

Green Claims – Practical Guidance

How To Make A Good Environmental Claim

Supported by the CBI, British Retail Consortium, Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services, and British Standards Institution.



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How To Make A Good Environmental Claim

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Who should read this guidance?

Anyone producing, selling or advertising products or services in the UK and who:

- Currently makes *environmental claims* about those products¹;
- Is considering how to market the environmental attributes of their products;
- Receives queries from customers about the environmental attributes of their products and is considering how to respond.

How do I use this Guidance?

This guidance provides answers to some frequently asked questions and gives detailed advice and examples on how to make a good green claim;

- **Section 1 – An introduction**, provides an introduction and background to environmental claims and the aims of this guidance. Particular issues covered include:
 - **Why should I consider making an environmental claim?**
 - **What is the purpose of this guidance?**
 - **What are the benefits of using this guidance?**
 - **What is an environmental claim?**
- **Section 2 – How to make a self-declared environmental claim**, provides advice for all companies on how to make a self-declared claim about the environmental properties of a product or service. Particular issues covered include:
 - **What is legally required?**
 - **What codes do I have to comply with?**
 - **What is good practice?**
- **Section 3 – Existing Environmental labelling and declaration schemes**, provides summary information and links to existing environmental labelling and declaration schemes such as the European Ecolabel (the Flower), Energy Star, Paper Profile and Washright.

Sector specific guidance

In partnership with relevant trade associations, Defra has also developed more detailed advice for green claims made in certain sectors. If you are making a claim about a product in one the following areas, you should also refer to the particular guidance note available on the Defra website at

www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/index.htm;

- Aerosols
- Cleaning products (e.g. detergents)
- Decorative coatings (e.g. paints)
- Greeting cards
- Growing media

(1) within the context of this document the term 'product' is deemed to include any goods or services.

1. Introduction

Why should I consider making an environmental claim, or using an environmental label?

Giving clear, straightforward, environmental information, as outlined in this guidance, has benefits for both consumers and business alike. By providing information about the environmental effects and qualities of products, and how to use and dispose of them, environmental claims (sometimes called “green” claims) help consumers to make informed buying choices. They also help to raise awareness of the issues, enhance consumer understanding and improve product standards overall. At the same time businesses can enhance their credentials and demonstrate that they are acting responsibly to consumers, other business partners and regulators.

Environmental labels or logos and declaration schemes can also often serve the same purpose, by acting as a visual indicator that a product has achieved a particular standard of environmental excellence or that it should be disposed of in a certain way. Third party labelling schemes require independent approval before they can be put on products. As this guidance explains, they should be distinguished from logos or graphics which can be used without external consent. So it's important to understand what particular labels mean and how they can enhance your product. This guidance also explains how to choose meaningful labels.

What is the purpose of this Guidance?

The purpose of this guidance is to promote the use of clear, truthful and relevant environmental claims and labels on products. It is designed to complement the Green Claims Code and provide more detailed advice on how to make a good claim. Good environmental information allows consumers to make informed choices and enables industry to convey the environmental qualities of their goods and services. Misleading, false, meaningless or unclear information results in consumers losing faith in environmental claims and labels in general, in unfair business competition and in discouraging companies from making truthful claims.

Hence, the objective of this guidance is to:

- Give firms confidence that their claims meet good practice standards in the UK, Europe and internationally;
- Improve the standard of environmental claims found in the UK market;
- Encourage more firms to provide environmental information on their products.

This guidance is published jointly by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and is supported by the CBI, British Retail Consortium (BRC), Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS) and British Standards Institution (BSI).

What are the benefits of using this Guidance?

By following this guidance, companies can have confidence that self-declared environmental claims are meaningful and consistent with existing standards and codes, namely [the UK Green Claims Code²](#), ISO 14021, the British Code of Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing, and [European Commission Guidelines for making and assessing environmental claims³](#). It is not intended to replace these codes but to provide interpretative guidance on how they can be applied.

By following best practice in this field and giving clear, straightforward information, a business can:

- Strengthen its reputation and credibility with consumers and other business partners;
- Demonstrate to regulators that it is working to meet or exceed legal requirements;
- Meet requirements that may be introduced in some overseas markets, especially those based on the international standard ISO 14021;
- Enhance the appeal of its products.

What is an environmental claim?

Ever since environmental issues have become part of daily business in most companies, they have also become an element of marketing strategies as companies promote their environmental achievements. There are various channels for communicating environmental information including on-product claims, environmental reports, declarations, advertising and at point of sale promotions.

One specific form of such communications are so-called 'self-declared environmental claims' or 'green' claims. These are any self-declared statements, symbols or graphics that:

1. Refer to an environmental aspect of a product, a component or product packaging;
2. Are made on products, on product packaging, in product literature or advertisements⁴.

This is a very broad definition and most statements about the environmental aspects of products will fall under it. Typical examples include '100% recycled', 'environmentally friendly' or 'CFC-free'.

In addition to self-declared environmental claims, there are third-party labelling schemes such as eco-labels, which can also be used to communicate information about the environmental properties of a product. Section 3 provides more information about these other types of environmental product information.

(2) <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/gcc/index.htm>

(3) http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/cons_safe/news/green/guidelines_en.pdf

(4) Claims made in advertisements are furthermore covered by the British Codes of Advertising and Sales Promotion (<http://www.asa.org.uk>) and the ICC International Code of Environmental Advertising http://www.iccwbo.org/home/statements_rules/rules/2001/code_of_environmental_advertising.asp

2. How to make a self-declared environmental claim

In this section you will find information about what is legally required when making environmental claims and what is considered good practice.

2.1 What is legally required?

What environmental information am I required by law to provide on my product?

Before considering whether to voluntarily pass on environmental information, it is important to first establish whether there are any specific laws or regulations that require environmental information to be communicated. This should not stop you making additional information available about the environmental qualities of your product, but will help in understanding minimum requirements and in ensuring that you word your claim correctly.

Very few forms of environmental product information are mandatory. One notable exception is the EU Energy Label which must be displayed on certain domestic electrical equipment such as washing machines and light bulbs. (Further information on this label is available on the [Defra website⁵](#)).

Several sectors such as food & drink and pharmaceuticals are subject to legal requirements on information provision and labelling. Some of these requirements, for example on hazardous chemicals or genetically modified ingredients, could be considered to constitute environmental product information.

However, this guidance only covers environmental claims made *voluntarily* by companies about their products – it does not provide specific details of mandatory requirements and where appropriate, more detailed advice and information would need to be sought from, for example, trade associations, Government Departments, or local authority trading standards.

When making a voluntary, self-declared environmental claim, what regulations and codes do I have to comply with?

The International Organization for Standardisation (ISO) has developed an international standard on self-declared environmental claims (ISO 14021:1999). In the UK, Defra and the DTI jointly publish the Green Claims Code to help provide a user friendly introduction to this standard.

Both the ISO 14021 standard and the Green Claims Code are voluntary and companies are not required to comply with them *per se*. However, within the UK, Trading Standards Officers have powers under the Trade Descriptions Act to deal with claims which are demonstrably false or are found to be misleading. The Office of Fair Trading can also take action against misleading claims under the Control of Misleading Advertisement Regulations 1988. Both will take appropriate account of the detailed guidance in ISO 14021 when investigating complaints about environmental claims.

(5) www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/energylabels/index.htm

2. How to make a self-declared environmental claim

When making a voluntary, self-declared environmental claim, what regulations and codes do I have to comply with? – *continued*

Claims made in TV or radio advertisements are subject to codes administered by the Independent Television Commission (ITC) and Radio Authority respectively. Following passage of the Communications Bill into law in summer 2003, the ITC and Radio Authority will be replaced by the Office of Communications (OFCOM).

Non-broadcast advertising is regulated by the Advertising Standards Authority. The ASA administers the British Code of Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing which includes specific guidance on environmental claims (Clause 49). Companies found in breach of the Code can face a range of sanctions including a requirement to change their advertising, the pre-vetting of future advertising, or the withdrawal of advertising space. Again these bodies will take appropriate account of the detailed guidance in ISO14021 when investigating complaints about environmental claims.

2.2 What is good practice?

What are the basic requirements for all 'good' environmental claims?

There are three main elements to be taken into account when considering making a self-declared environmental claim. These relate to the quality of the actual information being communicated (i.e. content), the way in which the information is presented (i.e. presentation), and finally, the steps and methods taken to verify its accuracy (i.e. assurance of accuracy).

Content

The content of the claim should be:

- Accurate and truthful (page 8)
- Relevant (page 9)
- Specific and unambiguous – especially when making a comparison (page 11)

Presentation

The presentation of the claim should ensure that: (page 14)

- The claim uses plain language
- All relevant information is presented together
- The meaning of any symbols or pictures is clear and relevant

Assurance of accuracy

To ensure accuracy all claims should be: (page 15)

- Substantiated and verifiable
- Reassessed and updated as necessary
- Based on the best agreed standards available
- Supported by information needed to verify its accuracy

2. How to make a self-declared environmental claim

2.2.1 How do I ensure my claims are accurate and truthful?

What is the issue?

While it might appear obvious that any environmental claim ought to be accurate and truthful, this is not always easy to achieve. In particular, an environmental claim can be literally true, but still capable of being widely misunderstood or misinterpreted.

How can this be addressed?

- Consider how an ordinary member of the public, not an expert, might understand the claim.
- Don't make claims simply because they are literally true, if they are likely to be misinterpreted.
- Avoid claims indicating an environmental benefit that, while literally true, is unlikely to happen in practice.
- Make sure a single environmental benefit isn't restated using different terminology to infer multiple benefits.
- If a claim relates to a pre-existing, but previously undisclosed aspect, don't make a claim inferring a recent improvement or enhancement.
- Make sure that any claim indicating that a product is free of a specified substance contains no more of that ingredient than would be found as an acknowledged trace contaminant or background level. The threshold level used should be specified.

Example – Is the claim literally true but likely to be misinterpreted?

The retail sale of all lead-containing decorative coatings to the general public has been prohibited for some time. Therefore a claim on paint stating that it is 'lead-free' or 'contains no added lead' might be literally true, but could be easily misinterpreted. For example, consumers may believe that this is a recent change to the product's formulation or that other competing products do in fact contain lead. Therefore, such claims should not be made.

Example – Is the claim literally true but unlikely to be realised?

Polyethylene rubbish bags (except those meant to contain recyclable waste only) are technically recyclable, but, when used for their intended purpose, will in most cases end up in a disposal facility such as a landfill. Although a claim that 'this product is recyclable' is literally true, it is very unlikely to be realised and therefore should not be made in this context.

2. How to make a self-declared environmental claim

Example – Does the claim use different terminology to infer multiple benefits?

A claim such as “This paper is Non-chlorine bleached, Totally Chlorine Free (TCF) and Elemental Chlorine Free (ECF)” implies 3 environmental benefits rather than what is essentially just one.

Example – Does the claim refer to the absence of a specified substance?

A claim stating that a printed wire board is ‘lead-free’ can be misleading if there is no agreement on the allowed maximum concentration values. If, in the absence of such an agreement, a company wants to make a claim related to the lead content, it would be better to qualify this claim by stating for example; “this printed wire board does not contain more than 0.1% lead by weight”.

2.2.2 How do I ensure my claims are relevant?

What is the issue?

Relevance is about enabling customers to understand the context within which the claim is made.

How can this be addressed?

- Make sure the claim is relevant to that particular product.
- Make sure the claim is relevant to the place where the corresponding environmental impact occurs.
- Clearly indicate whether the claim refers to the whole product, or just part of it, or just the packaging.
- Do not make claims that imply that a product is exceptional when in fact all products in the marketplace share the same characteristic. The exception to this rule is where significant levels of consumer concern exist and consumers do not realise that it is a legislative requirement that all products share the same characteristic. In this scenario, the claim should be qualified, for example by the statement “in line with similar products ...” or “as required by law ...”.
- Don’t make a claim based on the absence of ingredients or features which have never (or have not for some time) been associated with the product category.
- Regularly review and update all claims to ensure that they remain relevant in view of changes such as new legislation being enacted, improvement in the environmental performance of competing products and technological advances. There is no fixed or recommended timeline for reviewing claims. Individual companies are likely to be fully aware of changes to legislation or competing products and are therefore best placed to review claims to take these factors into consideration.
- Make sure that any claim is used only in circumstances where, overall, there is a net environmental benefit associated with the product.

2. How to make a self-declared environmental claim

Example – Is the claim relevant to the place where the environmental impact occurs?

'This product is recyclable'. Many products are technically recyclable but the recycling infrastructure may not exist in the place of sale, use and eventual disposal and hence the likelihood of the product being recycled is very small or non-existent. For this reason, the term 'recyclable' should only be used when there is evidence that the recycling infrastructure exists, i.e:

- The collection, sorting and delivery systems to transfer the materials from the source to the recycling facility are conveniently available to a reasonable proportion of the purchasers, potential purchasers and users of the product;
- The recycling facilities are available to accommodate the collected materials;
- The product for which the claim is made is being collected and recycled.

Example – Does the claim refer to the whole product, a component of the product or the packaging?

A greeting card and envelope packaged in a cellophane wrapper has a sticker on the wrapper stating 'Made from 65% recycled post-consumer waste'. Although this may be a good claim (being both clear and quantified), the consumer may be left in some doubt as to whether it applies to the cellophane, the envelope, the card or all three. If in fact the claim referred to the card, the following options would help to make this clear:

- a) Change the wording on the sticker to state "This card is made from 65% recycled post-consumer waste";
- b) Make the original claim on the card itself, "Made from 65% recycled post-consumer waste"
- c) Use the Mobius loop on the card itself (See section 3 for further information on the use of the Mobius loop):



65% recycled content

2. How to make a self-declared environmental claim

Example – Does the claim imply that the product is exceptional when all products share a similar characteristic?

A claim on an aerosol sold in the UK stating “CFC-free” is misleading as it implies that the product is exceptional whereas in fact the absence of CFCs in aerosols is a legal requirement in the UK. Given that this attribute is now common to all aerosols on the UK market, the general advice is that there is no need to make a claim. However, if a company considers consumers are not aware of this and are still concerned about the issue, the British Aerosol Manufacturers’ Association (BAMA) recommends that their members use the agreed wording “Aerosols do not contain CFCs”. This wording ensures that the claim does not imply that the product is exceptional.

Example – Does the claim refer to the absence of substances which have never, or have not for some time, been associated with the product?

A claim stating that a desk top computer does not contain any asbestos is inappropriate, because asbestos is no longer used to manufacture computers. An average consumer may be misled into thinking that the use of asbestos may be common in computer manufacturing today and that this particular product offers an environmental benefit.

Example – Does the claim refer to an aspect which results in a net environmental benefit?

Make sure that any claim is used only in circumstances where, overall, there is a net environmental benefit associated with the product. In some cases, an environmental improvement in one area may cause a negative impact elsewhere. For example, if a production process employs less water compared with the previous process, but for this reason needs to employ more energy, a claim of reduced resource use or reduced water consumption would not be valid unless the increase in energy was also stated.

2.2.3 How do I ensure my claims are specific and unambiguous, especially when making comparisons

What is the issue?

Ensuring that environmental claims are specific and unambiguous will help ensure that customers fully appreciate their intended meaning. The worst examples of this kind of labelling are those that are highly generalised, such as ‘environmentally friendly’ or ‘nature’s friend’. It is this kind of poor quality labelling which has, in the past, discredited all forms of environmental labelling.

2. How to make a self-declared environmental claim

How can this be addressed?

- Make clear what environmental impact or improvement the claim relates to. A claim should identify exactly why a product is better for the environment and make a specific statement to that effect. Vague or non-specific environmental claims should never be used, either on their own or as part of some broader environmental statement.
- Make clear the level of environmental improvement or performance achieved.
- If the claim involves a comparative assertion (for example comparing against previous product contents or performance):
 - make clear the basis for the comparison
 - quantify the claim using either percentages or absolute values as appropriate
 - always make a comparison against a comparable product serving similar functions, either currently or recently in the same marketplace
 - only make a claim against:
 - your own prior products or processes
 - another organisation's products or processes
- Don't make any claims that relate to the general issue of 'sustainability' since to date there are no definitive methods for measuring sustainability or confirming its accomplishment. Be specific about the particular environmental aspect(s) you are claiming.

Example – Does the claim specify the environmental impact or improvement?

Claims such as, 'environmentally friendly', 'green', 'nature's friend', 'made with care for the environment', 'safe for the environment', 'ecological', 'eco-friendly' are neither clear nor specific, so should not be used.

Example – Does the claim specify the level of environmental improvement?

A product has the following environmental claim: *"this product now uses even less energy than our previous version"*. This claim does not convey the extent of the environmental benefit – it would be better to say, for example, that *"this product now uses 20% less electricity in normal use than our previous model"*.

2. How to make a self-declared environmental claim

Example – Is the claim comparative in nature?

A company has developed a new battery which can be recharged up to 5 times, the previous version was not rechargeable. In this case, it is not possible to make a comparative percentage based claim as this would give us an infinite answer:

$$\frac{5 \text{ recharges} - 0 \text{ recharges}}{0 \text{ recharges}} \times 100 = \infty$$

Therefore, in this case the claim should be expressed as an absolute difference. An appropriate claim could be “now rechargeable up to 5 times”.

Example – Is the claim comparative in nature?

For a battery which lasts 15 hours instead of a previous 10 hours, the difference is:

$$\frac{15 \text{ hours} - 10 \text{ hours}}{10 \text{ hours}} \times 100 = 50\%$$

In this case, an appropriate claim would be “50% longer life than our previous battery”.

However, an appropriate claim for packaging that has changed from having 4% to 6% recycled content would be “contains 2% additional recycled content compared with our previous packaging”. This is because the absolute difference is 6%-4%=2%. A claim based on the relative change of 50% while strictly accurate is likely to be misleading and, therefore, should not be used.

Example – Does the claim use the term ‘sustainability’?

Although sustainability is a widely used term it is not defined by a common methodology when applied to products and hence claims containing the term ‘sustainability’ or ‘sustainable’ should be avoided. In particular, claims relating to sustainable forest management should:

- Refer to a specific forest certification scheme e.g. FSC, PEFC;
- Comply with the rules set by the particular certification scheme regarding use of the logo, the wording of the claim and the ‘chain of custody’ requirements;
- State the percentage (%) content from this source (if the scheme allows).

For example, “Paper made from 75% FSC certified pulp”.

2. How to make a self-declared environmental claim

2.2.4 How do I ensure that my environmental claims are presented clearly?

What is the issue?

It is possible for the information associated with a product to meet all the criteria referred to above, and yet still be unhelpful to customers as a result of the way that it is presented.

How can this be addressed?

- Make sure that any further information needed to understand an environmental claim is not buried in the 'small print'.
- Do not use language that exaggerates the advantages of the environmental feature the claim refers to.
- Make sure that any symbols or logos are used in a way that their intended meaning is clear, if necessary by adding an explanatory statement. In particular:
 - The **Mobius loop** (the recyclability logo) has a specific meaning depending on how it is used – follow the guidance in section 3.2;
 - The **Green Dot®** symbol denotes compliance with an authorised packaging recovery scheme in some EU member states, however it is not applicable in the UK and therefore has no meaning for products sold on the UK market. It should not be used to denote general recyclability or recycled content – see section 3.3 for further information;
 - Symbols used for environmental claims should be easily distinguishable from any other symbols found on products;
 - Natural objects such as trees, flowers or animals, should only be used if there is a direct and verifiable link between the product, the object and the environmental benefit being claimed. This link should be clearly explained.

Example – Is critical information buried in the small print or on back of pack?

A claim of 'peat reduced' on growing media made as a headline claim on the front of pack, with further information available on the back of pack, falls into this category. The problem with this claim is that the actual level of improvement or actual peat content is not easily visible to the consumer when selecting which product to purchase and hence the consumer is unable to identify the level of environmental improvement achieved by competing products. To resolve this issue, the claim 'peat reduced' needs to be accompanied by further information on the front of the pack clearly stating the level of improvement and/or actual peat content. For example "peat reduced – contains 20% less than our previous version (date)"

2. How to make a self-declared environmental claim

Example – Does the claim exaggerate the environmental features?

Claims such as 'One tree planted for every tree cut down' or 'All trees used in the manufacture of this paper are replaced thus helping to replenish the earth's resources' on paper products imply that the product has significant environmental benefits, whereas in fact the vast majority of paper and cardboard will come from forests that are replanted on a commercial basis. To make such a claim therefore falsely implies that the paper or card used has significant environmental benefits.

Example – Is there a direct and verifiable link between the object, product and environmental benefit?

A claim on cork floor tiles refers to the fact that the cork used is a natural material harvested from the outer bark of the cork oak tree every 9 years without affecting the lifespan of the tree, which lives for about 200 years. In this context it is perfectly reasonable for the claim to be accompanied by a picture of a cork oak tree.

2.2.5 How do I ensure the accuracy of any claims I make?

What is the issue?

There is no requirement to use third party verification or certification before an environmental claim is made, but it should be substantiated and verifiable. A business' own internal procedures may very well be able to perform this function. In addition, information should be retained by the person making the claim and supplied to anyone seeking justification of it.

How can this be addressed?

- Check that the claim is fair and truthful, whether by testing the product or otherwise.
- Don't make a claim if it could only be verified through access to confidential business information.
- Document and retain information that others may need to verify any claims made. If the claim is a comparative claim, this should include data relating to the product with which the comparison is made.

2. How to make a self-declared environmental claim

Example – What test method should I use?

There are numerous test methods to verify and evaluate environmental claims. If you are going to use one of these methods, they should follow, in order of preference:

- International Standards;
- Recognised standards that have international acceptability (e.g. CEN or BS standards);
- Methods developed by industry provided they have been subjected to peer review.

For example, a claim on photodegradability is to be evaluated for a carrier bag. The regional manufacturing industry has developed a peer reviewed testing method, however, an international standard exists. In this case, the international standard should be selected over the regional manufacturing industry standard.

Example – What documentation should I retain?

Any relevant information to be retained will obviously depend on the type of claim that you would like to make, but the minimum information to be documented and retained should include:

- Identification of the relevant standard or test method used;
- Documentary evidence, if verification of the claim cannot be made by testing the finished product;
- Test results, where these are necessary for claim verification;
- Contact details of any independent party doing the testing;
- If a claim involves a comparison with other products, then a description of the method used, test results and any assumption(s) made should be clearly stated;
- Evidence that the claim will continue to be accurate during the period over which the product is on the market and longer, depending on the life of the product.

Example – How long should information be retained for?

If an environmental claim is made about a car, the documentation that supports the claim should be retained for as long as that model is expected to remain in use, and not just the period in which the model is actually being manufactured.

3. Existing environmental labelling and declaration schemes

In addition to self-declared environmental claims, there are a number of other ways to communicate product environmental information, for example using labelling or declaration schemes. Using a reputable scheme with clear criteria can often be a simple and familiar way of demonstrating to consumers compliance to environmental standards in areas with often complex issues.

Using a label or participating in a declaration scheme can say a lot about your company, and can enhance the appeal of your product. But before applying, it is worth considering whether it is relevant, how you want to use one, and perhaps discussing this with the organisation responsible for issuing the label or running the scheme.

For example, some ecolabels are national labels, and so offer the greatest advantages on products selling within a particular country. Similarly, it's important to remember that green labels – like the European Ecolabel – are environmental labels, and don't cover other aspects, apart from the product's fitness for use.

The marketing advantages of having a label or participating in a declaration scheme depend on how they are used. Some firms want to use a label as a high-profile statement (perhaps as part of a broader company strategy of making a positive green declaration), with accompanying explanatory material. Others prefer to use them in a less direct way (for example, for purchasing and supply purposes, or business-to-business communication, where the fact of having the label or making a declaration may be more important than actively publicising it).

To get the best value from a product-related label, it should be actively promoted on or alongside the product. Such labels are designed to promote products, and the products in turn promote the label.

The decision about which label or declaration scheme to choose depends on the value that it adds to your product. Relevant factors might include the environmental specifications of your major purchasers, where your product is sold, how much a specific environmental label might help to generate sales in a particular area, and the reputation of the label in question and its rules. A sensible step is to discuss this with your customers and stockists before applying – an increasing number of retailers have environmental policies about which products they will stock and which environmental claims they will accept.

Table 1 provides an overview of some existing sector and issue specific schemes. More detailed information on the cross-sectoral EU Ecolabel scheme and the frequently misunderstood Mobius loop and Green Dot® can also be found in the following sections:

-  **EU Ecolabel scheme** (page 19)
-  **Mobius loop** (page 20)
-  **Green Dot®** (page 21)

3. Existing environmental labelling and declaration schemes

Defra also publishes a number of information leaflets to provide advice to business and consumers on labelling, including 'A shopper's guide to green labels'

www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/shopguide/index.htm

Table 1 – Some sector-specific schemes

Product or Sector	Label/Declaration	Further information
Electrical and Electronic Equipment	EU Energy Label	www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/energylabels/index.htm (Note – this is a mandatory scheme applying to certain household electrical products. If you are selling one of the products covered, the label must be displayed).
	Energy Efficiency Recommended Logo	www.saveenergy.co.uk
	Energy Star label	www.eu-energystar.org
	ECMA International – technical report TR/70	www.ecma-international.org/publications/techreports/E-TR-070.HTM
	NITO (Nordic Information Technology Association) IT ECO Declaration	www.itforetagen.se/Pdf/Eco-declaration-IT-eng.pdf
	TCO label	www.tcodevelopment.com
Paper & Timber products	Paper Profile	www.paperprofile.com
See also sector-specific guidance on environmental claims in the greeting card sector at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/index.htm	NAPM Mark (National Association of Paper Merchants)	www.napm.org.uk/info.htm
	FSC (Forest Stewardship Council)	www.fsc-uk.info
	PEFC (Pan-European Forest Certification Council)	www.pefc.org
Food	Organic certification	www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic
	MSC (Marine Stewardship Council)	www.msc.org
	LEAF Marque (Linking Environment and Farming)	www.leafmarque.com
Decorative coatings (eg paints) See also sector-specific guidance on environmental claims on decorative coatings at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/index.htm	VOC (Volatile Organic Compound) labelling scheme	www.coatings.org.uk/ and go to: > FAQs > What are VOCs?
Detergents See also sector-specific guidance on environmental claims on detergents at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/index.htm	Washright	www.washright.com

3. Existing environmental labelling and declaration schemes

3.1 EU Ecolabel



What is it?

An EU-wide ecolabelling scheme established by the European Commission and managed in the UK by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). It is intended to enable consumers to identify the top performing products in the marketplace in terms of overall environmental performance. To qualify for the logo, products must be independently assessed to have met strict environmental criteria covering all the aspects of a product's life cycle

Which products does it cover?

At present there are 21 product groups including:

- Textile products
- Copying and graphic paper
- Hand dishwashing detergents
- All purpose cleaners and cleaners for sanitary facilities
- Soil Improvers
- Footwear
- Personal computers
- Televisions
- Washing machines
- Refrigerators
- Tourist accommodation
- Bed mattresses
- Detergents for dishwashers
- Laundry detergents
- Indoor paints and varnishes
- Tissue paper
- Hard floor coverings
- Portable computers
- Light bulbs
- Dishwashers
- Vacuum cleaners

Who is it aimed at?

1. Businesses (to encourage the development of greener products)
2. Consumers (to help them to identify such products)
3. Public and commercial procurers (looking for products which meet high environmental standards)

3. Existing environmental labelling and declaration schemes

How can I use it on my product?

If you are a manufacturer, importer, service provider, trader or retailer (of own brand products) you can apply to use the label for products which meet the ecolabel criteria.

When using the Flower, it may be helpful to provide a few explanatory words on the product about the label, or some point of sale publicity material, to maximise consumer awareness of what the label stands for.

Where can I find out more?

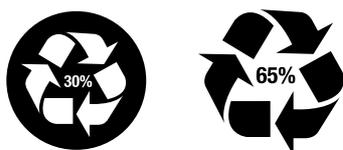
Further information on applications in the UK can be found at:

www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/ecolabel/index.htm

General information about the EU Ecolabel can be found at:

www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/ecolabel

3.2 Mobius Loop



What is it?

The Mobius Loop is an internationally-recognised recycling symbol in which each arrow represents an aspect of a successful recycling programme: collection; remanufacturing/reprocessing into a new product; and finally purchase by the consumer. The symbol should only be used on goods that are 'recyclable' or include 'recycled content'. In the case of recycled content the percentage should be stated together with the symbol.

Most people will be familiar with the Mobius loop but may be unaware exactly what it means:



Where the symbol appears without a number it indicates that the product is 'recyclable'.



Where the symbol appears with a number it indicates that the product contains x% recycled content – in this case 30% recycled content.

Which products does it cover?

Any which are recyclable or contain recycled material.

3. Existing environmental labelling and declaration schemes

Who is it aimed at?

All.

How can I use it on my product?

The Mobius loop is a voluntary logo that may be used free of charge, but the above requirements govern its use. In addition, the symbol should not be used in a modified form to incorporate a company logo or other branding. The specific requirements governing the use of the Mobius loop are outlined in more detail in ISO standard ISO7000, symbol no. 1135.

As UK consumers may be unaware of the precise meaning of the symbol in the different formats described, it is good practice to accompany it with a short statement clarifying whether it is referring to recyclable or recycled content. For example 'recyclable' or 'x% recycled content' as appropriate.

3.3 Green Dot



What is it?

The Green Dot® is a licensed trademark which denotes compliance with an authorised packaging recovery scheme in some EU member states. Its use indicates that a financial contribution has been paid to a national packaging recovery company, that has been set up in accordance with the principles defined in the European Directive for Packaging and Packaging Waste and the national law which transposes it.

The Green Dot® is not a recycling symbol although is often misinterpreted as such. It should not be used to denote general recyclability or recycled content. The Mobius loop is the correct symbol to use for claims in this context.

The member states within the European Union which have adopted the Green Dot® trademark are the Republic of Ireland, Portugal, Spain, France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg and Sweden.

Which products does it cover?

Packaging.

3. Existing environmental labelling and declaration schemes

How can I use it on my product?

The UK is not a participant in the Green Dot® system as producer responsibility obligations are discharged by a different method, via the packaging Regulations which have a system of Packaging Waste Recovery Notes (PRNs) to demonstrate compliance. Therefore the Green Dot® has no meaning in the UK. However, it sometimes appears on products sold in the UK because the same packaging is often used for products sold in different markets. Where this occurs, a licence fee must be paid to the relevant organisation. Currently the Green Dot Licensing Company is operated by Valpak Ltd.

Where can I find out more?

Further information can be found at www.green-dot.org.uk and www.green-dot.com

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**About Defra
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