



# GREEN INSIGHTS

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Newsletter on "Environment Literacy - Eco-labelling and Eco-friendly Products"



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**ECO MARK SCHEME  
IN INDIA AND  
CERTIFICATION**

## **Navigating the Green Consumer Landscape**



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**Environment Literacy - Eco-labelling and Eco-friendly Products**

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Shri Praful Amin  
CERC, Chairman

Uday Mawani  
Chief Executive Officer

### Editorial Team

Anindita Mehta  
Programme Coordinator  
COO CERC

Dr. Kartik Andharia  
Programme Officer

Karan Thakkar  
Information Officer

Aayushi Manek  
Intern, CERC-EIACP



## Foreword

In today's world, consumers are bombarded with choices, and making environmentally responsible decisions can feel overwhelming. This is where "Navigating the Green Consumer Landscape" comes in – your guide to making informed choices that benefit both you and the planet. Sustainability has become a global conversation, and consumer choices undeniably hold immense power. The products we buy, the brands we support, and the way we dispose of things – all contribute to our environmental footprint. But with a seemingly endless sea of "green" labels and conflicting information, navigating this new landscape can be tricky.

This newsletter aims to be your compass. We'll cut through the greenwashing and provide clear, actionable insights to empower you as a green consumer. We'll explore a range of topics,

from deciphering eco-labels to understanding the environmental impact of different materials and production processes.

But "Navigating the Green Consumer Landscape" goes beyond just product choices. We'll discuss broader issues like reducing your overall consumption, minimizing waste, and exploring sustainable living practices. Remember, every little bit counts and even small changes in your daily habits can make a big difference.

Ultimately, this newsletter is about fostering a community of conscious consumers. We believe that informed choices, combined with collective action, can create a significant positive impact. So, join us on this journey! Let's work together to navigate the green consumer landscape and build a more sustainable future, one informed purchase at a time.

# Demystifying Green and making informed choices




Deciphering Eco-labels





## ECO Mark Logo

Everyone plays a part in protecting the environment. This includes businesses, governments, and everyday citizens. India is making progress on its commitment to sustainability. We can see this in several ways, like the growing number of steel companies getting eco-friendly certifications and introducing new eco-labels in India. The number of green buildings has also doubled since 2016, and some beaches are meeting high environmental standards to achieve blue flag certification.

Choosing eco-friendly products is key. While companies and governments take steps like creating products with eco-labels, consumers also have a role to play. When you buy furniture, look for wood with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) label. This shows the wood comes from a responsibly managed forest. Similarly, look for energy-efficient electronics with higher star ratings. There are many eco-labels for different products and services, so you can find options that are better for the environment.

	<p>“Eco-mark” was launched by the Government of India to make people aware of green products. It follows the cradle-to-grave approach. Products that can use eco-mark are soaps, detergents, batteries, cosmetics, papers, textiles, etc.</p>
	<p>India Organic Eco mark is a certification for organically farmed products in India, ensuring they are produced without synthetic chemicals and meet national organic standards.</p>
	<p>FSC is a key driver in promoting better forest management and transforming the market. It aims to make global forest use more sustainable, focusing on conservation, restoration, and respect for all stakeholders.</p>

	<p>To connect disadvantaged farmers and workers with consumers, promote fairer trading conditions, and empower farmers and workers to combat poverty, strengthen their position and take more control over their lives.</p>
	<p>The development, implementation, verification, protection, and promotion of the Global Organic.</p>

### Greenwashing vs genuine sustainability

Just because a product has a green name or talks about nature doesn't mean it's eco-friendly. Companies might use misleading terms to trick you into thinking their product is good for the environment. Greenwashing isn't just about the name - it's also about how they advertise the product.

Let's pause here and think about some examples of companies that might be using greenwashing tactics. Think about companies that use words like "natural" or "eco-friendly", but don't have any certifications or clear details about their environmental impact.

To check whether the product is eco-friendly and has a certification, check for indicated eco-label on any of the sides of its packaging. You may also go through the website of that specific eco-label to see other details of that product, viz. what is the validity of the eco-label for a product, when was the product certified, etc.

### Understanding the concept of Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)

Life cycle assessment is helpful in identifying the products' environmental impact from start (raw materials) to finish (disposal). LCA is one step ahead of eco-labels, as eco-labels don't show the whole picture. LCA on other hand considers everything, viz. manufacturing of a product, transporting it, how you use it, and even its post disposal impacts. This approach to assess a product's environmental impact is also called cradle to grave approach.

### Types of Ecolabels

#### Type I Labels

A voluntary program that grants a license after a thorough analysis of the overall environmental performance of the product under consideration. This type is voluntary, multiple-criteria based, third party assessed program, and awards a license,

which authorizes the use of environmental labels on products indicating overall environmental preference for a product within a product category based on life cycle considerations. Type I labels are also called gold standard for consumer education because there is an independent certifying body. Common examples include Eco-mark, BEE Energy Efficiency Labelling, Forest Stewardship Council, etc.

#### Type II Labels

Type II environmental declarations use text and symbols emphasizing a particular environmental aspect of a product or service on the product or in product advertisements. The purpose is to increase market share by promoting the environmental features of a product to the environmentally conscious consumers. These however are self-declared environmental claims and are often difficult to verify.

The scope of such labels is limited to only single aspect of a life cycle or a single environmental attribute of a product, and not its whole life cycle. And therefore there are no certifications involved with such labels.

#### Type III Labels

Unlike type 1 and 2, type 3 ecolabels are focus on providing factual data. This data comes from a life cycle assessment of the product. With a lot of technical data, such labels are generally understood by the common person. Such labels are often used in business-to-business communication for internal company assessments.

In short, type 3 ecolabels provide a detailed, data-driven picture of a product's environmental impact but might require some effort to interpret for the average consumer. Environmental Product Declaration (EPD), The Hållbarhetsdeklaration (The Swedish Sustainability Declaration), etc. are type 3 ecolabels.

# Eco Mark and Green Certification in India: Promoting Environmental Sustainability



**Eco-Friendly Raw Material Only**



**Eco-Friendly Process Only**



In the wake of global environmental concerns, India has taken significant steps towards promoting sustainable practices across various sectors. Two key initiatives in this regard are the Eco Mark and Green Certification programs. These initiatives aim to encourage businesses and industries to adopt eco-friendly practices, reduce their carbon footprint, and contribute to a healthier planet. Let us delve into what these programs entail, their requirements, and the process involved.

## Eco Mark Certification

Eco Mark, also known as the Eco-friendly Product Labelling Scheme, is a voluntary certification scheme introduced by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India. The primary objective of the Eco Mark is to identify and promote products that have a reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycle.

### Requirements:

1. **Environmental Criteria:** Products seeking Eco Mark certification must meet specific environmental criteria set by the BIS. These criteria typically cover parameters such as energy efficiency, resource conservation, recyclability, and reduced emissions.
2. **Compliance with Standards:** The products must comply with relevant Indian standards specified by the BIS.
3. **Documentation:** Applicants need to submit detailed documentation and evidence demonstrating their product's adherence to the environmental criteria and standards.

### Process:

1. **Application Submission:** Interested businesses or manufacturers apply for Eco Mark certification with the BIS.

2. **Evaluation:** The BIS evaluates the product against the predefined environmental criteria and standards.
3. **Testing (if required):** In some cases, products may undergo testing to ensure compliance with specified standards.
4. **Certification:** Upon successful evaluation, the product is granted Eco Mark certification, allowing the use of the Eco Mark logo on the product packaging.

**Green Building Certification**  
in India



## Green Certification

Green certification encompasses a broader spectrum of sustainability initiatives beyond product labelling. It applies to various sectors, including buildings, industries, and services, and aims to recognize and reward entities implementing sustainable practices.

### Requirements:

1. **Adherence to Sustainability Standards:** Entities seeking green certification must adhere to specific sustainability standards relevant to their sector. These standards may include energy efficiency, water conservation, waste management, and use of renewable resources.
2. **Compliance with Regulatory Requirements:** In addition to sustainability standards, applicants must comply with relevant environmental regulations and policies.
3. **Implementation of Sustainable Practices:** Entities are required to demonstrate the implementation of sustainable practices within

their operations, such as adopting renewable energy sources, implementing waste reduction measures, and promoting eco-friendly transportation.

#### Process:

1. Pre-Assessment: Applicants may undergo a pre-assessment to determine their readiness for green certification and identify areas for improvement.
2. Documentation and Assessment: Entities submit detailed documentation outlining their sustainable practices and undergo assessment by authorized certification bodies.
3. On-site Verification (if required): In some cases, on-site verification may be conducted to validate the information provided and assess the actual implementation of sustainable practices.
4. Certification: Upon successful evaluation, entities are awarded green certification, which serves as a testament to their commitment to environmental sustainability.

#### Objective of the schemes

1. Incentivize Manufacturers and Importers: Encourage companies to make products that are better for the environment.
2. Educate Consumers: Provide information to help people make environmentally friendly choices when they shop.
3. Promote Eco-Friendly Purchases: Motivate people to buy products that have less negative impact on the environment.
4. Improve Environmental Quality: Enhance the overall environment and support sustainable use of resources.

#### Criteria:

Cradle-to-Grave Approach: Evaluate products from raw material extraction through manufacturing to disposal.

Broad and Specific Criteria: Cover general environmental aspects but focus on specific product impacts.



#### Main Environmental Impact Criteria:

1. Pollution Reduction: Products should cause much less pollution during production, use, and disposal compared to similar products.
2. Recycling and Biodegradability: Products should be recycled, recyclable, made from recycled materials, or biodegradable when similar products are not.
3. Resource Conservation: Products should help save non-renewable resources, including energy and natural materials, more effectively than comparable products.
4. Primary Environmental Impact: Each product must reduce the most significant environmental impact associated with its use, tailored to each product category.



#### Advantages of Ecolabel

- » Encouraging innovation through sustainable product development.
- » Growing markets to meet changing consumer interests.
- » Providing educational opportunities.
- » Creating new value chains via new production networks.
- » Ensuring accuracy in environmental claims.
- » Shaping consumer behaviour towards eco-friendly products.
- » Enhancing economic efficiency by following standards.
- » Offering financial support for sustainability.
- » Redistributing costs for environmental improvements.



# BIS CERTIFICATION

## Bureau of Indian Standards [BIS]

BIS plays role in standardizing and certifying the products that also includes the eco labels. Following are the penalties and punishment under BIS act for the misuse of eco labels:

### 1. Misuse of BIS Certification Mark:

If any person uses the BIS certification mark (including eco-labels) without authorization, they are liable for penalties.

Punishment: Imprisonment for up to one year or a fine up to fifty thousand rupees, or both.

### 2. False Representation:

If a person falsely represents that a product is certified by BIS, they face legal action.

Punishment: Imprisonment for up to one year or a fine up to fifty thousand rupees, or both.

Continuing Offence: For every day the offence continues after the first conviction, additional fines can be imposed.

Additional Fine: Up to five thousand rupees per day



### 3. Consumer Protection Act, 2019:

Consumer protection act mainly concerns about misleading Advertisement and unfair trade practices, which can include the misuse of eco-label. Penalties and Punishment are as follows:

Misleading Advertisement:

If an advertisement falsely claims that a product has an eco-label or other certification, it is considered misleading.

### Penalties:

First Offence: Fine up to ten lakh rupees.

Subsequent Offence: Fine up to fifty lakh rupees.

Imprisonment: Possible imprisonment for up to two years.

### 4. Unfair Trade Practices:

Misrepresenting a product's eco-friendly characteristics is an unfair trade practice.

Penalties:

First Offence: Fine up to ten lakh rupees.

Subsequent Offence: Fine up to fifty lakh rupees.

Imprisonment: Possible imprisonment for up to two years.

### 5. Consumer Compensation:

Consumers can file complaints with the Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission as well as Consumer Education and research centre (CERC) if they are misled by eco-label claims.

Compensation: The commission can order compensation for any harm caused by the false representation.

### Conclusion

The Eco Mark and Green Certification programs play a crucial role in promoting environmental sustainability in India. By incentivizing businesses and industries to adopt eco-friendly practices, these initiatives contribute to reducing environmental degradation and fostering a greener future. However, continuous monitoring and enforcement of standards are essential to ensure the credibility and effectiveness of these certification programs in the long run.

### Source:

- <https://cpcb.nic.in/eco-scheme/>
- <http://www.fao.org/3/y2789e/y2789e06.htm>
- Eco-labels: A Tool for Green Marketing or Just a Blind Mirror for Consumers: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6k83s5mv>
- Increasing the effectiveness of ecological food signal: Comparing sustainability tag with eco-labels: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0148296321007803>
- <https://www.clasp.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Ecolabel-final-report.pdf>
- Eco mark Certification Rule, 2023: <https://compass.rauias.com/current-affairs/ecomark-certification-rule-2023/>
- Environmental Protection Act,1986 [https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/4316/1/ep\\_act\\_1986.pdf](https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/4316/1/ep_act_1986.pdf)
- BIS Eco-mark Scheme:<https://www.bis.gov.in/product-certification/eco-mark-scheme/>

## Events (April - June 2024)

1. Dr. Kartik Andharia, Programme Officer, CERC EIACP PC RP has organized an awareness session on the theme of “Planet vs. Plastic” for the members of Revatirth Apartment, Bhavnagar on World Earth Day.



2. Dr. Kartik Andharia, Programme Officer and Mr. Karan Thakkar, Information Officer held an awareness session on Mission LiFE, Eco label, Millets and Sustainable Lifestyle with Law Interns at CERC classroom on 2nd May 2024.



3. Anindita Mehta, COO, CERC, Board Trustee, CI & Coordinator EIACP, MoEF&CC, was a Keynote speaker at a Seminar at AMA (in association with an NGO Paryawaran Mitra) on the outcome of the recent INC 4 , Plastics Treaty negotiations at Ottawa, Canada. Dr Kartik Andharia, Program Officer EIACP, CERC, also attended the Seminar and took part in the discussions. The event received wide media coverage.







Giving details of his participation at INC-4, Chiragh Bhimani said, a major focus of the meet was micro plastics found in marine life across the globe. Offering examples of micro plastics found in the fishes consumed in the countries along the Pacific coasts, in an answer to a Counterview query, he regretted that there is no such study on Gujarat, which accounts for 20% of India's sea coast, and where fisheries is a major means of coastal livelihood for fisherfolk.

Expressing similar concern, Anindita Mehta, senior official at the Consumer Education and Research Centre (CERC), Ahmedabad, and trustee, Consumers International, said, the only study that she has come across on marine pollution in India because of micro plastics is by the SRM College, Chennai, carried out along the Tamil Nadu sea coast. "There should be a study on Gujarat coastal region too", she insisted.

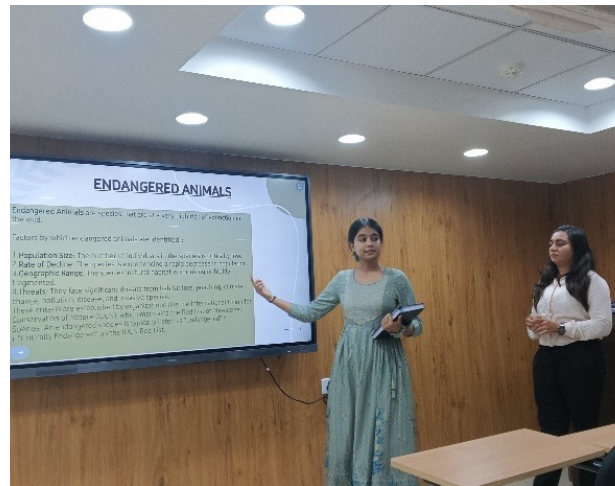


WHAT CONSUMERS NEED FROM THE TREATY

PRIMARY PLASTIC POLYMERS & CHEMICALS OF CONCERN :

- Safety in all stages of the plastics supply chain, including production, transportation, distribution, sale, import, export, and disposal.
- A clear limit and global targets for reduction, with legally binding language.
- Disclosure of chemicals (groups of chemicals) at each stage of the lifecycle.
- The establishment of scientifically sound criteria to determine hazards to human health and the environment.
- A timeframe for prohibition, phase-out, and regulation.

4. To mark International Day for Biodiversity, CERC-EIACP hosted a special presentation by two law students, Ms. Pranjal and Ms. Ayushi (currently a CERC intern) on 22nd May 2024 at CERC classroom. Their insightful talk focused on the vital topic of biodiversity and the important legal framework protecting it: The Biodiversity Act, 2002.



ENDANGERED ANIMALS

Endangered animals are species whose numbers are declining rapidly in the wild.

Factors by which an animal becomes endangered:

1. Population size: The smaller the number of individuals in a population, the more vulnerable it is to extinction.
2. Rate of Decline: The faster the number of individuals declines, the more vulnerable the population is to extinction.
3. Geographic Range: The smaller the geographic range, the more vulnerable the population is to extinction.
4. Threats: They face significant threats from habitat loss, poaching, climate change, and other human activities.

Worldwide conservation efforts have been successful in protecting many endangered species, but many still face significant threats to their survival.

Source: International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species



5. Dr. Kartik Andharia, Programme Officer held an awareness session on World Environment Day to the students of Department of Food Science and Nutrition, Gujarat University and Department of Biotechnology, Gujarat Biotechnology University at CERC classroom.



6. World Food Safety Day was celebrated at the CERC classroom with the participation of students and staff members of Blue Bell School (Standards 8, 9, and 10), and interns from Gujarat University and Gujarat Biotechnology University. Dr. Kartik Andharia, Program Officer, led a session on Sustainable Food Systems, educating students on how to adopt healthy and sustainable food practices in their daily lives.



7. CERC supported a local cultural group to organize a community event showcasing the lush green environs of yesteryears and how climate change is now real and affecting life on earth.

Anindita Mehta, COO CERC, Board Trustee CI, & Program Coordinator spoke to a large audience of 700+ at Pt. Deendayal Auditorium.

Dr Kartik Andharia, Program Officer, CERC-EIACP, conducted the awareness drive where posters, pamphlets, leaflets were distributed and BCC / IEC material was exhibited.



8. CERC-EIACP PC-RP celebrated International Yoga Day 2024 with the students of C K Patel School, Ahmedabad (Class 9 to 11) under Mission LiFE to promote a healthy lifestyle. Ms. Mayuri Tank, IT Officer (Trained Yoga Instructor), CERC-EIACP conducted a Yoga session and Dr. Kartik Andharia, Program Officer, CERC-EIACP conducted an awareness session on sustainable lifestyle for the students and staff members of the school.





## ECO Mark Scheme


Source: <https://vakilsearch.com/blog/eco-mark-scheme-2/>

Environmental Information, Awareness, Capacity Building and Livelihood Programme acronymed as EIACP erstwhile Environmental Information System (ENVIS) was implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change by end of 6th Five Year Plan as a Plan Scheme for environmental information collection, collation, storage, retrieval and dissemination to policy planners, decision makers, scientists and environmentalists, researchers, academicians and other stakeholders. MoEF&CC has identified Consumer Education and Research Centre (CERC), Ahmedabad, as one of the Resource Partner to collect and disseminate information on “Environment Literacy - Eco-labelling and Eco-friendly Products”. The main objective of EIACP Programme centre- Resource Partner is to disseminate information on Environment literacy, Eco-products, International and National Eco-labelling programmes.

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**Programme Coordinator, CERC-EIACP Programme Centre, Resource Partner On Behalf of Consumer Education & Research Centre, 801, 8th Floor Sakar II Building, B/H Ellisbridge Shopping Centre, Ashram Road, Ahmedabad- 380 006, Gujarat, India.**

Phone: 079-353372 62-65

 [cerc@cercindia.org](mailto:cerc@cercindia.org)  
<cerc@cercindia.org>

 <http://www.cercenvis.nic.in/>

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**Write to us: We value your views and suggestions. Please send your feedback on this issue. We would also like to invite your contributions on the Eco Product and Eco Labelling.**

### Disclaimer

The material used in this newsletter does not necessarily represent the views of CERC or EIACP. The images and contents provided in the publication are intended solely to provide information from secondary sources.

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