclosure or use for any purpose, unrelated to the environmental certification, of the information accessed during the conformity assessment of products, technical surveillance and verification of the

- product's life cycle, to ensure the protection of information against counterfeiting;
- ▶ to regularly check the compliance of eco-labelled products with ecolabel criteria and assessment requirements;
  - ▶ to carry out unannounced on-the-spot inspections and inform the user of the eco-label of any complaint about the eco-labelled product and ask the user to respond to those complaints;
  - ▶ to ensure that any changes in the composition or production process of the product which could affect compliance with the ecolabelling criteria are examined the notification from the economic operator;
  - ▶ to act if it determines that the eco-labelled product does not meet the ecolabel criteria specific to that product group or that the ecolabel is not used in breach of the legislation;
  - ▶ to maintain the confidentiality of data provided by economic operators and take all reasonable steps to ensure the protection of documents provided to it against unauthorized falsification and misappropriation for a period of at least 3 years from the date of termination of the contract with the economic operator;
  - ▶ to inform interested parties, including other ECB, of the measures envisaged in relation to non-compliant products (found in the assessment process) which present a risk to human health and safety or other aspects of the protection of the public interest;
  - ▶ to conclude insurance contracts with legally recognized insurance companies on the territory of the Republic of Moldova and to have insurance policies to repair the damage that may be caused to third parties by their activity and for which they are liable in accordance with the legislation on insurance in force;
  - ▶ to order the suspension and/or cancellation of the certificate of conformity before the expiry of the period of validity, as the case may be;
  - ▶ to provide the Environmental Agency with a written report on its work in the previous calendar year by 1st February of each year. The annual report contains information on:
    - ▷ conformity assessment activities carried out in the field of eco-labelling;
    - ▷ any refusal, restriction, suspension, or withdrawal of certificates of conformity, with reasons;
    - ▷ appeals and complaints received, including information on how they have been resolved;
    - ▷ difficulties encountered in carrying out the activities, measures taken and/or proposed to improve the activity;
    - ▷ subcontracted activities, subcontractors, measures taken and/or proposed to improve these activities;
    - ▷ requests from market surveillance authorities relating to the conduct of conformity assessment activities;
    - ▷ list of certified economic operators including name, address, type of economic operator (manufacturer, processor, exporter), type of product and service, date of registration, data on certificate of conformity;
    - ▷ inspections carried out, including the name and address of the economic operator, type of economic operator (manufacturer, processor, exporter), date of

inspection, type of inspection (planned, unannounced, on-site), and if applicable, measures applied, date of application and duration;

- ▷ participation in informing or briefing the assessment staff on standardisation activities in the field in which it has been recognised.

#### **Ecolabelling CBs have the following rights:**

- ▷ to have access to publicly available information related to the accreditation activity in the field for which the request was done or accreditation received;
- ▷ to negotiate, within the limits provided by the procedures of the National Accreditation Centre, exact data on the development of the different phases of the evaluation process;
- ▷ to refuse the composition of the evaluation team only for well-founded reasons, presented in writing to the management of the National Accreditation Centre. In this case, the ECB assumes the risk of delaying the accreditation process compared to the established schedule, and the Centre reserves the right to use, as appropriate, evaluators from foreign accreditation bodies, and recalculate the costs of accreditation, costs which will be further communicated to the CB;
- ▷ to request from the members of the assessment team declarations of confidentiality and respect for its right to industrial property and intellectual property, as well as to such a right of its customers,
- ▷ to cancel the accreditation, notifying the National Accreditation Centre in advance;
- ▷ to refer to its accreditation status only for the period of validity of the accreditation certificate and only for the accredited activities;
- ▷ to challenge the decisions of the National Accreditation Centre;
- ▷ to require the manufacturer to provide access to the production site and to the quality system documents as part of the conformity assessment, and to carry out planned and unannounced assessment visits if necessary.
- ▷ other rights.

### **4.3. THE SUGGESTED PROCEDURE FOR ASSESSING THE CONFORMITY OF SERVICES AND PRODUCTS**

#### **4.3.1 SUGGESTED APPLICATION PROCEDURE FOR ISSUING THE CERTIFICATE OF CONFORMITY**

Ecolabelling, as a voluntary system, implies that any economic operator who produces, imports, manufactures, provides services, wholesalers or retailers may apply for the right to use the ecolabel for their products and services. To obtain the right to use the ecolabel, the economic operator concerned must first apply to the ECB for a certificate of conformity. Based on this request, the ecolabelling CB initiates the procedure for assessing the conformity of services and products.

The economic operator shall apply **for the issue of a certificate of conformity for a product**, even if it is placed on the market under one or more trade names.



The economic operator should attach to the application for a certificate of conformity the following documents:

- ▶ indication of the group of products or services concerned and full description of the product or service;
- ▶ the documentation necessary for the assessment of the product or service in accordance with the ecolabel criteria for the product or service group concerned;
- ▶ proof of payment of the fee.

Within a reasonable period from the date of registration of the application for the issuance of the certificate of conformity, the ECB shall verify the documents submitted and if the information provided by the economic operator is incomplete and/or inconclusive, it shall request additional information. If the economic operator does not provide the requested information within 60 days of the date on which it was informed, or at least one of the documents submitted is false, the application for the ecological certificate shall be rejected.

#### 4.3.2. THE SUGGESTED PROCEDURE FOR CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

The request for the issue of the certificate of conformity and the complete information submitted by the economic operator shall be the basis for the ECB to carry out the conformity assessment of products and/or services, as appropriate.

ECB shall carry out **the conformity assessment procedure** in a proportionate manner, considering the following aspects:

- ▶ the size of the enterprise;
- ▶ field of activity;
- ▶ the structure of the enterprise;
- ▶ the degree of complexity of the production technology, as well as the serial or mass character of the production process.

At the same time, the ecolabelling CB shall respect the degree of accuracy and the level of protection required for the compliance of the product/service with the ecolabel criteria applicable to the product/service.

Following the conformity assessment of the products and/or services, the ecolabelling certification body shall issue a **reasoned decision on the conformity of the products and/or services**. After the issuance of the decision, the ecolabelling CB shall notify the economic operator thereof. Based on the decision to meet the ecolabel criteria, the ecolabelling CB shall issue the **certificate of conformity** to the economic agent. If the ecolabelling CB, following the conformity assessment, finds that the products and/or services for which the ecolabel has been requested do not meet the ecolabel criteria or that the economic operator fails to pay the product conformity assessment fee, it refuses issuing the certificate with the indication of the justifying reasons. The validity of the certificate of conformity is 3 years. The form of the certificate of conformity shall be drawn up by each ecolabelling certification body, being the exclusive property of the issuer. When the certificate of conformity expires, it shall be renewed.

After the certificate of conformity has been issued, the ecolabelling certification body shall assign a **product registration number** and sign with the economic operator a **contract** governing the conditions for the use of the ecolabel, including provisions on the suspension and withdrawal of the certificate of conformity. The ecolabelling CB shall be informed or shall ensure that their assessment staff is informed of the standardization activities relevant to its field of activity.

The economic operator is obliged to inform the ecolabelling CB by registered letter of any changes to the product characteristics, even if these do not affect compliance with the ecolabel criteria. In the case of changes to product characteristics that affect compliance with the ecolabel criteria based on which the certificate of conformity has been granted, the economic operator shall inform the ecolabelling certification body. The ecolabelling CB shall cooperate with other conformity assessment bodies carrying out similar conformity assessment activities covering the same products, providing relevant information on the negative results of conformity assessments and, upon request, on the positive results of conformity assessments.

### 4.3.3. ECOLABEL CRITERIA FOR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

The criteria applicable to the national ecolabelling scheme will set out the environmental requirements that a product must meet to carry the ecolabel. They will be based on the separately defined environmental characteristics for the specific products and the additional requirements for the corresponding product category that determine the impact of these products on the life cycle, on the environment, and human health. Where ecolabel criteria lay down certain conditions for production facilities, these conditions shall be met at the level of all facilities where the eco-labelled product is produced. Eco-label criteria should be established by product groups and services transposing the European Community Commission Decisions establishing Eco-label criteria for product groups and services, approved by Order of the Minister for the Environment. The Ministry of the Environment shall monitor developments and ensure, where appropriate, the updating of the Ecolabel criteria.

## 4.4. RECORDS OF ECONOMIC OPERATORS AND THEIR OBLIGATIONS

The economic operator who produces manufactures, imports, provides services, wholesaler or retailer using the ecolabel is registered by the Environmental Agency. The Environmental Agency creates and maintains the **Electronic Register of Certified Economic Operators and Eco-labelled Products**, updating it regularly. The register is published by the Environment Agency on its official website. Upon request, the Environment Agency shall provide the interested public with the updated list, including the names and addresses of the economic operators subject to the eco-certification scheme. To verify the information contained in the Register, the Environmental Agency may request relevant information from the CB and the economic operator.

## Obligations of economic operators

Allow the CB to carry out all necessary investigations to monitor the compliance of the eco-labelled product with the eco-label criteria specific to the product group and with the provisions of the given Guideline.

Immediately discontinue the use of the eco-label and notify the ecolabelling body of the inconsistency indicated in the event of non-compliance of the products with the eco-label criteria.

Be subject to the control carried out by the eco-labelling body.

Inform the CB in advance of any planned changes that may affect the compliance of the products with the requirements of the eco-label criteria.

**These can be:**

- ▶ replacement of parts, components, materials for the manufacture of packaging or packaging;
- ▶ replacement of suppliers;
- ▶ changes in production technology;
- ▶ changes in technological production conditions;
- ▶ changes in technological equipment;
- ▶ changes in logistics schemes.

## 4.5. COSTS OF ECOLABELLING SERVICES

Like the experience of the European Union, the ecolabelling mechanism applied in the Republic of Moldova shall involve the assumption of expenses by economic agents in the process of obtaining and using the ecolabel. These include costs for examining the applications for a certificate of conformity, assessing the conformity of products and/or services, supervising of the certified products, extending the scope of the certificate, further assessment, repeated certification, on-site visits etc. The costs collected are determined by the ecolabelling CB.

## 4.6. CONDITIONS OF USE AND CONTROL OF THE ECOLABEL

### 4.6.1. CONDITIONS FOR THE USE OF THE ECOLABEL

The ecolabel shall be used by the economic operator in accordance with the provisions of national legislation and the contract concluded between the ecolabelling CB and the economic operator. The ecolabel shall be used only for registered products which comply with the ecolabel criteria applicable to those products. However, the ecolabel may also be used for promotional materials of the products covered by the registration.

The economic operator should use the ecolabel in the form and colour provided for in the legislation. Moreover, one of the requirements regarding the use of the ecolabel and which needs to be strictly observed by the economic operator is to ensure the visibility of the ecolabel. It is essential to understand that the right to use the ecolabel does not extend to

the use of the ecolabel as a component of a trademark. Any false or misleading advertising or the use of any label or logo that could be confused with the ecolabel is prohibited.

To ensure the proper use of the ecolabel by the economic operator, the ecolabelling CB shall take a few measures:

- ▶ take measures to prevent controversial situations in the application of the ecolabel;
- ▶ establish rules to ensure the unequivocal application and any accompanying information and take the necessary measures to prevent misuse and misleading of the ecolabel;
- ▶ take measures to protect and monitor the use of the ecolabel;
- ▶ take steps to address all issues related to the misuse of the ecolabel;
- ▶ act on all complaints regarding the use of the ecolabel and keep records of them.

#### 4.6.2 INSPECTION OF THE ECO LABELLED PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

The ecolabel certification body shall, throughout the period of validity of the ecolabel certificate of compliance, ensure the inspection of eco labelled products and services to determine whether economic operators comply with the ecolabel criteria and verify compliance with the conditions of use of the ecolabel.

The inspection activity shall include the assessment of materials, products, installations, plants, processes, working procedures, or services and the determination of their compliance with the ecolabel criteria. The inspection shall cover all stages of the life cycle of the tested product, including the design stage. Inspection parameters may include elements relating to quantity, quality, safety, and suitability for use, as well as the continued observance of safety in the operation of industrial objects or systems.

The scope, frequency, and inspection procedure shall be determined by the ECB according to:

- ▶ the degree of the potential hazard of the product;
- ▶ production stability and product volume;
- ▶ availability of a quality management system,
- ▶ the results of the ecological certification or the previous inspection;
- ▶ the presence or absence of complaints from consumers and state control and supervisory authorities.

The results of the inspection shall be concluded by drawing up the inspection report, which shall contain the results of the analysis of compliance of the product or service with the Ecolabel criteria and compliance with the conditions for use of the Ecolabel. Based on the inspection report, the ecolabelling CB shall take a decision on the validity of the certificate of conformity.

# ANNEXES

## ANNEX 1


### **Blue Angel Ecolabel**

<b>Blauer Angel</b>	Year of establishment: 1978
<b>Web Page</b>	<a href="https://www.blauer-engel.de/en">https://www.blauer-engel.de/en</a>
<b>Short description</b>	<p>German Environmental Agency (UBA) is developing requirements (the so-called basic award criteria) for each specific product group based on scientific publications, own studies, and market research which act as a precondition for certification with the environmental label.</p> <p>In the evaluation process, the environmental label has a holistic view of the product life cycle - from its production and use to its disposal and recycling. The aim is to identify environmentally relevant areas for each product group in which environmental pollution could be significantly reduced or even avoided.</p> <p>In this process, Blue Angel goes beyond traditional environmental criteria, such as low energy consumption, low water, air, and soil emissions, and resource conservation. It also considers health issues such as low levels of pollutants and noise emissions.</p> <p>The Blue Angel is an environmental label, but it is increasingly focusing on other issues, such as working conditions during the production process. In addition to the environmental benefits, companies want to demonstrate that they offer more than comparable products when it comes to these social issues. The Blue Angel faces this challenge and incorporates social issues into the requirements for relevant product groups, e.g.</p>
<b>Country of Origin</b>	Germany - The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection
<b>Scope</b>	<p>Over 20,000 products, and services from more than 1,600 companies have been awarded the Blue Angel label in the following sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Household</li><li>• Textiles</li><li>• Green-IT</li><li>• Products for construction</li><li>• Heating / Energy</li><li>• Paper / Stationery</li><li>• Vehicles / Mobility</li><li>• Services / Municipality</li></ul>
<b>Validity</b>	3-5 years
<b>Environmental Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sustainable production of resources,</li><li>• Avoidance of harmful substances in the product,</li><li>• reduced emissions of harmful substances in the ground, air, water,</li><li>• reduced noise and electromagnetic radiation,</li><li>• longevity and recycling the product,</li><li>• compliance with international occupational safety standards,</li><li>• take-back systems and shared-use services, e.g., car sharing<sup>19</sup>.</li></ul>

19 <https://www.blauer-engel.de/en>

## ANNEX 2

### Nordic Swan Ecolabel Nordic Swan

	<p>Year of establishment: 1989</p>
<p><b>Website</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.nordic-ecolabel.org/">https://www.nordic-ecolabel.org/</a></p>
<p><b>Short description</b></p>	<p>The Nordic Swan eco-certification system is based on the ideas of economics circular and sustainable development, supported by the UN, namely reducing the environmental impact of the production and consumption of goods.</p>
<p><b>Country of origin</b></p>	<p>Nordic Council of Ministers: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden</p>
<p><b>Scope</b></p>	<p>Applicable to the following product categories: Alternative dry cleaning; Baby products with textiles; Candles; Car, boat and train care products; Construction chemicals; Cleaning agents for use in the food industry; Cleaning of liquid damaged electronics; Cleaning products; Cleaning services; Coffee service; Compost bins; Construction and faced panels and mouldings; Copying and printing paper; Cosmetic products; Dishwashing detergents and rinsing agents; Dishwasher detergent for professional use; Disposable bags, tubes and accessories for health care; Disposable for food; Durable / resistant wood for outdoor use; Floor coverings; Food services and conference facilities; Furniture and fitments; Grease-proof paper; Grocery stores; Hand dishwashing detergents; Hotels, restaurants and conference facilities; Imaging equipment; Interior paints and varnishes; Industrial cleaning and degreasing agents; Investment funds and investment products; Laundry detergents and stain removers; Laundry detergents for professional use; Liquid and gaseous fuels; Office and hobby supplies; Outdoor furniture, playground and park equipment; Packaging for liquid food; Primary batteries; Printing companies and printed matters; Rechargeable batteries and portable chargers; Remanufactured OEM toner cartridges; Renovation; Sanitary products; Ski wax; Small houses, apartment blocks and buildings for schools and pre-schools; Solid fuels and fire lightning products; Stoves; Suppliers for microfiber based cleaning; Textile services; Textiles and leather; tissue paper; Transport washing installations; TV and projectors; windows and Exterior doors.</p>
<p><b>Validity</b></p>	<p>3 years</p>
<p><b>Environmental requirements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nordic Swan uses non-toxic, environmentally friendly chemicals.</li> <li>• Nordic Swan eco-labelled dishwasher detergents reduce emissions of substances that are harmful to the environment and health.</li> <li>• The purpose of ecolabelling is to encourage the use of energy-efficient windows and exterior doors, which have also been manufactured in a way that ensures a low impact on the environment.</li> </ul>

# ANNEX 3

## **Content of the documents prepared in the standard procedure of elaboration of the EU ecolabel criteria.**

STANDARD PROCEDURE – DOCUMENTS AND CONTENT		
No.	Name of the document	Information list
1.	<b>Preliminary report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantitative indication of the potential environmental benefits specific to the product group, also considering the benefits of other similar European and national or regional EN ISO 14024 type I ecolabelling schemes.</li> <li>• The motivation of the choice and the scope of the product group.</li> <li>• Examination of all possible commercial aspects.</li> <li>• Analysis of the criteria of other ecolabels.</li> <li>• Legislation in force and ongoing legislative initiatives on the product group sector.</li> <li>• Analysis of the possibility of replacing hazardous substances with safer substances, as such or using alternative materials or designs, when technically feasible, in particularly regarding substances of very high concern.</li> <li>• Information on the national market for the respective sector, including the volume and the turnover.</li> <li>• Current and future potential for market entry of eco-labelled products.</li> <li>• Extension and overall relevance of the environmental impact associated with the product group, based on new or existing life cycle assessment studies. Other scientific evidence may be used. Critical and controversial issues are reported in detail and evaluated.</li> <li>• References of data and information collected and used in the preparation of the report.</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Proposal for draft criteria</b>	<p>Proposal for draft criteria complies with the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• it is based on the best products available on the Community market in terms of environmental performance throughout their life cycle and, at the date of adoption, corresponds, as an indication, to the best 10-20% of products available on the Community market in terms of environmental performance;</li> <li>• to allow the necessary flexibility, the exact percentage is defined on a case-by-case basis, with the aim, in each case, of promoting the most environmentally friendly products and ensuring that a sufficient range of options is available to consumers;</li> <li>• consider the clear ecological balance between environmental benefits and risks, including health and safety issues as well as social and ethical issues, as appropriate;</li> <li>• it is based on the most significant environmental impact of the product, which is expressed, to the extent possible, by key technical indicators of the product environmental performance and is appropriate for assessment in accordance with the rules of this Regulation;</li> <li>• is based on reliable data and information, which is as representative as possible for the entire EU market;</li> <li>• it is based on life cycle data and quantitative environmental impact, as appropriate, in accordance with European life cycle data reference systems;</li> <li>• the views of all stakeholders involved in the consultation process shall be considered;</li> <li>• when considering the definitions, test methods and technical and administrative documentation, harmonization with the legislation in force applicable to the product group is guaranteed;</li> <li>• relevant policies and work on other similar product groups are considered.</li> </ul>
3.	<b>Technical report</b>	<p><b>Technical report shall</b> include at least the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• scientific explanations of each requirement and of each criterion;</li> <li>• quantitative indication of the overall environmental performance that the criteria must achieve, by comparison with that of the average product on the market;</li> <li>• estimating the expected environmental / economic / social impact of the criteria taken as a whole;</li> <li>• relevant test methods for evaluating different criteria;</li> <li>• estimating test costs;</li> <li>• for each criterion, information on all tests, reports and other documentation to be provided by users, at the request of a competent authority, in accordance with the provisions of this Guidance.</li> </ul>

## STANDARD PROCEDURE – DOCUMENTS AND CONTENT

4.	<b>Manual for authorities awarding public contracts.</b>	<p>The Manual provides guidance to contracting authorities on the use of EU Ecolabel criteria.</p> <p>The Commission shall provide templates translated into all official Community languages of the Manual for authorities awarding public contracts and Manual for potential users of the EU Ecolabel and competent bodies.</p>
5.	<b>Manual for potential users of the EU Ecolabel and competent bodies</b>	<p>The Manual is intended for potential users of the EU Ecolabel and the competent bodies in the process of assessing the conformity of products with the established criteria.</p>



