

# **Ethical Health Check Questionnaire**

## **Guidance Notes**

**April 2024 - V1.5**

## **Introduction**

### **About our ethical health check questionnaires**

Ethical Consumer Research Association has been ranking companies against ethical issues for more than 30 years. Our journalists and researchers keep up to date with where the best ethical standards are across more than 50 business sectors and rank hundreds of companies a year for our magazine and screenings clients.

The Ethical Consumer Health Check Questionnaires (EHCQ) are designed to serve two purposes:

#### **(i) Learning and development**

The EHCQ provides a useful ethical benchmark for your company and products. For your company's own learning and development, or just for fun, you can answer the questions and calculate your own score for a range of products.

- More than 65 and you're amongst the best
- Between 34 and 65, you're doing some good things, but could be much better
- Below 33 you've got a fair bit of work to do

By seeing yourself what you score low on, it should be clear what you could do to get a higher score if you wanted to. Sometimes it might mean developing more policy in a controversial area. Sometimes it might just mean being more transparent around policies and practices that already exist. Sometimes bigger changes might be needed.

In some cases you'll also be able to see how your products benchmark against your competitors by looking at their scores on our consumer website at [www.ethicalconsumer.org](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org)

#### **(ii) An opportunity for promotion if you score well**

Products that score more than 65 may be able to work with Ethical Consumer to promote their products. We have a Best Buy label certification scheme where companies can use the logo on products or websites. They can also appear on our website and can choose to participate in other marketing opportunities with us. In order to move forward with this, our researchers will need to check how you have scored yourself in the questionnaire. This will incur a small cost.

You'd also need to make sure you're happy for a pdf of this completed questionnaire to be published on our website. If there are elements which you would want redacted from the public domain before this happened, please highlight them in yellow in this form.

Please also let us know if you'd like us to sign a Non Disclosure Agreement before returning the questionnaire to us. Some elements do not need to go into the public domain.

To find out more about any of this, please contact Simon ([birch@ethicalconsumer.org](mailto:birch@ethicalconsumer.org)) or Grace ([grace@ethicalconsumer.org](mailto:grace@ethicalconsumer.org)).

## **How to fill in the Ethical health Check Questionnaires**

### **(a) Companies and products**

Ethical Consumer's benchmarking system is unique because it checks first a company's ethics and then checks the ethics of each product under review.

Many schemes, like Fairtrade or Leaping Bunny, will certify a product but not necessarily look at the ethics of the company which makes them.

Some schemes, like B Corp, look at company ethics but not in detail at the products each company makes.

In this way we provide one of the most comprehensive analyses available. And, if you think about it, it makes sense for a sustainable future to have both products and companies that are ethical.

Because of this, to benchmark a product, you will need to:

A - Fill in the company level questionnaire and then

B - Fill in the appropriate product-level questionnaire for the item in question. You may need to ask us for this if the obvious one is not available on the website.

Please try to fill in all the sections in the questionnaires you are sent.

### **(b) Providing evidence**

As you go through the questionnaires, if you award yourself points at any stage, we ask you to provide some evidence in the box next to that question.

This might be:

(i) a link/url pointing us to a website where you have more information

(ii) refer to a separate document (e.g. modern slavery policy) which you enclose

(iii) a sentence you write explaining the position clearly, such as "We do not have any activities in these areas".

### **(c) Feedback and comments**

Our EHCQ project was only launched in 2024 and so we are learning as we go. Do add comments to a document if you find some of it tricky or you don't understand it.

**How to add up your score and take next steps**

We are looking for an average score across the number of categories which you have completed.

1. Please copy in your total scores from the score cards that you filled in into the table below and add them up to create a total score in the bottom right column.

<b>Part 1 Company Level Scores</b>	<b>Score</b>
Climate Change	
Workers	
Animals	
Company Ethos	
Tax conduct	
<b>Part 2 Product Level Scores</b> [please write below the criteria you scored against e.g. Sustainable Agriculture]	
<b>Your Total Score</b>	

2. Take the total number of categories that you have completed and then divide your total score by the number of categories. This is your draft ethiscore.

Total score/categories	=	
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If your draft ethiscore score is more than 65 you may be eligible to use the Ethical Consumer Best Buy label with its linked promotional opportunities.

If it isn't, you may be able to put into place a few policies and practices and come back in a relatively short time to score yourself again. It should be obvious from the document what improvements are needed where.

## **Best buy label certification**

If it is above 65, and you want to explore using the promotional logo, send these forms to us to check and we will review your score.

We charge a small fee for reviewing a score (around £200). This we will invoice in advance of research taking place.

Please contact Simon ([birch@ethicalconsumer.org](mailto:birch@ethicalconsumer.org)) or Grace ([grace@ethicalconsumer.org](mailto:grace@ethicalconsumer.org)) for more information.

If we agree that your score makes the grade we'll get back to you and we can begin a discussion about logo licencing.

If we don't agree that your score makes the grade (companies are sometimes inclined to score themselves more highly than we are!) we will give you suggestions of what changes you could make. We will re-assess you for free after any changes have been made in a six month period..

Please remember that, should you decide to go ahead with the Best Buy label, this document will be published (with redactions if necessary) as a downloadable PDF on the Ethical Consumer website.

## Appendix 1

### List of lobby groups

- American Chamber of Commerce/AMCHAM-EU
- Bilderberg Group
- Business Action for Sustainable Development
- Round Table / European Round Table of Industrialists
- European Services Forum
- International Chamber of Commerce
- Transatlantic Business Dialogue
- Trilateral Commission
- US Coalition of Service Industries
- World Economic Forum

## Appendix 2

### List of tax havens

- |                        |                          |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Anguilla               | Luxembourg               |
| Aruba                  | Macao                    |
| Bahamas                | Malta                    |
| Barbados               | Marshall Islands         |
| Belize                 | Mauritius                |
| Bermuda                | Monaco                   |
| British Virgin Islands | Montserrat               |
| Cayman Islands         | Nauru                    |
| Cook Islands           | Netherlands              |
| Curaçao                | Nevada (US)              |
| Cyprus                 | Samoa                    |
| Delaware (US)          | San Marina               |
| Dominica               | Seychelles               |
| Gibraltar              | Singapore                |
| Guernsey               | St. Kitts and Nevis      |
| Guyana                 | St. Vincent & Granadines |
| Hong Kong              | Switzerland              |
| Ireland                | Taiwan                   |
| Isle of Man            | Turks and Caicos Islands |
| Jersey                 | US Virgin Islands        |
| Liberia                | Wyoming (US)             |
| Lichtenstein           |                          |

## Other Part Questions

Product-related questions will vary according to the product you want to check. We currently break them down into six types though this is a work in progress.

Food and Drink Sustainable agriculture Sustainability of packaging Palm oil (only where used or common in that product) [UD] Cocoa (only where used or common in that product) [UD]	Household and home Sustainability of packaging Animal testing Sustainability of materials/Toxics Timber (only where used or common in that product) [UD] Conflict minerals (only where used or common in that product) [UD]
Financial Services Sustainable lending policies [UD] Arms and military [UD]	Clothing Sustainable cotton [UD] Sustainability of clothing materials/Toxics [UD]
Cosmetics and personal products Toxics [UD] Animal testing	Other (including services)

Some of these are still under development [UD]. Please contact us for more information.