

NORDIC ECOLABELLING

Annual report 2016

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Developing for the future

We have a planet that shows all the signs of deterioration, and people are being seriously affected by these changes. Cross-border actions and big strategic decisions need to be made to stop this negative development. However, if small changes are made, often and by many persons, they can create great results. This is our mission: to help consumers and purchasers make wise decisions and choose products with one of the most well-known brands for sustainability, the Nordic Swan Ecolabel.



One of our goals is that companies, who can fulfill our strict requirements for their products and/or services and who choose to label their products with the voluntary Nordic Swan Ecolabel, will achieve a clear market advantage. We work together in our Nordic organization to strengthen our Nordic Swan Ecolabel brand, and by doing so, we are adding more value to those companies who choose to use our ecolabel and enhance their own brand. During the past year we have therefore made large campaigns in all our markets to make our brand even stronger.

During the last year, we have received a great response from both the business community as well as consumers. We have seen a growing interest in our Nordic Swan Ecolabel, more satisfied licensees and, above all, a greater turnover of these products and services. 2016 was, in other words, a really good year. Nevertheless, we have to develop our ecolabelling for the future, to ensure an attractive system for next generation of consumers and producers.

The strategy is very much about simplifying and streamlining in order to be able to expand and develop the ecolabel business. We must put even more focus on developing smart environmental criteria, that provide the same environmental impact, but are easier to administrate, both for ourselves, but most importantly, for our customers. We will also address the public sector more vigorously, where public procurement purchasers, who are strengthened by new laws, will have an easier situation using ecolabelling as a purchasing instrument. And we will focus on developing criteria for new product groups, so that even more producers and consumers will be able to make the right environmental choices.

Our vision is that the Nordic Swan Ecolabel will be an important contribution to changing both production and consumption patterns in the Nordic countries, in order to support sustainable lifestyles. In this work, we strive to help consumers choose the most environmentally friendly products and services, as well as making it profitable for producers to market better goods and services from an environmental point of view.

Thank you all for a successful 2016, and for sharing our vision and doing your part to let us all achieve sustainable lifestyles.



Ragnar Unge, Chairman of the Board

The Board's Report

The primary focus in 2016 was the commencement of the work under Nordic Ecolabelling's new strategy for 2016–2020. This mainly concerns a new brand strategy and a more effective concept and approach, with digital transformation as a key element. Important criteria development work took place in several sectors, together with increased Nordic coordination of IT, licensing and marketing.

Nordic cooperation and coordination – the association's main aim

Achieving Nordic cooperation and coordination was the motivation behind the formation of Nordic Ecolabelling. The ecolabelling organisations of the Nordic countries are all members of the association, and the directors of the respective countries form its Board of Directors. An executive officer has been appointed to ensure that the work on coordination progresses effectively and with optimal internal communication and follow-up. The Board held 11 formal minuted meetings during the year, with updates via tele- and videoconference calls in between.

Nordic working groups have been appointed within the processes for criteria development, licensing and marketing, each under the leadership of a process owner.

The association has convened three meetings of the Nordic Ecolabelling Board (NMN) in 2016. The association acts as secretariat for NMN, and notices of meetings, meeting practicalities and secretariat functions have been handled via the Nordic Criteria Group.

The formation of the association, the work of the Board of Directors and the various Nordic process groups have resulted in a significantly increased level of Nordic coordination and cohesion: Nordic Swan Ecolabel is being framed jointly and is increasingly perceived as a homogeneous ecolabelling system with a Nordic starting point and management, by staff as well as customers and the world around us.

NMR's final report, Nordic Ecolabelling, vision 2015

The final report is the basis for the association's and Nordic Ecolabelling's work on formulating a new strategy for the 2016–2020 period. The direct recommendations in the report are reflected in a number of forthcoming strategic projects. These include building alliances with other systems and organisations, as well as ecolabelling as a public procurement tool. The recommendation to continue to work on climate, quality and health aspects of the criteria is being fulfilled continuously. The relevance of Nordic Ecolabelling to climate control is promoted strongly in the day-to-day communication

2,101 Nordic Swan Ecolabel licences

There were a total of 2101 Nordic Swan Ecolabel licenses in the Nordic region – an increase of 78 licences in one year.

28,445 products

are sold as Nordic Swan Ecolabelled in the Nordic region. This is a marked increase with over 4700 products since 2015 (23718 products).



Nordic Ecolabelling's vision is a sustainable lifestyle.

and campaign work. In Denmark in recent years, Nordic Ecolabelling has worked to promote concrete quantitative environmental benefits within selected areas. This experience can serve as the basis for any ongoing work on quantifying environmental effects.

Strategy 2020

The association is now working intensively on business development in accordance with the strategy adopted by the Nordic Ecolabelling Board up to 2020. The most important elements are to develop a new "Brand Strategy" for Nordic Ecolabelling – as an overall strategy for Nordic Ecolabelling's activities – and to prepare and adopt "Strategic product development", "New concept for criteria" and "Digital transformation". This will ensure that we are a relevant and requested labelling scheme among both producers and consumers, enabling them to work on a timely and cost effective basis, with a good impact on the environment. The aforementioned major development project is under way, several Nordic workshops have been held, and the foundations have been laid for the coming strategy work, which will require both internal and external resources.

Criteria development

The association has previously coordinated the work on criteria in a Nordic project unit under the leadership of a process owner appointed by the Board. The unit consisted of eight product officers, one project controller, two criteria editor services and around two services with interdisciplinary expertise (the two last-mentioned distributed on several ecolabelling organisations), and one manager. Besides experienced licensing administrators and marketing staff, we are now working on an increasingly more integrated basis to draw up relevant, market adapted and attractive criteria with good environmental impacts.

Being able to introduce criteria for new product groups is one of the most enjoyable parts of our work, although it is resource intensive. Just before the turn of the year 2015/2016, criteria for Coffee services were adopted, but otherwise 2016 was a year without new product groups in the market. Full development work is ongoing, however, for Investment Funds, Renovation of Properties, Liquid Packaging Board and Textile Baby Products, for several of which criteria are expected to be adopted in 2017.

Ensuring that updated, relevant and discriminating environmental criteria are in place for all our product groups is also important for Nordic Ecolabelling. Evaluating and revising criteria is therefore always a work in progress. During 2016, NMN decided on revised criteria for Buildings, Hygiene Products, Cleaning Services, Grocery Stores and Cosmetics product areas.

Criteria revision is ongoing for Fuel, Pellets, Cleaning Agents for the Food Industry and Disposable Items in Contact with Food Products.

Combined Nordic digital information

During the year, several IT projects took place to ensure shared access to central information. Licensing work now takes place on a shared platform. Customers, products, criteria, etc. are now gathered digitally in one place, with the automatic transfer of relevant information to the national consumer-oriented websites, and to a shared Nordic website for manufacturers.

Nordic Ecolabelling has been very successful with Nordic Swan Ecolabelling of residential properties. Hundreds of

projects are under their way to construct Nordic Swan Ecolabelled houses in various Nordic countries. These projects involve quantities of different products and many subsuppliers. With the Nordic Swan Ecolabel's holistic approach, environmental requirements are made of most the them. To support the sector and our administrators, via a major IT project we have gathered product information in a combined Nordic database, which is available to subsuppliers, house contractors and Nordic Ecolabelling staff.

Grocery stores are now administered completely digitally, from the stores submitting applications to our administrative staff. A "store guide" was developed for this purpose during 2016. Another development project is to gather information for our technical chemical product groups, which is expected to be completed in 2017.

Nordic marketing

In 2016, the cooperation between the Nordic Ecolabelling organisations' marketing and communication departments was further expanded. Communication is now more uniform, in terms of both content and style. Campaigns with the same appearance and message have taken place in all Nordic countries. It is also important that our customers, the licence holders, communicate the Nordic Swan Ecolabel on a uniform basis throughout the Nordic region. A Nordic manual has therefore been prepared for our customers. The Nordic marketing group is now working intensively on developing our future brand strategy, in accordance with the overall strategy adopted by the Nordic Ecolabelling Board (NMN).



The Board of the Nordic Ecolabelling Association: Gun Nycander (Executive Officer), Ragnar Unge (Sweden), Gunnlaug Einarsdóttir (Island), Petri Väisänen (Finland), Martin Fabiansen (Denmark) and Anita Winsnes (Norway).

Public procurement

Many of the Nordic Swan Ecolabel product groups are also procured by the public sector. The new EU directive, which will be implemented by new legislation in the Nordic countries, opens up further opportunities to use the Nordic Ecolabelling system. During 2016 we therefore attended several seminars and workshops to present how we can be used, and also to learn and understand how the Nordic Swan Ecolabel can be developed into a more complete system for the procurement sector. A Nordic guide for legal and effective use of Nordic Ecolabelling is being developed, and national guides have been created in several of the Nordic countries. Within Nordic Ecolabelling, during the year, we also further developed our network for buyers and procurement officers, in order to create commitment and knowledge of more sustainable product choices.

Control and licensing

A key aspect of our activities is the ongoing control and licensing undertaken by the various Nordic Ecolabelling organisations in their respective domestic markets, and also outside the Nordic region.

During 2016, around 570 licences were reviewed against revised and more stringent Nordic Ecolabelling requirements. Almost 200 companies achieved approval of new licences within many different product groups.

Under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers (NMR), there is focus on greater Nordic coordination within this area. Our shared CRM system is subject to continuous oversight and improvement and a Nordic process group ensures that applications and interpretations are calibrated for equal treatment of companies, and for the issue of licences on equal terms. We are also developing shared, searchable databases with subsuppliers' raw materials and input products, in order to streamline administration for the Nordic Ecolabelling organisations, as well as the companies applying for licences.

International work

The association is a member of GEN, the Global Ecolabelling Network, in which it has played a key role during the past year. Our international coordinator has chaired the organisation, and at the annual general meeting was re-elected for a new two-year period. Nordic Ecolabelling attended the meeting with a small delegation and shared its experience from building up the brand in the Nordic region, and also attended parallel international environmental conferences' panel debates.



Nordic Ecolabelling regularly visits our licence holders for inspection.

We also visited the German ecolabelling organisation, the Blue Angel, to exchange experience and discuss the development of closer cooperation. Working for the mutual recognition of each others' criteria and licensing, in order to streamline the basis for producers to apply for ecolabelling all over the world, is a strategy that we are working to achieve, and which must be based on uniform environmental quality.

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel attracts considerable international attention, due to its strong impact on the market and the ambitious, detailed criteria that are often used as a model and example. Many other ecolabelling systems are based on the Nordic Ecolabelling requirements, which we also encourage. Turkey is in the process of building up its own ecolabelling scheme, and via GEN, Nordic Ecolabelling has been requested to provide expert assistance, which we have also offered.

Circular economy

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel is a good tool to promote circular economy, and thereby strengthen companies' competitiveness, promote their efficient use of resources, and contribute to creating innovative solutions. The Nordic Swan Ecolabel takes a circular life cycle approach and this outlook is a condition for the circular economy. This entails a focus on how measures in one phase have a positive effect at several stages of the life cycle, as well as avoiding negative environmental impacts which might risk being forwarded elsewhere in the life cycle. The circular economy focuses not only on closed systems for the individual product, but is also a shared circular resource system. The circular economy can be stimulated in several ways during the life cycle of a product or service. It is also a complex system that includes even more besides product development. Nordic Ecolabel monitors the international discussion, in which other aspects are also considered.

Nordic Ecolabelling also takes part in the "Nordic Swan, Circular Economy and Product Environmental Footprint" project, which is supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The project will run for three years (2016–2018). The project's focus is on how the Nordic Ecolabelling criteria can be seen as part of the process of developing a circular economy and marketing products with the lowest possible environmental impact.

Conclusion

2016 was a good year for Nordic Ecolabelling. Our combined licences increased in terms of both number and size. Our customers are loyal and both wish and intend to remain with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel for many years. We are much sought after and have shown an ability to enter new sectors and areas. This is due to the strong confidence in our working methods and expertise, and great respect for our brand. This all indicates a promising future, although we must adapt to new production and consumption patterns and ensure that we are effective and relevant in the market of the future. This is the aim of the strategic projects that are starting up, and we look forward to the coming challenges with confidence.



Global Ecolabelling Network

The Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN) is a non-profit association of leading ecolabelling organisations worldwide. GEN was founded in 1994 to help protect the environment by improving, promoting and developing the ecolabelling of environmentally friendly products and sustainable services.

GEN fosters cooperation, information exchange and harmonization of environmental requirements among the member labels. GEN also participates in other international fora to promote ecolabelling as a tool for both consumers and purchasers, and contributes to increased demand for ecolabelled and environmentally responsible goods and services.

What characterises members of GEN?

Labels such as the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, EU Ecolabel, Bra Miljöval (Good Environmental Choice), TCO Development, Germany's Blaue Engel and Green Seal in the USA, etc. assess all the relevant environmental problems throughout a product's life cycle. This means that the labelled products must document that they satisfy stringent and measureable requirements with regard to climate considerations, sustainability, energy consumption and chemical content all the way from resource extraction, via production and usage, and finally as materials for recycling or waste. Labels of this type are known as type 1 ecolabels in accordance with standard ISO 14024. All 26 members of GEN have attained this status.

Type 1-ecolabelling is spreading world-wide

Recent membership applications to GEN, from countries such as India and Kazakhstan, show that ecolabelling is spreading over the world. In the future, new countries will have ecolabelled products, based on thorough lifecycle-based assessments. An initiative to spread information about the advantages of type 1 ecolabelling schemes to an even broader international acceptance is led by GEN-members under the UN Environment program for Consumer Information under the 10 YFP-umbrella. For the European members especially, the coupling of ecolabels to the new legislation for green public procurement opens for new expansion of the schemes. And both in the US EPA and the German governmental work for classifying different ecolabels for public procurement, GEN members have shown that their schemes are robust and a good basis for making public procurement more sustainable.



Bjørn-Erik Lønn, specialist in international work at Nordic Ecolabelling, and chairman of the Board of Directors of GEN – Global Ecolabelling Network.

Our organisation in the Nordic countries – the Nordic Swan success story

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel is the official ecolabel of the Nordic countries and was established in 1989 by the Nordic Council of Ministers with the purpose of providing an environmental labelling scheme that would contribute to sustainable consumption. It is a voluntary, positive ecolabelling of products and services. The Nordic Swan Ecolabel was also initiated as a practical tool for consumers to help them actively choose environmentally friendly products.

Each Nordic country has local national offices with the responsibility for criteria development, licensing, marketing and audits. In Denmark, Nordic Ecolabelling is administered by Ecolabelling Denmark at Danish Standards Foundation, in Sweden by Ecolabelling Sweden AB, in Finland by Finnish Standards, in Norway by The Foundation for Ecolabelling, and in Iceland by The Environment Agency that operates under the direction of the Ministry for the Environment.

How Nordic Ecolabelling works

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel is a type 1 ecolabel and follows the ISO 14024 standard. This means, for example, that continuous improvements are built into the ecolabel, since the criteria regularly are being revised and gradually made more stringent, with the aim of contributing to more sustainable consumption. Nordic Ecolabelling applies an evaluation model known as the RPS model (Relevance, Potential, Steerability) and a holistic, life cycle perspective.

Life cycle perspective

Our criteria are rooted in a life cycle perspective, taking account of the whole chain from raw material extraction, production and use, to waste/recycling. By considering the entire life cycle, it is possible to assess the most relevant aspects of environmental impact and focus on avoiding simply transferring impact from one area to another (burden shift). The MECO model (Materials, Energy, Chemicals and Others) is an analysis tool used in this process. To establish for which parts of the life cycle of goods or services setting environmental requirements is relevant, Nordic Ecolabelling conducts a MECO analysis as the first step in an RPS analysis. R – Relevance is assessed based on the environmental problems associated with the product, P – Potential is assessed in terms of possible environmental gains, i.e. what can be done about the problem, and S – Steerability questions whether the Nordic Swan Ecolabel is the right instrument for tackling the environmental problem.

Human rights

All Nordic Ecolabelling criteria follow legislation in each Nordic country in terms of labour rights, non-discrimination, freedom of association and right to collective bargaining. Certain criteria documents may also include the UN's Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights or other international agreements where these are considered relevant. For example, the criteria for Nordic Swan Ecolabelled toys also require the manufacturer to satisfy the ILO Conventions with regard to human rights, working conditions, etc. and to be able to verify this by means of SA8000 or ICTI certification.

Licensing and verification

When a company applies for Nordic Swan Ecolabelling licence, the submitted test reports and documentation are examined closely. A site visit is made in conjunction with the application. Once licensed, products may then be sold and marketed with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel. The licence applies for as long as the criteria for the product are valid. Licences are reassessed on a continual basis as revised criteria are introduced, with licence holders required to reapply. This procedure affects the company's sustainability target for a number of licences.

Product development

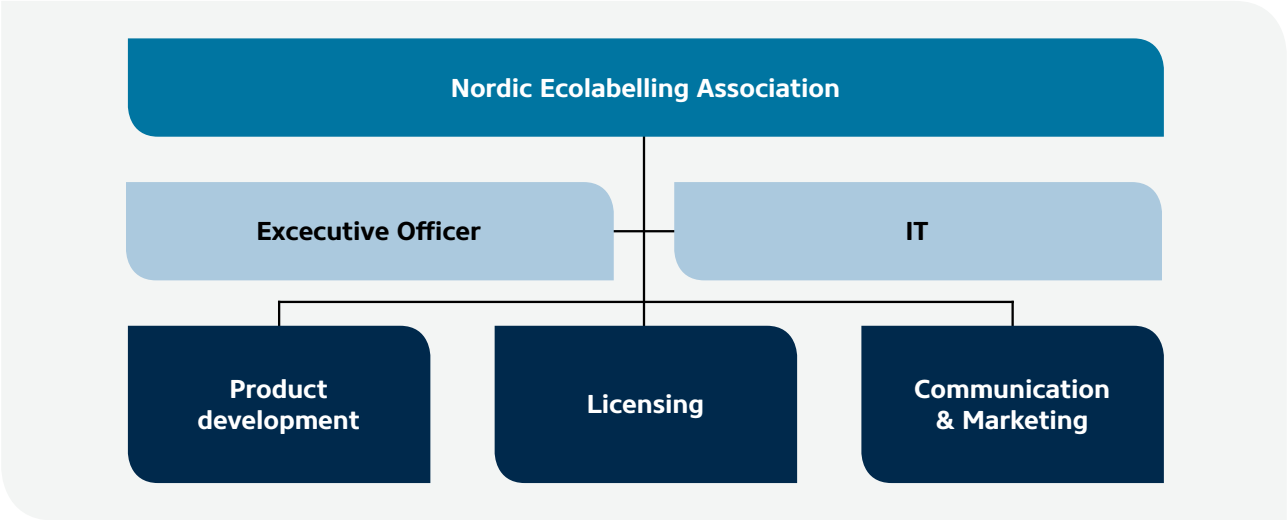
Each of the Nordic countries has an ecolabelling board, which is responsible for its country's stance on issues concerning criteria and new product groups. It is then up to the joint Nordic Ecolabelling Board to decide which product groups and criteria will apply. This is an open process, with broad consultation on the proposals before any decision is taken. In 2016, Nordic Ecolabelling was available in 58 product areas, covering both goods and services. There are product managers and a criteria manager in each country, reporting to a Nordic product development manager, who in turn reports to the Nordic association council and the Nordic Ecolabelling Board (NMN). Ultimate responsibility for Nordic Ecolabelling rests with the Nordic Council of Ministers (NMR). Nordic Ecolabelling contributes expertise, and the respective criteria manager handles the proposal before it is passed to the Swedish Ecolabelling Board and the ministry for Sweden's stance.

How requirements (criteria) for Nordic Ecolabelling are drawn up

- A pilot study and draft criteria are drawn up by a Nordic or European project group.
- The draft is sent out for consultation and revised on the basis of views received.
- The national board takes a stance. This board comprises representatives from trade and industry, consumer organisations, public authorities and environmental organisations.
- A final decision is made by the Nordic Ecolabelling Board, which comprises the chairs of each national board.
- The requirements are raised on a continual basis. After a few years, they are evaluated and revised.

Environmental platform

The Nordic Ecolabelling's environmental platform applies in all Nordic countries and is the basis for the Nordic Ecolabelling's assessment of the environmental impacts of goods and services.



Nordic Ecolabelling Association - organization scheme.



Christina Lindbäck (Sverige), Nina Schiøtz (Danmark), Mette Fagerli (Norge), Magdalena Lönnroth (Finland), Kristin Linda Árndottìr (Island).

The precautionary principle

Nordic Ecolabelling may choose to exclude/limit a substance on the basis of the precautionary principle. This concerns certain substances, for example, that are suspected of having undesirable properties, even if they are not classified as harmful and are not included on any official regulatory list. For example, new research may show an undesirable property over a longer time horizon, or as a product of degradation, in a substance that previously had no known negative environmental properties. Experience has shown that it can take a long time for new research to be confirmed and for this to lead to a different risk classification.

Energy consumption and climate effect

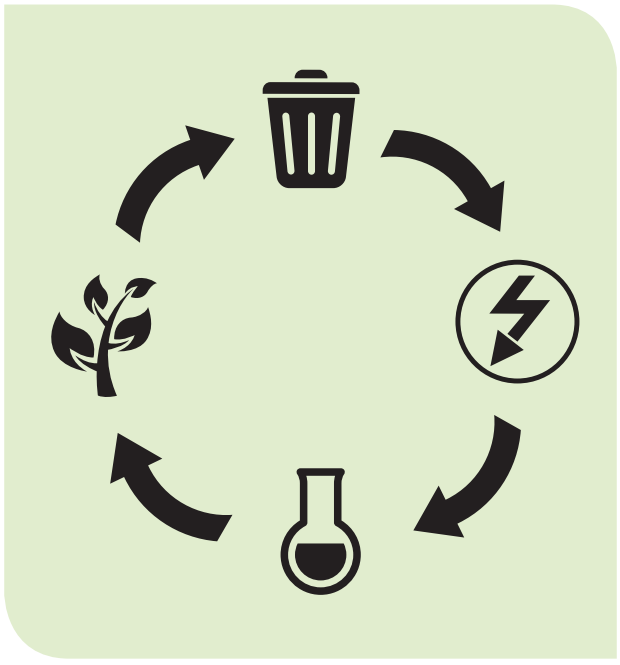
The concentration of greenhouse gases, in particular carbon dioxide, in the atmosphere has increased with the advent of industrialisation. The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has established that human emissions of fossil greenhouse gases and other activities have strongly contributed to an increase in average temperatures globally, which could have severe consequences. Nordic Ecolabelling takes a serious view of these emissions, and energy efficiency measures and energy use are among the most highly prioritised areas in our criteria.

Use of chemicals

New chemicals that are harmful to human health and the environment are constantly being discovered. At the same time, we still lack sufficient knowledge to be able to identify which particular characteristics of these chemicals and pollutants are having a harmful effect on our health and the environment. The effects are therefore difficult to assess. The majority of substances harmful to the environment being discovered today, are substances that break down slowly and are therefore found in the environment, foodstuffs and also in our bodies. Point sources of pollution, where chemicals are emitted in a more or less controlled manner, have been remedied over time. The most important source today



All Nordic Ecolabelling's criteria are rooted in a life cycle perspective.



The Nordic Ecolabelling's environmental platform include waste, energy, chemicals and biodiversity.

is therefore raw materials and consumption goods from which chemicals are emitted more slowly through what is known as diffuse emission. Nordic Ecolabelling works to minimise substances that are harmful to the environment and health in the life cycle.

Biodiversity

The way in which we use nature's resources today presents a serious threat to the diversity of habitats and rich variety of flora and fauna. If this diversity is restricted, nature's ability to respond to the habitat changes that occur over time is weakened. Air and water pollution also have a harmful impact on biodiversity. Together, these threats could have a negative impact on our planet's ability to sustain life which could, in the worst case, result in an ecosystem collapse. Nordic Ecolabelling strives to ensure that raw material consumption is in balance with growth – basing its work on accepted certification schemes, for example for wood and other crops, as far as this is possible.

Resource consumption and waste

Rising consumption is draining the planet's resources and at the same time generating more and more waste. Even so, we are becoming better at conserving resources in manufacturing processes and utilising the waste generated through recovery and recycling, but there is still a long way to go. Nordic Ecolabelling's criteria work promotes long-term, sustainable raw materials production, which helps to safeguard the future supply of natural resources. It is therefore important to minimise resource consumption through reduced use of materials (for example minimising packaging), recycling and thorough waste separation, by manufacturers and consumers alike. Nordic Ecolabelling also strives to impose quality requirements that ensure satisfactory product lifetimes, which in itself is good for the environment, as well as requirements concerning the performance of the product. Together with quality management requirements, the ecolabelling system ensures that the goods or service live up to the requirements and offer good quality throughout the term of validity of the licence.



Our values

Our values are the core values of the company and brand, and the values we strive for in our way of working.

Credible: We are the official Nordic ecolabel, we are independent and third-party. We compile an overall assessment and evaluate from a life cycle perspective. We have a high level of expertise in all functions in our organisation and we are thorough and transparent.

Determined: We are proactive, focused and resolute. We are results oriented and brave. We dare to lead the way and challenge to create results.

Clear: We are transparent in all of our operations: Policy development, licensing, and communication. We strive to make the complex simple.

Our personality

These values guide our daily work within our organisation. In addition to our values we have defined a set of personality traits that will help and guide us in how we live the values in our daily work.

Inspiring: Through our actions and through knowledge sharing, we inspire others to do their best for a sustainable future. We are positive and solution oriented.

Responsive: We show respect for other's opinions and seek dialogue. We are attentive, flexible and we always communicate on an even level with our audience.

Committed: We are passionate about our work and want to make a difference. We are innovative and have the will to change.

Marketing activities throughout the Nordic region

In all Nordic countries there is focus on promoting the Nordic Swan Ecolabel and its benefits to among others, consumers, companies, licence holders, authorities, media, and public procurement officials.

Seminars

Public procurement

One of the key subjects to Nordic Ecolabelling marketing activities was the new EU Regulation for public procurement: the 2014 Public Procurement Directive. This directive allows public procures to demand ecolabelled products which is new from the former 2004 directive. This directive was adapted in the Nordic countries during 2016 and Nordic Ecolabelling has organized many seminars and workshops about the role of ecolabels in public procurement. In Norway and Denmark the theme was: "What guidance's do procures need in order to use the possibilities in the new procurement law to demand ecolabels?" The goal was to increase awareness of the new possibilities and how ecolabels make it easier to carry out environmentally sound procurement. These seminars and workshops gathered over 600 participants. A summary of the workshops will be published to give a Nordic guidance to how requirements can be made in public procurement to include ecolabels and environmental management systems.

Nordic Ecolabelling also participated via Ecolabelling Denmark in the Nordic conference "Growth through Green Public Procurement" which had over 100 participants and a stand about the Sustainable Procurement Network in Denmark. Ecolabelling Sweden continued its cooperation in the ModUpp2020 network that started in 2013. In this network FairTrade, MSC, KRAV, TCO Development, and Bra Miljöval have as their goal to encourage public procurement officials in all counties all over Sweden to demand more ecolabelled products and services in their procurement bids.

Nordic Ecolabelling and the European Ecolabel joined Fairtrade Finland and the Finnish Organic Food Association in challenging local authorities to make sustainable procurements of materials such as printed products, paper, and general cleaning and dishwasher detergents, ensuring that these purchases satisfy environmental labelling criteria.

Political summer events in Almedalen and Arendal

Nordic Ecolabelling continued its presence at the popular political week Almedalen in early July. Four seminars were arranged to give attendees a chance to learn more about Nordic Ecolabelling´s public procurement activities, digital campaigns, Nordic Swan Ecolabelled hotels/restaurants/conference criteria and the criteria work being done on Nordic Investment Funds. Over 300 persons attended these seminars which gave rise to many discussions with leading government ministers.

Ecolabelling Norway was also represented in Arendalsuka, an event for Norwegian politicians held in Arendal in Norway in August. The Nordic Ecolabelling arranged a seminar about retail and its role in our everyday choices, together with The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) and the Enterprise Federation of Norway (Virke).

Sustainable Procurement Network

The Nordic Swan Sustainable Procurement Network is a network of more than 300 companies in all Nordic countries that focuses on the environment in the indirect procurement. The network's basic idea is to make professional procurement a powerful driver towards a more sustainable society.

The Network connects Nordic Ecolabelling, the members and the companies that provide ecolabelled goods and services. When network members every year use an increased share of ecolabelled goods and services, the selection will be correspondingly larger. This makes it easier for members to achieve their own environmental goals and makes it more profitable for both buyers and suppliers.

Network for Sustainable Procurement is an Environmental Labelling network of companies that focus on the environment in the indirect procurement. The network's basic idea is to make professional procurement a powerful driver towards a more sustainable society. More than 300 companies/organisations are members throughout the Nordic countries. Throughout 2016 seminars with different themes were arranged, among others, the exchange of best practices, discussions about the UN sustainable goals (SDG), and environmental-awareness projects, were held in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland.

Consumer campaigns

Environmental campaigns for the Nordic Swan Ecolabel ran in several countries. The purpose was to disseminate more information about the benefits of the Nordic Swan Ecolabel and increase sales for those products and services that are Nordic Swan Ecolabelled.

The advertising campaign with the overriding message "Save the world a little every day" continued in Sweden, Norway and Finland. In Sweden there was an outdoor advertising in 34 cities at bus stops and underground stations, ads in major country-wide newspapers, followed by the digital campaign "The world´s most important classroom" where celebrities gave a 3 minute speech in a classroom setting about what sustainability means to them. Ecolabelling Norway also ran an outdoor campaign in 40 cities and suburbs, digital ads at 55 shopping centres as well as ads in magazines and newspapers. In addition to this, the campaign provided



The Nordic Swan Sustainable Procurement Network holds many seminars to provide the opportunity for knowledge sharing on environmental and other sustainability issues.



Finnish musician Raakel Lignell

educational material about the Nordic Swan Ecolabel to the staff in the shops in Norway. Social media played a large part in these campaigns.

In Finland, a social media autumn campaign urged consumers to do a little every day to save the world. The well-known compere and musician Raakel Lignell spearheaded this initiative encouraging users of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to make responsible daily choices. Businesses and brands involved in the campaign included Lumme laundry detergents, Scandic hotels, Cello interior paints, Lotus Soft Embo toilet paper, Vileda Professional microfibre mops and towels, Cottover profile clothing, Marmoleum Click flooring and Gasum biogas. The campaign achieved more than two million advertising impressions, reaching over 600,000 individual consumers

In Denmark, the campaign "Your choice today makes a world of difference tomorrow" ran twice in February and October. The green shopping basket, which has



Nordic Ecolabelling in Berlin for a joint meeting with the Blue Angel.



Swedish consumer campaign "Save the world a little bit every day"

become a strong symbol of consumer empowerment and environmentally friendly choices, were widely shown on national outdoor advertising, print ads in newspapers and magazines and online banners. Social media activation ensured high level of engagement from consumers. A majority of Danish supermarket chains participated in the two campaigns with offers on ecolabelled products and visibility in store, in trade papers and social media. Both campaigns were supported by extensive PR activation, which resulted in more than 160 press clippings from licensees, retail, stakeholders, authorities and national news media. Follow-up consumer research showed both a significant increase in unaided awareness of the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, and an increase in share of consumers looking for the Nordic Swan Ecolabel when purchasing. Awareness of the EU-Ecolabel grew from 38% (2015) to 44% (end of 2016).

Ecolabelling Iceland participated in the environmental show "Together against waste". The show and a conference held in connection are a part of the government's Action Plan for Waste Preventions. The show emphasized how the Nordic Swan Ecolabel decreases waste throughout the lifecycle of a product or service. Iceland also held out a specially designed campaign for hotels,

restaurants and conference centres encouraging them to learn more about the Nordic Swan Ecolabel and get a free introduction meeting.

Social media, press and films

In all Nordic Ecolabelling organisations, there was much focus on producing films and using social media to engage consumers in the Nordic Ecolabelling's activities. Radio and TV interviews, newspaper articles, op-eds in major newspapers and trade press were part of the media mix the different Nordic organisations used during the past year, which has also lead to many journalist interviews and articles in trade press, daily press, magazines and newsletters.

Increased cooperation with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel and the Blue Angel

Germany´s official environmental label is the Blue Angel. Nordic Ecolabelling participated in a joint meeting in Berlin to discuss how our two ecolabels could have a closer cooperation and more harmonization between the two ecolabelling systems with particular focus on IT. Since many international companies need different ecolabels that work in several markets, it is important to try to harmonize criteria in different product categories and make it easier for companies to have ecolabels that work internationally.

Nordic Swan Ecolabel ranked fifth most reputable brand in Finland

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel is now fifth out of more than 1,000 reputable brands in Finland, which is five places higher than in the preceding year. These were the findings of the Brand prestige 2016 survey by Talous-tutkimus and Markkinointi & Mainonta magazine.



One of Nordic Ecolabelling Sweden's seminars during "Almedalen Week".

Interviews



Arne Terp-Nielsen, Managing Director, Abena Danmark

"The Nordic Swan has been an important part of our DNA and this is something that we are extremely proud of."

Why did you decide to obtain for a Nordic Swan Ecolabel?

We decided to apply for the Nordic Swan Ecolabel 26 years ago, and we were pioneers in our field. Our profile has always been based on quality and sustainability.

Ever since then, the Nordic Swan has been an important part of our DNA and this is something that we are extremely proud of. Now we have a broad range of Nordic Swan ecolabelled products, from diapers and sanitary towels, to paper for catering use, baking paper and muffin cups.

What advantages have you noticed having this Ecolabel?

At Abena, we want to make money, do something good for the environment and show social responsibility. If we don't make money, it is not sustainable. And the Nordic Swan Ecolabel is good for business.

It is perfect for us. It helps us to tell the story of our philosophy and how we do business. The external control helps ensure us that our products are the best, also in terms of quality and environmental considerations. There is no doubt whatsoever that our market recognition is far greater because of the Nordic Swan Ecolabel.

We use the Nordic Swan Ecolabel very actively in our marketing, also internationally. We have major private label customers outside the Nordic region who are now seriously considering a Nordic Swan licence.

Would you recommend other companies to apply for this licence?

We work with numerous suppliers worldwide, who we encourage to get a Nordis Swan Ecolabel licence. Because our experience with Nordic Ecolabelling is entirely positive, we can only recommend it to other companies.

Is there any area you think we can improve upon?

There is always room for improvement and we do of course have a couple of things we would like Ecolabelling Denmark to focus even more on. For example, it is our experience that Denmark's public sector doesn't emphasize environmental requirements enough in public tenders. The situation in Norway is very different, for instance.

There is also the task of making international customers understand what the Nordic Swan Ecolabel actually represents. We think that this is a story that needs telling and we would like to work alongside Nordic Ecolabelling to help improve this knowledge. Greater international focus is required. The label needs to be recognized outside the Nordic region and its value needs to be clear.



Abena's production plant.



Tiia Leppäkangas, Marketing Manager, Huhtamäki Foodservice Nordic Oy

"The Nordic Swan Ecolabel is very well-known and appreciated throughout the Nordic region and we believe it makes it easy for the end user to make sustainable choices."

Why did you decide to have a Nordic Swan Ecolabel?

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel is very well-known and appreciated throughout the Nordic region and we believe it makes it easy for the end user to make sustainable choices. We wanted to offer our customers this added value and have ecolabelled products in our assortment.

In addition, we share the mentality of continuous improvement that Nordic Ecolabelling stands for and we are committed to develop sustainable products also in the future.

What advantages have you noticed having this ecolabel?

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel is a way to distinguish ourselves from our competitors. As Huhtamaki Foodservice Nordic has been the first to introduce ecolabelled single use cups we have gained added value to our products by offering something no one else has. The Nordic Swan Ecolabel also supports the understanding that we are a responsible company and a trustworthy partner to our customers.

Would you recommend other companies to apply for this licence?

At least for us, the Nordic Swan Ecolabel has been a good way of pointing out the sustainable benefits of our products. Sustainable development is an important part of our business and the Nordic Swan Ecolabel fits in as a natural part of it.

Is there any area you think we can improve upon?

As a Nordic operator Nordic Ecolabelling should drive eagerly for benefits of locally produced products and local services. It is our shared responsibility among corporations, public sector and consumers to continuously build a more sustainable Nordic society.

Do you get more customers or recognition in the marketplace by having a Nordic Swan Ecolabel?

As the Nordic Swan Ecolabel is a well-known and trusted ecolabel, we believe it has a positive impact on end users. As a visual element on a product the Swan logo makes sustainable choice easier. This is one of the key benefits we offer to our customers.



Huhtamäki's Nordic Swan Ecolabelled cup.



Arndís Soffía Sigurðardóttir and Ívar Þormarsson, Managers Hótel Fljótshlíð

> "Our experience is that the Nordic Swan Ecolabel is not only an environmental label but furthermore a licence of quality."

Why did you decide to have a Nordic Swan Ecolabel?

Before we decided to apply for the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, we had been working with environmental issues in the company for a long period of time. At a certain point we thought it was a natural next step to get the work licenced, as we wanted to do even better. We looked into a few different systems but came to the conclusion that Nordic Ecolabelling had the credibility that we were looking for. The most important thing was to get a licence from an unbiased 3rd party.

What advantages have you noticed having this ecolabel?

The advantages have first and foremost been more efficient operations. The system behind the ecolabel has given us a great overview of our operation and taken us through implementation of certain processes that make our work much more effective. Our experience is that the Nordic Swan Ecolabel is not only an environmental label but furthermore a licence of quality. Everything that Nordic Ecolabelling requires from us directly or indirectly leads to better service for our guests.

Would you recommend other companies to apply for this licence?

We can without hesitation recommend the Nordic Swan Ecolabel. It is our duty as business owners to ensure responsible tourism and provide service with minimum negative impact on the environment and society. We cannot promote Iceland as a clean destination and a nature paradise and simultaneously disregard the environmental impact of the operation of tourism businesses. Even though managers of companies or agencies might not have a clear interest in environmental issues, the system is basically about wasting less. Less wasteful business operations always lead to economical gains. Therefore, the Nordic Swan Ecolabel should appeal to anyone that wants to run their business better.

Is there any area you think we can improve upon?

The licencing process is a bit heavy and requires in many cases outside consultants or specialists in order to ensure that everything is done properly. It can be quite expensive for small to medium size companies to pay for such consultants. If possible it would be beneficial to simplify the process itself to prevent companies giving up half way in.

Do you get more customers or recognition in the marketplace by having a Nordic Swan Ecolabel?

We seem to have a new generation of tourists that put more emphasize on environmental issues and they demand to travel as green as possible. Today we are connected to foreign travel agencies that were specifically looking for hotels in Iceland that had an ecolabel so the licence really has paid off.



Hótel Fljótshlíð is a small hotel in rural Iceland.



Jonas Arrelöv, Product and quality manager, Cubus

> "We believe that when you see the Nordic Swan Ecolabel you instantly understand that the product is a sustainable product."

Why did you decide to have a Nordic Swan Ecolabel?

Today the consumer has to deal with many different types of sustainable labelling, it's a real jungle. When we decided on what we wanted to do, a big factor for us was to make it easier for our customers to make a good choice for the environment.

We believe that when you see the Nordic Swan Ecolabel you instantly understand that the product is a sustainable product. Produced with eco-friendly materials and chemicals and under healthy conditions. This was one of the strongest points why we decided to go for the Nordic Swan Ecolabel for our products, an easy choice for us and for our customers.

What advantages have you noticed having this ecolabel?

We received a lot of positive feedback when we launched our Nordic Swan Ecolabelled baby collection. Our customers are happy to find a fantastic baby collection that is produced with one of the toughest and strictest sustainable labels you can get on the market. Another big advantage is that it pushes us to think even more sustainable.

Would you recommend other companies to apply for this licence?

Absolutely. It is one of the toughest licence to receive out there. It takes time, and will challenge you on what you can use when it comes to material, composition, colors and more, but that is only positive. It drives us in the clothing industry to save the world a little every day.

Is there any area you think we can improve upon?

I was born in 1975 and in the 90's the Nordic Swan Ecolabel logo was very visible in the media. Raised with this logo, my generation associates it with a good choice. With younger consumers, and a whole set of different types of media, you will have to be on top of your game, improve and fortify your advertising and communication. It's crucial that you reach the younger crowd with your message; the Nordic Swan Ecolabel is one of the most sustainable choices.

Do you get more customers or recognition in the marketplace by having a Nordic Swan Ecolabel?

We sincerely hope so. Cubus has been making a great deal of green choices for a very long time, working with a substantial amount of Eco-Friendly cotton, BCI cotton etc. The Nordic Swan Ecolabel was an addition to and a way to highlight our sustainable effort, and we hope this will contribute to open the eyes of the customers on how we strive to do better for our planet.



Cubus Nordic Swan Ecolabelled baby collection.



Helene Samuelsson, Head of Communications, Preem

"Most people want to choose what is best for the environment, and the Nordic Swan Ecolabel is instant proof of our product being the right choice."

Why did you decide to have a Nordic Swan Ecolabel?

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel is trustworthy and clear proof that our product is a sound environmental choice. The logo facilitates for our customers to make an active choice – this is better for the environment. We were also familiar with the fact that fuels, a complex product group, fulfilling the requirements of an independent eco-label are in high demand among our customers.

What advantages have you noticed having this Ecolabel?

We have received a lot of and only positive attention from numerous stakeholders; customers, media NGOs to name a few. We have also received many questions regarding how it is possible to ecolabel a diesel product. It gives us the opportunity to tell more about our excellent Preem Evolution Diesel +. Fuel is generally a product of low interest to most people. However, by having our diesel fulfilling Nordic Swan Ecolabel's requirements we have created an interest for fuels' environmental benefits. People now understand that different diesel products may differ a lot from each other.

Would you recommend other companies to apply for this licence?

Absolutely! The Nordic Swan Ecolabel criteria ensure that the product lives up to strict environmental requirements and our customers can therefore trust that they make a sound choice. Fuel is such a complex product and it is difficult for most people to possess the kind of knowledge required to make the right choice.

Is there any area you think we can improve upon?

To communicate the requirements which a product must fulfill in a simple and clear manner. The customers will then not only know that they are making a sound environmental choice, but also in what way they are contributing to a better environment.

Do you get more customers or recognition in the marketplace by having a Nordic Swan Ecolabel?

Absolutely, from both private consumers as well as our B2B customers. Most people want to choose what is best for the environment, and the Nordic Swan Ecolabel is instant proof of our product being the right choice. The Nordic Swan Ecolabel facilitates both for us and for our conscious customers.



First Nordic Swan Ecolabelled liquid fuel in the world.

Criteria

Alternative dry cleaning
Closed toilet systems
Car and boat care products
Construction and façade panels
Grocery stores
Computers
Photographic development services
Fuel and biogas for heating and industrial use
Disposables for food
Primary batteries
Disposable bags, tubes and accessories for health care
Grease-proof paper
Vehicle wash installations
Windows and exterior doors
Floor coverings
Floor care products
De-icers
Hand dishwashing detergents
Hotels, restaurants and conference facilities
Sanitary products
Durable/resistant wood for outdoor use
Indoor paints and varnishes
Industrial cleaning and degreasing agents
Coffee services
Chemical building products
Copy and printing paper
Imaging equipment
Office and hobby supplies
Compost bins
Cosmetic products
Toys
Candles
Dishwasher detergents and rinsing agents
Dishwasher detergents for professional use
Machines for parks and gardens
Tissue paper
Furniture and fitments
Solid biofuel boilers
Solid fuels and firelighting products
Cleaning products
Cleaning agents for use in the food industry
Stoves
Small houses, apartment buildings and buildings for schools and pre-schools
Supplies for micrifibre based cleaning
Cleaning services
Textiles, hides/skins and leather
Textile servies
Laundry detergents and stain removers
Laundry detergents for professional use
Remanufactured OEM toner cartridges
Printing companies, printed matter, envelopes and other converted paper products
TV and projectors
Rechargeable batteries
Outdoor furniture and playground equipment
White goods
Heat pumps

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