Summary

It has been 25 years since the EU Ecolabel was launched in the European Union as a voluntary label that identifies products and services with reduced environmental impact. The EU Ecolabel is awarded to green consumer products such as detergents, paints, shampoos, computers, furniture and clothing. They must meet strict environmental criteria on chemical composition, packaging efficiency and sustainability throughout their life-cycle. It also helps consumers identify high environmentally-performing products available on the market.

The “Flower logo” can be found on the packaging of ecolabel products:

If you want to market your green product, the EU ecolabel can open new business opportunities. It is a trusted logo in Europe. EU consumers are increasingly mindful of purchasing environmentally-friendly products and the EU Ecolabel can also be used in public procurement. As the EU moves to a circular economy, the EU Ecolabel is going to grow as a tool supporting products that are designed to be sustainable, energy efficient, durable and repairable.

The report highlights the process for getting the EU Ecolabel and the support tools available for potential applicants.

For more information, see the European Commission Ecolabel webpages: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/
The EU Ecolabel

The EU Ecolabel is a Type I Ecolabel (ISO 14024). This means the EU Ecolabel is voluntary, based on multiple criteria, where a third party awards the use of the label to indicate overall environmental preference within a particular product category, based on life cycle assessment.

Note that the EU Ecolabel coexists with EU Member States’ national ecolabels, such as the Nordic Swan in Sweden or the Blue Angel in Germany. However, not all EU countries have national ecolabels.

1. Eligible Products

The EU eco-label applies primarily to consumer products, ranging from personal care products, clothing and cleaning products to clothing furniture and electronic equipment. It does not apply to food products, drinks and medicines.

The EU has established a list of product groups that are eligible for the EU Ecolabel. It is updated regularly: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/products-groups-and-criteria.html](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/products-groups-and-criteria.html).

2. Award criteria:

Manufacturers who wish to benefit from the EU Ecolabel must comply with strict environmental performance requirements. The award criteria are developed for each product group by experts, in consultation with stakeholders. The entire product life cycle is considered, from production to recycling or disposal. Criteria include chemical composition, packaging, energy efficiency, and limits to air and water emissions. The criteria are different for each product type and are revised every 4 to 5 years to reflect innovation and market evolution. They are based on the main principles of circular economy, supporting both sustainable production and consumption.

For example, dishwashing detergents meeting the following criteria may be awarded the EU Ecolabel: reduced amount of chemicals; limited substances harmful to the aquatic environment; increased biodegradability; less packaging: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/documents/det_dishwashers.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/documents/det_dishwashers.pdf)

To be eligible for the EU Ecolabel, computer manufacturers will need to consider energy efficiency and device upgradability during the design and manufacturing process, along with taking into account how easy it is to dismantle, recover and recycle resources from the devices: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/documents/personal.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/documents/personal.pdf)

In terms of product visibility, products bearing the EU Ecolabel appear on the European Commission’s website with a link to the company’s website. See the EU Ecolabel catalogue and, as an example, the list of companies that have been awarded the EU Ecolabel for their rinse-off cosmetic products: [http://ec.europa.eu/ecat/category/en/46/rinse-off-cosmetic-produc](http://ec.europa.eu/ecat/category/en/46/rinse-off-cosmetic-produc)
3. How to apply for the EU Ecolabel?

Any company that markets eligible products in the EU can apply for the eco-label.

**Procedure:** The first step is to contact the Competent Body in one of the countries where your product is marketed. The Competent Body is the national government agency that will evaluate your dossier and make the decision on whether to authorize the use of the eco-label. In general, Competent Bodies are pleased to receive such contact and will provide the prospective applicant with additional information about submitting an application. A single application covers all EU countries.

Contact details of competent bodies: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/competent-bodies.html](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/competent-bodies.html)

To prepare the application dossier, companies have to follow the instructions of the User Manuel for their product group which specify the required documentation for the assessment with compliance criteria: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/documents/user_manual/en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/documents/user_manual/en.pdf)

The Competent Body will evaluate the application dossier to determine whether applicant’s product meets the relevant criteria. This process takes approximately two months. In some cases, it may request to visit or audit to the U.S. exporter's manufacturing facility.

Additional information about the application process may be found at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/how-to-apply-for-eu-ecolabel.html](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/how-to-apply-for-eu-ecolabel.html)

**EU Ecolabel fees:** National competent authorities charge a one-off application fee (typically between EUR 200 to EUR 2,000) and an annual fee for the use of the logo (typically between EUR 350 to EUR 1,500), with a 30% reduction for companies registered under the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) and 15% for companies certified under the international standard ISO 14001 (Environmental management standard). The annual fee is reduced by 25% for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

Neither the application fee nor the annual fee will include any cost towards testing and verification that may be necessary for products that are the subject of applications. Inspection fees may be charged.


**For More Information**


The U.S. Commercial Service at the U.S. Mission to the European Union can be contacted via email at Office.BrusselsEC@trade.gov; or visit our website: [http://www.export.gov/europeanunion](http://www.export.gov/europeanunion).
The U.S. Commercial Service – Your Global Business Partner

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We welcome your comments and suggestions regarding this market research. You can e-mail us your comments/suggestions to: Market_Research_Feedback@trade.gov. Please include the name of the applicable market research in your message. We greatly appreciate your feedback.

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