

INFORMATION ON SIEGELKLARHEIT

Why is there *Siegelklarheit*?

Voluntary sustainability standards are an important instrument for enforcing environmental and social standards in (global) supply chains and promoting sustainable consumption. In this context, standards can play an important role by compensating for weak legal requirements, closing legal gaps beyond specific national legislation and promoting consistency at the international level. In recent years, the landscape of product labels has expanded considerably, which can sometimes be confusing for consumers. This is where *Siegelklarheit* (which is German for “Clarity of labels”) comes in.

Who is *Siegelklarheit* for and what is its objective?

The target group is German consumers. *Siegelklarheit* provides information about label for different product groups and evaluates their environmental friendliness, social compatibility and credibility. The aim is to promote sustainable purchasing decisions.

Who is behind *Siegelklarheit*?

The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is in charge of the portal. The *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) provides the secretariat on behalf of the BMZ and is thus responsible for day-to-day implementation.

Which product groups are assessed for *Siegelklarheit*?

Currently, labels are assessed in the product groups textiles, paper, leather, detergents & cleaning agents, mobile phones, laptops & co. and natural stone. In the product groups foodstuff and timber, labels are currently presented with brief information only and without an assessment.

How does the rating on *Siegelklarheit* work?

Siegelklarheit is not a standard of its own, but a tool for comparative analysis of standards. As a benchmarking initiative, *Siegelklarheit* works with a well-founded evaluation and comparison methodology, the Sustainability Standards Comparison Tool (SSCT). Benchmarking refers to the comparative analysis of standards based on comprehensive sets of criteria in the areas of credibility, environmental friendliness and social compatibility. The sets of criteria are developed by experts from the scientific community, civil society and the private sector in a public consultation process and published by the *Siegelklarheit* steering committee. In principle, an ambitious approach is followed in order to give labels an incentive to improve – a trend which we were able to observe in the past. The criteria are based on international standards, scientific findings and the specifications of organisations such as the ISEAL Alliance. The assessment of labels based on the criteria sets is carried out by independent experts from the International Trade Centre (ITC).

How binding are the criteria on *Siegelklarheit*?

All assessments on *Siegelklarheit* are carried out on a voluntary basis and are approved by the standard organisations.