

# Overview of Ecolabelling outside the Asian region

Bettina Heller

Associate Programme Officer



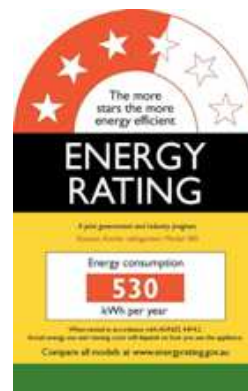
# Contents

- Consumer Information for Sustainable Development: definitions, challenges, characteristics
- Voluntary standards and public procurement
- Examples outside of Asia:
  - National level: German Blue Angel
  - Supra-national level: European Ecolabel
  - Regional level: Eco Mark Africa
- The 10YFP Consumer Information Programme: a global framework

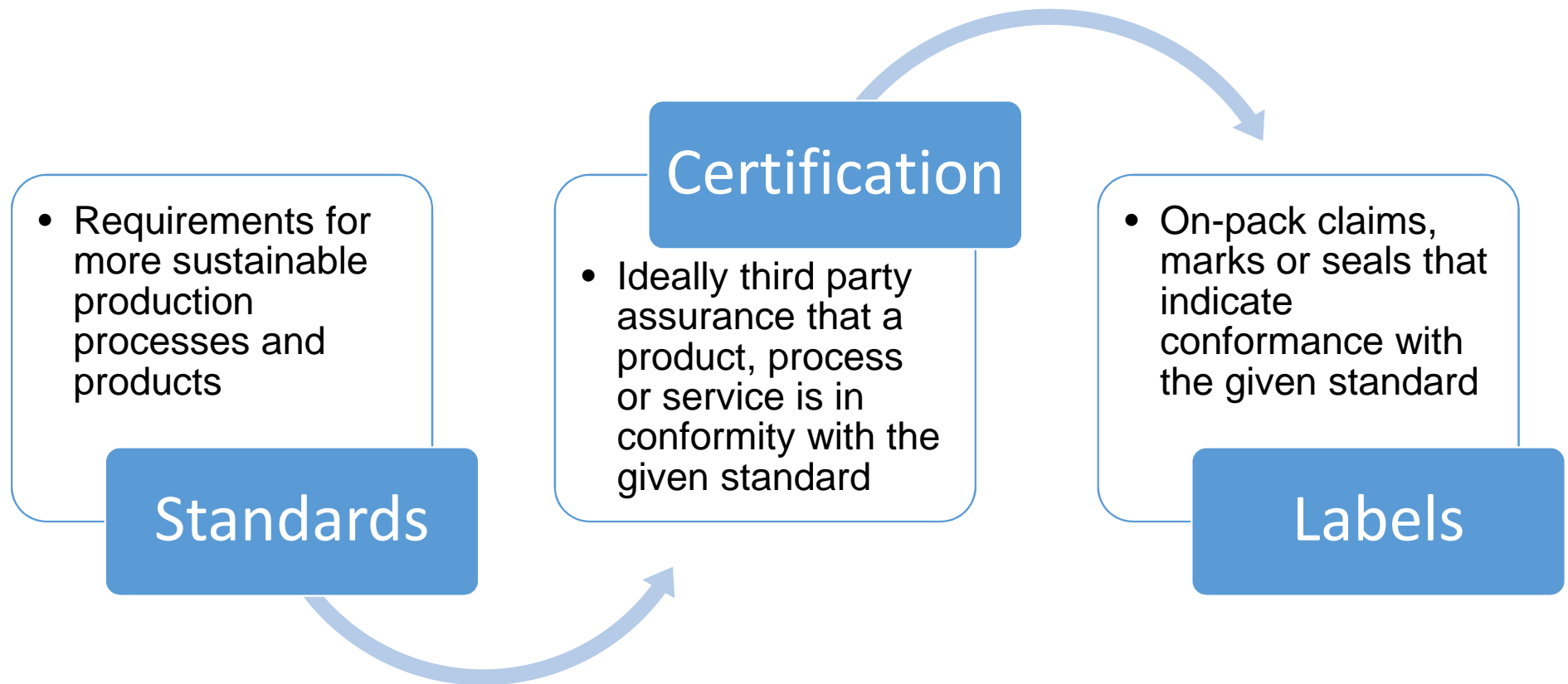
# Consumer Information for Sustainable Development

... is “a range of tools and systems that seek to guide consumers to make more sustainable **choices** about goods and services (products) **including in their use and end of life phase.**”

... **can take many forms**, including ecolabels, product declarations, ratings, claims, foot printing, life-cycle assessments, etc.



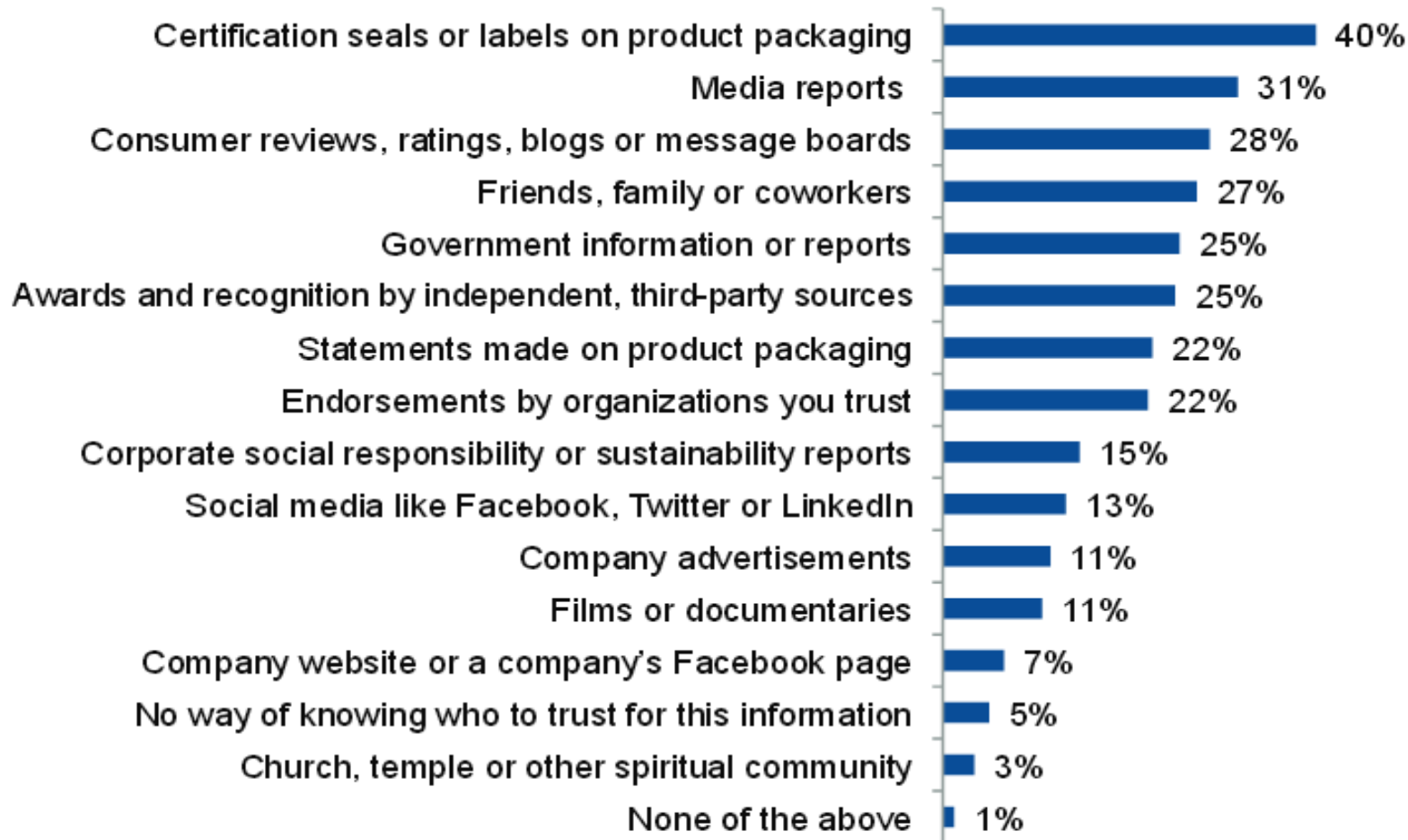
# Consumer Information for Sustainable Development



# Consumer Information?



# Who to trust?



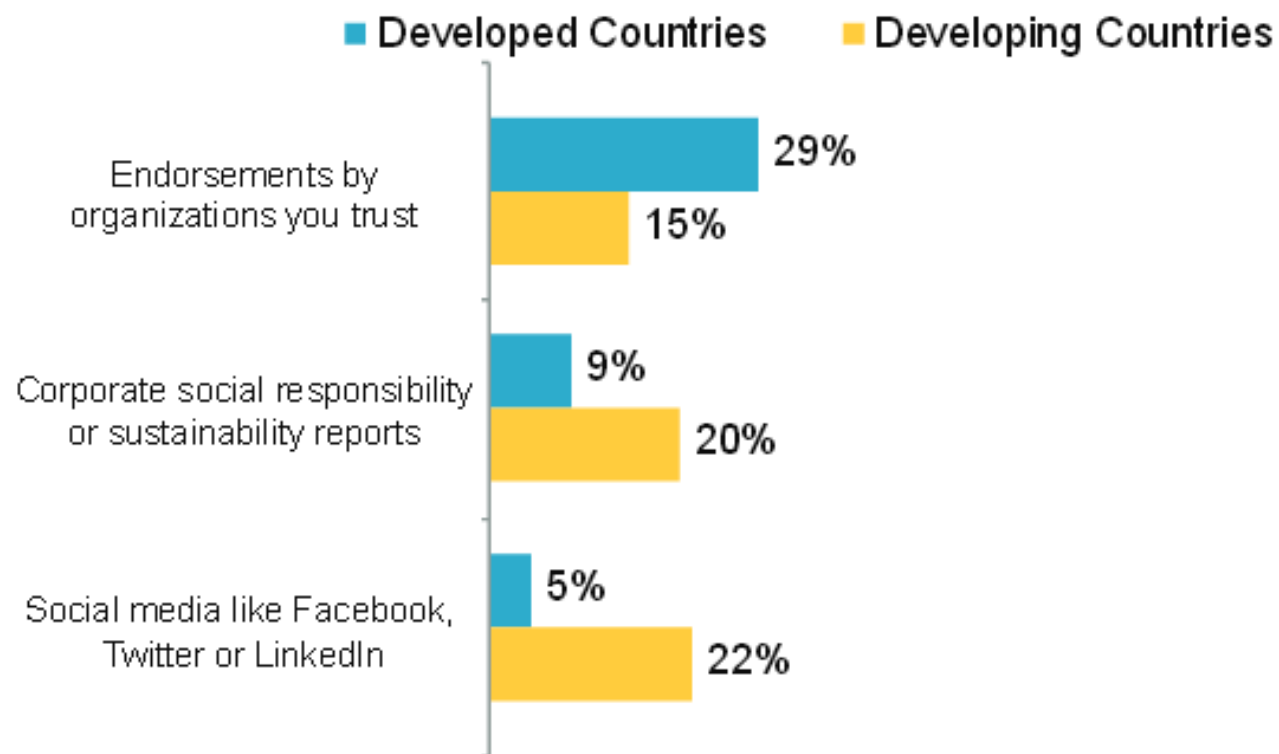
Note: Among respondents' top 3 choices

Question 9: Which of the following sources do you trust to inform you about whether a product is environmentally and socially responsible?

Source: Globescan 2013

# Who to trust?

The Source of Trust (Differences Between Developed and Developing Countries)



Note: Among respondents' top 3 choices

Question 9: Which of the following sources do you trust to inform you about whether a product is environmentally and socially responsible?

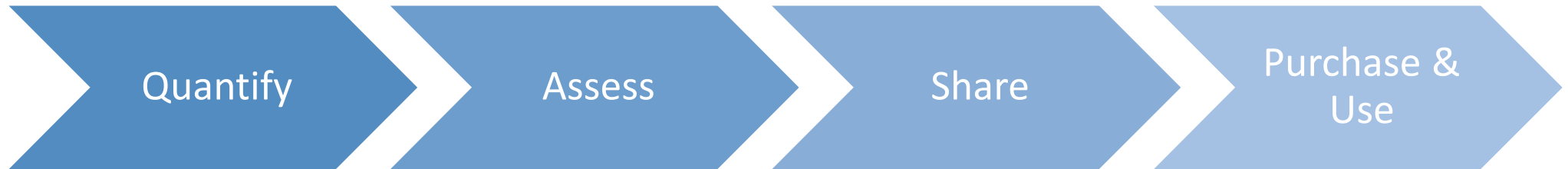
# Some challenges....



- Proliferation ⇒ Growing **confusion and mistrust from consumers**
- Sustainability as a holistic approach (focus on one indicator)
- Limited **methodologies** and scattered and fragmented **information**
- Costly – barrier to SMEs



# As it stands now: needs and challenges



- Lack of established science or poor information collection about product information.

- Lack of harmonisation between assessment methodologies leading to incompatibility.

- Proliferation of communications tools that can be confusing to marketers and consumers.
- Lack of policy guidance.

- Mistrust and confusion from consumers that can hinder demand.
- High-quality information does not necessarily lead to change in consumption practices.

# Consumer Information characteristics

- Level of obligation (Mandatory or voluntary)
- Type of information (information; rating; or leadership)
- Life-cycle coverage (Single or Multiple)
- Impact aspects (Single or Multiple)
- Sectors covered (Single or Multiple)
- Geographic scope (National, Regional or International)
- Verification (Auto-declaration or Third-party)
- Credibility

# Consumer Information characteristics: credibility

Some of the more relevant aspects are:

- Verification process
- Stakeholders engagement and decision making
- Accuracy, relevance and verifiability of criteria
- Transparency and information access
- Clarity and truthfulness

# Different types of voluntary instruments

ISO Type I ecolabels

Leadership (targets 20% best products); Life Cycle coverage; Multi-impact aspects; Mostly products; Third party certification

ISO Type II self-claims

Self-declarations by manufacturers; Disclose information of normally one environmental aspect but can also be comprehensive; Might include self-defined logos or seals

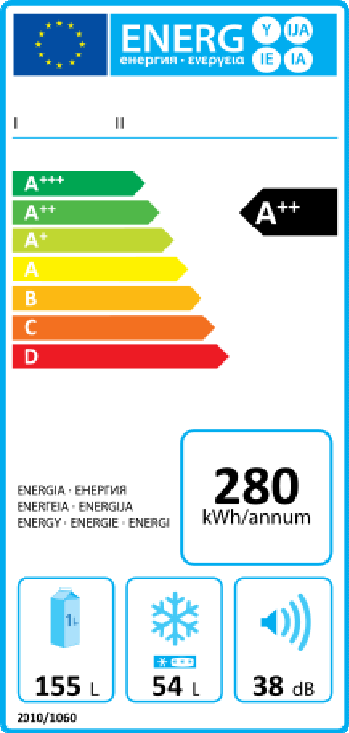
ISO Type III declaration

Comprehensive disclosure of quantitative environmental data → no evaluation, only information; Based on life cycle assessment following Product Category Rules for different sectors; Require independent review

Voluntary sustainability standards

Growing interest; Different calculation methods; Different labeling strategies; More oriented for individuals as consumers

# Examples of Voluntary Sustainability Schemes



# Standards known to public procurers

Technical challenge for public procurers lies in identification of hotspots of myriad of products they buy



Standards, certification and ecolabels as tools that public procurers can use as they provide a set of green requirements that a product must meet

Eco-labels: examples outside of Asia

# National level: The Blue Angel (Germany)

- Founded over 35 years ago
- 12,000 goods and services from about 1,500 companies
- Well-known: 92 % of Germans know the label, 37 % state that the label influences their buying decisions
- Awareness raising through Blue Angel 'ambassadors'
- Mutual recognition agreements in place with Austria, China, Japan and Korea



# National level: The Blue Angel (Germany)

- Criteria reviewed every 3-4 years to reflect technological advances, thus encouraging companies to constantly improve
- Highlights a product category's top runners, complementing mandatory minimum requirements (such as EU energy label)
- Thematic clusters: environment & health, climate, resource conservation, water





## Supranational level: European Ecolabel

- Developed in 1992 as a pan-European label, endorsed at supranational and national level, currently spanning over 44,000 products
- Managed by the European Commission and authorities in every EU Member State plus Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey
- Institutional connection with European legislation on public procurement
- Criteria developed with reference to the top 10 – 20 % of environmentally friendly products on the market
- Special rates for SMEs, micro-enterprises and applicants from developing economies

# Legislation backing the EU Ecolabel and public procurement: EU Directive, 2014

- Procurers may require a specific **label** as means of proof in the **technical specifications, award criteria or contract performance conditions** (while accepting all labels that meet the requirements equally) (Article 43)
- Definition of the relevant parts to be covered by **life cycle costing**; and requirement for contracting authorities to include data and method used in the tender; and provision for application of common method for calculation once it has been made mandatory at EU level (Article 68)
- Possibility should exist to submit **tenders** reflecting diversity of technical solutions standards and specifications (including **life cycle** and **third party verified labels**) (Article 74)

# Regional level: Eco Mark Africa

- African Ecolabelling Mechanism institutionalized as Eco Mark Africa in 2010
- Mission: *African products attain an environmental profile that makes them competitive in the international market and secures expanded market access at national, regional and international levels*
- Identified 4 sectors: agriculture, fisheries, forestry, tourism, in which to develop a set of pan-African sustainability standards
- Standards follow principles defined in WTO/TBT Agreement and ISO/IEC Directives
- Secretariat is operational under the African Union Commission, partnering with a number of regional economic communities





# The 10YFP Consumer Information Programme (10YFP CIP)

Secretariat



**Launched in 2014 as the second programme under the 10 Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP)**

**Co-Leads :** German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry and Consumers International.



Federal Ministry for the  
Environment, Nature Conservation,  
Building and Nuclear Safety



Ministry of Environment and Forestry  
Republic of Indonesia



## **Multi-stakeholder Advisory Committee (MAC) :**

- **Governments:** France, Jordan, Peru and the United Kingdom;
- **Inter-governmental organization:** European Commission;
- **International organizations:** International Network of Product Sustainability Initiatives (INPSI), International POP Elimination Network (IPEN), International Trade Centre (ITC), UNEP/SETAC Life cycle Initiative (LCI) and UNEP.
- **NGOs, Networks and Private Sector:** AKATU Institute, Caribbean Consumer Council, Centro Tecnológico para la Sustentabilidad, Consumer Education Trust (CONSENT), Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN), Green Purchasing Network (GPN, Japan), International POP Elimination Network (IPEN), ISEAL, Pick and Pay and Sustainability Consortium

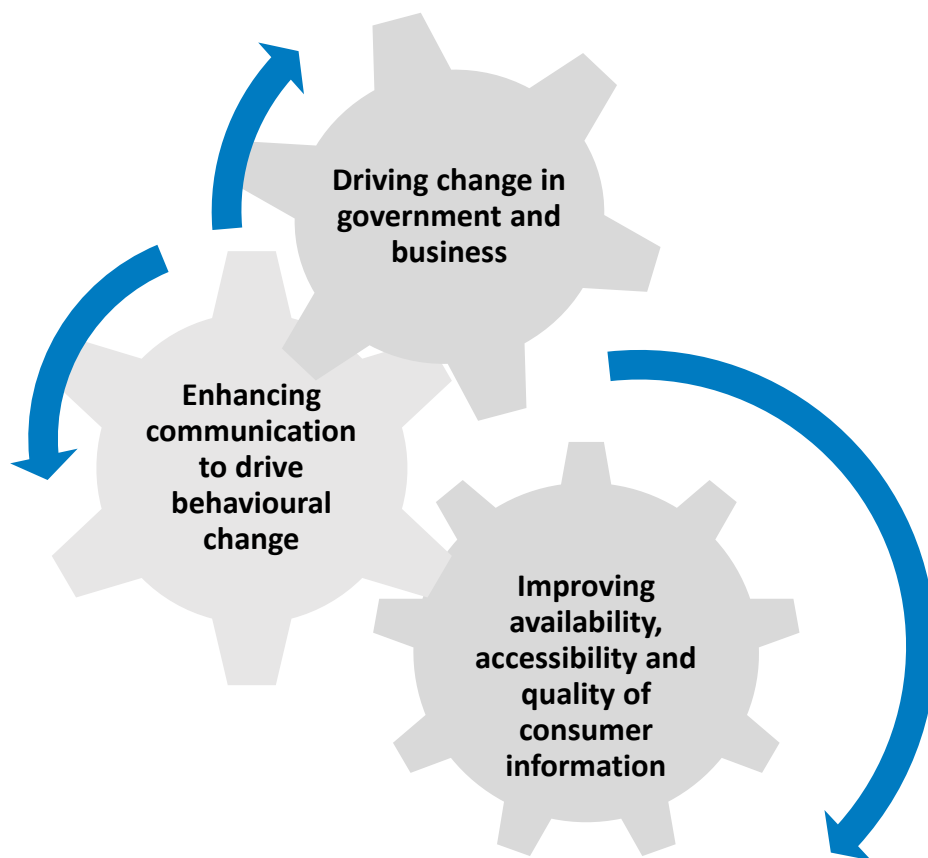


# The 10YFP Consumer Information Programme (10YFP CIP)

Secretariat



**Goal: Provide global platform to support the provision of quality information on goods and services, and the identification and implementation of the most effective strategies to engage consumers in sustainable consumption**



Relevant, transparent and reliable information to facilitate purchasing decisions, and product use and disposal  
⇒ **consumers**

Use information tools to improve processes, goods and services  
⇒ **businesses**

Promote sustainable goods over the supply chains & quality information  
⇒ **retailers**

Stimulate the development of operating markets for sustainable products  
⇒ **governments**



# 10YFP CIP Working Groups

Secretariat



Name	Status
<b>Global guidelines for reliable sustainability information for consumers</b>	Led by UNEP, co-led by ITC; launched in June 2015
<b>Eco-labels Type I:</b> <i>Strengthening &amp; harmonizing existing schemes; sharing lessons from practice</i>	Co-led by GEN and GIZ; to be launched 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter 2016
<b>Best practices on consumer sustainability information:</b> <i>Sharing &amp; replicating private/public sector initiatives</i>	Co-led by OECD, currently call for second co-lead
<b>Supporting Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) implementation through the use of ecolabels and sustainability standards, with 10YFP SPP</b>	Co-led by ISEAL, GEN, UNEP
<b>Consumer Behaviour:</b> <i>Investigating how consumers take decisions; the ‘value-action gap’; and testing approaches to facilitate decisions (with 10YFP SLE, tbd)</i>	To be launched in 2016, call for interested co-leads
<b>Social impact assessment and communication:</b> <i>Investigating and improving on current approaches</i>	Led by PRé Sustainability, co-led by UNEP, to be launched 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter 2016

To learn more and/or get involved in any of the working groups, please email: [CIFP@unep.org](mailto:CIFP@unep.org)

# Questions to the audience

- In countries with EL schemes in place, what have been the key factors that have really made a difference in increasing the supply of EL products ? *(e.g. regulatory framework, connection with SPP, engagement with stakeholders, communication campaign, technical assistance to businesses, etc).*
- For countries with EL schemes connected with GPP, or countries making reference to VSS in GPP, what have been the advantages so far *(e.g simplification of processes, increase supply of products with EL, access to certain markets, others?)*
- For countries with GPP policies, what is missing to make the connection to EL?



# Thank you!

Contacts:

[Bettina.heller@unep.org](mailto:Bettina.heller@unep.org)

[unep.org/10yfp](http://unep.org/10yfp)

[www.scpclearinghouse.org](http://www.scpclearinghouse.org)

