EPA Disclaimer

The use of ecolabels in purchasing:
Determining credibility

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WWW.ECOLABELINDEX.COM

WWW.DOTECO.ORG

Largest independent global directory of ecolabels

Currently tracking nearly 400 ecolabels

Subscription and advisory services

Coordinating a new internet extension for the sustainability community

Working with WWF, Greenpeace, Conservation International, Green Cross, ULE, and others

Search

Ecolabel Index is the largest global directory of ecolabels, currently tracking 377 ecolabels in 211 countries, and 25 industry sectors.
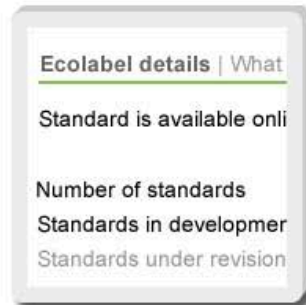
Introducing Ecolabel Index PRO

Ecolabel Index PRO gives you unlimited access to our database, including the ability to easily filter, research, and compare selected labels, and access relevant news and independent analysis.

FILTER

Region | Only show ecol

North America x

Africa (18)
Asia (39)
Europe (47)
Latin America (26)

Refine Ecolabel Index to find the ecolabels relevant to you.

RESEARCH

Ecolabel details | What

Standard is available onli

Number of standards
Standards in developmer
Standards under revision

Access trustworthy data on ecolabels around the world.

COMPARE

:olabels   Compare now

+ Compare

roduced from wind, PV, tidal & waves, biogas

Side-by-side, which ecolabels meet your specs?

SUBSCRIBE TODAY | Monthly subscriptions starting at **CA$99 for 5 users.**
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Keep up to date | Tweets, news, press

Tweets
Whole Foods launches a new 'eco-scale' label - http://bit.ly/iHEf1y

Follow @ecolabels on Twitter.

News
Watchdog Groups Claim CBS 'EcoAd' Program Is Greenwashing

Draft Green Claims Guide Released for Public Comment

SustainAbility Sets out Ecolabel Research Agenda

Press coverage
USA Today | FTC to issue new green guidelines, address 'tsunami' of marketing claims

TriplePundit | Is It Greenwashing Or Too Many Eco-Labels That Is The Problem?

The Guardian (UK) | Questioning and Evolving the Eco-label

More mentions...

The New York Times   theguardian

FAST COMPANY   THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Mailing list
Subscribe to our mailing list for occasional updates.

Who is running them?

Types of organizations running the ecolabels

Industry Associations 16%

For profit 12%

Non-Profit 57%

Government 15%
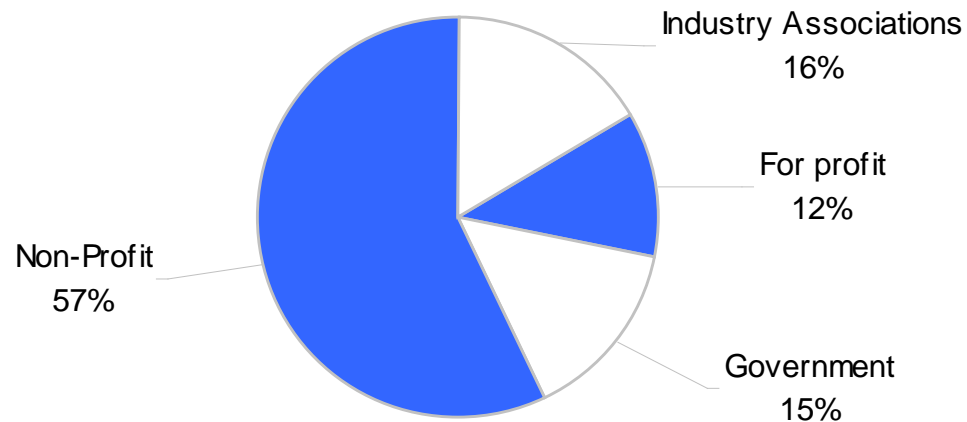
Growth in ecolabels

Total number of ecolabels by year of launch

Source: Ecolabel Index (www.ecolabelindex.com)
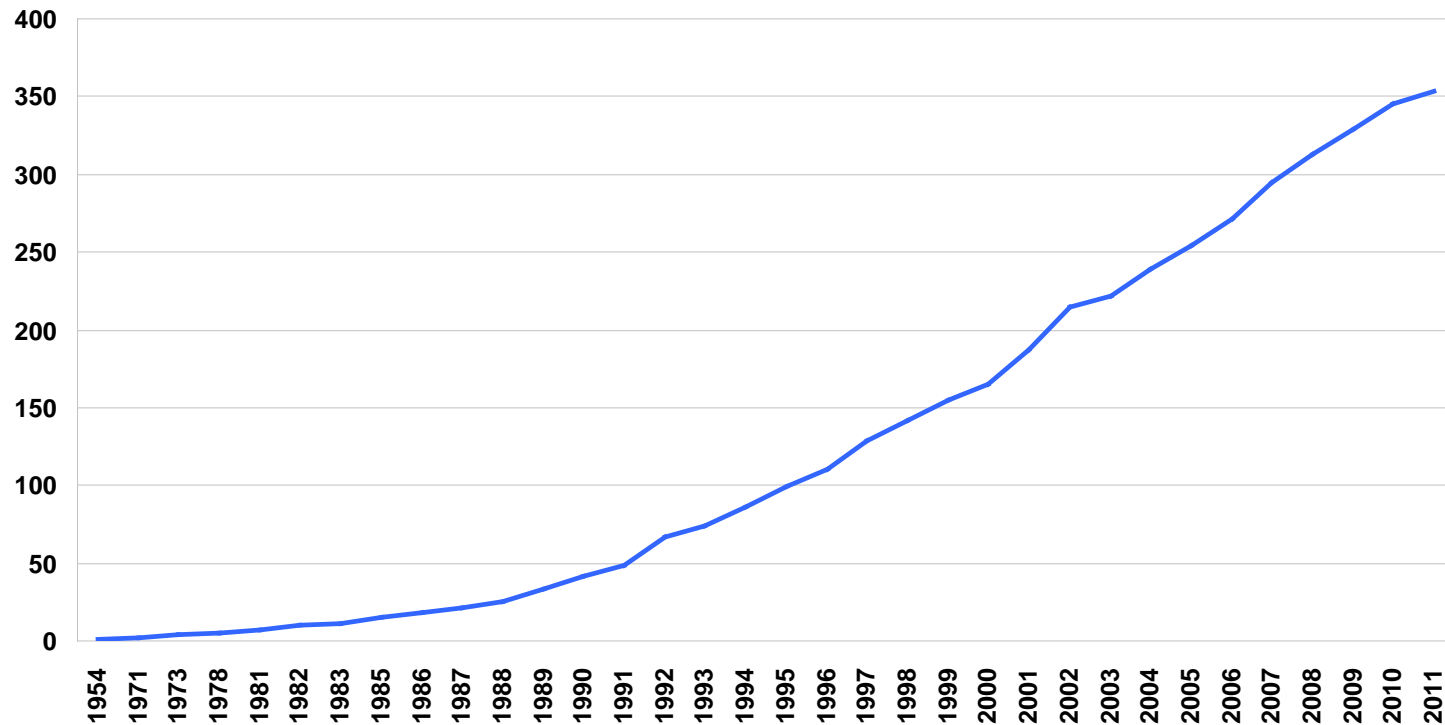
Where do they have a presence?

Regional presence of ecolabels
Source: Ecolabel Index (www.ecolabelindex.com)

Africa	Latin America	Oceania	Asia	Europe	North America
24	37	52	82	176	179

Framework for comparing labels

1. Governance/Management
-*Standard setting:* how the set of criteria is created and maintained
-*Implementation & Verification:* how the program is managed, verified and controlled

2. Standard
The content, relevance and effectiveness of the ecolabel's criteria

3. Market
The extent to which the label is used and recognized in the market

Trends: Multi-Attribute and Life Cycle based systems

Raw material extraction & processing	Product Manufacture	Distribution	Use of Product	Disposal/ recycling/ re-use of product

Single Stage

Single Issue

Multiple Stage

Multiple Issues

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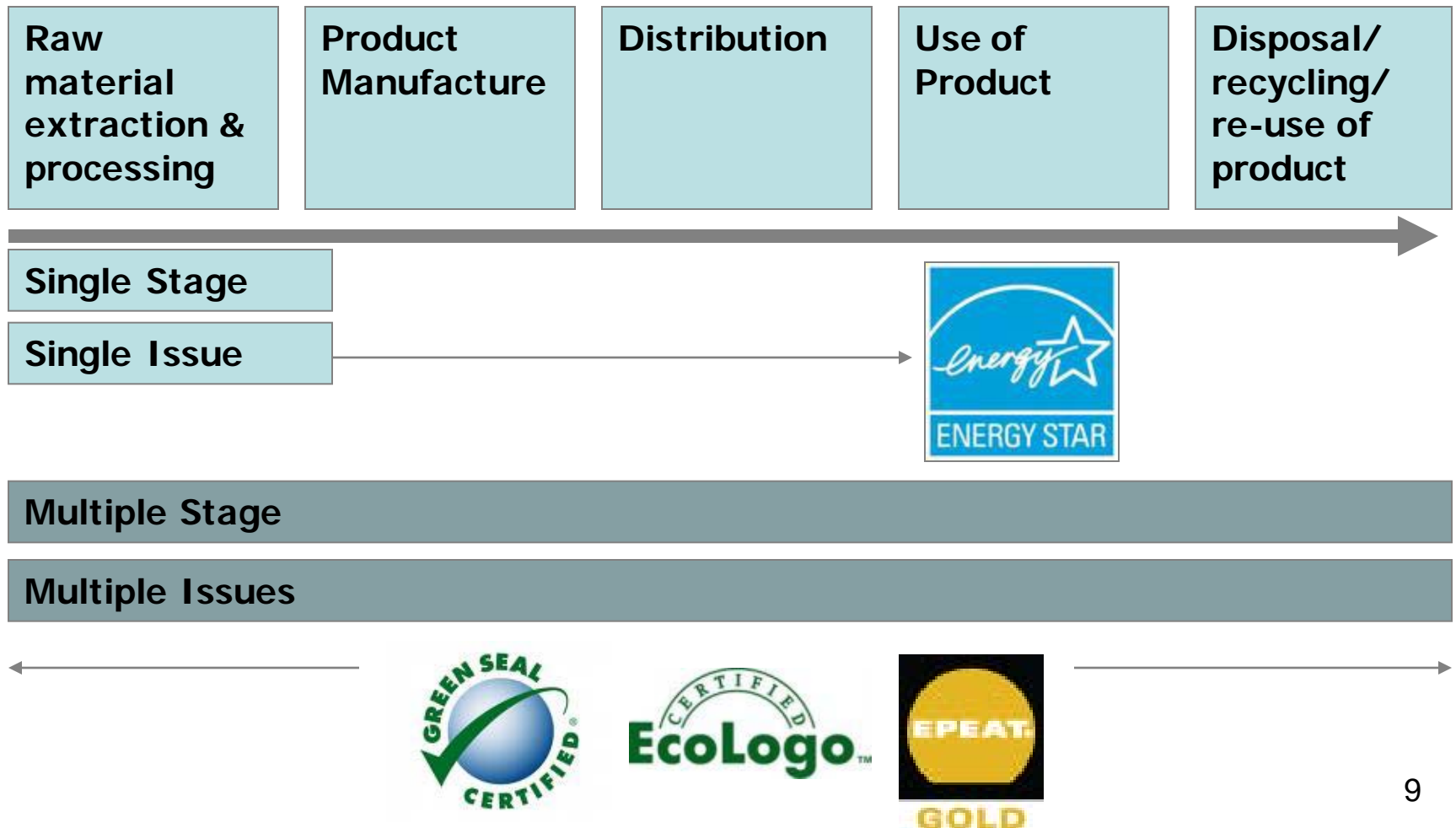
How do purchasers use ecolabels?

1. As a **screening tool** for finding and buying greener products

2. Use the standards/criteria behind the label in **specifications** for greener products
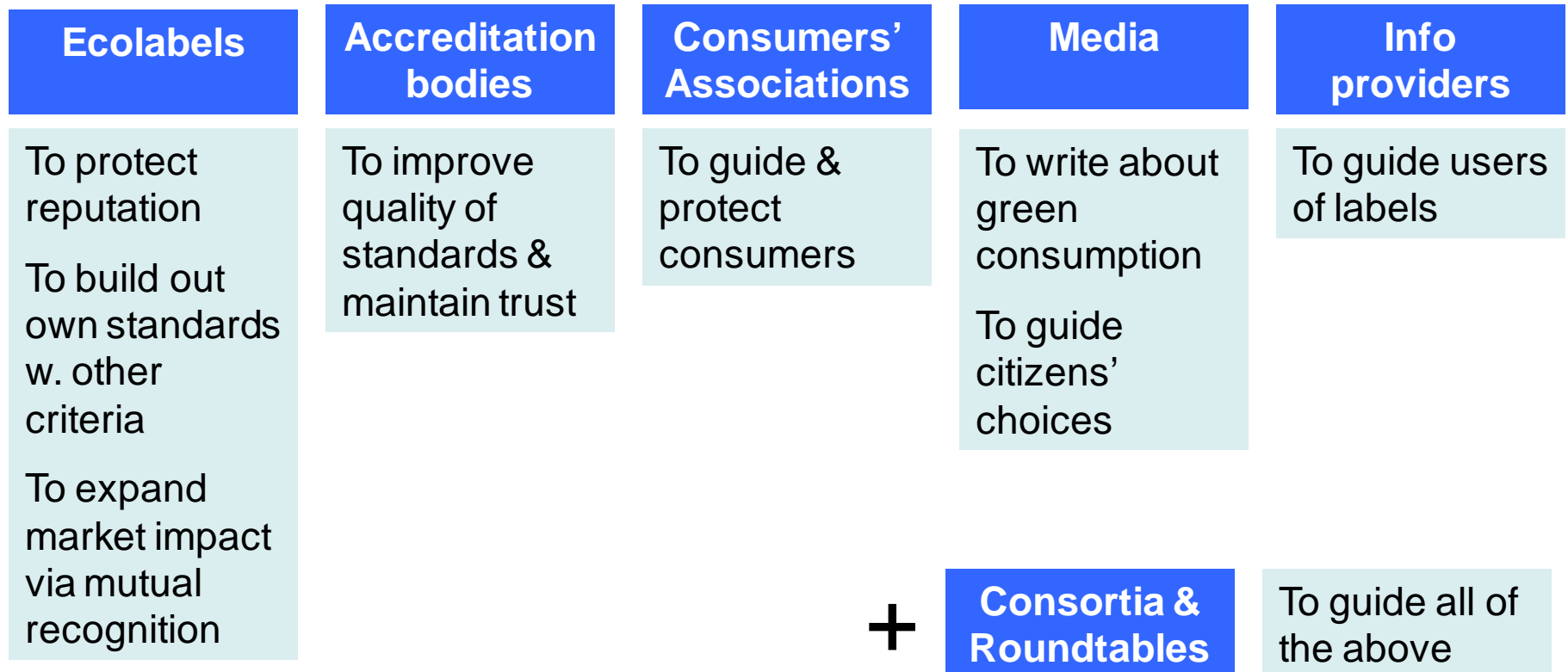
3. Use the standards/criteria to help **shape policy** in looking at environmental claims

Who assesses ecolabels & why?

Buyers	Producers	NGOs	Government
To select products using labels as filter	To decide which label (if any) to certify products	To advocate on specific issues	To help set policy
	To screen suppliers	To decide which labels to support as stakeholders	In own purchasing
	To benchmark performance against credible standards		

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In addition:

Ecolabels	Accreditation bodies	Consumers' Associations	Media	Info providers
To protect reputation To build out own standards w. other criteria To expand market impact via mutual recognition	To improve quality of standards & maintain trust	To guide & protect consumers	To write about green consumption To guide citizens' choices	To guide users of labels

+

Consortia & Roundtables	To guide all of the above

Types of Assessments

A. Informal Guides and Lists
-by Media, lifestyle guides, green shopping sites etc

B. Formal Assessments

1. Principles & Best practices

2. Ratings

3. Standards for standard setting (eg ANSI, ISEAL, ISO)

4. Ratings embedded within other ecolabels' standards

5. Embedded within other tools, e.g. Good Guide

6. Embedded within purchasing guides and policies

Assessments' studied to date

Type of Assessment	Name of Assessment	Type of Organization	Status
Principles/ best practices	Green Products Roundtable: Preferred Practices for Organisational Credibility	Multi-stakeholder	Draft
	ISEAL Alliance: Draft Credibility Principles	Association of Voluntary Std's	Draft
	WWF: "Must-Be" Principles for voluntary standards	Environmental NGO	Available, 2010
Ratings	Consumer Reports: Label Report-Card	Consumers Association/ NGO	Available, 2006
	NRDC Label Look-up: Leaf Rating System	Environmental NGO	Available, 2011
	Die Verbraucher Initiatieve : Label-online.de rating system	Consumers Association- NGO	Available, 2009

Convergence in assessing ecolabel credibility

Governance: Standard Setting	Governance: Implementation	Standard/ Criteria	Market
•Multi-stakeholder participation •Based on standards for standard-setting •Periodic updating •Harmonization w. other standards	•Multi-stakeholder oversight •Transparent •Rigorous complaints/appeals/ dispute process •Auditor/certification standards & accreditation process •Continuous improvement •Market surveillance system	•Multi-attribute •Objective	• N/A no criteria

Divergence in assessing ecolabel credibility

Governance: Standard Setting	Governance: Implementation	Standard/ Criteria	Market
• Science based or consensus based • Definition & roles of stakeholders • Definition of consensus	• Third party certification • Self designated • Degree to which impacts should be measured • Accessibility • Strictness of verification protocol	• Full or one life-cycle phase • Environmental and/or social issues • Determining the "relevance" of criteria • Multi-attribute or just being clear on the scope • Locally adapted, or a globally applied standard	• N/A no criteria

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What purchasers look for in ecolabels

- Governance:
  - Open, transparent and multi-stakeholder standard setting process, preferably science-based
  - Transparent, independent, verification processes, preferably third party certified
- Standard:
  - Transparent criteria; Multi-attribute and/or focused on relevant environmental or social issues for product category; increasingly full life cycle.
- Market:
  - Enough products certified in marketplace to meet requirements; competition between suppliers
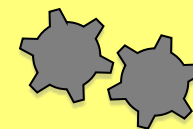
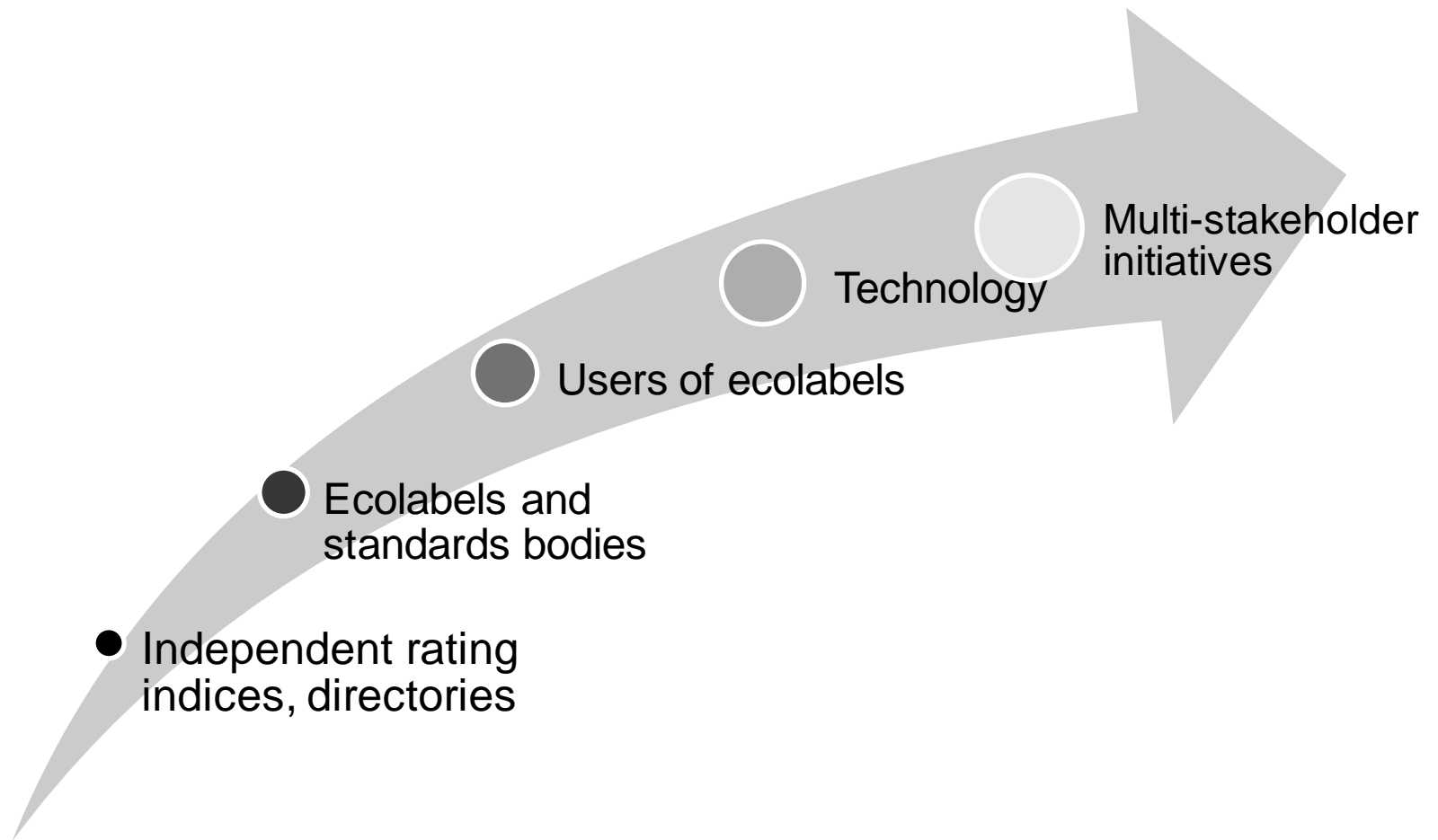# Trends: Signs of convergence

Consolidation

Mutual recognition

Interoperability

Trends: Drivers of convergence

Multi-stakeholder initiatives

Technology

Users of ecolabels

Ecolabels and standards bodies

Independent rating indices, directories

Implications - general

- Answer to "what is a good ecolabel" will depend on:

  who is asking the question, and importantly – why

- Most agreement around governance systems – best practices for creating and managing an ecolabel.

- Scientific and expert knowledge is required to assess the relevance and credibility of the underlying standards & criteria

- Market data (# of certifications issued by product and market share) is currently a critical missing piece of public information.

- To assess, comparable information and data is needed.

Thank you and questions

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