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Guide for Municipalities - Integrating the European Ecolabel in building projects

CONCERTO INITIATIVE Class 1

Cost-effective Low-energy Advanced Sustainable So1utions

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Guide - Integrating the European Ecolabel in building projects



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1. THE EUROPEAN FLOWER



The Flower is the EU's Ecolabel and was established in 1992 by the EU Commission. It is recognised throughout the EU.

The Official environmental symbol for non food products

An extensive number of products can be certified by the Flower and today there are over 750 companies that have products certified.

The Ecolabel offers benefits to producers, retailers and consumers

The Flower makes it **easy and quick** to identify products which guarantee:

- Lessened environmental damage
- Good quality
- Health aspects are taken into account

The Flower **cooperates** with a number of National Ecolabels such as the **Nordic Swan** which was established in 1989 in the Nordic countries:



The purpose of the Flower is to promote sustainable products and reduce environmental damage

Ecolabel criteria are based on studies which analyse the impact of the product or service on the environment throughout its **life-cycle**, starting from raw material extraction in the pre-production stage, through to production, distribution and disposal.

For more information on the Ecolabels and products visit:

EU:
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/index_en.htm

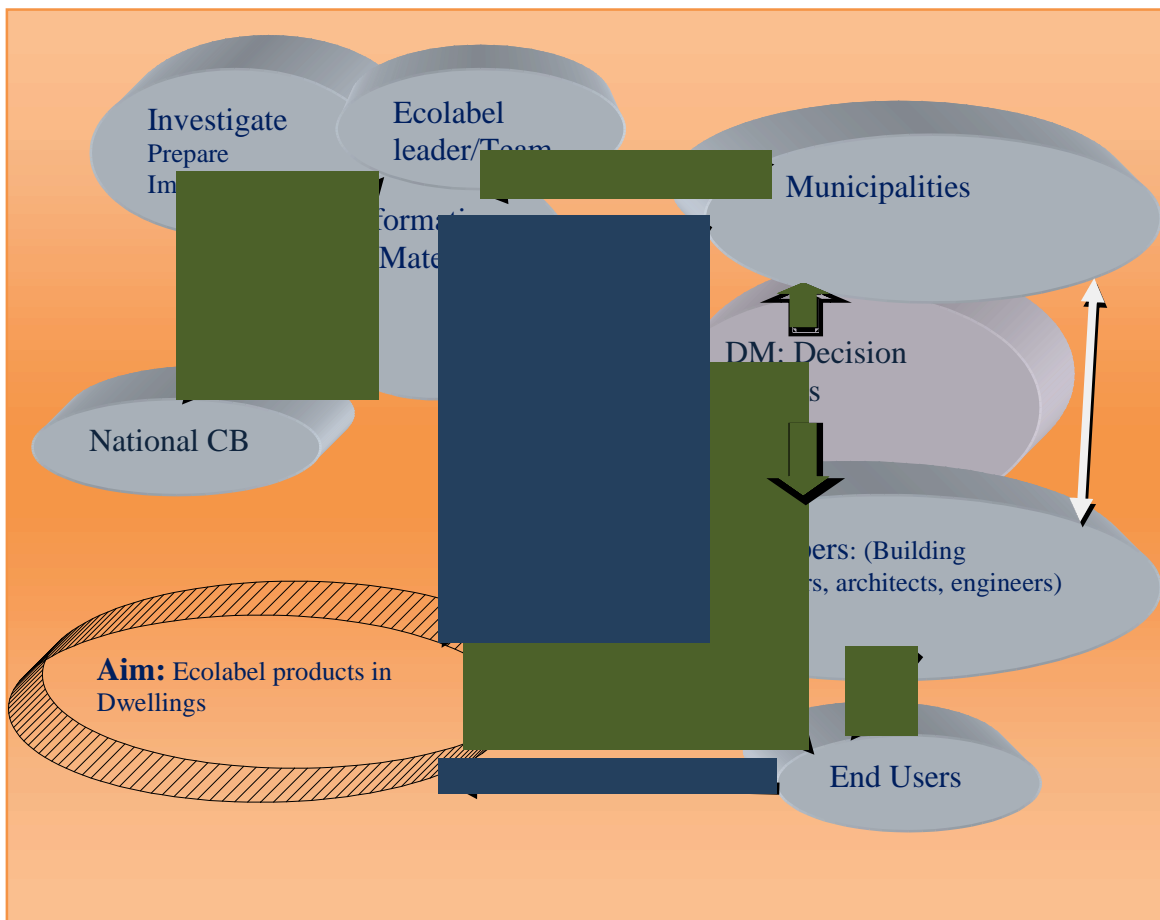
DK:
www.ecolabel.dk

2. GUIDE FOR MUNICIPALITIES

This guide has been developed for municipalities engaged in building projects and wishing to integrate the Ecolabel in these projects and is based on the experiences derived from integrating the Ecolabel in CLASS 1.

The guide offers recommendations of procedure to the **Ecolabel team/leader** which can either be internally appointed staff by the Public Authority or hired external consultants.

The elements of the guide graphically:



The tasks of the Ecolabel leader/team are:

- To research and identify the stakeholders and determine the degree of participation and or cooperation
- To coordinate and establish a best possible cooperation with the CB (Competent Body) and the Public Authority for support activities
- To increase the Ecolabel competence level of the municipality staff and other stakeholders involved

- To prepare Ecolabel information materials for the developers and other stakeholders and the end users and to present the information to these groups
- To incorporate the use of Ecolabel products in the building project
- To monitor, evaluate and report on the progress and results of the project

There are 2 crucial factors that need to be considered by the Ecolabel team as early as possible in the process for ensuring a successful integration of the EU Ecolabel and Ecolabel product use in building projects.

1. **Defining the role of the municipality.** It is very important to clarify the extent of involvement and commitment regarding the requirements placed on developers.

The Ecolabel team should have a very clear picture of the situation regarding the role of the municipality in the process of integrating the Ecolabel and a very important question is: Will the municipality require the use of Ecolabel products and to what extent?

Ideally the municipality will:

- a) Require that the developers use Ecolabel products or at least use them in some areas where the products are readily available and do not incur any meaningful extra cost.
- b) Commit to cooperate fully in all areas of Ecolabel activities: Product use in public buildings, information dissemination, participation in relevant meetings and prompt information to the Ecolabel team about the developers.

This may not be possible in all situations and will differ from country to country depending on the rules and regulations regarding building projects.

In situations where the municipality cannot/does not set down requirements for the developers, it is important that the Ecolabel team gets the message of integrating the Ecolabel across to the developers as well as all relevant municipality staff attached to the project.

In other words the Ecolabel team should ensure the full cooperation of all stakeholders directly involved in the building project before any decisions are made.

2. **Contacting the developers before they decide on product use.** The developers can ask their various contactors and suppliers to use Ecolabel products as a part of the contract and this can only be done if the developers are convinced that they will benefit through the **Ecolabel marketing advantages** of the dwellings.

It is therefore imperative for the Ecolabel team to contact the developers early in the process and inform them of the intention to integrate the Ecolabel in the project as well as availability of products and benefits associated to the use of such products.

The following table shows the procedure and steps of the guide

Procedure	Steps	Comments
Investigate	Identify the present situation regarding:	
	1. Availability of EU Ecolabel products.	<p>Identify Ecolabel products available Both Nationally and in the EU. Use the National and EU Ecolabel web sites (The “green Store” http://www.eco-label.com/). Not all products can be Eco-labelled.</p> <p>This information is vital to have as soon as possible. The Ecolabel team should have a list of products available in the building area product groups as well as home products.</p> <p>Identify the “focus products” in the building stages and for the end users: These are the most readily available locally and the most likely to be considered for use.</p> <p>If EU flower products are very limited, look at the National Ecolabel availability of products (The EU flower cooperates with most National Ecolabels).</p>
	2. Suppliers of Ecolabel products.	<p>Who are they and what can they offer.</p> <p>A clear picture of the existing situation regarding suppliers will make it easier to plan and carry out the activities. Some suppliers may be willing to contribute with product information, presentations at municipality/stakeholder meetings and in some cases discounts on their products</p>
	3. Stakeholders that can help.	<p>The municipality behind the project is the driving force and it is important to define the role of the municipality as explained above.</p> <p>Investigate if the public purchasers are active in GPP (Green public Procurement) and carry out a training session if they are not active to increase their knowledge regarding GPP and the Ecolabel.</p> <p>The National Competent body.</p> <p>The local CB is the best partner in terms of support with both, information, materials and marketing. Most CB’s</p>

<p>Prepare</p>	<p>Preparation of the following</p>	<p>will cooperate within their rules and competence capacity.</p>
		<p>Other stakeholders.</p>
		<p>Stakeholders/references that may help in Ecolabel activities can be local associations, partners in the project and the Ecolabel web site. Identify them and determine their willingness or extent of participation</p>
		<p>4. The developers</p> <p>Who are they and what is their level of commitment.</p> <p>These are the building contractors, engineers and architects</p>
		<p>The municipality behind the project must notify and provide the identity of the developers to the Ecolabel team as soon as possible. The Public authority should also help in setting up a meeting with the developers</p>
		<p>5. Ecolabel competence.</p> <p>Identify the level of Ecolabel awareness amongst the stakeholders</p> <p>Are the relevant stakeholders aware of the Ecolabel and how much do they know</p>
<p>This will help in the planning of Ecolabel activities and also determine the extent of Ecolabel training for the various stakeholders</p>		
<p>6. The focus groups.</p> <p>Define the focus groups for the various activities</p> <p>The main focus groups are the developers and ultimately the End users.</p>		
<p>The municipality is also a focus group for Ecolabel competence training and supporting activities.</p>		
<p>The builders/contractors are focus groups as well, as it is them that will use Ecolabel products during the building stages</p>		

<p>1. Product availability information.</p>	<p>What you prepare has to be relevant to the focus group and related to the level of Ecolabel competence of the focus group.</p>
	<p>Building products for the contractors, home products for the end users, all products for the municipality</p>
<p>2. General Ecolabel information</p>	<p>Information for all participating stakeholders. This information will be used to increase the awareness of the Ecolabel in the planned activities. The CB can in most cases provide information, leaflets and so on. The Ecolabel web site is also a good source of information</p>
	<p>http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/index_en.htm</p>
<p>3. Specific Ecolabel product information</p>	<p>Specific information of the focus products. This information should be in more detail and should contain a list of all suppliers, their contact details and their leaflets/material on the products.</p>
	<p>Ask these suppliers if they can come to a meeting and present their company and products – most are very glad for the opportunity.</p>
<p>4. Activities plan</p>	<p>A plan of activities based on the information gathered should be worked out. The aim of the activities is to increase the Ecolabel awareness and competence level for the purpose of Ecolabel product use.</p>
	<p>These activities could be in the form of meetings, seminars/workshops and so on depending on the audience or focus group.</p>
	<p>A very important aspect to remember is to always point out the benefits of using Ecolabel products for the target groups.</p>
	<p>For example: The benefits for the developers are such things as improved company image and marketing potential when selling the dwellings, product quality guarantee, assurance of diminished use of harmful substances and good indoor climate and so on depending on the product.</p>
	<p>The benefits for the end users are such things as less</p>

		energy use, good for the environment, quality assurance and so on depending on the product.
Implement	Carrying out the work	
	<p>1. Carrying out the planned activities</p>	<p>The activities plan contains who does what, what the objective is, practicalities (venue, equipment etc.), speakers/presenters, participants and so on depending on the specific activity.</p> <p>It is the job of the Ecolabel team to ensure that the planned activities are carried out and that materials, letters, brochures, presentations, product selection and whatever else is relevant to the specific activity are in order.</p>
	<p>2. Evaluating</p>	<p>It is important to evaluate the activities especially in terms of concrete results relating to the use of Ecolabel products. This can be done in different ways and one good approach is to hand out a questionnaire about the specific activity and include questions that can be analysed to determine the success/failure and possible recommendations for re-planning purposes.</p>
	<p>3. Following up</p>	<p>Following up is easier if the evaluation provides first hand information.</p> <p>A developer for example could express cost as an obstacle for using an Ecolabel product instead for the conventional equivalent.</p> <p>A follow up action can then be planned. It could be to try and find an Ecolabel product that is not more expensive or it could be an action of pointing out the benefits of the specific Ecolabel product or the type of end user and their expectations and so on depending on the barrier and the products in question.</p>

3. THE CLASS 1 PROJECT – AND THIS GUIDE

The idea of the project CLASS 1 is to use strengthening of the energy requirements to boost and drive the technological developments and to prove the economical and environmental benefits of ultra-low energy buildings (50% below the new requirements in the Danish building regulations) integrated with biomass- and solar heating based renewable energy supply.

In this context the Scientific & Technical objectives of the project are to:

1. Optimise the integration of low-energy building technologies with supply (renewable and conventional) and distribution (heating and electricity) technologies.
2. Advance selected technologies within the 3 areas: low-energy building, renewable energy supply and distribution
3. Improve the design, checking and verification procedures (this relates directly to the implementation of the building energy performance directive -EPBD).
4. Integrate the European ecolabel in the building projects (houses and components)
5. Demonstrate large scale implementation at close to market technical and economical conditions.

The Class 1 project is focused on the optimisation of sustainable energy systems in local communities, through an innovative integration of RE technologies with ultra low-energy buildings. The bio-mass CHP system produces electricity and heat that are distributed directly to the use for heating in an innovative local district heating system for the dense, low-rise houses, and through the electricity network to heat the single family houses by heat pumps. Solar heating systems integrated in the network – and individual systems on the single family houses will be supplementing the CHP and taking over the in summer months when it is shut down. An advanced Building Energy Management System will control the energy supply, the thermal storages (for solar and for heating energy pulses from the CHP plant).

The project also has special focus on the Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ) to make sure that the energy savings are met without reducing the IEQ standards set out in the design specification phase. The IEQ focus is one of the areas in which the Class 1 project involves partners from other EU countries who are experts in respectively lighting and thermal comfort issues. Also trans-national cooperation is introduced for the socio-economic research part of the project, which deals with the user point of view (priorities, etc.) in the participating countries.

The Ecolabel is integrated in Class1 through product use and information dissemination and the development of the above guide has been based on the experiences gained in Class 1.

The class1 guide above is a simple and practical tool that can be used by municipalities engaged in building and renovation projects to take care of the environmental and quality issues regarding product use.