Questions & Answers about
Eco-friendly Products and Eco labeling

Going Green, being green, green friendly, we hear it all around us.
Everyone is talking about it, the consumer is asking for it.
Many businesses only want to do business with a company that has an environmental policy.
Many employees prefer to work for a green environmentally friendly company.

What is Green? What does it all mean?
Green is an environmental term which is defined as: products or services that have a reduced mal-effect on health and the environment when compared with competing products that provide the same functionality.

What is eco or environmentally friendly products?
Environmentally friendly products are those that best meet the aims of environmentally responsible management (i.e., using resources efficiently and minimizing chemical contamination).

Why are eco products better than conventional ones?
Eco products have a lower environmental impact in comparison to conventional products.

Are eco products more expensive to buy?
Not necessarily. Some have been manufactured for less than the cost of conventional products, some for more, so in general the price should not be substantially different.

What are the general principles that Eco product uses to determine whether a product is eco friendly?
In general, products should meet as many of the following criteria as possible:
• Be less polluting & minimize waste
• Maximize the use of bio-based or recycled materials
• Conserve energy and water & are made from renewable materials
• Are compostable, or biodegradable
• Produce fewer polluting by-products and safety hazards during use and disposal than competing products

How important are environmental factors in production?
Life-cycle analysis is an important factor in producing sustainable product. It should be constantly environmental-friendly during its entire life. That is, from the moment the raw materials are extracted to the moment the final product is disposed of, there must be no permanent damage to the environment.
**What is an eco label?**
An eco label is a voluntary environmental performance certificate that is awarded to products and services. These products and services have to meet specific, identified criteria depending on the product groups, which reduce overall environmental impact. Use of the label indicates overall environmental preferability within a particular product category based on life cycle assessment. Eco labelling schemes have been widely used worldwide since the late 1970's and each country has its own eco labelling scheme with logo.

**Who manages the scheme at international level?**
Competent bodies across the world play a central role in the work of the Ecolabel scheme ([http://cercenvis.nic.in/](http://cercenvis.nic.in/)) and are the first point of contact for applicants. They specifically assess applications and award the Ecolabel to products that meet the criteria set for them. As such, they are responsible for ensuring that the verification process is carried out in a consistent, neutral and reliable manner by a party independent from the operator being verified, based on international or national standards and procedures concerning bodies operating product-certification schemes.

**Who manages the scheme at national level?**
In India, Central Pollution Control Board Ministry of Environment and Forest launched the eco-labelling scheme known as 'Ecomark' ([http://www.cpcb.nic.in/Eco_Label.php](http://www.cpcb.nic.in/Eco_Label.php)) in 1991 for easy identification of environment-friendly products.

**How do you apply for the Ecolabel?**
First, you have a look at the different product groups ([http://www.cpcb.nic.in/criteria_ecomark.php](http://www.cpcb.nic.in/criteria_ecomark.php)), which are currently covered by EcoMark scheme. Have a look at the associated criteria document and the application manual for your product group. For a short overview of the criteria, you can also have a look at the factsheets in this section.

**Who can apply for the eco label?**
Producers, manufacturers, importers, and service providers placing their products and/or services on the market can all apply for the Ecolabel.

**What is the logo of Indian Ecomark Scheme?**
Logo is an earthen pot. It is because it uses a renewable resource like earth, does not produce hazardous waste and consumes little energy in making. Its solid and graceful form represents both strength and fragility, which also characterises the eco-system. The logo ([http://www.cpcb.nic.in/ecomark_logo.php](http://www.cpcb.nic.in/ecomark_logo.php)) for the Ecomark Scheme, signifies that the product which carries it does the least damage to the environment.
What are the benefits of the Ecolabel for businesses?
The purpose of the Ecolabel is to make the consumer’s choice in favour of your product easy. This holds true for business purchasers, as well as shoppers. It makes easy for you to sell your products. It’s not an environmental label for industry by industry. The scheme involves compliance checks, as well as independent verification, and is trusted by consumers. In addition, the Ecolabel adds value to your business and your products because it enhances reputation, indicates corporate social responsibility and increases sales.

How do consumers recognise products and services awarded the Ecolabel?
There are many authentic Eco labeling Schemes run by voluntary and government organisations. Once approved for an Ecolabel, the producer can place the Ecolabel logo anywhere on the product and packaging.

What is “Greenwashing?”
“Greenwashing” is the practice of making an unsubstantiated or misleading claim about the environmental benefits of a product, service or technology.

Can the eco label is trusted?
With environmental claims on products being so common, it can be difficult to tell the difference between “greenwashing” and reliable claims. Ecolabelled products and services can be trusted because, from production to use and disposal, they have been assessed to reduce their environmental impact. Scientifically sound criteria are developed in a transparent way involving scientists, NGOs and stakeholders to enable consumers to make environmentally responsible choices. The Ecolabel is moreover awarded by independent third-party organisations.

Why is it good to buy Ecolabelled products?
The Ecolabel logo is a guarantee to consumers that the product they are considering for purchase has a lower environmental impact in comparison to similar products on the market. By buying such products, consumers are making a commitment to the future of the environment. This is because products have to follow tough criteria before they receive the Ecolabel. By purchasing these products, consumers may also encourage other producers and retailers to offer Ecolabelled products.

What is green marketing?
Environmental claims can be a powerful marketing tool. Companies are increasingly using environmental claims in an attempt to differentiate themselves and their products from the competition. These claims come in a wide range of forms, including statements about environmental sustainability, recycling, energy and water efficiency or impact on animals and the natural environment.
Are consumers interested in ecolabelled products?
According to a recent survey in July 2013 done by Nielsen, environmental concerns among consumers are increasingly influencing their behaviour at the cash register. Its Global Survey of Consumer Shopping Behaviour “New Wealth New World : How and why we shop around the Globe” – which surveyed more than 29,000 internet respondents in 58 countries – shows that one in four UK consumers are choosing more environmentally-friendly products despite their higher price. In a related study also from Nielsen 17 months earlier, only 8% said they’d buy the eco-friendly option even if it was more expensive.

Where can I get environmentally friendly products?
There are many online shops selling eco marked products. You can also visit shopping malls keeping eco friendly products.