



## Deliverable 4.3: Report summarising the findings and the best practices in the retailer worlds



## DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION

DOCUMENT TITLE	Report summarising the findings and the best practices in the retailer worlds
DOCUMENT ID	D4.3
DOCUMENT VERSION	V. Final
DOCUMENT TYPE	Report
DISSEMINATION LEVEL	Public
DUE DATE	28th February 2022
SUBMISSION DATE	28th February 2022
AUTHOR	SONAE

## HISTORY OF CHANGES

VERSION	DATE	CHANGE
V1.0	18th February 2022	Initial contents



# INDEX

## 1. Introduction

## 2. New energy labels implementation: the retailers experience & best practices

2.1. Articulation between manufacturers and retailers

2.2. Informing consumers during the transition

2.3. Reaching out to other retailers

2.4. Stocking out

## 3. Recommendations for future implementations



## 1. Introduction

As expected, retailers had a highly relevant role in the implementation of the new energy labels. As mentioned in D4.1, retailers play a central role in this transition given their link to the entire value-chain of appliances commercialization: manufacturers, installers and after sales services providers, public authorities and end consumers, both corporate (B2B - business to business setting) and individual (B2C - business to consumer setting).

They worked with manufacturers to ensure a correct transition between the two labeling schemes and the management of stocks, compliant with the new rules. They implemented the new labeling both in-store and online. And they also actively communicated the new labels to individual consumers, helping clarify questions and make informed choices. Thus, they faced the questions and concerns from these market actors regarding the “why”, “what”, “how” and “what for” of the new label.

The experience was, however, anything but smooth, aggravated by the unexpected effects of a worldwide pandemic.

This document describes the main achievements and challenges faced by retailers throughout the transition and aims at listing recommendations for future waves of the new labeling implementation.

## 2. New energy labels implementation: the retailers experience and best practices

In this section we highlight the main achievements and challenges of the implementation of the new labels. These reflections are aimed at highlighting some recommendations and best practices.

### 2.1. Articulation between manufacturers and retailers

Given the close relationship between retailers and appliances manufacturers, the dialogue between them during the preparation stage for the transition increased because, on both sides, questions regarding compliance and management of stocks were raised. This was particularly true for suppliers outside of Europe that are traditionally less familiar with changes in European legislation and that need to face a longer time-to-market considering the maritime shipment of products.

At national and European level, BELT partners liaised with manufacturers and their associations (APPLiA, AGEFE, etc) to exchange information and understand how the transition implementation was flowing.

But two situations caused some concerns from the retailers’ perspective:

- (1) from the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020, manufacturers were obliged to start shipping existing models of products with rescaled labels into the market with both labels (old and new) included inside the packaging. But retailers were prohibited to display the labels, and thus communicate them, to



consumers before 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021. This actually meant that consumers received products with the double labeling without being told by retailers why that was happening.

- (2) This situation was heightened by the fact that at least one large European manufacturer started shipping to retailers' stores, in the summer of 2020, appliances already with the new labels, way before retailers could display them and before them being able to conveniently train their staff to answer any coming questions from consumers of installers. Upon re-analyzing the regulation, it was clear that this was not prohibited, but it represented an important and dangerous gap between what was allowed manufacturers to do (placing newly labeled appliances in the market), and what was allowed to retailers (to communicate the new labels only from the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2021 onwards).

This situation should be considered, and addressed, in future implementations of new labeling schemes as they generate confusion in consumers' perception, and diminished trust, and pose to retailers some challenges to address this from a supply-chain and consumer satisfaction perception.

**As a best practice, retailers recommend that, throughout the planning and implementation of new waves of labeling, the dialogue with consumer associations and manufacturers is recurrent to ensure a continuous alignment.**

**25 June 2020**  
A Workshop and a Webinar for the energy label



**WORKSHOP | morning session 10:00 – 12:00**

This section is dedicated to the presentation of the communication strategies that relevant stakeholders are adopting, the challenges they are facing and the training activities they are organizing.

Held by ECODOM, ALTROCONSUMO, APPLIA Europa, WORTEN.

For whom: all stakeholders involved in the rescaling: Producers, Retailers, EU Commission representatives, Associations



**WEBINAR | afternoon session 14:30 – 16:30**

This section is dedicated to the presentation to market actors of the operative details of the new energy label implementation.

Held by: ECODOM, SOFIES, WORTEN

Fig. 1 – Online workshop promoted by BELT on the 25th June 2020 directed at retailers and manufacturers and promoting a joint dialogue



## 2.2. Informing consumers during the transition

The issue raised in section 2.1 represented an additional challenge when it came to communicate the new scheme to consumers.

This challenge was heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic situation that, for example, prevented retailers to do in store sessions to explain the new labels, as social distancing and limitations in the number of consumers per m<sup>2</sup> were in place in commercial space at several European countries. In Portugal, for example, SONAE/WORTEN and DECO were planning joint in store sessions to explain the new labels and address questions or concerns but their implementation was unfortunately not possible.

Thus, retailers had to rely on videos, digital communication, leaflets and their recently trained staff to address any questions raised by consumers.

Also, for a considerable number of months, it was not clear what the new QR-code on the labels would display meaning that training and communication materials needed to be prepared without actually knowing what details could be given as to what consumers would find when scanning the code.

BELT partners, in liaison with LABEL 2020 and in close collaboration with retailers' associations, tried to overcome the obstacles encountered.

**As a best practice, retailers recommend the usage of an integrated communication strategy to inform and support consumers. This means taking advantage of all channels, including digital media (videos, websites and others), social media, in store communication through displays and flyers, as well as workshops or conferences (both online and presential) to reinforce the messages across all channels and to all consumer audiences. The adaption of contents in the local languages is of key importance also.**





Fig. 2 – In-store communication of new labels by BELT partner WORTEN

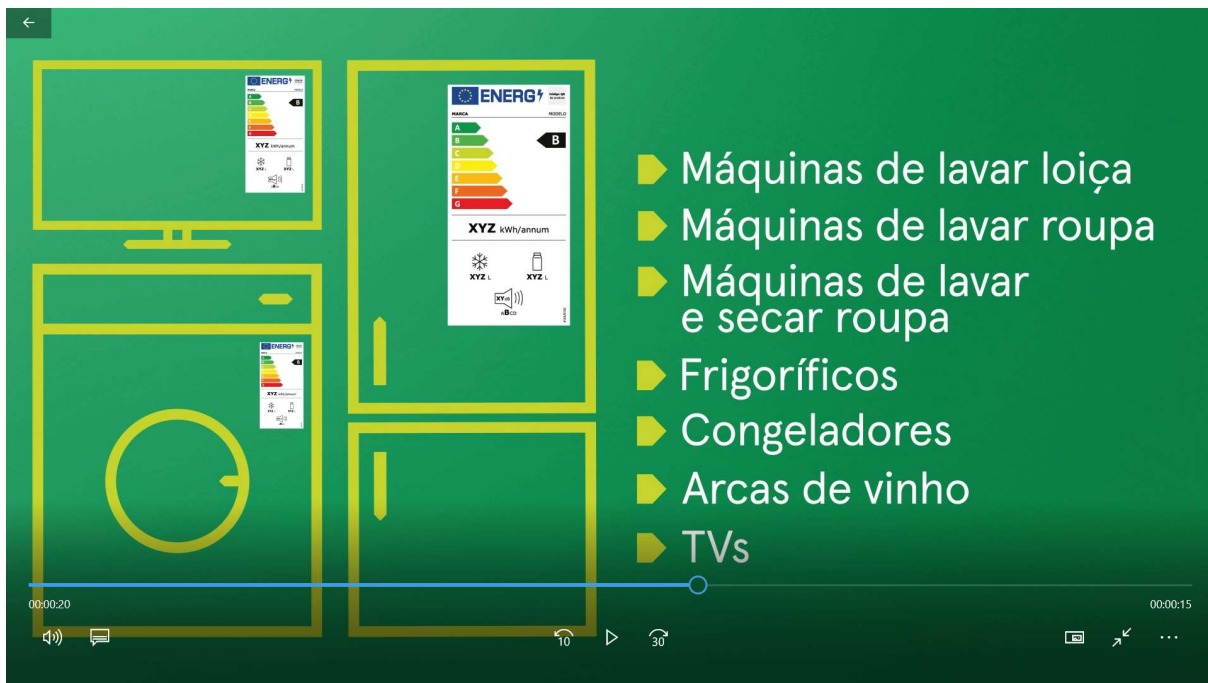


Fig. 3– Video used in-store by BELT partner WORTEN





Fig. 4– Dedicated page at website of BELT partner WORTEN

### 2.3. Reaching out to other retailers

Reaching out to retailers outside of the BELT consortium, and helping them navigate the labels' transition, was a goal of the project. Thus, **BELT partners developed materials to guide and train retailers in several European countries.**








Fig. 5 – [Guidelines](#) for retailers jointly prepared by BELT and LABEL2020

**BELT also organized and participated in events aimed at informing retailers also through their associations and they recommend these initiatives as a way to share insights and involve several retailers, large and small, in discussing the adoption of the new labels. The BELT consortium considers this a best practice for future implementations.**





**Convite**

**A NOVA ETIQUETA ENERGÉTICA EUROPEIA**  
**Implementação e responsabilidades**


**Webinar**  
 28 de setembro  
 1h às 12h30


No contexto da entrada em vigor do novo regulamento europeu relativo à etiquetagem energética de produtos e das responsabilidades dos diferentes agentes de mercado, a APED promove, em parceria com a ADENE - Agência para a Energia e com o apoio da DGEG - Direção Geral de Energia e Geologia, um webinar que visa apresentar as principais novidades e esclarecer as questões associadas à sua implementação.


**AGENDA**

- 11h00 Boas vindas
- 11h10 Etiquetagem Energética, o contexto Português
- 11h20 - A nova etiqueta energética Europeia
  - Contexto e regulamentos
  - Base de dados de produtos Europeia
  - Responsabilidades dos agentes da cadeia de mercado
  - Calendário de implementação
  - O projeto Label 2020 em Portugal
  - A experiência do retalho (Worten) e o projeto BELT
- 12h00 Perguntas e Respostas
- 12h30 Fim da sessão

Agradecemos confirmação até 23 de setembro para [geral@aped.pt](mailto:geral@aped.pt).  
 Posteriormente será enviado link para videoconferência MS Teams.







Este projeto foi financiado pela União Europeia no âmbito do programa de Investigação e Inovação Horizonte 2020 sob os contratos No 847042, Label 2020 e No. 847043, BELT.

Fig. 6 – Online workshop promoted by BELT, LABEL 2020 and APED (Portuguese National Association of Retailers) on the 28th September 2020 directed at retailers



“ **Agenda provisional:**

11:00-11:05 Bienvenida y presentación de la situación marco. Mónica Vidal (ECODES).

11:05-11:15 El nuevo etiquetado energético.

Presentación del proyecto Horizon 2020: LABEL 2020. Marina Gros (ECODES).

11:15-11:20 Presentación del proyecto Horizon 2020: BELT (Boost Energy Label Take Up). (OCU).

11:20- 12:15 Aproximación sectorial, qué retos nos plantea el nuevo etiquetado energético y cómo nos preparamos para solventarlos:

- Adelaida González. Representante del Instituto para la Diversificación y Ahorro de la Energía (IDAE).
- David Molina. Representante de la Asociación Nacional de Fabricantes e Importadores de Electrodomésticos (ANFEL).
- Distribuidores (Worten).
- Comercio online en el mercado español (BSH).
- Roberto Bonilla. Representante de OCU y del Proyecto BELT para España y (OCU).

12:15-12:30 Turno de preguntas. Conclusiones y cierre de la jornada.

1 de octubre de 2020

11 horas, en formato online

Fig. 7 – Online workshop promoted by BELT and LABEL 2020 for Spanish retailers on the 1st October 2020

But it should be noted that the appliances retail sector is composed of many different players of diverse sizes: from large international chains implemented in several countries such as Media Markt to small local retailers with one or a few stores. Some are fully specialized in electronics and appliances whilst others sell a diverse range of home apparel, including appliances.

Typically, the medium to large scale retailers are easier to reach and have dedicated departments – marketing and communications, sustainability, supply-chain and others – to address such a transition. They also tend to take part in retailers associations, at a European and/or national level, which makes it easier for them to access information and training materials regarding new labelling.

But that is not the case for small and very small retailers that are less prone to be members of such associations. Therefore, identifying and reaching out to them is harder.

As this situation was promptly identified during the implementation of the project, BELT partners designed some special initiatives to reach out to smaller retailers such as identifying them and sending them relevant communication material that they could use to inform their consumers and staff.

**As a general recommendation, highlighted in section 3, a special consideration should be taken into strategies to reach out to these smaller retailers.**



## 2.4. Stocking out

Another issue detected during the implementation of the new label was the difficulty in stocking out products that would be discontinued in the market, and that only displayed the old label. These products could be sold in the market only during the specified transition period.

But this proved to be a hard challenge for retailers as the situation was heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic context that disrupted the usual flow of appliances sales. Additionally, it was clear that many manufacturers took the opportunity to launch new models, with upgraded efficiency, thus discontinuing several models. Therefore, in several countries retailers were left, at the end of the transition period, with many units of discontinued models of appliances still to be sold and prevented to do so.

If this situation is a nuisance from the point of view of stock management and retail operations, it is, additionally and perhaps more importantly, unreasonable from the point of view sustainability. For many retailers, it was also unclear if they could donate those appliances.

## 3. Recommendations for future implementations

Given all the questions and concerns highlighted in the previous sections, BELT partners collected and share in this document some recommendations for future implementations of the new labels, taking into consideration the perspective and experience of retailers:

### Articulation between manufacturers and retailers

Special care should be devoted into analyzing and discussing the effects of the regulatory framework in the liaison between manufacturers and retailers. As highlighted in section 2.1, the way that the obligations and restrictions of both market agents are designed will greatly influence how the preparation, implementation and transition stages will progress, and they will ultimately have an impact on consumers' perception as to what is going on.

Therefore, regulations should be double-checked in order to ensure that there is a coherence between processes on the manufacturers' side and on the retailers' side, considering as much as possible their impact on consumers.

Retailers, manufacturers and consumer associations should be involved in joint discussion groups to ensure a fine-tuning of future waves of the new labels.

In this regard, within the BELT project activities a Task Force consisting of some APPLiA Italia members and AIREs has been established with the aim of ensuring dialogue and collaboration among manufacturers and between manufacturers and retailers. The Task Force was especially active in preparation of the transition period of the implementation of the new energy labelling system. More details regarding the activities



performed by BELT to facilitate the cooperation between manufacturers and retailers are reported in deliverable *D5.2. Report on the performed campaigns*.

### **Informing consumers during the transition**

As highlighted in section 2.2 with the issue of the QR-code, the timely preparation and disclosure of all elements pertaining to the new labels is of great importance to ensure that market actors, such as manufacturers, retailers, consumer associations and others, can prepare in advance all the messages, materials and initiatives designed to help consumers through the transition and to, ultimately, help them to make more informed decisions regarding efficient equipment.

### **Reaching out to smaller retailers**

Market actors working on the next waves of new labeling implementation should consider the challenges in reaching out to smaller retailers as soon as possible in their implementation roadmaps. If the products being rescaled are sold through smaller retailers, then dedicated strategies should be designed in the early stages of those implementation projects. BELT partners recommend strategies such as:

- mapping those retailers per geography, including their contacts, and keeping them updated
- including, in the training and communication strategies, channels that allow for a wider reach to these retailers (communication by post, radio, TV and similar channels)
- promote visits to smaller retailers

### **Stocking out**

As described in section 2.4, the process of stocking out discontinued models is very dependent on market dynamics which are difficult to foresee or to control for retailers. Thus, special consideration should be given to the transition periods to ensure a correct stock out of products already in the market.

Additionally, a clear definition of alternative processes (for example donating discontinued models not sold) should be considered.

