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Sustainable Production, Products & Consumption

Strategic EU Ecolabel Work Plan 2020 - 2024

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Key words and abbreviations

AHWG	Ad Hoc Working Group
CE	Circular Economy
EC	European Commission
EMAS	Eco-Management and Audit Scheme
EU Ecolabel Regulation	<u>Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the EU Ecolabel</u>
EUEB	European Union Ecolabelling Board
ESG	Environment, Social, Governance
GEN	Global Ecolabelling Network
LH	Licence Holder
GPP	Green Public Procurement
MS	Member State
PEF	Product Environmental Footprint
REG COM	Regulatory Committee
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
UN	United Nations



INTRODUCTION

The Strategic EU Ecolabel Work Plan 2020-2024 is the operational tool for the planning and the management of activities related to the EU Ecolabel scheme foreseen by Art. 7.4 of the EU Ecolabel Regulation. It is aimed for the European Commission (EC) services, national Competent Bodies (CBs) and stakeholders involved in the implementation of the scheme.

The Plan is a non-binding rolling document that may be updated by the EC services in the course of its implementation.

1. THE EU ECOLABEL GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The EU Ecolabel, established in 1992, is a voluntary label of environmental excellence. It is promoting goods and services with reduced environmental impacts all over their life-cycle, when compared with products in the same product group existing on the European market. In doing so, the scheme contributes to making consumption and production more sustainable.

The new Circular Economy Action Plan¹ recognizes the valuable role of EU Ecolabel criteria to inspire mandatory legislation and prescribes the systematic inclusion of circular economy aspects in the EU Ecolabel criteria. By encouraging producers, depending on the product group, to efficiently use raw materials, generate less waste and CO₂ during the manufacturing process, use less hazardous chemicals and develop products that are durable, easy to repair and recyclable, the EU Ecolabel is a crucial tool of the circular economy. At the same time, the EU Ecolabel is an enabler of sustainable lifestyles and green procurement because it guides consumers, public and private buyers towards excellent products in terms of environmental performances. The Action Plan on Sustainable Finance "Financing Sustainable Growth"² has moreover identified the possibility to extend the EU Ecolabel to retail financial products as a suitable way to enable investors to directly channel their funds into environmentally sustainable investments. As soon as EU Ecolabel criteria for financial products will be adopted, they will contribute to the promotion of environmentally sustainable investments.

The overarching goal of the EU Ecolabel is to empower market actors to consume, produce and live more sustainably and to engage them in the transition towards a circular economy.

This is particularly important after the COVID-19 crisis in order to ensure that the recovery is sustainable and in line with the principles of the circular economy.

¹ [COM\(2020\) 98 of 11 March 2020: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "A new Circular Economy Action Plan - For a cleaner and more competitive Europe"](#)

² COM/2018/097 final: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Central Bank, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "Action Plan: Financing Sustainable Growth"

To reach the above goal this work plan has identified three objectives:

- 1. Mainstream and further develop the EU Ecolabel as a relevant tool in policies and initiatives promoting sustainable consumption and production, circular economy, sustainable lifestyles, sustainable finance and climate action in synergy with other tools.**
- 2. Maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of the EU Ecolabel Regulation implementation including the development and the maintenance of a successful criteria portfolio.**
- 3. Enhance the EU Ecolabel presence on the market, by boosting both industry uptake and consumers awareness.**

To fulfil the three objectives above, Annex I presents a list of non-exhaustive actions, clustered per thematic areas, identified by the EC services and relevant stakeholders. Joint efforts by the EC and relevant stakeholders are necessary to fulfil these objectives. The EUEB meetings and the [European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform](#) will therefore promote the exchange of best practices and lessons learnt.

2. THE CURRENT EU ECOLABEL PORTFOLIO

EU Ecolabel criteria are developed and revised through the multi-stakeholder process described in Annex I of the EU Ecolabel Regulation. The decision on the need to prolong/review/withdraw/establish EU Ecolabel criteria is taken by the EC after having consulted the EUEB and having assessed the relevance of the product group, its criteria and the related assessment and verification requirements.

ANNEX II – Current EU Ecolabel portfolio, presents the list of product groups in the current EU Ecolabel portfolio, and the timeline for 2020-2024.

More information about the state of on-going development/revision processes, related Ad Hoc Working Group meetings and documents is available on the [Product Bureau page of JRC](#).

The EC currently uses both the number of EU Ecolabel licenses and the number of labelled products as key performance indicators. The EU Ecolabel statistics are available on the [Fact and Figures page](#) of the EU Ecolabel website and are updated twice a year.

The list of EUEB, Competent Bodies Forum and Regulatory Committee meetings is available on the [Meetings corner page](#) of the EU Ecolabel website.

3. FUTURE EU ECOLABEL PRODUCT GROUPS

The development of EU Ecolabel criteria is a very resource-intensive process. Given the need to prioritize efforts, the current activities of the EU Ecolabel focus on the maximization of the success of the current product portfolio. As in the past several product groups were discontinued for very low uptake, a stronger strategy is needed for the selection of promising EU Ecolabel products groups. The possibility to develop a new product group shall therefore be considered only when both high potential environmental benefits, high potential uptake

and increased visibility of the scheme are expected. Synergies and coherence with the other circular economy policies and tools shall also be ensured.

The EU Ecolabel Regulation gives the possibility to the European Commission and other stakeholders to propose the development of EU Ecolabel criteria for a certain product group. The list of product groups for which the Commission Services received a request from external stakeholder to develop EU Ecolabel criteria will soon be available on the EU Ecolabel website (<https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/criteria-development-and-revision.html>). The potential future product groups that are currently under consideration are listed in ANNEX III – Future Product Groups still under consideration by the Commission Services.



ANNEX I – Strategic Actions for the EU Ecolabel

Objective	Thematic area	Actions	Actors	Starting date	End date
1. Mainstream and further develop the EU Ecolabel as a relevant tool in policies and initiatives promoting SCP, CE, sustainable lifestyles, sustainable finance and climate action at different scales, in synergy with other tools.	EU Ecolabel as a key tool for the implementation of policies	Strategically mention the EU Ecolabel in the overarching EU policies and create synergies with all related initiatives related to SCP, CE, sustainable lifestyles, sustainable finance and climate action.	EC Team	Continuous	Continuous
		Strategically mention the EU Ecolabel in the overarching National policies and create synergies with all related initiatives related to SCP, CE, sustainable lifestyles, sustainable finance and climate action.	CBs +MSs	2020	Continuous
		Strategically include the EU Ecolabel in Industry and Finance strategies .	EUEB industry members	2020	Continuous
		Strategically include the EU Ecolabel in other relevant policy documents .	EUEB NGOs members	2020	Continuous
	Funding opportunities for the EU Ecolabel	Mainstream the promotion and the uptake of the EU Ecolabel in funding opportunities at EU, National, Regional and local level	EC Team, EUEB members, MSs + regional/local authorities	Continuous	Continuous
	Setting up strong synergies with EU SCP tools (GPP, PEF,	Ensure coherence between EU Ecolabel and GPP criteria.	EC Team	Continuous	Continuous
		Develop GPP "Manuals" for public authorities on how to use EU Ecolabel criteria in procurement (first 3 PGs: Paper, Hard	EC Team	Q2 2020	Continuous

Objective	Thematic area	Actions	Actors	Starting date	End date
	EMAS) and Sustainable Finance initiatives	Coverings, Absorbent Hygiene Products).			
		Collect and share on existing networks best practices on GPP and Corporate GP promoting ecolabels. Explore the possibility of creating a network of companies buying EU Ecolabel products.	EC Team + EUEB members + GPP Advisory Group	Q1 2020	Continuous
		Foster the procurement of EU Ecolabel goods/services in the EC, the EU Institutions in all EUEB members' institutions/organisations as well as through relevant actors and associations at national/regional/ local/ level through, inter alia, training and assistance to public authorities that would like to procure ecolabelled goods	EC Team + EUEB members	Q1 2021	Continuous
		Explore the possibility to integrate PEF method in EU Ecolabel criteria through the development of PEF studies to identify hotspots, when needed, and through the « pilot project » on the revision of EU Ecolabel criteria for textiles and footwear apparel (and paints?).	EC Team + EUEB Members	2021	2024
		Ensure coherence between EU Ecolabel criteria and EMAS Sectoral Reference Documents.	EC team	Continuous	Continuous
		Promote the use of EU Ecolabel product/services in EMAS registered organisations (public/private).	EC team + EUEB members	Q4 2020	Continuous
		Explore the possibility to have the production/provision of EU Ecolabel good/services mentioned in the EU Taxonomy .	EC team	Q2 2020	2021
		Explore the possibility to link EU Ecolabel financial products with the ' suitability test ' for green and sustainable financial products , which will have to take into account ESG preferences of clients and select products (green/sustainable products) in line with such preferences.	EC team	Q3/Q4 2020	Continuous

Objective	Thematic area	Actions	Actors	Starting date	End date
		Explore the possibility to link EU Ecolabel financial products and the Regulation on Sustainability-related disclosure in the financial services sector (2019/2088) , which includes disclosure requirements for green and sustainable financial products.	EC team	Q3 2020	Continuous
	EU Ecolabel in global/international initiatives	Increase collaboration within GEN .	EC Team	2021	Continuous
		Explore synergies with UN initiatives .	EC Team	2021	Continuous
		Cooperate with EU Delegations/Info Centers to promote third-country applications for the EU Ecolabel.	EC Team	2021	Continuous
		Reinforce collaboration on EU Ecolabel in international cooperation .	EC Team + EUEB Members	2021	Continuous

2. Maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of the EU Ecolabel Regulation implementation, including the development and the maintenance of a successful criteria portfolio	Strategic choice of product groups	Optimisation of the decision process for the prioritisation of product groups to include/maintain into the scheme.	EC Team + EUEB Members	2021	Q4 2020
	Structured collaboration with other Type I ecolabels	Identify possibilities of structured collaboration with other Type I ecolabels (e.g. align timing of criteria development, joint criteria development, joint communication, etc.).	EC team + CBs from other Type I ecolabels	2021	Continuous
	Optimisation of efficiency and effectiveness of EUEB/CB Forum	Adopt new rules, role and modus operandi for the EUEB/CB Forum in order to enhance members participation in the implementation/development of the scheme.	EC Team + all EUEB Members	Q1 2020	Q4 2020
	Digitalisation of the awarding process	Develop a strategy and implement steps towards the digitalization and simplification of the awarding process.	EC Team + CBs	2021	Continuous

Objective	Thematic area	Actions	Actors	Starting date	End date
	Monitoring of EU Ecolabel uptake	Update and disseminate statistics on EU Ecolabel products/licences.	EC Team + EUEB members	Continuous	Continuous
		Include periodically questions on EU Ecolabel awareness in Eurobarometer surveys.	EC Team	Every 2 yrs	Every 2 yrs
3. Enhance the EU Ecolabel presence on the market, by boosting both industry uptake and consumers awareness.	Relief/incentive measures to foster EU Ecolabel uptake	Investigate on the possibility to act on tax measures .	EC team + Member States	2021	Continuous
		Explore the possibility of including the EU Ecolabel in the Extended Producer Responsibility guidelines.	EC team	Q1 2020	Q4 2020
		Exchange of best national practices at EU level, such as the ECO-Vouchers, include them on the CE Stakeholders Platform and encourage replication at EU level.	EC Team + EUEB	Q1 2020	Continuous
	Capacity building + technical assistance	Organise webinars/events/training activities to explain EU Ecolabel criteria to industry stakeholders, retailers and procurers, as well as information about the added value and business case to engage with the EU Ecolabel.	EC team + CBs	Continuous	Continuous
	Increase awareness through education	Explore the possibility of including the EU Ecolabel in education curricula/extra-curricular activities.	EUEB members	2021	Continuous
	Increase awareness through communication activities	Organize periodic meetings on communication with EUEB members.	EC Team	Q2 2020	Continuous
		Set-up a joint Communication Calendar to foster synergies between communication activities.	EC Team + EUEB Members	Q2 2020	Continuous
		Implement Communication activities aimed at promoting the EU Ecolabel in the Recovery context	EC Team + EUEB Members	Q2 2020	Q4 2021

Objective	Thematic area	Actions	Actors	Starting date	End date
		Develop and implement a multi-annual Communication framework for the EU Ecolabel, including <i>i.a.</i> new collaboration with key multipliers (retailers, Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform, etc.) and including specific activity for the promotion of EU Ecolabel criteria for financial products.	EC Team + EUEB Members	Q2 2020	Continuous
	Optimisation of EU Ecolabel Catalogue (ECAT)	Finalize and keep up to date ECAT	EC team +CBs/LHs	2019 and continuous	Q2 2020 and continuous
		Cooperate with online platform/catalogues/booking sites	EC team	Q2 2020	Continuous
	Revamping of EU Ecolabel website	Start « migration » to new platform and more visibility to ECAT.	EC Team	2021	2021
		Regularly update the website. Provide new articles/videos/information to be displayed on the website.	EC Team + the HD + CBs	Continuous	Continuous

ANNEX II – Current EU Ecolabel portfolio

Rev (n) = normal revision procedure Rev (s) = shortened revision procedure

Product group	Current criteria			Revision/Prolongation/Vote/Amendment					Comments
	Decision n.	Adoption	Expiry date	Timeline					
				2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Rinse-off cosmetic products (030)	2014/893/EU	09-12-2014	31-12-2021	Rev (n) on-going 4-5 Jun: AHWG2 Nov EUEB: last consultation	Spring: RegCom vote	-	-	-	Scope enlarged to "Cosmetic Products and Animal Care products"
Absorbent hygiene products (047)	2014/763/EU	24-10-2014	31-12-2022	Rev (s?) starting	Rev (s?)	Jun: RegCom vote or prolongation.	-	-	
Hard Surface Cleaning Products (020)	2017/1217/EU	23-06-2017	26-06-2023	-	Assess if criteria are still up-to date. Rev to start?	Rev? Nov: RegCom vote or prolongation.	-	-	
Detergents for dishwashers (015)	2017/1216/EU	23-06-2017	26-06-2023	-	Assess if criteria are still up-to date. Rev to start?	Rev? Nov: RegCom vote or prolongation.	-	-	
Hand dishwashing detergents (019)	2017/1214/EU	23-06-2017	26-06-2023	-	Assess if criteria are still up-to date. Rev to start?	Rev? Nov: RegCom vote or prolongation.	-	-	
Laundry detergents (006)	2017/1218/EU	23-06-2017	26-06-2023	-	Assess if criteria are still up-to date. Rev to start?	Rev? Nov: RegCom vote or prolongation.	-	-	

Product group	Current criteria			Revision/Prolongation/Vote/Amendment					Comments
	Decision n.	Adoption	Expiry date	Timeline					
				2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
I&I laundry detergents (039)	2017/1219/EU	23-06-2017	26-06-2023	-	Assess if criteria are still up-to date. Rev to start?	Rev? Nov: RegCom vote or prolongation.	-	-	
I&I automatic dishwasher detergents (038)	2017/1215/EU	23-06-2017	26-06-2023	-	Assess if criteria are still up-to date. Rev to start?	Rev? Nov: RegCom vote or prolongation.	-	-	
Textile products (016)	2014/350/EU	05-06-2014	31-12-2025 (prolonged)	Jun: Reg Com vote on prolongation to 31 Dec 2025 together with Footwear	Rev (n) to start (integrating PEF method for apparel).	Rev (n)	Rev (n)	Jun: RegCom vote	Revised criteria to be merged with footwear. The need to split criteria between apparel/non apparel to be assessed. Synergies and coherence to be created with the Sustainable Product Initiative of the CEAP.
Footwear (017)	2016/1349/EU	05-08-2016	31-12-2025 (prolonged)	Jun: Reg Com vote on prolongation to 31 Dec 2025 together with Textiles	Rev (n) to start (integrating PEF method).	Rev (n)	Rev (n)	Jun: RegCom vote	Revised criteria to be merged with Textiles. Synergies and coherence to be created with the Sustainable Product Initiative of the CEAP.

Product group	Current criteria			Revision/Prolongation/Vote/Amendment					Comments
	Decision n.	Adoption	Expiry date	Timeline					
				2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Indoor and outdoor paints & varnishes (044)	2014/312/EU	28-05-2014	31-12-2022	Assessment on the need for an amendment related to TiO2 and TMP.	Decision to take on the starting of the rev (n) and the integration of PEF method; Rev (n)? Spring: vote on Amendment related to TiO2 and TMP + prolongation		-	-	The current set of criteria will be prolonged in order to allow for the revision process to be completed.
Electronic Displays (022)	(EU) 2020/1804	27-11-2020	31-12-2028	Jun: RegCom vote	-	-	-	Mid-term assessment on the need to revise the criteria	These criteria are replacing the previous criteria for Televisions (2009/300/EC) valid until 26/11/2021. Transitional period ending on 27/11/2021.
Wood-, Cork- and Bamboo-based Floor Coverings (035)	2017/176/EU	25-01-2017	26-01-2023	-	Assess if criteria are still up-to date Rev to start?	Rev? Jun: RegCom vote or prolongation	-	-	-
Hard coverings (021)	2009/607/EC	09-07-2009	30-06-2021 (prolonged)	Oct: Reg Com vote	Adoption of revised criteria	-	-	Mid-term assessment on the need to revise the criteria	-
Furniture (049)	2016/1332/EU	28-07-2016	28-07-2022	-	Decision to take on starting date of	-	-	-	Criteria to be prolonged and in the

Product group	Current criteria			Revision/Prolongation/Vote/Amendment					Comments
	Decision n.	Adoption	Expiry date	Timeline					
				2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
					the rev. Spring/Nov: RegCom vote on prolongation.				future merged with Bed Mattresses (revision linked to the revision of “Textiles”)
Bed mattresses (014)	2014/391/EU	23-06-2014	28-07-2022	-	Decision to take on starting date of the rev. Linked to the rev. of “Textiles”. Nov: Spring/RegCom vote on prolongation.	-	-	-	Criteria to be prolonged and in the future merged with Furniture (revision linked to the revision of “Textiles”)
Growing media, soil improver and mulch (048)	2015/2099/EU	18-11-2015	30-06-2022	Rev (s) started	Rev (s)	Feb: RegCom vote			
Lubricants (027)	(EU) 2018/1702	08-11-2018	31-12-2024	-	-	Rev to start?	Rev?	Jun: RegCom vote or prolongation	
Graphic paper, tissue paper and tissue products (011-004)	(EU) 2019/70	11-01-2019	31-12-2024	-	-	Rev to start?	Rev?	Jun: RegCom vote or prolongation	
Printed paper, stationery paper, and paper carrier bag products (053)	(EU) 2020/1803	27-11-2020	31-12-2028	Jun: RegCom vote	-	-	-	Mid-term assessment on the need to revise the criteria	These criteria are replacing the previous criteria for printed paper (028), (2012/481/EU) and converted paper

Product group	Current criteria			Revision/Prolongation/Vote/Amendment					Comments
	Decision n.	Adoption	Expiry date	Timeline					
				2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
									products (046) (2014/256/EU) valid until 31/12/2020. Transitional period ending on 27/05/2022.
Tourist accommodation and campsite services (051)	(EU) 2017/175	25-01-2017	26-01-2022	-	Decision to take on starting date of the rev. Spring: RegCom vote on prolongation.	Rev?	Rev?	-	Criteria to be prolonged. The possibility to strengthen social criteria and to enlarge the scope should be assessed in the revision.
Indoor cleaning Services (052)	(EU) 2018/680	02-05-2018	02-05-2023	-	Decision to take on starting date of the rev.	Nov: RegCom vote or prolongation.	-	-	
Retail financial Products	-	-	-	Development ongoing 25-26 Mar: AHWG2 Nov EUEB: last consultation	Spring: RegCom vote	-	-	-	

ANNEX III – Future Product Groups still under consideration by the Commission Services

Product group	Status
Solar photovoltaic modules, inverters and systems	The “Preparatory study for solar photovoltaic modules, inverters and systems” (JRC) has been completed ³ and 2 possible options are being recommended: option 1 could be a policy approach comprehending Ecodesign, Energy Labelling and GPP, and option 2 (should the Energy Labelling not be legally feasible) could be Ecodesign, the EU Ecolabel and GPP. The assessment of the feasibility of the 1 st option (in particular of Ecodesign and Energy Labelling) is ongoing and it should be assessed by the beginning of 2021 (the Ecodesign Consultation Forum meeting is indicatively planned in December 2020/January 2021).
Toys	The EU Ecolabel for toys could have the potential to increase the visibility of the scheme, if taken up by a sufficient number of market players. The possibility to establish sound criteria in line with the circular economy principles should be further investigated, as well as the possibility to develop EU Ecolabel criteria for toys as a service. Reasons for uptake/non-uptake in other ecolabelling schemes should also be further investigated. The development of a questionnaire for toy industry and other stakeholders to collect feedback on their interest for the EU Ecolabel was put on hold for lack of resources.
Food retail stores	Working on greening food retail stores is an important work stream of the circular economy, and it is linked to the possibility of improving the practices of the sector (including decreasing food waste), promoting the production and consumption of sustainable products and nudging consumers towards sustainable choices. The issue should be discussed in the whole context of the circular economy initiatives, and in case EU Ecolabel criteria are developed they should touch all relevant aspects, including the products that are sold. After a discussion at the EU Ecolabelling Board, it was agreed that further reflection is needed on the suitability for an ecolabel to address the issue in its complexity, taking into account potential synergies/overlaps with EMAS, and Organisation Environmental Footprint (OEFSR) for Retail and other existing activities such as the EU Retail Forum (and maybe EU GPP).
Cartridges	This product group was not considered as a priority because of the on-going revisions of the Voluntary Agreement and of the GPP criteria for Imaging Equipment. The New Circular Economy Action Plan foresees the inclusion of printers and consumables such as cartridges in the next Ecodesign work plan unless the sector reaches an ambitious voluntary agreement within Q3/Q4 2020. The willingness to develop EU Ecolabel criteria for this product group will be re-assessed after a decision on Ecodesign measures.
Renewable energy from new installations	A study was launched by the Commission Services to assess options to establish an EU-wide green label with a view to promote the use of renewable energy coming from new installations. The EU Ecolabel is one of the options investigated by the study. The study will provide the technical support for the elaboration of the report described in Article 19(13) of Directive (EU) 2018/2001 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (RED II).

³ The Final Report may be found online at : https://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/solar_photovoltaics/documents.html