

# The role of labels for responsible consumption

3-CO Final Event

Session 1 – Labels and certifications

Margaux Le Gallou, ECOS, October 21, 2025



ecos

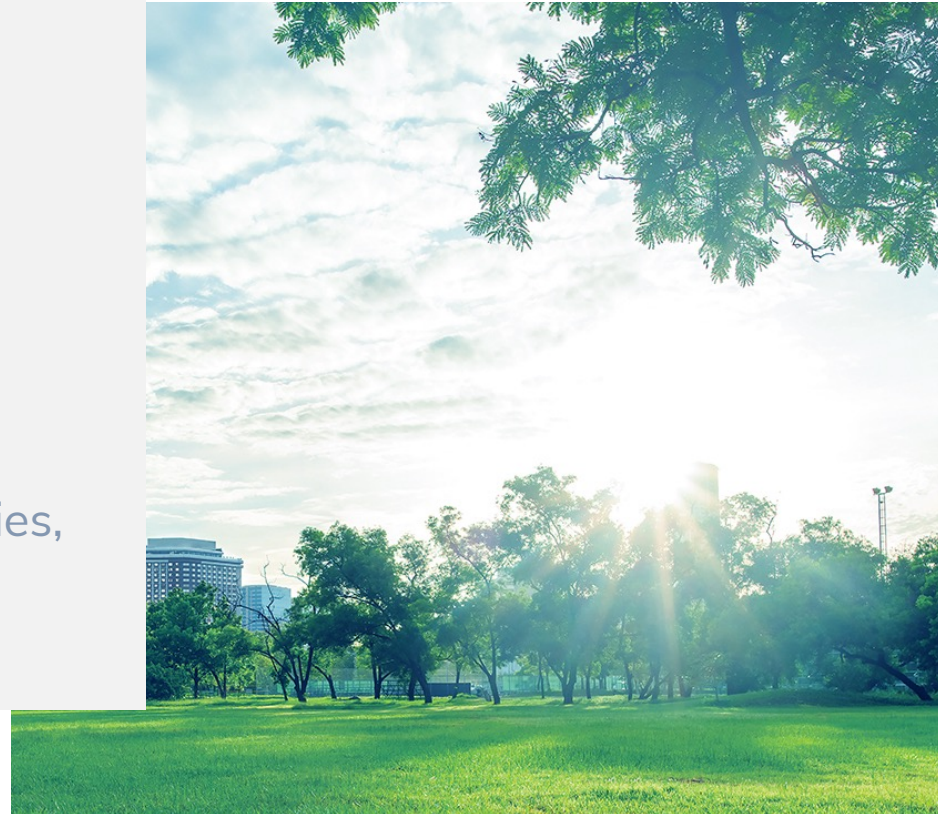


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The 3-CO project receives funding from the Horizon Europe Framework Programme under grant agreement number 101086086. Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

# **ECOS** Environmental Coalition on Standards

is an international NGO with a network of members and experts advocating for environmentally friendly technical standards, policies, and laws.







# How can labels support consumers

# The challenge for consumers


- Hundreds of sustainability labels exist
- Not all are reliable or transparent
- Consumers want to make good choices but face confusion & mistrust




# The role of labels

-  Support companies adopting best practices
-  Differentiate products in the market
-  Provide consumers with trust signals
-  But only effective if reliable & clear

# Our research

 We analysed 25 labelling schemes across 10 biobased value chains:

 How do they communicate to consumers? (logo, website)

 What criteria do they cover?

 Best practices and room for improvement

## A representation of diversity in LCS:

- Ecolabels: Nordic Swan, Blue Angel, etc.
- Sector specific: FSC, Better Cotton Initiative, etc.
- Strong biobased focus: ISCC Plus, RSB Global Advanced Products Certification, etc.
- Social criteria: UEBT Union for Ethical Bio Trade



Name, Occasion, Company

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# Current coverage

- **Environmental:** chemicals, waste, water, pollution
- **Emerging:** circularity, climate, biodiversity
- **Social:** labour rights, equality (still uneven)

➡ No single scheme covers all aspects

# The challenges



# Key challenges for schemes



Balancing strict criteria vs. mainstream uptake



Proving real-world impact, not just number of certificates



Avoiding overlaps & proliferation → need collaboration



Consumers rarely included in governance

# Communicating sustainability

- 5 pillars: accessible, clear, reliable, relevant, transparent
- Ecolabels generally outperform specialised B2B schemes
- Logos often unclear on scope, grades, or attribution
- Best practice: require explanatory statements
  - 💡 Question: integrate niche labels into broader ecolabels?

# Takeaway

- Labels are essential, but must be **robust, clear & trusted**
- Collaboration is key to reduce overlaps & raise ambition
- 3-CO is building tools to empower consumers & the bio-based sector



# Thank you for your attention!

For more information, go to:

<https://3co-project.eu/>

[Margaux.legallou@ecostandard.org](mailto:Margaux.legallou@ecostandard.org)



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