

***When beauty meets green:  
The EU Ecolabel for cosmetic products***

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**Cosmetics Europe**  
the personal care association

# Transparency and sustainability in consumer products: an evolving landscape

**Growing consumer demand for transparency** around products (origin, environmental impact, sustainability credentials, etc.)

**73%** say the impact of the product on the environment is 'very important' or 'rather important' when making a purchasing decision  
*Eurobarometer on EU Ecolabel, 2023*



**58%** of consumers buy or advocate for brands based on their beliefs and values  
*(Edelmann 2022)*

**80%** of investors globally have sustainable investment policies in place  
*(Deloitte/Tufts Survey)*

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# Sustainability and transparency in the cosmetics industry

Cosmetics Europe sees sustainability and transparency vis à vis consumers as **win-win instruments** in the business-customer relationship:

- Builds **trust** in the product
- Is conducive of customer **loyalty**
- Became more and more a building block of **competitiveness**

Example from the cosmetics industry



- Reliable, verified and scientifically supported information on almost **30,000 ingredients** used in cosmetics.
- Available in **14 official EU languages** with more to come
- Information sourced from European Commission's **CosIng database**
- Helps consumers understand why certain ingredients are in cosmetic products, which properties they have and much more.

# Transparency and sustainability in consumer products: an evolving landscape

Industry and policymakers undertaking significant efforts to meet consumers expectations

- Proliferation of private and public labels....



- ...and regulatory instruments on supply chain transparency, reporting, traceability, tracing, labelling
  - **EU Ecolabel**
  - **Ecodesign Regulation (ESPR)** will lead to sustainability and information requirements and the adoption of the Digital Product Passport
  - **Empowering Consumers Directive** regulating generic environmental claims
  - **Green Claims Directive** regulating explicit environmental claims about consumer goods



Emerging need of clarity, coherence across instruments, fitness-for-purpose

The regulatory landscape and consumer information tools need to **address consumer expectations AND be a market incentive** for companies to continuously improve their sustainability performance and avoid unintended consequences (e.g. green hushing).

# The EU Ecolabel for cosmetics: value and perception

The EU Ecolabel can be **in principle a useful tool** to provide information about the sustainable performance of products

- European Commission as trusted, neutral provider
- Useful LCA elements
- KPI-based approach to track progress in uniform/systematic way
- Mark of excellence renowned across the globe

So, why low uptake within the industry so far?



Low consumer demand



Criteria are very demanding, especially for SMEs



Ecolabel criteria going beyond Cosmetics Products Regulation on human toxicity, giving the impression the CPR is insufficient when in fact it is a best-in-class standard globally



Impact on product performances



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# Addressing the challenges: visibility

- Increase visibility towards **consumers**:
  - Engage **consumers** through joint comms campaigns on EU Ecolabel benefits in collaboration with national bodies, civil society, retailers
  - Engage online and offline **retailers**, e.g. test in-shop approaches to improve visibility, develop of product catalogues
  - Engage **manufacturers** on how to improve on-pack visibility without affecting the visual appeal of products
- Increase visibility towards the **industry**:
  - Run surveys/studies to identify **most relevant industry target profiles**
  - **Awareness campaigns** with involvement of key middle-men (chambers of commerce, industry associations, national/regional agencies, etc.)
- Facilitate **best practice-sharing** (as per above and beyond) across member states and private actors

# Addressing the challenges: industry uptake

- Incentivise **industry uptake**:
  - **Embed market considerations** in the Ecolabel criteria to make it more operationally manageable
    - Impact on product performance and consumer's response (e.g., some ingredients excluded by default)
    - Adopt more approachable derogations for certain ingredients
  - !!! Also fundamental to avoid unintended environmental consequences such as premature disposal !!!
  - Support **R&D funding** to overcome product performance failures and make product appetible and thus competitive
  - **Simplify** application procedure and continue provide support to SMEs
  - Assess **market incentives** together with national authorities e.g.:
    - Industry-oriented:
      - Public procurement
      - Promote easier access to finance (e.g. discounts, preferential interest rates, etc.)
      - Equally relevant: raise awareness about incentives (events, chambers of commerce, websites, etc.)
    - Consumer oriented: e.g., eco-vouchers
  - Facilitate **best practice-sharing** (as per above and beyond) across member states and private actors



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