Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information

A Navigator for Making Reliable Claims
Context
Working Group 1 participants

Co-Leads
United Nations Environmental Programme
International Trade Centre (ITC)

Facilitators
100 Prozent Erneuerbar Stiftung
THEMA1

Working Group Members
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International Association for Soaps, Detergents and Maintenance Products (AISE)
European Brands Association (AIM)
Akatu Institute
Caribbean Consumer Council (CCC)
Centro Tecnológico para la Sustentabilidad, Argentina
Consumer Education Trust (Consent), Uganda
Consumers International (CI)
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), United Kingdom
European Commission, Directorate General for the Environment
European Commission, Joint Research Centre
European Policy Centre (CEP)
Betterfly Tourism

Working Group Members
Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB), Germany
GEDnet – Global Environmental Declarations Network
Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN)
Global Standards 1 (GS1)
Green Purchasing Network (GPN), Japan
HEJSupport
International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)
International Network of Product Sustainability Initiatives (INPSI)
International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN)
ISEAL Alliance
LAC Footprint
L’OREAL
Ministerio del Ambiente, Peru
Ministry for Environment, Energy and Sea (MEEM), France
Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Indonesia
Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) World Forum
The County Administrative Board of Östergötland, Sweden
The Sustainability Consortium (TSC)
Life Cycle Initiative (LCI)
Overview development process

• Early 2015: **Scoping exercise** to identify existing guidance documents, relevant initiatives and stakeholders

• June 2015: **Working Group** formed with CI-SCP MAC members and other stakeholders identified during scoping

• Development of the Guidelines through a **consensus building process** (6 webinars and 1 face to face workshop)

• End 2016: **global** online stakeholder **consultation**: feedback received from over 90 stakeholders from all regions

• Feb 2017: Review of the Guidelines by the **10YFP CI-SCP MAC**, request for final changes and **support for go ahead**
Scope
Objectives

- Improve the reliability of consumer information for sustainable consumption through international consensus
- Set a common ground of minimum requirements to remove the potential for greenwashing
- Actively encourage organizations to take leadership and communicate quality information in a useful manner to consumers
- Offer a tool to address...

Sustainable Development Goal 12
Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Target 12.8
By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature
Target audience

Producers and retailers
Marketing & advertising professionals
Procurement practitioners (private & public)
Governments
Labelling organizations
Consumer organisations & Sustainability NGOs

Ultimately: support informed choice for consumers...
...keeping in mind: consumers are communicators as well.
Scope

Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information

*Global guidance on making effective environmental, social and economic claims, to empower and enable consumer choice*

- **Entire value chain**, i.e. communication to consumers, between suppliers, to retailers, etc. (B2B and B2C)
- **Focus on products** (goods and services)
- Addressing all kinds of communication of product sustainability information (e.g. labeling, declarations, advertising/marketing claims, etc.), not a sole focus on any one area
Overview of the Guidelines: fundamental and aspirational principles
Each principle includes:

- A summary box to explain their essence in non-technical language
- A list of ‘musts’ (fundamental principles) or ‘shoulds’ (aspirational principles), and guiding questions to help clarify those
- Examples to demonstrate do’s and don’ts
- A list of other existing guidance documents that refer to the principle at hand and are helpful to be consulted for further information
- In the future: series of case studies to demonstrate how all principles can be applied and demonstrated
Principles

The ‘Fundamental Principles’ describe the minimum requirements for product sustainability information: The information must be...

- Comparable
- Reliable
- Relevant
- Clear
- Transparent
- Accessible

This milk comes from farms that were certified against the Earth Friendly Standard. www.earthfriendly.org

The ‘Aspirational Principles’ complement the minimum requirements of product sustainability information. They provide guidance to improve the ways of communication to consumers: The information should be...

Based on three Dimensions of Sustainability

Encourage Behaviour Change

Use a multimedia approach

Based on a collaborative approach
Next steps
Pilot testing in 2017

• Objective to ensure the Guidelines are actionable and to test applicability of provisions over regions, sectors and target groups
• Aim also to build a library of case studies from different regions and sectors
• Assess how existing product sustainability information meet the Guidelines’ principles to improve the way they communicate
• Non-disclosure
• Invite them to become part of an expert community to exchange good practices and lessons learned
Thank you!

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Do’s and Don’t’s Example – Principle: Clarity

There **must** be a **direct link** between the sustainability claim and the product to avoid generalization of the claim. The consumer **must be able to differentiate between product and brand information.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product: Eggs</th>
<th>Do (company A)</th>
<th>Don’t (company B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Claim</strong></td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“These eggs were produced by free range chickens”</td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(un-labelled)</td>
<td>(un-labelled)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion**

- The complementing claim is directly connected with the product. This means that the consumers can be sure that the eggs they are buying are organic.

- Complementary but generalised claims might give the impression that all products from the same brand/category are covered by the claim. The consumer might think that all eggs from the brand are organically produced.