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# Assessing sustainable practices in food production and consumption



## Analysis of Eco-Labeling Tool Pilot Results



## Erasmus+ European Youth Together (ERASMUS-LS)

**Proposal No.:** 101185473

**Project Acronym:** FOOP

**Project Title:** FOODPrint

**Deliverable Title:** D2.3 / D3.3 – Food Eco-Labeling System Development and Transnational Implementation Report



### 1. Executive Summary

This deliverable presents the development, testing, and transnational implementation of the Food Eco-Labeling System under:

- WP2 – Capacity Building (Task 2.3: Development of the Food Eco-Labeling System)
- WP3 – Youth in Action (Task 3.3: Practical Needs Analysis using the Eco-Labeling methodology)

The Eco-Labeling System was developed as an innovative sustainability assessment framework based on Doughnut Economics principles, translating complex environmental and social indicators into an accessible A–E grading scale.

The system was tested as a structured project activity in all six partner countries:

- Netherlands • Germany • Greece • Romania • Slovakia • North Macedonia

A total of 60 “Future Food Influencers” participated in the activity. 44 structured product assessments were completed and analyzed.



Following the initial testing phase, the consortium partners collectively decided to continue applying and testing the Eco-Labeling tool with larger participant groups in subsequent project activities, including the Innovation Factory and the Great European Bake Off Challenge. This ensures progressive scaling of the methodology within the project lifecycle.

The Eco-Labeling tool has been published on the official FOODPrint project website, allowing broader accessibility and transparency. The consortium will continue monitoring its effectiveness, collecting user feedback, and assessing its educational impact throughout the remaining project duration.

The implementation confirms strong educational impact, high transnational added value, and measurable progress toward the project’s specific objectives (SO1–SO4).

## **2. Relevance**

### **2.1 Alignment with Project Objectives**

This deliverable directly contributes to the specific objectives defined in the FOODPrint application:

- SO1: Cultivating Cross-Organizational Partnerships
- SO2: Empowering and Educating Young Leaders
- SO3: Awareness-Raising and Advocacy for Sustainable Living
- SO4: Engaging Youth in Policy and Environmental Action

The Eco-Labeling System operationalizes sustainability education by transforming awareness into structured, measurable youth-led action.

### **2.2 Addressing Identified Needs**

The implementation responds directly to the needs identified in the proposal:

- N1: Educating youth on sustainable food systems
- N2: Promoting youth-led sustainable initiatives
- N3: Introducing innovative engagement methodologies
- N4: Strengthening youth networks and skills
- N5: Supporting behavioral shifts toward sustainable consumption

Survey findings confirm that gaps in sustainability literacy, transparency, and food system awareness remain significant across partner countries.



## 3. Quality of Project Design and Implementation

### 3.1 Concept and Methodology

The Food Eco-Labeling System was developed under WP2, Task 2.3.

The methodology integrates three sustainability pillars:

#### 3.1.1 Environmental Dimension

- Climate footprint
- Water footprint
- Local sourcing
- Seasonality
- Processing level
- Packaging
- Deforestation-linked ingredients

#### 3.1.2 Social Foundation

- Labor rights
- Ethical certification (e.g., FairTrade)
- Human rights risks
- Corporate transparency
- Multinational company involvement

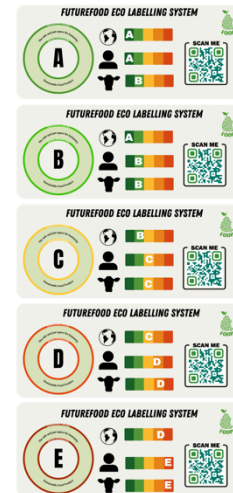
#### 3.1.3 Animal Welfare & Aquatic Sustainability

- Animal welfare labels
- Living conditions
- Responsible antibiotic/hormone use
- Sustainable seafood certification
- Overfishing status

Each product was assessed and translated into an A–E grade:

- A: Highly sustainable
- B: Above average
- C: Moderate
- D: Low sustainability
- E: Unsustainable

This grading structure simplifies complex sustainability indicators into accessible consumer guidance while maintaining analytical depth.





## 3.2 Transnational Implementation (WP3 – Task 3.3)

Under Task 3.3 the Eco-Labeling System was implemented and tested in all partner countries as a coordinated project activity.

Each partner organization facilitated the activity locally with its selected Future Food Influencers, ensuring:

- Equal partner engagement
- Comparable implementation structure
- Shared methodology
- Cross-country coherence

Youth conducted product assessments in:

- School and university canteens
- Supermarkets
- Fast-food chains

Participants worked in national groups while applying the same common scoring framework. This ensured methodological consistency and cross-regional comparability.

A total of 60 youth were involved. 44 completed structured product assessments were collected and analyzed.

The activity confirms that the Eco-Labeling System is adaptable across different national food markets and socio-economic contexts.

## 3.3 Monitoring and KPIs

The implementation contributes to the following KPIs defined in the application:

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
Future Food Influencers selected	0	60	60
Youth involved in Needs Analysis	0	30	44 assessments
Transnational testing of methodology	0	6 countries	6 countries

The deliverable meets and exceeds participation thresholds.

## 4. Results



### 4.1 Environmental Findings

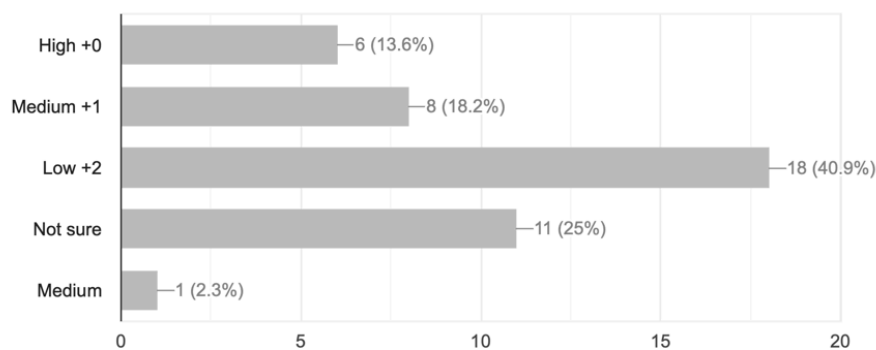
Key trends identified:

- High uncertainty regarding water footprint (approx. 38–40%)
- High uncertainty regarding local sourcing (approx. 40%)
- 67% identified unnecessary packaging
- Over 50% classified products as highly processed

This indicates growing awareness but limited access to transparent sustainability information.

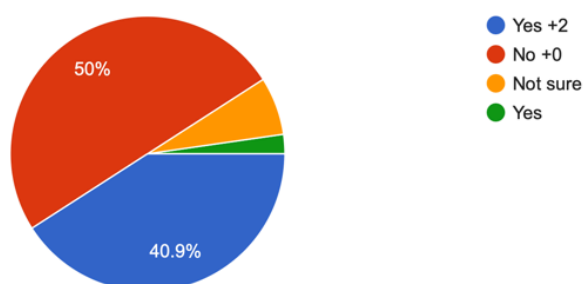
How high is the climate footprint of the product? Tip: Look up the average GHG for the product category.

0 / 44 correct responses



Is the product locally sourced? Explanation: Local sourcing reduces emissions and supports local economies.

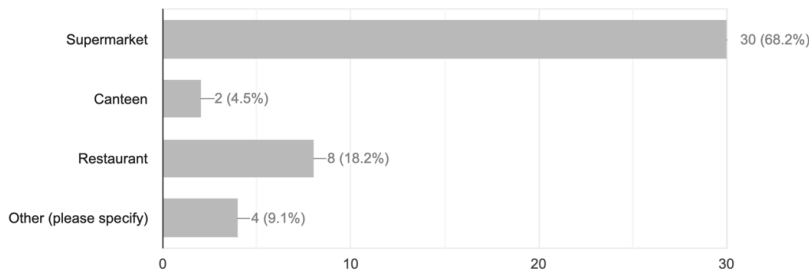
44 responses





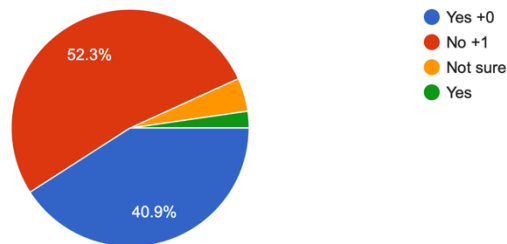
Where did you find it?

0 / 44 correct responses



Is it highly processed (many ingredients)? Explanation: Highly processed foods generally use more energy, additives, and packaging.

44 responses



## 4.2 Social Transparency

Findings indicate:

- Low visibility of ethical certifications
- Limited clarity on labor rights compliance
- High uncertainty regarding human rights risks

Transparency remains a structural barrier to informed consumer decision-making.

## 4.3 Animal Welfare

- 73% unsure about animal welfare labels
- 43% unsure about antibiotic/hormone responsibility
- Limited awareness of sustainable seafood certification

Animal welfare literacy appears significantly lower than climate awareness across partner countries.

## 5. Impact

### 5.1 Youth Competence Development

Participants demonstrated:

- Increased sustainability literacy
- Stronger critical thinking skills
- Enhanced understanding of food systems
- Greater confidence in discussing environmental issues
- Practical application of Doughnut Economics principles

The activity fostered active citizenship and strengthened youth agency.

### 5.2 Transnational Added Value

The Eco-Labelling System was tested in all six partner countries, ensuring equal consortium ownership and shared innovation.

This approach:

- Validated the methodology across diverse regional contexts
- Strengthened cross-organizational collaboration
- Reinforced peer learning across Western, Eastern, and Southern Europe
- Demonstrated scalability beyond the consortium

The structured transnational implementation fully supports the objectives of European Youth Together.



### 5.3 Policy and Systemic Relevance

The results reveal systemic sustainability challenges:

- Over-packaging
- Limited corporate transparency

- Information asymmetry in food supply chains
- Low visibility of ethical and welfare certifications

These findings provide a basis for future advocacy, dissemination, and policy dialogue under WP4.



## 6. Sustainability, Scalability and Further Development

The Eco-Labelling System demonstrates strong replication potential:

- Can be digitized via QR integration
- Can be linked to AI-supported databases (Task 3.4 alignment)
- Can be integrated into youth education modules
- Can be adopted by retailers or local municipalities
- Can be transferred to additional EU countries

In addition, partners collected structured feedback from participant groups following the testing phase. Participants recommended:

- Including clearer indication of country-specific context
- Adding testing location information (e.g., supermarket, school canteen, fast-food chain)
- Providing simplified user guidance
- Technically upgrading the tool

Based on this feedback, partners agreed to further develop the Eco-Labelling tool into a more technically advanced format, potentially transforming it into a digital application that would be easier to use for educational purposes and scalable in formal and non-formal learning environments.

A concrete example of impact is observed in Romania, where a teacher involved in the project expressed commitment to integrating the Eco-Labelling challenge into her technology course. She decided to engage her students in applying the methodology as part of classroom activities, demonstrating immediate educational transferability and institutional uptake.

The methodology is adaptable, scalable, and aligned with EU sustainability frameworks.

The Food Eco-Labelling System represents a successful innovative output under FOODPrint (FOOP).

The deliverable confirms that:

- Youth can effectively apply structured sustainability frameworks.
- Practical, hands-on activities increase engagement and ownership.
- Significant transparency gaps exist within current food systems.

- Transnational cooperation strengthens methodological robustness.
- The tool demonstrates strong potential for digital transformation and curriculum integration.



The Eco-Labelling System is:

- Holistic
- Educational
- Transnational
- Action-oriented
- Replicable

The implementation validates its relevance for long-term sustainability education, youth empowerment, and cross-European cooperation.

