

*Advancing consumer information and protection in alignment
with selected Multilateral Environmental Agreements*

Key Findings, Recommendations, and Next Steps

Consumer information & protection and Multilateral Environmental Agreements: Pathways for Policy Integration



**United
Nations**

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Context

Empowering consumers for a sustainable future

Sustainable consumption and production are essential to tackling the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Consumers influence markets by demanding more sustainable and healthier products, driving businesses toward more sustainable practices. Supporting informed choices through consumer protection globally helps promote responsible consumption and build a more sustainable future for all.

Multilateral Environmental Agreements and their role in sustainable consumption

Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) are legally binding international treaties that guide global environmental governance. Ratified by states and regional organizations, MEAs are central to advancing international cooperation on environmental standards. Each MEA operates through an independent governing body (e.g. Conference of the Parties) and is supported by a secretariat. The report Advancing consumer information and consumer protection in alignment with selected Multilateral Environmental Agreements focuses on selected MEAs in climate, biodiversity and pollution, including the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), highlighting their role in promoting responsible consumption.

The project: Consumer information and protection in selected Multilateral Environmental Agreements

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) have partnered on a joint initiative to align consumer protection policies with MEA implementation. The initiative highlights the value of consumer information and engagement in advancing the objectives of selected MEAs, particularly those linked to SDG 12 on Sustainable Consumption and Production and its target 12.8 (people have access to relevant Information for sustainable lifestyles).

[Access the project here](#)





Leveraging MEAs to Advance Consumer Protection: Key Opportunities and Recommendations

The report identifies concrete opportunities to advance sustainability through informed, consumer-focused policy. MEAs and consumer protection frameworks share important touchpoints – especially in promoting sustainable consumption, improving access to reliable information, and shaping consumer behaviour.

To capitalize on these synergies, the report outlines three overarching recommendations:

1. Co-develop joint education campaigns

Strengthen public awareness of MEA provisions and sustainability issues by encouraging collaboration between consumer protection agencies and MEA secretariats.

2. Leverage MEA technical assistance and regional centres

Utilize regional MEA centres' capacity for training, technology transfer, and stakeholder engagement to support national implementation.

3. Integrate sustainability principles into consumer policies

Embed environmental objectives into consumer protection frameworks to promote informed choices, responsible business conduct, and more sustainable markets.

These foundational actions inform the following targeted recommendations and proposed next steps for key stakeholders.





Actionable recommendations for consumer protection agencies:

Action 1. Strengthen consumer awareness and education

- Incorporate sustainable consumption and the right to information into consumer protection policies.
- Partner with MEA focal points to co-develop and launch public campaigns on environmental provisions at the national level.
- Improve access to and involve consumers in the design of reliable sustainability information through product labels, leveraging digital tools.
- Facilitate access to MEA-related reports and data for consumers, businesses, and researchers.
- Support or collaborate in recognition programmes and awards for businesses demonstrating leadership in sustainability, reinforcing consumer trust and awareness.

Action 2. Align policies, strengthen coordination, and ensure accountability

- Establish coordination mechanisms between national MEA focal points and consumer protection authorities.
- Mainstream consumers' needs and interests in national MEA implementation strategies.

- Promote guidelines for communicating sustainability attributes of products.
- Develop enforcement tools to promote responsible and transparent business conduct and combat misleading environmental claims.
- Promote dispute resolution through accessible complaint channels and third-party mediation, including both formal and informal mechanisms for sustainability-related consumer issues.

Action 3. Expand collaboration and representation

- Actively engage in global initiatives like the Consumer Information Programme for Sustainable Consumption and Production (CI-SCP).
- Encourage academic and research participation to drive innovation and evidence-based policymaking.
- Promote collaboration between businesses, regulators, and civil society to foster accountability and shared responsibility in delivering sustainability outcomes.

Proposed next steps for MEA secretariats

- **Support cross-sector collaboration:** Explore ways to activate MEA technical assistance mechanisms to support joint outreach and capacity-building efforts with consumer protection stakeholders.
- **Enable consumers' interest:** Consider inviting consumer authorities and associations as observers in COPs and related MEA bodies.
- **Strengthen regional support:** Leverage regional centres under conventions like Basel and Stockholm to deliver tailored training and stakeholder engagement on sustainable consumption.
- **Enhance access and usability of MEA information:** Facilitate targeted, user-friendly access to MEA information by curating relevant content –e.g. national reports and notifications– and improving visibility through tailored platforms, summaries, and guidance, so stakeholders can effectively use the information.
- **Foster credible information systems:** Collaborate with value chain actors to enhance the availability of reliable, life cycle-based environmental product information for consumers.



Proposed next steps for international organizations

- **Coordinate joint initiatives:** Engage with MEA secretariats and consumer authorities to design joint education campaigns and develop adaptable consumer tools aligned with international environmental frameworks.
- **Support national implementation:** Advocate for sustainability information to be grounded in life cycle analysis –addressing climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss– and support governments and businesses with science-based tools and guidance to implement it, including the use of credible environmental labels and digital product information systems.
- **Promote policy innovation and dialogue:** Facilitate multistakeholder platforms to exchange best practices, support research, and disseminate lessons learned from integrated policy initiatives.
- **Encourage alignment:** Work with national authorities to ensure global tools and messaging are harmonized with national consumer protection frameworks.

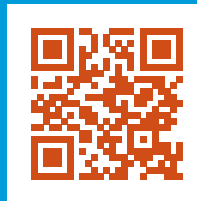




Want to learn more?

Further details, examples, and stakeholder-specific guidance are available in the report *Advancing consumer information and consumer protection in alignment with selected Multilateral Environmental Agreements*. It expands on the recommendations and measures to support consumer-centred sustainability through collaboration between MEA secretariats, consumer protection authorities, and international organizations such as UNCTAD and UNEP.

[Access the full report here](#)



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