



## Sustainable consumption and procurement: from Germany to the world

In Germany, industry has long since discovered the brand potential of the environment. Manufacturers strive to introduce more sustainable production processes, while sustainability criteria and labels such as the Blue Angel scheme inform consumer decisions. Policy-makers generate initiatives and establish settings for sustainable consumption patterns – such as through the European [REACH regulation on chemicals](#) or the [European Ecodesign Directive on energy-using products](#).

In many other countries, awareness of environmental, climate and nature conservation issues is still in its infancy. This presents particular challenges in regions in which economies are growing just as rapidly as their consumption and levels of energy and resource demand.

### ASEAN states: mounting energy consumption

The ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) region is one of the most dynamic in the world. It has ten member countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam. In 2010-2013, these countries' economies grew yearly by 4.9 to 7.9 percent, and their energy demand rose in step. Their primary energy demand more than doubled in the period from 2000 to 2011, rising from 273 to 549 million tons of oil equivalents. By comparison, primary energy consumption has decreased slightly in the EU-28 since 2000; in 2012 it amounted to 1,685 million tons of oil equivalents.

### Cleaner products for reduced environmental impact

The ASEAN states' high demand for energy and resources is associated with negative environmental impacts, of which climate change is just one example. In order to minimise these impacts, various approaches are needed. One of these is to place efficient and environmentally-friendly products on the global market.

Researchers at the Oeko-Institut are working on diverse aspects of sustainable consumption. They explore sustainable products, green procurement and ecolabel schemes such as the [Blue Angel](#) – in Germany, Europe and worldwide.

[Interview with Jens Gröger on the Oeko-Institut blog: "The Blue Angel guides climate-smart purchasing" \(in German language\)](#)

## Sustainability criteria for public procurement in ASEAN states

The Oeko-Institut's researchers are passing on their experience with the development of environmental criteria for products and services to Thailand and other ASEAN countries. One such project ran from 2013 to 2015 with funding from the [International Climate Initiative](#) of Germany's Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU). Its goal was to promote green public procurement and harmonise existing ecolabel criteria.

Together with the relevant authorities and local experts the institute's researchers developed product-specific environmental criteria for green public procurement. In a series of workshops in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, criteria were discussed with relevant stakeholders for printer cartridges, fluorescent lamps, computers, paper, air conditioners and other products. In addition, the participants tested approaches such as [Life Cycle Costing \(LCC\)](#) for their suitability in the ASEAN region. Moreover, training on sustainable procurement tailored to the specific needs of the individual ASEAN member countries was delivered in Thailand.

## Bringing more environmentally-friendly products to the global market

The Oeko-Institut's work on sustainable procurement in the ASEAN region revealed that, while ecolabel schemes do exist in almost all member states – e.g. Green Label Thailand and the Indonesian Ecolabel – only very few products actually carry such a label.

One reason is that, from the perspective of the producers, the cost and effort outweigh the gain. Label schemes thus need to be made more attractive to producers if green product output is to be boosted. The Oeko-Institut has recommended a harmonisation strategy to this end. It seeks to simplify the label procedure, for instance by standardising the criteria governing the award of labels.

## Enhancing environmental performance worldwide – with the Blue Angel

Does the Blue Angel label also function internationally and can it promote sustainable consumption beyond Germany? This question was explored by the Oeko-Institut in a study conducted together with lichtl Ethics & Brands GmbH on behalf of the German Environment Ministry. In cooperation with selected manufacturers, the project team tested the international use of the Blue Angel and evaluated the experience gained. This involved three pilot projects in the UK, India and Turkey.

### [The Blue Angel goes international – film in English](#)

The study found that the Blue Angel label has the best prospect of success in the business-to-business (B2B) market and in public procurement. The researchers also concluded that the diffusion of the label in foreign markets will not happen automatically in the short term. A targeted internationalisation strategy is needed to ensure the medium- to long-term success of the label in foreign markets. Key elements of such a strategy are the development of Common Core Criteria with national ecolabels that have already established an international position, and the mutual recognition and certification of ecolabels among each other.

[Interview with Siddharth Prakash on the Oeko-Institut blog: "Transmitting the Blue Angel experience to the world" \(in German language\)](#)

[Project presentation: "Strengthening the international use of the Blue Angel as a climate label" \(in German language\)](#)

## The Blue Angel for room air conditioners

An Oeko-Institut project concerned with refrigeration and air conditioning systems has also highlighted the scope for the Blue Angel ecolabel scheme to promote sustainability and environmental performance in further countries around the world. Such systems are not only of concern because of the refrigerants they contain, which cause direct harm to the climate, but also because of their energy consumption. In Thailand, for instance, 25 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions are attributable to refrigeration and air conditioning systems; of that amount, four-fifths are caused by air conditioning.

In a study titled “The Blue Angel for Stationary Room Air Conditioners” conducted together with HEAT GmbH and commissioned by the German Environment Agency UBA, the Oeko-Institut has refined the Blue Angel for such systems. This lays the groundwork for label award criteria that can be applied just as well in Asian markets as in Germany. Initial successes have emerged: in March 2018 a Chinese company received the first Blue Label for a room air conditioner with a very low greenhouse gas potential and a high level of energy efficiency.

[Article in the Oeko-Institut's eco@work e-zine: Learning from experience. Sustainability criteria in ASEAN countries](#)

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Oeko-Institut is a leading independent European research and consultancy institute working for a sustainable future. Founded in 1977, the institute develops principles and strategies for realising the vision of sustainable development globally, nationally and locally. Oeko-Institut is represented at three locations in Germany – Freiburg, Darmstadt and Berlin.