AALBORG UNIVERSITY

Going for Green Domino Effects

- will European Eco-labelling Contribute to Sustainable Consumption?

Henrik Riisgaard
Aalborg University
Department of development and planning

The 3 points to take with you

1. The praised link between production and consumption called the EU flower was a failure according to most evaluations
2. There were no valid evaluations of the current scheme
3. To be effective, connect the label to
   - other aspects of the products (savings, health, social issues)
   - other policy tools
   - other important institutional players

Do not expect miracles! The flower might contribute to, but not lead to sustainable consumption (lacks focus on scale, choice of product groups)

Core elements of the EU flower

- It has a *European dimension*
- It is *selective*
- It is *transparent!*
- It works with a *multicriteria approach*
- It is *voluntary*

Type I - main target audience: consumers (public and private) - and product designers and manufacturers
”LCA-based”, positive, external control

Type II "claims"
Single attribute (ex: recycled paper content), positive, self controlled

Type III "declarations” - main audience: business communication

LCA-based, neutral, verification?

Evaluation of policy: 2 options

- Comparing with original targets (looking back)
- Looking at impacts (direct as well as indirect), new challenges, opportunities and improvement potentials (looking forward)

Methodology

- ***Ask the involved experts who for evaluation methodology:***

  The interviews involved seven people from six organisations:
  - The head of eco-label team of the EU commission
  - The current EUEB president
  - The head and the EU responsible of the largest national competent body
  - The chair of the EUEB Co-ordination and Co-operation management group,
  - The head of a consultancy working for different EUEB members
  - The European umbrella organisation representing environmental NGOs at the EUEB)

- ***Scan the science literature (911 texts)***
- ***Select key text (evaluations, coverage of the experts' key stages , topicality)***
- ***Add non-science texts (internal reports, usually made by consultants)***

Evaluating the mechanism of eco-labelling

Criteria development

- Feasibility and market study
- Life cycle considerations
- Improvement analysis
- Proposal of the criteria

Criteria - many variations

- General demands including "fitness for use" e.g. colour fastness of textiles)
- ”Hurdles” - threshold values: contents, emissions, consumption
- Negative - or positive lists (blacklisting/whitelisting)
- Point systems

EU's 5th Environmental Action Plan 1992-1999 "Towards Sustainable Development"

FIGURE 2b: The Potential of Consumer Power to Promote Ecologically-Sound Manufacturing Processes and Products

EC regulation 880/92:
Slow and delayed criteria development
After 3 years: only 1 labelled product on the market!

Eco-label evaluations

Authors	Data collection	Supply side focus						Demand side focus				Impacts				Promotion
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
OECD 1997	≤1996	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	X	X				XX		XX	X	
EPA 1998	≤1998	XX	XX	XX	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	XX	X	
Thøgersen 2000	1999						X	XX	XX	XX	XX					
Bjorner 2001	1997-2001		X							XX				XX		
Gallaraga 2002	≤1999	X						X		X		X	X	XX	X	
Williams 2004		XX						X	X					X	X	
Pedersen and Neergaard 2005	≤2002							X	X	X	XX		X	XX		
Rubik and Frankl (eds.) 2005	≤2002	XX		X	X	X	X					X	X	X		
Leire and Thidell 2005	≤2004	X						X	X	X	X					

X indicates a coverage mainly based on secondary sources
XX indicates new additional empirical evidence

Situation today

New regulation 1980/2000:

- Services included
- New organisation: European Union Eco-labelling Board (EUEB)
- Fee reductions (for SMEs, developing countries, EMAS, ice-breakers)
- Transparency
- New work plan (on time)

Promotional campaign "flower weeks" Autumn 2004 and 2006

New revision process startet in 2004

"Informal Draft non-paper …"

23 product groups

Most Criteria-sets running to 2007

Number of companies awarded the EU Eco-label

(data provided by Eco help-Desk 2005)

Ex-factory sales value (€ million) of EU Eco-labelled products/item

(data provided by Eco help-Desk 2005)

(Eco-help desk final report 2005)

ANNEX I

INDICATIVE ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Life cycle of products

Environmental aspects	Goods					Services		
	Preproduc-tion/raw materials	Production	Distribution (including packaging)	Use	Reuse/ recycling/ disposal	Acquisition of goods for service performance	Service performance	Wa manag
Air quality								
Water quality								
Soil protection								
Waste reduction								
Energy savings								
Natural resource management								
Global warming prevention								
Ozone layer protection								
Environmental safety								
Noise								
Biodiversity								

Conclusions I

- Most evaluations are critical regarding the EU flower
- But most evaluations are concerning the old scheme
- And no evaluations cover the whole eco-labelling scheme

Important impacts of eco-labelling

Recommendation/Conclusion II get connected

Connect to other aspects of the products

- savings
- health
- sustainability

Connect eco-label criteria with other policy tools:

- Public procurement
- EMAS
- Energy efficiency (energy labelling)
- Environmental Product Declarations
- Directive on Energy Using Products

Connect to other institutional players (product panels, certifying bodies, retailers)

And do not expect miracles! (maximum 0.1 per cent of promotional expenditures)

Governance and private influence on eco-labelling