PRODUCT DATA AND DIGITAL TOOLS – A KEY ENABLER FOR ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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KEY MESSAGES

- Why do we need reliable product information
- A vision for a product passport
- Context in the EU today – European Green Deal
- How to change a market – more than information is needed

WHY DO WE NEED RELIABLE PRODUCT INFORMATION?
## Products drive environmental impacts

Products are:

- Effected by premature obsolescence or are not durable
- Are designed for single use only
- Not easy to recycle at their end of life
- Contain or use hazardous substances
- Driving the depletion of resources, carbon emissions and pollution...

WHY DO WE NEED RELIABLE PRODUCT INFORMATION?

For example → carbon emissions

COMPLETING THE PICTURE: TACKLING THE OVERLOOKED EMISSIONS
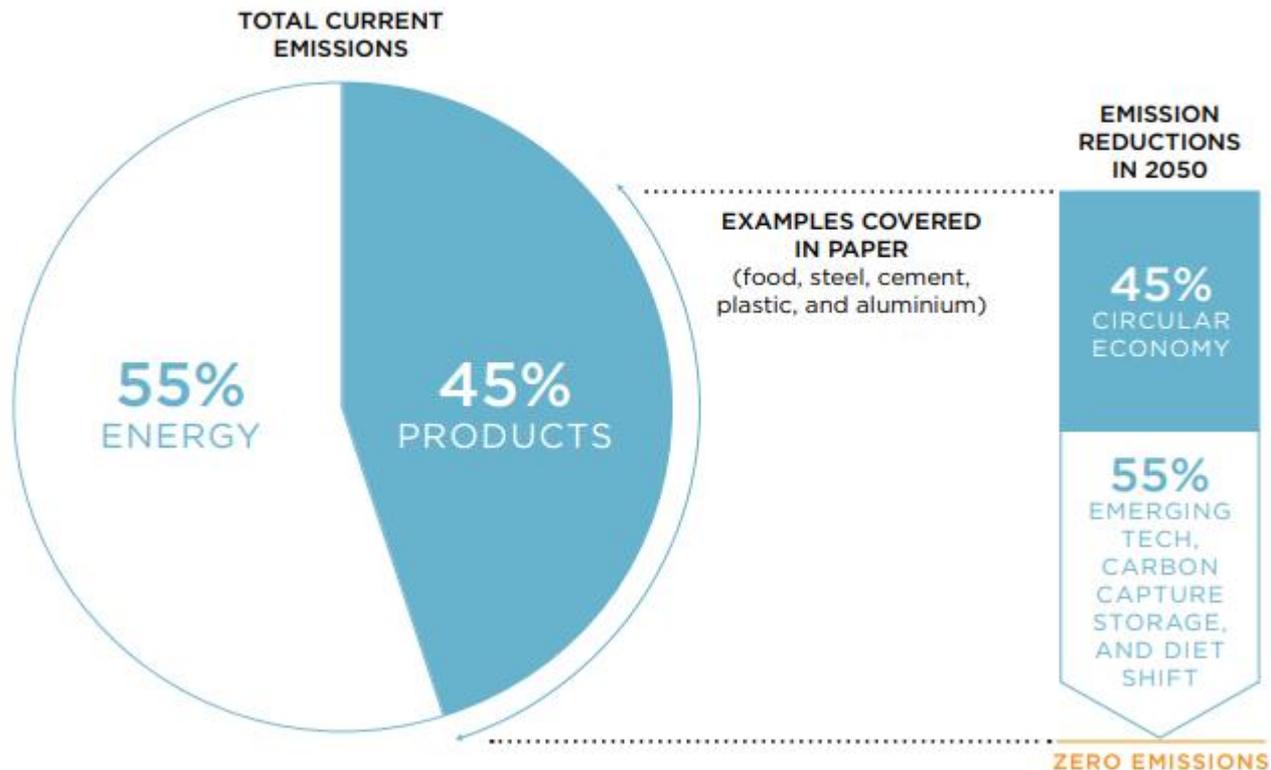
# WHY DO WE NEED RELIABLE PRODUCT INFORMATION?

Information can influence purchases

- **3 out of 4 products** display an environmental claim or label in the EU
- **57% of EU consumers are receptive to environmental claims** when making their purchase decisions.
- **A majority (61%) find it difficult to understand** which products are truly environmentally friendly.
- Mistrust in **environmental information** displayed on products and in advertisements is relatively common. **44% of consumers say they do not trust this type of information**

WHY DO WE NEED RELIABLE PRODUCT INFORMATION?

There is a high level of distrust in information

Many products claim to be environmentally friendly, but you do not trust this is true? (% - EU)

Totally disagree
2

Don't know
6

Tend to disagree
11

Totally agree
34

Tend to agree
47
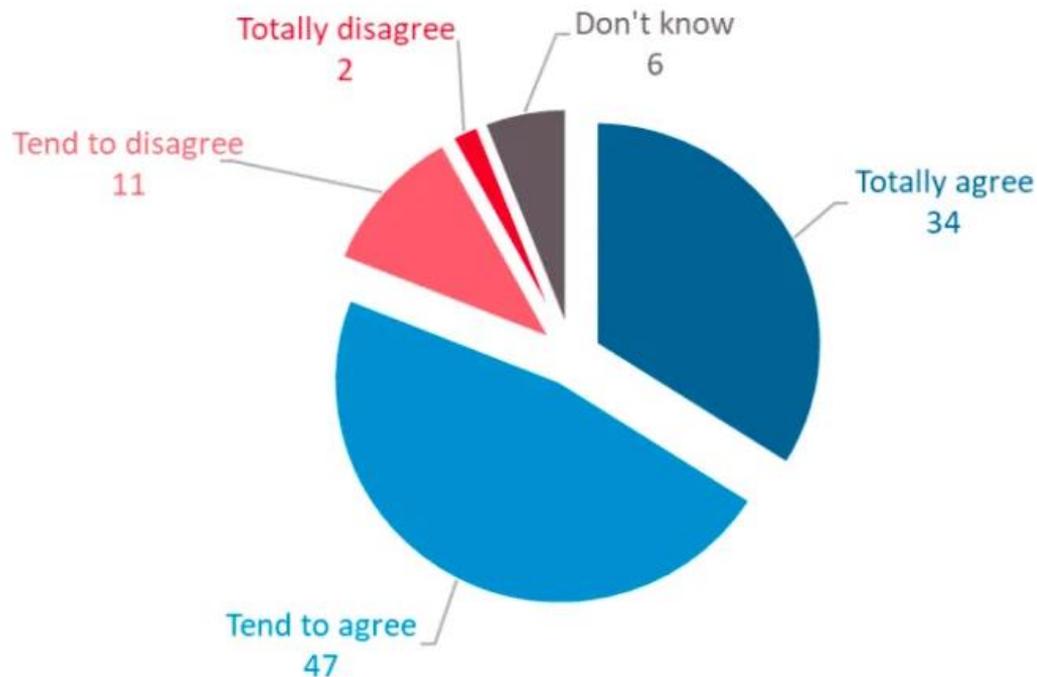
VISION FOR A PRODUCT PASSPORT

What do we mean?

- **Interoperable information system** for accessing product data from different channels on one public interface
- **Central point of access** linking multiple databases
- Using digital tools (e.g. QR codes and blockchain) to enable access through unique identifiers
- Presentation of information can be tailored for different actors (e.g. market surveillance, recyclers, and consumers). **All environmental information should be made public.**
- **Scope** – priority high impact sectors (e.g. food, electronics, furniture, batteries, buildings, textiles, packaging), and eventually all products on the market
- **<u>Not a physical passports designed to effect trade!</u>**

VISION FOR A PRODUCT PASSPORT
What information should it include?

- **Durability** - expected lifetime ideally aligned with free guarantee period
- **Repairability** – including access to manuals and schematics
- **Recyclability** – sorting, dismantling and hazards guidelines
- **Environmental performance** – environmental footprint (LCA), notably global warming potential, resource depletion, material footprint, and water footprint
- **Energy use efficiency** – for energy products
- **Contents of hazardous substances** – bill of materials and bill of chemicals
- **Social data** – such as due diligence and fair-trade certificates

VISION FOR A PRODUCT PASSPORT
What information should it include?

- Initially **data which is legally required** – e.g. on hazardous chemicals

- Producers should be encouraged to provide more information voluntarily to demonstrate "greenness"

- **Incentives** may be set up **to encourage transparency** beyond the minimum requirements – e.g. in the form of criteria within ecolabel or public procurement schemes

- Overtime more information may be required by law

- It will be necessary to **define clear language, formats and standards**, to ensure the information is meaningful, comparable and enforceable

VISION FOR A PRODUCT PASSPORT

What are the potential benefits?

- **Citizens and civil society -** facilitating confidence in environmental claims, a basis to inform purchasing and prevent greenwashing
- **Circular economy** – providing the right information to refurbishers, repairers and recyclers in order to retain value and ensure safety
- **Reduce administrative burden** – key principle of report once use many times
- **Sustainable sourcing and due diligence** – creating trust between producers and suppliers
- **Policy making and market surveillance** – facilitating regulatory development as well as compliance and verification of environmental law

CONTEXT IN THE EU TODAY

Green Deal and Circular Economy Action Plan

Green Deal, December 2019: *"an electronic product passport could provide information on a product's origin, composition, repair and dismantling possibilities, and end of life handling"*

Circular economy Action Plan, March 2020: *"The European data space for smart circular applications referred to in section 2 will provide the architecture and governance system to drive applications and services such as product passports, resource mapping and consumer information"*

Sustainable products initiative roadmap, September 2020: *"The following measures will be considered: ... establishing EU rules for setting requirements on mandatory sustainability labelling and/or disclosure of information to market actors along value chains in the form of a digital product passport"*

CONTEXT IN THE EU TODAY
Existing initiatives to build upon

- **SCIP database**: for information on **S**ubstances of **C**oncern **I**n articles as such or in complex objects (**P**roducts) covers products containing substances of very high concern above 0.1% weight.
- **EPREL database**: European product registry for energy labelling. Covers all products covered by energy labelling regulation.
- **Digital building logbook**: ongoing initiative to develop a common framework for building data
- **Product environmental footprint (PEF)**: initiative to develop common harmonized EU methodology to conduct LCA on a product or organisation.
- **Safety gate / RAPEX**: rapid alert systems for product hazards (toxicity, environment, electric shocks, choking) relating to non-compliance risks

Note: initiatives cover specific sectors or performance aspects and lack a single point of access

HOW TO CHANGE A MARKET
Information alone isn't enough...
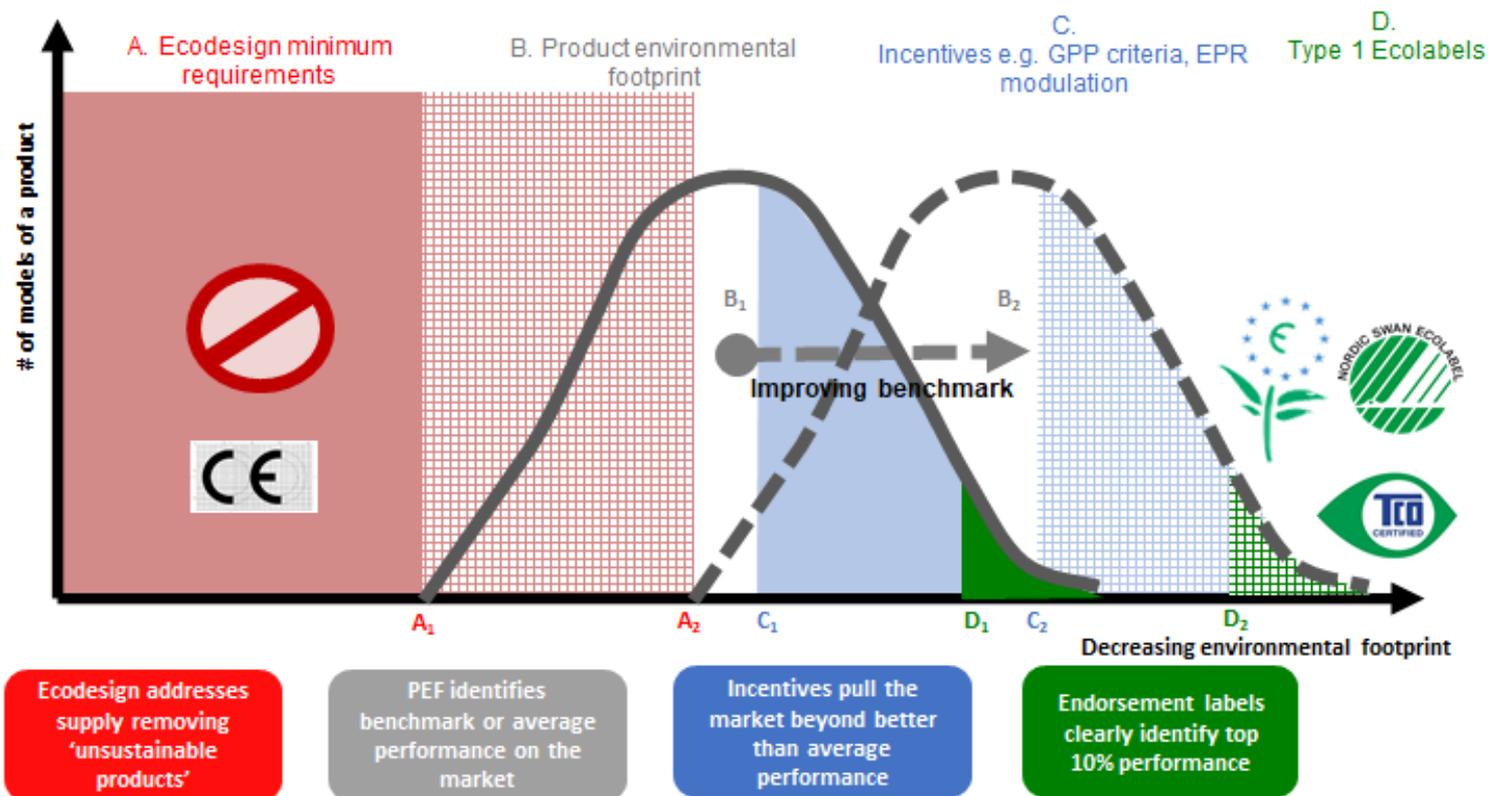
THANK YOU

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