

# Workshop: Smart Consumer Labels for the EU–BioEconomy – Your Input for Effective Design Guidelines

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25–09–12 Dušica Banduka, Kaj Seeger (nova–Institute)



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(ISO 14040/44, PEF Conform)
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- Techno-Economic Evaluation (TEE)  
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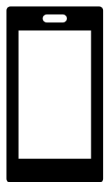




# EU-funded research project 3-CO on certification



Concise Consumer Communication through Robust Labels for Biobased Systems

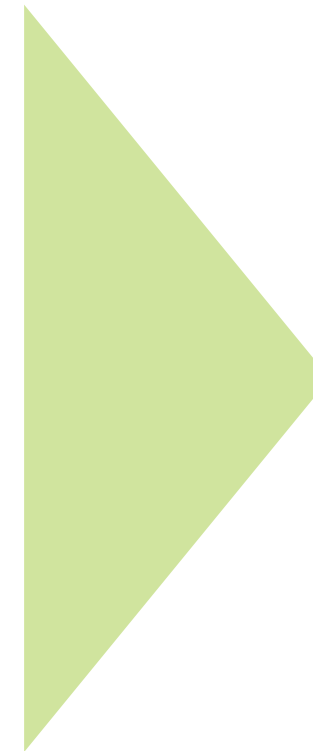


Influence consumer behaviour through smart eco-labels and digital solutions



Develop guidelines for Labelling and Certification Scheme holders

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Concise Consumer Communication



**Final 3-CO Event**

# **Empowering Bio-Based Choices Through Smart Certification**

**21 Oct 2025  
9:00–13:30 CEST  
Free Webinar**



# RENEWABLE MATERIALS CONFERENCE 2025

22–24 Sep • Siegburg/Cologne (Germany)

# Housekeeping

- Short surveys and questions through the Zoom survey tool.
- Please engage through the Chat if you want to discuss further and bring up additional points.
- We have time for discussion in each section. If you would like to state a question verbally, raise your hand and we will unmute you.
- Your contribution will directly influence the finalisation of the Design Guidelines.
- The event is recorded and transcribed for internal use only.



# Agenda

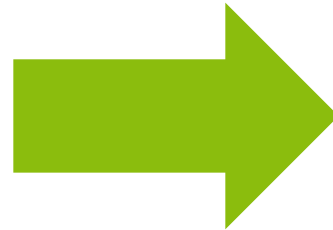


- The role of consumers and consumer facing labels
- Differences between B2B and B2C labelling
- Common challenges for effective B2C labelling of bio-based products
- Scope of the Guidelines
- Assessing the fit of practical advice in the guidelines for real world application
- Regulatory and Legal Framework
- Social Innovation aspects

# Purpose of this Workshop

## 3CO research

- LCS in the bioeconomy (metrics, robustness, effectiveness)
- The consumers perspective on bio-based products and labels
- smart digital solutions for consumers
- Social Innovation in the bioeconomy



## 3CO development

- A consumer App for labels
- **Label Design Guidelines**
- **To validate the findings through external stakeholder feedback and fine-tune the guidelines.**



# Goal of the Guidelines

Create a fully comprehensive set of actionable guidelines for the design of labels for BBPs (for LCS owners, public authorities and industry designers) ...

... that can be implemented in existing LCS...

enabling the switch to more environmentally responsible behaviour, improved understanding of value generated, and more...

... to improve the deployment of business-to-consumers communication.

**improve the responsible decision-making processes of consumers and improve the sustainability performance and competitiveness of bio-based systems.**





# Why do consumers matter for bio-based systems and labels?

25-09-12 Kaj Seeger, Guideline Verification Workshop



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# The difference between B2B and B2C labelling

# The difference between B2B and B2C schemes

## B2B schemes

- Are well established for BBPs.
- Allow for long-term relationships between certifiers and producers.
- Require mainly internal communication between businesses.
- Include technical language, nuanced criteria and extensive reporting.
- Does not require a label, necessarily.
- Rely on trust in the LCS.
- Tend to address specific sustainability issues
- Allow industry to show compliance with/adherence to sustainability principles.



## B2C schemes

- Few exist for BBPs.
- rely a lot on short term interaction and quick conveyance of information at the point of sale.
- Require external outreach to consumers through campaigns and marketing.
- Work best with simple to understand messaging and simple statements.
- Must have a label to gain visibility.
- Rely on trust in the certified brand.
- Consumers expect holistic sustainability benefits.
- Should motivate consumers to make more sustainable purchasing decisions





# Common Challenges

Hurdles to effective B2C labelling of Bio-Based Products



# Identified challenges

- B2C labels rely a lot on short term interaction and quick conveyance of their informational content .
- Bio-based products are notoriously hard to certify due to their complex nature.
- In B2C, consumer trust relies more on the image of the products brand itself.
- Lack of awareness and knowledge about bio-based products among consumers.
- Consumers are a much larger, more diversified target group than value chain stakeholders.
- The proliferation of LCS and their varying coverage confuses consumers.
- A dynamic regulatory landscape with unclear priorities.
- Uptake does not equal impact




# Scope of the Guidelines



# Scope of the Guidelines

- Main focus on (visual) Label design guidance.
- Elements on communication measures is included, as it addresses a major difference between B2B and B2C interaction.
- Some aspects on claim development and operations included to ensure applicability and usefulness.
- Guidance is based on 3CO research findings on BBP Labels, Consumer Perspective and Social Innovation.



The background of the slide is a photograph of a mountain landscape. In the foreground, a compass is visible, slightly out of focus. The compass has a blue and white face with a red needle. The background shows a steep, forested mountain slope under a clear sky.

# Do the guidelines match your expectations?





# The Social Innovation Dimension

# Aspects of Social Innovation initiatives

- Social Innovation tend to focus on positive handprint, over reducing the negative footprint. This is a wider scope than that of traditional social indicators.
- Social Innovation actors often have very strong local roots, enjoying high reputation and trust with their community and ecosystem.
- Based on strong values, Social Innovation aligns well the cause of LCS.
- Many Social Innovation initiatives work on/with circularity principles, a “blind spot” for many labels.
- social washing concerns are widespread and require Low staff and financial capacity may require significant support efforts by LCS, both with capacity building and potentially funding.
- Social Innovation initiatives tend to operate at very small scales, leading to high incremental cost for certification.
- Green- and social washing concerns are widespread and require highest levels of integrity from LCS.



A photograph of a pair of brass scales of justice and a wooden gavel resting on a black velvet-lined case. The scales are open, showing two empty brass pans. The gavel is positioned horizontally across the front of the case. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

# Regulatory and Legal Frameworks



# Policy Trends



- There is a clear trend among policy makers to harmonise labelling by increasing requirements on the methods and definitions to be used for conformity.
- Increasing number of mandatory labelling requirements on different products groups (e.g. on textiles, packaging waste or fertilisers).
- Emerging trend to directly regulate voluntary labels (e.g. on allowed claims, 3<sup>rd</sup> party verification etc.).
- Currently, calls for simplification of sustainability reporting dominate policy discourse.

# The case of the Green Claims Directive

## Key measures:

- **Claims must be verifiable and backed by data** (Environmental Footprint (PEF) methodology and common LCA ISO standards can be used, claims on environmental footprint must be backed by Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) of the product.)
- **Claims and labels require 3rd party verification.**
- **Aggregated scores are no longer allowed** (with exemption when the PEF method is applied).
- **Claims can not specifically be made on requirements already imposed by law.** (e.g. minimum content requirements in PPWR)
- **New schemes** may only be introduced at EU level.
- **Strict rules on robustness of schemes** (complaint and dispute resolution mechanism, withdraw mechanism for non-compliance).

# The case of the Green Claims Directive

In case the Green Claims Directive may not be adopted in the end:

- What do you think would be missed opportunities? i.e. rules that could have improved the market for biobased LCS
- Do we need rules on LCS operations and governance to ensure that LCS provide reliable and useful certificates?
- Will weak schemes continue to operate, in the absence of a verification procedure?
- Do we need specific rules for biobased claims? (e.g. ensuring minimum sustainability criteria for feedstock, demonstrated environmental over conventional products; rules on how to communicate biobased content and their benefits)

# Thank you for your time!

For any additional comments, feedback, suggestions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me [kaj.seeger@nova-institut.de](mailto:kaj.seeger@nova-institut.de)