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# Green Procurement and Environmental Labelling

Professor: Lela Mélon

Office hours: upon request

Course Type: Elective

Credits: 3 ECTS

Term: Third

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## Course Description

The development of more ecological or greener products is not enough to generate a substantial change in consumer behavior. For this, it is necessary to convey the message clearly and unequivocally to the consumer, as well as find mechanisms for them to choose to buy them. This subject will provide key information on how to communicate correctly through eco-labeling of products, as well as on mechanisms to stimulate their consumption such as green purchasing. The course provides practical information to the student to be able to identify and interpret the environmental labels, eco-labels and seals present on the products. Provides knowledge about the different types of ecolabels (Type I, II and III), what they are, how they can be obtained and how to apply them correctly. Likewise, it provides information and tools to identify green products and green purchasing strategies at the business level and provides information on alternatives to incorporate environmental requirements in service contracts. Students develop a critical spirit in relation to environmental communication and the purchase of products.

## Objectives (learning outcomes) and competences

The present course aims at conveying green procurement concepts and principles. The exercise of green procurement requires a balanced judgment as each purchase entails different environmental impacts, meaning that the challenges and opportunities for exercising green procurement differ with each situation and are unique in a sense. Ideally organisations search for innovative solutions in applying the concepts and seek to continuously improve. Green procurement can prove to be challenging as organisations work with precise language, whereas environmental responsibility is contextual and will

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vary from one product to another, from one organization to another, and also across time with the development of industry and evolution of our knowledge. Such contextual knowledge of environmental impact is the cause for green procurement being more than just purchasing from an approved list. There in fact is no suitable replacement for a case-specific holistic, full life cycle review of environmental risks and opportunities. This course aims to equip students with a working knowledge of the most significant eco-labelling frameworks and practices, as based on the latest EU policy on sustainable products and the efforts of private organizations to that effect.

The goals incorporate the following learning outcomes:

1. Understanding the EU policy and strategy on green procurement and the role and position of environmental labelling in green procurement
2. Having the capability of carrying out a balanced discussion on advantages of buying green
3. Having the capacity to explain the legal and market requirements on green procurement and their future developments
4. The capacity of evaluating goods and services using a wide range of environmental terms, claims and certifications.
5. Being capable of integrating green procurement considerations into procurement solicitation and contracting documents.
6. The capability of identifying and understanding the different ecolabels: environmental labels and declarations. ISO type I and ISO type II environmental labelling, self-declared environmental claims in the form of statements, ISO type III environmental declarations.

## Methodology

The course is divided in eight 3-hour sessions, which will combine *ex-catedra* teaching with problem-based learning, which will entail vivid two-way discussions based on case law and practical cases. Active preparation of students is required for these classes as cases will need to be read in advance. The class entails individual as well as group work. While the class entails knowing and applying the law, the individual work and work in groups entails the application of law on particular business cases.

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### Evaluation criteria

Apart from lectures, course activities therefore imply course and reading assignments, as well as active participation by students. The evaluation of the course will combine continuous assessment and a final examination according to the following criteria:

- Midterm (session 4): 40%
- Course assignments: 20%
- Final exam: 40%

It is possible to obtain additional 10% from outstanding active in-class participation.

### Contents

#### **Week 1 and 2 – Introduction to Green Procurement**

In the first two weeks we will be discovering the notion of green procurement in organisations, its development at the international level and then at the EU level, identifying climate change concerns as a driver of changes in environmental law on all levels:

- Introduction to environmental criteria in purchasing decisions and its complexity
- The life cycle assessment approach and contrast between the traditional and green procurement
- The challenges of green procurement and the search for the remedies

#### **Week 3 and 4 – Environmental labelling 101**

The third and fourth week we will be diving deep into the role of environmental labelling as a remedy for challenges of green procurement, exploring the notion of sustainability and climate change, unveiling the role of labelling in corporate practices and the guidance at the EU level and globally on the matter.

- Presentation of the nature and aim of using ecolabelling
- Defining and presenting different environmental labels and declarations:
  - ISO type I
  - ISO type II
  - ISO type III

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- Cradle to Cradle certified, ENERGY STAR®, Environmental Choice, EU Ecolabel, Nordic Swan, Blue Angel, Green Seal, FSC, LEED, Environmental product declarations based on life cycle assessment

### Week 5 (midterm)

#### Week 6 – Environmental labels used in the frame of Type I ecolabel

Defining in detail Type I ecolabel and presenting different global, national and local ecolabels. Based on concrete ecolabels, critically assessing the possibility of feasibility of use in green procurement.

#### Week 7 – Environmental labels used in the frame of Type II ecolabel

Defining in detail Type II ecolabel and presenting different global, national and local ecolabels. Based on concrete ecolabels, critically assessing the possibility of feasibility of use in green procurement.

#### Week 8 – Environmental labels used in the frame of Type II ecolabel

Defining in detail Type III ecolabel and presenting different global, national and local ecolabels. Based on concrete ecolabels, critically assessing the possibility of feasibility of use in green procurement.

## Bio of Professor

**Dr. Lela Mélon**, a former Marie Curie Research Fellow at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona, and the 2021 Emerging Sustainability Leader Awardee (by World Sustainability Foundation), has a legal and economics background. Currently the Executive Director of the Planetary Wellbeing Institutional Framework at the Pompeu Fabra University and the academic director and a professor of the postgraduate programme Sustainability Transition Management and Climate Emergency at ESCI-UPF, she is specialized in EU law, with a main focus on corporate conduct and sustainability, on which she published the book *Shareholder Primacy and Global Business* (Routledge 2018). She is currently researching policy coherence for sustainability at the EU level, focusing on corporate law policies as well as the challenges of policy and legislative barriers in the existing EU business law framework for sustainable corporate conduct and sustainable outcomes. Besides being active in the academic field, she created and implemented a three-step systemic approach towards sustainability, which entailed the insertion of separate sustainable corporate law course in academic curricula and a simultaneous sustainable revision of the

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## MSc in Sustainability Management

existing and well-established academic curricula in economics and law. Additionally to the abovementioned, Dr. Lela Mélon is a lecturer at the Masters on Planetary Health (carried out jointly by the UPF, UOC and IS Global) in the course of Global and multilevel governance in planetary health; a lecturer at ESSEC Paris in the course Sustainable Finance and Law in Sustainability Management; a lecturer at CEI Barcelona in the course Companies as actors in Sustainable Development; and a lecturer at UPF Masters in Global and European Law in the course Sustainable Business Law, which she developed in the framework of her Marie Curie funded SCOM project.

### Reading Materials/ Bibliography/Resources

1. Bratt C. (2011) »Assessment of eco-labelling and green procurement from a strategic sustainability perspective« Blekinge Institute of Technology Licentiate Dissertation Series.
2. Rubik et. al. »The Future of Eco-labelling: Making Environmental Product Information Systems Effective« (Routledge 2017)
3. Tullani and Dahiya (2017) »A Turn in Green Purchase Intentions through Eco-Labelling, 5(11) International Journal of Engineering Research and Technology (IJERT).
4. ISO 14020:2000, Environmental labels and declarations – General principles.
5. ISO 14021:2016, Environmental labels and declarations – Self-declared environmental claims (Type II environmental labelling).
6. ISO 14024:1999, Environmental labels and declarations – Type I environmental labelling Principles and procedures.
7. ISO 14025:2006, Environmental Labels and Declarations – Type III Environmental Declarations – Principles and procedures
8. ISO 14040:2006, Environmental Management – Life Cycle Assessment – principles and framework.
9. ISO 14044:2006, Environmental Management – Life Cycle Assessment – requirements and guidelines.

As the field is changing and being modified, the professor will be providing additional materials during the class, making them readily available for discussion in class.

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