



European Food Sustainable Consumption and Production Round Table



## Presentation of Guiding Principles

for voluntary environmental assessment and communication of environmental information along the food chain, including to consumers



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# Context

- **A widening range of different initiatives to inform consumers and other stakeholders about various environmental characteristics of food and drink products**
  - High degree of diversity in terms of chosen scope, methodology, communication tools
  - No commonly applied methodology to assess and communicate environmental information
  - Current situation has the potential to confuse or even mislead consumers and other stakeholders
    - to lead to unnecessary burdens for food chain operators



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# Context

### Effective environmental information requires:

- Scientifically reliable and consistent environmental assessment methodologies to be applied along the food chain
- Ability to effectively and efficiently communicate this information from one stage in the food chain to the next until it reaches the consumer





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## Three Key Objectives

1. Establish scientifically reliable and uniform **environmental assessment methodologies** for food and drinks
2. Identify suitable **tools and guidance for voluntary environmental communication** to consumers and other stakeholders
3. Promote **continuous environmental improvement** measures along the entire food supply chain



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## Background to the Guiding Principles

- The Guiding Principles do not lay down any specific methodology, instrument or tool to assess and communicate environmental information to consumers, nor are they intended to prejudge the outcome of ongoing work in this field
- Existing and emerging methodologies and tools will be assessed in order to evaluate whether and how the Guiding Principles can be put into practice.
- The term “food chain” includes the whole food and drink value chain including consumers, starting with the suppliers and going up to end-of-life



## The Lead Principle

**Environmental information communicated along the food chain, including to consumers, shall be scientifically reliable and consistent, understandable and not misleading, so as to support informed choice.**



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# Scientifically reliable and consistent

- The environmental assessment shall be based on methodologies and scientific data that are:
  - recognised and widely accepted in scientific / professional disciplines
  - sufficiently thorough and comprehensive to produce results that are accurate and reproducible
- Use shall be made of international and European standards and recommendations and of derived sector-specific guidance documents
- A common framework assessment methodology shall be applied to all food and drink products; where necessary, with methodological specifications at the level of product categories



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# Easy to understand and not misleading

- Environmental information shall be communicated in an **easily understandable, factual** and **unambiguous** way, so as **to support informed choice**
- Operators shall **use the means and format of communication** that is the **most suitable and effective** to support informed choice
- Assessment methodology and communication shall **ensure**, to the extent possible, **comparability**
- Information shall be relevant, addressing the **significant environmental impacts related to the product life-cycle**
- the **provided information** must be specified in a **clear, accurate and unambiguous manner**, particularly where communication of environmental information is limited to specific aspects or life cycle stages.
- Environmental **information must not be misleading** in any way.



## Ten Guiding Principles

### **I - Principles for the voluntary environmental assessment of food and drink products**

1. Identify and analyse the environmental aspects at all life-cycle stages.
2. Assess the significant potential environmental impacts along the life-cycle.
3. Apply recognised scientific methodologies.
4. Periodically review and update the environmental assessment.



## Ten Guiding Principles

### **II - Principles for the voluntary communication of environmental information**

5. Provide information in an easily understandable and comparable way so as to support informed choice.
6. Ensure clarity regarding the scope and meaning of environmental information.



## Ten Guiding Principles

### III - Principles for both voluntary environmental assessment and communication

7. Ensure transparency of information and underlying methodologies and assumptions.
8. Ensure that all food chain actors can apply the assessment methodology and communication tools without disproportionate burden.
9. Support innovation.
10. Safeguard the Single Market (Internal Market) and International trade.



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## Questions?



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