

*Exchanging Knowledge on Environmental Labels and
Declaration*

Regional Workshop Report

*Project "Driving sustainable consumption in Latin America with better product information
and design"*

Exchanging Knowledge on Environmental Labels and Declaration

Regional Workshop Report

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Regional Workshop Report

Exchanging Knowledge on Environmental Labels and Declaration

The workshop took place on September 11-13, 2019 at the Mexican Secretariat of Economy in Mexico City with the attendance of representatives of the following organisations:

Associação Brasileira de Normas Técnicas

Blue Angel

Dirección General de Normas de México

Ente Costarricense de Acreditación

Entidad Mexicana de Acreditación

International Environmental Product
Declaration (EPD®) System

Global Ecolabelling Network

Gloh Studio

Instituto Colombiano de Normas Técnicas
y Certificación

Instituto de Normas Técnicas de Costa
Rica

Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos
Naturales de México

UNEP Programme (UNEP)

Ministerio de Ambiente y Energía de Costa
Rica

Ministerio de Medio Ambiente de Paraguay

Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo
Sostenible de Colombia

Nordic Swan

Organismo Nacional de Acreditación de
Colombia

Organismo Nacional de Normalización y
Certificación de la Construcción y
Edificación de México

Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt

List of Acronyms

AAA	Environmental Alliance of America
AB	Accreditation Body
ABNT	Brazilian Association of Technical Standards
CB	Certification Body
EPD	Environmental Product Declaration
EU	European Union
GEN	Global Ecolabelling Network
GPP	Green Public Procurement
IAF MLA	Multilateral Agreement of the International Accreditation Forum
ICSAL	Boosting Sustainable Consumption in Latin America
ILAC MRA	Mutual Recognition Arrangement of the International Accreditation Laboratories Cooperation
LCA	Lifecycle Assessment
MRA	Mutual Recognition Agreement
NGO	Non-profit Organization
PCR	Product Category Rule
PEF	Product Environmental Footprint
PTB	Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt
SAA	Environmental Seal of America
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production/Decoupling
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SPP	Sustainable Public Procurement
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

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Introduction and Objectives

This workshop is part of the UNEP's project called *Driving Sustainable Consumption in Latin America with Better Product Information and Design*, ICSAL in its Spanish acronym. The member countries of this project were in a meeting for two days in order to establish the committee for the *Environmental Alliance of America*, AAA in its Spanish acronym.

The objectives of the workshop are the following:

- Support the AAA in designing and strengthening their governance, administrative and financial mechanisms.
- Learn and exchange knowledge and best practices with other internationally recognized ecolabels and declarations.
- Increase the outreach of the AAA and support its international recognition.

After the opening and welcome words from, Mr. Alfonso Guati Rojo Sánchez, General Director of Standards from the Secretary of Economy of Mexico, Mr. Paolo Caridi, Head of Trade Section, Delegation of the European Union to Mexico and Ms. Adriana Zacarías Farah, Resource Efficiency Regional Coordinator, UNEP, the meeting began according to the agenda (Annex I).



As an introduction, UNEP presented the ICSAL project that is supporting the development of an environmental ecolabeling and declarations program in the region of America, as well as the vision and strategy that the region is pursuing and the tools that Latin American countries can use for Circular Economy.

Introduction to the project: “Driving sustainable consumption in Latin America with better product information and design” (ICSAL)

At the XXI Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 8-12 October 2018), countries adopted a Decision on Sustainable Consumption and Production/Decoupling. The decision call upon action on important SCP areas: “support Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the incorporation of tools that encourage changes towards sustainable consumption and production patterns” and “recognize

the initiative for the development of a regional eco-label (Environmental Seal America), promoted by Colombia, Costa Rica, and Mexico.

In order to support the implementation of SDG 12 to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, following the Forum’s resolution on SCP and responding to the priorities of the Regional Strategy for Sustainable Consumption and Production, UNEP initiated the ICSAL project in 2019. The objective of the project is to support governments, private sector and other stakeholders in the implementation of policies and practices that lead to improvement in product’s design and product sustainability information and increase consumer awareness to support sustainable lifestyles in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The expected Outputs from the ICSAL project are:

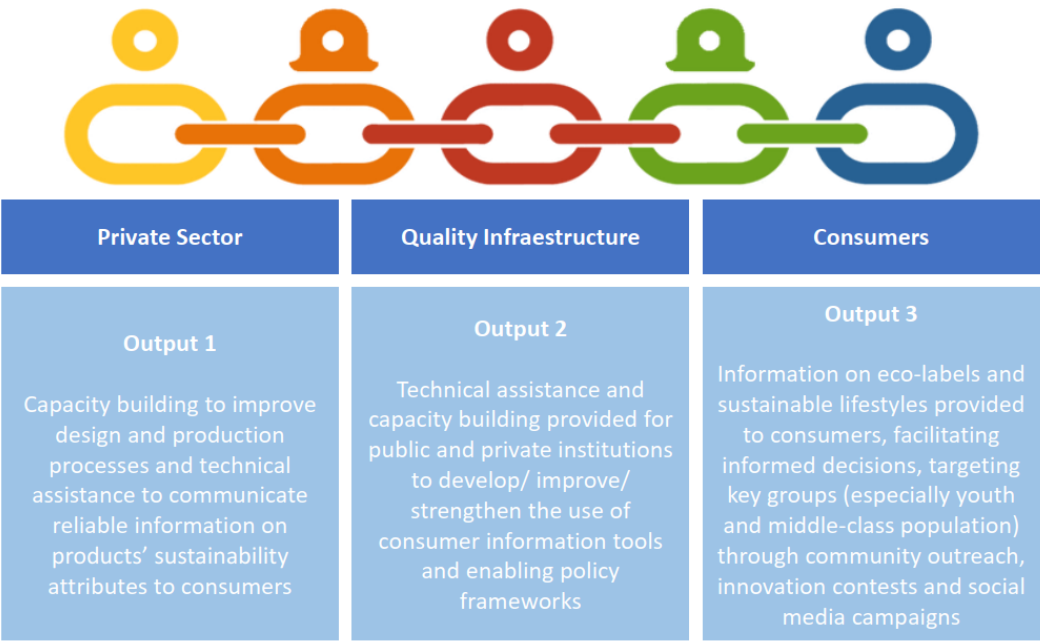


Figure 1 ICSAL Project Outputs

This workshop was one of the first initiatives that is carried out to support output 2.

Environmental Alliance of America. Vision and strategy of the regional ecolabel

The first negotiation of the project which originate the Environmental Alliance of America (AAA) started in 2013, with a proposal from Costa Rica and the participation of Colombia and Mexico; with the support of the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB).

From 2015 to 2019, work has been done for the establishment of criteria and agreements started, as well as the design of the logo, website and promotional video.

The objective of the project is to develop a regional ecolabel and declarations program supported by the Quality Infrastructure of the member states. Nowadays members are Mexico,

Colombia, and Costa Rica but more countries from Latin America as Perú, Ecuador and El Salvador have expressed their interest to join the initiative.

On September 9th, 2019 the Environmental Alliance of America was formally established and agreements have been taken to continue its legal establishment. The AAA is a program for environmental declarations, labels and claims for the American continent which include environmental information of type I, type III and footprints.

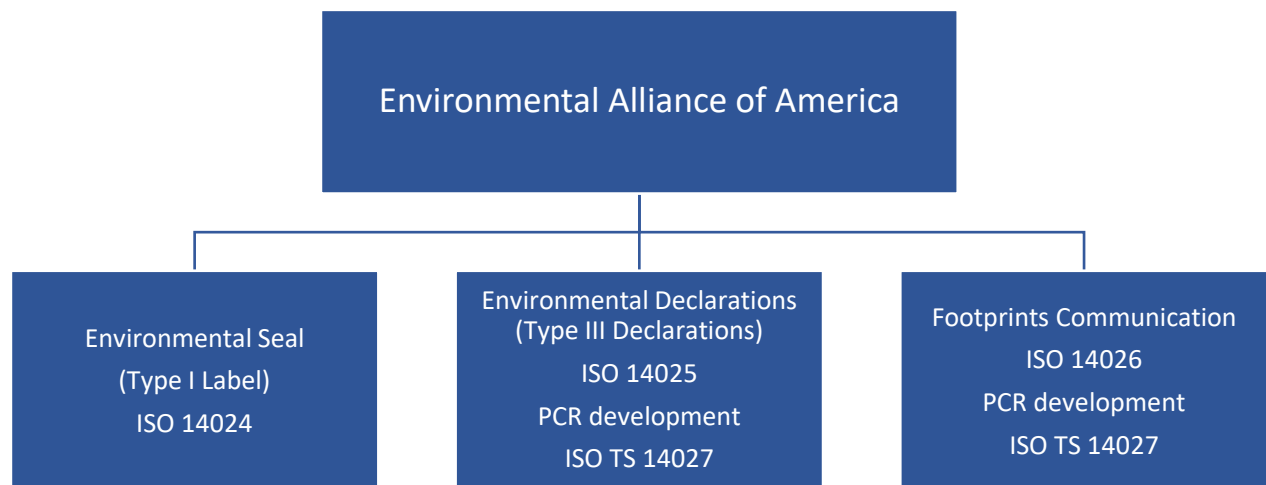


Figure 2 Scope of the Environmental Alliance of America

There is a potential of 220 million consumers in Latin America, the vision of the AAA is to reach them and have a presence in more Latin-American countries with a recognition from international labelling organisations.

EU Circular Economy Tools

Circular economy is related to SDG Goal 12. For the EU, there are 5 priority sectors: Plastics, Food Waste, Critical Raw Materials Construction & Demolition and Biomass-biobased Products.

Circular economy is the efficient use of resources and a better waste management.

4 Key areas of action



Figure 3 EU circular economy areas of action

Some strategies to establish Circular Economy in society are: Push and pull approach and Eco-design measures¹. Maria highlighted that textile and furniture are very important to consider in Eco-design.

Nowadays international products have minimum environmental requirements to enter the EU market and voluntary initiatives, but the EU ecolabel is increasing its recognition.

The EU ecolabel is geographically uneven and there has been a steady increase on the number of licenses granted for products and services. Periodical re-evaluations are suggested to know if the program or tool is still relevant for the industry and market.

There is still a lack of knowledge among the consumers about what the EU label is. An 80% of consumers said that occasionally buy green products and would be willing to buy more if the information was reliable and accessible.

Green Public Procurement (GPP) voluntary program has started where EU wants to identify the products with high potential of improvements through their life cycle assessment, to increase the scope of the label, i.e. toys, beverages, food, etc. and make a strategy to increase the information available to the consumers².

EU Green Deal is another relevant issue starting in Europe which includes circular economy. This deal wants to combine and apply digitalization and globalization to solve environmental issues. The green deal will support the use of the ecolabels as part of the strategy³.

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/>

² https://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/index_en.htm

³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/political-guidelines-next-commission_en.pdf

Overview of ecolabel schemes and lessons learnt



EU ecolabel is a voluntary scheme aiming at promoting products and services with a lower environmental impact established in 1992 managed by the European Commission and Member States' Competent Bodies⁴. Is related to ISO 14024 Type 1 Ecolabel with independent third party verified criteria by national competent bodies.

The aim is to provide consumers an environmental certification they can trust. EU Ecolabel products are durable, easy to dismantle, repair, reuse and recycle. Although the EU ecolabel is based on life cycle assessment sometimes packaging is not included. As it is important to have comparable impacts, therefore is agreed to focus only on stages where products have the highest environmental impact, and this differs from product to product.

The EU Ecolabel covers 25 product groups. Food and medicines are not included within the scope of the label. The label is available for every product and service placed on the market in the European Economic Area. A new product group is currently under development "Financial Products".

There are 72,797 products and services certified with the EU Ecolabel on the European market.

Conclusion is that even though EU Ecolabel is useful, its uptake and awareness need to be fostered.

Regarding the conformity assessment. – Each member state appoints its competent bodies who are responsible of given the criteria for the certification. Austria for instance has a certification body for each product group.



The **Nordic Swan** is the Nordic environmental label in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland⁵. Grants licenses are all over the world. It establishes same criteria for international, regional and national manufacturers. They started targeting the 30% of the best products in the market.

It is a voluntary and market-oriented scheme based on life cycle considerations with strict environmental requirements and transparent criteria development and certified by independent third-party verification entities. The ecolabel has shown that is very useful and has benefits for companies including bringing innovation to their products.

Save the world. A little every day. – is the Nordic Swan Slogan

Conclusion is that is a successful program because 91% of people in Nordic countries are familiar with the Ecolabel and 51% look for the Swam in their purchases.

Regarding conformity assessment, the Nordic Swan is recognized by the Norwegian authorities and the accreditation body. The Nordic Swan is a certification body itself. There is a department

⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/>

⁵ <http://www.nordic-ecolabel.org/>

to verify the criteria and a licensing department. Each country has its own competent bodies as EU Ecolabel.



The **Blue Angel** issued the first ecolabel in 1978. It is governmental programme created to support the environment and people's health⁶.

Blue Angel aims to orient the customer and offer reliable information. As well as the Nordic ecolabel, it has a high percentage of consumers awareness.

The product categories with highest number of certifications are recycling paper, construction products and printing and multifunctional devices. The number of certified products has kept growing during the 40 years of existence of the label.

Blue Angel has one certification body, internal quality management system, in contact with the German accreditation.

Blue Angel representative recommends not to start with products but with group of products. It is recommended that the Environmental Alliance of America (AAA) includes their normative references in their documents (14020's, 17065, etc.).



Associação Brasileira de Normas Técnicas (ABNT) Ecolabelling Program is owned by ABNT. ABNT is the Brazilian Standardization Body and a Certification Body accredited for certification of products, services, management systems, GHG emissions and Ecolabelling and it is a non-profit organization

ABNT informed that they are accredited by the Brazilian accreditation body, INMETRO as a Product Certification Body for regulatory and voluntary programs. The Ecolabelling program is a voluntary program that is carried out with internal procedures based on 17065 and 14024. These procedures are called "the ecolabel criteria" which includes the conformity assessment procedure.

ABNT Ecolabel program based the selection of product categories on the product environmental impact. For the criteria development, ABNT evaluates the extent of environmental impacts at each stage of the product life cycle and they are developed by their technical certification committee that has the representation of all interested parties and the industry according to the product category which is being discussed. Their criteria development follows the standardization procedure but with fast track procedures.

The evaluation compliance process includes document assessment, audit, sample collection, test and decision according to results, and for products that are imported to Brazil and request the Ecolabel, they evaluate them in their country of origin.

⁶ <https://www.blauer-engel.de/en>

ABNT representative highlight that ecolabel brings environmental consciousness; is a market strategy, and public procurement is an incentive for producers to comply with the environmental requirements.



countries.

The **International EPD® System** (<https://www.environdec.com/>) is a global programme for environmental product declarations (EPD) based on ISO 14025 for Type III Environmental declarations and EN 15804. Their online database currently contains more than 1,200 EPDs for a wide range of product categories by organisations in 45

The main objective of the International EPD® System is to enable and support organisations in any country to communicate quantified environmental information of products in a credible, comparable, and understandable way from a life cycle perspective.

The International EPD® System offers a voluntary programme EPDs based on Life Cycle Assessments , LCA, according to ISO 14025, ISO 14040/14044, and other relevant standards or methodology guides; contribute to make standardised, verified, and life cycle-based environmental information; and seek cooperation and harmonisation with other EPD programmes and initiatives (national, regional, sectorial, etc.) to help organisations to broaden the use of EPD on an international market .

EPDs are based on Product Category Rules (PCR) providing LCA calculation rules, requirements, and guidelines for a defined product category. The International EPD® System has developed and made more than 100 PCRs for different product categories publicly available⁷ with the ambition to harmonize PCR activities on a global scale⁸.

After the overview of each program, sessions on specific topics started. The objective of every session was to discuss specific matters related to the development and management of an ecolabelling programme.

Session 1: Governance, administrative and financial mechanisms of a regional ecolabel

Raised questions for this session were the following:

- How is the administrative part of the ecolabeling program, how are they legally constituted as a program? Who owns it? Who operates it?
- How is the program financially maintained/sustained?
- How are fees established and what is the process for collecting the fees?
- Do the interested parties pay for having the right to develop new environmental criteria?
- What is the process for making administrative decisions, and who makes them?

⁷ <https://www.environdec.com/PCR/>

⁸ <https://www.environdec.com/PCR/Global-PCR-harmonization/>

- How do they give credibility with a regional program?
- How countries are represented in the regional ecolabel and what roles/responsibilities they have in the administration of the scheme?
- Who can request the environmental label and who receives it?
- Which is the regulation for the use of the label?
- Why Blue angel and Nordic Swan have only included type I ecolabeling?

Environmental Alliance of America (AAA)

The “Alianza Ambiental de América” (AAA), is a voluntary ecolabel and declaration program in the American continent, will be managed as an independent and non-profit organisation that will be legally established in Colombia with the director of ONAC as the legal representative.

A Council and an Operation Committee are formed to execute the AAA program. The Council is formed by the full member countries' governmental ministries. The Operation Committee is the executive part of the Environmental Alliance of America. It will be constituted by all the representatives and alternates designated by the member entities.

Members can be governmental ministries, standardization bodies, national accreditation bodies and scheme owner of the American continent.

A country is considered full member when it has a governmental ministry, a standardization body and the national accreditation body as members.

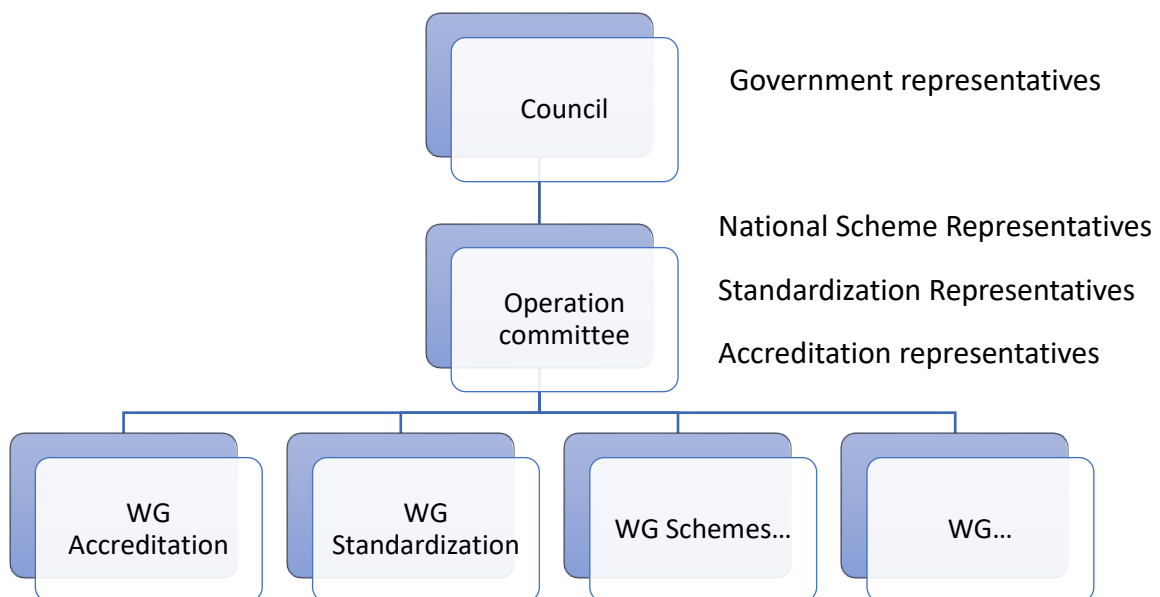


Figure 4 Detailed structure of the AAA

Type I Ecolabel program of the AAA will be the *Sello Ambiental de América* and the Type III Environmental Declarations program will be the *Declaración Ambiental de América* (DAA).

The conformity assessment process will be carried out by competent bodies in each member country, considering competent bodies those Product Certification Bodies accredited by a

signatory of the IAF MLA for the defined criteria of the Alliance. The criteria for conformity assessment will include the ISO 14020's series and the 17065 for product certification that want to display the Sello Ambiental de America in their products.

The *Declaración Ambiental de América* will be uploaded to the website and a QR code can be printed in the product.

The AAA is working in the definition of several operative procedures such as the requirement for the applicants, environmental criteria thresholds and licence fee mechanism.

EU Ecolabel

EU Ecolabel is set through a regulation of the European Parliament. European Commission manage the scheme and ensure that the regulation is implemented. The EU Ecolabel criteria is a legal document. This Ecolabel program works with a Board and an Operations Committee formed by National Competent Bodies⁹.

The Board includes the EU Ecolabel competent bodies, selected stakeholders, organisations representing a balanced of trade organisations, NGO's, think tanks, etc., and EU/UN bodies. The board contributes to the development and revision of EU Ecolabel criteria and to any review of the implementation of the EU Ecolabel scheme.

NGO's that want to participate need to contact representatives of environmental organisations to be designated in the Board.

A balanced participation of all relevant interested parties concerned with a particular product group (e.g. industry and service providers, including SMEs, crafts and their business organisations, trade unions, traders, retailers, importers, environmental protection groups and consumer organisations) is moreover guaranteed in the development of the criteria, through their participation in Ad Hoc Working Groups and the possibility to provide written comments in the public consultations.

The competent bodies are independent and impartial organisations designated by the European Economic Area states and can be public or private. They assess applications and award the EU Ecolabel to products that meet the criteria, ensuring that the verification process is carried out in a consistent, neutral and reliable manner. They meet 3 times per year to exchange experiences and ensure a consistent implementation of the scheme

There is not a fee for members, but they provide in kind contribution mainly through man-hours. The application fee to obtain the ecolabel is very low to attract applicants. The license fee is a percentage of 0.15% of the turnover of the company.

The EU Ecolabel program has a budget for research and for promotion. The criteria are developed using the research budget and the in-kind contributions of the interested parties.

⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/competent-bodies.html>

Nordic Swan

Nordic Swan has a Council of Ministers and an Ecolabelling Board. In each country there is a Secretariat and a Director who represents the country in the Board of Directors. All Nordic countries follow the Nordic Swan regulation as it is agreed in the Council.

The representative of Nordic Swan informed that *“was a decision to work only with type I ecolabel, as they think type III does not give enough certainty yet.”*

It has a product criteria development management group, an application assessment and licensing group and a marketing and communication group.

In 1989 the industry of detergents started using the environmental label to demonstrate their commitment with the environment. When they ensured that a river in Norway was not polluted anymore, the detergents company sales increased and housewives started to seek that product with the ecolabel, that gave the impulse for other sectors to require the ecolabel as well.

The Nordic Swan has the following financial mechanism to operate:



Figure 5 Financial mechanism of Nordic Swan

The application fee is about €3,000 (25,000 NOK) while the annual fee is estimated according to the companies' turnover in Nordic countries: 0,3% up to turnover of €20,000. Thereafter 0,05% up to max annual fee €100,000. The minimum annual fee €1,500.

Blue Angel

The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety is the owner of the scheme. The German Environment Agency is responsible for developing the criteria, reviewing these criteria regularly to ensure that the Blue Angel always is in line with new developments and functioning as the offices of the voluntary Environmental Label Jury.

The Environmental Label Jury is an independent decision-making committee made up by 15 members from different sectors of society, which makes decisions on new groups of products and approves the award criteria for the Blue Angel.

Blue Angel works with the certification body RAL for assessments and licensing. This Body was assigned from the beginning of the program.

The Ministry determines the principles upon which the Blue Angel is awarded, appoints the members of the Environmental Label Jury, promotes the Blue Angel and advocate for its use in public procurement.

The Blue Angel is funded from different sources:

- Research money from the Environment Ministry/Agency to support criteria development
- License fees from the applying companies
- Percentage of the Certification Body revenue
- Companies input by doing the papers / product tests for the application

The Certification Body use 25% of the license fees in public relations and marketing the Blue Angel

The license fee includes a unique one-off fee of 400 EUR for processing the application for the use of the Blue Angel Ecolabel, plus a yearly fee based on the company's annual sales as shown in the following table:

Yearly fee for the use of the environmental label as of 01.07.2017:		
Annual Sales (in Million Euros)	Annual Fee (in Euros)*	Fee Category
up to 0.25	320.00	1
more than 0.25 up to 1.0	600.00	2
more than 1.0 up to 2.5	1300.00	3
more than 2.5 up to 5.0	2400.00	4
more than 5.0 up to 10.0	3500.00	5
more than 10.0 up to 15.0	4800.00	6
more than 15.0 up to 20.0	6100.00	7
more than 20.0 up to 25.0	7500.00	8
more than 25.0 up to 40.0	9000.00	9
from 40.0	10500.00	10

* plus value-added tax (VAT)

Figure 6 License fees for Blue Angel

The International EPD® System

The International EPD® System has a board of directors integrated by a group of EPD stakeholders from different industry sectors and countries. An independent Technical Advisory Board is responsible for reviewing and accepting PCR as well as third-party verifiers. The administrative work is handled by a Secretariat.

There is no European regulation for EPDs. The ISO 14025 is open for any organisation that wants to become a program operator and requires independent third-party verifiers.

The governance of an EPD programme is usually structured as follows:

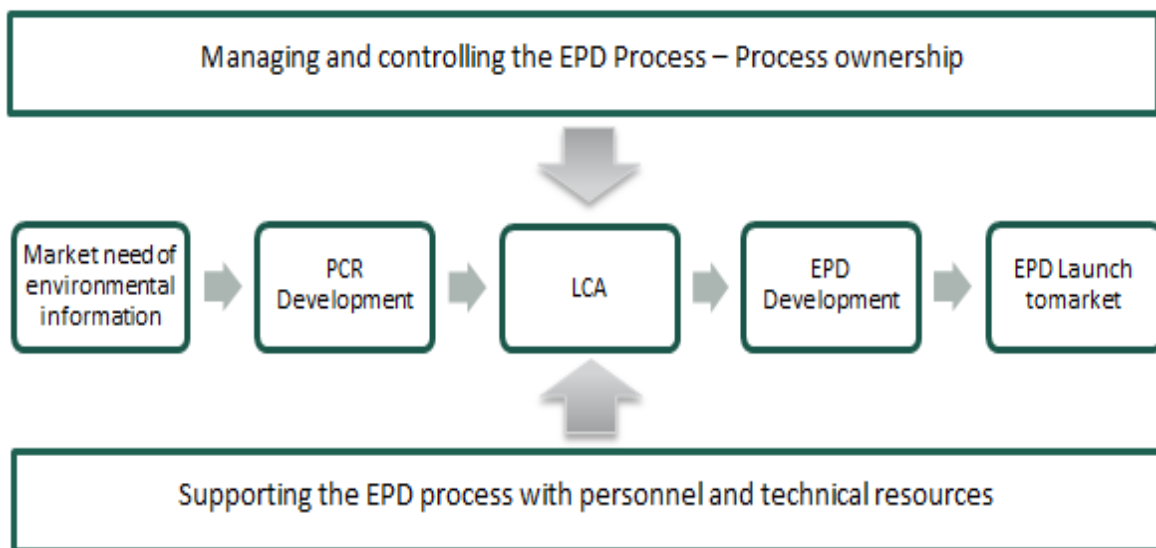


Figure 7 EPD governance structure

The procedure to develop the PCR is similar to the one used in standards development and is set in ISO/TS 14027. When developing PCRs, the application or adaption of existing PCR shall be the preferred option before starting to develop a new one for the same product category. The EPD has clear focus on sustainability issues and key stakeholders. The administration of the International EPD® System is as follows:

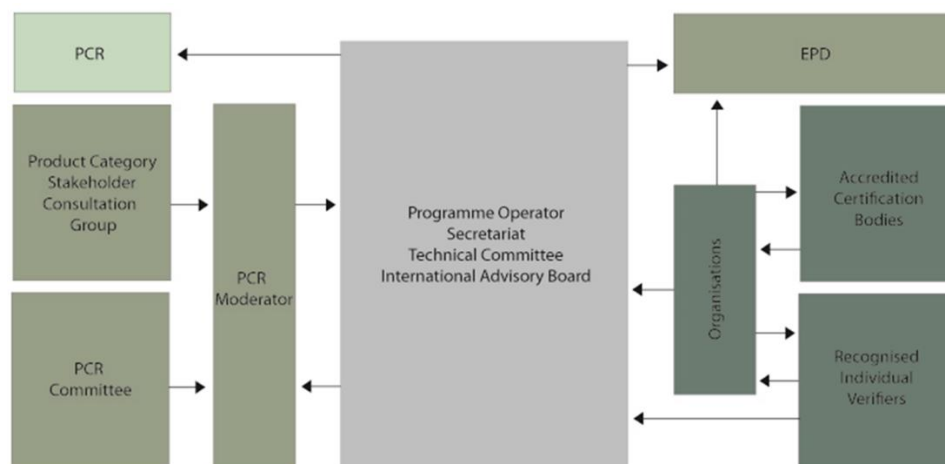


Figure 8 Structure of the organizational set-up of the International EPD® System

It is recommended to use the Polluter Pays Principle (PPP) Allocation Method to define system boundaries between interlinked product systems. The PPP principle was adopted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1972 as an economic

principle for allocating the costs of pollution control. Meaning, a polluter has to bear all the costs of preventing and controlling any pollution that he originates.

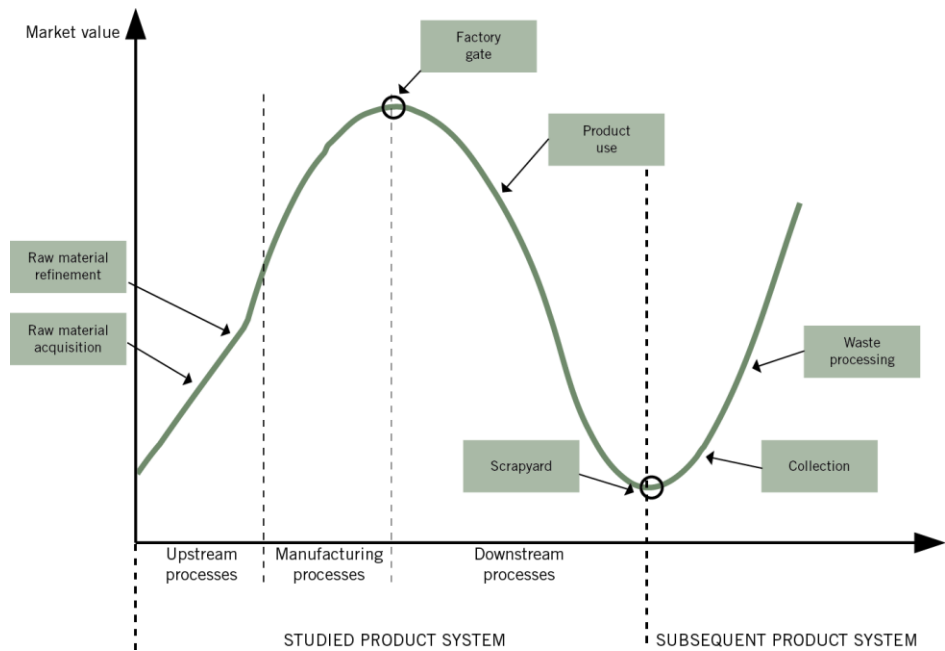


Figure 9 Principle of the PPP allocation rule

The EPD program operator shall establish minimum requirements for the competence of verifiers.

Only approved individual verifiers or accredited certification bodies may carry out verification. Their competence and qualifications shall be checked, approved, and supervised by either the programme operator or by accreditation bodies. Some Certification Bodies carry out EPD verifications provided they have in-house LCA experts.,

The registration cost to obtain an EPD is “usually lower compared to obtaining an Ecolabel licence” as exemplified below:

<div> TOTAL COST FOR ONE EPD FOR A MEDIUM-SIZED COMPANY </div> <div> First year: appr € 3000 </div> <div> Coming years: appr € 1000 </div>	<div> Number of EPDs registered at the same time </div>	
	1	Registration fee €1 500
	2	€2 500
	3	€3 000
	4	€3 200
	5 or more	€750 per EPD

Figure 10 Examples of fees for registered EPDs

The annual fees for EPD are different and adapted to the size of a company with lower fees for smaller companies:

Micro companies (1-10 employees)	€500
Small or medium-sized companies (11-250 employees)	€1,000
Large companies (>250 employees)	€2,500
Industry associations (Sector EPD)	€1,000

ABNT suggest that the validity of the Sello Ambiental de América is as in Brazil, 3 years. ABNT Ecolabel program has external audit and is subject to the assessment of the Brazilian accreditation body (CGcre).

The AAA must define the validity of the seal and linked it to the validity of the certification body.

Session 2: How to develop and revise product criteria and PCR – drivers and processes

Raised questions for this session were the following:

- How is the criteria development process? Who participates in the elaboration of the criteria?
- How the elaboration of type I criteria is decided when there is sustained opposition?
- Is there a panel of experts and how are decisions made of which environmental characteristic will be accepted?
- How they harmonize/establish or determine the environmental requirements of products.
- Which type of criteria do you have in your ecolabel: Threshold; Load Points; Exclusion Lists; Product performance. What are the pros and cons of each of them?
- In type I, is the performance defined to grant the environmental label at 25% above the minimum?
- How are the products requests managed? (Product criteria to be included)
- What is the process to develop new PCRs and what other PCRs are accepted?
- Who can request the environmental label and who receives it?
- How often are the criteria and PCRs reviewed?
- How the EPD system is integrated with Carbon and Water Footprints?

Criteria development process type I

Environmental Alliance of America (AAA)

The process to develop type I criteria will start with the submission of a proposal of any member to the Operations Committee (OC) and Council, once it is approved, the country that presented the proposal will lead the criteria development with the participation of interested parties of all the countries in an AAA Committee. When a draft is ready, countries will start a public

consultation at the same time; comments will be collected and responded by the AAA Committee. When the criteria are ready, it will be presented to the OC for approval and when it is approved, it will be informed to the Council to be published in the AAA website.

Member countries can use their standardization bodies to develop environmental criteria ensuring the balance of interest and the competence of the developers.

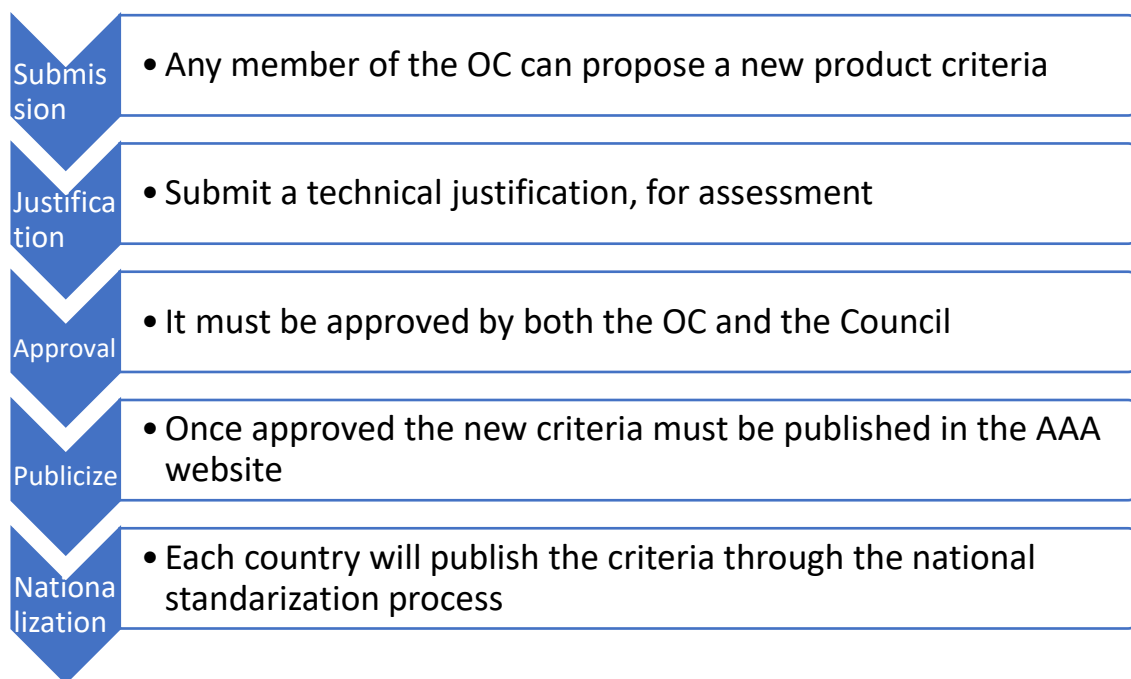


Figure 11 Process for a new PCR

Blue Angel

Anyone can submit a proposal for a new product environmental criterion. The process starts when an environmental issue has been identified. The Environmental Jury decides if an ecolabel should be developed to solve this issue. Afterwards, the Environmental Agency works on developing new criteria focusing on the life cycle of the product. External researches can support this process.

The requirements of the ecolabel shall influence the product design and in some cases productions steps

Therefore, different requirements are defined:

- Threshold values
- Exclusion lists
- Positive lists
- Production standards (like BREFs)
- Material from defined (certified) sources (like wood with FSC or PEFC)

It is very helpful to use existing assessment schemes and adapt them for the purpose of ecolabel, e.g. Substance classification and regulation.

All criteria and proofs are discussed within stakeholder consultations

Different types of proofs are used in the Blue Angel, depending on the importance of the criteria for the reliability of the product group. Self-declarations of producers; Test reports from Laboratories and/or Certificates of other schemes.

EU Ecolabel

In the case of the EU Ecolabel, member states, competent bodies and other stakeholders may propose to the European Commission to revise or develop the criteria. For the development of the criteria they take into consideration the life cycle of the product or service



Figure 12 Life cycle assessment approach for Nordic Swan and EU Ecolabel

The development/revision process takes at least 2 years, it includes several consultations and all relevant stakeholders are welcome to participate. The criteria are revised every 5 years on average.

The EU Ecolabel criteria are different per each product group and they include:

- Thresholds
- Exclusion lists
- Exclusion based on chemical classification of substances
- Environmental management system (for services)
- Use of EU Ecolabel products (for services)
- Fitness for use criteria to ensure product performance.
- Assessment and verification requirements for each criterion

EU Ecolabel is a pass-fail system: to get the label an applicant has to comply with all criteria. Criteria shall be based on the best products available on the market in terms of environmental performance throughout their life cycle and they should correspond indicatively to the best 10-20% of the products available on the market in terms of environmental performance.

To start the development of a product environmental criteria, select the right product group by analysing how comprehensive is the environmental strain (problem), what possible environmental gains are anticipated and the possibility of the ecolabel to make a difference

Nordic Swan

The Nordic Swan department of product development drafts the criteria proposal in close contact with:

- Industry
- Research institutions
- Test institutions
- Retailers
- Consumer- and environment NGO's
- Brand owners

The draft criteria proposal for Nordic Swan is published on the websites in all 5 countries and sent out on an official review to all stakeholders, especially to the industry. All comments are evaluated and commented in a document sent out to everybody who has sent their comments

A final draft after the public review is discussed in the national boards where stakeholders are represented at Nordic level - by the managing directors together with the Nordic coordinator. The Nordic Ecolabelling Board adopts the criteria and it is published on their websites.

Criteria development process type III

Environmental Alliance of America (AAA)

The AAA's process to develop PCRs starts with the submission of a proposal of any member to the Operations Committee (OC) and Council, once it is approved, the country that presented the proposal will lead the PCR development with the participation of interested parties of all the countries in an AAA Committee. The leading country shall carry out a justification and prioritization of existing international PCR and propose a review panel. When a draft is ready, countries will start a public consultation at the same time; comments will be collected and responded by the AAA Committee. When the PCR is approved by this Committee by consensus, will be sent to the review panel, address any comment received and presented to the OC for approval and when it is approved, it will be informed to the Council to be published in the AAA website.

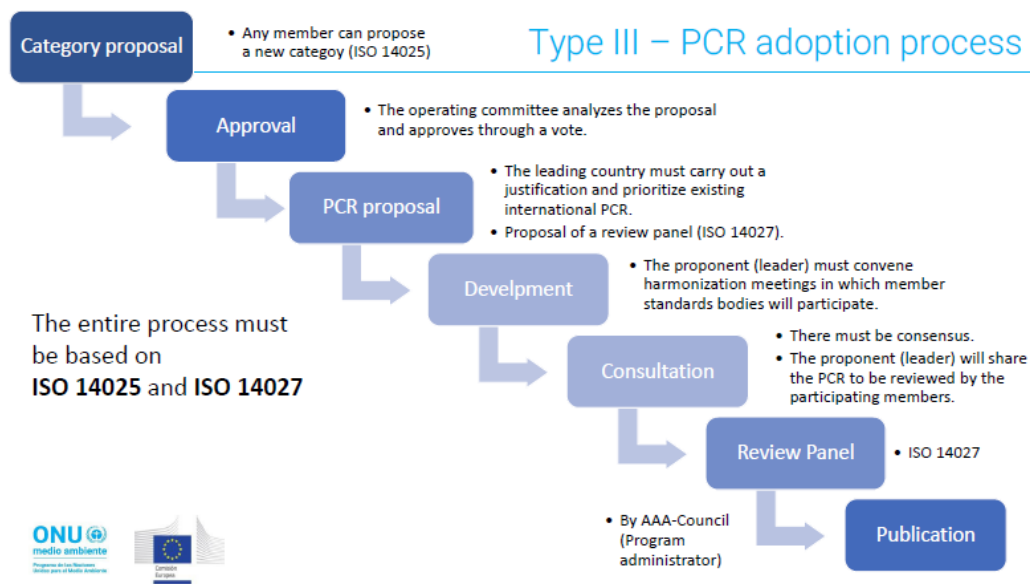


Figure 13 PCR Adoption process for type III of the AAA

The International EPD® System

EPDs are based on ISO 14025 and LCAs according to ISO 14040/44.

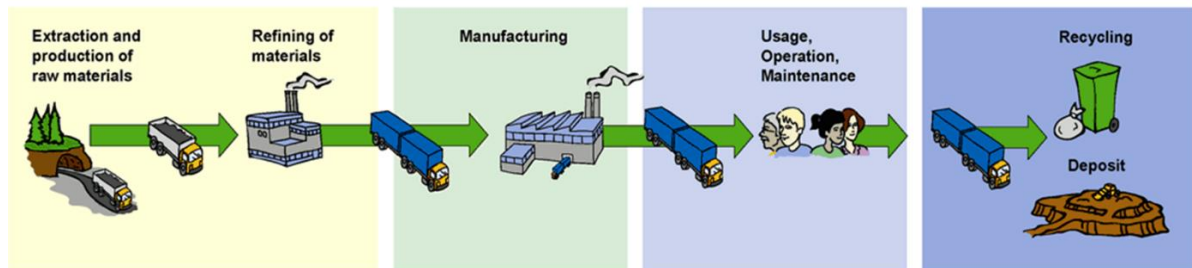


Figure 14 Life cycle stages presented in an EPD – from cradle to grave

For specific product groups and applications (mainly in the building sector), the full life cycle as illustrated above does not have to be considered, instead a so-called cradle to gate-approach can be used. An often-debated issue is which the most suitable product classification scheme to use for a proper identification of products category. Usually the UN CPC classification scheme is the one recommended to use.

EPDs are a communication tool that enables comparisons to be made between the environmental performance of separate products in the same product category, as stated in the 14025.

EPD can be used as a tool for green or sustainable public procurement

All EPD programme operators shall make their PCRs publicly available and publish complete information of the PCRs (their intent and how to make use of it) in order to reduce the risk for misuse or misinterpretation of the PCR rules.

To avoid proliferation of PCRs on the market when sharing PCRs between EPD programme operators, a new ISO standard is currently developed referred to as ISO/TS 14029 “Mutual Recognition between EPD programme operators”.

The PCR development process is an open staged approach including stakeholders and interested parties and administrated by an EPD programme operator as follows:

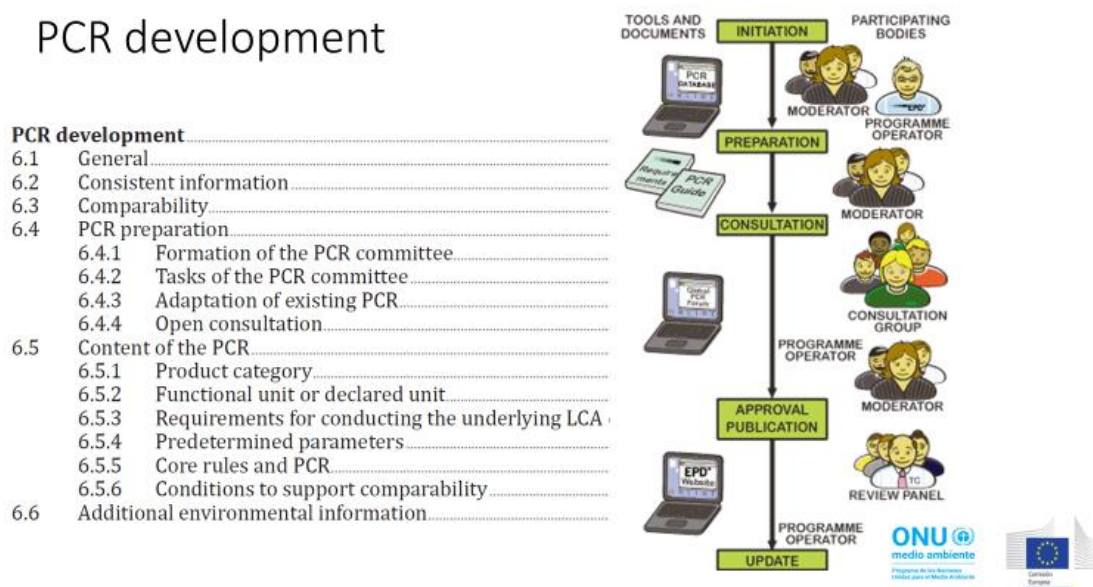


Figure 15 PCR development process

Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN)

GEN is a non-profit network of Type 1 ecolabels founded in 1994¹⁰.

Objectives:

- Serve our members, other ecolabelling programs and the public by promoting and developing ecolabelling of products and services
- Foster cooperation, information exchange, and harmonization among member ecolabelling programs
- Facilitate access to information about ecolabelling standards globally
- Participate in international organisations to promote ecolabelling
- Encourage demand for, and supply of, more environmentally preferable products and services



¹⁰ <https://globalecolabelling.net/>

GEN Members operate with lifecycle-based criteria, international standards and with the dissemination of the information to the public.

In a Survey in 2018 was found that under the Global Ecolabeling Network there are:

- 1,445 valid standards
- 593,000 certified products & services
- 16,320 participating companies

For GEN members the Standard criteria must:

- Be developed in a transparent process open to the public
- Address multiple key environmental and health impacts over the product life cycle
- Be attainable, verifiable and measurable
- Consider the performance of the product
- Be published and available for inspection by anyone
- Be updated regularly to represent environmental leadership

Certification must:

- Be voluntary, not regulatory
- Be open and equitably applied to all potential applicants
- Be awarded by an independent and unbiased third party

GEN has 3 levels of membership:



- Affiliate members are organisations that support ecolabelling and sustainable development.



- Associate members operate a robust labelling program, with standards and certified products, that is working toward meeting ISO 14024 guidelines.



- Associate members that have completed a GENICES review qualify for full membership of GEN.

GEN has a Technical Assistance Program and promotes members worldwide. The members of GEN are from all over the world:

Australia: Good Environmental Choice Australia	Kazakhstan: International Academy of Ecology of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Brazil: Associacao Brasileira de Normas Tecnicas	Korea: Korea Environmental Industry and Technology Institute
China (CEC): China Environmental United Certification Center	Malaysia: SIRIM QAS International Sdn Bhd
China (CQC): China Quality Certification Centre (CQC)	New Zealand: The New Zealand Ecolabelling Trust
Chinese Taipei: Environment and Development Foundation	Nordic Countries: Nordic Ecolabelling Board
European Union: European Commission	North America: UL Environment
Germany: German Federal Environment Agency	North America (U.S.A): Green Seal Inc.
Germany (TUV): TÜV Rheinland	Philippines: Philippine Center for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development (PCEPSD)
Hong Kong: Green Council (GC)	Russia: Ecological Union
India: Confederation of Indian Industry	Singapore: Singapore Environment Council
Indonesia: Ministry of Environment	Sweden: (SSNC) The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation
Israel: The Standards Institution of Israel	Sweden: TCO Development
Japan: Japan Environment Association (JEA)	Thailand: Thailand Environment Institute
	Ukraine: All Ukrainian NGO Living Planet

Figure 16 Global Ecolabelling Network members

Session 3: Criteria harmonization and mutual recognition agreements

Raised questions for this session were the following:

- What is the importance of criteria harmonization?
- Is it possible to have equivalency or mutual recognition agreements? How is it done?
- How does a country who has a national label and is member of a regional label adapt its processes (criteria development, awarding of label(s) to products, etc.)? How does a regional label recognize national labels?
- Is it possible to have equivalency or mutual recognition agreements? How is it done?
- Why MRAs are needed in EPD and why is considered different type I and type III MRAs.
- How is the and who represent the label globally and how and with whom are the MRAs carried out?
- Which Quality Infrastructure is required to recognize environmental products or labels outside member countries?



Blue Angel

It is advisable that criteria are harmonized with other international ecolabels in order for the customer to have the documentation ready.

Blue Angel has a nonofficial cooperation with Japan, China among other countries but is an exchange of experience and harmonization of the criteria to allow one label to accept and recognize the other.

The process to set up an agreement between ecolabel schemes can be long and challenging. There are several questions that normally raised such as:

- Who decides on the criteria documents?
- Which label's criteria is better?
- How changes can be made, or the criteria improved?
- How can innovation happen?
- Can partial harmonization be considered? (not the same, but same direction)

It is always important to take into consideration the market demands on the region. The trust in each other's certification quality is essential.

When one label has been established long before the other is harder to harmonize or give up your work to adjust to the others, i.e. EU ecolabel.

It is recommended to have a label with a big geographic scope for stronger cooperation in the region, join criteria development process and identical proofs for the criteria instead of national labels

It is recommended that the criteria is established jointly since the beginning, instead of a country developing it and submitting for approval of other countries.

Nordic Swan and EU Ecolabel

It is common that each country wants to manage their own scheme, claiming that it is preferred to follow their own structures and processes.

EU ecolabel and Nordic Swan have developed common criteria and is regarded equivalent by public procurement, for instance, both international ecolabels have the same focus on energy efficiency and chemical use.

Cooperation is very important, if the criteria of other labels is as strict or stricter as your own, is easier to accept it but it will depend on the different perspectives, scopes and markets within the regions.

The Nordic Swan representative mentioned that “There is willingness to promote harmonization, but the EU like to lead and for their criteria to be taken as the established one, not the other way around”.

To develop EU Ecolabel criteria, they always take into account existing criteria developed in officially recognized ecolabelling schemes in the Member States.

The EU Ecolabel can use a shorter procedure to develop criteria accepting the criteria from other EN ISO 14024 type I ecolabelling schemes. Nevertheless, this procedure has never been used until now).

There are too many ecolabels in EU, that is why there was an idea to restrict the amount of symbols but was not accepted since most countries want a national ecolabel, as well as the EU ecolabel. Therefore, was decided to develop explanatory documents to show the difference between the criteria of other ecolabels, i.e. textiles.

The International EPD® System

ISO 14025 states that harmonisation of PCRs should be encouraged between EPD programmes to meet the principle of comparability. This should be based on Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA) of rules with respect to PCR development, review and verification procedures.

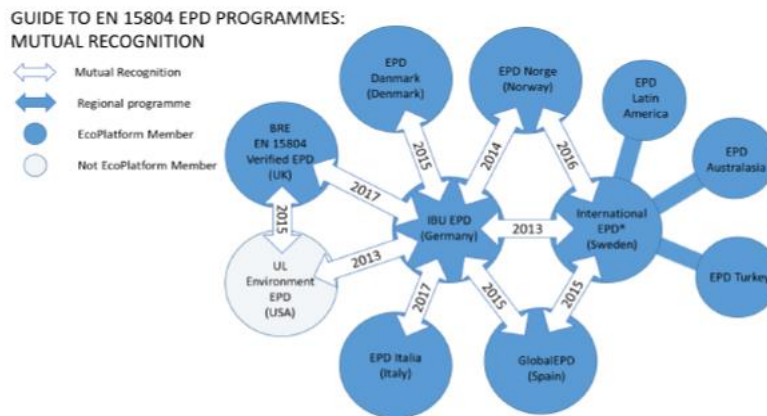


Figure 17 Outline of existing MRAs among EPD programme operators in ECO Platform

The International EPD® System is a member of ECO Platform – a business initiative including all EPD programmes in EU. ECO Platform works to develop verified environmental information of construction products, particularly focusing on EPDs. ECO Platform also includes LCA practitioners, industrial associations and other relevant stakeholders work to guarantee a coherent framework for EPD¹¹.

Many of the members of ECO Platform have settled and signed MRAs as illustrated above. It started as an informal way to show the market there was cooperation between EPD programme operators and this trend of cooperation has increased.

Some MRAs include the possibility for “dual registrations”, i.e. the possibility to use both EPD programmes logos on the EPDs. However, this has created some confusion on the market, so guidelines are needed to be established to avoid miscommunication. As mentioned above a new ISO standard on MRA is currently being developed.

An MRA is recommended between EPD programme operators due to the need of constant updates and revisions of the PCRs.

An MRA will help avoid the misuse of EPD information. From a market point of view, cooperation is very important, to know how to interpret the data of PCRs and EPDs.

The following steps should be included to establish MRA:

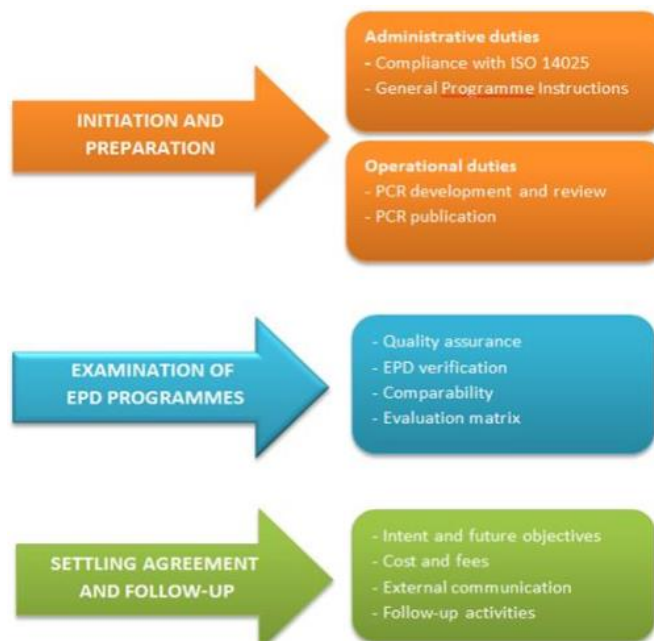


Figure 18 Recommended steps to achieve MRA

Footprints and EPDs are very similar, therefore both systems will gain from establishing MRA.

¹¹ <https://www.eco-platform.org/>

Global Ecolabeling Network

GEN has an Internationally Coordinated Ecolabelling System (GENICES) that is a peer review process for mutual trust and confidence. From the 29 GEN members, 24 achieved GENICES and 5 are in the process or not applied.

There are 4 types of compliance exchanges that members do:

- Members receive test reports from other members to demonstrate compliance with requirements,
- Members receive audit reports from other members to avoid duplication of audits.
- Members exchange criteria of conformity assessment, which is the majority of the collaboration among GEN members, and
- Full mutual recognition.

This type of exchanges saves a lot of time and money for the producers.

Success cases have been those that starts working together on the development of the criteria, rather than trying to harmonize what is already established.

Session 4: Quality management and standard procedures for a Type I and Type III programs

Raised questions for this session were the following:

- What management system is used internally and which operation procedures they have?
- How do you ensure that the credibility of the labelling scheme is kept?
- How do you ensure credibility of a regional program?
- How do you deal with conflict of interest? Are there mechanisms put in place to prevent/mitigate it?
- How is the transparency of the programme assured?
- Do you have mechanisms to protect the ecolabel against fraudulent licenses?
- What happens when a product stops complying with the criteria and already displays the ecolabel?

EU Ecolabel and Nordic Swan

The standards use by both programs are:

- ISO 14025 Ecolabel Schemes Type I. Multi-criteria ecolabel based on life cycle considerations
- ISO 17065 Product certification. Requirements to certification bodies that perform conformity assessments of products

The EU Ecolabel Regulation sets the management system and operation procedures. The Competent Bodies (CBs) are responsible to verify on regular basis that the product complies with the criteria.

A complaint against a product misusing the label can be filed by anyone to the European Commission.

Nordic Swam has the following documents for its operation:

- ✓ Procedure on criteria development
- ✓ Procedure on application assessment
- ✓ Nordic Database on licensees and ecolabelled products
- ✓ Procedure on handling of misuse of the logotype
- ✓ Procedure on our reaction against fraud
- ✓ Procedure for handling of interpretation of criteria text
- ✓ Common database on chemicals and building materials

And the following one for their Quality Management

- ✓ Internal procedures to ensure quality in each step
- ✓ Internal procedures on correcting non-compliance
- ✓ Internal procedures on complaints
- ✓ Internal procedures on qualifications of personnel

The Nordic Ecolabel has an on-going project to digitalize the criteria development and the application verification. This will have an increase in the efficiency and reduce the time spent in the development and assessment process. Besides, the customer will have a better and quick access to the product's information.

Blue Angel

To ensure credibility for type I ecolabel the following must be considered: Consult all the stakeholders, an independent body must have the final decision on criteria (Environmental Jury), publication of criteria online, transparent process and the criteria must be updated regularly.

If the product violates the criteria it must stop the use of the label immediately, but if the criteria is updated or the company doesn't want to renew the use of the label, there must be a transition period to take the products with the label off the market.

The International EPD® System

The International EPD® System, as well as all other EPD programmes, works for communicating the environmental performance of products based on the identification and quantification of the significant environmental aspects for well-known global environmental problems.

All EPDs are based on LCA and the results can be used for both internal and external use. The internal use, mainly for product development, has full flexibility regarding administrative rules and no third-party verification is needed. In contrast, the external use, mostly for market communication, has to comply with common administrative rules, follow existing PCRs and needs an independent third-party verification.

The International EPD® system is working on the digitalisation of the PCR and EPD information to make them machine-readable for facilitating the exchange of relevant and quality-assured data and reduce the handling time of the documents^{12,13}. Digitalised environmental information can easily be used in corporate internal software systems.

Product Environmental Footprint (PEF)

The main motivation behind the development of the PEF was to counter the proliferation of ecolabels in the world and to provide a tool suitable for policy making. A method was needed that produces reliable, reproducible, comparable and verifiable information, that harmonises approaches and simplifies procedures. The method was published as an annex to the recommendation for a Single Market for Green Products in 2013¹⁴

The 2013-2018 Environmental Footprint (EF) pilot phase had three main objectives:

- Test the process for developing product- and sector-specific rules (Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules – PEFCRs, and Organisation Environmental Footprint Sector Rules – OEFSRs);
- Test different approaches to verification;
- Test communication vehicles for communicating life cycle environmental performance to business partners, consumers and other company stakeholders.

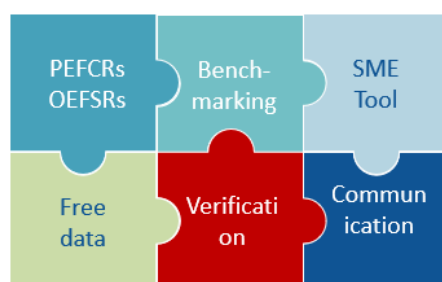


Figure 19 Pilot phase of the PEF

267 Stakeholders around the world participated actively in the development of the 23 active PEFCRs and OEFSRs of the pilot phase (members of the Technical Secretariats) and 2219 individual stakeholders followed the process.

The current status of the PEFCRs and OEFSRs of the pilot phase is:

¹² <https://www.environdec.com/What-is-an-EPD/Different-types-of-EPD/Machine-Readable-EPD/>

¹³ <https://data.environdec.com/>

¹⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/ef_pilots.htm



Figure 20 Current status of environmental footprints pilots

Elements bringing harmonisation and simplification were mentioned. PEF and PEFCRs are based on the materiality principle: PEFCRs identify the processes, impact categories and life cycle stages that drive the environmental performance of a product and calibrate the ambition of the analysis according to this principle, including data quality requirements.

During the pilot phase, experts participating in the work helped identify common approaches for several cross-cutting issues, including modelling electricity, packaging, transport and agriculture.

PEFCRs define which are the company-specific data that have to be gathered by users and defines the secondary datasets that have to be used where allowed. These approximately 8,000 secondary datasets are available for free to users of PEFCRs and OEFSRs developed during the pilot phase.

A new call for volunteers was open to develop new PEFCRs and OEFSRs. Work on PEF will start on apparel, cut flowers and potted plants; flexible packaging; synthetic turf and marine.

95% of European consumers say that buying green is the right thing to do.

The President-elect of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen proposes a European Green Deal which will be developed in the following 5 years. Some of the highlights of the Deal include:

1. Europe is aiming to be the first climate-neutral continent. (European Climate Law)
2. Europe to be the world leader in circular economy and clean technologies. (new Circular Economy Action Plan)
3. Europe will support farmers with a new 'Farm to Fork Strategy' on sustainable food along the whole value chain.
4. Europe will move towards a zero-pollution ambition.

5. European new [trade] agreements will have a dedicated sustainable-development chapter and the highest standards of climate, environmental and labour protection, with a zero-tolerance policy on child labour.

Policy options for the use of the PEF and OEF method are developed in this context.:

- Option 1: “Business as usual” (update of the Recommendation)
- Option 2: Continued support to the implementation of the EF methods (voluntary scheme managed by the European Commission)
- Option 3: Licensing of the right to use PEF and OEF (voluntary scheme managed by an interested 3rd party)
- Option 4: Integration of the methods in existing policies (e.g. EU Ecolabel, Green Public Procurement, the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme)
- Option 5: New instrument on specific green claims (no obligation to make green claims, but relevant green claims have to be substantiated via a PEF study)

Product Environmental Footprint of Coffee

When the European Commission announced the Environmental Footprint (EF) pilot phase and one of the pilot products was coffee, Costa Rica started working on their coffee's life cycle assessment and training coffee producers on LCA in order to calculate their environmental footprint. It was the first coffee LCA in the region.

The assessment analysed the cultivation of the coffee, processing, distribution, roasting, consumption and end of life. The first three stages with a better quality of data, than the rest, since it was assumed for the European consumption patterns.

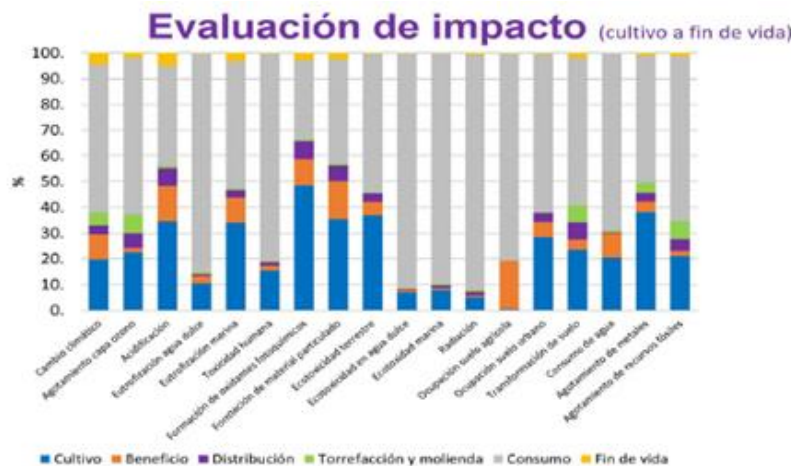


Figure 21 LCA's contribution analysis

The graph shows that the Consumption stage has the highest impact of the LCA, followed by the Cultivation.

A Latin American and Caribbean coffee Environmental Footprint Network was created and now 14 countries are members. At the moment, Colombia, Honduras, Perú and Brazil have a coffee's LCA and the network is in the process to develop a common proposal for PEF.

As a result, a Costa Rican coffee producer obtained a 49% overprice in an international bid after certifying the carbon footprint of their product.

How to use ecolabels as a tool in Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP)

UNEP

Sustainable Public Procurement is a tool that directly contributes to the SDG 12. The One Planet Network SPP programme is a voluntary global multi-stakeholder partnership in which various parties – governmental, non-governmental, public and private, agree to work together in a systematic way with the aim to promote and accelerate the implementation of sustainable public procurement globally as a way to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Goals of the project:

- Stimulate the demand and supply of sustainable products
- Provide capacity development and technical assistance on the development and implementation of SPP & EL policies
- Promote the use of ecolabelling and achieve synergies with SPP

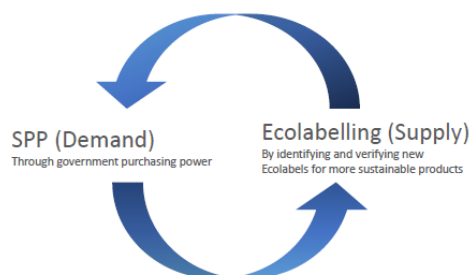


Figure 22 SPPEL goals

Countries with established ecolabelling programs were defined as Core Countries (Brazil, Colombia and Vietnam) combining the implementation of SPP and Ecolabeling activities:

1. The product selection for SPP synchronized with the ecolabels' coverage of products or with a process of criteria development coordinated with eco labelling stakeholders
2. Improve the effectiveness of existing national eco labelling programmes: best practices of internationally recognized labelling schemes
3. Capacity building and technical assistance to selected companies (especially SMEs): towards the improvement of their production process and meeting the criteria of ecolabels and SPP.

Nordic Swam

There is a Nordic Network for ecolabelled purchasing that offer Guidance and evaluation, seminars, newsletter, press, media, reports and price for the best buyer of the year.

When Nordic Swam started each producer had to bring to the buyer their evidences for environmental compliances, nowadays producer bring certification to recognized ecolabels such as PEFC, FSC, FRAIRTRADE, Blue Angel, EU Ecolabel and Nordic Swam and are accepted. This is now easier for both sides, buyers and producers.

Some examples of success of the Nordic Swam can be found at hotels where Scandic Hotels save energy equivalent to 4,000 homes and laundries where Nor Textile reduces CO₂ emissions corresponding to 4,500 cars per year.

Nordic Swan and EU Ecolabel comments that combining Ecolabelling with SPP simplifies and makes more efficient the buying process. This is because the buyer doesn't have to develop their own environmental requirements and receives a third-party environmental guarantee.

Session 5: Strengthening certification and verification process

The questions for this session are the following:

- Who awards the label?
- How the quality infrastructure gives credibility to the programs.
- How the verification program is handled and what is required to the certification and verification bodies?
- Are the certification and verification bodies members of the program? Do they pay fees to be part of the program?
- How are the ABs given the accreditation? By product, group of products, categories, types?
- What types of tests and declarations do you use for products to gain certification, and what are the testing procedures?
- What is the scope of the product evaluation? Raw material included? If raw material is from other country, the evaluation is done in the foreign country?

EU Ecolabel

In the EU, the competent bodies are designated by the states of the European Economic Area and they should be independent and impartial organisations. The CBs assess the applications and awards the EU Ecolabel that meet their criteria. They all meet 3 times per year in a Forum to exchange experiences and ensure a consistent implementation of the scheme.

Nordic Swan

The applicant and the assigned assessment officer work together to get the license approved. Documentation is assessed, feedback given and if considered necessary an audit to the production site is carried out.

Nordic Swan makes evaluation of raw materials on site, for instance for textiles, factories, where washing, dyeing, etc. are visited and evaluation is carried out. A lot of information must be confirmed on site.

There are products where Self-declaration is accepted as chemicals from the manufacturers, they gather the information from their suppliers of raw materials. There are internal databases for approved or banned raw materials. Sometimes hazardous chemicals are excluded from the database, because the inclusion has to be approved by the manufacturer.

Test results should be from accredited laboratories, according to ISO 17025.

Blue Angel

Blue Angel has only one certification body and its quality management system based on ISO 9001 is under development.

All the licensed products are published on-line. The products should be correctly identified and easily understood by the consumer.

The International EPD® System

The International EPD® system has a number of strict requirements to comply with for review and acceptance of PCR and EPDs as well as for required competence requirements for verifiers as listed in ISO 14025. In accordance with general programme instructions (GPI) EPD programme operators must demonstrate that PCRs have been developed in accordance with the ISO 14040 series on LCA, and that they give a description of the significant environmental aspects of the product with the LCA-based data as described in the EPD.

After the review, there must be an independent verification of the LCA data and EPD, this should confirm whether the information given reflects accurately in the documents on which the declaration is based, this information should be valid and scientifically sound.

The independent verifiers shall not have been involved in the execution of the LCA or the development of the declaration and shall not have conflicts of interest resulting from their position in the organisation.

EPDs have to be developed with strict requirements for LCA and verification as ISO 14025 has a focus on professional B2B-communication, mainly to be used for public procurement. In this context EPDs often have to comply with specific procurement legislation and be relevant and scientifically sound to enable comparisons between products to be made without being questioned from a legal point of view.

ABNT

ABNT presented their certification of agro-products against the PE-399-Ecolabel procedure for agricultural products developed in July 2017. The certification cycle is 3 years.

The Procedure establishes the requirements that “agricultural products” available in the Brazilian market must meet to obtain the license for use of the ABNT Environmental Quality Mark (ABNT Ecolabel).

The Assessment Process includes a Self-evaluation and a certification audit.

The criteria set out 5 possible levels of framing and according to the level achieved in each criteria a grade will be assigned. A minimum grade for each criteria are established and a grand total has to comply with an approval criteria. The product shall demonstrate compliance and achievements to the minimum and approval criteria to receive the certification and authorization to use the ABNT Ecolabel.

Session 6: Outreach and communication with public and private sectors and consumers – forms of promotion with focus on low budgeting techniques

Raised questions for this session were the following:

- How is the program marketed and which technology is used?
- How they position the seal on the market?
- How national or regional labels coexists with the EU ecolabel? How do they communicate their relationship to consumers and private sector?
- For EPD System, how organizations are giving clarity when preparing their environmental declarations?
- What communication strategies can be used to position the ecolabel and to promote it to the general public (including segments, e.g. in schools, through celebrities, etc.)?
- How do you engage the license holders in promoting the ecolabel? Is there a common approach?
- What is the average cost spent on outreach and communication (percentage of whole budget of the label)?
- How do you communicate the benefits of the ecolabel to the private sector to raise their interest to be certified?
- Which kind of partnerships help in promoting an ecolabel?

Nordic Swan

Nordic Swan's mission is to make easier to choose the best environmental option. 92% of Norwegians are acquainted with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel.

Target groups:

- Business to consumers (B2C). By buying ecolabelled products, consumers know they are helping to protect the environment.
- Business to business (B2B/B2G). By choosing the ecolabelled option for procurement, the businesses save time and money in evaluating the supplier's requirements. And it enhances the credibility of the company's environmental work.

The ecolabel should advise their own costumers how to communicate to their consumers their efforts to protect the environment and how to make their information public. They are the best publicity.

Provide your customers with Unique Selling Points (USPs), to communicate sustainability with credibility.

Marketing of the ecolabels

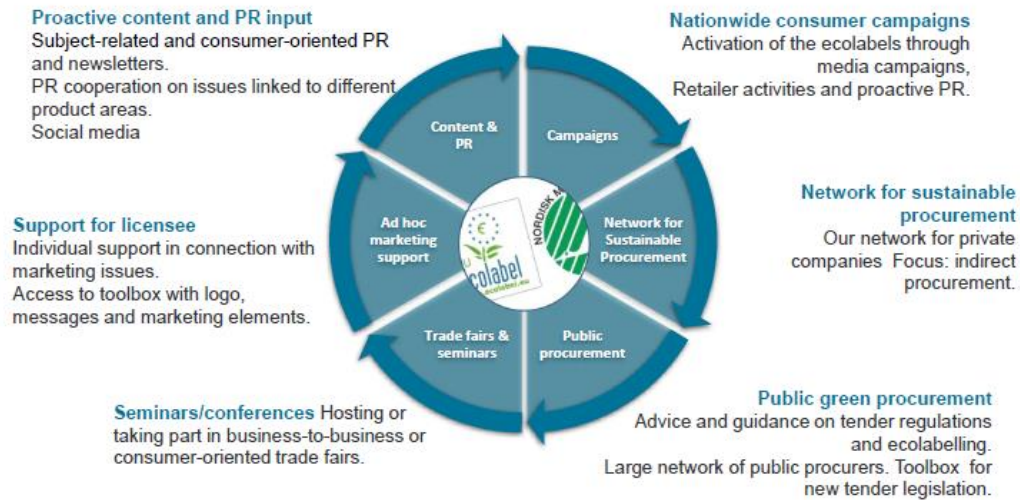


Figure 23 Marketing strategies of the Nordic Swan and EU Ecolabel

Marketing Strategies: Publicity campaigns alongside with other ecolabels (FSC, Fairtrade, etc), Social Media Use, Website, Network for ecolabelled purchasing (Meeting of procurers and providers), Advertising campaigns (Posters, ads in print, etc).

Take advantage of the ecolabel user's communication media to promote your ecolabel.

10% of the budget is used on marketing and communication.

Blue Angel

Target groups:

- Consumer and public procurement (orientation in purchase)
- Companies (certification)
- Multiplicators (support the ecolabel)

25% of the license fees goes to public relations.

Marketing strategies: Public figures to represent the label, campaigns for specific occasions (back to school, Christmas, etc.) or products, Face to Face communication at fairs, website and social media, competitions and prizes around festivities, focus publicity for specific products which public can relate to the ecolabel.



Figure 24 Communication campaign by the Blue Angel

GEN recommendations

- Make a translation of the environmental criteria of the products into colloquial language for each country.
- Look for a celebrity as a seal ambassador
- Use the guides for Green / Sustainable Public Procurement
- It is important that when the same image is used by all countries, find who are you speaking to so that everyone receives the correct information.
- The clarity of the message is essential and its Unique Selling Points (Bullet points or items)
- Your brand personality will help you keep your promises.
- Publish the success stories
- Start with 10% and then go up to 25% of budget for communication.
- Make a blog
- Sponsor persons to help talk about the brand.
- Advertisements with all the licensed products.
- For people who do not know about technicalities but know communication and marketing, give them the green attributes of the product for publicity. Give 5 or 6 bullet points for companies to include on their Sustainability Reports.
- For the AAA logo recommends enlarge the continent figure and close the circle. She offers to give ideas if required.

UNEP

UNEP presented the Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information that aims to set a common ground for effective product sustainability information to consumers¹⁵. The Guidelines build on recognized, well-established national, regional and sectoral guidance. They were developed in an international consensus-finding process under the 10YFP Consumer Information Programme for Sustainable Consumption and Production (CI-SCP)

The document includes a comprehensive set of high-level principles for users to follow, and guidance on how to apply them. They cover fundamental and aspirational approaches and can be applied in developed and developing countries, and by companies of all sizes.

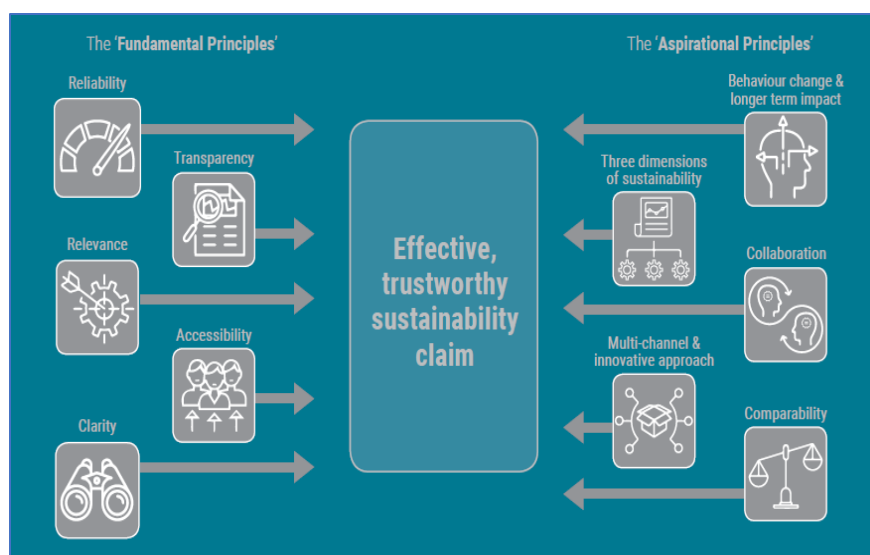


Figure 25 The ten principles for Providing Product Sustainability Information

The target audience of the Guidelines are providers of information, who can apply the Guidelines for the development of their product claims, as well as public and private organizations that develop or regulate product sustainability information schemes. Finally, the Guidelines also provide a tool to those that act as 'watchdogs', checking the quality of existing claims.

After the successful launch of the Guidelines, the One Planet network Consumer Information Programme embarked on an ambitious road-testing process to demonstrate the practical application of the Guidelines' ten principles¹⁶ through different case studies from companies and standard-setters.

¹⁵ <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/resource/guidelines-providing-product-sustainability-information>

¹⁶ https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/sites/default/files/ready_to_drive_the_market.pdf

National Quality Infrastructure

In order to build confidence and trust in the Environmental Alliance of America, it was mentioned in different sessions, that the program will be supported by the accredited National Quality Infrastructure of the member countries.

Either for type I, type III or footprints, if test results are required, the results shall come from testing laboratories accredited against ISO 17025 by their national Accreditation Body which has to be signatory of the ILAC MRA.

If validation/verification of environmental information or certification is required, the body has to be accredited against ISO 17029, plus ISO 14065 and if the footprint shall be communicated the certification body shall be accredited against ISO 17065 plus 14020 series. As well, the national Accreditation Body has to be signatory of the IAF MLA.

Of course, the ISO standards for LCA, Critical review, water footprint and carbon footprint of products will be used.

Next steps

At the end of the 3 days' workshop several next steps were identified based on the inputs and discussion generated in the different sessions:

- The project will continue strengthening the QI.
- Contact the African Ecolabel Program to learn about their experience (via webinar)
- Organize a follow up webinar to show the progress made by the AAA
- Explore the option of a new event next year with the same group to follow up the AAA progress
- Support communication activities to increase the visibility of the AAA. UNEP will seek for inputs with the AAA council (ideas, requirements, information)
- Webinar in Spanish to promote the guidelines for sustainability consumption
- Engage with other countries in the region to join the AAA
- Report the progress of the AAA at the Intersessional meeting of the Regional Forum of Ministers of Environment (November 2019, Barbados)
- Provide technical assistance and capacity building to Colombia Mexico and Costa Rica to strength their ecolabeling infrastructure
- Develop harmonized criteria for 2 product categories: Coffee and Paper

Annex 1 – Agenda

Regional Workshop Agenda

Exchanging Knowledge on Environmental Labels and Declarations

September 11-13, 2019

Day 1, Wednesday Sept 11th		
Time	Session	Responsible
9:00-9:15	Welcome remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alfonso Guati Rojo, Director General de Normas, Secretaría de Economía Paolo Caridi, Head of Trade Section, Delegation of the European Union to Mexico Adriana Zacarías, Regional Coordinator Resource Efficiency & Sustainable Consumption and Production, UNEP 	Secretary of Economy Mexico EU Delegation Mexico UNEP
9:15-9:30	Round of introductions	All participants
9:30 -9:50	Introduction to the project “Driving sustainable consumption in Latin America with better product information and design”	Ignacio Sanchez, UNEP
9:50-10:30	Environmental Alliance of America. Vision and Strategy of the regional ecolabel	Luis Rodriguez, MINAE
10:30-11:00	Coffee Break	
11:00-11:45	EU Circular Economy Tools	Maria Buzdugan, Delegation of the European Union to Mexico
11:45- 13:00	Ecolabel and Environmental Product Declarations programs. Overview of ecolabel schemes and lessons learnt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU Eco-label Nordic Swan Ecolabel Blue Angel ABNT Eco-label EPD System 	Marianne Burum Eskeland Johanna Wurbs Guy Ladvoat Sven-Olof Ryding
13:00-14:00	Lunch	
14:00-16:00	Discussion Session 1: Governance, administrative and financial mechanisms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentations 	Moderator: Adriana Zacarías, UNEP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Environmental Alliance of America ○ Nordic Swan Ecolabel ○ EPD System • Comments: Blue Angel, ABNT • Discussion 	
16:00-16:15	Coffee break	
16:15 -17:00	Continuation of Discussion Session 1: Governance, administrative and financial mechanisms of a regional ecolabel	Moderator: Adriana Zacarias, UNEP

Day 2, Thursday Sept 12th		
Time	Session	Responsible
9:00- 10:30	<p>Discussion Session 2: How to develop and revise product criteria and Product Category Rules - drivers and processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations Type I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Environmental Alliance of America ○ EU Ecolabel ○ Blue Angel • Comments: Nordic Swan, Blue Angel • Discussion 	Moderator: Beatriz Martins Carneiro, UNEP
10:30 -10:45	Coffee Break	
10:45-12:00	<p>Continuation of Discussion Session 2: How to develop and revise product criteria and Product Category Rules - drivers and processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations Type III <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Environmental Alliance of America ○ EPD system. PCR process • Discussion 	Moderator: Beatriz Martins Carneiro, UNEP
12:00-13:00	<p>The Global Ecolabelling Network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is GEN? • Promotion of Ecolabels • GENICES: the peer review process for GEN member organisations • Testimonies from ABNT, Nordic Swan and Blue Angel 	Linda Chipperfield, GEN Secretaria
13:00-14:00	Lunch	

14:00-16:00	<p>Discussion Session 3: Criteria harmonization and mutual recognition agreements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Blue Angel ◦ Nordic Swan Ecolabel ◦ EPD ◦ GEN • Comments: ABNT • Discussion 	Moderator: Lukas Kleiner, National Metrology Institute of Germany (PTB)
16:00 – 16:15	Coffee break	
16:15 -17:15	<p>Discussion Session 4: Quality management of and standard procedures for a Type I and Type III programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ EPD System ◦ Blue Angel ◦ Nordic Swan/EU Ecolabel • Comments: ABNT • Discussion 	Moderator: Nydia Suppen, Centro de Análisis de Ciclo de Vida y Diseño Sustentable (CADIS)

Day 3, Wednesday Sept 13th		
Time	Session	Responsible
9:00- 10:00	<p>Product Environmental Footprint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current status of PEF initiative • Experience with Coffee in Latin America • Discussion 	<p>Imola Bedo, EU DG Environment</p> <p>Luis Rodriguez, Ministry of Environmental of Costa Rica</p>
10:00 – 11:00	<p>How to use the ecolabel as a tool in SPP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case of SPPEL project • Case of Copenhagen / EU 	<p>Beatriz Martins Carneiro, UNEP</p> <p>Nordic Swan / EU</p>
11:00 – 11:15	Coffee Break	
11:15-13:00	<p>Discussion Session 5: Strengthening certification and verification process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ ABNT – Certification of Agro-products ◦ Blue Angel ◦ EPD System • Comments: Nordic Swan • Discussion 	Moderator: Beatriz Martins Carneiro, UNEP

13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00-16:30	<p>Discussion Session 6: Outreach and communication with public and private sectors and consumers - forms of promotion with focus on low budgeting techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Nordic Swam ◦ Blue Angel • Comments: UNEP, GEN, EPD System, ABNT • Discussion 	Moderator: Ignacio Sanchez, UNEP
16:30 – 16:45	Next Steps	Ignacio Sanchez, UNEP
16:45-17:00	Closing remarks	Ignacio Sanchez, UNEP




Annex 2 – Summary of Recommendations

- Blue Angel representative recommends not to start with products but with group of products. It is recommended that the Environmental Alliance of America (AAA) include their normative references in their documents (14020's, 17065, etc.)
- ABNT representative comments that lessons learnt are that ecolabel brings environmental consciousness; is a market strategy, and public procurement is an incentive for producers to comply with the environmental requirements
- ABNT suggest that the validity of the Sello Ambiental de América is as in Brazil, 3 years. ABNT Ecolabel program has external audit and is subject to the assessment of the Brazilian accreditation body (CGcre)
- The AAA must define the validity of the seal and linked it to the validity of the certification body
- The requirements of the ecolabel shall influence the product design and in some cases productions steps
- It is very helpful to use existing assessment schemes and adapt them for the purpose of ecolabel, e.g. Substance classification and regulation
- All criteria and proofs are discussed within stakeholder consultations.
- To start the development of a product environmental criteria, select the right product group by analysing how comprehensive is the environmental strain (problem), what possible environmental gains are anticipated and the possibility of the ecolabel to make a difference
- To make labels strong, is easier if the criteria are harmonized with other international ecolabels in order for the customer to have the documentation ready
- It is recommended to have a label with a big geographic scope for stronger cooperation in the region, join criteria development process and identical proofs for the criteria instead of national labels
- It is recommended that the criteria is established jointly since the beginning, instead of a country developing it and submitting for approval of other countries
- Success cases have been those that starts working together on the development of the criteria, rather than trying to harmonize what is already established
- Nordic Swan and EU Ecolabel comments that combining Ecolabelling with SPP simplifies and makes more efficient the buying process. This is because the buyer doesn't have to develop their own environmental requirements and receives a third-party environmental guarantee
- The ecolabel should advise their own costumers how to communicate to their consumers their efforts to protect the environment and how to make their information public. They are the best publicity
- Provide your customers with Unique Selling Points (USPs), to communicate sustainability with credibility
- The Certification Body use 25% of the license fees in public relations and marketing the Blue Angel

Annex 3 – Summary of Recommendations for Type III environmental product declarations, EPD

- All EPDs are based on Life Cycle Assessments (LCA) and the results should be used for both internal and external use. The internal use, mainly for product development, has full flexibility regarding administrative rules and no third-party verification is needed. In contrast, the external use, mostly for market communication, has to comply with common administrative rules, follow existing PCRs and needs an independent third-party verification.
- EPD can be used as a tool for green or sustainable public procurement
- When developing PCRs, the application or adaption of existing PCR should be the preferred option by an EPD programme operator before starting to develop a new one for the same product category
- Usually the UN CPC classification scheme is the one recommended to use for EPDs for identification of product categories
- Independent EPD verifiers shall not have been involved in the execution of the LCA or the development of the declaration and shall not have conflicts of interest resulting from their position in the organisation
- Harmonisation of PCRs should be encouraged between EPD programmes to meet the principle of comparability and based on rules with respect to PCR development, review and verification procedures

Annex 4 – Comparative table of ecolabels type I

	Blue Angel	Nordic Swan	EU Ecolabel
			
General Information	Germany	Nordic Countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden)	European Union (EU countries and also Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway)
	Voluntary Scheme	Voluntary and market-oriented scheme	Voluntary scheme
	Type I	Type I	Type I
	Single third-party verifier	Independent third-party verifier	Independent third-party verifier
		Based on LCA	Based on LCA
	80 product groups	60 product groups	25 product groups (doesn't include food and medicines)
Conformity Assessment	Blue Angel has one certification body, internal quality management system, in contact with the German accreditation.	The Nordic swan is recognized by the Norwegian authorities and the accreditation body. The Nordic swan is a certification body itself. There is a department to verify the criteria and a licensing department. Each country has its own competent bodies as EU Ecolabel.	Each member state designs its competent bodies who are responsible of given the criteria for the certification. Austria for instance has a certification body for each product group.
Operational Structure	The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety is the owner of the scheme.	Nordic Swan has a Council of Ministers and an Ecolabelling Board. In each country there is a Secretariat and a Director who represents the country in the Board of Directors.	The EU Ecolabel works with a Board and an Operations Committee formed by National Competent Bodies
Fees	The license fee includes a unique one-off fee of 400 EUR for	The application fee is about 3000 Euro (25 000 NOK) while the annual fee is estimated	There is not a fee for members, but they provide in kind contribution

	processing the application for the use of the Blue Angel Ecolabel, plus a yearly fee based on the company's annual sales.	according to the companies' turnover in Nordic countries: 0,3% up to turnover of 20 mill Euro. Thereafter 0,05% up to max annual fee 100 000 Euro. The minimum annual fee 1500 Euro.	mainly through man-hours. The application fee to obtain the ecolabel is very low to attract applicants. The license fee is a percentage of 0.15% of the turnover of the company.
Criteria Development	The German Environment Agency works for the Blue Angel program developing the criteria.	It has a Product Criteria Development management group, an Application Assessment and Licensing group and a Marketing and communication group.	The EU Ecolabel program has a budget for research and for promotion. The criteria are developed using the research budget and the in-kind contributions of the interested parties.
	Anyone can submit a proposal for a new product environmental criterion. The process starts when an environmental issue has been identified.		In the case of the EU Ecolabel, member states, competent bodies and other stakeholders may propose to the European Commission to revise or develop the criteria.
Quality Management	The Blue Angel was used as the role model for the ISO 14024 standard – an international standard upon which many new global environmental labels are based today.	<p>The standards use by both programs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISO 14025 Ecolabel Schemes Type I • ISO 17065 Product certification <p>Multi-criteria ecolabel based on life cycle considerations</p> <p>Requirements to certification bodies that perform conformity assessments of products</p>	
Certification and Verification Process	Blue Angel has only one certification body and its quality management system based on ISO 9001 is under development.	<p>Documentation is assessed by an officer, feedback given and if considered necessary an audit to the production site is carried out.</p> <p>There are products where Self-declaration is accepted.</p> <p>Test results should be from accredited laboratories, according to ISO 17025.</p>	The competent bodies are designated by the states of the EEA and they should be independent and impartial organisations. The CBs assess the applications and awards the EU Ecolabel that meet their criteria.



For more information about the workshop and the ICSAL Project contact the UNEP Resource Efficiency team, Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.

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