Report on EU Ecolabel mapping and analysis of promotional activities

Stakeholder engagement activities and support to communication – EU Ecolabel
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## Glossary

| **EU Ecolabel** | The EU Ecolabel is a voluntary scheme established in 1992 that is awarded to products and services with reduced environmental impact. The EU Ecolabel criteria are developed in cooperation with experts, industry, consumers’ organisations and environmental NGOs. |
| **EU Flower** | The EU Flower refers to the EU Ecolabel logo, displaying a flower with the Greek epsilon ‘ε’, and surrounded by 12 blue stars. |
| **EU Ecolabel criteria** | The EU Ecolabel criteria set out the high environmental standards to be met by goods and services carrying the EU Ecolabel logo. The EU Ecolabel criteria take into consideration the environmental impact of products throughout their whole lifecycle, from raw material extraction to production and distribution to end-of-life, to guarantee minimal environmental impact. |
| **EU Ecolabel products** | Goods and services that have been awarded with the EU Ecolabel. |
| **EU Ecolabelling Board (EUEB)** | The EUEB contributes to the development and revision of the EU Ecolabel criteria and to any review of the implementation of the EU Ecolabel scheme. It consists of representatives designed by EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway, and other stakeholder representatives and EU/UN organisations. |
| **EU Ecolabel Communication Group (to become EU Ecolabel Communication Task Force)** | The EU Ecolabel Communication Group consist of volunteering members who share responsibilities for communication/promotional activities on the EU Ecolabel. The members have actively participated in the parts of the mapping exercise. |
| **EU Ecolabel Communication Core Group (to be integrated into the EU Ecolabel Communication Task Force)** | The EU Ecolabel Communication Core Group is composed of marketing specialists from participating Member States. The Core Group is responsible for setting up and defining the fundamentals of the efficient communication of the EU Ecolabel. The members have actively participated in the development and refinement of the results of the mapping exercise. |
| **EU Ecolabel Helpdesk** | The EU Ecolabel Helpdesk [contractor] assists the European Commission in the implementation of the EU Ecolabel scheme, through the provision of information to the public, awareness raising and promoting the instrument. This includes technical tasks (website, EU Ecolabel Catalogue [ECAT]) and administrative tasks (editing, translation, supporting the Competent Bodies and the EU Ecolabelling Board). They also develop new publications and provide support to the public and stakeholders by email and phone on general questions about the EU Ecolabel. |
| **Competent Bodies (CBs)** | Competent Bodies are responsible for the implementation of the EU Ecolabel scheme at the national level. They assess applications and award the EU Ecolabel to products that meet the criteria. |
| **EU Ecolabel stakeholders** | EU Ecolabel stakeholders are a balanced representation of all relevant interested parties, for example concerned with a particular product group (industry, service providers, SMEs, business organisations, trade unions, traders, retailers, importers, environmental protection groups, and consumer organisations). |
| **EU Ecolabel retailer** | An EU Ecolabel retailer is stakeholder that has introduced EU Ecolabel products or services in retail stores (may be online). |
| **EU Ecolabel license holder** | An EU Ecolabel license holder is an organisation that had products or services awarded with the EU Ecolabel. |
1 Introduction and Summary

This report presents the results of the mapping process carried out by Technopolis Group as part of the consortium with Arctik, adelphi and denkstatt in the project, ‘Stakeholder Engagement activities and support to communication – EU Ecolabel’ on behalf of the European Commission (DG ENV). The mapping was carried out from December 2021 to May 2022. The results of the analysis will feed into the Strategic multi-annual EU Ecolabel Communication Work Plan (2022-2027), which is the operational tool for planning and managing the activities related to the promotion of the EU Ecolabel scheme by both the EC and the Member States.

The mapping focused on the EU Ecolabel communication campaigns and social media activity from 2016 to 2021, and on the Member States’ self-assessment of their current status, capacity and opportunities in promoting the EU Ecolabel. The objective of the mapping was to create a sound understanding of past, current, and future communication activities carried out at the EU and at national level. The data have been gathered using a wide range of methods including desk research, literature review, media monitoring data and collection, a self-assessment questionnaire, and selected interviews with active EU Ecolabel stakeholders.

This report has analysed the collected material as well as responses and interview notes provided by the European Commission and the EUEB, mapping and the efforts deployed across the 27 EU Member States and by the European Commission to communicate about the EU Ecolabel in the period of 2016-2021. The report has not assessed the level of awareness about the EU Ecolabel or the availability of EU Ecolabel products in the Member States.

The Member States and organisations that actively participate in the EU Ecolabel Board (EUEB) as members are:

- Austria - Federal Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism
- Belgium - Belgian Federal Public Service Health & Environment
- Croatia - Ministry of Environment and Energy
- Cyprus - Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment
- Czechia - CENIA CZ
- Denmark – Ecolabelling Denmark
- Estonia - Estonian Environment Agency and Ministry of the Environment
- Finland – Ecolabelling Finland
- France – ADEME
- Germany – RAL GmbH and UBA
- Hungary – Herman Ottó Institute and Ministry for Environment
- Italy – ISPRA
- Latvia – State Environmental bureau of the Latvia
- Lithuania – Lithuanian Protection Agency
- Luxembourg - Ministère de l’Environnement, du Climat et du Développement durable - Administration de l'environnement
- Netherlands – SMK
- Norway – Ecolabelling Norway
- Poland – Polish Centre for Testing and Certification
- Portugal Ministry of Economic Affairs
- Slovakia – Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic
- Slovenia - Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Republic of Slovenia
- Sweden – Svanen and Ecolabelling Sweden
- Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs (BEUC)
- Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP)
- European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC)
- European Banking Federation (EBF)
- European Environmental Bureau (EEB)
- EuroCommerce
- Eurometaux
- European Commission (DG ENV B1)
- PlasticRecyclers
- WWF European Policy Programme (WWF EPO)
The preliminary results of the mapping were presented to the Communication Core Group in an interactive stakeholder workshop on 31 March 2022, where stakeholders were consulted to provide their views and ideas about the results.

The recommendations from the mapping exercise to be used for the Work-Plan are presented further in Chapter 8.

The main findings of the mapping are as follows:

- There has been an active engagement in the last years on continued EU Ecolabel communication by the European Commission, Member States/Competent Bodies, and Stakeholders despite the disruptions caused by the COVID19 pandemic. The Member States have a high preference for three means for their continued EU Ecolabel communication activities: social media, website activities, and events.

- The focus of past EU Ecolabel communication (2016-2021) has been on increasing general awareness, building trust and market recognition of the EU Ecolabel towards consumers in particular, followed by license holders and retailers with the aim to increase the uptake of the EU Ecolabel. Member States also indicated that they know their key audience, but there is a need for guidance on how to tailor the communication towards their preferred key audience. Respondents also show that they are interested in continuing collaboration with license holders, retailers, and companies in their EU Ecolabel promotion.

- Stakeholders emphasise that there are elements of their communication activities that work better than others, such as clear and direct communication presented in a simple way using humour and striking images and being creative in event management to attract more interest from key audiences. Collaboration and networking are useful means to create more awareness about the EU Ecolabel and to display the opportunities for potential new license holders.

- Monitoring of EU Ecolabel communication happens on a basic level in terms and performance is not methodologically measured, so there is an indicated need for a suggested monitoring and evaluation framework to better assess the impact and adjust communication campaigns accordingly.

- Limited budget and staff capacity remain the two main challenges when carrying out EU Ecolabel communication.

- Four main solutions to the EU Ecolabel communication challenges were suggested: to set up national/regional communication plans; access to more communication materials with visuals, activity calendars, etc.; more active participation on social media channels; and the implementation of the upcoming Strategic Multi-Annual EU Ecolabel Communication Work Plan.

- While some of the Member States have their national communication strategies with actions for their EU Ecolabel communication, they report that an overarching, coherent, agreed-upon approach is needed. They give support to the implementation of an EU level EU Ecolabel Multi-Annual EU Ecolabel Communication Work Plan with an activity calendar aligned with the European Commission and the Member States’ ongoing activities.

- The analysis of social media and news website activity shows that there is potential in increasing EU Ecolabel presence on social media especially. Additionally, there is an
increase in news website activity about the EU Ecolabel, which can be aligned with the EU Ecolabel communication material.

- There is an identified need for a forum for knowledge sharing of examples of good practices among EU Ecolabel communicators.

2 Methodology and contributions from the Communication and Communication Core Groups

2.1 Literature review and desk research

This report integrates the feedback gathered from the desk analysis including documents provided by the European Commission, input, and feedback from the members of the EU Ecolabelling Board (EUEB), using various methods. EUEB members’ inputs have been integrated under the headline of this chapter and of other subsequent chapters.

As a first step, the desk research gathered material, studies, evaluations, and reports from the European Commission. These inputs were complemented with further relevant material from other sources, including studies from Ademe, EEB, BEUC, and OECD, and academic research papers on relevant marketing and communication of the EU Ecolabel.

As a second step, the EUEB members were contacted in January and February 2022 to contribute with additional inputs of two main categories:

- communication studies, reports, evaluations, and assessment
- campaign-related material, e.g. presentations, social media advertisements, blogs, event minutes, communication strategies, activity calendars, strategy recommendations, catalogues, good practice manuals, magazine articles, advertorials and other relevant documents.

As a third step, the European Commission and the EUEB members were asked to provide additional data regarding previous and future social media and website activity using the template in Appendix C, including online channels used to promote the EU Ecolabel1. The European Commission and 22 Competent Bodies (CBs) responded to the request (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden) and European Environmental Bureau (EEB), the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), including the Nordic Swan from the Nordic countries and the Blue Angel from Germany. However, the data received were not complete enough to provide general conclusions on the findings. The data was nevertheless used to feed into the SWOT analysis.

Information on a total of 131 EU Ecolabel communication campaigns was collected and analysed. The documents were provided by the European Commission and by the EUEB members, as well as found by the contractor through desk research. Most of the campaigns were delivered at the level of the European Commission (63), followed by the EU Ecolabel

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1 The statistical monitoring data on website and social media activity of the Member States was not comprehensive enough to provide a statistical analysis of the results. The Self-assessment tool (SAT) was designed to cover the gaps discovered in the initial phase of the mapping.
stakeholders (42), the Member States (17), academia/experts (5), and lastly, OECD reports (4), as illustrated by Figure 1.

Figure 1 Number of marketing/communication sources on EU Ecolabel promotional campaigns per stakeholder type, that were analysed by the project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Type</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academia, experts</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member state</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU Ecolabel stakeholder</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Commission</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Technopolis Group

In terms of countries, most of the sources covered activities covering the entire EU (59), followed by activities in France (29), Spain (16), Italy (13), Sweden (13), Poland (10), and Portugal (10), as illustrated in Figure 3. The lowest number of documents were from Iceland (1), Latvia (1), Global (1), and the UK (1). This is illustrated by Figure 2.

Figure 2 Literature review sources by country

Source: Technopolis Group

The literature review of the sources shows that the highest number of activities was implemented as PowerPoint presentations (45), reports (24), and blog posts (14). Additionally, the analysis included three evaluations, eight articles, four research papers, four event minutes, four social media posts, four videos, four communication strategies followed by three evaluations, three public policy working papers, three work plans, and three examples of Terms of References from relevant campaigns. Moreover, two activity calendars, two strategy

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2 Including documents from Ademe, EEB, BEUC, and the Nordic Swan.
recommendations, one advertorial, one catalogue, one good practice manual, and one magazine article were also included in the analysis.

Figure 3 Literature review sources by type of activity

![Figure 3 Literature review sources by type of activity](image)

Source: Technopolis Group

2.2 Media monitoring data and collection

Media monitoring data was collected using the online media monitoring tool, Meltwater. Meltwater is an online software that provides a comprehensive media monitoring across online news and social media, by tracking keywords connected to the chosen topic aggregating all public online and editorial content that mentions the keywords. For the online news monitoring, 270,000 news sources are scanned globally in 125 countries. For social media monitoring, 15 different media channels (including access to all of Twitter’s content), blogs, comments, news articles, and product reviews were used. While online news monitoring can monitor data within a five-year period, the social media monitoring can only access data from the year before.

Meltwater was used to better understand the interest and coverage of the EU Ecolabel in European countries. It was used in the mapping with the following purpose:

- **News monitoring of websites** extracted the following data:
  - Total articles per European country mentioning the EU Ecolabel in news websites from 2016-2021 with the objective of giving insights into the most active country coverage of EU Ecolabel mentions
  - Time evolution of articles on news websites from 2016-2021 with the objective to understand the progression of EU Ecolabel mentions over time in European countries

- **Social media monitoring**:

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3 https://www.meltwater.com/en
o Total mentions per day in 2021 with the objective to understand mentions of the EU Ecolabel on social media

o Total mentions per Member States in 2021 with the objective to understand which EU countries are most active in using social media to promote the EU Ecolabel.

o Top influencers per country and their reach with the objective to feed information into the list of EU Ecolabel communication channels, including top 3 influencers per country

The news monitoring of websites gave 7895 sources using the keyword ‘EU Ecolabel’ translated to all EU languages. Social media monitoring gave 773 sources, using ‘EU Ecolabel’ translated to all EU languages. Additionally, separate searches on news websites and social media were carried out for the Nordic Swan and Blue Angel to give insights into the comparison of these national labels with the EU Ecolabel.

Further results of the media monitoring are integrated into this report and presented more in-depth in Chapter 4.

2.3 Self-assessment tool (SAT)

In March 2022, the EU Ecolabel Communication Group, Communication Core Group, and license holders received the Self-assessment tool (SAT), an online questionnaire designed to collect their views on their perceived level of readiness, interest, and capacity to promote the EU Ecolabel. The questionnaire also served as an engagement mechanism for relevant stakeholders, as it provided inspirational examples of communication activities to implement and support increased awareness and uptake of the EU Ecolabel.

In total, 31 respondents answered the SAT, including one representative from the European Commission, 18 EU Ecolabel CBs also part of the Communication Group and Communication core Group, four company/business organisations/associations, four EU Ecolabel license holders, and two consumer organisations. The respondents represent 20 EU Member States and the EU level.

The respondents confirmed a high degree of experience working with the communication of the EU Ecolabel with 75% (23 respondents) having between 12 and 30 years of organisational experience, and 25% (8 respondents) between 0 and 11 years of experience. Furthermore, as indicated by Table 1, the results showed that overall, respondents are satisfied with their own efforts, as well as with the quality and success of their EU Ecolabel promotional activities. When asked to inform about their level of satisfaction regarding selected statements, their responses were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Respondents who are ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ (in %)</th>
<th>Respondents who are ‘dissatisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied’ (in %)</th>
<th>Respondents who are ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’ (in %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your organisation’s efforts and ability to promote the EU Ecolabel</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 Not including the responses ‘I don’t know’ which amounts to the remaining percentage of the total.
The number of own promotional activities around the EU Ecolabel carried out in a year | 35% | 22% | 39%
---|---|---|---
The quality and success of your promotional activities | 51% | 13% | 29%
The knowledge and the capacity of your staff to carry out promotional activities about the EU Ecolabel | 58% | 6% | 32%
Your capacity to monitor and assess the performance of your EU Ecolabel promotional activities: | 45% | 9% | 39%
Your ability to extract lessons learned from ‘successful’ or ‘failed’ EU Ecolabel campaigns | 48% | 6% | 32%
Your ability to share lessons learned from ‘successful’ or ‘failed’ EU Ecolabel campaigns | 45% | 6% | 32%
Your cooperation/synergies with EU Ecolabel stakeholders e.g. license holders, EEB/BEUC, other CBs members, EU/UN bodies, associations, etc. | 51% | 10% | 35%

Source: Technopolis Group

Additionally, 61% of the respondents reported that they currently have a communication strategy for their EU Ecolabel promotion, as opposed to 22% who do not and 13% who do not know.

2.4 Interviews

In total, 14 interviews have been carried out with a selected group of stakeholders from the Communication Group in April and May 2022. The aim of the interviews was to cover any remaining knowledge gaps of the mapping. The interviewees represented the following countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, and three EU level organisations: the European Commission, EuroCommerce and BEUC/EEB. The results from the interviews have been integrated in this report.

The template of the interview guide in Appendix B.

2.5 SWOT and good practices

As part of this report, a SWOT analysis was carried out to map strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in terms of communication on the EU Ecolabel by the European Commission and the Member States (see Appendix D). The SWOT is based on the feedback
from the Member States acquired through the SAT, as well as from the data collection (see sub-
chapter 2.1).

The following ten indicators were used in the evaluation of the European Commission and each Member State:

- In-house expertise/experience with EU Ecolabel communication activities
- Level of activity on communication
- Participation in EU Ecolabel’s 30th anniversary celebrations
- Presence on social media
- Collaborations/partnerships
- Capacity (budget and staff capacity) to carry out EU Ecolabel communication,
- Capacity/knowledge on how to interact with key audiences
- Separate EU Ecolabel website at national level
- If they have a communication strategy nationally/locally
- Monitoring and assessing communication activities.

Moreover, EU Ecolabel stakeholders through the provided communication campaigns, social media data collection, SAT, and the interviews, provided enough relevant material to capture a list of examples of good practices on EU Ecolabel communication. Based on the list, three good practices have been selected for further examination in collaboration with the European Commission. The good practices were suggested by the respondents in the SAT and during interviews. All suggested good practices were considered in cooperation with the European Commission and three were chosen based on the criteria of:

- Covering/including the promotion of the EU Ecolabel
- Covering three target groups for the EU Ecolabel, namely license holders, retailers, and youth
- Being examples that are inspirational and easy to replicable for other Member States
- Has geographical representation across multiple Member States

The three chosen good practices are:

- **EU ecolabel license holder event: ‘Ecolabel Press Day’ (Austria)**
- **EU Ecolabel retailer campaign: ‘Strong for you, gentle on nature’ (Belgium)**
- **EU Ecolabel youth: ‘Look for the sign! – the ecolabels competition’ (Hungary)**

The examples of good practices can be found in Appendix E.

### 2.6 Interactive stakeholder workshop

The interactive stakeholder workshop was held on 31 March 2022, where the preliminary results of the mapping and analysis were presented to the EU Ecolabel Communication Core Group consisting of marketing experts from Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Finland, BEUC, EEB, Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP), and the European Commission (DG ENV B1).

As part of the workshop, a total of 15 participants answered a set of questions on a live polling. This feedback is integrated in this report.
2.7 Conclusions

This section has presented the methodology used in the mapping of EU Ecolabel communication material from 2016-2021. The results of the mapping have been collected through desk research and literature review, a self-assessment tool (SAT), and interviews. Additionally, a SWOT analysis is presented in Appendix D and three good practices in Appendix E.

The mapping has relied on close collaboration with the European Commission, the Communication Group and the Communication Core Group for data collection and feedback throughout the process.
3 Communication activities on the EU Ecolabel

From the literature review and the responses received through the Self-assessment tool (SAT), representatives from the European Commission, Member States/Component Bodies, and license holders have carried out and are currently carrying out a wide range of EU Ecolabel communication activities.

Box 1 shows the previous and planned activities to promote the EU Ecolabel by respondents to the data collection activity, SAT, and interviews, consisting of the European Commission, Member States, Component Bodies, and license holders.

Box 1 Overview of types of activities and supporting documents for carrying out EU Ecolabel communication activities at the EU level and for EU Member States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means for carrying out EU Ecolabel communication activities</th>
<th>Supporting documents for carrying out EU Ecolabel communication activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Events</td>
<td>• Print, online and outdoor ads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Award ceremonies</td>
<td>• Blogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− World Environment Day</td>
<td>• Print and online advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− World Ecolabel Day</td>
<td>• Best practices/case studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− EU Ecolabel’s 30th anniversary</td>
<td>• Press releases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Fairs</td>
<td>• Advertisement on TV/radio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Communication at schools</td>
<td>• Visuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− On-site/online workshops participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− On-site/online organisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Ministry-level events and initiatives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Information day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promotion of the EU Ecolabel online</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social media channels, e.g. posts, competitions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Newsletter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Target sustainability events at tourist destinations, e.g. hotels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• EU Ecolabel Showroom/road shows</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stands at events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enhancing and continuing collaborations/partnerships with businesses, license holders, retailers, programmes, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the most chosen options in terms of previous and planned communication activities, the 31 SAT respondents have and will continue to focus on the following means when promoting the EU Ecolabel in their countries:
- Website activities (84%, 26 of 31 respondents)
- Social media activities (74%, 23 of 31 respondents)
- Events, webinars, seminars, and conferences (65%, 20 of 31 respondents)

Of the 13 most chosen activities, responses show that there is an increased interest by the respondents in participating in world-level events, such as the World Ecolabel Day celebrations and anniversary celebrations. Reaching out to current and potential license holders remain important as well as through additional communication channels such as newsletters and brochures and flyers. This is illustrated in Table 2 and Figure 4 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past activities</th>
<th>Times chosen</th>
<th>Planned activities</th>
<th>Times chosen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website (incl. your organisation website and/or other websites)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Social media posts (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media posts (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Website (incl. your organisation website and/or other websites)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events, webinars, seminars conferences (virtual and on-site)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Events, webinars, seminars conferences (virtual and on-site)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-on-one communication about the EU Ecolabel to license holders and retailers by providing advice and answer questions about companies’ EU Ecolabel applications</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Cooperation with license holders and retailers</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press releases</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Participation in World Ecolabel Day celebrations</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brochure, booklet, guide, flyer</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Press releases</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation and communication with license holders and retailers on EU Ecolabel activities</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Trainings/webinars</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Provide advice and answers questions about companies’ EU Ecolabel applications</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in World Ecolabel Day celebrations</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Anniversary celebrations, information day</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Showrooms/Fairs</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Award ceremonies</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trainings/webinars</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anniversary celebrations, information day</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Brochure, booklet, guide, flyer</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Technopolis Group
Moreover, in the interactive stakeholder workshop and through the polling tool Mentimeter, participants agreed that meetings, events, and conferences are preferred for EU Ecolabel communication EU level. This is illustrated in Figure 5 below.

Participants in the workshop were also asked about their preferences for the communication of the EU Ecolabel to best reach the key audience at the national/regional level, illustrated in
Figure 6 below. The respondents show that they prefer prioritising the same means of communication for both the EU level and the Member State level.

**Figure 6 Workshop - responses for the preferences for the EU Ecolabel communication to best reach key audiences at the national/regional level**

Source: Technopolis Group

Other suggested activities and ideas mentioned in the SAT and in the workshop were:

- Presenting success stories
- To promote current license holders and invite potential license holders to apply for an EU Ecolabel certification
- To carry out activities that improve collaborations between different players to disseminate and support the EU Ecolabel
- Activities that attract the attention of retailers and consumers, e.g. through collaborations with retailers, communication campaigns directed towards shoppers, etc.

Moreover, a few of the sources highlighted that every year one large EU Ecolabel campaign could be planned by the Member States and Competent Bodies with a focus on key products and topics and with the involvement of license holders and retailers. Other suggestions include providing activities that could award key multipliers the role as ‘EU Ecolabel ambassadors’.

From the interactive stakeholder workshop, 52% of the participants responded that they are implementing EU Ecolabel communication activities. 32% have a communication department and 16% use a contractor. Moreover, from the SAT, 62% of the respondents confirm that they have a national communication strategy, while 21% admit that they do not and another 14% who said that they did not know.

Furthermore, the results from the interactive poll at the workshop, emphasised that participants consider that meetings and events (10 votes) are very important to prioritise at the EU level to best reach the key audience, followed by Facebook (8 votes), website articles (8 votes), LinkedIn (7 votes), and press releases (7 votes). At national level, Facebook (10 votes), website

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5 e.g. the good practice from Belgium directed towards retailers and consumers (see Appendix E).
articles (10 votes), meetings, events, and conferences (9 votes), and press releases (7 votes) were considered most important.

3.1 Key audiences

Most of the 131 sources (75, 56%) focused on one key audience, either businesses as retailers, consumers as shoppers, multipliers as either retailers or license holders, the European institutions, or national policy-makers. The rest of the sources (57, 44%) targeted more than one key audience consisting of a combination of key audiences. The sources mentioned consumers (72, 43%) the most, followed by businesses and retailers (7) and EU and national policy makers mentioned 27 times each and with a 16% representation of the total. A few sources also mentioned specifically multipliers (11, 7%) as a term to indicate e.g. CBs, retailers, EEU/BEUC and license holders. The least targeted group by the sources is potential and current license holders (2, 1%), public procurers, academia, and contractors (mentioned 1 time each, 0.5%). A low number of four sources covered all audiences (4, 2.5%), while 18 sources are unclear about their key audience (11%).

While the respondents of the SAT confirmed that consumers (women and men above 25 years of age) are important recipients of EU Ecolabel communication, as indicated in Figure 7 below. Also 17 of 31 respondents emphasise that current license holders are one of their key audiences, followed by EU Ecolabel retailers, and commercial businesses. This was also confirmed at the interactive stakeholder workshop. Two of the analysed sources emphasised that the COVID-19 pandemic crisis would have reduced the reach of the key audience.

Figure 7 SAT – Main key audience according to respondents

Source: Technopolis Group

One of the sources highlighted that priority audiences need more targeted information about the EU Ecolabel to convince them of its added value. Retailers can play a role in relaying this information to suppliers and customers, as well as NGOs with grassroot initiatives and expertise

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6 Includes sources from the European Commission, Member States and Competent Bodies, and from desk research.
7 Retailers can include supermarkets (e.g. Delhaize, Carrefour), online retailers (e.g. Amazon, Zalando), tourist accommodation sites (e.g. Booking, Expedia), etc.
8 Commercial businesses can include companies with the EU Ecolabel such as Filippa K, Kavat, Neutral, etc. Commercial businesses are companies that sell their EU Ecolabel products directly to their consumers without using a retailer.
9 Multiple question
in awareness raising. One of the interviewees also confirmed that they usually receive requests from journalists and use marketing agencies to approach them.

3.2 Collaboration and partnerships

The respondents confirmed that they cooperate mostly with EU Ecolabel licence holders (23%), followed by business organisations/associations (15%), consumer organisations (14%), and EU Ecolabel retailers (11%). They cooperate the least with research associations/networks (3%), other EU Ecolabel Competent bodies (4%), and public research organisations and universities (6%). This is illustrated in Figure 8.

![Figure 8 SAT - respondents’ collaborations with other EU Ecolabel stakeholders](image)

**Source:** Technopolis Group

3.3 Product categories

Of the sources and campaign-related materials that were analysed, 88 of 131 focused on one or more product categories through their communication activity indicating a broad focus. Of the sources that mention one single product group, **tourist accommodation** was most frequent (15), followed by cosmetic products (6), cleaning up (4), furniture (3), personal and animal care products (3), and household products (2).
Source: Technopolis Group

As indicated by Figure 9 above, the respondents to the SAT confirmed that there is a broad interest to cover a variety of EU Ecolabel product groups. When asked which product groups they primarily work on, cleaning products was chosen as most relevant (15), followed by holiday accommodation (13), and paper products (10).

In terms of license evolution in Europe, the EU Ecolabel figures\(^{10}\) show that there has been a gradual increase of licenses in the last years with 2057 licenses in 2021 reaching the top number of licenses in March 2022, 2239 licenses were allocated, providing a 9% increase from the year before. The numbers are illustrated as part of Figure 10 below which shows the evolution of EU Ecolabel products and services from 2016 until March 2022.

Overall, there has been a gradual but large increase of products and services bearing the EU Ecolabel from 38,755 products and services in 2016 to 89,357 products and services in March 2022, amounting to a +130.5% increase. This is illustrated in Figure 11 below.

3.4 Objectives and messages of literature material and sources

Of the 131 previous sources that were analysed, 94 of them have a clear objective (72%). Most of them focus on increasing recognition and awareness about the EU Ecolabel for the general public by communicating about:

- What the EU Ecolabel is as a brand
- Visibility of the logo
- Benefits of choosing an EU Ecolabel product to change behavioural patterns of consumers
- How the EU Ecolabel is reliable, easy label followed a robust technique in the jungle of other labels
- The full lifecycle of the EU Ecolabel
- The growing acceptance of the EU Ecolabel in the European Union
- Better visibility of the logo and the availability of products in various product categories

11 Note 1: In 2016, a drop in products was due to the expiration and revision of criteria for four main product groups.
Note 2: The 2020 drop is mainly due to the expiration of the tissue/graphic paper and lubricants criteria-licenses, with renewal still in progress.

• Opportunities when choosing products labelled with the EU Ecolabel
• Existing license holders in the country’s market
• What sustainability and circular economy are
• How to support fighting climate change
• How to support EU-level initiatives, such as the SDGs and the UN’s 12th Global Goal of Ensuring Sustainable Consumption and Production
• How to promote the concept of sustainable production, consumption, and especially a sustainable lifestyle
• How the EU Ecolabel simplifies the process of integrating environmental requirements into tenders in public procurement processes, also limiting reputational risks

According to the Special Eurobarometer survey 46813 (2017), which covered 28 EU Member States and about 28,000 respondents, the EU Ecolabel is known by merely 27% of the respondents. It is best known in Luxembourg (62%), France (61%), and Denmark (51%). The lowest level of awareness can be seen in Romania (13%), Bulgaria (14%), the Czech Republic (16%), and the UK and Italy with (both 17% of respondents each). Younger generations are more likely to know the EU Ecolabel, such as 35% of 15-24-year-olds and 21% of those above 44 years old. Moreover, 78% of respondents that are aware of the EU Ecolabel trust the products carrying the label as environmentally friendly as opposed to 18% of them who disagree or tend to disagree.

Besides awareness, several sources appealed to consumers’ interests and values to better reach them by emphasising the ‘good’ aspect of EU Ecolabel and its ‘trustworthiness’. One interviewee explained that they had good experiences with connecting the EU Ecolabel with the link to nature.

The message of the sources that were product-focused highlighted the healthy and environmental aspects of EU Ecolabel products, such as the strict criteria to control chemical ingredients in cosmetics and cleaning products with the least possible negative effects on human health; the EU Ecolabel as an anti-greenwashing tool; and its ability to be a real guarantee for consumers regarding sustainable products.

It is notable that four sources focused on the collaboration and cooperation between European countries as important to ensure a common understanding of ecolabelling and its terms (e.g. biodegradable and recyclable) and standardisation. This would, according to one of the reports, ‘improve the quality of environmental claims’14 and the overall coherence of ecolabelling in Europe. From the SAT, 32% of the respondents support the claim that a national or regional policy framework that supports the uptake of the EU Ecolabel is missing and another 25% of the respondents find that no clear/lack of information on the synergies between the EU Ecolabel and other policies such as e.g. green public procurement (GPP), zero pollution objective, UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, European industrial strategy, is a challenge. Suggestions were made to better communicate about the connection with the EU policies, focused on highlighting the benefits of the EU Ecolabel in an easily implementable way, with e.g. slogans and visuals, as well as visible political support nationally and at the EU level.

13 Special Eurobarometer 468 – Attitudes of European citizens towards the environment, 2017, European Commission.
14 A review of public policies relating to the use of environmental labelling and information schemes (eLIS), OECD, 2016: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/environment/a-review-of-public-policies-relating-to-the-use-of-environmental-labelling-and-information-schemes-eelis_5m0p34bk7hb-en
The literature material and sources from the EU level confirmed that to improve the communication of the EU Ecolabel, existing challenges should be addressed and emphasised that targeted increased awareness about the EU Ecolabel towards consumers will also improve people’s knowledge and perception about the EU Ecolabel. The EU-level sources included a wide range of activities presented at the EU level, including showrooms, in-person events, print magazines, social media, website articles, newsletters. The sources covered all EU Member States, as well as Norway, the UK and several business associations and organisations operating at the EU level. These sources also emphasised the need to improve promotional activities, especially in Member States who do not have a strong national ecolabel and subsequently have less competition from national labels, as well as to further harmonise and inform about the EU Ecolabel’s connection with other EU policies.

The OECD sources focused on increasing international coordination between OECD countries on ecolabelling, highlighting current regulations and environmental criteria. Lastly, several documents also mentioned the need to accelerate harmonisation and integration with other EU policies and suggested developing a common EU Ecolabel communication strategy.

As for the interactive stakeholder workshop, participants suggested several core values of the EU Ecolabel, which are illustrated as a word cloud in Figure 12. The main values mentioned were ‘sustainability’, ‘trustworthy’, and ‘credibility’.

Figure 12 Interactive stakeholder workshop - suggested EU Ecolabel core values

Source: Mentimeter

3.5 Outcome, impact, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Regarding the outcome and result of the communication, only 19 sources communicated about impact. In 13 of these, KPIs were used to monitor the results through a variety of activities including social media, newsletters, TV appearances, publications, interviews, website, and social media reach.

Most of the sources indicated that the most influential impact expected by EU Ecolabel communication is increased awareness and knowledge about the EU Ecolabel, more trust in the EU Ecolabel, better community building, and increased awareness of different product categories. Others mentioned that the impact should lead to more sustainable shopping by
the key audience creating a positive impact on the market, and more overarching, the environment and people’s health.

58% of the SAT respondents having confirmed that they carry out large communication campaigns, also indicated that they monitor and assess performance of their communication campaigns, as opposed to 42% who do not.

Based on the literature review, the SAT and the interactive stakeholder workshop, the following KPIs were identified:

- Number of new and lost license holders per year
- Number of license applications
- Number of new retailer collaborations per year
- Social media: followers, impressions, views, likes, reshares, engagement rate, reach
- Website: link to site, readership of owned media articles, website page views, video views
- Click-through-rate for online advertisement
- Event participation
- Survey participation
- Number of downloaded materials on the organisation’s website
- Survey responses of consumer habits in behaviour change projects
- Annual market turnover of labelled products (how many products sold each year)
- Statistics on product sales growth from year to year
- Number of TV appearances
- Number of newsletter subscribers
- Number of publications
- Number of interviews
- Print advertisement in magazines
- Analyse reactive audience
- Monitoring publications by members on their websites

Respondents added that monitoring happens only on a very basic level in terms of what can be easily measured, and that in general, performance is not methodologically measured.

3.6 Comparison with two national labels: Nordic Swan and Blue Angel

The Nordic Swan

The Nordic Swan15 ecolabel has a dominant position in the Nordic countries, i.e. Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, and is used to a higher degree among Nordic companies than the EU Ecolabel. The Nordic Swan label is well positioned within services such as hotels, printing companies, household cleaning products, cosmetics, etc. Most of the larger chains of the Nordic stores have the Nordic Swan and the label is well known among Nordic consumers16. The Eurobarometer 468 confirmed that the EU Ecolabel is better known across the EU Member States than the Nordic Swan, respectively by 27% against 8% of the responses. The Nordic Swan is the best known in Sweden (98%), Denmark (93%), Finland (92%), as well as Estonia (25%). However, the analysis of sources indicate that the EU Ecolabel and the Nordic Swan are too similar, leading to confusion among consumers on the differences between the two labels.

15 General page of Nordic Ecolabelling: https://www.nordic-ecolabel.org; Specific websites per country: https://svanemerket.no (NO); https://www.ecolabel.dk/en (DK); https://www.svanen.se/en/ (SE); https://joutsenmerkki.fi (FI); https://svanurinn.is (ISL)
From the SAT, 39% of the respondents also confirmed that the main challenge in promoting the EU Ecolabel and national labels is the competition with other strong (eco-)labels. Interviews with the Ecolabelling Norway (covering the EU Ecolabel and the Nordic Swan) emphasised the challenge of creating awareness about the EU Ecolabel next to the strong national label of the Nordic Swan, emphasising the need for support to better understand how to differentiate between the two ecolabels towards consumers to avoid confusion. They added that it remains a priority to address this challenge in their national EU Ecolabel communication strategy.

The results using the online media monitoring software, Meltwater, suggested that of all the Nordic countries, Denmark is the most active in communicating about the Nordic Swan both on news websites and in social media, followed by Norway and then Sweden. The trend line for websites including news coverage shows a gradual increase on websites from about 60 mentions in 2016 to about 100 mentions in 2021.

According to the sources, the Nordic Swan cover more product categories than the EU Ecolabel and also have a higher level of criteria in their award requirements (e.g. inspection visits, etc.). The sources also indicate that there is a strategic plan to market the Nordic Swan as a ‘high end’ label, especially directed towards contested industries. Moreover, the Nordic Swan enjoys a higher budget allocation for their communication activities visible in their reported costs of communication activities, and that there is a limited budget to market the EU Ecolabel. Further, similar to the EU Ecolabel communication activities, the sources analysed from the Nordic Swan shows that they are also focusing on the objective of raising awareness.

From the communication activities of the Nordic Swan, the following relevant aspects can be taking into consideration for the EU Ecolabel:

- From the interview, Ecolabelling Norway mentioned using ‘news jacking’ as a method is effective. News jacking means to tap into public debates and engagement about climate change and sustainability (e.g. public debates on sustainability, discussions around the IPCC reports, weather conditions because of climate change, etc.) and subsequently use the opportunity to promote the ecolabel to stir general interest.

- Moreover, the Nordic Swan (Blue Angel) representatives are more visible in the public space attending events such as e.g. festivals, conferences, fairs.

- Additionally, the Nordic Swan provides tailored and marketing guidelines available online for license holders using the Nordic Swan Ecolabel: one for products and another one for services. Comparing these two documents with the EU Ecolabel Logo Guidelines, shows that the Nordic Swan in their ecolabel communication:

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18 https://www.newsjacking.com/
20 Guidelines for using the Nordic Swan Ecolabel in marketing materials for certified services (2021), Nordic Ecolabelling: https://www.nordic-ecolabel.org/contentassets/41d6aad46b69994445b059613167ee9d9/marketing_guidelines_services.pdf
- Uses facts from the Nordic Consumer survey (on the assignment from the Nordic Ecolabelling) to introduce the benefits of choosing Nordic Swan Ecolabel by focusing on the awareness of consumers, the belief of consumers that the ecolabel makes it easier for them to make environmentally friendly choices, and that the consumers knowing the label look for the Nordic Swan logo when choosing products.

- Provides useful examples of marketing materials (e.g. ads and billboards, social media posts, website and online shops, images of the visibility of Nordic Swan products in-store, brochures, examples of press releases) to be implemented for communication purposes.

- Displays products by explaining specifically which parts of the Nordic Swan ecolabelled product is sustainable (see image to the right).

Blue Angel

Blue Angel\(^{22}\) is a strong national brand in Germany covering products and services categories such as household, textiles, household appliances, construction products, paper, heating/energy, mobility. According to the analysed sources, the Blue Angel and the EU Ecolabel co-exist well under the organisation of RAL and GEPA, despite not being as closely linked as the ecolabels in the Nordic countries. Additionally, only a few product groups overlap (textile, footwear, computers/tele, and different coverings) and the criteria are different. A greater number of financial resources are also spent marketing the Blue Angel than the EU Ecolabel in Germany. Additionally, the Blue Angel promotes itself separately from the EU Ecolabel using two different websites: https://www.blauer-engel.de/en and https://eu-ecolabel.de. The Eurobarometer 468 also emphasises that 27% of the respondents in Europe know the EU Ecolabel almost as much as they are aware of the Blue Angel, supported by 23% of the respondents. Moreover, the Blue Angel is well known in Germany (86%), Austria (49%), Luxembourg (49%), and Latvia (24%).

Similar results as above can be seen in the analysis of the Blue Angel in Germany, where the trend line shows a gradual increase of mentions of news websites including coverage about the EU Ecolabel, respectively from about 80 mentions in 2016 to 120 mentions in 2021. Social media activity is estimated from the linear total average declining from about 2 mentions a

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\(^{22}\) https://www.blauer-engel.de/en
month from the beginning of 2021 to about 1 mention a month towards the end of the same year.

From the communication activities of the Blue Angel, the following relevant aspects can be taking into consideration for the EU Ecolabel:

- The promotion of the EU Ecolabel in Germany should take into consideration that the EU Ecolabel is mostly recognised by companies in Germany choosing the EU Ecolabel for global trade, as opposed to consumers who are more aware of Blue Angel
- A percentage of the sales of Blue Angel license holders are returned to RAL to be spent on marketing the ecolabel.
- A product portfolio showcasing the differences of both labels has been provided by Blue Angel to address consumer confusion about product categories²³

3.7 Conclusions

This section concludes with the following:

- The Member States have a high preference for three means for their EU Ecolabel communication activities in the future: i) social media, ii) website activities, and iii) events, webinar and conferences. This preference is expressed by the respondents for both the EU level and the Member State level.
- There is a high degree of knowledge and experience in the Member States in promoting the EU Ecolabel and a highly active interest in participating in EU-level events.
- Most Member States have national/local communication strategies integrating their plans for the promotion of the EU Ecolabel locally. Most of the Member States also agree that an overarching, coherent, agreed-upon approach for the EU Ecolabel at the EU level is lacking.
- The mapping of the main messages, objectives, key audiences indicate that the EU Ecolabel communication campaigns and activities focus on awareness raising, building trust and market recognition of the EU Ecolabel among consumers and businesses with the aim to increase the uptake of the EU Ecolabel. Member States also indicated that they know their key audience, but there is a need for guidance on how to tailor the communication towards their preferred key audience.
- Most of the sources show that EU Ecolabel has had a strong focus on increasing the general public’s awareness about the EU Ecolabel. However, the sources also show that the communication attempts to reach consumers through value-based communication (e.g. EU Ecolabel as good and trustworthy). Respondents also express that humorous and fun communication messages, often along with interesting visuals, create more reactions than generic messages.
- Respondents are interested in working with a range of potential collaboration partners including license holders, retailers, and companies, which are their most common partners, but also other partners such as NGOs with grassroot initiatives and expertise in awareness raising, journalists and marketing agencies.
- Most of the sources indicated that the most important impact that they would like to see by their EU Ecolabel communication is increased awareness and knowledge about the EU Ecolabel among consumers as well as more trust in the EU Ecolabel, and

²³ https://www.blauer-engel.de/en/node/156
increased awareness of different products. However, monitoring happens on a basic level in terms and performance is not methodologically measured.

- The EU Ecolabel communication can take inspiration from the communication of the Nordic Swan and Blue Angel on the following specific concrete points:
  - Address consumer confusion between these strong national labels and the EU Ecolabel in the Scandinavian countries by clearly defining the benefits of choosing EU Ecolabel products as a complementary action to choosing Nordic Swan products (e.g., specify the differences in product categories, specify for shoppers where to look for the logo, emphasise the benefits to license holders and retailers, etc.)
  - Strategically use data about awareness of the EU Ecolabel to convince about added the benefit of choosing EU Ecolabel products (see recommendations on the need for an awareness study and a climate, environment, and economic study)
  - Displays to license holders how to clearly market the EU Ecolabel communication material (see recommendations on the need to update the EU Ecolabel logo marketing guidelines)
  - Address consumer scepticism against ecolabelled products by taking inspiration from how the Nordic Swan displays the sustainability aspects of their products.
  - Implement news jacking as a method and tap into existing engagement in the public domain
  - A clear presence is the public domains at events to increase the visibility of the EU Ecolabel to citizens and consumers
  - Similar requirements of revenue contribution targeting ecolabel communication provided by Blue Angel license holders’ sales, could be considered for the EU Ecolabel in those countries where national labels are strong
  - The infographic provided by Blue Angel to compare product groups with the EU Ecolabel can be used and further developed to showcase the complementary differences and options for consumers, license holders and retailers.
4 EU Ecolabel social media and online website activities

4.1 Social media

The SAT results shows that 81% of the respondents promote the EU Ecolabel through social media channels, while 19% confirm that they do not. However, 35% believe that increasing the frequency of their presence on social media channels can support raising the awareness about the EU Ecolabel to their key audiences, and 90% also indicated that social media posts (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) will be included in their planned activities. The respondents also carry out most of the monitoring of their communication on social media and website. Appendix A provides social media channels per Member State.

Further, Box 2 illustrates the active engagement of EU Ecolabel stakeholders on social media.

Box 2 Member States’ presence on social media

The 26 EUEB members who provided information about their social media channels during the mapping and data collection, report the following:

- 19 members are active on Facebook, while 6 are not (1 is pending in May 2022)
- 12 members are active on Instagram, while 13 are not (1 is pending in May 2022)
- 12 members are active on LinkedIn, while 14 are not
- 11 members are active on Twitter, while 15 are not

By using the media monitoring tool Meltwater, a search for social media activity was carried out from 2016-2021. With regard to social media presence, the results show that the EU Ecolabel enjoyed in average about three mentions per day in 2021. The peaks of activity in January, April, July, and October 2021 are most likely a result of the launch of new EU Ecolabel criteria for product categories in these months; hard covering products and the launch of personal and animal care. This is illustrated in Figure 13.

Figure 13 Social media mentions of the EU Ecolabel per week in 2021

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24 Includes European Commission, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Norway, EEB and BEUC. Romania and Slovenia reported that currently they do not have any social media. Not included are Hungary, Lithuania, and Malta who did not provide information regarding their social media.
The results per country show that Spain had the most active social media presence with 156 mentions in 2021, followed by Germany with 114, France with 99, and Finland with 74, as illustrated by Figure 14.

Figure 14 Social media mentions of the EU Ecolabel per country in 2021

The least active of the countries analysed are Latvia with one mention, Lithuania with two mentions, and Norway, Luxembourg, and Czech Republic with three mentions each in 2021.

Lastly, the Meltwater search showed that Belgium, Spain, and France had the most active influencers.

The European Commission’s communication team promoted the EU Ecolabel on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram through DG ENV social media accounts. The posts were often linked with highly visible topics, such as the EU Green Deal, circular economy, etc. On Twitter, the
European Commission had 132.3 k followers with an 80% of total reach; on Instagram, 35.8 k followers, and on Facebook 291.5 k followers. The EU Ecolabel LinkedIn account was managed by the EU Ecolabel Helpdesk\textsuperscript{25} and currently have 3,586 followers in total with 1014 new followers in March 2022\textsuperscript{26}.

The European Commission confirmed in an interview that due to the many projects and initiatives that need to be promoted on their social media channels, it is crucial that four weeks’ notice is provided for any post to be published. On Twitter, they can commit to two tweets every other week, and run on an ad hoc basis on Facebook and Instagram.

### 4.2 Online news website activity

Moreover, an additional search for online website news activity with mentions of the EU Ecolabel from 2016-2021 was carried out using Meltwater. The results for the website news activity show a gradual increase from about 50 articles in 2016 to 150 articles in 2021, indicating increased interest in the EU Ecolabel by European countries on websites. This is illustrated in Figure 15.

The high peak in September/October 2021 shows an increased activity mostly likely due to the publication of new EU Ecolabel criteria for cosmetics and animal care products, and to the celebration of the World Ecolabel Day on October 14, 2021.

![Figure 15 Website presence of EU Ecolabel per year from 2016-2021](image)

Source: Meltwater, Technopolis Group

During 2016-2021 Germany has been the most active country in promoting online articles about the EU Ecolabel (2138 articles), followed by Spain (1059), Poland (723), and France (525). The least active country was Iceland (2), Malta (5), and Estonia (6). This is illustrated in Figure 16.

\textsuperscript{25} With the support of external contractors, Arctik and adelphi.

\textsuperscript{26} Follower analytics extracted 09.08.2022.
Figure 16 Website news activity on the EU Ecolabel from 2016-2021

Source: Meltwater, Technopolis Group

4.3 Online EU Ecolabel website activity

Additionally, the result of the mapping shows that 6 respondents confirmed that they have a dedicated EU Ecolabel website, while 17 informed that they promote the EU Ecolabel through other websites, including promoting the EU Ecolabel alongside national labels. A full overview can be found as part of Appendix A.

4.4 Lead generation media channels

The desk research showed that 32 of 131 (34%) of the sources used paid media to promote their EU Ecolabel communication, whereas 21 (16%) of those relied on both paid and shared media. Most of the sources (87, 66%) indicated that they used owned media and 12 were using shared media (9%). One of the analysed campaigns suggested taking advantage of paid, earned, shared and owned media to develop an integrated engagement and outreach plan for the EU Ecolabel.

4.5 Conclusions

The section presented the results of social media activity in relation to the EU Ecolabel from 2020-2021 and news website activity from 2016-2021.

The section confirmed that:

- Despite the COVID19 pandemic, the European Commission and the Member States have been active in promoting the EU Ecolabel
- The Member States use social media and their website as means for their EU Ecolabel communication, confirming that most are active on Facebook, but less than half are active on other social media channels like Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn.
- Less than a fourth of the respondents have a dedicated EU Ecolabel website. More than half informed that they promote the EU Ecolabel through other websites, including promoting the EU Ecolabel on other national websites.
• The results indicate an increased interest in the EU Ecolabel by European countries on news websites.

• The desk research showed that well below half of the sources indicate that lead generation media channels have been used. The lack of paid media usage could be understood in relation to the reported 67% of the Member States which reported in the SAT having limited prioritised or no budget available (see Chapter 6).
5 Lessons learned and opportunities for improvement

Recommendations from the SAT respondents as well as from the analysis of the communication activities suggest the following lessons learned and improvements:

- **Communication activities:**
  - Raising awareness about the EU Ecolabel through communication activities is crucial, since there are many consumers that are not yet aware of the benefits of products branded with the EU Ecolabel. Low awareness among consumers about the EU Ecolabel and their ability to differentiate between the various types of ecolabels in the EU, causes confusion of which ecolabel to trust.
  - The promotion of the EU Ecolabel could benefit from an improved quality in execution of activities, by ensuring clear and direct communication presented in a simple way.
  - Creative events such as award ceremonies to put attention to EU Ecolabel products and services in an entertaining way.
  - Health and safety are strong topics as well as showing a visual connection to nature.
  - Events focusing on one product group at the time are more effective as opposed to organising events providing general information on the EU Ecolabel.

- **Communication material:**
  - Need for articles or briefings with information and visuals that Members can reuse and adapt.
  - Humour and striking images in posts attract more interest and emphasises the need for easy-to-share material (e.g. on website, social media).
  - Paper publications are less cost efficient and less measurable than online ones.
  - Testimonials are effective as they can be used by the companies to inform consumers.
  - A focus on product identity attracts those who are environmentally aware or knowledgeable about the EU Ecolabel but is less appealing for those who are not.
  - Reliable and updated statistics such as data from the Eurobarometer, is more impactful when promoting the EU Ecolabel, according to the participants in the interactive workshop.

- **Collaborations and networking:**
  - Networking, collaborations, and bringing together different companies and license holders, including establishing relationships with retailers is useful to create more awareness about the EU Ecolabel and to display the opportunities for potential new license holders. These collaborations can amount to cooperation of EU Ecolabel events and communication campaigns (see Appendix E for good practice examples including collaborations with license holders and retailers).
  - Encourage businesses for the uptake of the EU Ecolabel with close guidance to and support in applying for the label.
  - Collaborations with especially retailers can be complex but efficient.
  - In the interviews, three stakeholders emphasised the continued interaction with industries, institutions, and other collaborations and cooperation, including being
present at their events, as a key success factor. In countries with smaller markets and fewer license holders, cooperation across stakeholders is easier.

- Moreover, one stakeholder confirmed that executing flexibility in this interaction is crucial, finding shared solutions with collaboration partners on how to carry out the promotion as beneficial to both parties as well as tapping into the various expertise available in the collaboration.

- **Proper planning and sufficient time to prepare before implementing communication material are crucial**
  - Cooperation at the regional and national level is key, as well as direct contact with stakeholders
  - Videos are effective, especially when targeting specific product groups and sectors
  - Newsletters as alternative means of communication to reach those that do not have a strong social media presence

Aspects that worked less well and where there are elements of improvement:

- Large campaigns towards retailers are sometimes very time-consuming
- Production of advertorial and editorials as well as the use of influencers to boost communication can be too expensive considering the low outcome
- Printed material (e.g. printed brochures, posters, etc.) is not easy to channel to final users
- Difficulties in countries with a strong national or regional label (e.g. Nordic countries and Germany, with the exception of Denmark)
- Promoting the EU Ecolabel scheme requires that there are ecolabelled products on the market.
- Potential use for promoting and using more of the hashtag #EUEcolabel
- Putting more than one label in a social media post as that can lead to the other labels not to reshare that specific post, leading to reduced reach

Identified solutions and other lessons learned were:

- Finding alternative methods for communication such as newsletters or direct emailing to reach key audiences besides social media, can be helpful.
- Communication and language that is simplified and not too technical is often more effective as well as good planning when relying on dissemination of information through multipliers such as license holders and retailers.

5.1 Conclusions

This section has summarised the lessons learned and area of improvement provided by the mapping:

- Stakeholders emphasise that there are elements of their communication activities that work better than others, such as clear and direct communication presented in a simple way using humour and striking images and being creative in event management to attract more interest.
- Collaboration and networking are useful means to create more awareness about the EU Ecolabel and to display the opportunities for potential new license holders.
• Proper planning and sufficient time to prepare before implementing EU Ecolabel communication material is crucial.

• In terms of aspects that work less well, the mapping shows that large EU Ecolabel campaigns are time consuming and that finding alternatives can be expensive. Moreover, in countries with a strong national/region label, promotion of the EU Ecolabel can be experienced as more challenging.
6 Identified challenges and barriers

The following challenges and barriers were identified:

- Although promotion of the EU Ecolabel is a shared responsibility between the EC and the Member States, the analysed sources indicate that there is a lack of harmonisation from EU level to support the Member States in their EU Ecolabel communication. The sources support the implementation of a Work-Plan that suggests common activities through an activity calendar and a shared strategy. Respondents also indicated that the lack of an EU Ecolabel communication strategy and no clear information on the synergies between the EU Ecolabel and other policies is a challenge (8 or 26% of the respondents).

- Clear information on the different existing ecolabels is needed, especially in those countries where national labels are strong.

- A lack of awareness, trust, and market recognition of the EU Ecolabel among consumers and businesses limit the uptake and impact of the EU Ecolabel.

- The lack of a common environmental message and communication between Member States and organisations was also identified as due to a missing cohesive approach and communication from the EU level and between stakeholders.

- There is a lack of joint communication and collaboration regarding ecolabelling in general, although as shown from the SWOT in Appendix D, several Member States continue collaborations with a variety of stakeholders (e.g. with license holders, environmental organisations, national ministries, universities, schools, retailers, license holders, etc.) to increase awareness and uptake.

- The analysed sources also emphasise that there are additional barriers faced while working to increase awareness about the EU Ecolabel locally. A general consumer scepticism and uncertainty about green products being environmental enough27. Additionally, the deceptive use of greenwashing by some public relations and green marketing was also mentioned by SAT respondents as a barrier to address. Also, the lack of a definition of the term ‘sustainability’ (or awareness about such a definition) was also reported as a barrier.

- A large share of the respondents agreed that the main challenge in their promotion of the EU Ecolabel is insufficient budget for market promotion (39% or 12 of 31 of the respondents28). High cost of advertising with limited budget was also reported as a barrier for many stakeholders. In addition, at the interactive stakeholder workshop, 66% or 10 of 15 participants confirmed that their communication budget has not been increasing in the last couple of years. Due to limited funds, one interviewee commented that they work on a need basis and without any specific strategy or programme. Figure 17 below shows a breakdown of the SAT results regarding the available marketing communication budget for the EU Ecolabel, where 46% admitted to having a limited

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28 There was insufficient and scattered data about budget and costs of EU Ecolabel communication provided by the Member States, making it difficult to make generalised assumption.
budget, followed by 21% declaring no budget, 18% informed that they have a medium budget available, and 4% a highly prioritised budget.

**Figure 17 SAT - marketing communication budget at MS level for communication on the EU Ecolabel**

*Do you have a marketing communication budget for the EU Ecolabel?*

- Highly prioritised budget: 4%
- Limited prioritised budget: 46%
- Medium prioritised budget: 18%
- No budget: 21%
- Unknown: 7%
- I don’t know: 4%

Source: Technopolis Group

Other challenges were as follows:

- In the SAT, 32% or 10 of the respondents believe that a **national/regional policy framework to support the uptake** of the EU Ecolabel is lacking.
- Moreover, 29% or 9 respondents stated that a **lack of a common narrative** for the EU Ecolabel, including visual purposes should be addressed.
- Also, **lack of demand for products and services bearing the EU Ecolabel, not enough marketing and communication material provided at the EU level, and lack of knowledge about consumer perception nationally and/or in an EU context** are all supported by 7 or 22% of the respondents each. The analysed sources also indicates that in some Member States there are **too few green labelled products on the market and consumer demand is missing**, making it harder to effectively communicate about the possibilities of choosing EU Ecolabel products. The results from the interactive poll at the interactive stakeholder meeting also confirm this result.

In Figure 18 below, the main top challenges from the SAT are illustrated.

**Figure 18 SAT - main challenges in promoting the EU Ecolabel**
6.1 Conclusions

In this section, the results show the following main points:

- The reported lack of harmonisation across Member States for the EU Ecolabel communication supports the need for the implementation of an EU-level communication Work plan for the EU Ecolabel.

- There is a need for support for common and effective environmental and communication messages for EU Ecolabel activities implemented nationally and locally.

- The results show varied responses in terms of available budget for EU Ecolabel communication activities with almost two thirds saying they have limited or no budget opportunities.

- Respondents report a need for more collaborations across Member States, although many Member States already actively engage in various collaborations for the communication of the EU Ecolabel.

- The Member States indicate that they face a double challenge when promoting the EU Ecolabel in the attempt to raise awareness while also combatting greenwashing and consumer scepticism against green products.
7 Support solutions and needs

7.1 Solutions to identified challenges

As indicated in Figure 19 below, respondents in the SAT reported that their needs can be met by four main solutions, perceived as a priority:

1. Developing a tailored and strategic national/regional EU Ecolabel Communication Plan to be implemented monthly/yearly/every two years (14 respondents, 45%)
2. Providing more support to EU Ecolabel stakeholders through toolkit for promotions, visuals, activity calendar, etc. who can act as multipliers (13 respondents, 42%)
3. Support for increasing the frequency of EU Ecolabel presence on social media channels (11 respondents, 35%)
4. Implementing the upcoming Strategic Multi-Annual EU Ecolabel Communication Work Plan (11 respondents, 35%)

Figure 19 SAT - solutions to identified needs

Which of the following solutions can address your needs? (independently of the needed capacity)

- To develop a tailored and strategic national/regional plan to be implemented monthly/yearly/every two years - 14
- To provide more support to EU Ecolabel stakeholders (e.g. toolkit for promotions, visuals, activity calendar, etc.) who can act as multipliers - 13
- To increase the frequency of your presence on the EU Ecolabel on social media channels - 11
- To implement the upcoming Strategic Multi-Annual EU Ecolabel Communication Work plan - 11
- To organise more events to promote awareness - 10
- To set up a national or local network/forum for EU Ecolabel stakeholders that would benefit from sharing their challenges, good practices, experiences, and needs from implementing the EU Ecolabel - 10
- Participation in the EU Ecolabel Communication Core Group - 8
- To implement nationally/locally a monitoring and measuring framework to better learn from past experiences - 6
- Closer cooperation with other Competent Bodies - 5

Source: Technopolis Group

Other identified solutions were:

- Organising more events\(^{29}\) to promote awareness was emphasised with 10 votes
- To share good practices, challenges, and experiences in implementing the EU Ecolabel through a network or forum with 10 votes

\(^{29}\) e.g. local events like Ecolabel press day (see example of good practice from Austria in Appendix E) or EU level events such as World Ecolabel Day, Showrooms etc.
Participation in the EU Ecolabel Communication Core Group

To implement nationally or locally a monitoring and measuring framework to better learn from past experiences with 6 votes

Closer cooperation with other Competent Bodies

These main results indicate more immediate needs, some of which are already in planning: access to professional visuals, images, videos, etc. also in relation to the 30th anniversary. The respondents commented that a library of high-quality material such as visuals and videos from the EU level could potentially increase the performance success rate. Several interviewees also mentioned that they occasionally work with external communication contractors to obtain videos for social media and their websites. Two respondents highlighted that future material should be announced and be provided as early as possible in order to give sufficient time to share it with the network and allow stakeholders to include it in their communication planning. They emphasised that while all support is welcome, staff capacity and budget should be taken into consideration.

Towards existing and potential license holders and retailers, nine participants suggested that targeted retail-focused events to reach new license holders could be a solution, as well as to develop testimonials with 1-2 license holder representatives for each product category (9 votes).

Moreover, equal votes of 7 were given to the solution of exchanging good practices, providing EU Ecolabel exposure in national events, and organising specific meetings with networks to inform their members about the EU Ecolabel.

7.2 Needs

The stakeholders reported that to improve their EU Ecolabel communication, their needs are primarily directed towards more communication material for the 30th anniversary celebration in 2022 and other campaign material for other events, and more funding to support the promotion of the EU Ecolabel, both supported by 48% or 15 of respondents each.

Also, the interviews supported that a lack of material often leads to publishing the same pictures and posts, which is believed to have less of an impact. More variety in the material (e.g. digital material, but also EU Ecolabel pens, notebooks) is needed.

Further, they indicated that access to professional visuals, images, videos, etc., and promotional material or information about the EU Ecolabel portfolio of product/service categories is required, supported by respectively 14 respondents (45%) and 12 respondents (39%).

Other reported needs mentioned were:

- Support to understand how to better interact with EU Ecolabel stakeholders in my country (10 respondents, 32%)

- An understanding of the synergies with other EU policies to attract potential license holders (9 respondents, 29%)

- Good practices on successful marketing campaigns (9 respondents, 29%)

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30 e.g. pamphlets, flyers, posters, banners, campaign merchandise, etc.
31 e.g. learning by examples of good practices, collaborations with license holders and retailers, etc.
• Support with material for trainings and skills development among our staff and EU license holders (8 respondents, 25%)
• Support to understand how to improve the uptake of EU Ecolabel product/services by license holders in my country through communication campaigns (8 respondents, 25%)
• Support to develop a better monitoring system of our performance in promoting the EU Ecolabel (7 respondents, 22%)
• From the interviews, the stakeholders also reported the need for an activity calendar, information on how to communicate with the ecolabels coming from other countries and on how to target the audience based on consumer groups, a common newsletter from the EU Ecolabel with information about common activities, and more financial resources.

These results are illustrated in Figure 20.

**Figure 20 SAT - current needs of Member States for EU Ecolabel promotion**

Source: Technopolis Group

Moreover, the participants indicated that to allow Member States to do effective communication activities, the European Commission should:

• Provide communication material, i.e. leaflets, visuals, roll-up, gadget, etc. also in national languages and for social media, e.g. testimonial videos and as early as possible
• Participate in national events
• Provide more national-tailored resources for communication campaigns
• Update numbers from a Eurobarometer survey to include questions on the EU Ecolabel
• Support with budget for communication
• Grant further ecological criteria to increase the number of EU Ecolabel categories
• Update the EU Ecolabel criteria
• Provide a common EU Ecolabel communication strategy to support the promotion of the EU Ecolabel nationally
• Facilitate sharing good practices among Member States and testimonials (not only from licence holders, but also from consumer organisations, federations)
• Have an integrated approach with other EU policy communication materials that can be adapted to be used by licence holders
• Organise an ‘EU Ecolabel week’, e.g. where Member States can present their work on promoting the EU Ecolabel nationally and learn from others, learn and acquire more knowledge on EU Ecolabel at the EU level, etc.
• Set drivers to make the audience more aware of certification schemes and help consumers understand greenwashing and the difference between labelled and non-labelled products

Regarding what participants believe the communication Work Plan should focus more on:
• ‘Revamping the EU Ecolabel website’ was supported by 12 of 15 votes;
• Optimisation of EU Ecolabel Catalogue (ECAT) and cooperation with online platform sites with 11 of 15 votes; and
• Increase awareness through education with 9 of 15 votes.

Another 13 participants agreed to use the Work plan actively for the planning of their communication activities, while three answered ‘partially’.

Additionally, the literature review carried out at the EU level, emphasised the following lessons learned in relation to communication activities:
• A future strategy for the EU Ecolabel should focus on increasing the promotion of the EU Ecolabel at all levels, especially in Member States with a weak national label
• Accelerate the development of synergies between the EU Ecolabel and other EU policies (e.g. green public procurement, zero pollution) and develop a common communication strategy for promotional activities across EU-level initiatives
• Enhance the EU Ecolabel on the market by boosting awareness for industry uptake and consumers’ awareness
• Promote the EU Ecolabel as a relevant tool in policy initiatives and in connection with other key words such as sustainable consumption and production, circular economy, sustainable lifestyles, sustainable finance, and climate action.
• Communication should also educate about the external consequences of unsustainable products, so that consumers may be encouraged to buy more sustainable product
• Paid posts on social media can be optimised for specific objectives and be evaluated by a set of KPIs, which is recommended to improve future campaigns
• Due to the discrepancies on EU Ecolabel communication activities across Europe, recommendations and strategies should be implemented depending on the country in question and the segment of the population.
• Clear determination of roles for the communication of the EU Ecolabel with regard to the European Commission, Member States/Competent bodies, NGOs, business partners, and licence holders, in line with the requirements of the EU Ecolabel Regulation.
7.3 Conclusions

This section on identified solutions and needs emphasise that:

- Four main solutions to the challenges should be pursued: ensure national/regional communication plans; more communication materials with visuals, activity calendars, etc.; more active participation on social media channels; and the implementation of the upcoming Strategic Multi-Annual EU Ecolabel Communication Work Plan.

- Other identified solutions and needs focus on closer cooperation with other Competent Bodies, implementation of a monitoring and measuring framework, participation in the Communication Core Group of the European Commission, examples of successful marketing campaigns as inspiration, and support with materials for trainings and skills development internally.

- From the European Commission, the respondents indicate that they would like to receive common communication materials in the EU languages, have EC participation in national events, receive updated statistics from a similar study as the Eurobarometer focused on the EU ecolabel to support EU Ecolabel communication, receive support with communication budget, and general support to networking and collaboration across Member States.
8 Recommendations for the EU Ecolabel Communication Work Plan

Based on the above-presented results, the recommendations for the Work plan are as follows:

General recommendations

- The analysis shows that the European Commission and the Member States have three preferred means of EU Ecolabel communication activities: social media, website activities, and events. The Work plan should take this preference as a starting point when suggesting key messages, channels, and communication material for the promotion of the EU Ecolabel using these means, without excluding other relevant communication activities.

- The Work plan should distinguish between suggested actions for the European Commission and the Member States, including taking into consideration that Member States with a strong, national ecolabel face other local challenges when promoting the EU Ecolabel (see Chapter 3 for examples with Nordic Swan and Blue Angel). Additionally, the Work plan should take into consideration the point that in some Member States, there are too few EU Ecolabelled products on the market and consumer demand is missing, making it harder to effectively communicate about the possibilities of choosing EU Ecolabel products.

- Due to the need for increased harmonisation of EU Ecolabel communication across EU Member States, the Work plan should encourage and show how Member States can easily integrate elements from the Work plan into their national/local communication strategies.

- Due to the existing level of collaboration/indicated need for more collaboration, the Work plan should suggest how EU Ecolabel can be relevant for potential collaboration partners such as license holders, retailers, and other companies, as well as more ‘unconventional’ collaboration partners such as NGOs with grassroot initiatives and expertise in awareness raising, journalists and marketing agencies.

- Due to the high number of Member States not yet tapping into social media as a means for communicating about the EU Ecolabel, the Work plan should encourage and show how Member States can use social media channels to communicate about the EU Ecolabel, especially supporting those Member States that in the results show low level of social media promotion.

Need for an EU Ecolabel awareness study
There is an identified need by the analysis to better understand the current status of awareness about the EU Ecolabel at Member State level, especially to better adjust and coordinate more efficiently the level of activity across the Member States and to meet the new trend and ideas emerging, which are leading towards more shared activation ideas across Member States (e.g. showroom, increased engagement and interest for collaborations among Member States).\footnote{The latest data is from the Eurobarometer study from 2017.} Examples of how data has been used to promote awareness and benefits of ecolabels is further explained under the Nordic Swan ecolabelling in Chapter 3. The analysis shows that the Member States need updated and relevant data from a market analysis providing statistics on consumer attitudes, comparative analysis of the EU Ecolabel and other green labels. Alternatively, they suggest more information on where to access this data to better communicate about the benefits of the EU Ecolabel. The recommendation is for the European Commission to launch an updated Eurobarometer study to collect the following (but not limited to) information:

- Awareness of the EU Ecolabel per European country and in comparison, with other national labels per country
- Socio-demographic differences focusing on the EU Ecolabel, by age, education and socio-professional categories
- Frequency of a purchase of ecolabel products carrying the EU Ecolabel, also in comparison with other national labels and per country
- Number of respondents who believe that ecolabels play an important part in their purchasing decision
- Number of respondents who believe that the EU Ecolabel plays an important part in their purchasing decision
- Number of respondents wanting to buy more climate-friendly products
- Degree of trust in ecolabels and degree of trust in the EU Ecolabel

**Key audiences**

The analysis recommends that the Work plan focuses the suggested activities on the following key audiences:\footnote{Based on the preferences indicated in the SAT and interviews with CBs.}:

- **EU level:** EU Ecolabel retailers (including e-retailers), commercial businesses, consumer and business organisations, and current and potential license holders.
- **Member State level:** Consumers (men and women, young adults), current and potential license holders and retailers (including e-retailers).
Note that whilst these are the recommended key audiences, it is crucial that the focus on the key audiences is adjusted to the objectives of each communication action.

**Messages**

Regarding the messages and product groups and following the feedback received from the analysis on a clear narrative and messages, the Work plan should follow the below recommended messaging:

**Recommended topline messaging and benefits of the EU Ecolabel:**
- How can the EU Ecolabel guide consumers, business, and retailers into making sustainable choices
- What are the benefits of Eu Ecolabel products (for the climate, health, etc.)
- How does the EU Ecolabel tackle greenwashing
- EU Ecolabel are high quality products

**Develop a set of messages/slogans for the promotion of the 11 categories of EU Ecolabel product groups:**
- What are the groups and what specific products do they cover
- Highlight the stringent criteria (recyclability, reduced toxins, sustainably sourced materials, etc.)
- Showcase the benefits/impact of such criteria (better for health, wildlife, nature, climate, etc.)
- Success stories of labelled products

**Messaging for consumers with a clear narrative tailored to the various key audiences and product categories:**
- Why should they buy EU Ecolabel (instead of other products)
- Their direct contribution to climate when buying EU Ecolabel products (with the support of EU-level study, e.g. Eurobarometer)
- The EU Ecolabel means buying products and services that are proven to be durable, recyclable, and circular
- The analysis shows a confusion about the link between the EU Ecolabel with relevant EU policies and initiatives. If possible, the material should integrate the link to clarify EU Ecolabel’s role in the EU policy landscape.

**Messaging for business:**
- How does the EU Ecolabel increase their environmental impact (with the support of EU-level study)
- Consumers are looking for more sustainable and environmentally friendly products.
Localisation of messaging through clustering:

- Cluster and audience specific messaging will need to be created/adapted by stakeholders and based on local needs. Depending on the nature of the campaign and following the recommendations and guidelines for matching and targeting provided in the work plan.

Tools and channels

The work plan should suggest a list of channels (e.g. social media, website, radio, newspaper, etc.) for stakeholders and the EC to carry out their EU Ecolabel communication. Due to the budgetary limitations of many Competent Bodies, the channels suggested must be cost-effective, focusing on websites, social media, and events (e.g. workshops, reusable stands, static and mobile showrooms, etc.).

For the European Commission, each channel must be adjusted to each individual campaign, considering the objectives, audience, and messages. It is recommended that for larger campaigns the European Commission prepares toolkits with ready-to-use materials that CBs can use and distribute locally to enhance the outreach of the communication action.

Communication material

The analysis shows that there is a need for communication material that responds to specific functions of various communication channels. Moreover, it was emphasised that communication material focusing on one product group is preferred above the combination of several products group to ensure a clear message to recipients. For stakeholders to be able to communication effectively and coherently, access to professional campaign material is a necessity. The work plan should provide:

- Campaign material (Promotional material or information about the EU Ecolabel portfolio of product/service categories).
- Access to professional visuals, videos, editorial content, etc.
- Easy, ready to use and replicable communication materials
- Guideline on how to effectively create and/or adapt materials to local needs, including:
  - Integration of communication actions into existing climate/environment actions/events.
  - Tailoring of communication material for the specific functions and options for the various social media channels.

Due to the increased interest of the EU Ecolabel by European countries on news websites, the Work plan should also consider tailoring the means of activities to material such as press releases, newsletters, etc.

Lessons learned from the comparison with the Nordic Swan and Blue Angel, shows ways of addressing consumer confusion, how to use of statistical data to create awareness about benefits of the ecolabel, creative methods like “news jacking” to excite engagement in the public domain, physical preference at the local level events where citizens/consumers gather, adjusted requirements towards license holders to address budget constrains in communication activities, clear marketing material showing complementary benefits of both labels in the turn...
The analysis recommends taking inspiration from these methods further explained in Chapter 3. More specifically, the analysis recommends to:

- Provide communication material that addressed the differences and benefits of complementary choosing EU Ecolabel products and products with national labels (e.g. Germany, Nordic countries), preferably as visuals
- Integrate data and statistics (provided that the two studies mentioned in these recommendations are produced) in the communication material
- Updating the EU Ecolabel Logo Guidelines by including how to market the EU Ecolabel communication material with examples of the use of means (e.g. ads and billboards, social media posts, website and online shops, examples of press releases, etc.) and display specifically example(s) of the sustainable parts of EU Ecolabel products (see Chapter 3)
- Encourage Member States to be present where citizens and consumers gather to promote the EU Ecolabel, e.g. festivals, fairs, events, conferences, etc.

**Budgetary considerations**

The budgetary needs and staff capacity of both the European Commission and the Member States vary both in terms of communication activities and the use of tools, according to the analysis. More than half of the respondents indicate that they have limited or no budget for communication activities.

The Work plan should take into consideration inexpensive options by:

- Suggesting alternative free and/or cost-efficient online and offline tools, e.g. Mentimeter, Meltwater, tweet deck, Facebook Audience Builder, etc. for carrying out the EU Ecolabel communication
- Including in its clustering strategy recommendations of countries that could pull resources together and cooperate in the implementation of EU Ecolabel communication activities.
- Create groups of Member States that can work together on the development of specific communication priorities/topics using the SWOT in Appendix D as a starting point.

Additionally, it is suggested that the Work plan provides the Member States with information on how to access more funding to support the promotion of the EU Ecolabel.

To ensure that the Member States can use the communication material in an easy and accessible way at a low cost, the European Commission should provide translations of the communication material to all EU languages.

The mapping and analysis suggest that a capacity building mechanism should be put in place for CBs/Member States with limited financial and human resources, as is the case for other European policies, programmes or instruments.
**Forward planning**

As Member States express the need to have sufficient time to prepare campaigns and the use of communication material, the Work plan should make sure to:

- Allow at least 1-year of forward planning to ensure that CBs can plan ahead, secure budget, and resources and enable synergies.
- Align itself with the already-planned activities of the European Commission, Members States/Competent Bodies

**Good practices**

As part of its bottom-up approach, the Work plan should suggest a forum where Member States can identify, develop and facilitate the exchange of good and replicable practices and ensure mutual learning from EU Ecolabel communication activities and events. e.g. EUEB, communication groups, or working groups.

As several Member States indicated that they would like examples of good practices on successful marketing campaigns, this report suggests attaching to the Work plan the three good practices from Appendix E.

**Monitoring and assessment system**

The lack of a consistent monitoring and assessment of EU Ecolabel communication at the EU level and in the Member States, limits the smart steering of promotional activities and the potential for knowledge enhancement by learning from previous experiences. A monitoring and assessment system with a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) should be developed to support decision-making and to ensure that the European Commission and the Member States make the necessary adjustments to reach their desired key audiences. The work plan should explain how to implement the monitoring and assessment system and suggest solutions that are easy to implement. The monitoring and assessment system should be implemented before the Member States prepare their annual communication strategies so that the Member States can take into consideration the assessment. Moreover, the system should be versatile enough to account for the fact that some Member States and EU Ecolabel stakeholders represent Competent Bodies and other members.

**Climate, environmental, and economic impact study**

The analysis recommends that the European Commission launches an in-depth study on EU Ecolabel and ecolabels in Europe and their impact on the environment as well as the economic impact that includes relevant data, e.g.:

- Budget (cost) for consumer buying the EU Ecolabel vs other products versus non-environmentally friendly products
- Environmental impact of buying EU Ecolabel products as opposed to buying other non-environmentally friendly products including
  - Reduction of CO₂ emissions (from sourcing through production)
  - Impact of toxins in bodies of water/land, etc.
  - Impact of sourcing sustainable materials for production
• Average cost and benefit of production of EU Ecolabel products for license holder versus non-environmentally friendly products

Facts and figures from this study can then be turned into communication messages and material targeting businesses and consumers and other EU Ecolabel stakeholders.
9 Appendices

A. **EU Ecolabel communication channels in the Member States/Stakeholders (website, social medial and influencers)** ................................................................. Error! Bookmark not defined.

B. **Interview guide template** ................................ Error! Bookmark not defined.

C. **Template used for social media and website data collection** Error! Bookmark not defined.

D. **SWOT analysis** .............................................................. Error! Bookmark not defined.

E. **Examples of good practices on EU Ecolabel communication** ................. 69
A. EU Ecolabel communication channels in the Member States/Stakeholders (website, social medial and influencers)\(^{34}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Website link</th>
<th>Facebook (channels and hashtags)</th>
<th>Instagram (channels and hashtags)</th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>Top influencer per country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>EU Ecolabel (EU level)</td>
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<td>DG ENV Facebook Account</td>
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\(^{34}\) The table includes countries that provided information about their communication channels. The table of communication channels was prepared in May 2022.
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B. Interview guide template

**INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**Stakeholder Engagement activities and support to communication – EU Ecolabel**

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<td>Role in EU Ecolabel communication</td>
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<td>Email address</td>
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**Questionnaire and Introductory statement to the interviewees**

In cooperation with Arctik and on behalf of the European Commission (DG ENV), Technopolis Group is carrying out interviews as part of the project, ‘Stakeholder Engagement activities and support to communication for the EU Ecolabel’.

The project supports the European Commission in the preparation of a five-year EU Ecolabel Communication Work plan, which is meant to provide EU Ecolabel stakeholders with a multi-annual strategic work plan, and a calendar for future communication activities.

This work plan will be based on a mapping process where our team collects EU Ecolabel stakeholders’ views on drivers, gaps, needs, challenges, and ideas to better understand what works and what can be improved in their communication work of the EU Ecolabel.

Interviews are now being carried out with a selection of EU Ecolabel stakeholders, including EU Member States, Competent Bodies (CBs), and other stakeholders who are engaged in the promotion of the EU Ecolabel.

We value your contributions and are grateful for your time!

<table>
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**TOPIC: DRIVERS AND GOOD PRACTICES**

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<th>Answer</th>
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<tr>
<td>What are the <strong>programmes/strategies/ instruments/guidance currently in place that have facilitated/supported</strong> your communication activities of the EU Ecolabel?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the <strong>key success factors</strong> for your communication activities and strategies to encourage the uptake of products and services labelled with the EU Ecolabel?</td>
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<tr>
<td>The mapping analysis report will contain 2-3 good examples of communication campaigns of the EU Ecolabel. Could you please <strong>give an example of a successful communication campaign/activity</strong> that you believe can be an inspiration for other EU Ecolabel stakeholders, and explain why?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there any other lessons learned that you could share regarding the best ways to succeed when designing and implementing communication activities for EU Ecolabel products or services? Are there any lessons learned to be shared from partnerships or cooperation with other stakeholders (e.g. CBs, EUEB, EEB, license holders, etc.)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Based on communication targeting your main audience, what is the main impact/results from your communication activities (e.g. increased awareness about the EU Ecolabel towards consumers/producers, higher number of followers on social media, increased reach, higher number of applicants contacting for certification, etc.)?</td>
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**TOPIC: MONITORING AND ASSESSING OF PERFORMANCE**

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<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you have defined targets for your communication activities? If <strong>yes</strong>, how do you define them? If <strong>no</strong>, why not?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do you monitor and assess the performance/success (results and impacts) of your EU Ecolabel communication campaigns? If any, what are the KPIs/indicators that you use? How do you collect the information?</td>
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**TOPIC: CHALLENGES/BARRIERS**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are your main challenges when promoting EU Ecolabel products and services through activities, social media, website articles, etc.?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there any lessons learned from ‘failed’ communication campaigns of the EU Ecolabel?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How have you overcome these challenges in your communication work of the EU Ecolabel?</td>
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</table>
**TOPIC: IMPROVEMENTS, NEEDS AND SUPPORT**

What are your current needs in terms of your communication of the EU Ecolabel?

Based on the SAT, you indicated that your key audience is

*Please add results from SAT here*

Please explain your chosen key audience.

*If not indicated, please ask: Who is your key audience, and why?*

How do you adapt your EU Ecolabel communication to ensure that you reach your key audience?

In your opinion, are there any tools (i.e. digital tools, sharing platforms, activity calendar) or guidance, etc. that could support you in improving the effectiveness of your communication activities?

**TOPIC: WORK PLAN**

Your inputs today will be valuable for the development of a Work plan for the EU Ecolabel that will support Member States with promotional activities for the next five years. The Work Plan will consist of:

- The narrative, values, objectives, priorities, key audience, and key messages of the EU Ecolabel based on the contributions of the MS/stakeholders
- Actors involved and attribution of roles
- Proposed future activities
- Common calendar of activities
- Monitoring

Based on this list, are there any elements that you believe are important to include in the Work plan (e.g. support needs, information, etc.)?

How will you use the Work plan for your communication work, and do you have any specific expectations in terms of its implementation?

In your organisation, do you have a dedicated team to implement communication activities?

*If yes*, how many full-time persons?

*If not*, do you receive any external support? (e.g. communication contractor etc.)

In the implementation of your future communication activities as part of the Work plan, what should be the role of:

- European Commission?
- Organisations at national/local level?
- Multipliers?
- Any other actors? (Please ask the interviewee to list them, if relevant)
**ADDITIONAL INPUTS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>Do you know of any relevant study/material that you believe we should look at as we are preparing the Work plan?</td>
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<td>Is there anything else you find relevant to mention that we have not asked about?</td>
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C. Template used for social media and website data collection

Social media and website data 2016-2021
EU Ecolabel communication

Name of entity: please add info
Country: please add info

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social media year X</th>
<th>Your social media handle/link (i.e. @EUEcolabel)</th>
<th>Number of posts</th>
<th>Number of impressions</th>
<th>Number of shares / retweets</th>
<th>Average ‘Likes’ per posts (i.e. thumbs, hearts, claps)</th>
<th>Average engagement rate (%)</th>
<th>Link to the top 3 posts</th>
<th>Audiences most interested in your posts (through likes and reshares) (e.g. retailers, license holders, etc.)</th>
<th>Have you spent any money boosting/promoting posts?</th>
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</table>
Data from your website regarding EU Ecolabel/your country’s EU Ecolabel website (2016-2021):

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<td>How many have ‘link clicks’ do you have from your official website to the EU Ecolabel website?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How many ‘hits’ do you have on your webpage concerning the EU Ecolabel?</td>
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<tr>
<td>If you have any download options concerning the EU Ecolabel, how many people have downloaded material from your website?</td>
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<td>(If you can, please also indicate the type of material i.e. logo guidelines, brochures, visuals etc...)</td>
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D. SWOT analysis

The separate SWOT tables per country have been addressed directly to the country representatives.

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35 The table includes stakeholder feedback from countries that were covered by the literature review and who responded to the request for data through direct request, the survey and interviews. Selected information to map the SWOT is based on indicators mentioned in sub-chapter 2.4.
E. Examples of good practices on EU Ecolabel communication

From the desk research, the survey, the interviews, and the workshop, three good practices is hereby presented as case studies to foster topical, inspiring examples of good approaches and practices that can be implemented to achieve improved communication of the EU Ecolabel. The case studies focus on lessons learned and strengths for future campaigns and design in its implementation.

Good practice 1: EU Ecolabel license holder event: Ecolabel Press Day

GOOD PRACTICE FOR LICENSE HOLDERS

EU Ecolabel license holder event: Ecolabel Press Day

Austria

Description of the promotional event

The event ‘Ecolabel Press Day’ was organised in June 2020 for the celebration of the Austrian ecolabel’s 30th anniversary. Originally designed as a press conference, the format of the event was changed into one-on-one interviews between current and potential Austrian ecolabel and EU Ecolabel license holders and journalists, due to the restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

The event was held at the Austrian ecolabel certified hotel, Austria Trend Parkhotel Schönbrun. It was organised by the press agency Himmelhoch in cooperation with the Austrian Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation, and Technology (Bundesministerium, Klimaschutz, Umwelt, Energie, Mobilität, Innovation und Technologie), which is also the EU Ecolabel Competent Body responsible for promoting the EU Ecolabel in Austria.

36 https://www.himmelhoch.at
The license holders attending the one-on-one interviews were identified through a stakeholder mapping carried out in cooperation with the Austrian Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation, and Technology. License holders and journalists were selected based on their knowledge of sustainable products and within a series of topics, including some covered by the EU Ecolabel. Product categories covering tourism, green energy, and green finance were preferred over other categories such as household and cleaning and office, paper, and printing, primarily based on media interest among journalists and readers. The budget of the event was relatively low as both the license holders and the journalists took care of their expenses. The event concept was developed by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation, and Technology, and carried out by Himmelhoch. The organisation of the promotional event required the deployment of three full-time employees from Himmelhoch for one working week each. The overall budget was provided by the Austrian Ecolabel as part of their overall communication budget and the event was not defined separately. Himmelhoch provided their services as part of their annual retainer.

Objectives
The main objectives of the promotional event were to:

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37 Topics including green mobility, green production, green meetings and events, green restaurant and catering solutions, green energy, green finance, and tourism. The organisers also contacted license holders from categories such as green office, green living, green cleaning, and household products.

• Show that sustainable solutions and sustainable business models can also bring economic benefits to companies

• Raise the target audiences’ awareness about ecolabels (national and EU), including current and potential license holders, journalists, and consumers reading the press coverage

• Support certified license holders during the difficult period of the pandemic crisis with a dedicated media presence.

Key target audience
The key primary target audience included current national and EU ecolabel license holders and journalists.

The secondary target audience was stakeholders targeted by the press coverage, namely potential national and EU license holders and consumers. Journalists were invited to interview current license holders about their uptake and development of sustainable solutions. The event raised the journalists’ awareness of the sustainable activities carried out by national and EU ecolabel license holders operating in different economic sectors. In addition, the media coverage of the event allowed reaching out to consumers and potential new license holders.

Activity description
Interviewers for the one-to-one interviews were chosen by topic and suggested by the communication agency Himmelhoch, based on their database of 6000 Austrian media journalists working for magazines, newspapers, and online platforms in the country. Additionally, in connection with the event, the organisers arranged for a radio interview with the license holder Superfilm Filmproduktion, for Radio FM4 as a two-part contribution to the morning show and the daily afternoon show. The license holder talked about green filmmaking and the daily implementation of sustainable film production.

In the preparation phase of the promotional event, the organisers first sent a save-the-date invitation to a selected group of journalists and license holders, followed by a formal invitation to the event to secure their participation. Each interview was held in separate rooms at the event’s venue, respecting the health requirements at the time.

Results and impact
After the event, a press release was launched, focusing on the ecolabels, the ecolabeled sustainable products and services, and the license holders. Austria’s biggest daily newspaper - Kurier - provided content for a special edition called the ‘Ecolabel Supplement’. Moreover, the license holders were invited to publish marketing ads to further promote their ecolabeled products in the daily news after the event.
In the end, 17 license holders were invited to the event\(^39\). The invited EU Ecolabel license holder Pernauer\(^40\) provides most of the EU Ecolabel & Austrian ecolabel cleaners and detergents available in Austria. Representatives from nine companies attended the Ecolabel Press Day in person, including the ecolabeled Schick Hotels as well as Cup Solutions, Impacts catering & events, Heavy Pedals, Austria Trend Hotels, Oekostrom AG, Mondial Reisen, Umweltcenter der Raiffeisenbank Gunskirchen, and Vila Vita Pannonia. Additionally, the Austrian Consumers Association and the EU Ecolabel Competent Body in Austria participated and took part in the interviews. Ten journalists from the Kurier, Umwelt Journal, Best Banking, tip (Profi Reisen), e-fund research, Print & Publishing (European Media Group), Businessart, and Ökonews carried out the interviews, which were published as print and online articles\(^41\).

**Key takeaways and transferability**

According to the survey, Special Eurobarometer ‘Attitudes of European citizens towards the environment’ (2017), which included Austrian respondents, 27% of the total respondents have heard about the EU Ecolabel. In Austria specifically, this is supported by the view of 85% of the Austrian respondents, who believe that protecting the environment is important. The awareness of the country-specific label Österreichisches Umweltzeichen is high. 68% of the respondents confirmed that they know the label, and 73% acknowledged that they have bought products carrying the label. As for the EU Ecolabel, 38% of the Austrian respondents confirmed being aware of the label and 47% of them believe that the EU Ecolabel is trustworthy and environmentally friendly.

From the Austrian Gallup Institute survey from 2020\(^42\) carried out for the Austrian Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation, and Technology, there is a slight decrease in awareness about the EU Ecolabel from 28% in 2019 to 25% in 2020 (whereas 59% of the respondents in 2020 are aware of the Austrian ecolabel). The latter point makes a good baseline for further developing the awareness about the EU Ecolabel and encouraging the uptake of the label for products of current and potentially future license holders.

In terms of lessons learned at the promotional event, Himmelhoch reported that the main challenge was to achieve license holders’ attendance. Moreover, several points of improvements were identified in terms of the logistics of running the event, especially in separate rooms, to meet COVID-19 prevention requirements at the time. While the event’s format was influenced by the pandemic, the organisers suggested that similar events in the future could be organised in parallel with a (press) conference

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\(^39\) Heavy Pedals, oekostrom AG, Austria Trend Hotels, Cup Solutions, COLOP, Eurotoner, Impacts catering & events, Kolariks Luftburg, Mondial Reisen, Pernauer Chemiewerke (EU Ecolabel licence holder), Salzburger Tischler Küche, Sefra, Superfilm, Trodat, Umweltcenter der Raiffeisenbank Gunskirchen, Vila Vita Pannonia, and Schick Hotels.

\(^40\) [http://www.pernauer.com](http://www.pernauer.com)

\(^41\) Himmelhoch confirmed that they could not provide the links since they did not have any online monitoring in place at the time.

\(^42\) Bekanntheit Österreichischer Umweltzeichen (2020) – Eine quantitative Untersuchung für das Bundesministerium für Klimaschutz, Umwelt, Energie, Mobilität, Innovation und Technologie, Das Österreichische Gallup Institut September 2020
or as an alternative to a press conference to offer a more detailed coverage of license holders’ stories.

Himmelhoch also emphasised that the added value was to show ecolabel license holders that a business model based on sustainable business management is not only a viable solution for companies to contribute to fight climate change, but it also enables them to gain economic benefits. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and the negative impact on the revenue for many of the license holders, the event organised for the 30th anniversary of the Austrian’s ecolabel conveyed that the time is right for companies to embrace sustainable management.

The organisers organised the event on a relatively low budget (see footnote 5) mostly due to the free venue, but also as a result of the license holders and journalists seeing the benefit of joining without monetary compensation. The focus on storytelling provided by the license holders in cooperation with the journalists provided the visibility of their efforts, while raising awareness about the EU Ecolabel among potential license holders and the general public.

In replicating the example of good practice, organisers might consider:

- contacting journalists that are not solely working with sustainable topics to also reach the part of the public that are less familiar with sustainable issues
- also reach out to various age groups by tapping into social media as a tool for increased exposure.
- ensuring a solid monitoring and evaluation system would also have been key to assess how reach, impact and increased awareness have changed after the event, and how they can be improved further.

**Contact details**

More information can also be found in the following press material (in DE), [here](#). The press release for the event and the presentation of the participating companies can be found [here](#).

More information about the EU Ecolabel license holder, Pernauer, can be found [here](#). For further information about the promotional event, please contact the Austria’s Competent Body for the EU Ecolabel, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation, and Technology (Bundesministerium, Klimaschutz, Umwelt, Energie, Mobilität, Innovation und Technologie) [here](#) or at info@umweltzeichen.at.

The Austrian EU Ecolabel website can be accessed [here](#) (in English and German).
GOOD PRACTICE FOR RETAILERS

EU Ecolabel retailer campaign: ‘Strong for you, gentle on nature’

Description of the campaign

The ‘Puissant pour vous, doux pour la nature’ / ‘Krachtig voor jou, zacht voor de natuur’ (in EN: ‘Strong for you, gentle on nature’) campaign – presented in French and Flemish - focused on the promotion of EU Ecolabel in a wide range of Belgian chain-stores and supermarkets. It focused on the whole country but targeted especially five larger cities: Gent, Antwerp, Brussels, Charleroi, and Luik. Moreover, the campaign was launched on the Facebook channel of Ecolabel.be using visuals to attract the audience. The campaign was launched in 2017 and was carried out at different moments throughout the last few years\(^43\), including in 2019, 2020, and 2021.

The campaign was organised and implemented by the Belgian Federal Public Service Health & Environment (SPF Santé Publique/FOD Volksgezondheid)\(^44\) which oversees the implementation and the promotion of the EU Ecolabel in Belgium as the Competent Body (CB). It had a total cost of EUR455 000\(^45\) over four years. While the development and design of the communication materials and the ads on social

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\(^43\) The campaign periods were chosen based on when the retailers indicated they preferred organising and implementing the campaign in their stores.

\(^44\) Including writing the tender, selecting the communication agency for the visuals, and contacting the retailers.

\(^45\) 2017 – November – December: EUR160 000 for radiospots, EUR70 000 for the design and production of communication material and EUR90 000 for the advertising, 2019 – October (2 weeks): EUR65 000 on retailer promotion and street posters, 2020 – November (2 weeks): EUR65 000 on retailer promotion, street posters, Facebook competition, 2021 – November: EUR5000 on Facebook competition.
media and regular media were developed by the communication agency Big Trees46, the coordination and strategy of the campaign were carried out by the Belgian Federal Public Service Health & Environment.

The campaign was targeting mainly consumers and retailers and aimed at increasing visibility and awareness about the EU Ecolabel, marketing especially the variety and quality of EU Ecolabel products. The campaign covered EU Ecolabel product categories sold in general retail stores (e.g. detergents, soaps, shower gel, dishwasher liquid, paper) and do-it-yourself stores (e.g. detergents, paints, and varnishes). A key point to get across to the consumers was that EU Ecolabel products can be found and bought easily in supermarkets and stores and are not available uniquely in bio shops or green shops.

The campaign also sought to promote the EU Ecolabel with a simplified message using fun and charming visuals of animals while showcasing and directing attention to various home products branded with the EU Ecolabel logo. In most images, the animals are carrying out regular household activities, such as cleaning the dishes, washing clothes, or house cleaning while making use of the EU Ecolabel home product.

The personification of animals to demonstrate that the EU Ecolabel is good for nature accentuates the argument that if animals could choose themselves, they would undoubtedly opt for the EU Ecolabel products to clean their dishes, paint their homes, etc. The message is simple, effective, and easy to understand while giving a humorous and light approach to the campaign. The retro style ‘feel’ was used to make the drawings stand out and resemble the old animal paintings in the traditional encyclopaedia. The actions of the animals were chosen to appeal to women and men alike47.

The campaign partnered with the chain-stores Brico, Kruidvat, Delhaize, and Carrefour, and the retail brands AkzoNobel, Damhert Nutrition, and Levis for a variety of activities (further explained below).

Objectives

The campaign wanted to ensure that the EU Ecolabel products and logo were in the spotlight of the advertisement as opposed to being less visible only on a product. Thus, the general objective aimed at increasing visibility and awareness about the EU Ecolabel.

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46 Big Trees: https://www.bigtrees.be/

47 While animals are also relevant for children, the campaign had limited budget, so it targeted those who are the main shoppers as well as the retailers.
Based on this starting point, two specific objectives were pursued:

- To encourage retailers to actively communicate about the EU Ecolabel and increase their number of EU Ecolabel products.
- To encourage consumers to recognise the EU Ecolabel logo and to look for EU Ecolabel products when shopping.

**Key target audience**

The key target audiences of the campaign focused were twofold. Firstly, the campaign overall targeted consumers, namely adult female, and male consumers, and secondly, it targeted Belgian retail stores.

**Consumers**

- For the chain stores and the metro promotions, female and male consumers from 20 to 70 years of age were targeted as the main key audience.
- For the campaign on social media, the main target audience was those considered as most active on Facebook: female and male consumers from 25 to 50 years of age.

**Belgian retail stores**

Belgian retail chain stores were contacted through the Belgian retailer federation, Comeos. The requirement for participation was that they had to sell EU Ecolabel products in their stores. Of those indicating their interest, the responsible communications officers were contacted and partnerships were established.

**Activity description**

**Activities with retailers**

The following stores and retail brands participated in the campaign implementing EU Ecolabel activities:

- **Brico and Kruidvat**

In the Belgian hardware store chain, Brico, the campaign was offering a 20% discount on all scaled-up products during the campaign, using coupons with animal visuals. The coupons were shared with commuters in the local metro magazine. The discount was available from October until November 2019. Moreover, posters in A3 size were displayed near the shelves where the EU Ecolabel products were placed, in several stores in Belgium.
Similarly, in the Dutch retail, pharmacy, and drugstore chain, Kruidvat, similar coupons were used to attract consumers to purchase EU Ecolabel products with specific discounts. The promo was available for consumers from October until December 2019.

- **Delhaize**

Delhaize, the multinational supermarket chain, opted for displaying the campaign as an in-store totem in 330 of their supermarkets for two weeks. The store totem was placed strategically in specific sections where EU Ecolabel products were sold. Moreover, the campaign was advertised on digital screens located at the entrance of 11 stores, for one week. The campaign visuals with the EU Ecolabel logo were displayed for 12 seconds with 48 showings per day in each of the stores.

- **Carrefour**

Carrefour – the French multinational retail and wholesale company – promoted the campaign by adding the logo and visuals to the handlebars on each shopping cart. It was estimated that the campaign was exposed to more than 100,000 shoppers a day with an exposure time of up to 45 minutes per person. The campaign was shown in all the Carrefour supermarkets nationally.

- **Social media visibility and Facebook competitions by Carrefour, AkzoNobel, Damhert Nutrition, and Levis**

Carrefour, AkzoNobel, Damhert Nutrition, and Levis used social media to promote the campaign on Facebook. The Facebook competition asked participants to post a photo of one EU Ecolabel product with the hashtag #jachèteEUEcolabel or #ikkoopEUEcolabel (In EN: #ibuyEUEcolabel). The competitions aimed to interact and engage their consumers through shares and likes, and as such promote new EU Ecolabel products while showing the diversity of products. The partnerships were established with the support of AkzoNobel, one of the Belgian license holders. However, all Belgian license holders were contacted and invited to get involved.

The Belgian paints brand Levis and Carrefour used the campaign in November 2020 and September to December 2021 for two social media competitions. Levis offered the prizes of 25L of EU Ecolabel paint and Carrefour awarded 5 baskets of EcoPlanet products carrying the EU Ecolabel.

Both the paints and performance coatings company, AkzoNobel, and Damhert Nutrition – a food store focusing on healthy products - used social media and their websites to display the campaign competition. It was estimated that Damhert Nutrition engaged on Facebook around 200 people who actively participated in the competition. Total visibility was however estimated to be higher.

**Metro publicity**
Advertising in the metro was mainly provided by handing out coupons in metro magazines. The discount coupons presented in the magazines could only be used in specific chain stores. Additionally, the campaign went into cooperation with Clear Channel to provide visibility on commercial posters on bus stops and in the metro.

Radio spots
In 2017, the campaign used radio spots on French-speaking and Flemish-speaking radio channels starring animal voices. The radio channels participating were Pure, Classic21, Première, Vivacité, and StuBru.

Results and impact
The campaign had the following results, monitored by the Belgian Federal Public Service Health & Environment:

- **Increased number of license holders:** There was an observed increase in license holders and subsequently, a number of new EU Ecolabel products, specifically in the product categories of cleaning, personal and animal care, and paper after the campaign. In terms of products awarded the EU Ecolabel in Belgium, there was also an increase from 47 products awarded in 2019 and 2020 to 57 products awarded in 2021. In total, the Belgian market offered in 2021, 5,431 products with the EU Ecolabel showing a gradual increase from 4,542 products in 2019 and 5276 products in 2020. Moreover, there was an increase in several licenses per product group, including with products such as cleaning product, detergents, machine dishwashing detergents, tissue paper, and dishwashing products. It was, however, not possible to state which of these results was a direct consequence of the campaign.

- **Increased number of Facebook followers:** From social media, the Facebook page Ecolabel.be, had an increase of 10% in their follower base.

- **Increased website visits:** When monitoring the website traffic after the launch of the campaign, the number of visits increased by 89.4%.

- **The increase of interest from retailers:** The campaign received positive feedback during meetings and contacts with retailers, who confirmed that they liked the proposed visuals and the inclusion of retailers in the campaign. There was also interest among retailers in joining another EU Ecolabel campaign in the future. Moreover, one of the retailers Colruyt, who did not sell EU Ecolabel products previously, decided to change their collection of house mark products to EU Ecolabel products after the campaign. Also, the campaign was picked up by Competent Bodies in France and the Netherlands, who used the Belgian campaign images to promote the EU Ecolabel in their countries.

- **Additionally, the Facebook competitions by Levis and Carrefour** engaged more than 100,000 people per contest through reactions, comments, and re-shares facilitated by the campaign images, a well-targeted audience, and simple participation rules. The
cost per mille (CPM)\(^{48}\) was 40% higher in the second competition than the first due to the strong competition linked to the COVID19-crisis and fewer people reached within the target group.

- It was estimated that the radio spots reached about 820,000 listeners. Moreover, the radio spots were also played in the Carrefour and Delhaize stores.

**Key takeaways and transferability**

According to the Special Eurobarometer ‘Attitudes of European citizens towards the environment’ from 2017, 65\% of Belgians have bought a product carrying the EU Ecolabel. In comparison with other EU member states, Belgian ranks the second highest on this scale. When asked if the EU Ecolabel played an important part in their purchasing decisions, almost half (46\%) indicate that they do not take any notice of labels, while 28\% believe that ecolabels play an important part in their purchasing decisions. Another 26\% do not think that ecolabels play an important part. In this landscape, the campaign aimed at further raising consumers’ and retailers’ awareness about the EU Ecolabel in Belgium.

This campaign is an example of good practice of EU Ecolabel promotion at national level that set up in advance the target audience and which - through various channels (e.g. printed material such as posters and banners on shopping carts and coupons, social media posts, website articles, videos) - engaged successfully both retailers and consumers using an attractive and visually appealing message. To ensure additional exposure and visibility of the logo, the campaign took advantage of specific reductions on certain products using free coupons easily available in the metro, for commuters.

Key to its success was retailer collaboration, clear objectives, and tailored activities that resonated with the target audience. The campaign also used humorous images to ‘catch the eye’ of the consumers and convey the main message. This appealing visual approach contributed to successfully reach out to both target audiences – consumers and retailers - using a platform where these audiences cross paths. Also, close collaboration with the retailers - carried out both by the Belgian Federal public Service Health & Environment and the communication agency Big Trees jointly in the planning phase - led to the consistent engagement of the stores and ensured that the campaign was tailored to their need (e.g. banners and advertisements in the format they wanted). To encourage other retailers to join, the campaign organisers were transparent about which retailers participated in the campaign and stressed the benefits of joining.

Overall, the results indicate that the campaign was successful in raising awareness about the opportunities of promoting the EU Ecolabel products among a group of retailers and license holders and that it may have facilitated for an increased uptake of the EU Ecolabel in Belgian stores.

Possible improvements for future similar campaigns would be to ensure better monitoring of the results of the campaign, e.g. numbers on sales of EU Ecolabel products, visibility of the campaign at EU level events and an extra European ‘push’ for success, i.e. organising an EU Ecolabel Week, establishing nationwide collaborations with EU Ecolabel retailers federation, initiatives with EU Ecolabel visibility on big platforms such as Amazon, Zalando, etc.

A few tips for replicability:

\(^{48}\) Cost per mille: CPM is the amount paid per one thousand visitors who see the advertisement(s).
• **Need for a fixed budget each year for the campaign** to make it easier to prioritise. In terms of human resources, at least two employees at the Competent Body are needed, including support from communication officers and EU Ecolabel experts over a period stating 1 year in advance of the campaign.

• **Clear key target audience and concept**: Clearly identify the target audience and tailor the campaign activities to these target audiences are key, as well as a clear idea about the message to be conveyed in the use of visuals. Retailers and license holders can be involved early in the process to ensure ownership and increased exposure. Moreover, simple messages and the use of humour can facilitate for more public interest.

• **Creativity in terms of activities can boost visibility of the campaign**, e.g. social media competition, discount coupons, etc.

• **Encourage shares and re-shares** on social media, not only by the retailers themselves, but also the license holders of the displayed EU Ecolabel products.

• **Collect monitoring data** (e.g. social media impressions, page followers, website traffic, etc.) to learn and adjust activities for the next campaign.

**Contact details and other information**

For further information about the campaign, please contact Belgium’s Competent Body for the EU Ecolabel, the Belgian Federal Public Service Health & Environment (SPF Santé Publique/FOD Volksgezondheid), [here](#) or at +32 (0)2 524 97 97. The Belgian EU Ecolabel website can be accessed [here](#) (in French and Flemish).

An example of the campaign is visible online on the Levis’ website [here](#) (in Flemish) and as a social media post [here](#) on Damhert Nutrition’s Facebook page.
Good practice 3: EU Ecolabel youth: ‘Look for the sign!’ – the ecolabels competition

GOOD PRACTICES FOR YOUTH

EU Ecolabel youth: ‘Look for the sign!’ – the ecolabels competition

Hungary

Description of the good practice

‘Are you interested in environmental protection and sustainable consumption? Would you like to live as green as possible and produce as little garbage as possible? Would you like to know what ecolabels stand for and what these labels cover? If your answer to the above questions is yes, then the “Look for the sign!” competition is waiting for you.’

This is the introduction to the competition announcement of the yearly Ecolabel competition for high school students (9. -13. grade) in Hungary. The competition engages young people in solving tasks focused on the EU Ecolabel, the Hungarian national ecolabel Környezetbarát Termék Védjegy (Environmentally Friendly Product Trademark), other EN ISO 14024 type I ecolabels, and on the topic of sustainable production and consumption. With the competition, students are educated about existing ecolabels, their complexity, and how to trust them, as well as how to recognise greenwashing through fun and challenging team assignments.

The competition is launched yearly and carried out by the Ministry of Technology and Industry in cooperation with the Herman Ottó Institute, the EU Ecolabel Competent Body for Hungary49. The Hungarian Education Office also supports distributing the competition announcement to all middle schools in Hungary. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, the competitions were held in September - October in both 2020 and 2021, with the finals organised online. The topic of the 2020 competition was on the EU Ecolabel, ISO I ecolabels, and EMAS, whereas the 2021 competition widened the scope to include sustainable consumption and production. In 2022, the competition will be organised as an in-person event. The human resources needed are two

49 In 2021 and 2022, there was and will be no involvement of external contractors. In the competition’s first year, however, the organizer was the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (Department of Environmental Economics and Sustainability). The Ministry supported them with material. The budget for that year was HUF6 000 000 (equivalent to approximately EUR15 000).
representatives from the Ministry and two from the Herman Ottó Institute that work full time on the competition during the competition period. Additionally, a few colleagues also support the evaluation of the tasks. However, the invested effort depends on the types of tasks and prizes as well as the availability of staff to support during the process and evaluation of the tasks. Besides these human resources, there is no additional budget for the Ministry\textsuperscript{50}, besides the prizes provided by donors.

The prizes are donated by a selected group of sponsors\textsuperscript{51}, usually, ecolabel license holders, who have cooperated and developed a professional relationship with the Herman Ottó Institute over the years. The sponsors are invited to join the jury for the evaluation in the finals as well as offered advertisement spots in the Hungarian ecolabel magazine, Ökocimke Hírmagazin. The grand prize of first place has a value of up to about HUF250 000 (about EUR600) offering small excursions to national sights in Hungary. For the second and third place winners, the sponsors provide prizes in the amount of HUF70 000-100 000 (about EUR170-250) consisting of book vouchers, gift cards, or board games. Gift packages of books, mugs, as well as vouchers, are awarded to the winners from 4th to 10th place. Thanks to the support provided by license holders who acted as sponsors, the cost of the competition is relatively low.

A variety of channels are used to promote and launch the results of the competition, including the website and Facebook of the Herman Ottó Institute, the school websites, local Hungarian organisations (i.e. WWF), and the Hungarian Ecolabel Magazine. The competition is also announced through the Ministry of Education to all Hungarian high schools. The Ministry relies on its platform for the registration and evaluation of the contributions to the competition. However, other free and easily accessible online tools can easily be used as alternatives to organise the contest, e.g. Emails, Google Forms, Excel, etc.

Objectives

The objective of the competition is to:

- educate and make youth more aware of the EU Ecolabel and Hungarian ecolabels
- teach youth about the deceptive practices of greenwashing and how to spot them
- increase youth’s awareness about sustainable products and services

\textsuperscript{50} The competition keeps the budget low, mostly due to the promotional support from the other Ministries, the Competent Body, and by using low-cost platforms like the organizers’ websites and social media channels. All material are prepared electronically, mainly by the Herman Ottó Institute, using mostly stock photos and visuals made by the participants from the competition. No social media campaigns have been launched due to lack of budget.

\textsuperscript{51} List of sponsors is available here [in HU]: https://okocimke.hu/verseny/eldolt-kik-letetek-a-gyoztesek. In 2021, the jury consisted of one juror from the Ministry, one juror from the Herman Ottó Institute, one juror from IMSYS Kft (Sponsor), and a Hungarian Violin artist, Olga Nédő.
Additionally, the competition aims to interact and engage Hungarian license holders of the EU Ecolabel as well as the national ecolabels, by inviting them to become sponsors and mentors for young people through an active and fun activity.

Key target audience

The contest targets:

- high school students (primary target audience)
- license holders as potential sponsors and mentors (secondary target audience)
- participants’ classmates, family members, and teachers, who are made aware of the competition through the participating students (tertiary target audience)

Activity description

The competition welcomes applications from teams of 3-5 students from any high school in Hungary. Each applicant team applies using an online form on the website ‘Környezet Védelmi Páralyázat’, developed by the Ministry. A maximum of three teams per school can apply. Usually, 1-2 teams attend per school. There is no registration fee. Upon registration, each team is asked to indicate a team name and upload a consent letter signed by its members’ parents to attend the competition. The competition consists of two rounds and the finals. Ten teams go through to the second round, also competing in the finals.

The students are provided with background material in advance of the competition and most students also lean on the internet as a source of information to prepare themselves. To have a broader outreach, the tasks are occasionally presented to appeal to family members, classmates, and/or teachers. Previous assignments have been the following:

**Design a canvas bag!**

Design a canvas bag with the Hungarian Ecolabel and/or the EU Ecolabel. Design a bag that you would like to carry in your everyday life. The design should show that the ecolabel is a tool for sustainable consumption. Presentation format: the design can be created using any technique (e.g. digital or hand-drawn) but must be uploaded in digital format (jpg). The image should be up to 15 MB in size and have a resolution of at least 800 dpi/ppi, but the larger the better. The size of the design should not exceed one A4 page.

![Image: Tote bags designed by the participants](image)

**Ecolabels vs greenwashing**

Environmental protection and awareness are becoming more and more popular topics, leading to more and more consumers choosing environmentally friendly products when shopping. To take advantage of this, manufacturers are trying to green their products by placing different labels and slogans on the product packaging. However, these labels are not necessarily a guarantee that the products really do have a lower environmental impact, which can lead to greenwashing. However, there are some ecolabels that can only be given to products that have met a set of strict criteria set in advance by an independent certification body. Collect 10 ecolabels on products that have been...
Sustainable businesses
The actor Jason Momoa is filming his next movie in Hungary, but he has to cut his long hair for the role. Jason has a reputation for being an environmentalist, so he wants to get an eco-friendly haircut. Unfortunately, the ecolabel criteria for eco-friendly hairdressing do not yet exist. What do you think would make a hairdresser environmentally friendly?

Become a student journalist!
Each team member should interview a family member who is responsible for the shopping at home. The interview should focus on the interviewee’s shopping habits for ecolabelled products. You will have to create ten questions for the interview. Team members should ask the same questions to each interviewee. Presentation format: Jointly, you must produce a summary article with the interview questions, which could be published in the school magazine.

The teams submit the competition tasks for the first round online by filling out an application form. Each assignment provided in the rounds consists of 3-4 questions or challenges. The submitted assignments by the teams are evaluated based on a pre-designed scoring table per question or challenge. The evaluation of the assignments is carried out by the Ministry in cooperation with the Herman Ottó Institute, and with the sponsors. The evaluation uses a set of criteria assessing if the understanding of the task is clear, if the criteria of the assignment are complied with, the level of quality and quantity of the submitted assignments, and the ability to include environmental aspects, the EU Ecolabel, or other ecolabels in their responses. The winners are decided based on the evaluation of the performance ratings from ‘not acceptable’, ‘weak’, ‘average’, ‘good/above average’, and ‘outstanding’ per criteria. In 2020, the organisers used a Microsoft Excel form for the evaluation. Based on the total scores of the first round, the top ten teams will compete in the finals.

In 2021, the evaluation was carried out through the competition platform. An example of the scoring table is illustrated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation criteria</th>
<th>Rating scale</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Additional comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension of the task:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Overall, how well did the applicant(s) understand the task?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are the proposals in line with the instructions?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How well has the response covered a variety of topics (e.g. waste management, water management, energy recovery, etc.)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do the proposals show that the team has looked at other criteria outside of the task?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How detailed are the proposals?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality and quantity of execution:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How many proposals did the team submit?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is the wording clear?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is the structure of the text logical?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To what extent and how well does the team make use of the number of characters provided?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance with criteria:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Are the proposals to be considered environmentally friendly solutions?
Is a significant positive environmental impact expected from the proposals?
How many proposals did the team make?
Does the proposal include the use of the EU Ecolabel or any other ecolabelled product?

Uniqueness, creativity:
- How visual, comprehensible, sophisticated is the task?
- Is the work successful in conveying the message expected?
- Are there specific responses that stand out?
- Are there interesting additional facts or information in the essay?

TOTAL POINTS

Results and impact
In both 2020 and 2021, there has been steady participation of approximately 90 teams and 370 students each year. Information about the contest is disseminated to all Hungarian high schools through the Ministry of Education using a competition announcement on the website of Környezet Védelmi Páralyázat, here (2021, in HU). The WWF Hungary also informed about the competition through a Facebook post, here (2021, in HU). In total, about 600 schools are contacted and receive information about the competition. In 2021, the contest informed about the results:
- In a 4-page article available here, in the Hungarian Ecolabel Magazine (Ökocímke Hírmagazin, page 41-44, in HU), informing about the competition and announcing the winners.
- In an article posted on the Kalman Bernath Calvinist Gymnasium and Secondary School for Business and Catering’s website here (in HU) Additionally, the Herman Ottó Institute – the Competent Body for Hungary - promoted the competition on Facebook and their website with the following links and results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Link to the article about the competition on the Competent body’s website</th>
<th>Data on the viewers of the article on the website of the Competent Body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://okocimke.hu/verseny/eldoil-kik-lettek-a-gyoztesek">https://okocimke.hu/verseny/eldoil-kik-lettek-a-gyoztesek</a></td>
<td>Views: 198, Average time spent on the article: 4 min 23 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://okocimke.hu/verseny/akik-g-dontobe-julttalak">https://okocimke.hu/verseny/akik-g-dontobe-julttalak</a></td>
<td>Views: 492, Average time spent on the article: 5 min 56 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://okocimke.hu/node/386">https://okocimke.hu/node/386</a></td>
<td>Views: 63, Average time spent on the article: 55 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://okocimke.hu/node/373">https://okocimke.hu/node/373</a></td>
<td>Views: 4, Average time spent on the article: 6 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://okocimke.hu/node/371">https://okocimke.hu/node/371</a></td>
<td>Views: 4, Average time spent on the article: 6 sec</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Technology and Industry/Herman Ottó Institute

52 The organisers reported that they do not have data on the viewers of the article on the school’s website.
The Special Eurobarometer survey, ‘Attitudes of European citizens towards the environment’ (2017) focused on understanding the EU member states’ awareness of the EU Ecolabel and the national labels. The results show overall that 27% of respondents – including respondents from Hungary - have heard about the EU Ecolabel. According to the survey, in some EU member states, including Hungary, there is especially a high level of awareness about country-specific labels. 68% of the Hungarian respondents replied that they are familiar with the national label Környezetbarát Termék Védjegy. Only 17% of the Hungarian respondents indicate that they have bought a product carrying the EU Ecolabel as opposed to 83% that respond that they have bought a product with Környezetbarát Termék Védjegy. Despite this, there is a high level of trust in the EU Ecolabel with 94% of the respondents saying that the products carrying the logo are environmentally friendly. Moreover, 80% of the Hungarian respondents are more likely to agree that they can play a role in protecting the environment in Hungary.

With this context in mind, the organisers of the competition have focused their efforts on creating more awareness about the EU Ecolabel by targeting consumers of the younger generation. The competition is a creative and fun way of reaching youth people, providing a platform to tap into youth culture and youth’s increasing global interest in environmental issues. The organisers see the competition as successful in creating more awareness among the youth that participate. However, they aspire to have even more participants join the competition for higher impact. They will continue creating tasks that are fun and inspiring and that taps into youth’s interests, while also involving (indirectly) the secondary and tertiary target audiences.
For the 2022 competition, the organisers aim to further improve the background materials specifically designed for the contest. They hope that this can ensure that the participating students do not get confused by misleading information online. They also remain cautious that the competition targets minors and that the consent forms signed by the parents are required. Creativity in terms of coming up with new tasks for both former and new participants remain challenging.

Additionally, the following lessons learned have been useful:

- **Continued close cooperation** between the Ministry, the Herman Ottó Institute, and the sponsors for brainstorming of new assignments and ideas is crucial. Jointly, they elaborate the tasks, promote the competition by involving other ministries responsible for education and by posting the call on the Hungarian ecolabel website and Facebook, and evaluate the submissions of the assignments. The Ministry is in charge of uploading the tasks on the online platform, while the Herman Ottó institute collects the registrations, organises the in-person or online final, and purchases the prizes in collaboration with the sponsors. The Herman Ottó Institute also mainly takes care of communication and wrap-up summaries, although the Ministry also informs about them and posts news articles on their website about the results.

- **Investing in one platform for gathering the assignments** has made the competition process easier to monitor. However, free online tools can also facilitate the organisation of the competition.

- By including design tasks (e.g. visuals and graphics integrating the EU Ecolabel logo), the organisers can take advantage of these visuals for promotion the following year.

- In the future, the organisers see **potential in expanding the activity to include primary school students** but acknowledge that this would require increased staff capacity.

- Also, **monitoring the results and the impact on the target audiences is recommended** to better understand what works and to continuously improve the good practice.

**Contact details and other information**

More information can be acquired by contacting the EU Ecolabel Competent Body, the Herman Ottó Institute at hermanottointezet@hoi.hu, and the Hungarian Ministry of Technology and Industry here. Questions about the competition can also be sent to okocimke@hoi.hu.

The announcement for the competition for 2022 is posted here and here.

The following websites were provided to the participants to support them in solving the tasks and be a source of inspiration:

- The Hungarian EU Ecolabel and national label Környezetbarát Termék website, accessible here.
- Information and registration pages for EMAS, accessible here.
- Herman Ottó Institute’s (Competent Body for Hungary) webpages, accessible here.
- European Commission pages on EMAS, accessible here.
- European Commission pages on the EU Ecolabel, accessible here.
- European Commission campaign videos ‘Fall in love with EU Ecolabel’, accessible here.
- European Environmental Bureau’s campaign ‘New EU Ecolabel to tackle cosmetics greenwashing’, accessible here.