



As interest in the environment has grown, so has the demand for meaningful information to enable consumers to make informed choices. Organisations, either directly on products or by using promotional literature, regularly make environmental claims. Some companies provide useful consumer information, whilst others make claims that cannot be substantiated.

Over recent years, initiatives have been undertaken at national and international level, to develop labelling schemes that provide authoritative guidance and information.

Eco-labelling covers all types of products and services and is used, and recognised, in many international countries.

The following fact sheet describes some of the more established initiatives that now impact on internationally traded paper and board products.

UPDATED: MAY 2008



EU - Eco-label

Launched by the European Union in 1992, the European Eco-label is a voluntary scheme enabling European customers to identify green products across the EU, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. The scheme endorses products made with minimum environmental impact, and is an element of an EU strategy promoting sustainable production and consumption.

Using a lifecycle approach and including criteria based on the production cycle of reuse, recycling, and disposal, the objectives of the scheme are to:

- promote the production, marketing and use of reduced environmental impact products;
- provide consumers with better information on the environmental impact of products.

Criteria has been designated to twenty-one product groups, excluding food, drink and medicine. So far, criteria has been developed for the following paper product groups, although more are planned:

- tissue paper including toilet paper, kitchen roll, serviettes;
- copying and graphic paper.

Led by the Swedish Competent Body, work is now underway to establish criteria for a new product group for printed paper. The first ad-hoc working group took place in November 2003.

Although originally supportive of the theory, the paper industry has not embraced this particular label in practice. One of the main areas of contention is the way products are selected. The criteria was initially devised to limit the label to a small number of products so as to encourage competition on environmental performance but, in reality, it appears this approach has been a major deterrent for many organisations.

Further details available from:

Mr Charles Cox. The UK Ecolabelling Competent Body, Green Labelling Unit, DEFRA, Area 5D, Ergon House, c/o Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR. Tel: +44 (0) 20 7238 4404
Email: charles.cox@defra.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.europa.eu.int/ecolabel

Germany - The Blue Angel (Der Blauer Engel)



The Blauer Engel (Blue Angel) is the oldest environment label in the world for products and services.

It was created in 1977, under the initiative of the Federal Minister of the Interior. The label, owned by the Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Protection and Nuclear Safety, is administered by the Federal Environmental Agency and RAL Deutsches Institut für Gütesicherung und Kennzeichnung e.V.

It is awarded to products and services that have minimal environmental impact and which do not impair fitness for use or safety criteria. Approximately 580 companies and 3,600 products are using

the label in both Germany and abroad.

A number of paper products are covered by the Blue Angel, including toilet paper products, paper towels and kitchen roll.

Further details available from:

RAL German Institute for Quality, Assurance & Certification e.V.,
Siegburger Strasse 39,
D-53757 Sankt Augustin, Germany
Tel: + 49 (0) 22 41 16 05 -0,
Fax: +49 (0) 22 41 16 05 11,
Website: www.blauer-engel.de
Email: RAL-Institut@RAL.de

Holland - Stichting Milieukeur



The Milieukeur is independently managed by an organisation incorporating consumers, manufacturers, retail, government and environmental experts.

Any product can be awarded the Milieukeur if it is deemed less damaging to the environment compared to similar products. Specific criteria are set for individual product groups.

This label was developed in 1992 by the Dutch Ecolabel Foundation, and to date 32 products carry it. All product testing is done by independent certification organisations recognised by the Dutch Accreditation Council.

Further details available from:

SMK, Eisenhowerlaan 150, P O Box 17186, NL-2502 CD, The Hague
Tel: +31 (070) 3 586 300, Fax: +31 (070) 3 502 517,
Website: www.milieukeur.nl
Email: smk@smk.nl

France - AFAQ AFNOR Certification



Created in 1991, the NF Environnement mark is managed and issued by Afnor Certification. The scheme is jointly funded by industry and the authorities. It identifies those products that have minimum negative environmental impact.

The objectives of this label are to:

- increase commitment to environmental issues;
- strengthen customer confidence by proving the environmental quality of products;
- provide competitive advantage;
- expand markets and promote image;
- provide the benefits of a management tool.

Further details available from: AFNOR, 11, rue Francis de Pressensé, 93571 La Plaine Saint-Denis Cedex, France
Tel: +33 (01) 46 11 37 00
Website: <http://www.afnor.fr>
Email: cerification@afnor.org

Austria - Umweltzeichen Bäume



Created by the Ministry for the Environment, Youth and the Family in 1991, the criteria for this label covers both the product and the manufacturing process.

Labelling contracts are valid for a year. Products undergo life-cycle assessments to determine their environmental impact. To date, 34 products from 23 companies bear the label.

Further details available from:

Verein für Konsumenteninformation (VKI) Linke, Wienzeile 18, A – 1060 Wien, Austria
Tel: + 43 1 588 77254, Fax: +43 1 588 99255,

Spain - AENOR Medio Ambiente



The Asociacion Española de Normalizacion y certificacion (AENOR), launched this scheme in 1993. Criteria takes into account the whole life cycle of the product. AENOR has stated that in future AENOR Medio Ambiente will only consider products not covered by the EU Eco label.

Further details available from:

AENOR, C/ Génova 6, 28004, Madrid
Tel: +33 914 326 000 Fax:+33 913 104 032
E-mail: aenor@aenor.es, Website: www.aenor.es

USA - Green Seal Programme



Established in 1989, Green Seal is an independent, non-profit organisation aimed at achieving a healthier and cleaner environment.

By providing an authoritative environmental label to assist consumer choice, Green Seal aims to reduce air and water pollution, the amount of energy wasted and natural resources used, and to slow down ozone depletion.

Paper products covered under the Green Seal Programme include printing and writing papers, paper towels and napkins, coated printing paper and newsprint.

Further details available from:

Green Seal, 1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 827, Washington, DC 20036-5525, USA

Tel: +1 202-872-6400, Fax: +1 202 872 4324

Email: green seal@green seal.org

Website: www.green seal.org

Nordic White Swan (MILJÖMÄRKT)



This label was introduced by the Nordic Council of Ministers in 1989. It is the only existing multinational scheme covering Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Finland. In order to gain the label, the manufacturing

process has to undergo an environmental assessment. The green symbol is available for approximately 60 products.

In Sweden the Swan label is managed by SIS Ecolabelling, a non-profit organisation commissioned by the Swedish Government and parliament.

The label is usually valid for three years, after which the criteria are revised and the company involved must reapply for a licence.

Further details available from:

Swedish Standards Institution, SIS Ecolabelling AB, SE-118 80, Stockholm, Sweden

Tel: +46 8 55 55 24 00, Fax: 46 8-55 55 24 01,

Website: www.svanen.nu

Email: svanen@ecolabel.se

Good Environmental Choice (Bra Miljöval)



Established by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation in 1988 and revised in 1998. To be awarded this label, products must meet thresholds for carbon dioxide and sulphur emissions. Fluorescent Optical whiteners and de-inking agents must be readily biodegradable.

Energy efficiency is taken into account, and the energy used must come from a Good Environmental Choice source.

There are two types of label:

- for products primarily made from recycled fibre;
- products made from virgin fibre, part of it must have been certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.

Further details available from:

Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, Box 7005, SE 402 31 Göteborg, Sweden

Tel: ++ 46 31 711 64 50, Fax: ++46 31 711 64 30

Website: www.snf.se, Email: gbg@snf.se

Environmental Choice Programmes

The Environmental Choice Programme has been taken on board by a number of countries, including:

a) Canada



This label was launched in 1985 as part of the Canadian Government's Environmental Choice Programme. It is privately operated by Terrachoice Environmental Services Inc, and aims to inform consumers about products that have been manufactured with the least environmental impact.

Criteria include: energy efficiency; the reduction of hazardous bi-products; the use of recycled materials; reusability; and relevant industry safety and performance standards. Innovation also scores highly.

Originally focusing solely upon recycled fibre content, the scheme is currently expanding the criteria for paper products to include emissions and effluent.

Further details available from:

Environmental Choice Programme, c/o TerraChoice
 Environmental Services Marketing , 1280 Old Innes
 Suite 801, Ottawa, Ontario K1B 5M7, Canada
 Tel: 1-800-478-0399 or Fax: (613) 247-2228
 Website: www.environmentalchoice.com
 Email: ecologo@terrachoice.ca

b) New Zealand



The New Zealand Ecolabelling Trust is a voluntary, multiple criteria based environmental labelling programme, initiated, owned and endorsed by the New Zealand Government. The scheme

operates independently, although the government has financially supported the scheme, both directly and indirectly. Approximately \$1.35 million has now been spent.

The programme recognises manufacturers who reduce the environmental impacts of their products, and provides an independent guide for consumers who want to purchase products that are more environmentally sensitive.

The programme aims to:

- encourage sustainable processes;
- offer a credible national and/or regional programme for environmental labelling;
- work towards compliance with recognised international programmes and principles;
- develop relationships with recognised international networks and ecolabelling initiatives;
- establish mutual recognition agreements with similar programmes;
- work towards harmonisation;
- provide an independent guide to help consumers identify green products and services;
- provide a market incentive to manufacturers, suppliers and retailers of environmentally preferable products and services;
- encourage manufacturers, suppliers and retailers to develop products and processes in compliance with published product specifications;
- promote responsible procurement policies;
- establish and maintain strategic relationships with government, business and non-government organisations that have common environmental and product performance interests.

Further details available from:

Environmental Choice New Zealand, PO Box 56 533,
 Dominion Road, Mt Eden, Auckland 1003, New Zealand
 Tel: +64 9 845 3330, Fax: +64 9 845 3331
 Email: info@enviro-choice.org.nz,
 Website: www.enviro-choice.org.nz

c) Australia



The Australian “Good Environmental Choice”, launched in November 2001, provides an environmental mark of recognition for a wide range of products to the community.

Further details available from:

Good Environmental Choice Australia Ltd, PO Box 4140,
 Weston Creek 2606, Canberra.
 Tel: +02 6287 3100, Fax: +02 6287 3800
 Website: www.aela.org.au
 Email: office@aela.org.au

Mobius Loop



Named after August Ferdinand Mobius, a 19th century German mathematician, the Mobius Loop is used to identify a recyclable as well as a recycled product.

If a percentage figure is shown in the middle this will refer to the percentage of recycled fibre the product contains. If no figure is present in the centre of the logo, it signifies that the product is recyclable.

This symbol is sometimes used without authority or explanation, but it has now been standardised by the ISO (see eco-label standards).

NAPM Recycled Logo



The NAPM logo is allowed to be used on all branded paper and board products that contain a minimum percentage of genuine paper and board waste. There are three variations of the logo in use, indicating a recycled paper content of 50%, 75% and 100% respectively.

NAPM considers “genuine” recovered fibre to include:

- converters waste – waste, which has left the mill and is waste from a cutting or slitting operation

- undertaken to meet a specific commercial order;
- printer's waste – printed or unprinted, waste collected from a printing operation and may be either 'trimmings' (guillotine waste), 'overs', 'rejects' or any other similar waste received directly from a printer;
- domestic/Household /office waste - both printed and unprinted.

Any combination of these three wastes can make up the 75% requirement, but 'mill broke' (waste generated by the papermaking process) and virgin fibre cannot be taken into account.

Further details available from:

The National Association of Paper Merchants (NAPM),
PO Box 2850, Nottingham, NG5 2WW
Tel: +44 (0) 115 841 2129, Fax: +44 (0) 115 841 0831
Website: www.napm.org.uk
Email: info@napm.org.uk

Japan - Eco Mark



Following guidance from the Environment Agency, the Japan Environment Association (JEA) commenced the Eco Mark Programme in 1989. The Eco Mark Program disseminates information on the environmental aspects of products, it offers a choice of products with a lower environmental impact.

The Eco Mark is displayed on products that reduce the environmental impact caused by everyday activities. Products sold in Japan are allowed to bear the Eco Mark Products, regardless of their country of manufacture. Currently 5,618 products have been certified covering 59 product categories, including printing and sanitary papers.

An applicant granted Eco Mark certification must pay a contract fee, effective for two years, to the JEA for the use of the Eco Mark.

Further details available from:

Eco Mark Office, Japan Environment Association,
DaVinci Kamiyacho 2F, 1-11-9, Azabudai, Minato-Ku,
Tokyo, 106-0041
Tel: + 81-3-3508-2653, Fax: + 81-3-3508-2656,
Website: www.ecomark.jp/english/index.html
Email: ecomark@japan.email.ne.jp

Korea - Kela Eco Label Programme



The Eco Label programme was launched in 1992, to encourage friendly production and consumption. The Ministry of Environment (MOE) and KELA share the responsibility of administering the programme.

Further details available from:

Korea Eco-Products Institute (KOEKO) 613-2,
Bulgwang-dong, Eunpyeong-gu, Seoul, 122-706, Korea.
Tel: +88 2 358 6800, Fax: +88 2 358 8560
Website: www.kela.or.kr,
Email: webmaster@kela.or.kr

Thailand Green Label



The voluntary scheme promotes resource conservation, pollution reduction, and waste management. Initiated in October 1993 by the Thailand Business Council for Sustainable Development (TBCSD), it was formally launched the following August by the Thailand Environment Institute (TEI) in association with the Ministry of Industry.

The Thai Green Label is awarded to specific products, which have minimum impact on the environment in comparison to similar products. The scheme applies to all products and services, excluding foods, drinks, and pharmaceuticals. Criteria has been developed for 32 product categories, with a further 11 under development.

Paper products as defined in the following sub-categories:

- sanitary - toilet tissue, table napkins and paper towels;
- packaging - coated boxboard, uncoated boxboard, corrugating medium, kraft paper;
- printing and writing paper - printing paper, writing paper, paper for continuous forms, xerographic paper and mimeograph paper;
- gypsum liner board;
- fine paper products - envelopes, files, notebooks, books, greeting cards, shopping bags.

Further details available from:

Thailand Environmental Institute (TEI) 16/151 Mugant
Thong Thani, Bond Street, Bangpood, Pakkred,
Nonthaburi 11120, Thailand.
Website: www.tei.or.th, Email info@tei.or.th

Eco label standards

The International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) recognises three types of environmental label:

Type 1: Labels issued by independent third parties, awarded to the best environmental performers in a number of product categories.

Type 2: Self-declared labels which manufacturers use to make claims about their products.

Type 3: A label licensed by independent organisations which provides information on the possible environmental impact of a product but leaves the consumer to exercise judgement as to which product is best.

ISO has developed the following standards regarding environmental labelling (further details can be found on www.scc.ca):

ISO 14020 1998 – Establishes guiding principles for the development and use of environmental labels and declarations.

ISO 14021 1999 – Specifies requirements for self declared (Type 1) environmental claims including statements, symbols and graphics.

ISO 14024 1999 – Establishes the principles and procedures for developing Type 1 environmental labelling programmes. It includes the selection of product categories, environmental criteria and covers the certification procedures for awarding the label.

The European paper and board industry is increasingly aware of the need to provide environmental impact information to consumers. It is therefore involved in discussions aimed at producing a standardised approach to providing environmental impact information on a business-to-business basis.

The relevant elements are likely to include:

- breakdown of raw material usage;
- the percentage of virgin fibre emanating from independently certified products;
- electricity consumption per tonne of final product;
- information on water emissions and solid wastes landfilled;
- information on the application of environmental management systems.

Discussions will be focusing on how to provide information in a coherent and understandable way through a transparent and credible process.

The Green Dot

Although strictly it is not an environmental label, the green dot logo shows that a fee has been paid for the recovery of the packaging in some European countries. Valpak Ltd administers the use of this symbol in the UK for which a fee must be paid.

There are now a substantial number of websites containing information about the issue of eco-labelling. This is a small selection of relevant sites:

- **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA):** <http://www.defra.gov.uk/>
- **The European Commission:** <http://ec.europa.eu/>
- **Recycle More:** <http://www.recycle-more.co.uk/other/shared/labels/labels.html>