



**40 years**  
Good for me.  
Good for the environment.



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**V**ia letter, the United Nations had already approved the use of their environmental symbol in Germany. But which hurdles still had to be cleared before this symbol was allowed to be stuck onto bottle banks in the form of the Blue Angel, can be found on [page 6](#).



**W**hat is the Blue Angel doing behind the scenes of digitalisation? How can it operate on an international scale? Discover what the environmental label is already doing today to prepare itself for tomorrow on [page 16](#).



**Y**ou can read about how nappies and changing units in particular are making a contribution towards bringing the next generation of Angel fans into contact with the label, and how this strategy is lending the symbol new momentum on [page 18](#).



**SVENJA SCHULZE**  
German Federal Minister for  
the Environment



**MARIA KRAUTZBERGER**  
President of the German  
Environment Agency

## PREFACE

Dear readers,

The Blue Angel—the German Federal Government’s environmental label—is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. Independent and credible, it has been setting demanding standards for environmentally friendly, healthy and long-lasting products and services since 1978.

The Federal Ministry for the Environment and the German Environment Agency guarantee that the Blue Angel’s strict criteria have been developed on a scientific basis and that our environmental label is only awarded after careful inspection. In today’s jungle of labels, seals and symbols, the Blue Angel offers reliable orientation when it comes to shopping sustainably.

In this booklet, we give you a glimpse behind the scenes: how everything began in the 1970s, when spray cans still contained CFC and the Club of Rome made the world aware of the “limits to growth”; Prof. Dr. Edda Müller, today chairwoman of Transparency International Germany and grande dame of the environmental label, explains why, thanks to the Blue Angel, no more cows faint when bridges are renovated. What’s more, discover how we are shaping the environmental label to be future-proof and how we have our sights set on the next generation.

Over the past four decades, the subject of sustainable consumption has pushed its way out from a niche into the centre of society; not only in Germany, but across the world. In its Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015 in New York defined 17 concrete goals to be attained by 2030. In order to achieve goal 12: “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns”, the German Federal Government—under the leadership of the Federal Ministry for the Environment—agreed upon a “National Programme on Sustainable Consumption” as early as 2016, and also founded a “Competence Centre for Sustainable Consumption”, based at the German Environment Agency.

We are delighted with the steady change in awareness and the growing demand for a greener range of products. More than 12,000 environmentally friendly products and services from over 1,600 companies have already been awarded with the Blue Angel—a number which we hope will continue to grow over the coming years.

*Svenja Schulze and Maria Krautzberger*



## PROFILE

# The world's first environmental label

A reliable environmental label that provides clear orientation when it comes to making environmentally friendly purchases. This was the idea behind the Blue Angel when it was introduced in 1978 as the world's first environmental label. 40 years later, almost everyone in Germany is familiar with the Blue Angel.

But what is the Blue Angel exactly—and how does it work? In a nutshell: the Blue Angel is the environmental label of the German Federal Government and identifies products and services which are particularly environmentally friendly. Almost every schoolchild is familiar with exercise books made from Blue Angel-approved recovered paper, and a photocopier in a public authorities building which is not loaded with Blue Angel-certified recycled paper is a very rare sight indeed. However, the symbol can also be found on many more day-to-day products from across completely different areas of life: for example, furniture, laundry detergents or paints. In the meantime, over 12,000 products and services from over 1,600 companies have been awarded with the Blue Angel. Today, it is not only the world's oldest official "eco-label", but also stands for independent, transparent and ambitious labelling.



**Over 12,000 products and services from over 1,600 companies have been awarded with the Blue Angel.**

## Scientifically developed and inspected

The Blue Angel guarantees that a product does less damage to the environment and, in doing so, meets high requirements when it comes to protecting health—and all this while maintaining the same quality and fitness for use. Based on scientific investigations, its own studies, and market research, the German Environment Agency (UBA) creates requirements specific to product groups (“award criteria”) as a prerequisite for being certified with the environmental label. When it comes to making an evaluation, the environmental label takes the entire life cycle of the product into consideration—from its manufacturing, to its use, to its disposal and recycling. The aim is to identify the key environmentally relevant areas for each group of products in which considerable impacts on the environment can be reduced or even avoided.

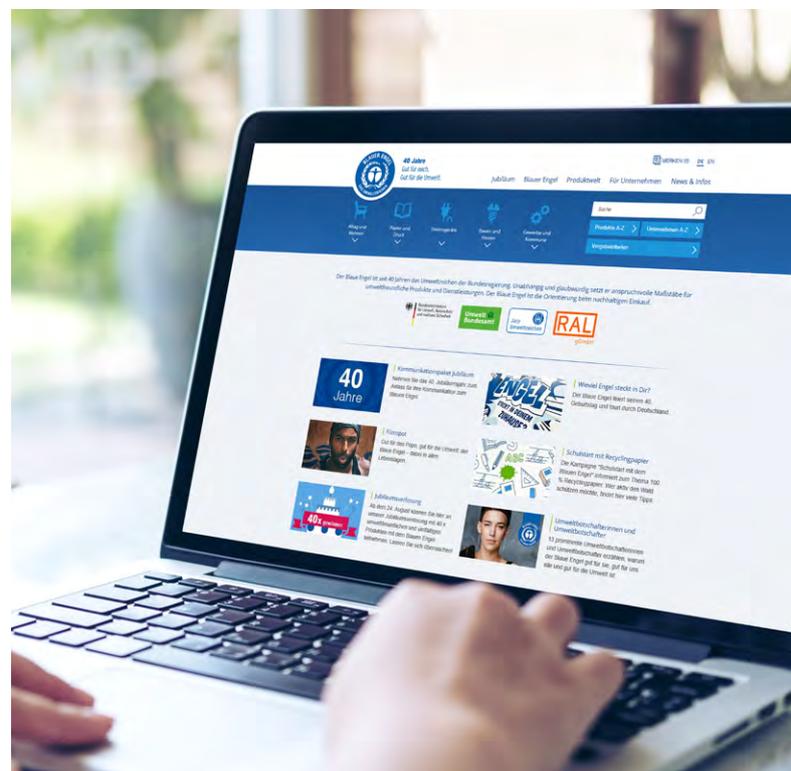
**An all-embracing view of products, from their manufacture, to their use, to their disposal and recycling**

### WHAT DOES THE BLUE ANGEL CONSIDER IN ITS AWARD CRITERIA?

- resource-saving production (water, energy, (recycled) materials)
- sustainable production of resources
- avoidance of harmful substances in the product
- reduced emissions of harmful substances in the ground, air, water and indoors
- reduced noise and electromagnetic radiation
- efficient use, e.g. products which save energy or water
- longevity, ability to repair and recycle the product
- good fitness for use
- compliance with international occupational safety standards
- take-back systems and shared-use services, e.g. car sharing

It can be proven that products with the Blue Angel meet the specified requirements and thus, these have an environmental advantage over comparable, conventional products. The further development (necessary due to technological developments) and periodic review of the criteria is also carried out by experts at the UBA, partly in collaboration with other independent scientific institutions and assessors, as well as in dialogue with interested parties.

The Blue Angel is transparent and publishes all award criteria (in German and English) as well as backgrounds, companies, certified products and updates for each group of products at [www.blauer-engel.de/en](http://www.blauer-engel.de/en). →



**ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNPOST:**

The Blue Angel helps you to navigate the ever-growing range of goods.

**Providing uncomplicated orientation**

The success of the environmental label is also thanks to its ease of understanding. Consumers know that the Blue Angel is only awarded to those products and services which are better from an environmental perspective. And this is exactly the case when it comes to local authorities, public authorities and companies which pay attention to environmental friendliness when it comes to procurement.

**Voluntary and market-oriented**

Thanks to its ambitious requirements, the Blue Angel consistently brings about changes in legislation. Even before environmental problems are regulated by law, the environmental label sets voluntary standards, giving companies the opportunity to make their pioneering role known. In doing so, the governmental environmental label is also an important, voluntary instrument of environmental policy. And manufacturers know: if they wish to improve the environmental footprint of their products and to develop ecological product innovations, the requirements of the Blue Angel provide a good guideline.

**FOUR STEPS TO THE BLUE ANGEL****1. SELECTION OF A NEW GROUP OF PRODUCTS OR A SERVICE**

Anyone can submit suggestions for a new group of products which benefits the environment. The preliminary review is carried out by the German Environment Agency (UBA). The Environmental Label Jury then decides whether an environmental label should be developed for the suggested group of products.

**2. DEVELOPMENT OF NEW CRITERIA AND REVISION OF EXISTING CRITERIA**

The UBA develops environmentally-relevant, scientifically-based criteria, and examines the existing award criteria to see if these are up-to-date. This takes place as part of a transparent and open exchange in which all interested parties are allowed to participate.

**3. RESOLUTION AND PUBLICATION OF THE CRITERIA**

The independent Environmental Label Jury decides upon the award criteria, which are then published and made freely available at [www.blauer-engel.de](http://www.blauer-engel.de).

**4. CERTIFICATION OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES**

RAL gGmbH takes over the transparent examination of the application by reviewing the evidence submitted by the company and also makes sure that the logo is used as stipulated in the contract.

# Who does what?



## Owner: **Federal Ministry for the Environment**

The Blue Angel is the environmental label of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU): the ministry owns the trademark. It determines the principles upon which the Blue Angel is awarded and appoints the members of the Environmental Label Jury. What's more, the ministry advertises for the Blue Angel in public, both among consumers and in the business world, as well as advocating for increased attention to be given to it when it comes to public-sector procurements.



## Professional expertise: **German Environment Agency**

The experts at the German Environment Agency (UBA) develop the technical criteria with which a product or service must comply in order to receive a Blue Angel certification. The German Environment Agency regularly reviews these criteria to ensure that the Blue Angel always remains up to date with the latest technical developments. What's more, the agency also functions as the offices of the voluntary Environmental Label Jury, and thus supports their work.



## Independent decision-makers: **the Environmental Label Jury**

Independent, unbiased and voluntary: the Environmental Label Jury vouches for the Blue Angel's reliability. It makes decisions on new groups of products, and discusses and approves the award criteria suggested by the UBA. The members of the jury are not bound by any instructions, making them completely independent. The decision-making committee is made up of 15 representatives from environmental and consumer associations, trade unions, the industry, retail, crafts, local authorities, academia, the media, churches, youth and federal states.



## Auditor: **RAL gGmbH**

As an independent organisation, upon receiving a product-specific application from a company, RAL gGmbH (a non-profit GmbH) inspects the adherence of this company to the requirements, and also concludes contracts with companies regarding their use of the Blue Angel.



**GERMAN INTERIOR MINISTER  
GERHART BAUM**

(l.) awards the first environmental labels in 1979, for low-noise lawnmowers among other things.

## HISTORY

# Hurdles in the Blue Angel journey

While the first environmental label in the world may have been presented to the public for the first time in February 1978, this took place against the backdrop of a run-up which had been taking place non-stop for over six years. A dawn in environmental awareness provided momentum, while large segments of industry put up heavy resistance.

The German Federal Government presented its first environment programme in autumn 1971, forming the German Advisory Council on the Environment. In 1972, the Club of Rome made the whole world aware of “the limits to growth”.

The newly-founded environmental department in the German Federal Ministry of the Interior had been working on a trademarked identification label for environmentally-friendly behaviour since 1972. Corresponding memos inform us that, even at this early stage, a “labelling of the object” was envisaged as a “commendation for enterprises which promote environmental protection”.

A logo was able to be found quickly: the emblem of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), founded in 1972. The United Nations indicated its basic approval in a letter from Geneva on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1972: “... no objections have been raised on the part of the office for environmental protection against the use of the un environmental symbol in west germany”. Later, permission was also granted to make use of the emblem as a label on products.



## BLUE ANGEL MILESTONES

**1972**

**CLUB OF ROME REPORT**  
“The Limits of Growth” is published and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is founded.

**1974**

**THE GERMAN ENVIRONMENT  
AGENCY IS FOUNDED**

**Umwelt  
Bundesamt**

The first step had been taken. The German Environment Agency, founded in 1974, provided environmental conservation with a strong footing in administration and politics. The guidelines for the first environmental label were determined. In his answer to a question from representative Hermann Biechele on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1974, Interior Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher summarised these as follows: the labelling of environmentally-friendly products is desired, but “a statutory regulation is not our intention”. Instead, it was planned that the labelling scheme “at first be left to the initiative of the private sector”.

### The industry rallied against voluntary label

But the business world was up in arms about it. As such, after a meeting of the big industrial associations on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1976, the Federation of German Industries stated: “From the point of view of industry, any need for an environmental protection label (...) can only be identified with difficulty. (...) faced with the diversity of existing labels, (...) the introduction of a special environmental protection label should be dispensed with (...)”.

This resistance did not stop the Blue Angel. One year later, the Interior Minister and the Environmental Ministers from the federal states decided to introduce the label. In 1978, the newly-formed jury approved the award criteria for the first six groups of products. On 5<sup>th</sup> June 1979, German Interior Minister Gerhart Baum was finally able to award the first Blue Angels for environmentally-friendly spray cans, toilet paper made from recovered paper, low-noise lawnmowers, retreaded tyres, returnable bottles and bottle banks. In his speech, he highlighted the voluntary nature of the environmental label, as well as its conformity with the market. Now, the Blue Angel began to build up momentum when it came to the environmental awareness of a wider public, becoming a driving force for the rollout of more environmentally-friendly products.

”

The labelling of environmentally-friendly products is desired, but a statutory regulation is not our intention.



**STUCK ON BY HAND** The first president of the German Environment Agency, Heinrich Freiherr von Lersner (l.), bestowed a bottle bank with the environmental label.

1975

**TEST RUN** As part of a poster campaign promoting environmental protection, the German Federal Ministry of the Interior uses a logo which resembles what would later become the environmental label.



1977

**DECISION TO INTRODUCE AN ENVIRONMENTAL LABEL,** which the press later calls the “Blue Angel”.

1978

**5<sup>TH</sup> JUNE: THE FIRST MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL LABEL JURY:**

Six award criteria are agreed upon.

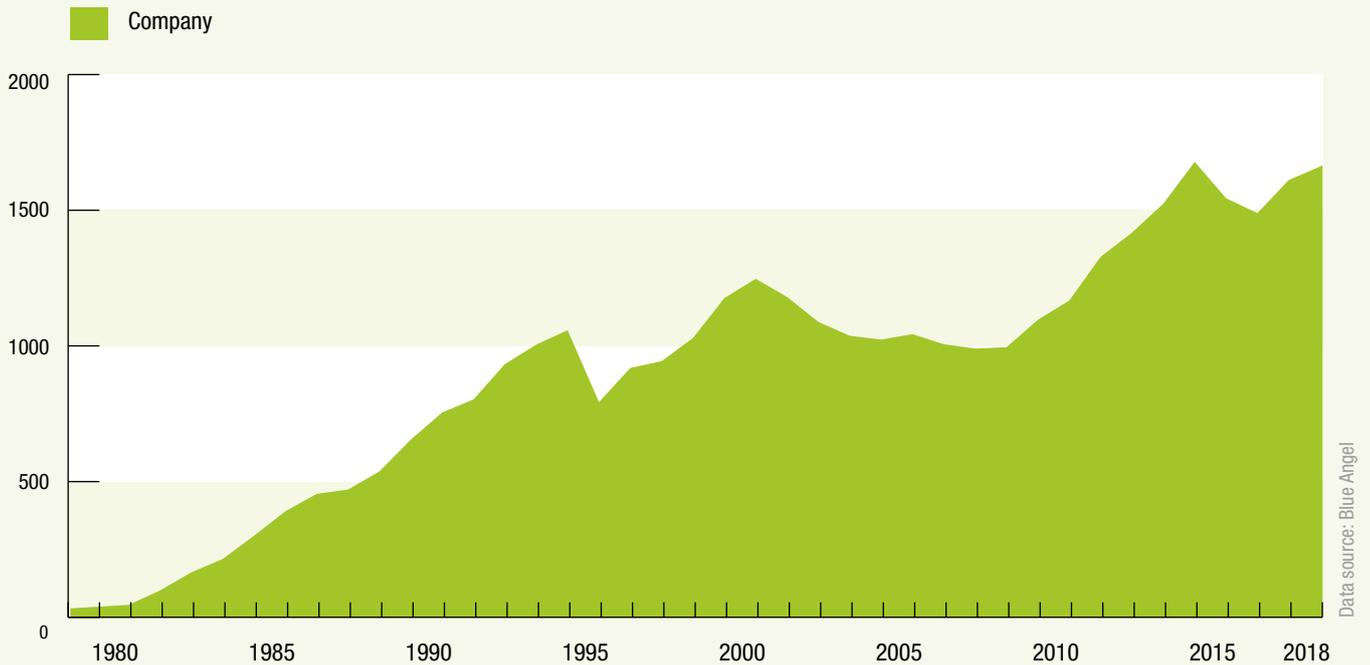
# A seal in demand

The Blue Angel has gained popularity during its 40 years in the business world, and has developed award criteria for more and more products and services. The following graphics display how the number of companies allowed to bear the symbol, and the number of award criteria, have developed in this time.

### WHAT BUSINESS WORLD DEMAND FOR THE BLUE ANGEL LOOKS LIKE:

The environmental label provides products and services with an advantage over their competition. The graphic displays the number of companies permitted to bear the Blue Angel seal for their products and services at the end of each year displayed.

Version 2018 ↙

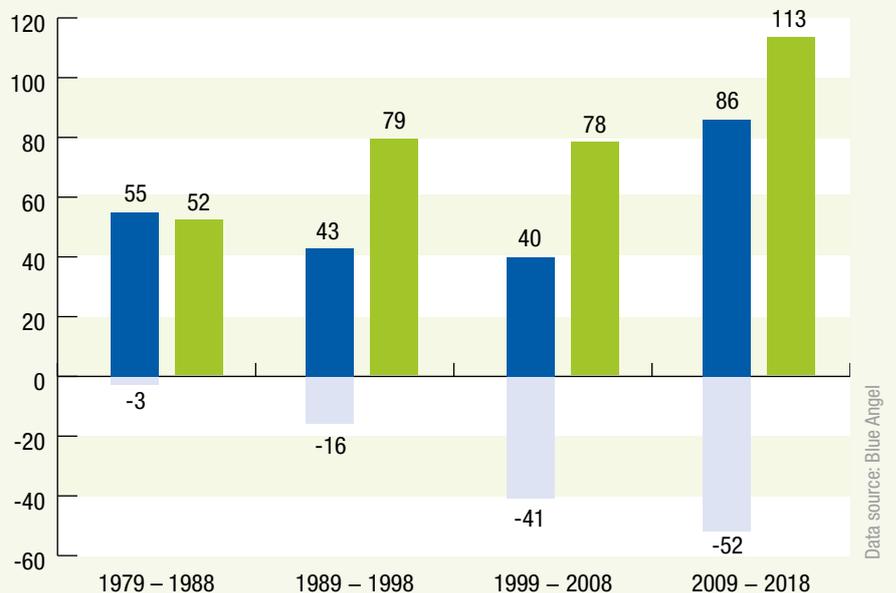


### MORE AND MORE GROUPS OF PRODUCTS

are earmarked to be provided with award criteria by the Blue Angel. A total of 224 have been developed in 40 years. Award criteria have continued to expire over the years, for instance when a statutory regulation was introduced. For each bar, the graphic displays the new award criteria which were developed by the end of the ten-year period specified (dark blue), the award criteria which expired by the end of the ten-year period (light blue) and, as a bottom line figure, the award criteria which were valid at the end of the corresponding ten-year period.

Version 2018 →

- new award criteria
- award criteria which have been phased out
- award criteria which are currently valid



# Driver and pioneer

There from the start, Edda Müller has been helping to shape the Blue Angel for 40 years. In our interview, Müller—today a member of the Environmental Label Jury—looks back, takes stock, and explains why, today, cows no longer faint when bridges are renovated.

*You've been with the Blue Angel for 40 years; for much longer than the environmental label has even had this name.*

The label was only first officially called the “Blue Angel” long after it began. The media called it that because the underlying environmental symbol of the United Nations is reminiscent of an angel. At some point, we adopted the name. For a long time, the label bore the transcription: “Umweltfreundlich weil ...” [environmentally friendly because ...]. Companies criticised this as misleading advertising and filed a lawsuit against it. Without success. At court, the generally-accepted opinion was that the phrase could not be objected against if the explanation was also displayed in the label. Many environmental associations also fought against the phrase for years, saying that consumption was unable to be environmentally friendly. Later, we decided to simply leave out the controversial phrase. In the meantime, what the environmental label stood for had become clear to most people.

*How did the voluntary environmental label overcome resistance in parts of the business world?* At the beginning, we had a very hard time finding companies who wanted to have the label for their products. The fact that the government was—and continues to be—an important purchaser through its public procurements helped a great deal. This is how, in the early days, the Federal Post Office (which was still a state-run company at the time) was able to help build up an industry for recycled paper with the Blue

Angel. Telephone books were manufactured and bound in such a way that they could be recycled. The postal service even changed its yellow colour on the initiative of the Blue Angel. This is because the very warm colour which was used on their cars, letter boxes and printed material contained cadmium—a metal which is harmful to both humans and the environment.

*Cadmium wasn't the only poisonous heavy metal that caused big problems.*

When the anticorrosive was removed from railways bridges using sand-blasting technology, the cows underneath these bridges collapsed by the dozen due to the heavy metal pollution. The German Federal Railway Authority joined forces with the Blue Angel to look for less harmful alternatives.

*This illustrates one of the key principles of the environmental label.* Time and time again, there were—and continue to be— →

”

The postal service even changed its yellow colour for the Blue Angel.



## Prof. Dr. Edda Müller Member of the Environmental Label Jury

Edda Müller joined the German Environment Agency and the Blue Angel in 1977. In 1987, the political scientist switched to the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, which had been founded one year previously. She was Environmental Minister for the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein from 1994 to 1996, subsequently Director of the Climate Policy department at the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy and, from 1998 to 2000, Vice-Director of the European Environment Agency in Copenhagen. Following this, Müller was Executive Director of the Federation of German Consumer Organisations until 2007. The honorary professor for the German University of Administrative Sciences Speyer has been the chairwoman of Transparency International Germany since 2010.

misunderstandings when it comes to the logic behind the Blue Angel. For example, people question why the bicycle hasn't received a Blue Angel. After all, these are more environmentally friendly than cars. But the environmental symbol is of no interest to bicycle manufacturers. After all, everyone knows that bicycles have less of an impact on the environment than cars. The Blue Angel only makes sense in areas where there is an environmental problem and providers find a way to be able to offer comparable products which are better and more considerate towards the environment. This was, for example, the case with varnishes. The environmental symbol ensured that the high share of solvents in varnishes, which contributes to ground-level ozone, continued to be reduced again and again. The threshold values were continually reduced and, today, varnishes either only contain very few solvents or no solvents at all.

criteria. If more than 30 percent of companies in a given product area bear the environmental label, the criteria need to be tightened in order to create new impetus. No one can be allowed to rest on their laurels.

**CFC is a thing of the past**

*Where else did these incentives work?*

The Blue Angel started in some fields which, thanks to us, there are no problems today and, for this reason, no Blue Angel. Just think about CFC and other substances which are hazardous to the ozone layer. CFC-free spray cans were one of the first products which we awarded with the Blue Angel. By the time that CFC was finally banned by law, the industry had long-since turned around. The environmental symbol had brought about change long before the ban was in place. It was a similar story with asbestos-free brake linings. Initially, the car industry opposed them, claiming that these were less safe. The industry even rejected a guarantee. Today, this is no longer an issue.

*However, the Blue Angel didn't always achieve the role of pioneer.* There were also failures and cases of rejection. Retreaded tyres received a Blue Angel, but never caught on. The concept of return-

**ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY,** a large poster was unfurled on a house façade for the Blue Angel.



*Stricter measures every three years—has this principle stood the test?* The

Blue Angel has always offered companies the incentive to push ahead with technical development when it comes to environmental protection. This is why we regularly revise the



**1979**

**5<sup>TH</sup> JUNE: THE FIRST PRODUCTS ARE AWARDED WITH** the Blue Angel by Interior Minister Gerhart Baum.

**1981**

**AWARD CRITERIA** for water-based varnishes low in harmful substances: in doing so, the health aspect is increasingly taken into account.

**1983**

**THE FIRST BLUE ANGEL FOR SERVICES:** Car washes.



able bottles ultimately failed. Once, 98 percent of all mineral water was sold in returnable bottles, until the deposit system for disposable containers was introduced. Now, plastic waste is being produced en masse again. In some sectors, the industry has successfully managed to put up resistance against the Blue Angel. For instance, household goods, washing machines, tumble driers, fridges, dishwashers. When a basis for awarding the Blue Angel for these “white goods” did exist, the only manufacturer in Europe capable of fulfilling them proved to be uninterested. Nor did low-radiation mobile phones initially receive the Blue Angel, because the industry did not want to make the population aware of the issue of radiation in the first place.

**How has the Blue Angel's focus changed over the past 40 years?** The label has always oriented itself towards the current environmental debates. For example, climate protection was a very big issue at the beginning of the 2000s. We developed award criteria for those devices which saved energy from across a range of energy-consuming products, such as televisions or laptops. Our criteria were stricter than those demanded by the EU energy label, but we had little success.

For private buyers, other device characteristics were more important. The public authorities, on the other hand, only buy printers, copying machines, etc. with the Blue Angel, not only in Germany but frequently on an international level.

**For you, what do the 40 years of the Blue Angel add up to?** Through product-related environmental protection, the Blue Angel has helped to ensure that a range of huge environmental problems have disappeared. It has enabled the German economy to prepare for legal requirements in good time.

**Where are its limits, and where does it go from here?** The limits clearly lie where the preferences of the individual play a dominant role, for example when the attractiveness of the product pushes consideration for the environment into the background. You can't get a grip on all environmental problems with a voluntary label. For example, the pollution of the seas through plastic must be tackled with laws which have been agreed upon internationally. The Blue Angel is helping the business world to become better at protecting the environment. However, it cannot serve as a replacement for environmental laws.



**The Blue Angel is helping the business world to become better at protecting the environment.**

**1986**

**THE GERMAN FEDERAL MINISTRY** for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety is founded. Walter Wallman becomes the first Federal Minister for the Environment.

**1988**

**THE AWARENESS LEVEL** of the Blue Angel in Germany reaches 80 percent. New inscription: “Umweltzeichen weil ...“ [Environmental label because ...]



**1989/1990**

**GERMAN REUNIFICATION:** As early as at the beginning of 1990, an international conference on the subject of environmental labelling takes place in Berlin's Reichstag building.

# Praise and criticism in the press

From the very beginning, the Blue Angel has received both praise and criticism from the media. We have printed some of the comments received from the press over the past years below.



## 10 years of the “environmental angel”

IT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN JUST A ONE DAY WONDER. But the Blue Angel *has* received criticism. For example, that it’s only an alibi for the government. Instead of banning ozone-damaging chlorofluorocarbon completely, either the spray cans which do without the dangerous propellant receive awards or those products which actually do protect the environment are put at a disadvantage in the choosing process.

*Westdeutscher Rundfunk* [West German Broadcasting], 5<sup>th</sup> June 1989

## “Environmental devil” called for

The *Stiftung Warentest* [an independent foundation which tests consumer products] is calling for the blue “environmental angel” sticker system to be expanded to include an “environmental devil” label for products which are particularly dangerous to the environment.

*Bonner Tageszeitung “General-Anzeiger”* [the “General Gazette”, the daily newspaper for Bonn], 11<sup>th</sup> August 1989

## What the Blue Angel does for the customer

“The Blue Angel is the only reliable seal of approval,” declares consumer advisor Hans-Jürgen Billigmann, “its award criteria are transparent and based on social consensus.” (...)

*“Natur”* [Nature] magazine, issue 11/1998

## Not all environmental seals on exercise books can be trusted

An angel that pupils and parents can rely on: Germany’s oldest environmental seal is also reliable when it comes to recycled paper.

dpa/Focus Online, 10<sup>th</sup> August 2012

## The Blue Angel for mobile phones fails to take off

(...) Producers unanimously boycott the “Blue Angel” and, according to a statement from industry association Bitkom, this decision is not about to change. The eco label for mobile phones is faced with becoming a flop. (...) This is because the additional phrase “Environmental label—because [this product is] low in radiation“ creates the impression that mobile phones emit harmful radiation. (...)

*“Handelsblatt”* [“Trade Journal”] daily newspaper, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2002

## What good are seals for sustainability?

On the other hand, Klaus Dosch considers the well-known environmental angel, awarded by the German Environment Agency, to be an undeniably good seal. The Blue Angel may only evaluate some aspects of sustainability—but it does so reliably.

*Deutschlandfunk* [a public German radio station], 5<sup>th</sup> January 2015

1994

**THE GLOBAL ECOLABELLING NETWORK (GEN) IS FOUNDED.** The integration of national environmental labelling organisations from around the world is aimed at strengthening their cooperation. A precondition for this is that these organisations hold TYPE I environmental labels as per ISO standard 14024.

2009

**THE BLUE ANGEL INCREASINGLY BECOMES SYNONYMOUS WITH CLIMATE PROTECTION**



2011

**AS PART OF THE NEWLY-CREATED AWARD CRITERIA** for textiles, demands are made on the working conditions during manufacture for the first time.

## HISTORY

### Does the Blue Angel keep its promises?

Even though not every award may be convincing, the Blue Angel has initiated the improvement or the complete replacement of countless products which were harmful to the environment. Often years before politics finally passed legal requirements or bans.

*BR Fernsehen* [Bavarian Broadcasting television], “Unkraut” [“Weeds” environmental magazine], 26<sup>th</sup> March 2018

### This is why the “Blue Angel” is so successful

The Blue Angel has now been around for 40 years. Has it really made a contribution towards protecting the environment? Yes—because it frequently makes it easier for consumers to become aware of new, environmentally-friendly products. (...) the Blue Angel makes customers aware of alternatives which are less harmful to the environment than other products, thus helping the manufacturers of such products in the fight for awareness among consumers and potentially giving them an advantage.

*SWR* [Southwest Broadcasting], “Marktcheck” [“market check”, consumer television programme], 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018



2014

#### THE BLUE ANGEL RENEWS ITS COOPERATION AGREEMENT

with environmental labels in Austria, Japan, China and Korea.

2016

FIRST BLUE ANGEL PROMOTION DAY ON 25<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER

2017

THE BLUE ANGEL LOGO IS MODERNISED



2018

THE FIRST AIR CONDITIONER (type monosplit) and the first pen receive the Blue Angel.

**TODAY AND TOMORROW**

# The Blue Angel today

In many branches of industry, our label is a seal which can be relied upon as an indication of more environmentally friendly products and services. Almost everyone recognises it and, for many, it is a factor which they consider when making purchasing choices.

**AN OVERVIEW OF THE SECTORS**  
 Meanwhile, the products and services which bear the environmental label can be separated into twelve areas.

↪ Version 2018



Paper Products



Laundry Detergents and Cleaning Agents



Vehicles, Mobility



Energy, Heating



Packaging, Disposal



Furnishings, Clothing, Everyday Items



Construction Products



(Household) Chemicals, Cleaning



Cleaning Services



Electrical Devices (Household)



Information and Communication Technology (ICT)



Other

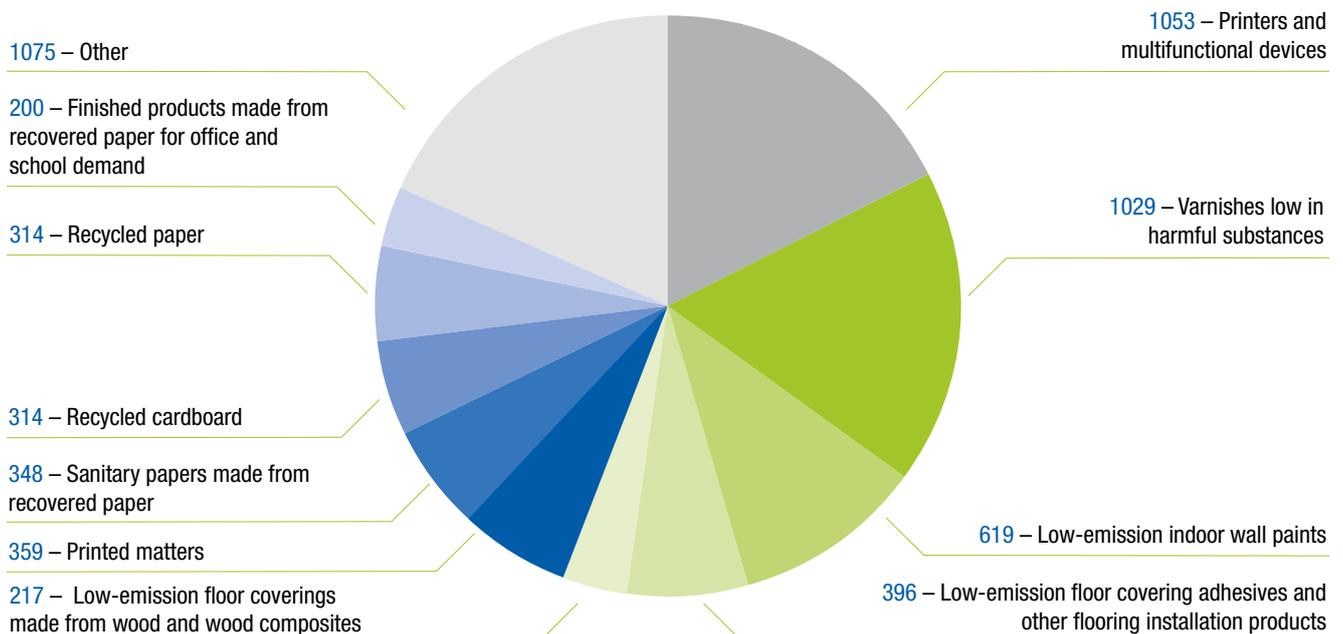
Data source: Blue Angel

**THE MOST SIGNIFICANT GROUPS OF PRODUCTS**

The Blue Angel is particularly strong in the areas of recycled paper, construction products, and printers and multifunctional devices.

Contracts (basic contracts and extension contracts)

↪ Version: 2018



Data source: Blue Angel

**COMPARING THE LABELS**

The graphic below displays a comparison of six selected labels. The Blue Angel is ranked among the most well-known. 92 percent of people in Germany are familiar with the environmental label (green bar). For 37 percent of those people who are familiar with the label, its presence also plays a role when making purchasing choices (blue bar). Together with the EU Ecolabel, the Blue Angel is present in considerably more groups of products than other selected labels and seals (overview below).

All figures stated as percentages | Version 2016 ↘

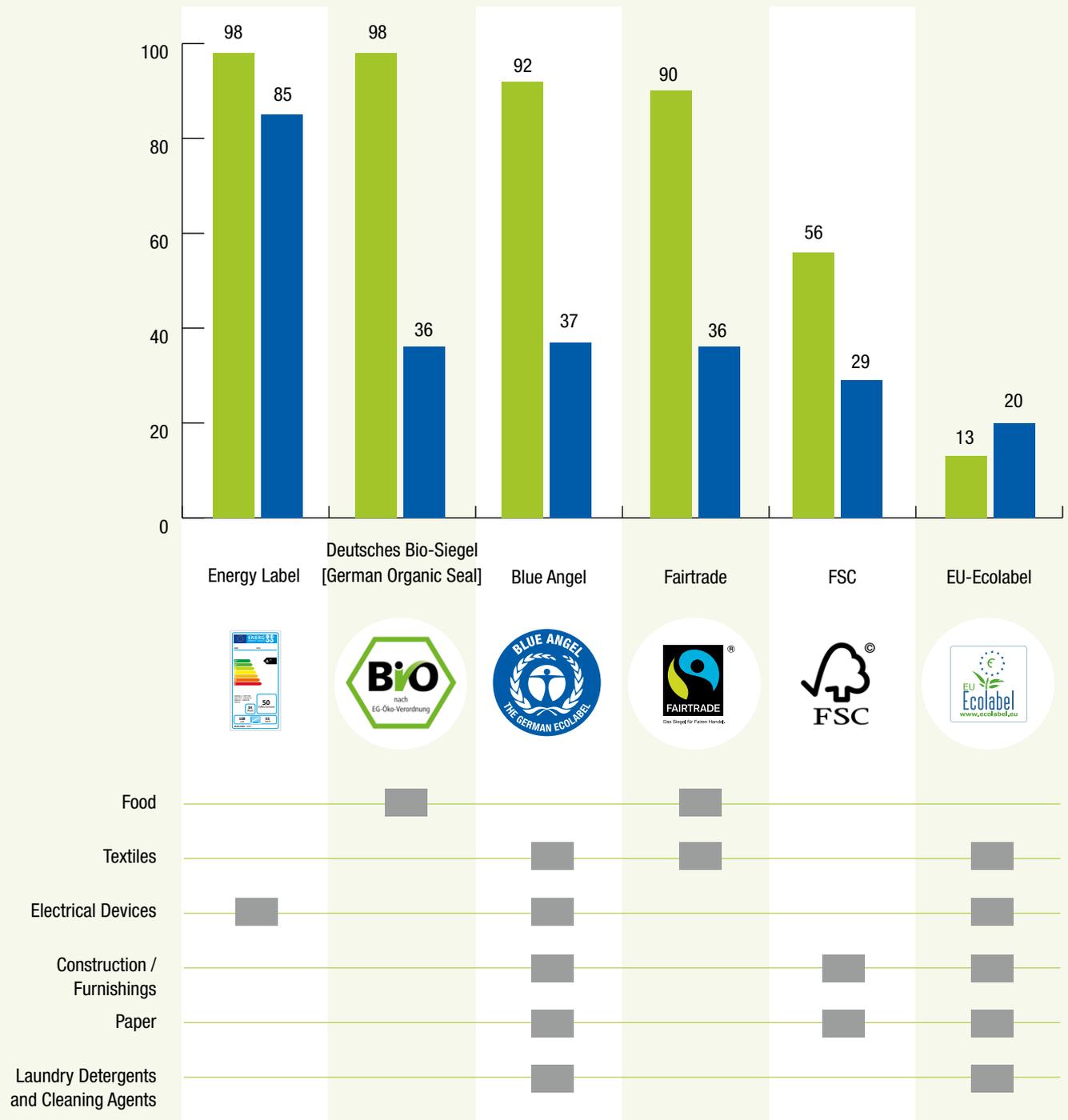
I am familiar with the label/ seal (basis: 2030 surveyed)



The label/seal has an influence on my decision to buy (basis: only those respondents who were familiar with the corresponding seal.)



The label or seal has a presence in this group of products.



Data source for bar chart (above): Umweltbewusstseinsstudie [Environmental consciousness study] 2016, Forsa Politik- und Sozialforschung [political and social research] GmbH. Data source for overview (below): UBA [German Environment Agency].

## Future-proof

Digitisation, the globalisation of markets and complex supply chains: the Blue Angel is reacting to new challenges. The environmental label is helping shape the change in the economy towards more sustainability. It wants to label innovative products and promote environmental and social standards worldwide. At the same time, it will remain the point of reference among traditional Blue Angel products.

At its core, the Blue Angel is an environmental label for products and services. However, consumers today are also increasingly beginning to question the working conditions involved in the manufacturing of products. Companies wish to demonstrate that, with regards to social aspects too, their products have more to offer than comparable products. Since 2011, the Blue Angel has been addressing this challenge by including social requirements in its criteria for selected categories of products, including textiles, mobile phones, toys and shoes.

### PRODUCED FAIRLY:

Since 2011, the Blue Angel has been evaluating social criteria when it comes to textiles.

### Environmentally friendly and fair

One example: when it comes to mobile phones, demand is rising for specific metals and rare earths, e.g. gold, tungsten and tantalum. For this reason, it is increasingly important that raw materials such as

these—with a potential for conflict—are obtained in a socially responsible way and that this is also verified and credible for the end consumers. This is why social criteria which also enquire into working conditions are supplementing classic requirements with regards to the environment and health.

### Resource-saving digitisation

In addition, devices such as mobiles, laptops, routers etc. bring about a high consumption of resources. The Blue Angel is setting ambitious standards to counteract this. Among other things, high-quality and replaceable batteries, as well as the availability of replacement parts and software updates, should enable a long service life for these products. An extensive take-back system, as well construction which enables the product to be recycled at a later date, also contribute towards improving the environmental balance of the products and towards saving resources. →

**STANDARDS:** Set by the Blue Angel e.g. for smartphones.



## TODAY AND TOMORROW

Digitisation requires a dense IT infrastructure. The services which form this infrastructure are not always the consumers' main focus. However, more environmentally compatible measures and alternatives are important here, too. For example, the environmental label for data centres which stands for energy-efficient operation and climate-friendly air conditioning. In the future, the Blue Angel will also be acknowledging servers and resource-efficient software.



### Strengthening our strengths

Recycled paper, printers, construction products such as floor coverings, paints and varnishes, or even furniture—these are the Blue Angel's traditional "best sellers". In order to ensure that the environmental label remains discerning, the criteria for these are revised regularly and, in doing so, are becoming more complex, more comprehensive, and more strict. Threshold values are being determined for more and more critical chemicals, and more and more substitute materials are being evaluated. With regards to construction products, the Blue Angel is developing better and better test procedures, and is turning its gaze towards methods of production which are as environmentally compatible as possible. For companies, this means that they must constantly shape their production processes and products to be more environmentally friendly and, in each case, must prove this anew.

### Introducing ambitious standards into the market

The state of the economy today means that products are developed and marketed more and more quickly, that partly global supply chains are becoming more complex, and that companies are quick to change suppliers. This presents companies with additional challenges when they wish to certify their products with the Blue Angel, for example textiles or toys. But it is with these products in particular that consumers desire more orientation when shopping. For this reason, it is our aim to establish the Blue Angel as a recognised and viable standard in these industries too, as well as to provide good orientation for consumers.

### National environmental standards on a global scale

Close cooperation between the various national environmental label programmes is important when it comes to facing up to the challenges of global markets. If demanding standards are used globally, huge environmental benefits can be achieved. When environmental labels set global standards which go beyond national ones, they will also become more attractive for companies which operate on an international scale.

**THE FUTURE IS DIGITAL.**  
With the Blue Angel for data centres.

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**If demanding standards are used globally, huge environmental benefits can be achieved.**



#### A SUMMER'S TALE IN LÜNEBURG:

Parents and children take a stance for environmental protection and health.

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**Environmental protection and health are important to young people when shopping.**

## With a view to the younger generation

Among the diversity of labels, the Blue Angel is increasingly addressing families in the early stage and young parents with corresponding day-to-day products. In this manner, the oldest environmental label in the world is also winning over fans in the next generation.

Numerous labels compete to win the favour of consumers. In this competition, the Blue Angel concentrates on its strengths: it convinces customers through its status as a trustworthy label which is government assured and which combines environmental protection and health. This is also the conclusion of an empirical study carried out by the *Institut für sozial-ökologische Forschung* [Institute for Social-Ecological Research] on behalf of the German Environment Agency in 2013.

### Building on our strengths

The researchers recommend relying on the Blue Angel's twofold promise of environmental protection and health in particular, a promise which the Blue Angel has upheld since its very beginnings. Blue Angel products not only cause less damage to the environment, but they also indicate fewer risks to people's health, e.g. through harmful substances, than comparable products.

**WE ARE BLUE ANGEL:**  
Young people at the  
Highfield Festival

As part of a representative online survey, the researchers also established who could be particularly interested in products bearing the Blue Angel label and how the organisation, after 40 years, could introduce the seal to the next generation. “We recommended addressing young people currently at the household-forming stage and young parents,” said Barbara Birzle-Harder, one of the authors of the study. “They tend to pay more attention than average to product promises regarding environmental protection and health.”

For this reason, everyone involved with the Blue Angel is working more intensively on award criteria for corresponding day-to-day products. This includes products for babies and small children, such as nappies, toys or children’s bedroom furniture—from changing units to bunk beds. At the same time, the Blue Angel is taking new approaches when it comes to communication: it is addressing young consumers in particular with topical videos on Instagram, Facebook and YouTube, as well as with marketing campaigns at festivals.

The Blue Angel team has the aim of not only handing the environmental label—fit and strong in its fifth decade—over to the next generation, but also of already having made the children of this next generation familiar with the Angel.



**TOILET PAPER RELOADED:**  
Videos for the next  
generation of Angels



# Blue Angel eco-labelled products and services

Basic award criteria listed by industry sectors



## Paper Products

Paper Filters for Hot Beverages (UZ 65)  
Sanitary Paper Products (UZ 5)

Disposable Diapers (UZ 208)\*  
Recycled Paper (UZ 14/14a)  
Recycled Paper (Stationery) (UZ 14/14b)  
Recycled Cardboard (Stationery) (UZ 56)  
Printing and Publication Papers (UZ 72)  
Printed Matters (UZ 195)



## Laundry Detergents and Cleaning Agents

Laundry Detergents (UZ 202)  
Hand Dishwashing Detergents and Cleaners (UZ 194)  
Dishwasher Detergents (UZ 201)  
Shampoos, Shower Gels and Soaps (UZ 203)



## Vehicles, Mobility

Busses (UZ 59/59b)  
Municipal Vehicles (UZ 59/59a)  
Construction Machinery (UZ 53)  
Car Sharing (UZ 100)  
Car Sharing for Electric Vehicles (UZ 100b)  
Ship Design (UZ 141)  
Ship Operation (UZ 110)  
Replacement Catalytic Converters (UZ 184)  
Mobility Cards (UZ 192)  
Electric Cycles (UZ 197)\*



## Energy, Heating

Energy Savings Contracts (UZ 170)  
Energy Meters (UZ 142)  
Wood Chips and Wood Pellets (UZ 153)  
Gas-Fired Cogeneration Modules (UZ 108)  
Solar Collectors (UZ 73)  
Hot-Water Storage Tanks (UZ 124)  
Wood Pellet Stoves (UZ 111)\*  
Wood Pellet and Wood Chip Boilers (UZ 112)\*  
Photovoltaic Inverters (UZ 163)\*  
Radiator Thermostats (UZ 168)\*  
Air Conditioners (UZ 204)



## Packaging, Disposal

Returnable Bottles and Glasses (UZ 2)  
Returnable Transportation Packaging (UZ 27)  
Low-Noise Waste-Glass Containers (UZ 21)  
Products made from Recycled Plastics (UZ 30a)



## Furnishings, Clothing, Everyday Items

Mattresses (UZ 119)  
Upholstered Furniture (UZ 117)  
Furniture and Slatted Frames made of Wood (UZ 38)  
Toys (UZ 207)  
Writing Utensils and Stamps (UZ 200)  
Artists' Colours (UZ 199)\*  
Textiles (UZ 154)\*  
Shoes and Inlays (UZ 155)  
Shower Heads (UZ 157)  
Flushing Boxes (UZ 32)  
Sanitary Tapware (UZ 180)\*  
Lead-Free Products (Sinkers) (UZ 67)  
Plant Containers (UZ 17)  
Mechanical Watches/Clocks and Lamps (UZ 47)\*



## Construction Products

Floor Coverings, Panels and Doors Made of Wood and Wood-Based Materials (UZ 176)  
Elastic Floor Coverings (UZ 120)  
Textile Floor Coverings (UZ 128)  
Floor-Covering Adhesives (UZ 113)  
Flooring Underlays (UZ 156)  
Panel-Shaped Materials (UZ 76)  
Sealants (UZ 123)  
Internal Plasters (UZ 198)  
Wallpapers (UZ 35)  
Wall Paints (UZ 102)  
Varnishes, Glazes and Primers (UZ 12a)  
Thermal Insulation Materials (Indoor and Suspended Ceilings) (UZ 132)  
Thermal Insulation Composite Systems (UZ 140)  
Roof Coatings and Bitumen Adhesives (UZ 115)



## (Household) Chemicals, Cleaning

Pest Control, Biocide Free (UZ 34)  
Pest Control, Thermal (Wood) (UZ 57a)  
Pest Control, Thermal (Indoor) (UZ 57b)  
Sanitary Additives for Camping Toilets (UZ 84a)  
Flushing Water Additives for Camping Toilets (UZ 84b)\*  
Mechanical Pipe Cleaners (UZ 24)



## Cleaning Services

Laundrettes (UZ 173)\*  
Wet Cleaning Services (UZ 104)  
Carbon Dioxide Cleaning Services (UZ 126)  
Fabric Towel Dispensers (UZ 77)  
Hand Driers (UZ 87)

## TODAY AND TOMORROW



### Electric Devices (Household)

Baby Phones (UZ 125)\*  
Hair Dryers (UZ 175)  
Lamps (Illuminants) (UZ 151)  
Electric Kettles (UZ 133)  
Toasters (UZ 167)  
Coffee/Esspresso Machines (UZ 136)  
Microwave Ovens (UZ 149)\*  
Television Sets (UZ 145)\*  
Digital Projectors (UZ 127)  
Set-Top Boxes (UZ 196)  
Cooker Hoods (UZ 147)  
Vacuum Cleaners (UZ 188)  
Solar-Powered Products (UZ 116)  
Garden Tools (UZ 206)

Voice Over IP Phones (UZ 150)  
Mobile Phones (UZ 106)  
Take-back systems for Mobile  
Phones (UZ 209)\*  
Routers (UZ 160)\*  
Video Conference Systems (UZ 191)\*  
Interactive Whiteboards (UZ 166)\*  
Data Shredders (UZ 174)  
Power Strips (UZ 134)  
Uninterruptible Power Supply (UZ 182)\*  
Data Centers (UZ 161)



### Other

Lubricants and Hydraulic Fluids (UZ 178)  
Spreading Materials (UZ 13)  
De-Icers for Airfields (UZ 99)  
Climate-Friendly Grocery Stores (UZ 179)  
Fabrics from Recycled Plastics (UZ 193)\*  
Leather (UZ 148)



### Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

Computers and Keyboards (UZ 78)  
Monitors (UZ 78c)  
Printers, Copiers and  
Multifunction Devices (UZ 205)  
Toner Modules (UZ 177)  
Telephone Systems (UZ 183)  
Cordless Phones (UZ 131)

Version: August 2018

\* currently no provider

## IMPRINT

### PUBLISHER:

Umweltbundesamt  
Wörlitzer Platz 1  
06844 Dessau-Roßlau  
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### CONCEPT, TEXT, DESIGN:

MediaCompany—Agentur für  
Kommunikation GmbH

**RELEASE DATE:** Octobre 2018

**PRINTING:** Druckhaus Mitte

**COPIES:** 1.000

### PHOTOS:

Title: kovop58 / shutterstock.com  
P. 1: BMU / Sascha Hilgers; photostudiod29  
P. 2: ValuaVitaly / istockphoto.com  
P. 3: Farknot Architect / shutterstock.com  
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P. 6: Globus-Press GmbH & CO. KG /  
Archiv RAL gGmbH  
P. 7: Photographer unkown / Archiv RAL gGmbH;  
Press and Information Office of the Federal Government  
/ Lichtenford  
P. 9: Dominik Butzmann / Transparency Germany  
S. 10: Photographer unkown / Archiv RAL gmbH;  
Archiv RAL gmbH; own publication Blue Angel  
P. 13: sebra / shutterstock.com  
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This print product is awarded with the Blue Angel.



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for the Environment, Nature Conservation  
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