

# KANTAR PUBLIC

## Understanding consumers' needs and perspectives about food contact materials

Final report



# Study objectives



1. Gain understanding of the **habits, behaviours and experiences** of consumers with regards to FCM



2. Collect insights on the **concerns and preferences** of consumers with regards to FCM



3. Grasp **the information needs** with regards to FCM & **the way it should be communicated**

... with regard to **3 key themes**:

- Safety
- Hygiene
- Sustainability

# Study Methodology



9 EU countries: Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Malta (pilot), Poland, Romania, Spain  
Research was always in the language of the country



1 workshop per country



Equally split between age groups and genders



10 participants per group (12 recruited)  
Total of 90 participants



3h per workshop and one home diary to send 5 days in advance of the group to be completed in 2 days

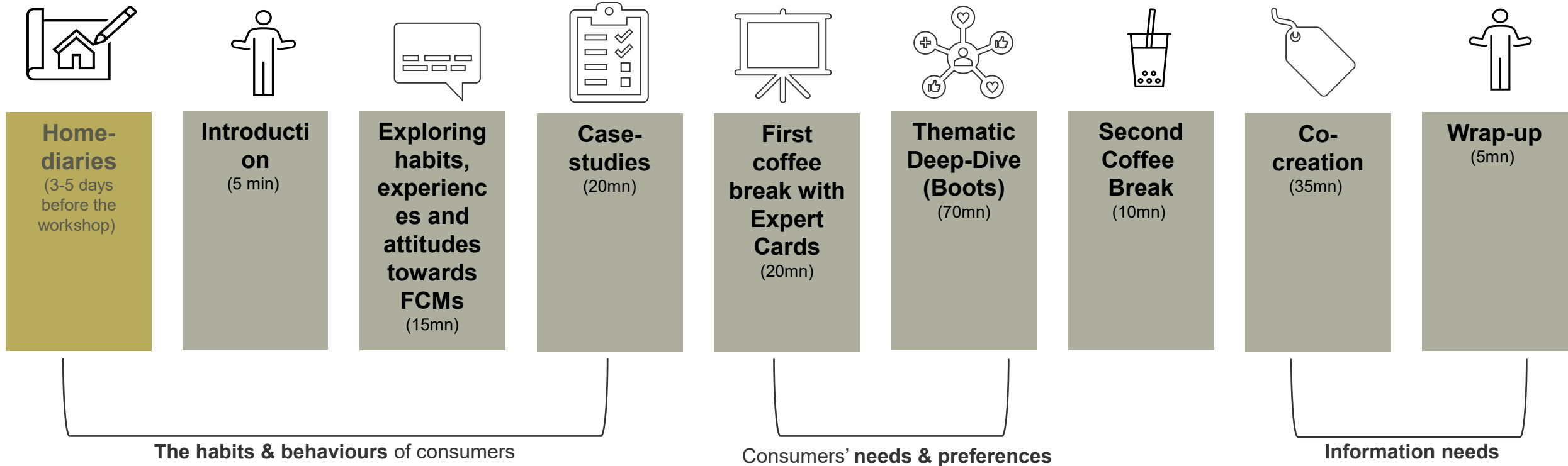


Between 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 (pilot) and 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022



# Study approach

## PARTICIPATORY WORKSHOP WITH A DIARY AS A HOME TASK

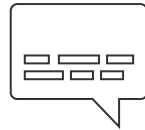


# Participatory Workshop Style

## POP CORN APPROACH

Exploring habits, experiences and attitudes towards FCMs and Case Studies activities

Generating ideas



- without critical reflection
- without a specific order
- without repeating what has been said earlier.

**All ideas are welcome, no filtering** during such activities.

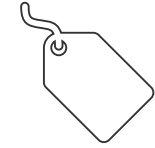
## WORLD CAFE

Thematic deep-dive



- **2 separate** rooms for each boot.
- For each thematic boot use of **relevant expert cards**
- **3 rounds:**
  - ✓ First two rounds the teams move between a sustainability & a safety boot.
  - ✓ Third round – trade offs between safety and sustainability boot, teams move again









## CO-CREATION



- The participants are **divided into 2 subgroups**
- **Instructions:** handouts with prompts are given to each of the groups
- **Provide materials** : flipchart, pmarkers, pencils, pictures from a photosort exercise, concern & idea cards
- **Each moderator** is there to support in case questions occur. **Help/prompts provided upon request.** Otherwise, no leading or guidance is required.

# Current knowledge and behaviours

1. **Safety and hygiene** of FCMs are not key concerns for consumers at first
2. Show **strong interest and gaps in knowledge** after stimulation
3. Citizens expressed range of **concerns** around FCMs and **related potential harm** when prompted
4. Admit to making potentially dangerous use of FCMs even when aware of the risks
5. Higher interest in FCMs topic when engaged in a discussion

Practices	Occurrence
Freezing ice-cream container	
Reheating takeaway container	
Freezing in unlabelled container	
Using dishwasher to clean unlabelled container	
Unknowingly disposing of bio-based container	
Heating ice-cream container in the microwave	
Heating unlabelled container in the microwave	
Freezing in glass container	

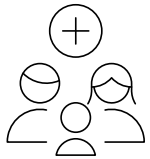
# Citizens' expectations of regulators and manufacturers/ retailers

1. Standard **harmonisation** at EU level
2. Manufacturers are responsible for **safe** FCMs at point of sale
  - In terms dangerous substances **leaching** into food
  - In terms of **hygiene**
3. All **FCMs** in circulation should be **safe**
4. Citizens understand that their choices to use and/or reuse of FCMs at home can lead to minor risks and its **their responsibility** (e.g., bulk-buy)



# Citizens hold a number of beliefs about sustainability and safety of different FCMs

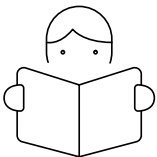
The different **sources** of citizens beliefs about FCMs sustainability and safety :



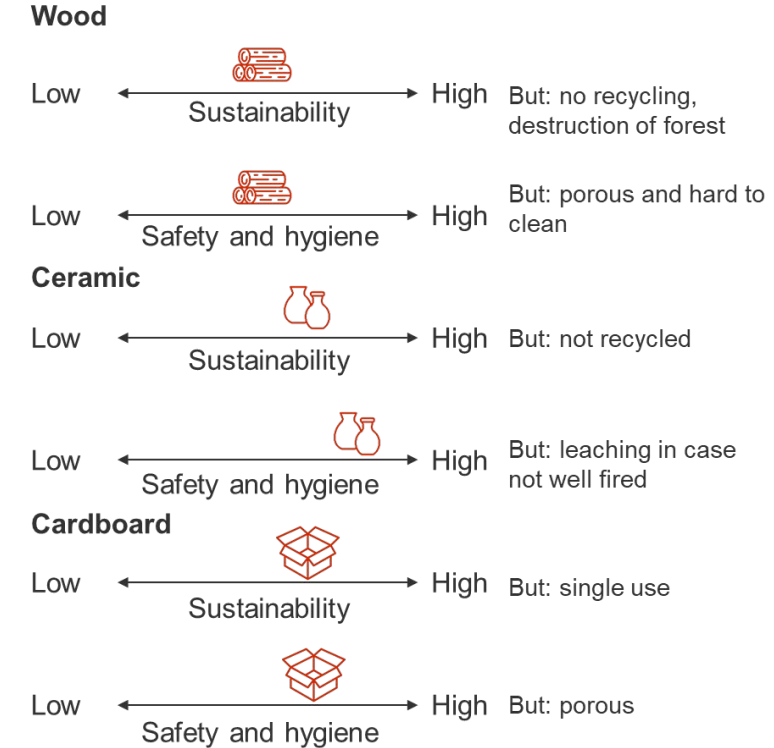
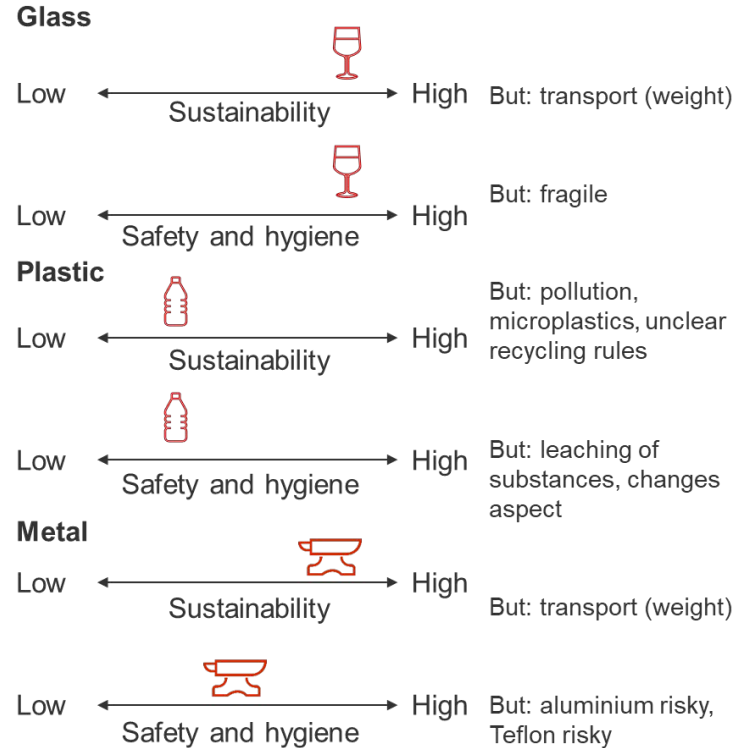
→ **Peers and family**



→ **Tradition**



→ **Scandals**





# Perceived characteristics of safe and sustainable materials

## SAFE (OR UNSAFE)



1. Synthetic materials → *general distrust*



2. Porosity → *food contamination*

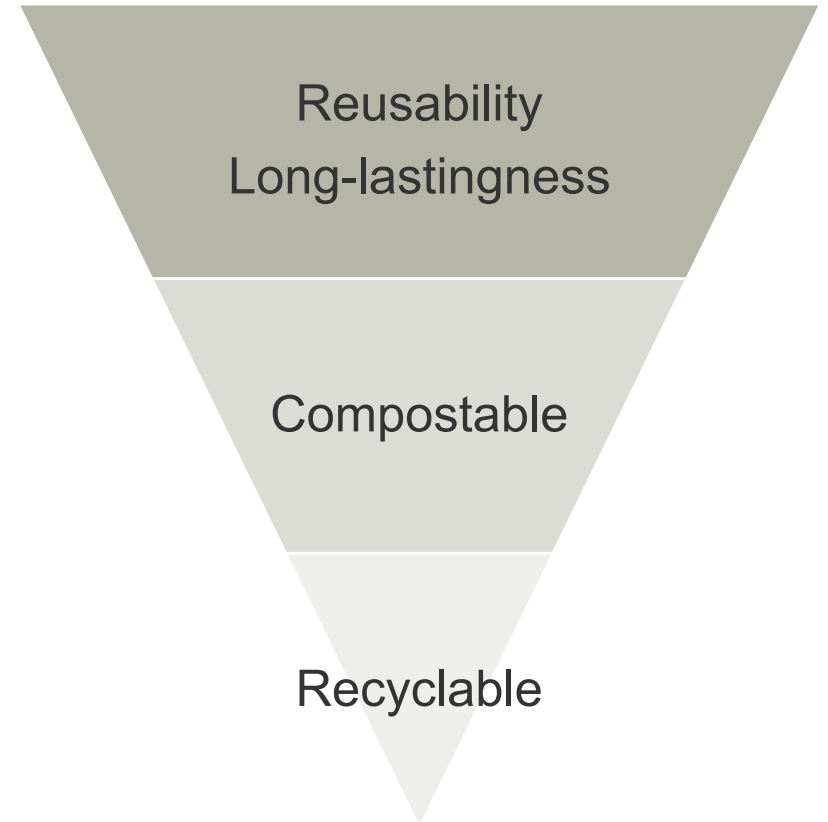


3. Oxidation → *risk of leaching*

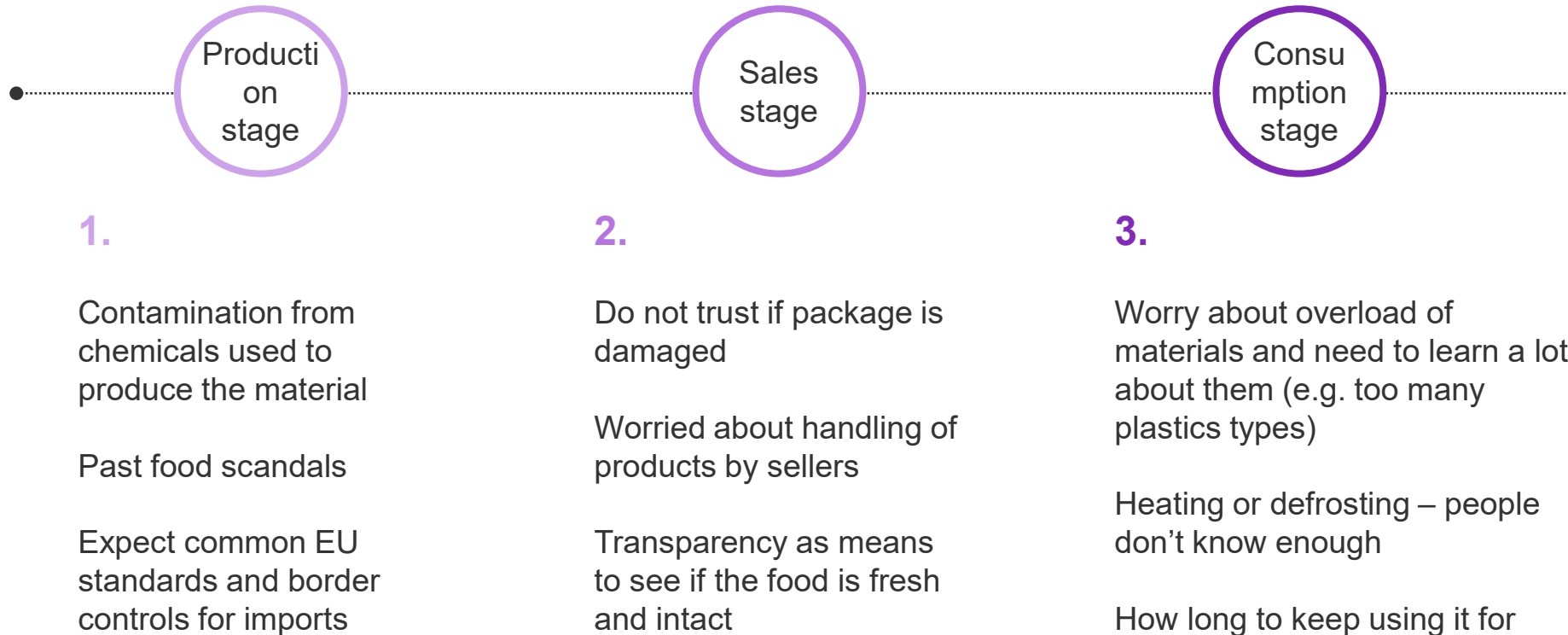


4. Breakability → *parents' concern*

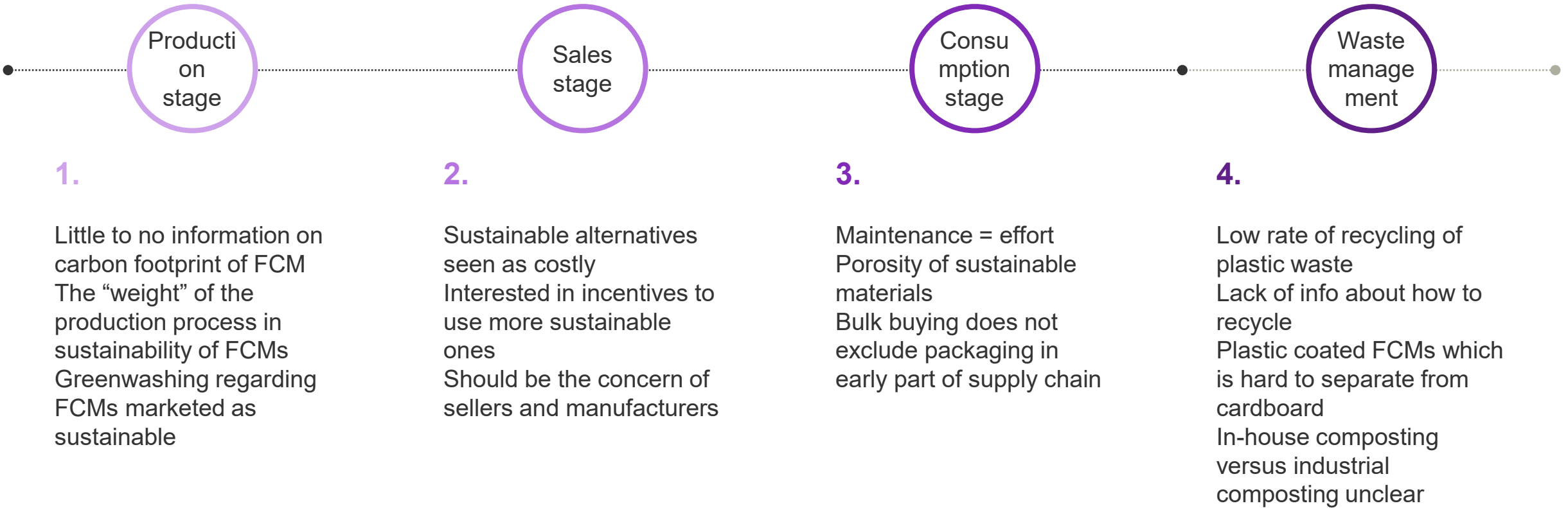
## SUSTAINABLE



# Concerns over safety and hygiene

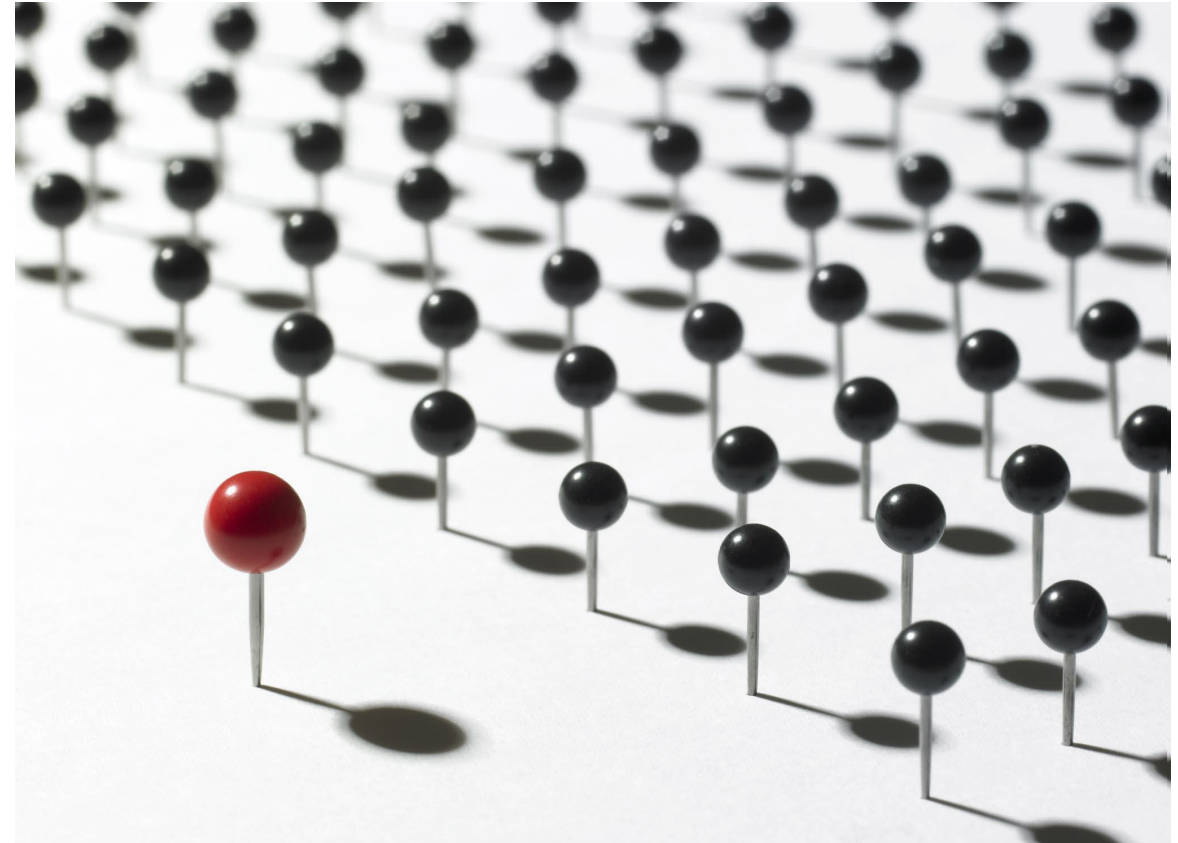


# Concerns over sustainability



# Strong opportunity for further communication actions

1. Limited understanding of **safety risks and sustainability issues**
2. Low comprehension of **current labels**
3. Past initial indifference to the topic, citizens feel **highly concerned**
4. Need to **relay information to citizens**, as they are already overwhelmed and uninterested in extra research



# Main information needs



## Heat & Freeze guidelines

(maximum temperature & time, microwave vs. oven, how long);



## FCM Composition

(particularly new materials/biomaterials)



**Re-use** frequency  
FCM **expiration date**  
**When** to dispose of FCM



**How** to dispose of the material



Who is the **source** of the information

# Main recommendations for communication or labels

Focus on actions → **DOs & DON'Ts**

“Just in time” → **Availability of information when needed**

More than labels → **Need for complementary information**

Convenient touch points (store, home kitchen) → **Access to supporting materials**



# Suggestions for labels

1

**Layering** of different types of information

2

**Colour coding** different types of messages

3

Use **text (or warning) messages** combined with **symbols**

4

**Rating** scheme

# Overall recommendations

1.

Review the current labelling to improve the understanding of intended messages. Harmonise labels across the EU. Include a wider breadth of information on the labels.

2.

Accompany labels with other information campaigns (posters, flyers, advertising spots). People expect information about: contact with food; heating/ freezing; recycling; composition. This would necessitate combining multiple messages in a single label or indication.

3.

Prioritise labels that focus on action: do's or don'ts.



# Overall recommendations

4.

Consider layering of information as well as colour coding accompanied with verbal information (warning messages)

5.

Enhance trust by specifying that the label is guaranteed by a trusted body (for example the EU).

6.

Test the understanding of messages on proposed labels

7.

Focus information provision and campaigns on choices that are relevant for consumers: sustainability as well as safe (re-)use of materials. Other measures need to ensure potentially dangerous products are not in circulation.

THANK YOU!



# Annexes - Suggestions for labels

## LAYERING OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF INFORMATION

### Layer 4

For example: waste disposal

### Layer 3

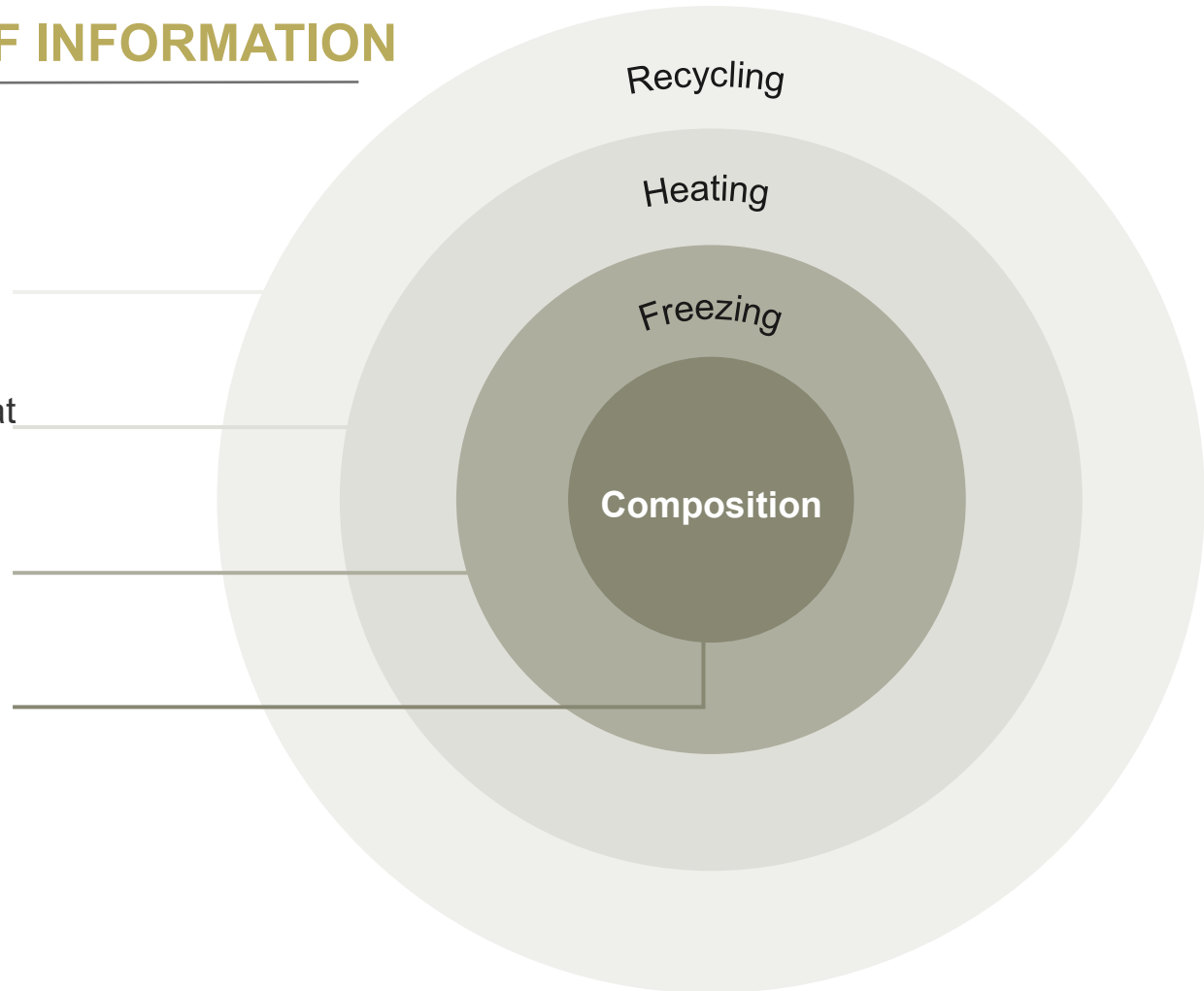
For example: whether the FCM can be heated and to what temperature and in what appliance

### Layer 2

For example: whether the FCM can be frozen

### Layer 1

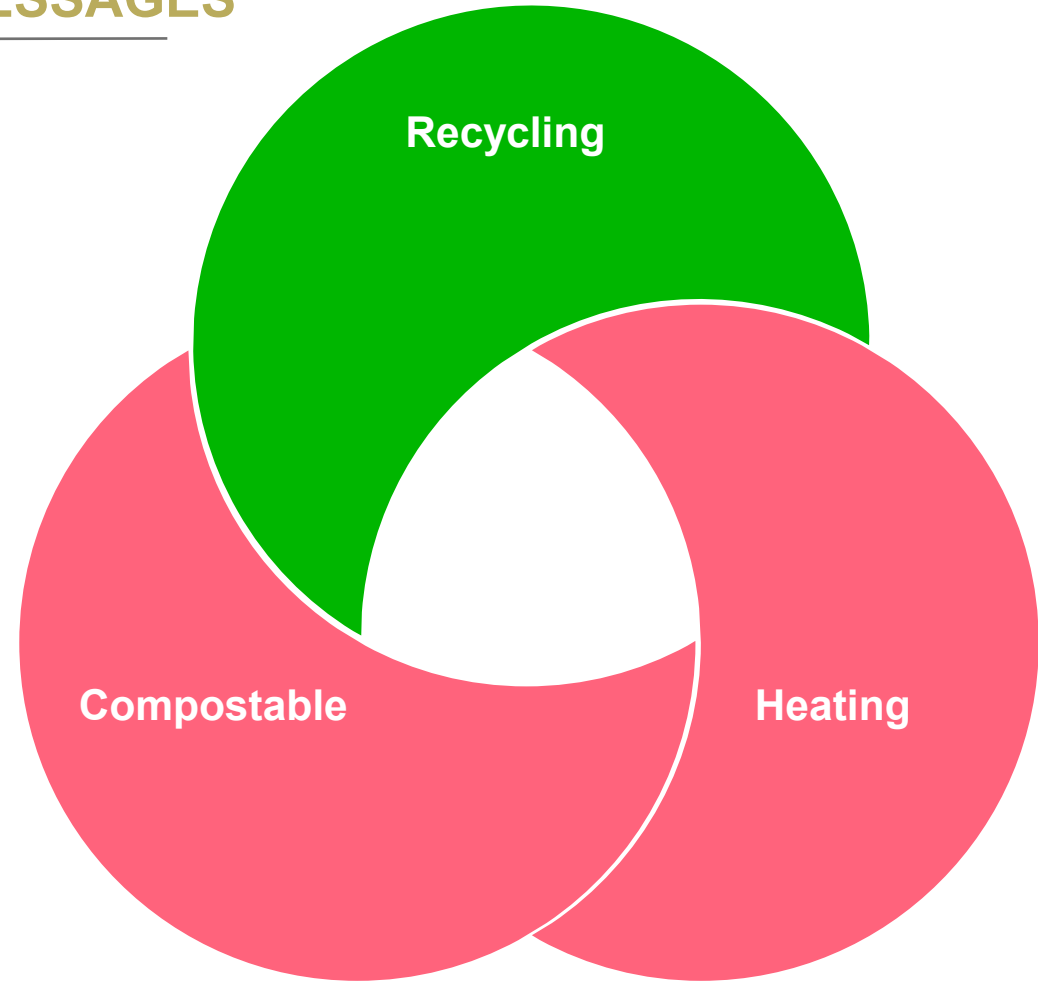
For example: composition



# Annexes - Suggestions for labels

## COLOUR CODING DIFFERENT TYPES OF MESSAGES

The FCM labels combining information about different topics could use colour codes to convey the message about each of the items.

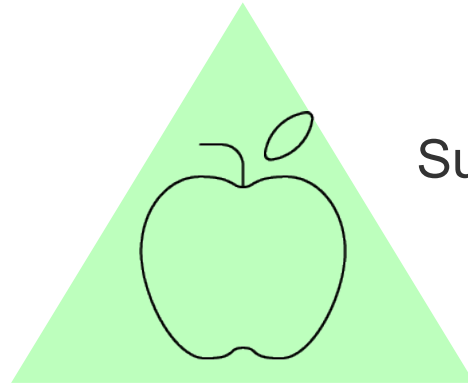


# Annexes - Suggestions for labels

## USE TEXT (OR WARNING) MESSAGES COMBINED WITH SYMBOLS

Do not heat

OR



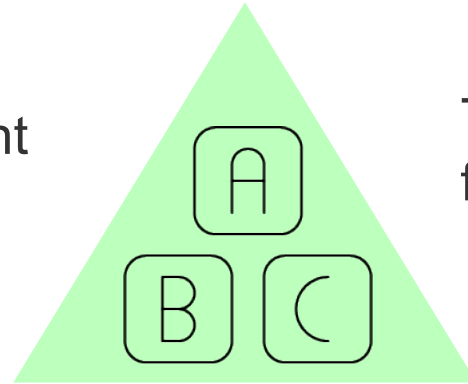
Suitable for household composting

Put in brown bin

# Annexes - Suggestions for labels

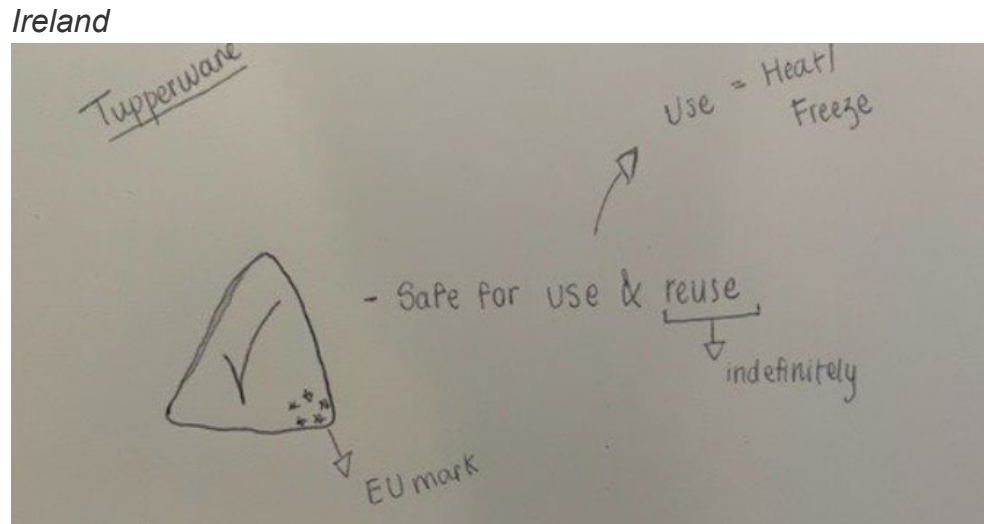
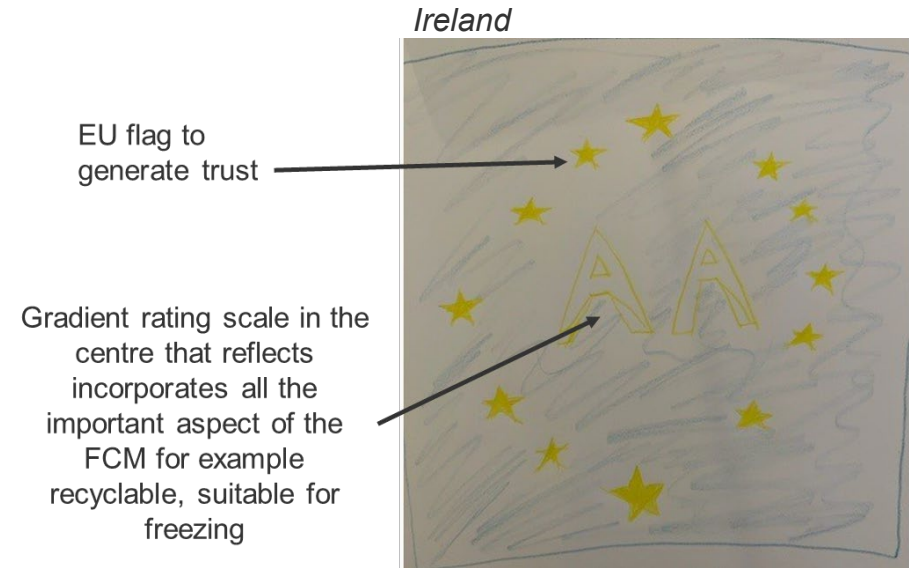
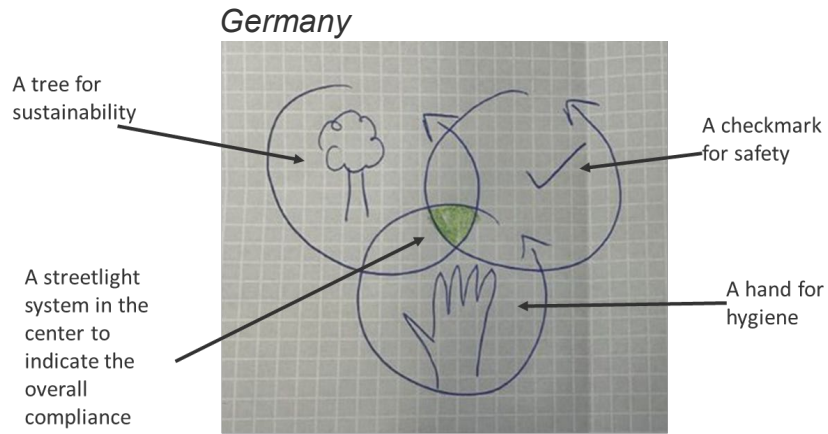
## RATING SCHEME

Whereby different ratings refer to different types of information













This requires other reference materials for the label to be actually understood

# Annexes – Workshop co-created labels



# Annexes – Home Diaries

Plastic containers	Utensils	Wrapping films	Glass containers	Cardboard
				
				



# Annexes – Consumer Archetypes



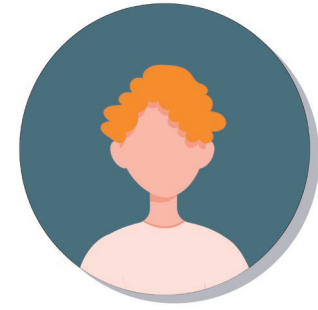
## THE ECOLOGICAL DEFENDER:

- **Most common behaviour:** they tend to be well-informed and motivated to find ideas for more sustainable choices for food contact materials. They are engaged and generally young consumers. They take part in advocating more sustainable choices and consumption of FCMs; sometimes their sustainable actions are implemented unconsciously.
- **Behavioural triggers:** the key behavioural triggers identified are social norms (peers), convenience and economic considerations. The additional costs when choosing biomaterials are perceived as positive.
- **Weak spots:** the primary weak spots are a lack of knowledge regarding the differentiation of a compostable and biobased FCM. They base their actions on a feeling of doing something good. They are inclined to choose more expensive options to ease their conscience.



## THE UNASSUMING CONSUMER:

- **Most common behaviour:** they are mostly uninformed, uninterested and highly disengaged consumers. They believe the responsibility for safe and sustainable FCMs lies with the authorities. They perceive sustainable options as an inconvenience.
- **Behavioural triggers:** the main behavioural triggers are convenience, social norms (family) and agency. They will base their choices on what is available for each situation separately. Additionally, economic considerations are important as they are key drivers in their choices.
- **Weak spots:** the key weak spot identified is ignorance of the potential dangers of harmful substances leaking from containers. They also tend not to dispose of their food contact materials unless they notice a visible deformation or discoloration.



## THE HEALTH PROTECTOR:

- **Most common behaviour:** they are fairly well-informed about safety and hygiene issues. They tend not to trust the safety of new materials used to package food items. These consumers are mostly concerned about plastic and its prolonged exposure.
- **Behavioural triggers:** the key drivers of the behaviours of these consumers are past experiences and habits, as well as health concerns and social norms. For instance, they demand guarantees in terms of hygiene to shift to bulk buying.
- **Weak spots:** dominated by their desire for safety and hygiene above all else, their FCM related actions are driven more by intuition than by knowledge and information. This weak spot is generally based on past experiences and social norms.

# Annexes – Consumer Archetypes

## EU citizens' consumer profiles

