

**Development of agrifood standards – VanuGAP and Pacific
Organic Standards - and Pre-launching of the
Sustainability Claims Portal in the Pacific Region**

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Sustainability Claims Portal

www.unctad.org/scp

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Magic Word: Sustainability

Sustainability: an ambiguous, “slippery as eel” word meaning different thing to different people §

Sustainability: “meet the needs of the present generations without compromising the needs of the future generations.”

[*Our common future*, Brundtland Commission, 1987].

Sustainability: integrates 3 intricately linked responsibilities/pillars: economic, social and ecological

Sustainability: helps ensure agrifood supply chains become;

- economically feasible
- socially acceptable
- environmentally benign



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Sustainability: the trade-off between the 3 pillars – economic, social and ecological – is critical



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What are sustainability claims?

- distinctive agrifood product labels that “**claim**” to comply or integrate pillars of **sustainability**:
- economic, social, and environment

However, there is “**NO**” 100% sustainability standard in the global agrifood marketplace!

The evidence: “*The Seven Sins of Greenwashing*”

(TerraChoice Environmental Marketing, Nov 2007)



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Greenwashing?

- most common mistakes or deliberately falsified claims on products

Seven Sins of Greenwashing?

1. Sin of Vagueness
2. Sin of Fibbing
3. Sin of Lesser of Two Evils
4. Sin of ...
5. Sin of ...
7. Sin of ...
7. Sin of Worshiping False Labels

Example – Sin of Worshiping False Labels (7)

- 98% of product making environmental claims commit at least one of the Sins of Greenwashing
- 25% of products (4,000 reviewed) make certification labels on products without the hard science to back it up!



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Who's driving the food safety & sustainability agenda?

- **Consumers** with “deep pockets” in developed & emerging economies
- **High incomes** & changing lifestyles – emerging & BRIC's
- Significant **structural changes** - transnational food companies control global food chains from the ‘farm to the fork’.
- **Institutional level** - weak traceability & transparency mechanisms; lax or failed compliance enforcement mechanisms on labeling laws and technical regulations





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Growing food safety & quality concerns:

Increasing incidences of **food –
and water-borne diseases**

Dioxin

Aflatoxin

Food contamination scares

Recalls §

BSE (Bovine Spongiform
Encephalopathy or “mad cow
disease”) §

Avian flu in poultry

Melamine in dairy - infant milk -
products

Salmonella in peanut products

Risks associated with genetically
modified crops (**GMOs**)

Growth hormones in animals

Pesticide residues

Rapid increase in food safety
related **law suites** §



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Growing environmental concerns:

- Climate change - increasing green-house-gas (GHG) emissions
- Deforestation
- Rising costs of food and productive inputs (e.g. energy and agrochemicals)
- Extensive dependency on hydrocarbons
- Alternative sources of energy (e.g. wind, solar, biofuels)



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Corporate social responsibility (CSR) concerns:

- Global food and beverage companies: now increasingly using sustainability to;
- rethink and retool business processes, stakeholder relationships
- environmental and social impacts
- reduce production costs
- increase innovation
- improve quality & performance
- increase overall resilience of company in the wake of current global financial and economic crisis





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Types of sustainability claims & labels:

- Organic standards - 
- Fair-trade standards - 
- Environmental/ecological standards - 
- Geographical indications - 





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Benefits of sustainability claims & labels:

- Products certified promote sustainable agricultural & adhere to socially acceptable practices
- Certification bodies “shoulder the advertising bills” when promoting their products
- **Dollars & sense:**
 - **\$US 2.6 billion** - Fair-trade products global market share
 - **\$US 46 billion** – Organic products global market share
- **Mixed bag of results:**
 - Some claims improve livelihoods, increase incomes & respect environ.
 - Others expensive
 - Most sustainability claims labels are confusing to consumers



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What is & objs of the Portal?

- A web based information tool to:
- Enhance accountability, increase transparency on trade in agricultural commodities marketed under sustainability claims
- Define requirements for organic production, fair-trade, environmental and social accountability schemes.



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Users of the Portal:

Provide ACP producers and EU consumers with:

- **access** to key data & info on existing sustainability schemes
- **minimum** requirements for small producers, cooperatives & producer organizations (e.g. VCMB)
- **objective** advice on sustainability schemes available to ACP producers and, info on the benefits and constraints of participating in certification schemes



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Progress thus far:

- Stakeholder consultations April 2008 – Brussels
- Development & constant improvement of the portal
- Up-load info on sustainability claims; certifier requirements; contact details of sustainability label providers; general info on sustainability issues; key documents
- Portal available in English and French
- Pre-launch portal – **Port Vial, Vanuatu**
- Regional workshops on sustainability claims
- Evaluate, monitor & update portal to “be responsive” to needs of clientele – ACP countries & EU consumers



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Where to from here?

The Portal's meant help you negotiate & make informed choices in the difficult terrain in international trade by providing you with;

- **Affordable access** to credible information on sustainability claims
- Help us, UNCTAD, develop this tool to help reflect your needs & aspirations
- Without your input, the SCP will «be an end in itself

- Focal Points in selected PICs
- Roll-out of SCP in selected PICS – Phase II



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Check us
out at
[www.unctad
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Thank you
Merci
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