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Green Economy in Eastern Partner Countries



**ROAD MAP FOR ESTABLISHING A
NATIONAL ECO-LABELLING SYSTEM BY
TRANSPOSING THE REGULATION (EC)
NO. 66. /2010 OF THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT OF THE COUNCIL OF 25
NOVEMBER 2009**

Action implemented by:



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I. Introduction

The EU Eco-label system was established in 1992. The overall objective of the Eco-label system is to promote products with a low impact on the environment compared to similar products, thus contributing to the efficient use of resources and a higher level of environmental protection. The details of the process of establishing and implementing the voluntary EU eco-labelling scheme are set out in the Regulation (EC) No. 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council (EEC) of 25 November 2009 on the EU Eco-label.

Specific features of the European eco-label include:

- The EU eco-label can be awarded to all goods or services distributed, consumed, or used on the EU market if they meet certain ecological criteria.
- Ecological criteria are developed through consultations between key stakeholders, including public authorities, representatives of consumer and environmental non-government organizations (NGOs), industry, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), distributors, etc.
- It is an environmental label and not a health or quality label, although these aspects are also taken into consideration.
- The EU eco-label takes into consideration the **whole product life cycle into account** - from the extraction of the raw materials to production, packaging, and transport, right through to your use and then your recycling bin. The same label is used for a broad range of product groups, thus being easily recognizable by the consumer, who can be sure of its legitimacy in terms of environmental performance.
- The label cannot be claimed by the producer alone, as the compliance with the criteria is certified, verified, and monitored by an independent third party (one of the competent bodies for eco-labelling).

The EU eco-labelling scheme is, therefore, an important policy instrument designed to reduce the negative impact of consumption and production on the environment, health, climate, and natural resources.

Generally, environmental labels can be either mandatory or voluntary. In the case of a mandatory Eco-Label, every product of a given product group must meet the required environmental criteria to be awarded the Eco-Label. According to this, market access is not given to those producers who are not willing or able to ensure that those criteria are met by their products. Mandatory eco-labels could be a barrier for foreign producers (i.e. imports may be rejected if they do not comply).¹ As for environmental protection, the environmental outcome of mandatory Eco-labels is generally more effective than that of voluntary Eco-Labels. Considering that products that are voluntarily ecologically labelled constitute a non-imposing percentage in relation to the number and diversity of products on the market (Voluntary Eco-labels are awarded on an average to 10- 20 % of the significant products)², the protection of the environment is not covered by each product of this product group. However, mandatory Eco-labels are binding for each product of the product group and hence, by covering the entire product group the provisions of the

¹ WTO. 1997. *Eco-labelling: Overview of Current Work in Various International Fora*, Note by the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment, WT/CTE/W/45, WTO: Geneva; OECD. 1997a. *Processes and Production Methods (PPMs): Conceptual Framework and Considerations on use of PPM-based Trade Measures*, OECD, Paris; OECD. 1997b. *Eco-labelling: Actual Effects of Selected Programmes*, OECD, Paris.

² Markandya, R., 1997. *Eco-Labeling: An Introduction and Review*. In: *Eco-Labeling and International Trade*, Zarrilli, S. et al. (Eds.). Palgrave Macmillan, ISBN: 0-333-66547-3, pp: 6.

environmental protection are fulfilled.³ In case of voluntary labels, it is up to the manufacturer to decide whether to apply for certification of a product and the consumer's choice whether to buy (or import) an eco-labelled product. Voluntary ecolabelling programmes may be funded and supervised by the private sector. Some, however, are also government-sponsored.

So, it should be acknowledged that the voluntary eco-label system, does not have the strength and universality that mandatory Eco-labels systems can offer. However, a good voluntary eco-labelling system will always remain attractive:

- For consumers – due to its informative, immediate, and simplistic character.
- For businesses – due to its direct contribution to improving the producer image and increasing consumer confidence, as well as due to cost reductions resulting from more resource-efficient production processes.
- For the government - due to its promotion of sustainable consumer choices/lifestyles and green democratic policies.

According to the *Commission Decision of 21 December 2001 on establishing the Community eco-label working plan*⁴, specific environmental benefits of eco-labels are difficult to calculate due to the difficulty of isolating and measuring these from environmental benefits achieved via other environmental measures. However, it is possible to estimate the maximum potential environmental benefit that could be achieved if all the products in a product group met the eco-label criteria. The direct environmental benefits of an eco-label are strongly correlated with its market penetration.

It should be mentioned that currently there is still a widespread misconception that applying for the EU eco-label involves a complicated, bureaucratic, and costly process. The 2010 revision of the regulation (EC) No 1980/2000 on establishing a Community Ecolabel award scheme, ensured that:

- The eco-label can be attained by companies through limited costs while remaining ambitious enough to ensure credibility among consumers and environmental groups.
- Criteria have been developed for products and services with a substantial environmental impact.
- There are more EU Eco-labelled products available (as of March 2021, Consumers can access over **78 000 EU Ecolabel products (goods and services)** across Europe)⁵;
- The label is better understood and respected in EU-28 and around the world.
- Criteria have been developed and can easily be used by public purchasers.
- The eco-label is better harmonized with other labels, both nationally and globally.

Thus, the enforcement of the EU's Eco-Label has become much simpler and cheaper than before. In addition, when setting the criteria for each product, special attention is paid to keeping the test costs to a minimum and accurately evaluating the documentation and test reports that an applicant provides.

Eco- labelling system for Republic of Moldova

In the context of climate change and with a view to promote sustainable development, the Republic of Moldova aims to transpose the legal provisions of Regulation (EC) No. 66/2010 of the European

³ Stein, 2009. *The Legal Status of Eco-Labels and Product and Process Methods in the World Trade Organization*. *American Journal of Economics and Business Administration* 1 (4): 285-295, 2009 ISSN 1945-5488

⁴ [*European Commission Decision of 21 December 2001 establishing the Community eco-label working plan.*](#)

⁵ [*Environment Ecolabel Facts and figures. The number of EU Ecolabel - figures of March 2021.*](#)

Parliament and of the Council (EEC) of 25 November 2009 on the EU eco-label. Developing an eco-labelling system similar to that of the European Union will also promote Moldova's European integration and the alignment of national legislation to the provisions of European Union directives.

The process of European integration includes two major directions for action: harmonization of the national environmental legislation with the *acquis Communautaire* in this sector; and institutional reform, which involves developing an institutional mechanism capable of enforcing the newly adopted legislative framework. Thus, pursuant to the Action Plan for the implementation of the Republic of Moldova (RoM)-EU Association Agreement ratified by Law No. 112 of 02.07.2014 on Ratification of the Association Agreement Between the Republic of Moldova, on the one side, and the European Union and European Atomic Energy Community and the Member States of the latter, on the other side⁶, according to Chapter 13 on Trade and Sustainable Development, the Republic of Moldova undertakes to promote in the trade of goods that contribute to the creation of better social conditions and environment-friendly practices, including goods subject to voluntary sustainability schemes such as fair and ethical trade, eco-labels and certification schemes for products obtained from natural resources.

In addition to the commitment assumed by signing the RoM – EU Association Agreement, the Action Plan for the implementation of the Environmental Strategy for 2014–2023 covers several objectives – one of which is also focussed on integrating environment protection, sustainable development, green economy promotion, and climate change adaptation principles in all sectors of the national economy.

Moldova's efforts towards environment protection are guided by, inter alia, the final document approved at the Rio de Janeiro Conference for Sustainable Development "The Future We Want"; the Astana Declaration of the Ministers of Environment; the 26 Principles of the Stockholm Declaration on Human Environment; the Millennium Development Goals (particularly Goal No. 7 "Ensuring Environment Sustainability"); and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

In addition, Moldova's National Development Strategy "Moldova 2030" guides the country's socio-economic development over the next ten years, based on the four sustainable development pillars, including "the right to a healthy environment".⁷

The transposition of legal provisions laid down in Regulation (EC) No. 66/2010 will condition the accomplishment of the following benefits:

- a) Stimulation of innovation as more sustainable products are invented
- b) Development of markets that cater to evolving consumer interests
- c) Creation of new value chains by establishing new networks of production
- d) Influencing consumer behavior towards more environmentally friendly products
- e) Promotion of economic efficiency in response to predefined standards
- f) Economic support for sustainability
- g) Reduced environmental impacts from improved processes
- h) Reduced environmental impacts from reduced waste and increased recycling
- i) Increased awareness of environmentally responsible activities

⁶ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=83489&lang=ro

⁷ https://cancelaria.gov.md/sites/default/files/strategia_moldova_2030_redactata_parl.pdf

- j) Reduction of effort and cost required by consumers to get sustainability information – the label tells the story.

II. Objectives and Expected Results

This road map has been developed in order to determine the measures to be taken to facilitate the transposition of provisions laid down in the EU Regulation on Eco-Labeling (Regulation (EC) No. 66./2010) in the Republic of Moldova. The road map is, to a large extent, an Action Plan for establishing a national voluntary eco-labelling system. This Action Plan is divided into four sections, as follows:

- 1) National regulatory framework;
- 2) Institutional framework;
- 3) Promotion and public awareness raising; and
- 4) Authorities involved in the process of granting the Eco-Label.

Objectives, actions for implementation, responsible institutions, the timeframe for implementation, and progress indicators are laid out in each of the four sections.

SECTION I – NATIONAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Priority No. 1. Developing the national regulatory framework on eco-labelling.

Output No. 1. Regulatory framework on eco-labelling developed and aligned with the EU acquis Communautaire.

Output No. 2. A national eco-labelling system is in place, efficient and easy to implement.

Output No. 3. The administrative and criminal legislative framework on eco-labelling is developed.

SECTION II – INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Priority No. 2. Improving the efficiency of the institutional framework in the field of eco-labelling.

Output No. 1. The institutional framework in the field of eco-labelling is established.

Output No. 2. Institutions in the field of eco-labelling efficiently perform their duties.

Output No. 3. There are professionally trained specialists in the field of eco-labelling.

Output No. 4. State oversight of the awarding and the use of eco-labels is efficiently performed.

SECTION III – ECO-LABEL PROMOTION

Priority No: 3 Public and stakeholder awareness is increased on the benefits of the EU Eco-Label.

Output No. 1. The general public and key stakeholders (consumers, businesses and procurers) are informed about the advantages of the eco-label.

Output No. 2. Web Pages are developed and operational, ensuring access to complete, accurate, and timely information about the eco-label.

Output No. 3. Eco-label criteria are used efficiently in public and private procurement procedures.

SECTION IV - CONCLUSIONS

This work plan aims at providing a mechanism to monitor the progress made from year to year. Also, the issues raised, and the objectives set in this work plan will serve as a good indication and basis for future work plans. Additionally, it is necessary to underline that successful completion of the actions reviewed in the roadmap will contribute to a considerable increase in the number of labelled products, to make the eco-label visible on the market and increase its environmental impact.

III. Action Plan

No.	Action	Goal of the Action	Timeframe for implementation	Responsible institutions	Performance indicators
SECTION I – NATIONAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK <i>Priority No. 1. Developing and improving the efficiency of the national regulatory framework on eco-labelling.</i> <i>Output No. 1.</i> Regulatory framework on eco-labelling is developed and aligned to the EU acquis Communautaire; <i>Output No. 2.</i> National eco-labelling system is in place, efficient and easy to implement; <i>Output No. 3.</i> An efficient fining and sanctioning system is in place and applied to eco-labelling related infringements.					
1.	Carrying Desk review of policy documents with regard to promotion of the eco-labelling system, sustainable development, and green economy.	Identification of sustainable development priorities at the national level, and establishment of the necessary prerequisites for the creation of an eco-labelling system similar to the EU one.	4th Quarter of 2022	Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment	The desk review is carried out
2.	Analysis of the current regulatory framework on eco-labelling system at national level	Identification of legislative deficiencies and flaws.	4th Quarter of 2022	Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment	Analysis of the regulatory framework on eco-labelling performed.
No.	Action	Goal of the Action	Timeframe for implementation	Responsible institutions	Performance indicators
3.	Developing a draft Government Decision on Approving the Regulation on Eco-Labelling System.	Development of technical regulations for the awarding and the use of the voluntary eco-label in Moldova, including procedures for the revision of environmental criteria.	3rd Quarter of 2021	Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment	The Government Decision is enacted.

4.	Developing criteria for the eco-label in accordance with international standard ISO 14024	Evaluation of the potential impact of certain stages of a product's lifecycle, in accordance with EN ISO 14025 :2006 on Environmental Management.	IV Quarter of 2022	Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment, and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - technical standardisation committees; - Environmental NGOs; - MOLDAC (National Accreditation Center of Republic of Moldova) - Other stakeholders⁸ 	Environmental criteria developed and approved.
No.	Action	Goal of the Action	Timeframe for implementation	Responsible institutions	Performance indicators
5.	Drafting guidelines on the criteria applicable to the eco-label.	Defining the procedure for assessing the conformity of products with eco-label criteria. It should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - requirements for assessing the conformity of products 	2 nd Quarter of 2022	Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment	Guidelines on the criteria applicable to eco-label are developed.

⁸ (Each stakeholder may initiate and/or participate in the drafting and/or revision of environmental criteria in the presence of specialists who have relevant knowledge and experience in the production of a given category of products).

		<p>with the set out eco-labelling criteria;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - validity of environmental criteria; - limits of changes in the products and their composition which are allowed during the validity term of eco-labelling criteria. 			
No.	Action	Goal of the Action	Timeframe for implementation	Responsible institutions	Performance indicators
6.	Development and dissemination of guidelines on the procedure for granting the eco-label and the conditions for its use.	<p>The goal of the guidelines is to establish detailed and clear conditions for the awarding and use of the eco-label.</p> <p>These guidelines will be disseminated to the business community.</p>	4 th Quarter of 2022	Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment	Guidelines on the procedures for granting the eco-label and conditions of its use are developed.
7.	Adjusting the regulatory framework on the procedure of applying sanctions for the infringement of legal provisions on eco-labelling.	To develop a study of the national regulatory framework in terms of sanctions applicable in relation to environment protection (Misdemeanour Code, and Criminal Code of the RoM) and the need for including some applicable sanctions for the infringement of eco-labelling legislation. The sanctions provided	4 th quarter of 2021	Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment	The study is carried out.

		for should be efficient, proportional, and discouraging.			
SECTION II – INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK					
<i>Priority No. 2. Improving the efficiency of the institutional framework in the field of eco-labelling</i>					
<i>Output No. 1.</i> Institutional framework in the field of eco-labelling is established;					
<i>Output No. 2.</i> Institutions in the field of eco-labelling perform their duties efficiently;					
<i>Output No. 3.</i> Professionally trained specialists work within the authorities with duties in the field of eco-labelling;					
<i>Output No. 4.</i> State control of the award and use of eco-labels is efficiently performed.					
No.	Action	Goal of the Action	Timeframe for implementation	Responsible institutions	Performance indicators
8.	Designation of the competent body for the process of granting the eco-label.	With a view to apply the regulatory framework, it is necessary to create an efficient mechanism for implementation. The establishment of an institutional framework is a crucial step in the successful implementation of the process for granting the eco-label.	4 th quarter of 2022	Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment	Authorities competent in the eco-label granting process are designated.
9.	Designation of the authority responsible for market surveillance and control of the use of the eco-label.	An efficient state control in the field of eco-labelling requires the designation of an authority/body with surveillance duties to monitor the market and control the use of the eco-label.	4 th quarter of 2022	Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment	The authority responsible for market surveillance and control of the use of the eco-label is designated.
10.	Training of officers employed within authorities with duties in the field of eco-labelling.	To develop a training and capacity building plan which will include activities for training/assisting the representatives of local/central	3rd Quarter of 2022	Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment NGOs	A training and capacity building plan is developed.

		public authorities on eco-label-related issues.			Training certificates are issued to trained officials.
SECTION III – ECO-LABEL PROMOTION					
<p>Priority No: 3 Public and stakeholders’ awareness raising on the benefits of the eco-label.</p> <p>Output No. 1. The general public and stakeholders are informed about advantages of the eco-label.</p> <p>Output No. 2. WebPages are developed and operational, ensuring access to complete, accurate, and timely information about the eco-label.</p> <p>Output No. 3. Eco-label criteria are used efficiently in public and private procurement procedures.</p>					
No.	Action	Goal of the Action	Timeframe for implementation	Responsible institutions	Performance indicators
12.	Development and implementation of measures for raising public awareness on the advantages of using the eco-label.	Enhance the Ecolabel presence on the market, by boosting both industry uptake and consumers awareness.	2021-2022	Environmental NGOs Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment Environmental Agency	Materials (brochures, newsletters, articles on the website of central environmental authorities) developed and disseminated.
No.	Action	Goal of the Action	Timeframe for implementation	Responsible institutions	Performance indicators
13.	Implementation of measures to train the business community on the application of the ecolabel in accordance with the requirements of the ecolabel regulation.	Conducting relevant training courses, workshops, and seminars to train the business community on the eco-labelling process and ensuring the participation of national experts in these trainings.	2022	Environmental NGOs Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment Environmental Agency	Trainings, courses, seminars, workshops are carried out.
14.	Contributing to the increase in sustainability of the production and consumption of “green” goods and services and stimulating the use of the eco-label.	Progressively develop qualitative and quantitative evaluations of the direct and indirect benefits of the eco-label.	2022	Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment	Study for assessing the direct and indirect benefits of eco-labelling of the environment developed.

15	Promoting the use of the eco-label criteria in public and private procurements.	Raising awareness among entities responsible for public procurement on the possibilities for using the eco-labelling criteria in their calls for proposals. Developing information materials on green public procurement and eco-label criteria.	2022	Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment Public Procurement Agency	Action Plan and information materials developed.
SECTION IV - CONCLUSIONS					
<p>This work plan aims at providing a mechanism to monitor the progress made from year to year. Also, the issues raised, and the objectives set in this work plan will serve as a good indication and basis for future work plans. Additionally, it is necessary to underline that successful completion of the actions reviewed in the roadmap will contribute to a considerable increase in the number of labelled products, to make the eco-label visible on the market and increase its environmental impact. At the same time, will be achieved the outlined objectives such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Developing the national regulatory framework on eco-labelling. 2) Improving the efficiency of the institutional framework in the field of eco-labelling 3) Public and stakeholder’s awareness-raising about the benefits of the eco-label. 					