

Case Study 7: EcoTopTen Initiative

Germany

Summary

The EcoTopTen (ETT) initiative is an innovation and communication system for sustainable products and sustainable consumption started by the Oeko-Institut in Germany. The ETT initiative started its first phase (phase 1) with two interlinked but separate parts – the ETT research and development project on sustainable products, and the ETT consumer information campaign. Now the project has entered phase 2 in which market surveys and the lists of ETT recommended products will be updated on a regular basis.

The criteria for each product group are related to environment, quality and costs. To a large extent, the criteria are based on existing labels and product tests, like the European energy label, the German eco-label, as well as labels for green electricity or product tests published in the journal of the German 'Stiftung Warentest' which carries out product quality tests and consumer information.



ETT is aiming at going beyond existing labels and consumer information schemes by integrating environmental and quality aspects as well as annual life cycle costs. In doing so, the project promotes the further development from environment labels towards sustainability labels. Furthermore, the Oeko-Institut promotes sustainable product development: sustainable innovation goals are communicated to manufacturers showing which advanced criteria relating to environment, quality and costs should be met by products in a few years.

Lessons learned

1. External factor 1: A rising public awareness of climate change, its consequences and reasons
2. Tremendously increasing energy prices that lead to a rising awareness of energy saving potentials in the private household linked to related costs as well as cost savings.
3. Taking advantage of the trustworthiness of the implementing organisation in spreading ETT material to the consumers and multipliers:
4. A solid research basis with scientifically grounded methods to rank the products, and knowledge of different consumer group preferences.
5. Establishment of the ETT brand/label as reliable quality indicator for sustainable products, across product fields.