

ENVIRONMENTAL LABELLING PROGRAMS TYPE I DEVELOPED IN RANGE OF GEN

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ABSTRACT

Fundamental right of every consumer should be availability of necessary information to protect their own health. Information should be obtained from the marks referred to the product which it comes into contact. Marks are an integral part of everyone's life. We can see various types of marks at home, in stores and everywhere around us. Symbols indicate the importance assigned to them in opinion system (labeling scheme) to the consumer. There has been established an organisation for improving, promoting and developing the ecolabelling of products and services worldwide. The name of the organisation is Global Ecolabelling Network – GEN. Its task is co-operation, information exchange and harmonisation among members, associates, and other ecolabelling programs. Its members work with Type 1 ecolabelling programmes, and develop models in transparent way.

KEY WORDS

ecolabelling, environment, standards, membership

Introduction

Environmentally oriented product policy is in general determined by the relationships between its aims – subjects – objects – tools. It is based on the integrated approach to the product life cycle, which anticipates an enormous amount of information. It has to solve the questions of the international trade as well as the rules of the International Trade Organization.

New forms of preventive environmental strategies are being introduced helping to solve environmental problems and environmental motivation of producers. Many producers are faced with great attention of the public to their approach to the environment. Despite the fact that the customers buy products fairly prudently and their behaviour is markedly affected by prices, a particular part of the population prefers product that do not burden the environment. This brings about a situation, in which the producers within their mutual competition and in relation to customers are enforced to behave responsibly.

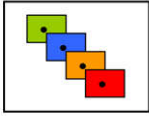
Nowadays, there is still bigger variety of instrumentation and organisations introducing and practising ecolabelling principles and instruments to increase the knowledge in ecology and to make the people more environmentally literate. One of such organisations is the Global Ecolabelling Network developed for products and service branch.

Ecolabelling

Ecolabelling is a significant compound of environmental product policies that are generally determined by relations between their targets – objects – subjects – tools [1]. Ecolabelling is based on an integrated approach to life cycles of products, the fact of which assumes provision of significant information. It is focused on products or provided services, however not only on their final form of completed products but also on individual phases of their life cycles. The subjects of this process are represented by a number of market participants, namely producers, distributors, dealers, customers, including the state. [7]

In recent years, the idea of 'green' or 'political' consumers expressing their political beliefs in everyday life has been widely embraced. Eager to satisfy the needs of this new market segment, firms have allocated substantial resources to environmental management, social accountability, corporate citizenship, occupational health and safety etc. [10] The role of consumers in driving organizations to be environmentally responsive is currently contentious. It is, however, important to understand the role that consumers play, because they can be a crucial pull factor for organizations. [12] Most green marketing literature is strongly based on the assumption that a consumer's environmental awareness is a pre-condition for green purchasing. While following such a 'behaviouristic' green marketing both scholars and companies seem to have neglected that green products are bought only if customers perceive the products as superior to competitors' offerings. [13]

There has been rapid development in the methods, data and protocols for the assessment of product sustainability over the past decade. Notwithstanding this welcome development, the widespread provision of sustainable products has not occurred. Moreover, indications from a myriad of surveys suggest that consumers remain full of intent to purchase sustainably, yet these stated preferences have not translated into a widespread uptake in the purchase of more sustainable products. Heightened interest in climate change over the past couple of years has led to rising calls for labelling to allow consumers to differentiate between more or less sustainable options. Such calls apparently assume that if consumers are



presented with appropriate label information their purchases will change and more sustainable purchasing will result. For many observers these calls bring more than a ring of déjà vu as the failures (or at least unfulfilled expectations) of environmental labelling schemes of the past spring to mind. [11]

The objective of the environmentally oriented product policy is a reduction of the potential environmental impact of products to a level, which will be acceptable from the point of view of sustainable development. It means:

- highest possible raw material exploitation,
- energy consumption minimization,
- achieving of such product quality, which will allow for prolongation of the life span of product, its increased usefulness, waste emission reduction to an acceptable level,
- environmental risk minimization linked to the product disposal after reaching its life span.

"Ecolabelling" is a voluntary method of environmental performance certification and labelling that is practised around the world. An "ecolabel" is a label which identifies overall, proven environmental preference of a product or service within a specific product/service category. There are different classifications of label. [9]

In contrast to "green" symbols, or claim statements developed by manufacturers and service providers, the most credible labels are based on life cycle considerations; they are awarded by an impartial third-party in relation to certain products or services that are independently determined to meet transparent environmental leadership criteria. [2]

Ecolabelling can be distinguished on the basis of trustworthiness and depth of information provided to the customer:

- Advertisement labelling. The aim is to attract attention of customers in order to gain their acceptance of the offer. The information on the protection of environment is not specific, often not verifiable and as such potentially misleading.
- Latent or indirect labelling. The aim is to inform the customer about particular properties of products as e.g. their safety, functionality, health protection, toxicity, flammability, explosiveness, loudness, exploitation of raw materials and energetic sources. These labels express compliance of properties with a particular set of requirements set up in advance, however not focused explicitly on the protection of environment. They testify particular properties of products without directly declaring their impact on environment.
- True Ecolabelling. The aim is to provide true and verifiable information guaranteed by so-called third party on the impact of the labelled product or service on environment.

Within the wide class of environmental labelling and declarations in coincidence with products or services, there are labels with various extent of relation to environment or its compounds. They can be divided into several types :

- standardised in the framework of ISO/TC/207 (series of standards 14020), type I., II. or III.
- standardised out of scope of ISO 14020,
- non-standardised,
- labelling with environmental aspects – standardised,
- labelling with environmental aspects - non-standardised. [8]

Global Ecolabelling Network

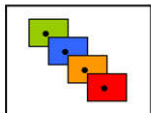
The GEN was founded and launched in 1995 to improve, promote, and develop ecolabelling products and services. GEN is a non-profit association of environmental performance labelling programs. These organizations are all classified as Type I ecolabelling programs by the International Standards Organization (ISO), indicating that they are third party and that they address multiple criteria. The main purpose of GEN is to bring together ecolabelling practitioners from around the world to share (i.e. compare and contrast) their knowledge, experiences, ambitions and operational strategies and processes. [5]



Figure 1 Logo of Global Environmental Network [6]

GEN Member Standards

All members of the Global Ecolabelling Network develop environmental leadership standards. That is, they operate Type 1 ecolabelling programmes, and develop standards in an open, public, transparent process. In many cases, certification to a particular standard is audited by an independent third-party. Criteria and product category differ among the membership, reflecting local and regional variables, but all standards address multiple environmental attributes and



most have requirements for items such as toxicity, air quality, energy use, recyclability, VOCs, carcinogens and other issues of concern. Life cycle thinking is used by our members in developing standards which minimize environmental impacts across the entire life cycle of a product or service, from raw material extraction through to use and eventual disposal or breakdown. With 26 members from countries across the globe, the collective expertise of the Global Ecolabelling Network is unparalleled. While GEN does not actually develop criteria or certify products, we certainly do support all of our members and their respective programs as they undertake the development of environmental leadership standards, and ecolabelling of products and services. To this end, GEN tracks its members active standards, and compiles and updates the information annually. Please use the links on the left to view standards available for certification by country, or by product category. [4]

Table 1 – Spreadsheet 2 List of GEN Members [3]

Country Region	Program
Australia	Good Environmental Choice Australia
Brazil	ABNT Associacao Brasileira de Normas Tecnicas
China [CEC]	China Environmental Labelling
China [CQC]	China Environmentally Friendly Certification
Chinese Taipei	Green Mark
European Union	EU Ecolabel
Germany	Blue Angel
Hong Kong	Green Label Scheme
Hong Kong	Hong Kong Eco-Labelling
Indonesia	Ekolabel Indonesia
Israel	Green Label
Japan	Eco Mark
Korea	Korea Ecolabel
North America	ECOLOGO
Nordic Countries	Nordic Swan
New Zealand	Environmental Choice New Zealand
Malaysia	SIRIM Eco-Labelling Scheme
Philippines	Green Choice Philippines
Russia	Vitality Leaf
Singapore	Singapore Green Label Scheme
Sweden [SSNC]	Good Environmental Choice- Bra Mijoval
Sweden [TCO]	TCO Certified
Thailand	Thai Green Label
Ukraine	EcoLabelling Program in Ukraine
USA	Green Seal

Member Standards By Product Category

GEN members have environmental leadership standards for a wide variety of product categories.

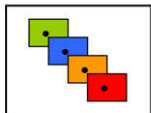
Table 2 – Spreadsheet 1 GEN Categories [1]

Batteries	Food	Cleaning Products	Clothing/Textiles
Construction/Building	Gardening/Agriculture	Home Appliances	Lights
Office Equipment/Furniture	Office Supplies	Paints/Coatings	Paper Products
Personal Care Products	Printing Inks	Services	Solar-Energy
Automotive	Water Conserving Devices		

Conclusion

The ISO 14020 series of standards provides businesses with a globally recognized and credible set of international benchmarks against which they can prepare their environmental labelling, which is increasingly used on products and in advertising, in response to consumer demand. With the relentless focus on the environmental aspects of their products on labelling and in advertising.

Global Ecolabelling Network has established a wide area of cooperation and information sharing between the members of the Network and provide the information to the public. They set criteria and certify products and services. The membership climate change and health, consumers are becoming more interested in less tangible product attributes such as the ethical and environmental aspects of a product's production and supply. In response to this, manufacturers often



voluntarily choose to provide information concerning of GEN is a network of cooperating organisations who are provided with information regarding to environmental labelling in time, and information about the technologies from the environmental area as well. These instruments are nearby the environmental thinking and way of life, the platform for effective technical and business development.

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