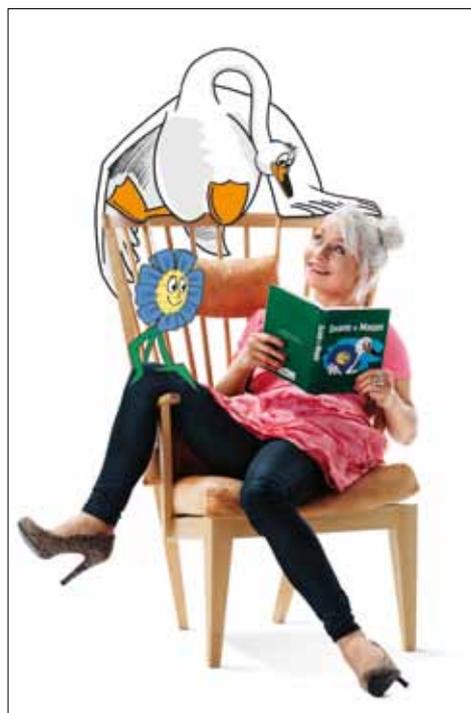


# NORDIC ECOLABELLING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2011



# NORDIC ECOLABELLING – A WELL-KNOWN SUCCESS STORY

In recent years, the Nordic Council of Ministers, and the ministers for the environment in particular, have recognised the major opportunities that good, voluntary product labelling like the Nordic Ecolabel offers for encouraging consumers, producers and professional purchasers to work towards more environmentally friendly consumption. Everyone must have access to simple and reliable environmental advice and guidance when making purchases.

The Nordic Ecolabelling Board, with representatives from all the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden – has an important function in ensuring that stringent criteria are set for all the 62 product groups that the Nordic Ecolabel now covers. The Nordic Ecolabel is found on everything from toilet paper to blocks of flats, candles to restaurants, pens and hotels. The number of licenses increased by a net 7% during 2011, as it did in the previous year.

The Nordic Ecolabel is recognised by more than 9 out of 10 people in the Nordic countries and licensees are extremely loyal and work hard to retain the label when the environmental criteria are made more stringent at regular intervals.

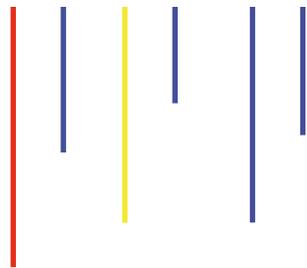
Several smaller projects under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Nordic Ecolabelling Board seek to develop ecolabelling and increase its importance in new areas. It is also a supplementary tool for setting environmental criteria in green public procurement (GPP). Ecolabelling also plays its part in an international context, sharing its experience in promoting the development of regional ecolabels, for example in South America. The Nordic Council of Ministers recognises these opportunities and during 2012 will also be examining the organisation and financing.

All of the over 120 people now employed in the Nordic countries are tackling these challenges on a daily basis, particularly in their contacts with individual consumers, industry and retail. In a global perspective, the Nordic Ecolabel's position in Nordic society is entirely unique. From the initial decision to create the label in November 1999, development has been stable and today the label can be seen as a natural element in the Nordic welfare society.

Bjørn-Erik Lønn, Nordic coordinator  
Nordic Ecolabelling



The Nordic Ecolabel is recognised by 9 out of 10 people in the Nordic countries.



## EXPORTING NORDIC ECOLABELLING

A collaboration between the Nordic Council of Ministers and the United Nations Environment Programme may be about to result in a regional offshoot to the official Nordic Ecolabel; the Swan.

Countries such as Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay have seen a surge in the interest in sustainable production and consumption. These countries are now looking into creating a joint ecolabelling scheme to help encourage more eco-friendly production, and consumption and the Nordic Ecolabel; the Swan, is the model that they are looking to base their scheme on. Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland have spent 20 years developing a labelling scheme to highlight the most environmentally friendly products on the market. The stringent environmental requirements that must be met in order for a product to be awarded the label are developed by Nordic work groups and approved by a Nordic board.

Titta Maja, Counsellor from the Embassy of Finland in Chile, participated in the workshop and welcomed the project initiative:

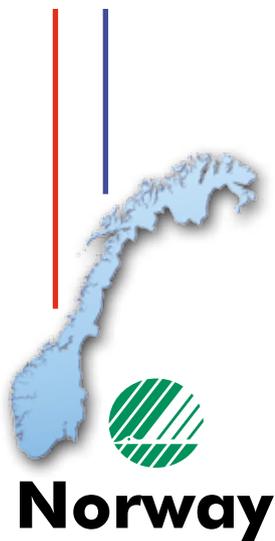
“The example of the Nordic countries on regional cooperation is very useful here in Latin America, where addressing the environmental and sustainable development questions is very topical. The Nordic Ecolabel, based on a regional approach, highlights the importance of sustainable development in everyday consumer choices and thus provides an excellent model for developing cooperation within the Southern Cone region”, she said.

“It takes time to develop a sustainable labelling scheme,” says Alvild Hedstein, Head of Ecolabelling Norway.

“Consumers, producers and politicians in the countries in question all need to recognise the need and importance of ecolabelling, and it takes time to build that awareness. The Swan is very successful now, but it has taken us 20 years to get to this point,” concludes Hedstein.

The coordinator of the Nordic ecolabel, Bjørn-Erik Lønn, attended the UN's workshop on ecolabelling and sustainable development in South America.





## ECOLABELLING 2011

**Around 4,000 Norwegian products carry the Nordic Ecolabel symbol.**

At the end of 2011, more than 4,000 Norwegian products carried the Swan label representing Nordic Ecolabel. There is strong interest in ecolabelled products and the number of product carrying the distinctive Swan symbol increased by 11 per cent over the past year.

### **The FIS World Cup chose Nordic Ecolabel**

The 2011 FIS World Cup in Norway aimed to be the most environmentally friendly skiing world cup ever held. As part of this pursuit, FIS registered with the Nordic Ecolabel Purchaser Club and committed itself to choosing products bearing the Swan label wherever possible.

Presentation of Jøtul's certificate. Director Alvhild Hedstein, Head of Ecolabelling Norway and Jøtul's Export and Marketing Director, René Christensen.





Many children were "labelled" with the Swan symbol at this year's festivals.



Young people try the Nordic Ecolabel environment quiz at the Øyafestivalen.



White ski tracks and green product choices at the FIS World Cup.



Children playing in the Ecolabel sandbox from Moelven.

### Jøtul the first to meet new wood burner requirements

Norwegian wood burner manufacturer Jøtul was the first company to meet the tightened environmental requirements for wood burners. Jøtul has more than 150 years' experience of manufacturing wood burners and can produce more than 100,000 wood burners and stoves annually. The new requirements included surface treatment, which had an impact both on the company's subcontractors and the subcontractors' subcontractors.

Norway has a long tradition of using wood as fuel and demand for wood burners is also on the increase elsewhere in Europe; a trend which is reflected in the fact that two thirds of Jøtul's revenue derives from export.

### Nordic Ecolabel on the festival beat

The Ecolabelling Foundation, Norway, visited three festivals in summer 2011, meeting with parents in a positive environment and introducing them to the Nordic Ecolabel product range.

This year's edition of the Øyafestivalen music festival featured a baby changing area with nappies where hygiene products were demonstrated and given away as prizes in an environment quiz. The Miniøya children's music festival and the Kids Environment Festival included a baby changing area, a sandbox and other activities geared towards children.



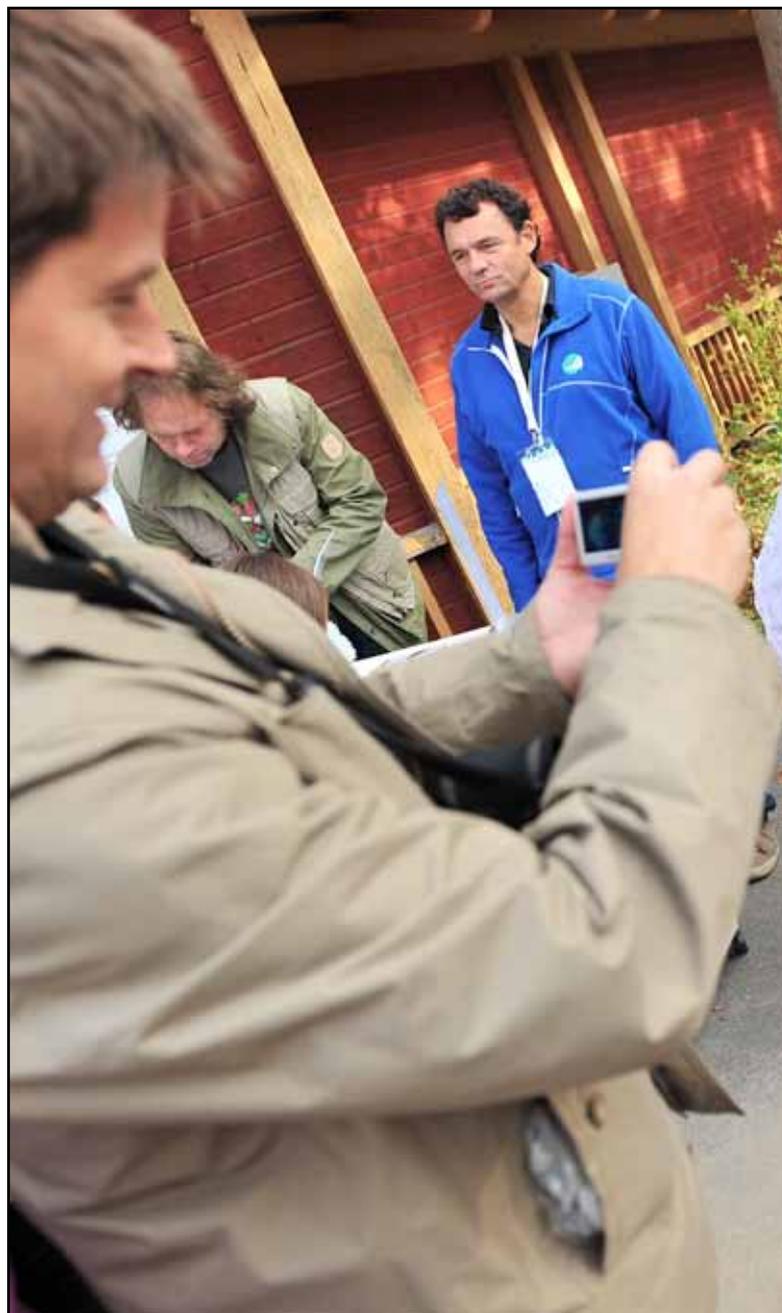
## Sweden



Ingvor Svensson (left) and Therese Kanter-Dickson next to their cardboard cut-outs at the Nordic Ecolabel stand at Ecocentrum in Gothenburg.



Consumer Minister Birgitta Ohlsson was one of the speakers at this year's major customer seminar on the theme of social media.



Glorious summer weather and popular artists meant that the Swan Day – the first

## 2011 – AN EVENTFUL YEAR

### Breakthrough for ecolabelled blocks of flats

On 29 August 2011, Housing Minister Stefan Attefall and Ragnar Unge, CEO of Ecolabelling Sweden, cut the tape in front of Veidekke Bostad's latest building in the Stockholm suburb of Västertorp. The world's first ecolabelled block of flats was ready to be opened. Since then the Gothenburg municipal housing company Familjebostäder i Göteborg has built rental accommodation and Skanska, the first to receive a Nordic Ecolabel licence for its ModernaHus concept, will complete an ecolabelled four-storey building in Söderköping in 2012.

### Swan Day at Skansen

On Sunday 2 October the Swan landed at Skansen. Together with the textbook on nature and the environment, Natur- och miljöboken, middle school students

from Stockholm schools were invited to a family day at Skansen. It was a wonderful day full of laughter, song and magic. For many of the 6,500 visitors, the star attraction was artist Nassim al Fakir who sang and danced. Magician Daniel Karlsson, familiar from a Swedish Television children's programme, caused plenty of astounded faces during his magic show. Meteorologist Pär Holmgren talked about his book about six-year-old Torsten and his exciting journey, while on the dance floor the parkour group Air Whipp performed amazing acrobatics and visitors also gained plenty of information about Nordic Ecolabelled and EU Ecolabelled products.

### Sustainable women in Gothenburg

In 2011, Ecolabelling Sweden and the Ecocentrum eco-centres in both Malmö and Gothenburg launched a



ever – was a really popular event.

partnership to bring the Nordic Ecolabel closer to consumers and companies. In our exhibitions we display Sara, the typical ecolabel consumer and talk about Therese Kanter Dickson who runs a Nordic Ecolabelled supermarket in Gothenburg.

### **@svanen – a celebrity on Twitter**

The focus on social media, primarily on Twitter and Facebook, continued in 2011. In late November we passed 700 fans on Facebook and 1,000 followers on Twitter. To inspire our licensees and members of the Nordic Ecolabel's Buy Ecolabelled network to start talking to their customers on social media, in November we organised a seminar at the Nordic Ecolabelled Operaterrassen in Stockholm. One of the many interesting speakers was Swedish Consumer Minister Birgitta Ohlsson, who



The Nordic Ecolabel was on the spot when the first soil was dug at Skanska's construction site for an ecolabelled block of flats in Söderköping. Ecolabelled buildings were also opened in Gothenburg and Stockholm during the year.

talked about how she uses Twitter in her work. The seminar was broadcast live on the internet so that anybody could watch it.

### **Petition for a greener publishing industry**

We attended the annual Gothenburg Book Fair where we shared a stand with meteorologist Pär Holmgren who recently ecolabelled his children's book. In conjunction with the book fair we launched a book petition to get publishers to switch to more sustainable manufacture. The aim is to get consumers and authors to sign the petition to show publishers that there is high demand for ecolabelled books. 800 people have so far signed the petition, which will be sent on to the publishing companies in 2012.

### **Thinking green on furniture**

During the autumn seminars on ecolabelled furniture went on tour in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. This was one of the major activities for the Buy Ecolabelled network and we met a total of 80 purchasers, architects, interior designers and property companies. The aim was to inform them and inspire them to think differently when it comes to purchasing furniture.



**Finland**

## THE NORDIC ECOLABEL'S YEAR IN 2011

### January

– At the start of the year, management of the Nordic Ecolabel and the EU Ecolabel moved from the Finnish standardisation organisation SFS to Motiva Services Oy, a subsidiary of Motiva Oy.

### May

– Ecolabelling took part in Finland's first corporate responsibility fair Ratkaisun Paikka 2011 at Helsinki's Kaapelitehdas.

### June

– The Nordic Ecolabel arranged a breakfast event for interior design journalists where the latest research information was presented on the environmental responsibilities of consumers in DIY and interior design purchasing. Over 20 interior design journalists attended the event.

Gasum's biogas is Finland's first ecolabelled fuel for vehicles



The Nordic Ecolabel published a chemicals guide



– The Nordic ecolabel campaigned for environmentally friendly cosmetics by challenging cosmetics users come to work without make up on Monday, 6 June 2011. The aim of the campaign was to increase consumer awareness of the availability of ecolabelled cosmetics and to encourage cosmetics manufacturers to provide ecolabelled products by showing them demand in a concrete way. The popularity of the campaign exceeded all expectations. During the whole two weeks over 38,200 cosmetics users rose to the challenge.

### October

– The Nordic Ecolabel was awarded to a vehicle fuel, Gasum biogas, for the first time in Finland. The gas is made from waste raw materials such as sewage sludge and bio waste from households, retail and industry.

– The Nordic ecolabel published a chemicals guide. Turvallisempi arki (Safer everyday life). The Ecolabel's chemicals guide is a 16 page publication for everyone interested in the environmental and health effects of chemicals.

– At the cleaning industry's FinnClean 2011 fair in Tampere, experts on the Ecolabel answered questions on ecolabelled cleaning products and equipment.

### November

– Ecolabelling attended the Motiva Forum, an invitation-only event for decision-makers in businesses and public administration and experts, which considered opportunities for climate change solutions and presented functional solutions from the corporate world and municipal sector for energy efficiency and sustainable development.

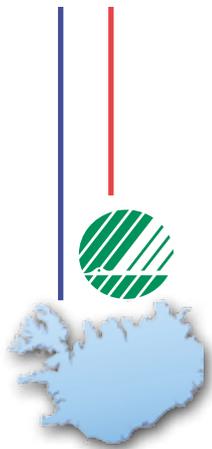
– A cosmetics afternoon was held where people who blog about cosmetics, fashion and the home received a pack full of information about the ecolabel.

### December

– Hotel Savoy became the first ecolabelled hotel in the Åland islands.

At the end of 2011 there were a total of 353 current licences in Finland. 56 new ecolabel licences and registrations were granted during the year. The first ecolabelled interior paints, exterior paints, fillers and vehicle biofuel also saw the light of day

Finland granted the right to use the EU ecolabel to 12 products during the year. There was one new licence holder, the Tervakoski paper mill. In addition, 2 licences were renewed and several companies are in the process of extending their licensing.



## Iceland



Svandís Svavarsdóttir Minister for the Environment hands over the first information kit from the Ágætis byrjun (Off to a Good Start) project.



Ágætis byrjun – Off to a Good Start, a brochure introducing the Swan.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORDIC ECOLABEL IN 2011

Several stores now offer a range of products with the Swan label, and an increasing number of Icelandic companies have been awarded the Swan. In 2011 three companies were awarded the Swan label; Hotel Rauðaskriða, Hotel Eldhestar, and Prentmet printers in Reykjavik. At the end of 2011 around 20 applications for the Swan were pending, so the number of licensed Ecolabelled products and companies are expected to grow considerably in the near future.

### Sound Advice for a Green Christmas

The Ministry for the Environment published a Christmas magazine in November 2011. The magazine's main story was on substances of concern in consumer goods and advice on how to avoid them. The magazine also addressed ecolabels, information on what Christmas trees are the "greenest", and ideas for alternative packaging.

### Ágætis byrjun – The Swan for New Parents

Ágætis byrjun is a project that is meant to introduce the Nordic Ecolabel – the Swan, and to distribute the Swan information kit to new parents. Parents are encouraged to use ecolabels as an aid when choosing products; there is no need to be an expert on environmental and chemical issues as the ecolabels offer assurance of a safe product choice. The kit includes a brochure on the Swan and the advantages of opting for ecolabelled products for babies and toddlers. It also includes sample products as a reminder of the many types of Swan-verified baby products and that parents have a choice of products that are healthier for both the baby and the environment. Ágætis byrjun is a year-long project that was launched in October 2011.



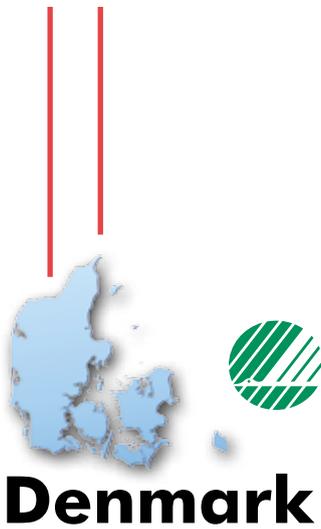
The kit includes a brochure with information on the Nordic Ecolabel and sample products.



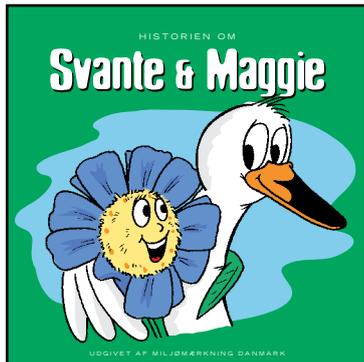
Hotel Rauðaskriða was awarded the Swan label in 2011.



The Christmas magazine published by the Ministry for the Environment – Sound Advice for a Green Christmas.



## Denmark



The reading area drew a crowd and the children were spellbound by the story of Svante the Swan and Maggie the flower.

## NORDIC ECOLABEL PUBLISHES BEST SELLING CHILDREN'S BOOK

A swan suffering from memory loss, a talking flower and an evil garbage disposer. These are just some of the elements in Ecolabelling Denmark's children's book Svante and Maggie. The main purpose of the book is to entertain the little ones, but it also aims to put ecolabelling on the agenda among Danish families with young children. In October 2011, families with children in Århus, Odense and Copenhagen had the opportunity to hear well-known children's TV presenter Signe Lindkvist read from the book. The sessions were a huge success, and not just because of the celebrity factor. "It is simply a good story. Svante and Maggie is about Svante the swan who takes a fall and loses his memory. He wakes up believing that he's an ostrich. He meets Maggie the flower and together they help each other through a perilous situation," explained Signe Lindkvist after the successful events.

### 6,000 copies in three weeks

The book and the readings were so extremely popular and a grand total of 6,000 copies were handed out over three Saturdays. The aim was first of all to create a good story. Secondly, Ecolabelling Denmark wished to make the public even more familiar with the two ecolabels.

### "I buy ecolabelled products"

The organisation's Facebook page "I buy ecolabelled products" was created in June 2011. By the first week of October it had had 563 "likes". That number had al-

most doubled two weeks later, totalling 1,169 and by the end of the year more than 2,000 people had expressed their liking. This figure had doubled again by January 2012 and Facebook has proven to be the ideal channel for dialogue with the main target group, young mothers. A further 1,000 copies of Svante and Maggie were sent out following scores of requests via Facebook. Parents and children were also able to download sound files containing two additional stories told by Signe Lindkvist via the page as well as colouring sheets to print out at home.

### Top marks for Svante&Maggie app

A free reading and colouring app for iPhones and iPads launched by Ecolabelling Denmark has been a major success. In just four months more than 5,500 people downloaded the app which will soon also be available for Android, and thus accessible to even more users. The app gives children the opportunity to choose whether they want to colour in the characters from Svante and Maggie or listen to Signe Lindkvist reading the story while they turn the pages of the book themselves.

The website appnytt.dk awarded the app top marks, stating: "This is a great app for kids. My five-year-old son was instantly entertained. He listens to the story over and over while colouring, erasing and colouring again. It's two great things combined and a great idea altogether."



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Well-known Danish children's TV presenter Signe Lindkvist together with the dynamic duo, Svante the swan and Maggie the flower, in a beautiful ecolabelled chair.



All the materials in the colouring area used by children between readings were eco labelled; felt-tip pens, paper, furniture – even the surrounding fence!



Nordic staff conference in Gotland. In August all Nordic employees met in Gotland for a two-day conference.



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