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DIRECTORATE FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRY
COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER POLICY

Cancels & replaces the same document of 15 March 2010

CCP Workshop on Enhancing the Value and Effectiveness of Environmental Claims: Protecting and Empowering Consumers

Paris, OECD Conference Center, 15-16 April 2010

Delegates will find attached the Draft Agenda for the CCP workshop on Environmental Claims to be held back-to-back with the CCP meeting in April 2010. Background information for the workshop will be circulated shortly.

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**ENHANCING THE VALUE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CLAIMS:
PROTECTING AND EMPOWERING CONSUMERS**

OECD WORKSHOP, 15-16 APRIL 2010, PARIS

Background

1. Green claims are claims made by firms about the environmentally beneficial qualities or characteristics of their products. In addition to environmental aspects, such claims are often also defined to include the socially responsible or ethical manner that products are produced and distributed.

2. The CCP has been carrying out work on green claims in the context of its work on sustainable consumption, which is included in the Committee's programme of work for 2009 and 2010. It is aimed at supporting the OECD's work on sustainable development and related work on environmental issues, focusing on the role that consumers can play in achieving policy objectives in these areas.

3. At its meeting in October 2009, the CCP agreed to proceed with a project to examine the value and effectiveness of the green claims. It decided in this phase of its work to focus on those claims that concern environmental impacts. In support of this work, it further decided to organise a workshop on green claims in April 2010, back-to-back with the CCP meeting, or as a part of the Committee meeting.

4. The results of the work will feed into two OECD horizontal projects: 1) the OECD's *Green Growth Strategy*, a final report which would be completed by May 2011; and 2) the OECD's work on *sustainable consumption and production*, which will be considered at the 2011 session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD).

5. The CCP work on green claims has horizontal links with, and will also contribute to, projects being carried out by a number of OECD Directorates, including Environment, Trade, Investment, other parts of STI and the International Energy Agency. It will be also pursued in the light of work being carried out in other international organisations, such as UNEP, ICPEN, and ISOCOPOLCO, Consumers International/ the international initiative Ethical Trade Fact-Finding Process (ETFP) and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC).

6. The Committee underscored the importance of linking the project to other, related work being carried out by the Committee, including the consumer policy toolkit, behavioural economics, industry-led regulation and consumer education.

Objectives

7. The purpose of the workshop is to provide a platform for stakeholders to share information on:

- How firms are using environmental claims to promote their products and services.
- How such claims are being perceived and evaluated by consumers.
- What consumer agencies and other stakeholders can do to enhance the value and effectiveness of these claims for consumers who would like to take environmental impacts into consideration when making purchasing decisions.

Rationale and scope

8. Studies show that consumers are increasingly interested in contributing to broad environmental goals, by choosing environmentally-friendly products and services. Business has responded as there has been significant growth in environmental claims, some in relation to specific products or product ranges, other in relation to a company brand or even an industry sector as a whole.

9. Such claims have the potential to play an important role in encouraging consumers to make choices which support environmental goals, while rewarding innovative companies for their efforts in this regard. The impact of the claims will be reduced, however, to the extent that they are unclear, unsubstantiated, confusing, deceptive or fraudulent. When this occurs, there is a risk that consumer interest and confidence in green products and services will diminish.

Format

10. The workshop will be a one day event, held back-to-back with the CCP meeting in April 2010. It will start on the afternoon of 15 April (Thursday), running through the morning of 16 April (Friday).

11. Participation will be open to CCP delegates and observers (Egypt and India), international organisations (ICPEN, UNEP, ISO), business representatives (BIAC/ICC, WBCSD), NGOs (consumer organisations and environmental organisations), and academia. The workshop would also aim to bring experts and decision makers from non-member economies, including the enhanced engagement countries.

12. The workshop will be divided into four sessions:

- Setting the context - overview of environmental claims prevalent in the marketplace.
- Understanding consumer response to environmental claims.
- Case studies: current business practices in environmental marketing and their impact on consumers.
- Policy tools and enforcement mechanisms.

Conference outputs and follow-up

13. A short issues paper identifying key discussion points will be drafted as background for the Roundtable.

14. Following the event, a report will be prepared that presents findings and identifies areas where further work might be beneficial. The report will be presented to the CCP at its October 2010 meeting, for approval. Once approved, it will be integrated into the OECD work on the Green Growth Strategy, and the 2011 session of the UNCSD.

DRAFT AGENDA

OECD WORKSHOP ON ENHANCING THE VALUE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CLAIMS: PROTECTING AND EMPOWERING CONSUMERS	
OECD Conference Centre, Paris, 15-16 April 2010	
Thursday 15 April	
14.30	<p>Opening Remarks by the CCP Chairman and the Workshop Chairman</p> <p>Michael JENKIN, Director General, Office of Consumer Affairs, Industry Canada, Chairman, OECD Committee on Consumer Policy</p> <p>Graham BRANTON, Deputy Director, Consumer and Competition Policy, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, United Kingdom, Vice Chairman, OECD Committee on Consumer Policy</p>
14.40-15.40	<p>SESSION 1: SETTING THE CONTEXT - ENVIRONMENTAL CLAIMS IN THE MARKETPLACE</p> <p>Chair: Workshop Chair</p> <p>Purpose: This session will examine how environmental claims have evolved over time and the role that claims are playing in today's marketplace. In particular the session will review the different kinds of environmental claims and current practices being used by business, and it will address the interaction of standards and guidelines with consumer perceptions.</p> <p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The role of environmental standards in the development of green claims</i> French Standards Authority, member of AFNOR Groupe • <i>Development of environmental claims over time: their range, quantity and quality</i> Bjarne PEDERSEN, Director of Operations, Consumers International, to report on their work, including recent work of the Ethical Trade Fact-Finding Process related to environmental claims • <i>Assessment of green claims in marketing</i> Heather COLLIE, Sustainable Products and Consumers, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), United Kingdom and Phil DOWNING, Icaro Consulting, to report on Defra's work on types of claims in different sectors <p>General discussion</p>
15.40-16.00	<i>Coffee break</i>
16.00-18.00	<p>SESSION 2: UNDERSTANDING CONSUMER RESPONSE TO ENVIRONMENTAL CLAIMS</p> <p>Chair: Hugh STEVENSON, Deputy Director, Office of International Affairs, Federal Trade Commission, United States, Vice Chair of the Committee on Consumer Policy</p> <p>Purpose: This session will discuss how consumers respond to environmental claims; how such claims are being perceived and evaluated by consumers. It will explore the key factors that determine consumer confidence in claims and how claims affect consumer decision making. The discussion will focus on how consumers are dealing with issues related to the accuracy and reliability of claims, how they detect and respond to misleading or fraudulent claims, and how they evaluate competing claims, particularly when there are trade-offs to be made in choosing one product over another.</p> <p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Factors that affect consumer perception of environmental claims</i> Rasmus KJELDAHL, Executive Director, Danish Consumer Council, Consumers International Head of Delegation at COP15 Christian HUDSON, European Commission DG Environment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consumer understanding of environmental claims</i> Phil DOWNING, Director, Icaro Consulting/ Defra's consultant, United Kingdom • <i>Business perspective</i> – how business uses consumer perception to develop claims in marketing? Where have environmental claims worked? Where have they failed? What have been the principal challenges? [Business speaker being confirmed] <p>General discussion</p>
18.00	<i>Cocktail</i>
Friday 16 April 2010	
9.00-10.00	<p>Session 3: CASE STUDIES (in two breakout sessions)</p> <p>Purpose: This session will discuss case studies on current business practices in using environmental claims to assess common practices in green claims and their impact on consumers.</p> <p><u>Breakout session 1: Automobile industry</u></p> <p>Chair [Chair being confirmed]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National experience – Nordic countries (two different models): Finland, Anja PELTONEN, Deputy Consumer Ombudsman, Consumer Law Department, Consumer Agency & Ombudsman Norway, Bente ØVERLI, Head of Section, The Consumer Ombudsman • Consumer organisation perspective [French or German consumer organisation – tbc] • Business perspective [Business speaker being confirmed] <p>General discussion</p> <p><u>Breakout session 2: Energy efficiency</u></p> <p>Chair: Nigel JOLLANDS, Head of Energy Efficiency Unit, International Energy Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National experience: Germany, Dr. Joern-Uwe THURNER, Federal Environment Agency Korea, Tae Hyun MOON, Head of International Cooperation Team, Consumer Agency • Consumer organisation perspective [tbc] • Business perspective [Business speaker being confirmed] <p>General discussion</p>
10.00-10.30	<i>Coffee break</i>

10.30-12.45	<p>Session 4: POLICY TOOLS AND ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS</p> <p>Chair: John SWIFT, Chair of TC 207/SC3, ISO standards on environmental labelling</p> <p>Purpose: The value and effectiveness of environmental claims depends on their accuracy and the ability of consumers to evaluate and use them. Consumer authorities can play a role, including <i>a)</i> by educating consumers on how claims can be used to make more informed decisions, <i>b)</i> by ensuring that claims are substantiated, <i>c)</i> by combating fraudulent or misleading claims, and <i>d)</i> by introducing regulatory measures. The session will explore what consumer agencies and other stakeholders can do to enhance the value and effectiveness of these claims for consumers who would like to take environmental impacts into consideration when making purchasing decisions. It will also discuss what the OECD can do to assist countries in performing this task.</p> <p><i>[Organisation: There are likely to be two panels focusing on two different themes.]</i></p> <p><u>Panellists:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia, Simon WRITER, Senior Adviser, Simon WINCKLER, Consumer Policy Framework Unit, Competition and Consumer Policy Division, The Treasury • Canada, Brent HOMAN, Assistant Deputy Commissioner in the Fair Business Practices Branch of the Competition Bureau Canada • France, DGCCRF • United States, Laura DEMARTINO, Assistant Director for the Division of Enforcement, Bureau of Consumer Protection, U.S. Federal Trade Commission • European Commission, Angelo GRIECO, DG Justice, Freedom and Security; Patrice GRUSZKOWSKI, DG Environment • UNEP • BEUC, European Consumers' Organisation, Sylvia MAURER, Eco-design project manager, • International Chamber of Commerce. <p>General discussion</p>
12.45-13.00	<p>Conclusions and next steps, the CCP Chairman and the Workshop Chairman</p>