The Consumer Information Programme serves as a global platform to support the provision of quality information on goods and services, and the identification and implementation of the most effective strategies to engage consumers in sustainable consumption. It empowers and raises the profile of relevant policies, strategies, projects and partnerships, building synergies and cooperation between different stakeholders. It builds on the work achieved under the Marrakech Process on product eco-labels and sustainability information.

Defining consumer information: In the context of the programme, consumer information is defined as a range of tools and systems that seek to enable consumers to make more sustainable choices about products and services, including in their use and end-of-life phases. The proposed focus is on information presented 'to the consumer' (individual or end-use consumer), including information from government and business to consumers, as well as from consumer to consumer.

The programme objectives are to: 1) improve availability, accessibility and quality of consumer information; 2) drive change in business and government; and 3) enhance communication to drive behavioural change. These objectives defined the work areas and sub-work areas that will be populated with existing and new activities proposed by programme participants.

Each sub-work area will follow an ‘implementation pathway’ of actions to achieve its goals and work towards the programme’s objectives. The implementation pathways have been agreed upon by the programme’s Multi-stakeholder Advisory Committee (MAC). Organisations, networks and individuals may propose their own new and existing activities to support or enhance the implementation pathway, and become a 10YFP CIP Partner. Partner activities will not only contribute to achieving the programme’s objectives, but should benefit from increased visibility at the international level, a platform of expert collaboration and partnership working, and, where relevant, support on mobilising resources for implementation. Their inclusion must be validated by the CIP co-leads and MAC members and will be monitored as part of the deliverables of the programme, with the following criteria considered:

- The activities included in the CIP should be in line with the 10YFP objectives, i.e., contributing to capacity building efforts, advancing research, implementation, scaling up and replication of policies and practices in SCP;
- Life cycle approach is preferred when possible. Information should further covers (to be possible extend) the three pillars of sustainability.
- Information needs to be provided to help consumers to maximise the benefits / reduce the impacts associated with using the product and to help consumers dispose of products responsibly or to recycle, repair or reuse them;
- Priority will be given first to value chains where high impacts on sustainability could be achieved, a phased approach could then be applied for implementation where appropriate;
- Consumer groups with the strongest impacts on sustainability are prioritised, along with the most appropriate media to transfer the information to and between the groups; and
- Impact should be monitored, evaluated and communicated to stakeholders.

CIP Objectives, Work Areas and Sub-Work Areas

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1 Including programme co-leads, Multi-stakeholder Advisory Committee (MAC) members, and programme Partners.
The current CIP objectives and structure have been developed through an extensive consultation process, which includes a stock taking analysis, an online survey (June 2013, over 180 responses); inputs from an expert advisory group and a consultation on the draft concept note (January 2014); and a meeting of the CIP Multi-stakeholder Advisory Committee (MAC; November 2014).

**Work area 1: Improve availability, accessibility and quality of consumer information**

**Sub-work area 1a: Improve availability, accessibility and credibility of consumer information through principles & guidelines**

**Objective:** This sub-work area covers the development and promotion of agreement on international principles and guidelines for credible, relevant and meaningful information to enable consumers to make more sustainable choices about services and products, including the use and end-of-life phases. These international principles and guidelines should further be tailored and operationalised as relevant for the different stakeholders, addressing in particular sectors and activities where high impact on sustainability could be achieved using hotspot analysis.

**Challenges to be addressed:** Greenwashing and related mistrust and confusion among consumers due to proliferation and the lack of internationally agreed principles to measure and communicate information to consumers.

**Implementation pathway:**
1. Scoping exercise: review global principles (national, regional and sectoral approaches) for generating and communicating sustainability information, identify gaps.
2. Identify best practices per type of consumer information tool and users, identify gaps and recommendations to strengthen information.
3. Develop a “one stop” web source that compiles relevant guidelines and principles.
4. Development and promotion of additional guiding principles and practices (where gaps exist).
5. Develop guidelines for reliable consumer sustainability information considering a variety of stakeholders.
6. Pilot testing and capacity building on understanding and using guidelines.

**Sub-work area 1b: Address data gaps and quality**

**Objective:** To ensure the availability of comparable and good quality data. This sub-work area will address gaps regarding the availability and quality of data used to support consumer information. It will also improve
the general alignment and interoperability of practices regarding data quality, collection and processing and strengthen the capacity of stakeholders.

**Challenges to be addressed:** Lack of data to support sustainability information, poor quality of data, limited accessibility to SMEs, lack of alignment and capacity in data collection, processing and management.

**Implementation pathway:**
1. Identify areas where data for consumer information is lacking for targeted efforts.
2. Development or enhancement of national life cycle databases.
3. Promote International cooperation for database interoperability and quality assurance.

**Sub-work area 1c: Improve methodologies on key sustainability impact indicators**

**Objective:** Improve international alignment of methodologies to assess the impacts on sustainability of goods and services, and improve methodologies that are at an early stage of development or acceptance (e.g. social impact).

**Challenges to be addressed:** Lack of reliable indicators and alignment of methodologies and indicators to assess impacts on sustainability.

**Implementation pathway:**
1. Identify key indicators for alignment and methodologies improvement under the CIP.
2. Methodologies alignment.
3. Methodologies development.

**Work area 2: Drive change in business and government**

**Sub-work area 2a: Support retailers and brand owners to promote sustainability**

**Objective:** This sub-work area will work with retailers and brand owners to promote sustainability through their supply chains and enable consumers to make more sustainable choices. On the supply side, this area will be working with retailers and brand owners to harmonise the requirements for their suppliers and harmonise the way the sustainability information is generated and communicated throughout the supply chain. On the consumption side, this area will work with retailers and brand owners towards the provision of credible information to consumers. It will also look at how retailers can contribute to put into place facilities and infrastructure to enable consumers to act upon that information, e.g. recycling and take-back-facilities.

**Challenges to be addressed:** Lack of comprehensive strategy towards sustainability for retailers and brand owners, which results in inefficiencies, additional transaction costs for suppliers and missed opportunities.

**Implementation pathway:**
1. Scoping exercise:
   a. Review ongoing consumer information practices of retailers/brand owners that influence supply chains.
   b. Review their means of transmission of information and means of verification of sustainability information.
2. Identify core sustainability issues.
3. Identify best practices: with the industry/business sector through existing networks/roundtable to be organised (include supply chain software providers, verification systems, GS1, etc.).

4. Promotion of aligned (homogenisation of) practices for consumer information through networks, taking into account accessibility and comparability of consumer information (see sub-work area 3a).

**Sub-work area 2b: Encourage the uptake of new business models and design of products that make sustainability the easy choice for consumers**

**Objective:** Engage with the business sector and identify innovative business models that are promoting sustainable consumption along with consumer information, such as green loyalty cards. It will also look at the production side and bring stakeholders to think about what is needed for products to be used and disposed of sustainably, making sustainability the easy choice for consumers. This could include the design for recycling as well as additional features that enable and facilitate sustainable choices in the use and disposal phases (e.g. cold water button for washing machines).

**Challenges to be addressed:** Many products are designed without much consideration for how they will be used and disposed of; consumer information along with other solutions are not fully used to promote more sustainable choices.

**Implementation pathway:**

1. Conduct hotspots analysis to identify products where the use and disposal phases are life cycle hotspots.
2. Identify and review new business models, design initiatives and best practices of consumer information targeting use and end-of-life product phases for these products.
3. Pilot testing, scale-up, replication.
4. Promote and raise awareness on these best practices (publication, network).

**Sub-work area 2c: Encourage the uptake of policies which enable more sustainable practices and choices**

**Objective:** Identify public policies to promote sustainable consumption in line with information. It will also look at public policies and enabling conditions at multiple levels, from national to municipal levels, such as the introduction of take-back-policies, Food for Recycling, etc. Furthermore, to support the international efforts on scale-up and harmonisation of consumer information, this area will also look at existing or perceived barriers in the regulatory environment, such as trade.

**Challenges to be addressed:** Policies can foster sustainable consumption but their full potential is not always put forward.

1. Promote public policies which enable more sustainable practices and choices:
   a. Stocktaking of policy related barriers that prevent sustainable consumption choices in high impact value chains.
   b. Stocktaking and dissemination of public policies that have proven to be successful in overcoming these barriers (e.g. the introduction of take-back-policies and the promotion of local production, choice editing for sustainability).
   c. Promotion of development and dissemination of innovative approaches that give the right incentives to make sustainable choices, e.g. Green Card in South Korea and Sustainable Advertising rules in Brazil.
   d. Raising awareness of relevant government officials of different sectors towards more sustainable consumption.
   e. Capacity building
2. Promote reliable/credible ecolabels and voluntary sustainability standards in developing countries.
3. Promote the cooperation of reliable/credible ecolabels (e.g. GEN and others).

**Work area 3: Enhancing Communication to Drive Behavioral Change**
**Sub-work area 3a: Promote comparable sustainability information**

**Objective:** Enhance and promote comparable information looking at existing consumer information tools.

**Challenges to be addressed:** ineffectiveness and proliferation of consumer information tools, confusion of the industry and consumers.

**Implementation pathway:**
1. Establish a joint framework for comparability of information within same tool and across different tools (guided by sub-work area 1a).
2. Identify tools and best practices to compare information.
3. Promote regional/sectoral cooperation on ecolabelling and other information tools.

**Sub-work area 3b: Identify and scale up effective practices of consumer information**

**Objective:** To identify and promote initiatives and activities in communicating sustainability information which have had a high impact, in order to increase their use and dissemination, particularly in high impact value chains. This area will be developed closely with sub-work area 3c, and the 10YFP Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programme.

**Challenges to be addressed:** Communication of information is not always effective; dissemination and lessons learned from effective practices have been limited.

**Implementation pathway:**
1. Scoping exercise to assess communication practices, identify most effective practices and conditions that make them effective.
2. Foster exchanges to identify effective communication practices (for example, organising roundtables at the margin of an upcoming event that will gather private sector, advertisers, marketing firms, etc.).
3. Identify new high impact information channels and encourage their use, e.g. traceability of products (e.g. mobile phone applications) due to new or emerging technologies; make recommendations on scaling up.
4. Foster alternative approaches to present information e.g. focusing on critical stages and/or issues such as information that aims at improving energy efficiency at the household level through comparative information (working closely with sub-area 3c).
5. Based on findings of 1, 2, 3, 4 - Promote the use of effective communication practices in specific sectors with high potential impacts.
6. Promote responsible advertising.

**Sub-work area 3c: Moving from information to action: Understanding the impact of sustainability information on consumer behavior**

**Objective:** Understand how consumers process, respond to, and share information; Identify the barriers to act on information and the drivers that lead from awareness to action; Test the factors that influence the transition from being informed to taking action in different contexts (applied field research). This area will work closely with sub-work area 3b and will ensure cooperation with the 10YFP Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programme.

**Challenges to be addressed:** High-quality consumer information does not necessarily lead to a change in consumption practices. The consumption process is not always linear, going from ‘awareness’ to ‘action’ because consumption choices are based on many different factors (quality, price, availability, social and cultural context), which also vary depending on the cultural background and age of the consumer.

**Implementation pathway:**
1. Stocktaking of education needs to empower consumers on sustainable consumption (ecolabels, information provision/capacity building tools, information sharing tools, impacts, etc.).
2. Collection of illustrative examples of consequences of consumer behaviour.
3. Stocktaking of existing research on consumer behaviour related to sustainability information, to understand behaviour in different cultural and generational contexts - with a specific focus on high impact audiences and sectors - in order to identify main hurdles and drivers.
4. Applied field research (testing drivers to behavioural change and effective communications practices identified in sub-work area 3b).
5. Development of toolkits and training modules to include the results of behavioural research in consumer information initiatives (in collaboration with sub-work area 3b).