

# Eco-voucher:

## an Innovative Tool to Empower Ecological Policies and Encourage Sustainable Consumption

"The eco-voucher grants workers additional purchasing power dedicated to ecological products and services, fostering long-term changes in consumption habits. It is an efficient and popular instrument to support ecological policies." **Conseil National du Travail - President, Rudi Delarue**

"The eco-voucher system has a proven impact on ecological behaviour, with a significant increase in green purchasing. It does not only benefit the environment but also generates additional revenue for merchants and contributes to jobs creation and economic growth."

**European Commission - Stephen White, Socio-Economic Analyst**



### Objectives

To ensure a long-term change in our global environmental footprint, it's crucial to **encourage a behavioural shift in European consumption patterns**. This involves enhancing citizens' skills in eco-friendly consumption and providing them with tools to change their habits through experiential learning.

### Efficient tool

The eco-voucher is an efficient tool for public authorities to promote a positive image of ecological changes. Employers can allocate eco-vouchers to their collaborators on an equitable basis, hence the presence in all sectors and income levels.

### Historical Context

Introduction of the eco-voucher system in Belgium through a union-employer-state negotiation, aimed at increasing workers' purchasing power with an environmental purpose. A list of eligible goods and services has been established, which is updated biannually to align with ecological realities, by the "Conseil National du Travail" (bringing together Belgian social partners).

### Key figures in Belgium 2022

**2,3M** beneficiaries

**1 OUT OF 2** workers in Belgium receives eco-vouchers

**124.500** employers

**€ 348 M** injected in our national economy

**40%** small local shops



**11%** supermarkets



**49%** specialized retailers



### Characteristics

Up to **€ 250** / per year / per worker



**Domestic consumption** only  
**No salary seizure** possible

**Exempted from fiscal** and social charges

**100%** digital



#### Top 10 uses in 2022

- 1 Garden: trees/plants/equipment
- 2 LED lighting
- 3 Household appliances
- 4 Organic food
- 5 Eco-friendly everyday products
- 6 Renovation/Construction
- 7 Eco-friendly cleaning products
- 8 Bicycle/electric scooters/mobility
- 9 Second-hand
- 10 Repair/Maintenance

#### Access to a list of 4 categories

- Ecological products and services
- Sustainable mobility and leisure
- Short/local food chains
- Waste, re-use and recycling

# The Impact of eco-voucher

## Behavioural impact



Consumers are **twice** as likely to adopt more eco-friendly behaviours thanks to eco-vouchers.

**50%**

of consumers **perceive ecological products as expensive** and need financial incentives to change behaviour

**43%**

would **delay the purchase** or even buy non-ecological household appliances if no eco-vouchers are provided

**54%**

credit eco-vouchers for directing behaviour towards sustainable consumption (+10% in 5 years)

**80%**

of consumers without eco-vouchers who opt for non-ecological products **would switch to the ecological alternatives** if they would receive eco-vouchers

**Each €100**

of eco-vouchers **increases desire for ecological purchasing** by 32%

**50%**

of consumers without eco-vouchers express **interest in buying organic food** more frequently if they would receive eco-vouchers

## Ecological Impact



**1**

For **€1** used in eco-voucher, it is **1 Kg / CO2 saved**

**2**

The eco-voucher system leads to annual energy cost **savings of between €12 million and €23 million** only if we take into account the replacement of tumble dryers.

“

*If all working families received eco-vouchers and exhibited similar behavioural changes as observed among eco-voucher beneficiaries, annual savings of **€50.7 million** in household energy costs could be achieved through reduced dryer-related energy consumption.* ”

**3**

In 2022 we can estimate the actual savings to have been to **350.000 tons of CO2**. This represents

- **1.147.962.617 km** with the average Belgian car,
- **122 wind turbines** needed to save the same amount of emissions,
- **28.699 times** around the world with an average car,
- **24.132 Belgian's** total annual CO2 emissions,
- Between **54.337.607 and 97.166.926 euros** in costs to society,
- **2.110 hectares** of new forest needed to capture this amount during 20 years

# Social Equality & HR Perspective:

1

## Collective & Equalitarian benefit

The eco-voucher is a **collective and egalitarian benefit**. By its nature, it is granted to different income categories and sectors.



2

## Social impact

Individuals with **lower incomes** exhibit more significant changes in purchasing behaviour compared to those with higher incomes.

## Low-income

respondents are more likely to buy non ecological products if they no longer receive eco-vouchers compared to high-income respondents (53% vs. 35%)

**56%**

of consumers with low income would buy organic food more often if they received eco-vouchers.

3

## Employers motivation to grant eco-vouchers

- Awareness around ecology & supporting company's CSR policies,
- Promote more local and sustainable consumption,
- Positively impact the Belgian economy.



4

## HR Perception of eco-voucher

- Motivating: highly anticipated annual moment for employees,
- Easy to use and spend.

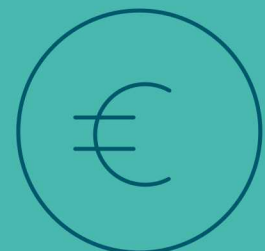
### Positive impact on public finance:

Government experiences a net positive effect of

**€240 million**

considering increased tax revenue, reduced unemployment benefits, additional social contributions, job creation, and other factors.

## Economical Impact



### Consumption generated by eco-vouchers:

**€337 million**

revenue for merchants, resulting in

**€71 million**

extra VAT for the State.

### Retail sector growth:

**2.823 new jobs**

created, saving

**€46 million**

on unemployment benefits.

# 4 Reasons Why the eco-voucher Impacts the National Economy and Society

By choosing the social voucher system, the government has successfully influenced the national economy, with proven impacts on ecological behaviour, positive effects on the economy, and additional financial benefits.



## Impact on Ecological Behaviour and Purchasing Power:

- Workers using eco-vouchers **prioritize ecological considerations** when making purchases.
- Families benefit from **energy savings**, resulting in a more sustainable and cost-effective lifestyle.



## Impact on Ecology:

- Each euro spent with an eco-voucher **reduces CO2 emissions**, contributing to environmental preservation.



## Impact on Social Equality:

- The eco-voucher system fosters social equality by offering a **collective and egalitarian benefit** that extends to diverse categories of workers and various income levels.



## Positive Impact on the National Economy:

- **Increased revenue for merchants**, stimulating economic growth.
- **Higher value-added tax (VAT)** collections, benefiting the State.
- **Job creation** and reduced unemployment benefits in the retail sector.
- **Overall financial benefits** for the government due to increased tax revenue and savings.



## A tool with a Vision

**IMPLEMENTED IN 2009**, the eco-voucher system promotes a forward-thinking ecological vision.



Result of **DIALOGUE** between social partners.



## ACHIEVED GOALS

Increase purchasing power with an environmental purpose, change behaviour, raise climate awareness, create jobs and ensure accessibility for all.