



Communication Strategies for Energy Efficiency Labels

SEAD Policy Exchange Forum Overview
19 June 2019, 11:00-13:00 UTC (TBC)

Background

Product labels are a key component of effective energy efficiency programmes, shifting markets to the highest quality, lowest impact appliances and products. In the first evaluation of the impact of the European Union (E.U.) labelling scheme, for example, an estimated 10% of the shift toward sales of more-efficient appliances resulted from labelling (Bertoldi 2000). Minimum energy performance standards *push* noncompliant products from the market, protecting consumers and levelling the playing field for manufacturers, distributors, and procurers – meanwhile, energy efficiency labels *pull* consumers and other buyers toward the most efficient and innovative products.

Labels inform smart choices on high-performing and quality products. More efficient products consume less energy, which leads to lower operating costs and reduced environmental impacts. Labels help high-performing products stand out, providing information on their performance and quality – which drives competition and innovation. Effective communication on the labels and benefits of efficient appliances creates awareness among consumer and helps them make informed choices.

The energy efficiency of products is usually invisible, requiring a credible label to inform consumers on whether a product uses energy wisely or is an energy guzzler. The design and content of the label itself is critical to effectively convey the most useful information to consumers. Labels must be easily read and understood by a wide range of people. Labelling programs should also clearly communicate the benefits of efficient products, such as lower lifetime costs, helping consumers make well-informed decisions and select the most efficient product they can afford.

Strategic and locally- or nationally-appropriate communication efforts to support labelling programs are essential to empower consumers and ultimately shift behaviour and appliance markets to prioritize and value efficiency. When consumers are knowledgeable about product energy efficiency and labels, they often drive the demand toward greater efficiency, which spurs competition among manufacturers to produce and market higher efficiency products.

Labels can also serve as the backbone of other market transformation tools, such as financial incentive programs and government procurement. The simple message of buying or qualifying only products that meet predetermined and publicly disclosed label thresholds can reduce the costs associated with supplemental programs (CLASP Guidebook).

During this SEAD Policy Exchange Forum, speakers from the European Commission, South Africa, and Ghana will share information and lessons learned in labelling communications campaigns, associated smartphone applications, and label design for effective communication of appliance energy efficiency.



An overview on the importance of communicating energy efficiency labels will be provided by Marie Baton, CLASP. Following this, three case studies will demonstrate national and regional experiences in designing and communicating labels, including some innovative ways to inform consumers about appliance and lighting energy efficiency – how the label can help save energy and money. The first case study, from the European Commission, will discuss how the label design is a key piece in effective communications for appliance energy efficiency, including lessons learned in regional label communications. South Africa will follow with details on their communications campaign focused on the label for lighting products, as well as how their label and Energy Calculator App can work together to inform and support consumers. The third case study, from Ghana, will present innovative communications approaches that the country has used to inform consumers about energy efficiency labels – highlighting how unique, locally-specific communications can be highly effective in shifting markets toward energy efficient appliances.

Presenters will address questions such as:

- What are the key considerations in label design to ensure effective communication of product energy efficiency?
- What are the major barriers and challenges to effective communication of energy efficiency to consumers?
- How can governments use label design and communications around it to influence consumer purchasing decisions and shift the market toward more energy efficient products?
- What are some effective or unique strategies to increase awareness among consumers about product energy efficiency labels?
- What are the strategies/key considerations in building communications and label awareness campaign for the consumers?

More information on the SEAD Policy Exchange forum and how to participate available on the SEAD website at: www.superefficient.org/about-us/sead-policy-exchange-forum