



Interview

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Where lie the difficulties for Label and Certification Schemes (LCS) when addressing consumers in comparison to B2B LCS?

Consumers are not experts and often lack knowledge about biobased feedstock and sustainability issues. While clear information is essential for both consumers and enterprises, consumers typically make quick purchasing decisions in shops, often within seconds. This brief decision-making window increases the risk of consumers being misled by non-representative logos and makes it challenging to capture their attention

regarding the label's significance. Moreover, consumers are less likely to seek additional information, especially when shopping in physical stores, but not everything can be written on packaging where space is limited. Finally, both consumers and businesses can share a potential lack of knowledge regarding sustainability issues, complicating the effectiveness of LCS communication.

How can LCS prevent that consumers are misled, and how do they counteract greenwashing of an unsustainable product?

To prevent consumer misinformation and counteract greenwashing, LCS must provide independent certification ensuring that products meet specific sustainability criteria. Ecolabels guarantee that products are among the most sustainable options, while specialised LCS address particular issues such as the origin of feedstock, deforestation, or child labour. Verification processes must be trustworthy and

independent to maintain credibility. However, the LCS sector has faced challenges such as unambitious criteria, false claims of verification, and poor accountability. These issues highlight the importance of robustness in LCS, including rigorous audits, effective complaint procedures, and inclusive processes for setting and updating criteria, all supported by legislation to ensure compliance.

How should a reliable labelling scheme logo be designed to clearly inform consumers on the sustainability of a product? Which other information should be communicated and in which way?

A reliable labelling scheme logo should clearly convey information about a product's sustainability. Logos should not address issues irrelevant to consumers and should avoid overwhelming packaging with excessive information. Any sustainability logo must be linked to an independent product verification, a legal requirement under the Empowering Consumers in the Green Transition Directive (ECGT). The design should reflect the specific criteria of the product; for example, a logo indicating wood sustainability should focus on wood rather than generic environmental claims (generic claims with no substantiation are also banned under ECGT, apart from legally recognised ecolabels). The scheme's

name should be included in the logo, avoiding acronyms. Additional information is crucial: adjacent to the logo, there should be a website URL or QR code for further details, a short explanatory text about key criteria, directly on the packaging. While grading systems (e.g. gold/silver/bronze labels) are generally discouraged, transparency about the scale is necessary if used. Icons can also help communicate information effectively. Beyond logo design, ensuring the scheme addresses relevant sustainability aspects with ambitious criteria is vital for the overall credibility and effectiveness of the LCS.