



EcoTopTen 2.0

Promotion of energy-efficient products and energy savings with market overviews, social-media activities and events

 Consumers | [Information](#) [Campaign](#)



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Project information

 [Support programme](#)

Innovative climate action projects

 [Project duration](#)

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 [Project leader](#)

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Going the whole hog – the most energy-saving products for climate action

Power consumption by private households makes a significant contribution to CO₂ emissions in Germany. Many devices are now significantly more efficient than in the past, but the most efficient are often a lot more expensive to buy than the 'power guzzlers'. And as long as the total costs of a device – in other words, the purchase price plus electricity costs over the entire period of use – at the time of purchase are not recognisable, the price tag is the one that counts.

At a glance

Since 2005, the EcoTopTen information campaign that was initiated by the Oeko-Institut e.V. has been providing some help in this respect. It offers compact market overviews of recommended products that are not only eco-friendly and energy-saving but also have a good price-performance ratio and high quality on www.ecotopten.de. The funded project EcoTopTen 2.0 has extended this offering. The web page, which acts as a central information platform, has been improved and updated significantly, with new content added. It has been given a markedly improved and more modern design. New partners have increased the range and penetration, and households were motivated to join in by means of a competition.



Only the best get on the list

The EcoTopTen product lists provide a current overview of the leading ecological products available in the areas of lighting, appliances, entertainment, information and communication technologies, mobility, food and textiles. These lists contain information on technical characteristics, energy efficiency and the CO₂ emissions associated with manufacture and use. Minimum criteria ensure that only high-quality products are recommended that have an adequate price-performance ratio and are also top performers from an environmental point of view. EcoTopTen also shows what the products 'really' cost: in addition to the purchase price and the annual operating costs, the total costs over the life of the product are presented.

What were the project goals?

- To provide information to consumers about low-cost, energy-efficient, climate-friendly products and their use;
- To thus motivate consumers to purchase such products;
- To mobilise households to save electricity with the campaign 'Energy transition – we are starting now!'

The website offers additional information on purchasing and the environmentally sound use of the products. The buying tips help consumers to ask the right questions before making a purchase decision, to ensure that the product is suited to their own needs.

In addition to consumers, the product lists are also useful as a source of information and a basis for advice for experts in consumer advice and those responsible for procurement in companies, associations and local authorities.

Optimisation of the web page

Since the start of the campaign, the website has been regularly updated, but the programming had not been fundamentally redesigned. Therefore, it was necessary to significantly update the web page to modern standards. This included reprogramming using the content management system (CMS) Drupal. During the reprogramming, the content was also fundamentally revised and the look and feel of the page refreshed. The new structure made it easier to search and find products and information.



Logo of the seasonal recipe calendar

Climate-friendly food as new content

Studies on the climate-relevant emissions from vegetable and fruit farming show that regional, organic production is linked to fewer emissions. Based on this, the product cluster 'food' was developed for the project in addition to the existing categories. The cluster included a seasonal recipe calendar and recommendations for climate-friendly grocery shopping. These publications were illustrated with helpful graphics.

The platform for sustainable consumption as a partner

To achieve the greatest possible range of recommendations, the product lists were linked to www.utopia.de, a platform for sustainable consumption.



This provided users of the Utopia Product Guide, a catalogue of sustainable products and services, access to the EcoTopTen recommendations.

The Utopia City Guide, a digital directory for sustainably operating businesses in Hamburg, Berlin and Munich (initially), made it even more user-friendly. In 2011, this database included more than 12,000 address entries and enabled a direct search for the suppliers of the products and services recommended by EcoTopTen.

What did the project achieve?

- Informing consumers on the benefits of purchasing energy-efficient, climate-friendly and cost-effective products via the website;
- Provision of advice to ensure energy-efficient and climate-friendly usage of the products;
- Mobilisation of 2,281 households to save electricity with the campaign 'Energy transition – we are starting now!'

The campaign 'Energy transition – we are starting now! Save 1,000 euros on power'

One part of the project was the campaign 'Save 1,000 euros on power' which motivated consumers to save large amounts of electricity through measures that cost little. The idea of the campaign was based on the idea that a typical two-person household can save around 1,000 kilowatt hours of electricity a year by using energy-saving products for approximately 250 euros. Over the course of five years, this provides an overall saving of 1,000 euros. Originally, the campaign was aimed at least 50,000 households (or 100,000 people).

Consumers learned about the action via attractively designed flyers and media partners such as the magazines *Wirtschaftswoche* and *Schrot & Korn*. Sponsors such as Deutsche Telekom, the green electricity provider Polarstern and Saturn offered

attractive prizes. Particularly energy-efficient homes had the chance to win cash prizes of 1,000 euros, 1,000 kilowatt hours of green electricity and various energy-efficient products. The 2,281 winning households shared their experiences in the Utopia campaign blog and gave advice on the subject of energy saving.

"The winners shared their personal tips and tricks to save power in the Utopia campaign blog [...] Learning about the tricks the participants used to save so much power will hopefully motivate many more people to save energy."

Dr Meike Gebhard, Managing Director of Utopia GmbH

Tangible added value improves visibility

A study by the project implementer, Oeko-Institut e.V., in late 2013 showed that many organisations referred to EcoTopTen or used its minimum criteria for tenders when procuring product classes covered by the lists. The lists of environmentally sound top products on the campaign's website are also being used by several other consumer websites including, among others, the 'KühlCheck' (cooling check) by co2online for their household and consumer advice. The media response was documented monthly. Assuming that, for every print mention, three readers actually read the article, this equated to almost 140 million media contacts over the entire project period. The sites involved in the campaign – www.ecotopten.de, www.testberichte.de and www.utopia.de – registered 2.23 million hits for the EcoTopTen-specific content over the period 2012 to 2014.

What happened next?

The project continued to be funded by the National Climate Initiative (NCI). The latest information on the project is available on the page www.ecotopten.de.



Contribution to climate action

If the campaign website influences visitors in their purchasing decisions to the effect that they would chose a product recommended by EcoTopTen instead of a typical product, this can lead to electricity and CO₂ savings. The calculation of this savings effect was performed using a two-stage online survey, which was conducted in 2012 and 2013. They found that per access to the website an average annual power savings of 18.93 kilowatt hours was achieved. Against the background of traffic to www.ecotopten.de in the period 2012 to 2014, it was possible to determine that this triggered a total annual saving of 17.41 gigawatt hours of electricity.

Lessons learned

The website www.ecotopten.de is still an important information source for sustainable and climate-friendly consumption. Therefore, it makes sense to make use of it for private or public purchases of goods and services.

Checklist for success

- Clearly laid out presentation of the total costs incurred for the product;
- Cooperation with other website providers with comparable offers and interlinking of the offers;
- Local and online information for consumers.

Presenting overall costs

A comprehensible display of all costs of a product during its lifetime – investment and power costs - provides the necessary transparency about the added value of energy-efficient and high-quality products that stand out from the short-lived cheap goods. In climate change communication, this should generally be given greater consideration.

Linking online information with local information

The multifaceted cooperation with established platforms and a very tangible added value – for example, through integration with product catalogues and local business directories – helped interested consumers not only to find products in their locality but also with the selection of the products themselves.

Climate action needs your initiative

Since its launch in 2008, the National Climate Initiative (NCI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) has been supporting numerous projects that contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Funding has been given to a broad range of activities, from developing long-term strategies to providing practical assistance and investment aid. With a focus on advancing climate action on the ground, the Initiative benefits consumers, municipalities, businesses and educational institutions.

Legal information

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