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Strategic EU Ecolabel Work Plan 2020 - 2024

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Key words and abbreviations

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



INTRODUCTION

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

The Plan is a non-binding rolling document that may be updated by the EC services in the course of its implementation. This document is the Plan developed in 2020, updated in January 2024.

1. THE EU ECOLABEL GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS

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

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

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

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

² COM/2018/097 final: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Central Bank, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "Action Plan: Financing Sustainable Growth"
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This is particularly important after the COVID-19 crisis in order to ensure that the recovery is sustainable and in line with the principles of the circular economy.

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

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

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

2. THE CURRENT EU ECOLABEL PORTFOLIO

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

“ANNEX II – Current EU Ecolabel portfolio”, presents the list of product groups currently in place, and their timeline.

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

The EC currently uses the number of EU Ecolabel products as key performance indicator of Green Transition, for instance in the [Single Market Scoreboard](#). The EU Ecolabel figures are available on the [Fact and Figures page](#) of the EU Ecolabel website and are updated twice a year.

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

3. FUTURE EU ECOLABEL PRODUCT GROUPS

The development of EU Ecolabel criteria is a very resource-intensive process. The EU Ecolabel Regulation gives the possibility to the European Commission and other stakeholders to propose the development of EU Ecolabel criteria for a certain product group. As in the past

several product groups were discontinued for very low uptake, a stronger strategy is needed for the selection of promising EU Ecolabel products groups. The possibility to develop a new product group shall therefore be considered only when both high potential environmental benefits, high potential uptake and increased visibility of the scheme are expected. Synergies and coherence with the other circular economy policies and tools shall also be ensured.

Given the need to prioritize efforts, the current activities of the EU Ecolabel team focus on the maximization of the success of the current product portfolio, as well as on the creation of synergies and complementarities with the forthcoming legal acts under the Eco-design for Sustainable Product Regulation.



ANNEX I – Strategic Actions for the EU Ecolabel

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

Objective	Thematic area	Actions	Actors	Starting date	End date
	Sustainable Finance initiatives	tissue paper and tissue products; Hard Coverings; Absorbent Hygiene Products).			
		Collect and share on existing networks best practices on GPP and Corporate GP promoting ecolabels. Explore the possibility of creating a network of companies buying EU Ecolabel products.	EC Team + EUEB members + GPP Advisory Group	Q1 2020	Continuous
		Foster the procurement of EU Ecolabel goods/services in the EC, the EU Institutions in all EUEB members' institutions/organisations as well as through relevant actors and associations at national/regional/ local/ level through, inter alia, training and assistance to public authorities that would like to procure ecolabelled goods	EC Team + EUEB members	Q1 2021	Continuous
		Explore the possibility to integrate PEF method in EU Ecolabel criteria through the development of PEF studies to identify hotspots, when needed (pilot project on the revision of EU Ecolabel criteria for absorbent hygiene products).	EC Team + EUEB Members	2021	Continuous
		Ensure coherence between EU Ecolabel criteria and EMAS Sectoral Reference Documents.	EC team	Continuous	Continuous
		Promote the use of EU Ecolabel product/services in EMAS registered organisations (public/private).	EC team + EUEB members	Q4 2020	Continuous
		Explore the possibility to have the production/provision of EU Ecolabel good/services mentioned in the EU Taxonomy Delegated Acts.	EC team	Q2 2020	2023
		Explore the possibility to link EU Ecolabel financial products with the ' suitability test ' for green and sustainable financial products , which will have to take into account ESG preferences of clients and select products (green/sustainable products) in line	EC team	On hold	On hold

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

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

Objective	Thematic area	Actions	Actors	Starting date	End date
	Monitoring of EU Ecolabel uptake	Update and disseminate statistics on EU Ecolabel products/licences.	EC Team + EUEB members	Continuous	Continuous
		Include periodically questions on EU Ecolabel awareness in Eurobarometer surveys.	EC Team	2023	Every year
3. Enhance the EU Ecolabel presence on the market, by boosting both industry uptake and consumers awareness.	Relief/incentive measures to foster EU Ecolabel uptake	Investigate on the possibility to act on tax measures .	EC team + Member States	2021	Continuous
		Explore the possibility of including the EU Ecolabel in the Extended Producer Responsibility guidelines.	EC team	Q1 2020	Q4 2020
		Exchange of best national practices at EU level, such as the ECO-Vouchers, include them on the CE Stakeholders Platform and encourage replication at EU level.	EC Team + EUEB	Q1 2020	Continuous
	Capacity building + technical assistance	Organise webinars/events/training activities to explain EU Ecolabel criteria to industry stakeholders, retailers and procurers, as well as information about the added value and business case to engage with the EU Ecolabel.	EC team + CBs	Continuous	Continuous
	Increase awareness through education	Explore the possibility of including the EU Ecolabel in education curricula/extra-curricular activities.	EUEB members	2021	Continuous
	Increase awareness through communication activities	Organize periodic meetings on communication with EUEB members.	EC Team	Q2 2020	Continuous
		Set-up a joint Communication Calendar to foster synergies between communication activities.	EC Team + EUEB Members	Q2 2020	Continuous
		Implement Communication activities aimed at promoting the EU Ecolabel in the Recovery context	EC Team + EUEB Members	Q2 2020	Q4 2021

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

ANNEX II – Current EU Ecolabel portfolio – (table updated in January 2024)

Product group	Current criteria			Amendment		Timeline	Comments
	Decision n.	Adoption	Expiry date	Technical (date of adoption)	Prolongation (date of adoption)	2024	
Cosmetic products (030)	(EU) 2021/1870	22-10-2021	31-12-2027	25-07-2023	n.a.	-	Mid-term assessment planned for Q1 2025
Animal Care Products (054)	(EU) 2021/1870	22-10-2021	31-12-2027	25-07-2023	n.a.	-	Mid-term assessment planned for Q1 2025
Absorbent hygiene products (047)	2014/763/EU	24-10-2014	20-09-2024	n.a.	11-07-2022	-	
Absorbent hygiene products (047) (new)	(EU) 2023/1809	14-09-2023	31-12-2029	n.a.	n.a.	-	
Reusable menstrual cups (055)	(EU) 2023/1809	14-09-2023	31-12-2029	n.a.	n.a.	-	
Hand dishwashing detergents (019)	(EU) 2017/1214	23-06-2017	31-12-2026	11.07.2018; 13.03.2019	27-03-2023	Revision on-going. 1 st virtual AHWG meeting foreseen in Mar and 2 nd in Oct.	Preliminary planning: vote of the criteria in Nov 2025
I&I dishwasher detergents (038)	(EU) 2017/1215	23-06-2017	31-12-2026	11.07.2018; 13.03.2019	27-03-2023	Revision on-going. 1 st virtual AHWG meeting in Mar and 2 nd in Oct.	Preliminary planning: vote of the criteria in Nov 2025
Dishwasher detergents (015)	(EU) 2017/1216	23-06-2017	31-12-2026	11.07.2018; 13.03.2019	27-03-2023	Revision on-going. 1 st virtual AHWG meeting in Mar and 2 nd in Oct.	Preliminary planning: vote of the criteria in Nov 2025

Product group	Current criteria			Amendment		Timeline	Comments
	Decision n.	Adoption	Expiry date	Technical	Prolongation	2024	
Hard Surface Cleaning Products (020)	(EU) 2017/1217	23-06-2017	31-12-2026	13-03-2019	27-03-2023	Revision on-going. 1 st virtual AHWG meeting in Mar and 2 nd in Oct.	Preliminary planning: vote of the criteria in Nov 2025
Laundry detergents (006)	(EU) 2017/1218	23-06-2017	31-12-2026	11.07.2018; 13.03.2019	27-03-2023	Revision on-going. 1 st virtual AHWG meeting in Mar and 2 nd in Oct.	Preliminary planning: vote of the criteria in Nov 2025
I&I laundry detergents (039)	(EU) 2017/1219	23-06-2017	31-12-2026	11.07.2018; 13.03.2019	27-03-2023	Revision on-going. 1 st virtual AHWG meeting in Mar and 2 nd in Oct.	Preliminary planning: vote of the criteria in Nov 2025
Indoor cleaning Services (052)	(EU) 2018/680	02-05-2018	31-12-2027	29-03-2023	27-03-2023	-	
Textile products (016)	2014/350/EU	05-06-2014	31-12-2025	25-07-2017	27-11-2020	Revision process carried out together with the development of the first Delegated Act on textiles under ESPR. Preliminary work started. First stakeholder meeting: Spring 2024.	A prolongation will be needed if revised criteria are not voted by June 2025
Footwear (017)	2016/1349/EU	05-08-2016	31-12-2025	n.a.	27-11-2020	-	Revision timeline to be decided in synergy with ESPR timeline.
Indoor and outdoor paints & varnishes (044)	2014/312/EU	28-05-2014	31-12-2025	08.06.2015; 16.03.2016; 03.04.2020; 22.11.2021	27.04.2018; 11.07.2022	Revision on-going. First virtual AHWG meeting in Q2 2024	

Product group	Current criteria			Amendment		Timeline	Comments
	Decision n.	Adoption	Expiry date	Technical	Prolongation	2024	
Electronic Displays (022)	(EU) 2020/1804	27-11-2020	31-12-2028	n.a.	n.a.	-	Mid-term assessment planned for Q4 2024
Wood-, Cork- and Bamboo-based Floor Coverings (035)	(EU) 2017/176	25-01-2017	31-12-2026	n.a.	11-07-2022	-	Product group to be revised simultaneously with Furniture. Revision timeline to be decided in synergy with ESPR timeline, if relevant.
Hard covering products (021)	(EU) 2021/476	16-03-2021	31-12-2028	n.a.	n.a.	-	Mid-term assessment planned for Q1 2025
Furniture (049)	(EU) 2016/1332	28-07-2016	31/12/2026	n.a.	11-07-2022	-	Criteria to be possibly merged with Bed mattresses. Revision timeline to be decided in synergy with ESPR timeline, if relevant.
Bed mattresses (014)	2014/391/EU	23-06-2014	31-12-2026	n.a.	11-07-2022	-	Criteria to be possibly merged with Furniture. Revision timeline to be decided in synergy with ESPR timeline, if relevant.
Growing media and soil improver (048)	(EU) 2022/1244	13-07-2022	31-12-2030	n.a.	n.a.	Corrigendum on expiry date	Mid-term assessment planned for Q4 2026
Lubricants (027)	(EU) 2018/1702	08-11-2018	31-12-2024	n.a.	n.a.	Criteria to be prolonged. Updated assessment to be presented at the April EUEB meeting.	Revision should be planned taking into account ESPR planning, if relevant.
Graphic paper, tissue paper and tissue products (011-004)	(EU) 2019/70	11-01-2019	31-12-2024	n.a.	n.a.	Criteria to be prolonged. Assessment to be presented at the April EUEB meeting.	

Product group	Current criteria			Amendment		Timeline	Comments
	Decision n.	Adoption	Expiry date	Technical	Prolongation	2024	
Printed paper, stationery paper, and paper carrier bag products (053)	(EU) 2020/1803	27-11-2020	31-12-2028	n.a.	n.a.	-	Mid-term assessment planned for Q4 2024
Tourist accommodation (051)	(EU) 2017/175	25-01-2017	30-06-2025	29-03-2023	20-10-2021	Criteria to be prolonged	The possibility to strengthen social criteria and to enlarge the scope should be assessed in the revision, foreseen to start in Q1 2025.
Retail financial Products	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	The file is put on hold to ensure coherence with other initiatives on sustainable finance.