



# The EU Ecolabel and the UN Sustainable Development Goals



**The UN sustainable development goals are a universal call to action to fight poverty and inequalities, protect the planet and tackle climate change by 2030. To achieve the goals, all of us must make an effort: governments, the private sector, the public sector, civil society and every individual.**

The EU Ecolabel is the official ecolabel in the EU. Our goal is to reduce the environmental impact of production and consumption. When setting requirements, the EU Ecolabel therefore assesses the entire life cycle of the products, from raw materials to production, use, disposal and recycling.

The requirements promote sustainable use of resources, recycling and reuse and reduce waste in all parts of the life cycle of ecolabelled products and services.

The EU Ecolabel is a powerful tool for securing a sustainable future – and actively contributes to accomplishing 10 of the 17 sustainable development goals. On an overall level the EU Ecolabel contributes to goal 12,

“Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns”. In addition it contributes to achieving several of the other goals. The EU Ecolabel places most importance on environmental aspects, but also puts emphasis on health and social conditions where relevant.

The 28 countries in the EU are generally well-positioned to reach most of the UN sustainable development goals but may improve in terms of goal 12, as we are only halfway there.

See the description of all UN sustainable development goals and targets here: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

# Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns



**Goal 12 on responsible consumption and production has several targets. The EU Ecolabel contributes as follows:**

## **12.1 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns**

The EU Ecolabel strives to reduce the environmental impact of production and consumption. This ensures sustainable production as well as control of the value chain – and provides the end user with sustainable products.

Products with the EU Ecolabel are manufactured all over the world. Wherever products are made, strict environmental requirements go beyond legislation. In that way we propagate more environmentally friendly production methods – also in developing countries.

## **12.2 Achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources**

The EU Ecolabel sets requirements for the sustainable use of natural resources, use of raw materials, energy and water in manufacturing processes.

## **12.3 Reduce food losses among consumers, in retail and along production and supply chains**

All EU ecolabelled accommodation establishments are rewarded if they take measures to waste less food.

## **12.4 Achieve environmentally sound management of chemicals and wastes and reduce their release to air, water and soil**

The strict chemical requirements ensure that chemicals at all stages of the life cycle are handled in a way that makes the least possible impact on the environment.

In that way, the EU Ecolabel is a strong instrument for phasing out substances that are hazardous to health and the environment in products and manufacturing. This helps to prevent both users and factory workers from being exposed to harmful chemicals – and to reduce contamination of air, water and soil.

## **12.5 Reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse**

The EU Ecolabel strives to reduce waste, for example by promoting reuse of materials and setting strict chemical requirements that allow the materials to be recycled.

At the same time, ecolabelled products consisting of different materials that can be reused should be easy to dismantle, so that the materials may be used again. Strict quality standards ensure that the product works as desired and has a long lifetime.

## **12.6 Encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle**

The EU Ecolabel is a third-party certification scheme with absolute and transparent requirements. This makes it easier for companies to document their sustainability work. Accommodation establishments must also report the progress of their sustainability work.

## **12.7 Promote sustainable public procurement practices**

The EU Ecolabel is a strong tool for ensuring sustainable public procurement. The EU public procurement directive has allowed public procurers to request ecolabels, which allows them to more efficiently prepare and review tender documents.

The EU Ecolabel makes it easy for procurers and consumers to make sustainable choices.

## Other UN global goals that the EU Ecolabel supports

The EU Ecolabel contributes to accomplishing several of the sustainable development goals – always putting most emphasis on environmental aspects. Requirements are set where

it is possible to achieve real environmental improvements. Here are the goals that the EU Ecolabel contributes to in selected product groups.



### Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages – target 3.9

Through strict requirements for chemicals in all products the EU Ecolabel helps reducing the amount of hazardous substances and promoting healthy lives for all. This applies to substances that come into direct contact with humans as well as substances that pollute air, soil and water. For example,

the EU Ecolabel sets requirements for personal care products, prohibiting among other things, substances classified as carcinogenic, mutagenic or allergenic as well as reproductive toxicants and substances listed by the EU as possible endocrine disruptors.



### Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all – targets 6.3, 6.4, 6.6

In selected product groups, the EU Ecolabel sets requirements for sustainable water consumption. For instance, EU ecolabelled accommodation establishments are to limit their water consumption by using water efficient installations. Moreover, there are demands that measures be taken to reduce the amount of unwanted chemicals and to treat waste water in or-

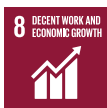
der to prevent pollution of the water environment. The EU Ecolabel has strict requirements for the use of pesticides in cultivation of cotton and other raw materials. Other requirements limit the use of unwanted dyes and other chemical substances in the manufacturing of, for example, textiles and paper.



### Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy – targets 7.2, 7.3

The EU Ecolabel is a tool for reduced total energy consumption and less use of fossil fuels and promotes locally produced energy in products and services. In production systems with high energy consumption the EU Ecolabel works to ensure energy efficiency in both the production and use stages. For example, EU ecolabelled paper products must be ma-

nufactured in an energy efficient manner, and the use of sustainable energy sources should be encouraged. Moreover, electronics bearing the EU Ecolabel logo are to have low energy consumption in the use phase, and EU ecolabelled accommodation establishments are to have energy efficient installations and the use of locally produced energy should be promoted.



### Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all – targets 8.4, 8.7, 8.8

The EU Ecolabel contributes to sustainable economic growth by providing market benefits to products and services that are environmentally sustainable. The EU Ecolabel is a tool for promoting circular economy — thus enhancing business competitiveness, promoting resource efficiency and helping to create new business models and innovative solutions. As well

as complying with strict environmental requirements, companies that make products with the EU Ecolabel must always adhere to working environment legislation. For industries that typically carry out production outside the EU, this also means that no child labour or forced labour must be used, along with other social requirements.



### Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation – target 9.4

The EU Ecolabel contributes to making industries more sustainable – with increased resource efficiency and increased use of cleaner and more environmentally friendly technology and processes. This includes setting resource and energy requirements

especially for the production and use stages, where there is a lot to be gained. For example, EU ecolabelled paper and textile manufacturers must use technology that ensures low energy consumption.



### Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts – target 13.2

The EU Ecolabel is a strong tool for national and common European strategies for climate change action and strives to limit the use of fossil fuels and promote renewable energy. A limitation of emissions of various chemical substances that contribute to climate change is also strived for. The EU Ecolabel supports the conservation of natural areas that counteract

climate change by requiring that a high proportion of virgin wood in for example furniture and wood-based floors be sourced from certified forestry, where protecting nature is important.



### Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development – targets 14.1, 14.4, 14.7

The EU Ecolabel has strict requirements for chemicals, thereby reducing the discharge of toxic substances to the sea.

Personal care products, as well as detergents and clean-

ing agents, must be free of microplastics. The EU Ecolabel also sets requirements for the treatment of waste water from for example dyeing plants producing EU ecolabelled textiles, and waste water from paper mills.



### Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss – targets 15.1, 15.2, 15.5

The EU Ecolabel strives to counteract the deterioration of natural habitats, halt biodiversity loss and protect endangered species.

To support sustainable management of the world's natural resources, the EU Ecolabel sets requirements based on recognized sustainable certification schemes

for the sustainable use of areas. It encourages conservation of areas that are particularly important for biodiversity, for example sustainable forestry. The criteria may also require traceability of raw materials and organic cotton in textiles.



### Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development – target 17.16

The EU Ecolabel is a member of the Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN). GEN is a global partnership of third-party organisations working to achieve sustainable development through certification by ecolabels. The organisations promote and develop

ecolabelling of products and services all over the world. Only environmentally friendly products and services proven to have lower environmental impact may carry a GEN member ecolabel.