



SUSTRAINY

Sustainable action Training for Youth



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SUSTRAINY PROJECT



SOCIAL
TOPIC°5

SUSTAINABLE CONSUMERISM

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Introduction to the topic

Sustainable Consumption is the umbrella that unites all concepts related to consumption that has the least negative impact on society, natural resources, animals and ecosystems, changes in consumption that help solve local and global problems of pollution, exploitation of resources, poverty, exploitation of minors, adults and animals.

It seeks to promote products and habits that are healthy, that allow a quality life for both producers throughout the production chain and for the consumer. Some of the concepts it covers are the following:

- Fair trade
- Direct trade
- 0km or local production
- Zero waste
- The “R” imperatives, ie Reject, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Recycle
- Minimalism
- Decrease
- Circular economy
- Collaborative economy
- Green economy
- Sustainable entrepreneurship
- Social entrepreneurship

References to EU policies in line with this topic

The programme of EU action in the field of consumer policy mainly consists of the (Regulation (EU) No 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014, Decision No 1926/2006/EC) that you can see under this [link](#)

The European Consumer Agenda has several objectives:

- Promoting consumer safety through the 2013 **Product Safety and Market Surveillance Package**, and in particular through enhanced product identification and traceability, measures reinforcing safety in the food chain and the new rules on the safety of cosmetic products introduced in mid-2013;
- Enhancing knowledge of consumer rights: interactive tools, such as the **Consumer Classroom**, have been developed to inform and educate consumers and help them to fully participate in the single market;





Introduction to the topic

- Strengthening the enforcement of consumer rules through coordinated action against breaches of EU consumer law in the form of checks of websites (sweeps) by networks of national consumer protection authorities; and simple, fast and low-cost out-of-court procedures for consumers to seek redress available as a result of the **Directive on alternative dispute resolution** (2013) and the **Regulation on online dispute resolution** (2013);
- Integrating consumer interests into key sectoral policies through new legislation in sectors such as telecommunications, digital technologies, energy, transport and food, and new measures to increase transparency and access to retail financial services and to make it easier for account holders to switch bank accounts;
- Empowering consumers the main objective of the EU Consumer Policy Strategy, as described in the Commission working paper entitled '**Consumer Empowerment in the EU**', which aims to empower EU consumers through choice, information and awareness of consumer rights and means of redress.

The **Consumer Agenda** also identifies challenges, such as moving towards more sustainable consumption and addressing the specific needs of vulnerable consumers.



Chapter 1

Sustainable Consumerism Trends

1.1 Sustainable Consumption Concept Note

Sustainable consumption is a concept closely associated with the concept of sustainable production and the articulation of both is what is known as sustainable development. In its initial definition in the Brundtland report:

“It is in the hands of humanity to make development sustainable, lasting, that is, to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (ANNEX - Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, 20 march 1987).

Global evolution of Sustainable consumption:

At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 (UNCED) the concept of sustainable consumption is established in Chapter 4 of Agenda 21. (United Nations)

The definition proposed by the 1994 Oslo Symposium on Sustainable Consumption was *“the use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimising the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so as not to jeopardise the needs of future generations”* (Oslo Roundtable on Sustainable Production and Consumption Symposium , 1994)



Picture from Ready Made



According to ECOSOC Resolution 1995/53, the Council “Requests the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the development funds and programs of the United Nations, the regional commissions and other relevant bodies and agencies of the United Nations system, to continue to provide assistance to governments, at their request, in implementing the guidelines for consumer protection, to elaborate guidelines in the area of sustainable consumption patterns, taking into account the work undertaken in other intergovernmental forums, and to examine the possible extension of those guidelines into other areas.

An important report on Sustainable Consumption, also called “SC” was produced by the OECD in 1997 (OECD, 1997). And in 1998, United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) initiates a Sustainable Consumption program and is discussed in the Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Program (United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 1998).

In 2002 a ten-year program on sustainable consumption and production (SCP) was created in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg (United Nations (UN), 2002 UN Document A/CONF.199/20*).

in 2003, The “Marrakech Process” was developed through the coordination of a series of meetings and other “multi-stakeholder” processes by UNEP and UN-DAES after WSSD.

The United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs (2010) Paving the Way to Sustainable Consumption and Production. In Marrakech Process Progress Report including Elements for a 10-Year Framework of Programs on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)(UNEP)

After that, as we said before, the programme of EU action in the field of consumer policy mainly consists of the **European Consumer Agenda and the 2014-2020 Consumer Programme**

The **2030 Agenda** for Sustainable Development and the SDGs continues speaking about sustainable consumption in Goal 12. Responsible consumption and production. highlighting, among others, the following objectives:

12.1 Implement the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, all countries taking action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries

12.3 By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses.

1.2 Sustainable Consumption Concept Note

We can speak about three distinct strategies for greening consumption relating with different consumers profiles (Individual Strategies for sustainable consumption Article in Journal of Marketing Management, March 2012 DOI: 10.1080/0267257X.2012.658839):



- Translators

Translators are green in some aspects of their lives and gray in others. They do not actually think about sustainability holistically. They are not motivated by a political agenda, but by a sense of trying to do what they perceive to be the right thing to do.

Consumers in this group are open to change, although they do not deliberately seek change. They are also prepared to make a certain sacrifice if they can see a clear reason for adopting a new routine or a slightly less convenient activity. If they realize a concrete action that they can take and can see a clear benefit from doing it, then they are likely to take it. In this way, translators translate consciousness into specific actions.

Their belief in being better citizens and their willingness to change means that if they know that one aspect of their consumption is problematic for the environment, or for others, then they are likely to change it, but not specifically the concept of sustainable consumption in its entirety,

For example, it is possible that a translator may be committed to composting (something that can affect “deep green”) but not use local recycling facilities (something that could be more conventional) simply because they were never presented with any compelling arguments or appropriate information.

- Exceptors

This group has the most sophisticated understanding of sustainability. Sustainability is a priority for Exceptors in all aspects of their lives.

Exceptors seek change. They see individual change and personal sacrifice as the key to safeguarding the planet for future generations. They see themselves as rejecting many of the principles of the dominant society and consider themselves comfortable with alternative products and outlets. They tend to belong to networks, and will naturally look for Other Exceptors.

However, a weight of being the most ecological group in our typology, generally all have at least one aspect of their lives in which they behave like gray consumers. This exception is likely for their otherwise consistent, sustainable lifestyles to be relatively short, but conscious within the dominant consumer. They can have many shapes, but we can give examples of small appliances that could have been active green.

Thus, during the process of purchasing your „exception” item, suspend the search for routines and sustainability criteria, or take less into account.

-The Selectors

The selectors are an intriguing group, because they act as ecological or ethical consumers in one aspect of their lives, but as gray consumers in all other aspects. They are also likely to be the largest group in terms of population numbers.

Selectors select an aspect of sustainable consumption to focus on. For example, they may be avid recyclers or pay a premium for green energy or sponsor a child in Africa, but otherwise lead consumption-oriented lives. This group is attracted to or motivated by a single problem, but is not interested in sustainability in a holistic way.



Table 1 Identifying translators, exceptors, and selectors.

Aspect of consumption	Translators	Exceptors	Selectors
Conception of sustainability	Fragmented	Holistic	Selectors may act as either Exceptors or Translators for their focus activity, but as grey consumers in all other aspects of their consumption
Orientation to information seeking	Passive	Active	
Treatment of sustainability information	Accepting and uncritical	Cynical	
Trusted information sources	Government info, product advertising, charity marketing campaigns	Specialist networks	
Information formats	Mainstream (television, direct mail)	Online searches for CSR. Specialist print media for product info	
Level of research focus	Products	Companies	
Compliance with information	High	Only if corroborated by research	

Resource: Individual Strategies for sustainable consumption Article in Journal of Marketing Management

1.3 Some tips for sustainable consumerism

David Suzuki is a Japanese Canadian academist, locutor, scientist and activist of environment. In 2008, he published a “Green Guide” where he included a list of guiding principles of sustainable consumption that can be applied by everyone in daily life to better consumerism behaviours. In this book, he identifies the most effective ways individuals can be more green in four key areas: home, travel, food, and consumerism. It also describes how citizens can ensure that governments take the actions necessary to make sustainable lifestyles the norm instead of the exception. Here are some of the major principles set up:

- Think about the big picture. Sustainable consumerism is not so much about plastic bags, but over all about our general way of life, where you live, the energy you use, the way you travel, the food you eat, etc.
- Think about it twice before you purchase a good: do you really need it? Do you need it new? Isn't there a more sustainable way to acquire it?
- Avoid waste, and in particular food waste. For the rest of products, think about the end of life of the goods you purchase.



- Prefer the local products, with reduced transportation need



Picture from ready made

- Prefer quality over quantity. Suzuki refer to prefer durable goods that last, so you don't need to replace them so often.
- Take care about your sources of energy and prefer renewable energy
- Prefer healthy products, avoid toxic components
- When possible, look for products issued from recycled materials
- Request authorities to act to increase the regulation regarding environmental compliance of products
- Encourage environmental leaders and innovators
- Make an insight effort to forget about commercial messages telling you to buy more, be more distant to advertising
- Slow down and take time for yourself, and to develop greener habits.

1.4 Best practices about sustainable consumerism

Case 1. Free public transportation in Faroe Island.

The city of Tórshavn, the capital of The Faroe Islands, is promoting a shift from private car use to public transport through economic incentives, i.e. by making public bus transport free for everyone.

Traditionally the only means of public transport on the Faroe Islands has been buses or ferries. The bus service in Torshavn was rarely used due to an infrequent service – a service that people were unwilling to pay for.



People preferred to use their cars, which made for a heavily congested town center and a premium on parking spaces. The free public transportation has led to more people using buses instead of private cars and has led to the development of more frequent and better planned bus services. The free public transportation was piloted in 2009 and has continued and been further developed since then.



The project aims at reducing air pollution, fuel usage, noise and the emission of greenhouse gases as well as road maintenance needs and costs, and parking congestion in the city. The goal is also to enhance traffic safety, both by minimising the number of private cars in the city and by making the bus-drivers' work less stressful. The over-arching goal is to create an environment in which the children of the municipality consider it perfectly natural to take the bus, rather than being driven to and from school, sports practice, or other free time activities by their parents or friends. The target group is all citizens but especially children.

For more information, you can enter this [link](#)

Case 2.Svanhild's Travels

Svanhild's Travels is a Norwegian learning concept for daycare children, which promotes understanding of nature and sustainable consumption habits and choices, through the use of storytelling. It includes teaching materials for daycarecenters and interactive web- and mobile applications, which can be used by both daycarecenters, preschool children and their parents.



In the concept, Svanhild, a well-known Norwegian storybook figure, is used to tell stories from which children can learn about sustainable consumption and nature in an inspiring and positive way. Attitudes toward the environment are created early, which is why preschool age children are especially targeted by the concept.

Svanhild's Travels is a learning concept developed by the Swan label, the Nordic eco-label. It is actively used by some daycarecenters in Norway.

The Svanhild's Travels learning concept aims to inspire children to learn about sustainability and to teach that each person can have an impact on the environment by making sustainable choices. The goal is to engage children and parents on an emotional level in order to create a mindset that inspires good consumer choices. The objectives for the Svanhild learning concept are linked to one of the objectives for daycare education in Norway, which is stated as follows:

"It is a goal that children shall begin to understand sustainable development early. This includes nurturing the love of nature and creating an understanding of the interplay in nature and between nature and people."

The daycarecenter activity pack includes the following elements:

- Seven stories, which can be read aloud in seven different daily gatherings of daycare children.
- A postcard from Svanhild.
- Postcards the children can take home.
- A large poster, which can be used in group meetings to illustrate the discussion.
- Tasks and suggestions for inspiring activities.

In addition to the above, a magazine is distributed through partners and other channels and online information is provided for teachers. The online information aims to give guidance and support to teachers for teaching of sustainability related subject matter.

For more information, you can enter this [link](#)





Chapter 2 The identification of sustainable products

2.1 The role of Consumers' associations

Consumers associations are non-for-profit civil society organisations that seek to protect the consumers from abuse from the industry such as unsafe products, false advertising, false information on products, or pollution. They represent the consumers and users defending their rights, educating and advising them. Thus, consumer associations play a key role to provide information on products and contribute to the promotion of eco-labels and other sustainable labels.

Consumers association first mission is to inform about products, and provide recommendations, mostly based on prices and quality, as reflected in their products' tests. However, they are getting more and more engaged in the sustainability field. For instance, the Netherlands mainstream consumers' association Consumentenbond include since 2005 information of the ethical consumers, including product related environmental data such as energy efficiency.

2.2 The importance of products labeling

One thing is the willingness of becoming a responsible consumer and taking care of the environment through purchases. However, this might be challenging considering the high complexity of production processes and the difficulty to find exhaustive information on the product and the way it was developed. Traceability and correct labelling are legal obligation of the companies. Indeed, in Europe, the law obliges the companies to establish a registration system that must be available to the authorities, and to label their product in a way that facilitates its identification and location.

In addition to this minimum legal obligation, many packaged and processed products include additional labels that contain information, such as a recycling label that indicates which container it goes to. When we talk about sustainable labels, we are referring to those that provide us with information on the environmental characteristics of products, such as their origin or the quality of their ingredients. The objectives of such labels are to raise awareness and provide information about the negative ecological impact of production, to minimize the use of products harmful to our health, limit the use of GMOs (genetically modified organisms) or reduce unnecessary harm to animals by avoiding, for example, animal experimentation.



Picture from Fuzzy Rescue

The use of sustainability related labels has grown over the last three decades and have been multiplied in an exponential way. The catalogue ecolabelindex.com nowadays inventory a total of 457 ecolabels in 246 countries. Despite these efforts, surveys (Klaus G.Grunerta Sophie Hiekeb Josephine Willsb, 2013) made among consumers on food products show that the level of use of sustainability labels is still low and that although they can guess their meaning, consumers have limited awareness of sustainability labels,. As the use of labels is fundamental to highlight the quality of a product, and in particular its effort to be more sustainable, it is still necessary to increase communication and pedagogy on the existing labels to explain their meaning to the consumers so they are able to chose a product with full understanding on what is behind this product.

2.3 Major labels of sustainability in the European territory

In this section, we will present you some of the most common labels of sustainability that we can find in European territories. This list is far from exhaustive, are there are also numerous small labels that evidence the sustainability and authenticity of local or regional products.

	<p>This label is one of the most internationally used label for sustainable products. It certifies that the product has been produced without child labor exploitation, with decent wages and gender equality, under the following common principles that are considered in all Fairtrade standards applicable to small-scale producers and workers and their organizations: social, economic and environmental development and prohibition of forced labour and child labour.</p>
	<p>Created in 2000 by the European Commission, this organic farming label enable producers to demonstrate that their products comply with established Community legislation. That is to say, that the products that bear this green label are 95% issued from ecological production and, therefore, that all their ingredients are natural and that they respect the environment.</p>
	<p>The GRS is a comprehensive, voluntary, international product standard that sets requirements for third-party certification of recycled content, chain of custody, social and environmental practices, and chemical restrictions.</p>

	<p>The EU Ecolabel helps identify products and services that have a reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycle, from extraction of raw materials to production, use and disposal. Recognized across Europe, the EU Ecolabel is a voluntary label promoting environmental excellence.</p>
	<p>This certification with the green frog indicates that a farm, forest or tourist company has been audited to verify that they meet environmental, social and economic sustainability standards. Thousands of products bearing the Rainforest Alliance Certified seal are available on store shelves, in advertising, and on websites around the world.</p>
	<p>This label guarantees the origin of the product from sustainable forestry operations</p>
	<p>Certification oriented to the environmental improvement of the company</p>
	<p>This label is delivered under social and environmental criteria. It is an international organic textile label created in 2008 by an industry working group of the International Association of Natural Textiles (based in Germany), the Soil Association (UK), the Organic Trade Association (United States) and the Japan Organic Cotton Association (Japan) and focus on workers rights, prohibition of forced labor, not excess hours, prohibition of child labor, freedom of association, right to organize and collective bargaining, job security, decent and non-precarious wages.</p>

2.4 Reading a food label

Beside the sustainable labels, all products are packaged with numerous information and labels, which can result difficult to understand correctly. For food products in particular, reading labels can help you make informed food choice, and select products that are healthier but also more environmental friendly.

Beside the nutrition facts, and the preference to biological food, labelled as seen in the previous section, to avoid the use of pesticides, here are some basic elements that you should take care of:

- Product dates:

Taking care of the date of the product will help you to plan your menu and avoid to accumulate big quantity of food in your fridge that you will simply not be able to eat before they expire, so leading you to through part of them and waste.

Also, remind that there are **2 types of dates**:

- The expiration date appears on very perishable foods, such as fresh fish, fresh minced meat, etc. You should not consume any food after the “expiration” date.
- “Best if used by” (or “best if used before”) date indicates the time until the food retains the expected quality. The food remains safe for the consumer after the “preferred consumption” date, provided that the storage instructions are followed and its packaging is not damaged; however, it may begin to lose flavor and texture.



Picture from Mat Brown

- Origin

Since April 1, 2020, the EU Regulation 775/2018 on the labeling of the origin of food products in the EU apply. This new regulation involve a series of changes to the previous food labeling, to avoid misleading information or that may mislead consumers. The country of origin must be indicated on the products when its omission may mislead the consumer about the true origin of the food. The obligation arises when the country of origin or place of provenance is mentioned on the labeling of the product, and is not the same as that of its primary ingredient. Thanks to this information, you should help you to reflect about the origin of the product and think about its eventual transportation. For instance, is it worth to eat oranges coming from South Africa in summer?



- Ingredient list

Some products used by the food industry have highly negative impact on the environment. This is for instance the case of palm oil, that is known to contribute dramatically to deforestation. Also, paying attention to the ingredient list will help you to avoid food products containing such kind of ingredients. Here, you should take care about the different names that can be given to palm oil, as it often appear on labels as “vegetable oil” or many alternative names, as listed by the Orangutan Alliance (Ethical Consumer, s.f.)

Finally, you shouldn't forget to have a look at the packaging of the food product, see if it can be recycled and do not use unnecessary plastic.

2.5 Some examples of regional quality labelled products

Case 1. The Comitee of Ecological Agricultures of the Valencia Community (Spain)

The Comitee of Ecological Agricultures of the Valencian Community (Spain) is the Control Authority in charge of certifying agri-food organic products of plant or animal origin, transformed or not, obtained in the Valencian Community.



Their organic certification guarantees that the products have been produced or elaborated following the rules of organic agriculture, and that they have been controlled throughout their production, preparation, packaging and marketing process. All green operators are inspected at least once a year.

Control covers any stage, from the primary production of an organic product to its storage, transformation, transport, sale and supply to the final consumer and, where appropriate, labeling, advertising, import, export and subcontracting activities.



Before marketing a product as organic or in conversion, any operator that produces, manufactures, stores or imports products from a third country or that markets these products must:

a) Notify their activity to the CCAA where it is carried out, in the case of the Valencian Community, to the CAECV.

b) Submit your company to the control regime established by the CAECV based on the regulations.

Under the current organic production regulations:

Are certifiable.

a) Live or unprocessed agricultural products.

b) Processed agricultural products intended to be used for human consumption.

c) Feed.

d) Vegetative reproductive material and seeds for cultivation.

e) Yeasts intended for human or animal consumption.

Not certifiable:

a) The products of hunting and fishing of wild animals shall not be considered organic production.

b) Collective catering activities are also not included in the scope.

Case 2. Agriculture Biologique and Bio Coherence

AB is the France's national logo for organic products since 1985. Organic products carrying the logo must contain more than 95 percent organic components, and be produced or processed within the EU, and were certified by one of the inspection bodies accredited according to EN 45011.

L'Agence Bio began managing and promoting the label in 2008.



In January 2009, the entry into force of the new European regulation on organic farming put an end to the principle of subsidiarity, in order to simplify regulations and limit distortions of competition. National public regulations concerning organic farming, such as the AB label, are therefore no longer authorized. The French “AB” logo remains voluntary, but gives way to the European logo, which is less restrictive (the so called “eurofeuille” seen in 2.3). This European organic label is now gradually replacing the AB logo. Following the alignment of the AB label specifications with European regulations, which meant a sudden drop in regulatory requirements, a large part of AB labeled producers and several organic farming organizations created in 2010 a new label, stricter, called Bio Coherence.



Case 3. Oivo-Crioc and Citizenside.com

Ovio-Crioc now merged with Citizenside.com is the Belgian “Centre de recherches et d’information des organisations de consommateurs”, which makes a link between the specialist ethical consumer organisations and the national consumers associations. It has been actively publishing quality content that ranges from press releases, research and analysis, consumer advocacy, and more. With over 45 years of expertise, CRIOC strongly believes in its aims to provide technical assistance to consumer organizations and to promote consumer protection. In pursue of this goal, CRIOC participates in consumer representation to work closely with authorized groups at the federal, community, regional, and European levels.

CRIOC believes in social responsibility, hence, CRIOC responds to all requests for documentation from consumer organizations, SME, FPS Economy. In the appreciation of accuracy and responsibility, all researches and studies were carried out properly in obliged to all requirements and documentation.

THE BOTTOM LINE: CRIOC is at the heart of social change. They believe in social support and if you needed a voice to be heard, they make sure it’s done.





Chapter 3 Green Procurement

3.1 Green Public Procurement instrument

Beside our own individual consumption and industrial consumption of goods and services, public authorities are some of the major consumers that we can find. This is why the European Commission, and in particular the directorate general for environment, has considered developing a proposal for promoting the public consumption of more environmentally friendly products and services, as the potential impact of such behaviour on general sustainable production and consumption is huge. This is called Green Public Procurement (GPP), or green purchasing.

GPP is defined in the European Commission's Communication as *"a process whereby public authorities seek to procure goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycle when compared to goods, services and works with the same primary function that would otherwise be procured."*(COM (2008) 400, p. 4)

The topic of GPP seems to have gained most of its relevance in research in recent years, from the 2000's. It was the subject for a first publication of the European Handbook "Buying Green" in 2004, which was further edited with new versions in 2011 and later in 2016. Despite the current EU legal framework for public procurement (adopted in 2014) doesn't include cohesive measures regarding GPP, which remains a voluntary instrument, it allows environmental considerations can be included at each stage of the procurement process.

Also, it is widely encouraged by European authorities, as it has a key role to play in the EU's efforts to become a more resource-efficient economy. Indeed, according to the **European Commission** *"it can help stimulate a critical mass of demand for more sustainable goods and services which otherwise would be difficult to get onto the market. GPP is therefore a strong stimulus for eco-innovation"*. The EC as well as several EU countries have developed number of publications and recommendations to provide guidance in the implementation of Green Public Procurement process, developing criteria that help understanding the different steps and elements to be considered based on clear, verifiable environmental indicators.

Due to the lack of compelling dimension, the challenge remains high to make authorities follow this practice and to mainstream the use of green procurement over other criteria based on the economic only.

However, the benefits of GPP have been highlighted by several institutions, for instance the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), which quotes:

- GPP can be a major driver for innovation, providing industry with incentives to develop environmentally-friendly works, products and services.

- GPP may also provide financial savings for public authorities, especially if you consider the full life-cycle costs of a contract and not just the purchase price.
- Authorities who implement GPP will be better equipped to meet evolving environmental challenges, for example to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or move towards a more circular economy.

3.2 Ecolabels and GPP

We have seen in the second chapter different examples of sustainability related labels. Those also have importance in the public procurement processes. Indeed, in Europe, under the EU Procurement Directives (2004/18/EC and Directive 2004/17/EC), **ecolabels may be used in public procurement**, providing a number of conditions are met:

- Procurers are not allowed to demand that a product carries an ecolabel, but may only indicate that the criteria underpinning a certain ecolabel must be met and that the ecolabel may be used as one form of proof of compliance.
- Procurers may only use ecolabel criteria that refer to characteristics of the product or service itself or production processes, not those relating to the general management of the company.
- Procurers may only refer to ecolabels that meet a number of requirements (the Type I or ISO 14024 ecolabels, such as the EU Ecolabel, meet these requirements).
- The requirements for the label are based on scientific evidence.
- The ecolabels are adopted with the participation of all stakeholders, such as government bodies, consumers, manufacturers, distributors and environmental organisations.
- They are accessible to all interested parties.

The **Green Public Procurement and the European Ecolabel factsheet**, which is part of the **GPP Training Toolkit** proposes a list of existing labels that can be used for GPP and what can be done in this framework.

In any case, the presentation of labels in Green Procurement presents advantages. It make easier for public authorities to make reference to sustainable requirements in their processes and to recognise the compliance with such requirements by easing the identification of companies that are certified.

3.2 Ecolabels and GPP

Case 1. OECD Publication, a source for GPP best practices.

A collection of best practices has been prepared by the OECD, providing good practices for green public procurement at national and sub-national levels. The practices cover the following areas:

- Green Public Procurement Legal and Policy Framework
- Understanding Market Capacity and Assessing Costs and Benefits



- Introducing Environmental Standards in Procurement
- Professionalising Green Public Procurement
- Raising Awareness
- Monitoring Green Public Procurement

Among those, we can for instance quote the case of the Estonian best practice, as reported in this document:

Context and background

The Estonian Road Administration (ERM) is a government agency operating in the administrative area of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications. It is responsible for the implementation of transport policy, that is, infrastructure, traffic and public transport.

The ERM carried out a procurement process in October 2010 under the Green Investment Scheme ("Promoting the Use of Public Transport"), which is funded from the agreement of the sale and purchase of the CO₂ emissions quota between Estonia and Spain. The agreement was awarded in accordance with Kyoto protocol Article 17 and provided that the Estonian government invest the proceeds arising from the sale of the CO₂ quota into areas where CO₂ emission reductions can be achieved. The aim was to introduce new environmentally friendly buses which will help to popularise the use of public transport and reduce CO₂ emissions caused by the transport sector.

Criteria used

In terms of "green" criteria, the tender specifications included the following:

Subject of the contract

The purpose of the public procurement is to buy new cost-effective and environmentally friendly buses, suitable for running county and regular urban services (category M3 vehicles).

Award criteria

The award criteria were weighted as follows: 55% value of tender (i.e. lowest price); 24% for a combination of warranty, bus engine smoke opacity and repair and maintenance work; and 21% for other technical properties of the buses [...]

Results

All the bids received offered vehicles with engines that met the EEV emissions standard – which is more stringent than the legally required EURO V, despite this being the award criterion. This meant that the tendering criteria motivated tenderers to offer greener vehicles than required. Most tenders also offered technical enhancements, for which additional evaluation points were awarded. In the tendering procedure, 28 persons registered as interested parties and 6 tenders were submitted. The tender was awarded to a Czech company and had a value of EUR 15.7 million (excluding VAT) for the delivery of 110 new buses with long warranty periods (5 years).



Environmental impacts

It was important to popularise public transport as a more environmentally friendly choice of transport. The main purpose of this action was to limit the growth in the number of car owners and to attract more passengers by offering them more comfortable and modern public transport services. According to the contract between Estonia and Spain, the ERM is obliged to monitor the efficiency factor of the project until 2018. The efficiency factor is measured in tonnes of CO2 emissions prevented due to the project. The methodology used to calculate the efficiency factor takes into consideration the amount of fuel that has been consumed by the new buses compared to the amount consumed by the old buses. Consideration is also given to the change in the number of public transport users and is based on the assumption that a certain proportion of new passengers have shifted to public transport, thus stopped using their personal vehicles. The estimated total amount of CO2 emissions saved has been calculated at 912 tonnes.

Case 2. Resource efficient print and copy management solutions – Consip, Italy

Since January 2010, the European Commission has been promoting good practice experiences on GPP to illustrate how public authorities in Europe have successfully ‘greened’ a **public tender or procurement process**. These include the use of life-cycle costing (LCC), circular economy principles, approaches fostering sustainable innovation, among others.

From this website, we can for instance quote the case of Consip is a public company owned by the Italian Ministry of Finance.

Context and background

It operates as Italy’s central purchasing body, and implements the programme for the rationalisation of public spending on goods and services through the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) and innovative procurement tools, such as framework contracts, e-marketplace for public administration, and a dynamic purchasing system. Italy’s National Action Plan (NAP) on green public procurement (GPP) entered into force in 2008 and, since then, GPP has been one of the pillars of Consip’s Rationalisation Programme. Consip’s mission is to make the use of public resources more efficient and transparent, by providing tools and support to public administrations which enable them to carry out procurement procedures which foster competitive participation from enterprises.



Criteria used:

The main part of the framework agreement was for the Click & Save service. The service covers external management of printing and copying activities in a centralised way. It covers the installation of certain office equipment, supplies of materials (except paper), and provides services such as support and maintenance, management, and monitoring and cost rationalisation. The cost of the service is calculated as the cost of the printed/copied page or “click”, in which the total number of clicks are defined as the number of users working at pre-defined levels of productivity. A threshold of 3,000 clicks per user (the European average is around 10,000 pages/clicks per year) was allocated. The level of productivity and the total number of users are assessed by a third party. The framework also included an optional service to manage leased office equipment (printers, photocopiers and fax) that is property of the public administration.

Results:

The new print and copy management services are expected to save approximately 6,887,979 kWh per year and 34,439,895 kWh during the lifetime of the service. This translates to CO₂ savings of 4,417 tonnes of CO₂ equivalents per year and 22,085 tonnes of CO₂ equivalents during the lifetime.

Environmental impacts

- The Click & Save mechanism helps to reduce energy consumption and paper consumption due to the control of the printed output.
- Moving away from single user machines creates printing areas which emit less ozone, dust and noise.
- The Green Printing Policy allows continuous monitoring of the environmental impacts and resource consumption.





Chapter 4

Consumerism in Circular Economy

4.1 Consumerism in Circular Economy

The circular economy proposes an economic and productive model based on sustainability and the saving of resources and energy sources. Goods are produced, consumed, recycled, produced and re-consumed, entering a circular life cycle. It is a recent and increasingly widespread concept based on economic principles and other aspects such as the environment. In this way, the life cycle of products is extended.

In that sense, the concept of circular economy covers all stages of the product life cycle, from product design and production process, through transformation and consumption to waste management, recycling and reuse. You can learn more about Circular Economy in the Sutrainy Sustainability Guideline, Environmental Field, Topic 3 Circular Economy.

Consumption in the context of the circular economy can be considered a form of sustainable consumption. Sustainable consumption as a field of research investigates the relationship between consumption and sustainable development, and the roles that consumers and other stakeholders play in that relationship (Edward Elgar: Glos & Thøgersen, UK, 2015; pp. 1–17).

Indeed, the circular economy is one facet of the new consumerism, which recognises that consumers are reassessing their values and priorities and are increasingly focused on getting the most out of life. This isn't a selfish pursuit of happiness, but rather a behavioural change encompassing the desire for authenticity, the search for wellbeing, the desire to live a freer, more simple life. We are seeing a range of interwoven trends, sharing common drivers, which combine to impact on a whole range of industries.

4.2 Cause and effect relationship between consumer behaviour and the circular economy

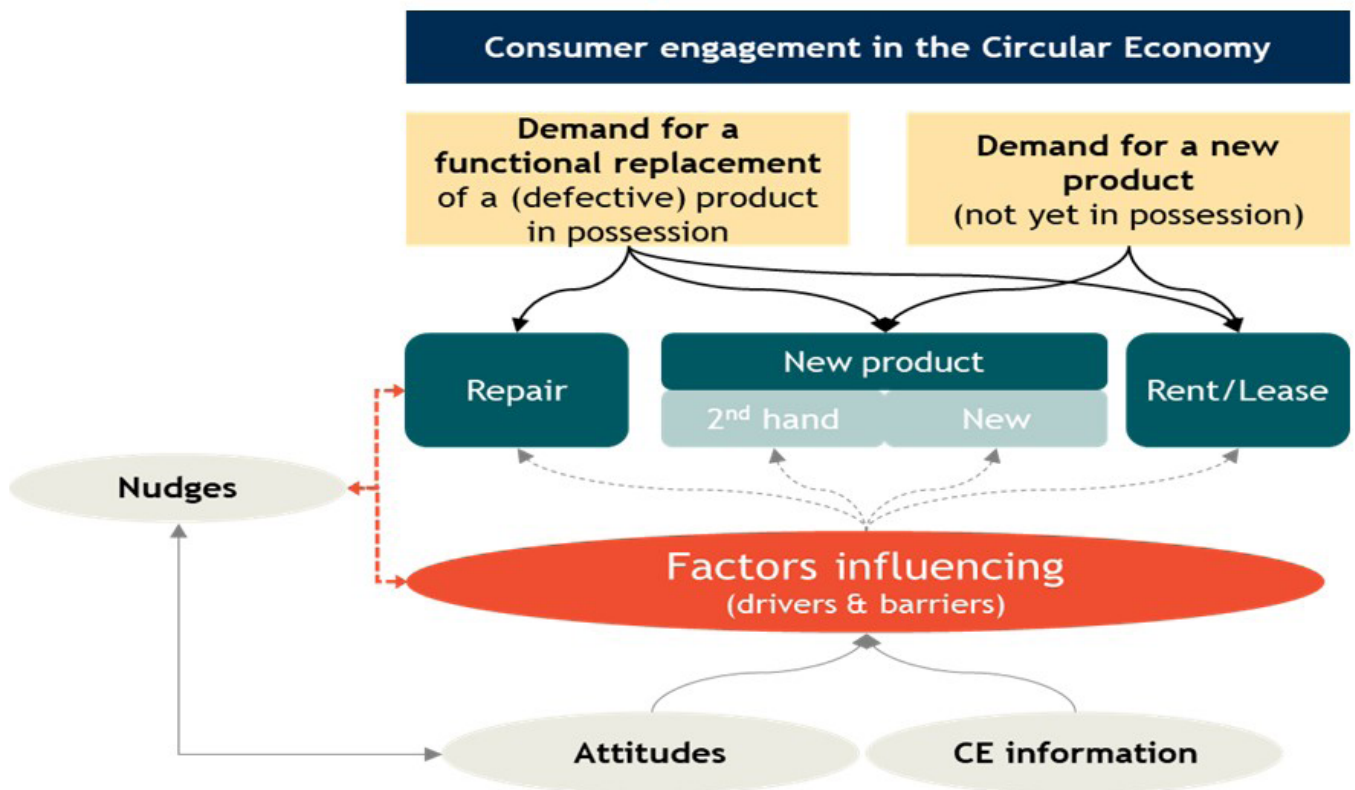
The European Commission has been supporting the transition to a Circular Economy for some time, for example by adopting the comprehensive Circular Economy Action Plan (A new **Circular Economy Action Plan** For a cleaner and more competitive Europe, COM/2020/98 final) Many policy measures taken to date have, however, solely focused on stimulating circular solutions from a production perspective, whereas through their market power, consumers can significantly support or hamper a transition towards a circular economy. A study led by London Economics and supported by Trinomics, VVA, Ipsos, and ConPolicy, acting on behalf of the European Commission (European Commission, 2018, CHA/FEA/2015/CP/01/LE), aimed to fill that gap and provide insights into consumers' engagement in the circular economy.



This study investigated to what extent consumers currently engage in Circular Economy practices and what determines their engagement with a focus on product durability and reparability. Making products more durable and easier to repair can extend their useful lives and increase their utilisation. As a result, fewer products are needed to satisfy a similar level of demand, which results in lower use of resources and less waste generation.

From a consumer perspective, actions that extend the lifetime of products include purchasing more durable products, repairing products when broken and giving products a second life by selling them in the second hand market. Increasing the utilisation rate of products can also be achieved through renting/leasing models. Renting or leasing is especially useful for products that people only use occasionally.

Behavioural study on Consumer Engagement in the Circular Economy



These options are presented in the previous picture for two types of consumer demand:

- **Type 1:** Demand for a functional replacement, or equivalent, for a product the consumer already owns (but is defective); and
- **Type 2:** Demand for a new product that they do not yet possess.



The options for the first type are repair or replacement with a new or second hand product. The second type can only be satisfied by a new or used product (in ownership) or through rental/leasing.

The Key findings of this study were:

- Generally, consumers have a very positive attitude towards repairing and durability. But there is a gap between stated values and actual engagement in circular economy activities.
- A strong correlation was found between pro-environmental and pro second-hand/repair attitudes and reported engagement in circular economy activities (repair, second-hand purchases etc.)
- In choices between repair or replacement with a new product or replacement with a second-hand or new product, the following factors seem to be leading:
 - The price-quality ratio of the two options – i.e. does the circular option offer a significant cost reduction? If not, new products are always preferred;
 - The difference in effort required between the two options – the need to find a repair shop and go there can be an important barrier for choosing for a repair.
 - The importance of durability and reparability in purchasing decisions differs strongly among product categories:
 - Durability & reparability considerations are more important for large and expensive purchases (e.g. laundry machines);
 - Durability & reparability considerations are much less important for clothing and other trend-sensitive products.
 - Behavioural experiments show that provision of clear information of product durability & reparability can significantly increase the chance that consumers choose a more durable or repairable product
 - This effect was stronger for durability than for reparability

4.3 Some tips to encourage the circular economy as a consumer

By their choices, millions, if not billions of consumers can support or hamper the successful transition to a circular economy for improved and new types of products and services. However, a major obstacle, also underlined by the EASAC report, remains: consumer attitudes and behaviour, always more influenced and driven by fashions and the marketing of industrialists and traders than by the concerns of obsolescence or recycling (Green Facts, s.f.)...



It is thus crucial to raise consumers' awareness and to increase their proactive role (EC Europa, s.f.). The **EU's action plan on the Circular economy** lays out five axes of action that will help consumers to choose products and services that are better for the environment and, at the same time, provide monetary savings and an increased quality of life (EC Europa, s.f.):

- Encourage reuse and repair of products through the revised waste legislation; 7R's, (see SustraninySustainability Guideline, Environmental Field, Module 3 Circular Economy, Chapter 1 "The 7R's of the circular economy")
- Promote energy savings as well as the reparability, upgradability, durability and recyclability of products in the future work on Ecodesign;
- Improve the enforcement of existing rules on guarantees and step up the action to tackle false green claims;
- Support the higher uptake of green public procurement and increase its focus on issues related to the circular economy;
- Help examine how to improve reliable and adequate consumer information on the environmental impacts of products, such as enhancing the effectiveness of EU Ecolabel and how to address possible practices of planned obsolescence.

Furthermore, increased demand of consumers for products and services that are supportive of the circular economy will also create new business opportunities.

4.4 Circular consumerism best practices

Case 1. Lithuania's Reverse Vending Machines - credit for plastic

In February 2016, the government of Lithuania implemented a "deposit return system", to give consumers an incentive to return used beverage containers for recycling. To combat litter and increase collection and recycling rates, consumers would pay a deposit amount of €0.10 when purchasing eligible drink containers, to be refunded when the empty container is returned for recycling.

The Lithuanian Ministry of Environment initiated the deposit process in April 2013, passing amendments to the packaging law through parliament a year later. The legislation applies to glass, non-refillable plastic and metal beverage containers.

To make returns convenient for customers, the Lithuanian government chose a 'return-to-retail' system which means stores selling beverage containers must also receive used containers back for recycling. Consumers are refunded their deposit as vouchers that can be redeemed in store as cash or credit toward their shopping bill, bringing additional foot traffic into stores.

Packaging can be returned throughout most of Lithuania, with this option available in shops with an area of more than 300 m² or village shops.



Main results:

- 2,163,370,953 packages have been returned since 2016.
- 56 000 tonnes of material have been collected since 2016, equal to 6 Eiffel Towers.
- 97% of consumers are satisfied with the system.
- 97% of the population claimed the deposit system is necessary.
- 93% of consumers admitted that the introduction of such a system encouraged them to treat their waste more responsibly.
- The 2025 targets set by the Lithuanian Government have already been reached and surpassed.
- Since the start of the system Lithuania has prevented 152 400 tonnes of CO2 emissions.

More about this best practice

Case 2. Eco-vouchers. Sustainable consumption, including second-hand and refurbished goods

Eco-vouchers were introduced in Belgium by the social partners through collective agreement. Eco-vouchers can only be used to purchase, in Belgium, environmentally-friendly goods and services included in an exhaustive list annexed to that agreement. That list contains 3 categories:

- Ecological Goods & Services
- Sustainable Mobility & Leisure
- Re-use, recycling, repair and waste prevention

The eco-vouchers can also be used for purchasing re-used, recycled products or products made from recycled or biodegradable materials, second-hand products or repaired goods, rechargeable batteries or eco-friendly lamps. Maintenance and repairing costs can also be paid with eco-vouchers.

Every two years, the list of eligible products is evaluated to keep up with ecological developments. Eco-vouchers are issued by Belgian firms through a voucher issuer (represented by Vouchers Issuers Association). Currently, approximately 1.8 million employees receive eco-vouchers and 62% of eco-vouchers are distributed in electronic form.

Main results:

- A study of Hasselt University (Via Belgium, s.f.) carried out at the request of VIA in collaboration with Indiville shows a positive impact on the consumption behaviour of the beneficiaries of eco-vouchers since more than half of them are more sensitive to environmental interests.
- The very same study also highlights that due to the use of eco-vouchers, families' energy savings amount between EUR 6.89m and EUR 15.70m.
- Another study of CO2Logic, also carried out at the request of VIA, concludes that eco-vouchers also have a positive impact on the climate by contributing substantially to the reduction of CO2 emissions.

More information about **Eco-Cheques**.





Chapter 5 JOIN THE MOVE

1. Existing networks and organism to increase your level of ethical consumption

- Consumers associations and CSO focused on ethical consumerism

Associations and consumers networks propose information and tests on products that might help you and guide your choice before the decision of purchase.

Ethical Consumer

Citizenside

Clean Clothes Campaign

Conso durable

Ademe

Consumentenbond

- Fair Trade

In addition to the labels, you will probably find in your city shops that are already specialised in Fair trade, such as the following organisations:

Fair Trade International

Artisans du monde

Oxfam

- Ethical bank:

Triodos finance progressive entrepreneurs and influence the banking sector to become more transparent, diverse and sustainable.

- Second hand shops and online website:

Before purchasing a new product, could you buy it second hand? You can always look in your local second hand shop, or other second hand specialised website for goods. You might look for instance at the **Emmaus Movement** which is a secular, socially responsible and non-violent movement which is independent from any form of power. The movement aims to defend the most destitute members of society.

2. Tools of reference to develop actions

Green travel planner:

Greentickets App

Traveling is amazing, right? We completely agree! But you probably know that traveling can have a large climate impact. This tool help you to take responsibility of your travel behaviour and reduce your footprint, while still enjoying everything that traveling has to offer.

Green Healthy cooking:

This blog, from Lorena Grater offer real food recipes made out of 95% unprocessed food. Only 95% because let's be realistic, not all of us have a mill to grind grains and make flour in the kitchen corner or a cow to milk in the entry hallway.

Sustainable shopping:

Founded in Los Angeles in late 2014, The Good Trade is a leading resource and community for sustainability, slow living, and self-love. It proposes for instance **lists of sustainable brands such as for clothing**

3. Tips to taking action

The organisation Ethical Consumer propose 10 tips to shop more ethically (Ethical Consumer, s.f.), here they are:

1. Buy the most ethical
2. Less is more
3. Get creative before you recycle
4. Shop pre-loved (second hand)
5. Help re-invigorate your local community
6. Shop for democracy with cooperatives
7. Look for trusted labels
8. Boycott the bad guys
9. Get active and challenge corporate power
10. Take back control on your money





Chapter 6 TO GO FUTHER

Consumers behaviours and ethics

Behavioural Study on Consumers' Engagement in the Circular Economy

Consumption in the Circular Economy: A Literature Review

Individual strategies for sustainable consumption

Nordic best practices Relevant for UNEP 10YFP of sustainable consumption and production

Consumers in the circular economy

Sustainable mobility

On green public procurement:

Buying Green!

Going Green: Best Practices for Sustainable Procurement

On labels:

List of 457 ecolabels

Fair Trade certification

EU Organic logo



Chapter 7 PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

1. Carbon Footprint Calculator

For this first practical activity, we propose you to increase your awareness about the actual impact that your behaviour as individual and consumer has on environment. For this, you might find different calculators on the web that will help you to calculate the impact that you have in terms of Co2.

For instance, we propose you to go and have a look on the [WWF carbon footprint calculator](#), which is provided free to use:

By answering this questionnaire, you will get an estimation of your yearly emission of CO2 based on your behaviour regarding travel, food, home and stuff.

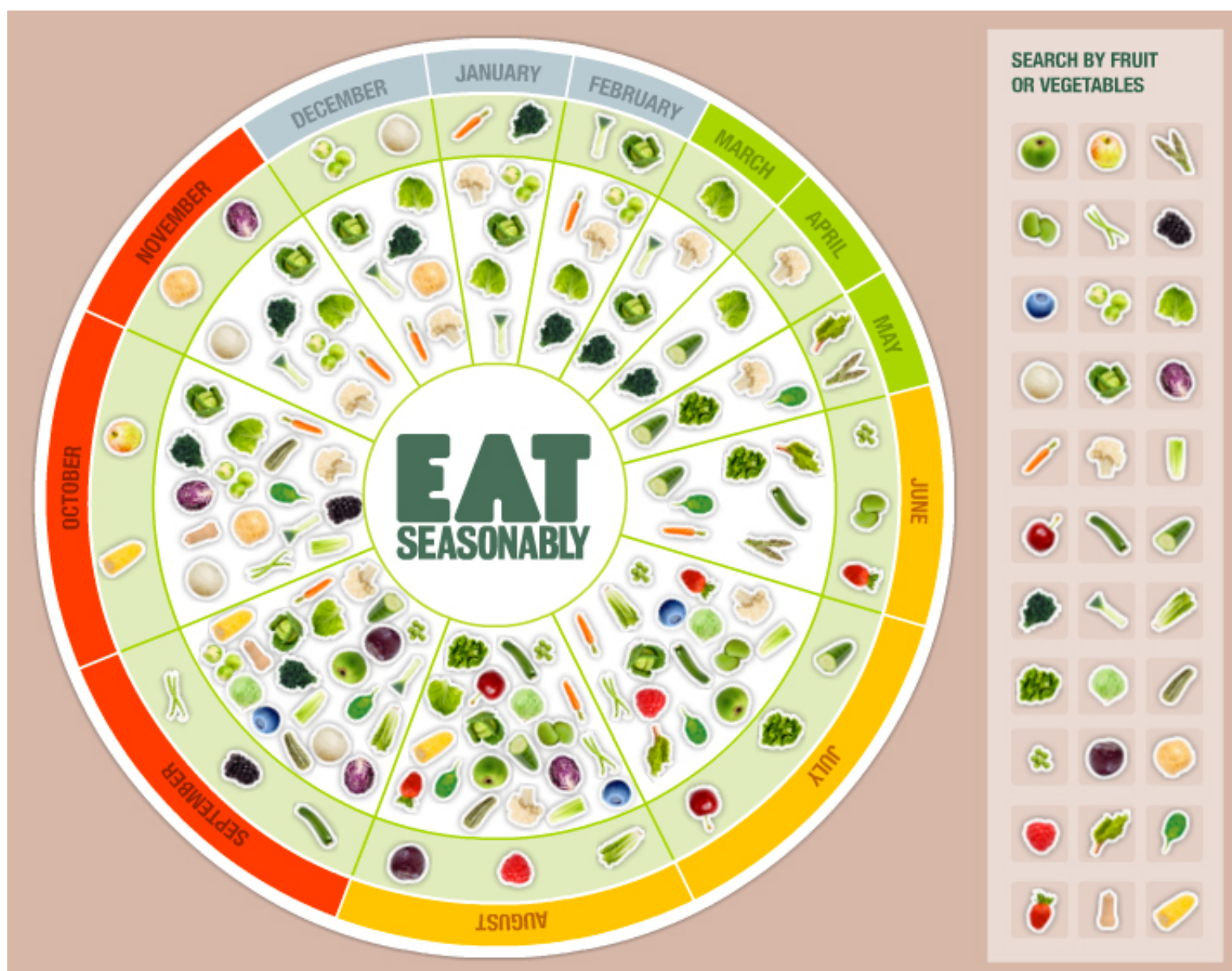


Are they elements that you could improve? This tool offer a good opportunity to reconsider some of your consumer habits!

2. Eat seasonably

Fruit and vegetables taste best when eaten in season. You will also get better chances to buy local production, avoiding food transport, for a more sustainable consumption. The [Eat Seasonably calendar](#) developed by eatseasonably.co.uk helps you discover what's in season throughout the year so that you can enjoy fruit and veg that not only tastes better, but is better value as well as better for the planet. Explore the calendar by selecting a month to reveal which produce is at it its very best throughout the year.





No go and get a look in your kitchen : what fruits and vegetables do you have? Are they in accordance with the season?





Conclusion: This is a beginning - My action

We've given you some advice; now it is time to turn this info into action... your action!

Write here your own remarks:





Conclusion: This is a beginning
- My action

