

STUDY OF THE NORDIC ECO-LABELLING IN ESTONIA, LATVIA, LITHUANIA AND NORTH- WEST RUSSIA

Janar Sutt, Swedish Trade Council

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AGENDA

● Background

● Knowledge about ecolabelling

● How to proceed?

BACKGROUND

- Consumers in the Baltic countries and in North-West Russia are steadily getting more environmentally conscious and interested in ecolabelled products. Environmentally friendly consumer habits and issues of sustainable development are high on the political agendas in the Baltic countries, as well as in Russia. At the same time the public and business community is still lacking information about ecolabelling
- The Nordic Ecolabel (Swan label) is one of the best known Nordic brands, and at the same time one of the best-known ecolabels in Europe – the Nordic Ecolabelling offices would be of immense value for the Baltic countries and North-West Russia
- During the project activities the target groups have been presented with information about ecolabelling, the Nordic Ecolabel, as well as further steps for application for the Nordic Ecolabel in this region will be discussed

OBJECTIVES

The overall objectives of the project are:

- To increase environmental awareness among the public and businesses in the Baltic countries and North-West Russia by introducing the Nordic Ecolabel as a successful example
- To stimulate the interest for importing Swan labelled Nordic products to the Baltic countries and North-West Russia, and to contribute to a better environment in the Baltic Sea Region
- To increase the interest among businesses in the Baltic countries and North-West Russia to label their products with the Nordic Ecolabel which would increase their competitiveness on the Nordic market
- To increase contacts between public servants in Nordic countries, the Baltic countries and North-West Russia on ecolabelling

Target group

- The main target groups of the project are officials, businesses and NGOs involved in ecolabelling, and consumption in the Baltic countries and North West Russia

BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE SURVEY

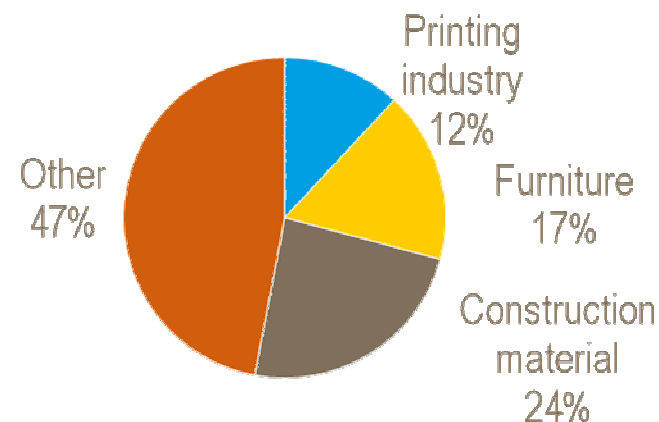
- Number of respondents and contacted companies in brackets:

- Estonia: 55 (189)
- Latvia: 51 (165)
- Lithuania: 55 (138)
- North-West Russia: 50 (250)

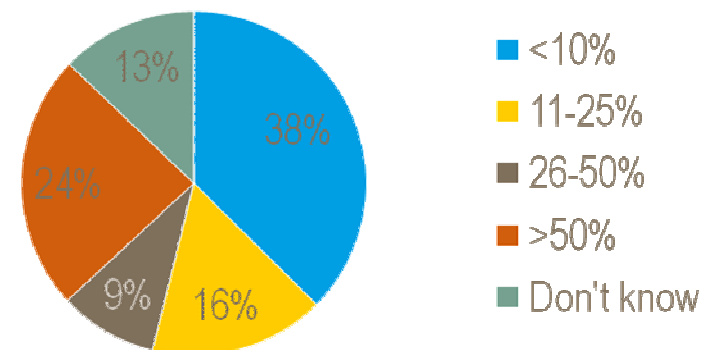
- Personal interviews with industry associations and companies*:

- Estonian Textile Association
- Estonian Forest Industry Association
- Printing Industry Association
- Latvian Furniture Association
- Latvian Association of Textile
- Latvian Printing Industry Association
- Lithuanian Apparel and Textile Industry Association
- Lithuanian Association of Timber Houses Producers
- Association of Lithuanian Wood
- *In the North-West Russia industry associations refused to be interviewed and referred to contact the Russian Ministry of Environment only. Instead of the associations, companies were interviewed

- Sectors the respondent companies represent:



- Respondents' export to the Nordic countries:



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ECOLABELLING IN THE BALTICS AND NORTH-WEST RUSSIA

North-West Russia

- Companies generally do not have much knowledge about ecolabelling, but often claim having knowledge about the requirements. Companies tend to believe that the requirements are very stringent. Also, there is not enough information about ecolabelling in Russian
- Although companies do not know much about ecolabelling, they are interested in ecolabelling their products

Estonia

- Companies in Estonia have both positive and negative experiences with ecolabelling
- They have relatively good knowledge about the Nordic Ecolabel, but do not know much about the specific requirements

Latvia





- According to the respondents, Latvian companies have a relatively good knowledge about the Nordic Ecolabel, but are not as interested in the Swan label as their focus is on the EU Ecolabel

Lithuania

- Lithuanian respondents are not well aware of the Nordic Ecolabel nor the requirements, but are interested in labelling their products with the Swan label
- According to the Lithuanian companies, the EU Ecolabel is more attractive than the Nordic Ecolabel

LOW KNOWLEDGE BUT CLEAR INTEREST IN ECOLABELLING

0 – not important at all ● – less important X- important ✓ - very important

				
Spontaneous knowledge about ecolabels	●	●	●	0
Knowledge about the Nordic Swan Ecolabel	x	✓	x	0
Knowledge about the EU Ecolabel	0	x	x	0
Knowledge about other ecolabels	●	●	●	0
Information available about ecolabelling	✓	x	●	0
Awareness of the conditions to be fulfilled in order to be ecolabelled	0	●	●	x
Positive experiences with the Nordic Ecolabel meaning increasing sales due to having a clean production process	0	●	●	●
Interest in labelling their products with the Nordic Ecolabel	●	0	✓	x
Interest in labelling their products with the EU Ecolabel	●	x	✓	x
The Nordic Ecolabel would benefit sales	●	x	x	x
The preferred channels for information: Internet	✓	x	x	x
The preferred channels for information: Seminars	●	●	✓	✓

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GENERAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ECOLABELLING IN THE BALTIC COUNTRIES AND NORTH-WEST RUSSIA IS LOW

Could you please name any of the ecolabels that you know?

Spontaneously people could name the following ecolabels (number of times)

Nordic Ecolabel (18)



FSC (17)



EU-flower (10)



Blue Angel (7)



Гост* [gost] (6)

EMAS (5)



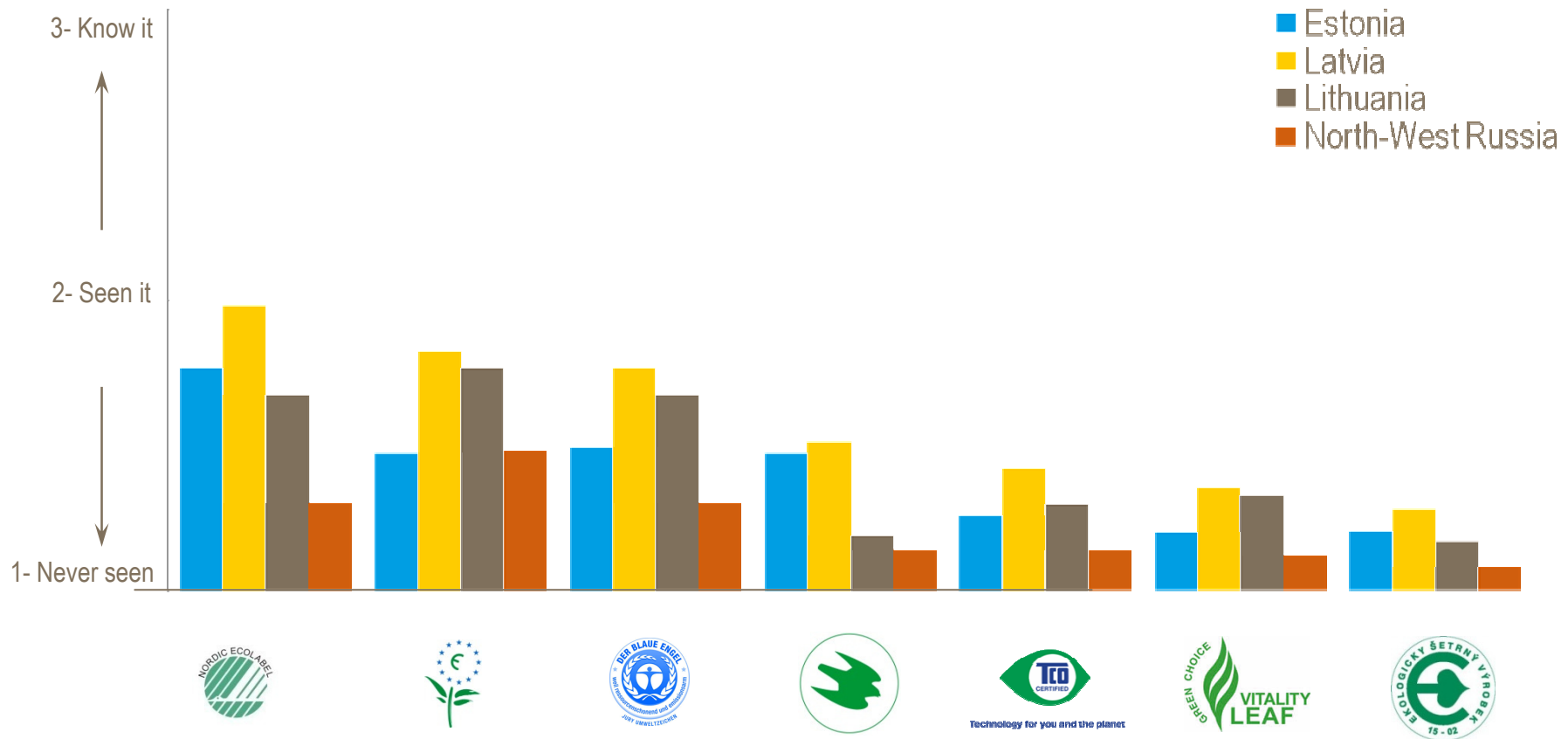
General knowledge about specific ecolabelling is relatively low in the Baltic countries and in the North-West Russia, but 65% of the companies could name at least one label that for them associates with ecolabelling

*Although gost is not an ecolabel, respondents in Russia regarded it as one

EXPORT COMPANIES ONLY RECOGNIZE CERTAIN ECOLABELS

Do you recognize the following ecolabels?

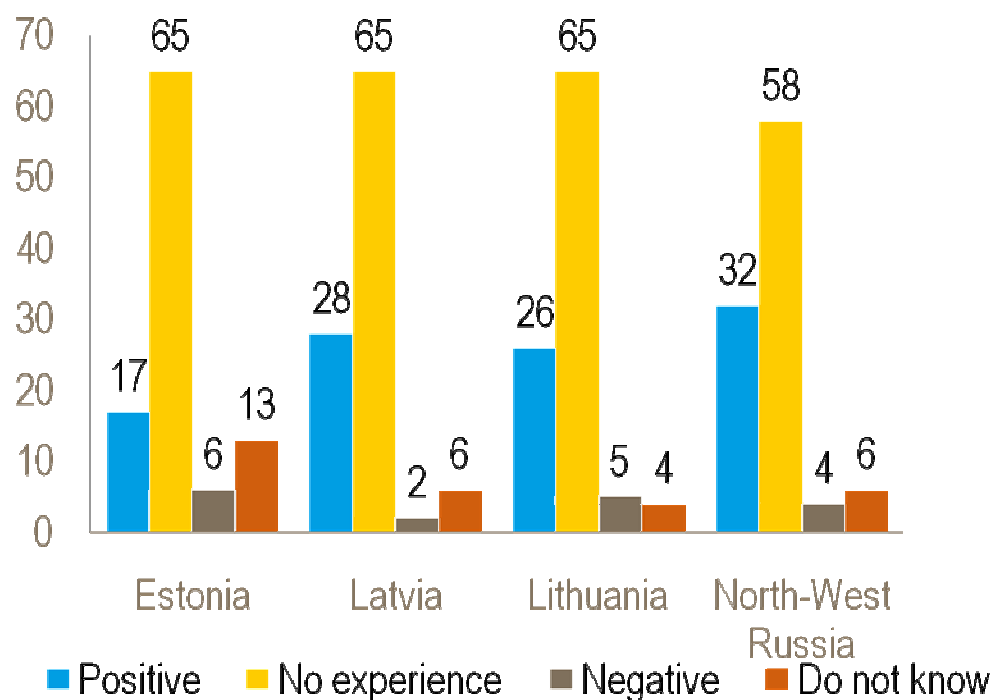
Average knowledge: 1-Never seen it, 2-Seen it, 3-Know it



COMPANIES DO NOT HAVE MUCH EXPERIENCE WITH ECOLABELLING

What are the previous experiences with ecolabelling?

Percent / Country



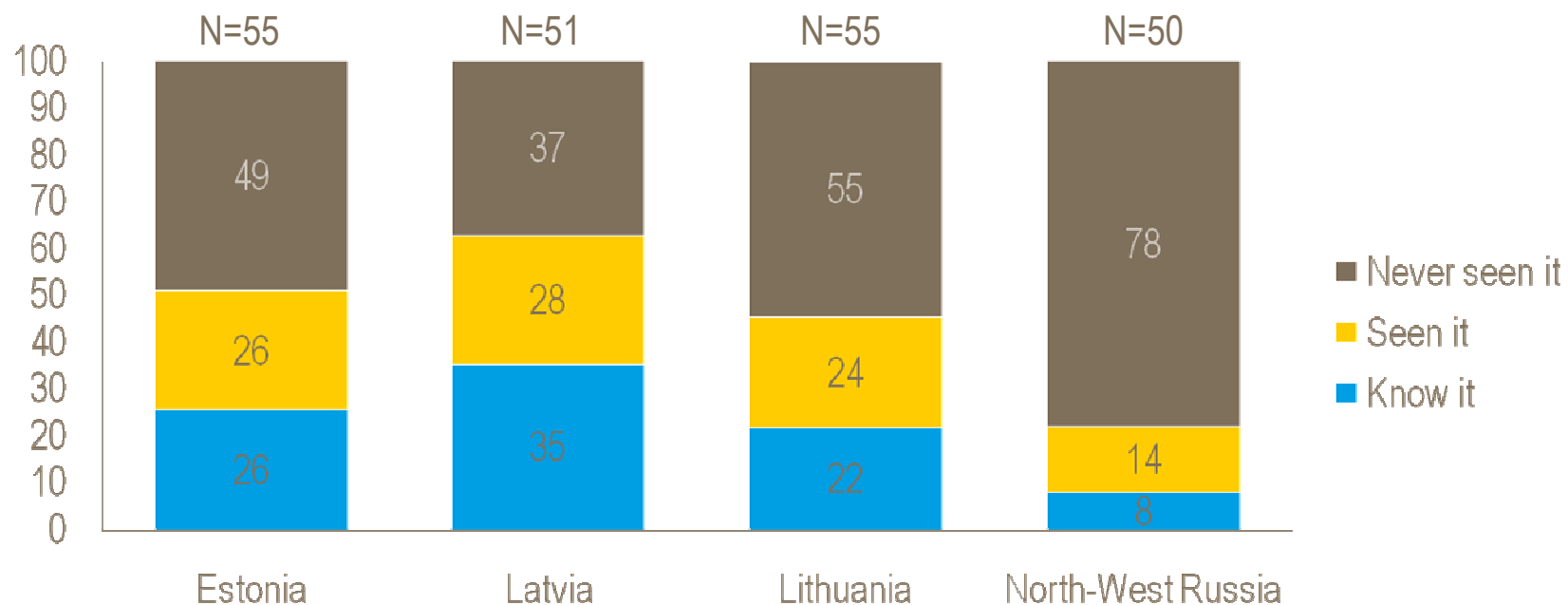
- Generally companies do not have much experience with ecolabelling. About 65% of the Baltic respondents have no experience with ecolabelling while in Russia the share of companies with no experience is somewhat lower 58%
- The companies that have been in need for ecolabelling, are already ecolabelled due to the market demand

MORE THAN 62% OF THE LATVIAN COMPANIES ARE AWARE OF THE NORDIC ECOLABEL

Do you recognize the Nordic Ecolabel?



Percent / Country



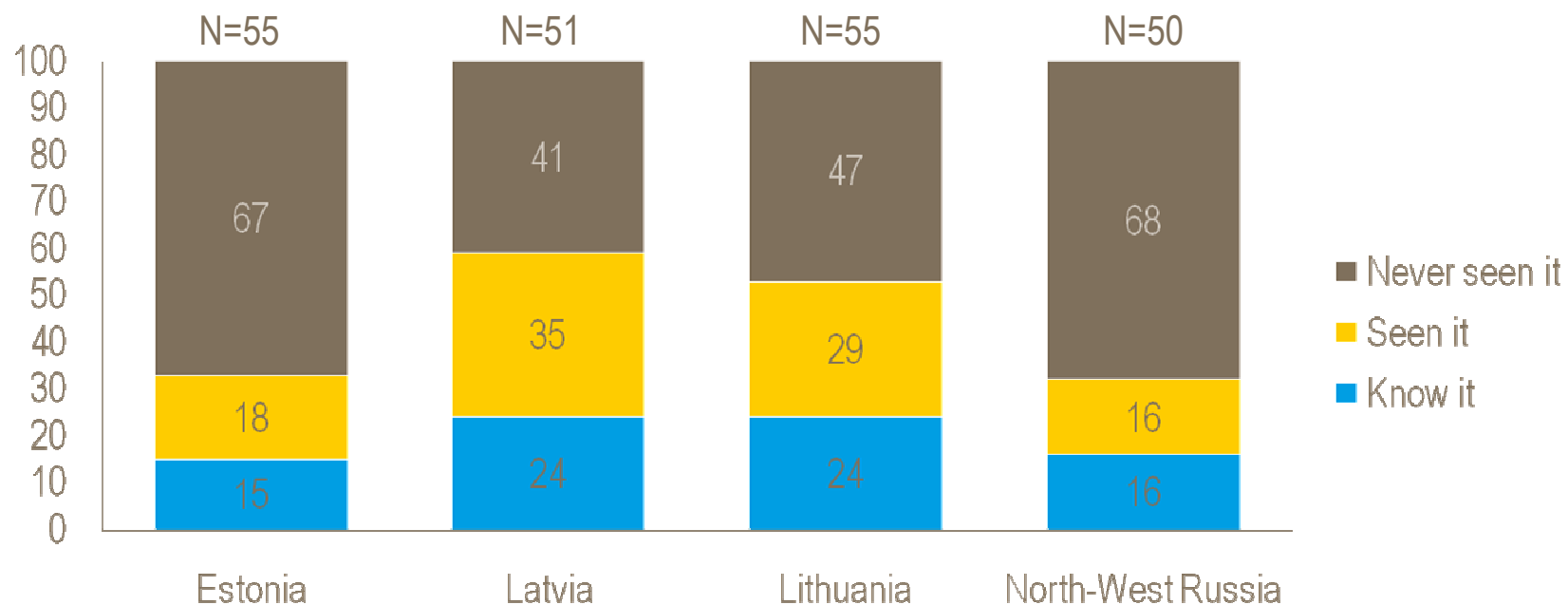
Companies in North-West Russia are not well aware of the Nordic Ecolabel

MORE THAN 50% OF THE LATVIAN AND LITHUANIAN RESPONDENTS RECOGNIZE THE EU ECOLABEL

Do you recognize the EU Ecolabel?



Percent / Country



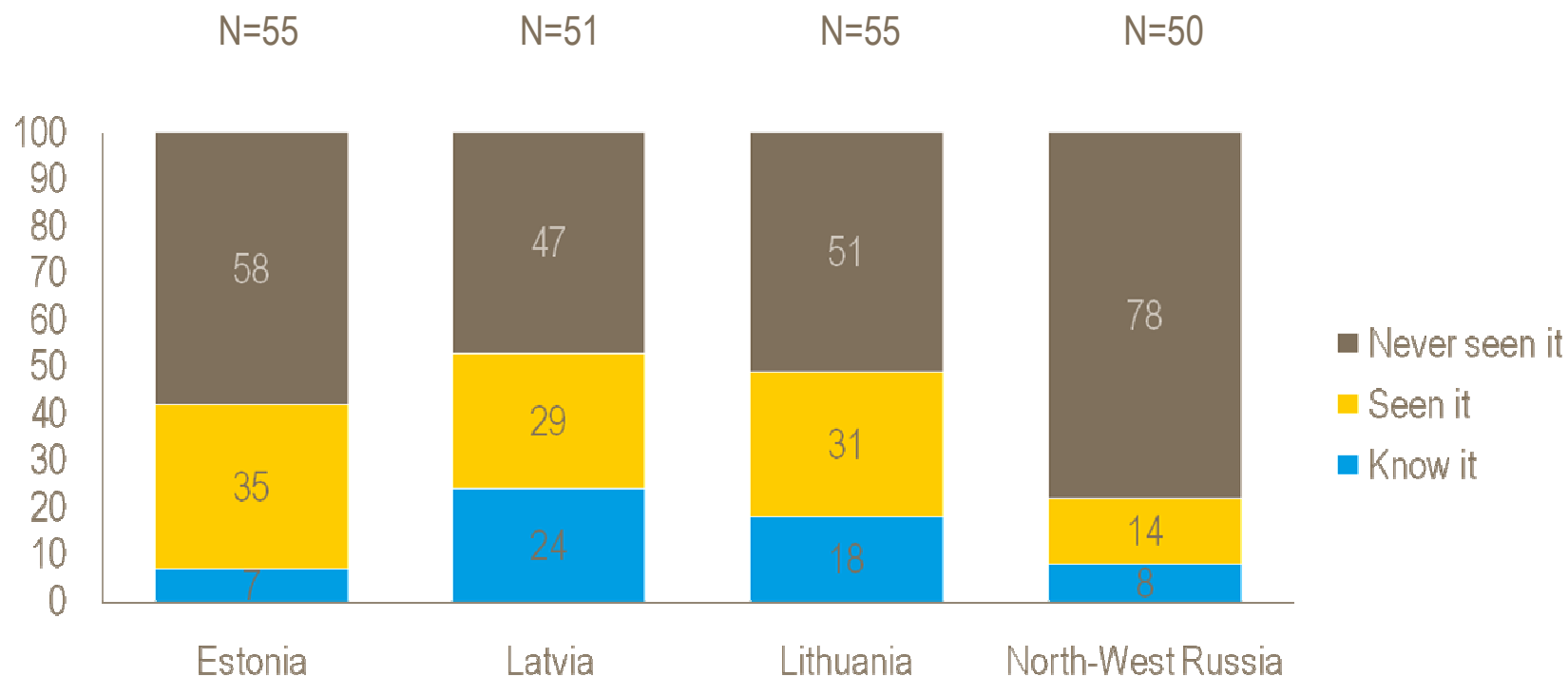
Every fourth respondent in Latvia and Lithuania knows the EU Ecolabel

ABOUT 1/3 OF THE BALTIC RESPONDENTS HAVE SEEN THE GERMAN BLUE ANGEL LABEL

Do you recognize the Blue Angel?



Percent / Country



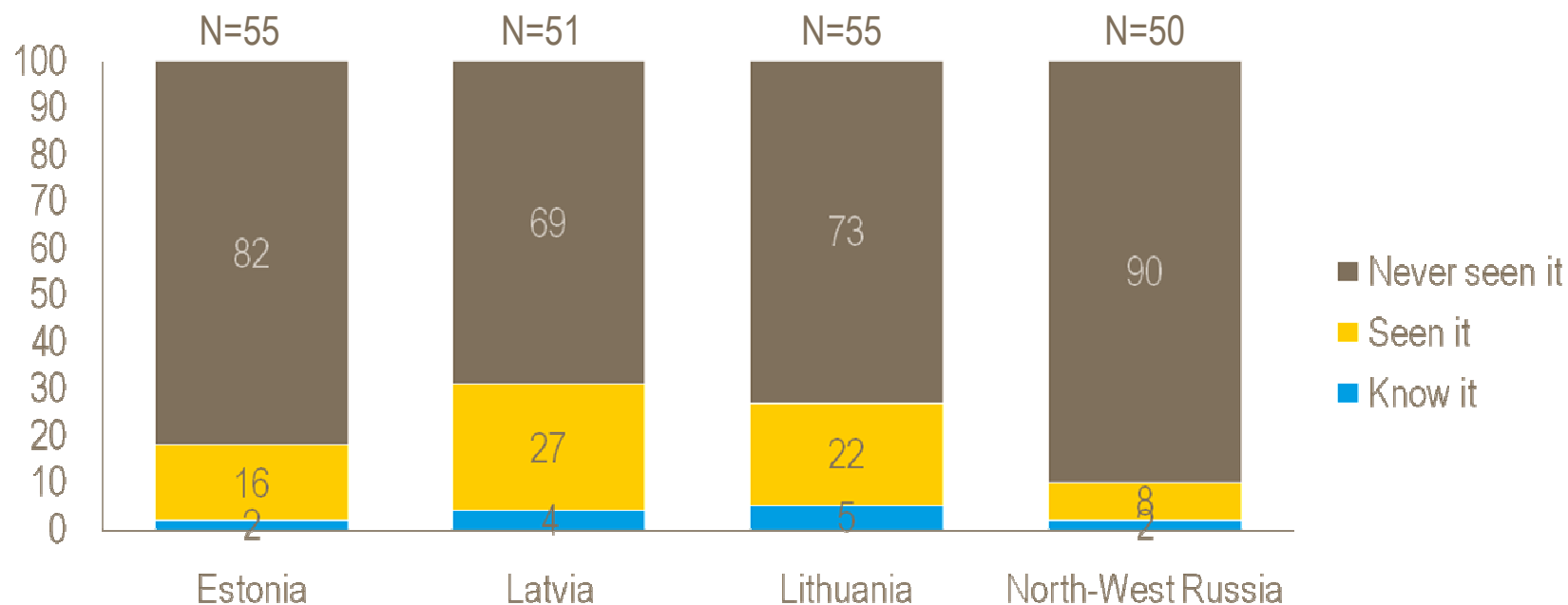
A big majority of the North-West Russian companies have never seen the German Blue Angel Ecolabel

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE RUSSIAN VITALITY LEAF ECOLABEL IS LOWEST IN RUSSIA

Do you recognize the Vitality Leaf?



Percent / Country



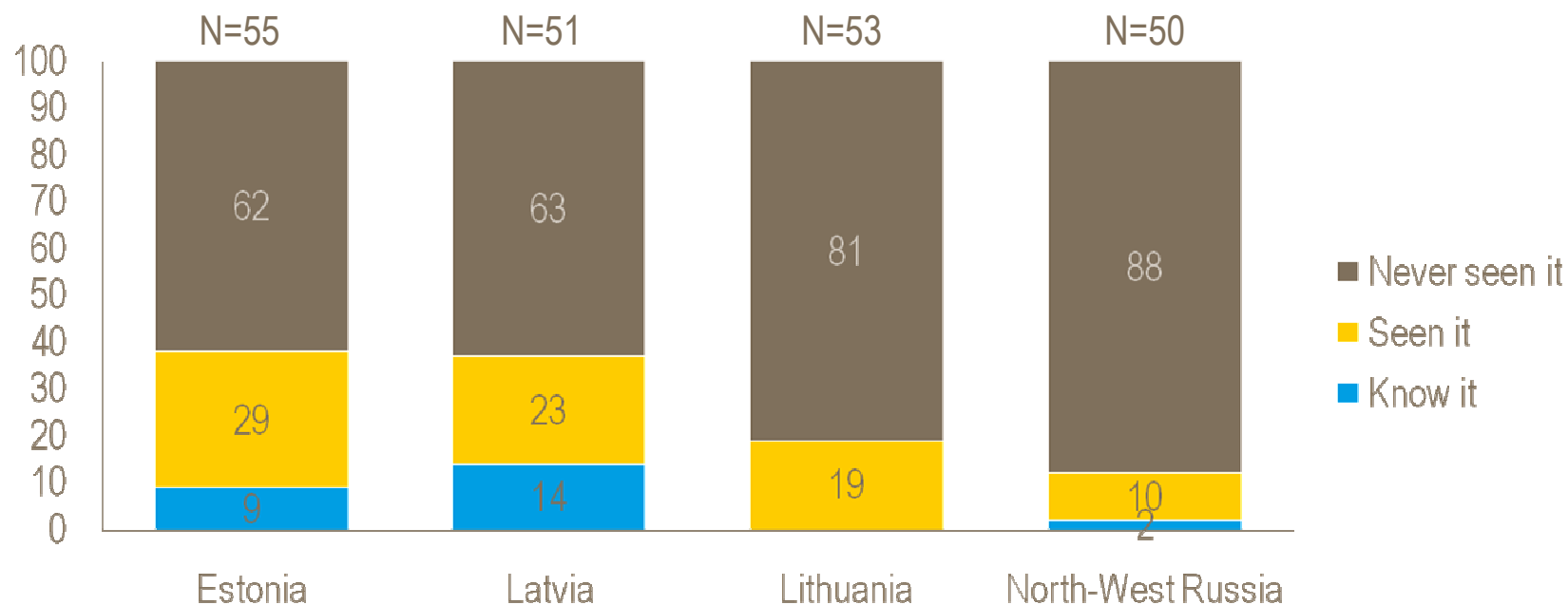
Companies that recognize the Russian Ecolabel is below 5%

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE BRA MILJÖVAL LABEL IS BEST KNOWN AMONG ESTONIAN AND LATVIAN COMPANIES

Do you recognize the Bra Miljöval label?



Percent / Country

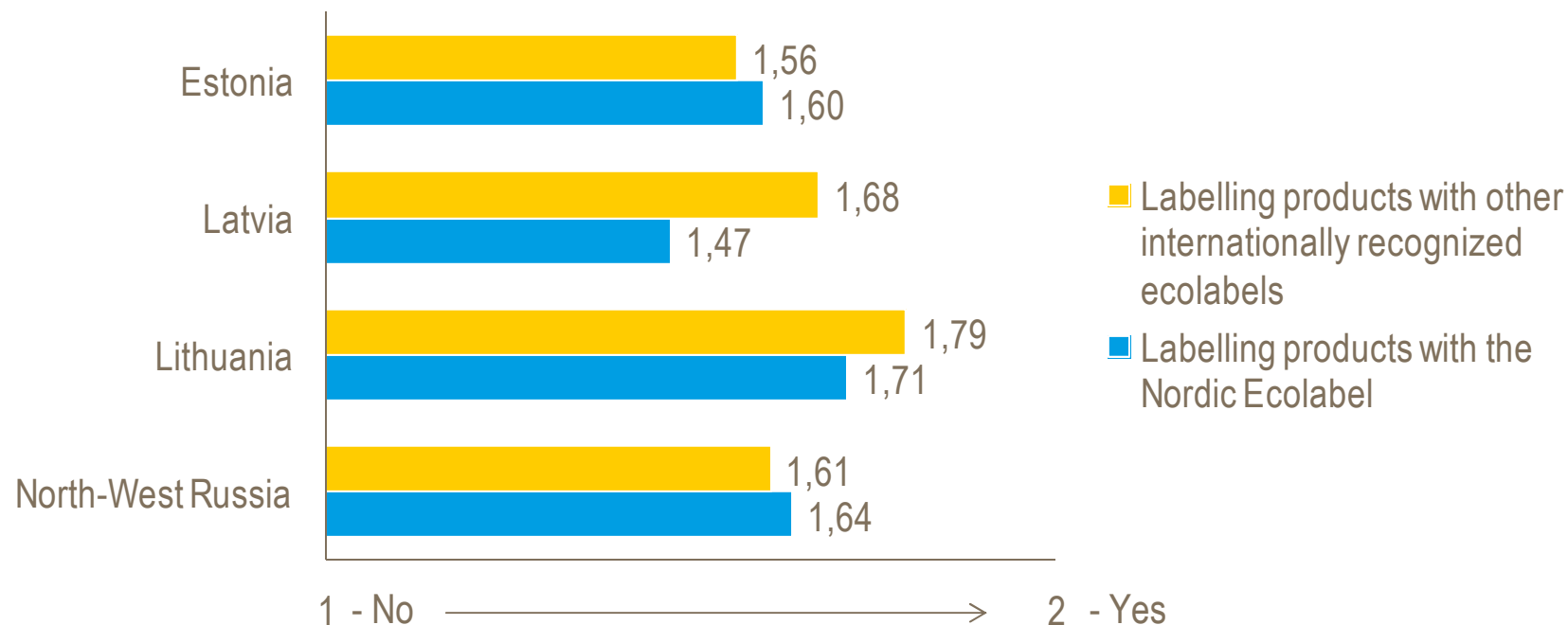


Swedish domestic Bra Miljöval [Good Environmental Choice] is even recognized outside Sweden

COMPANIES IN LITHUANIA ARE MOST INTERESTED IN ECOLABELLING

Are companies interested in labelling their products with the Nordic Ecolabel or other internationally recognized ecolabels?

Country / Average willingness

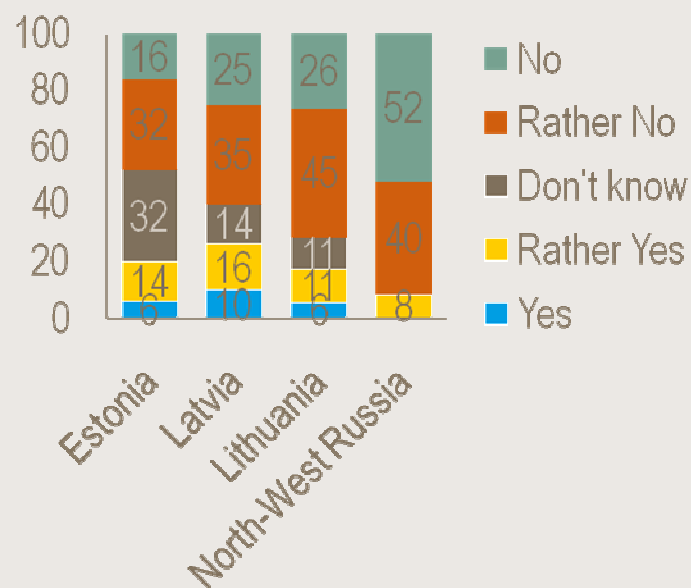


Latvian and Lithuanian companies give greater preference to other ecolabels than to the Nordic Ecolabel

MORE THAN 90% OF THE RUSSIAN RESPONDENTS ARE IN LACK OF INFORMATION ABOUT ECOLABELLING

Is there enough information available about ecolabelling?

Percent / Country



Where do companies wish to find information about ecolabelling?

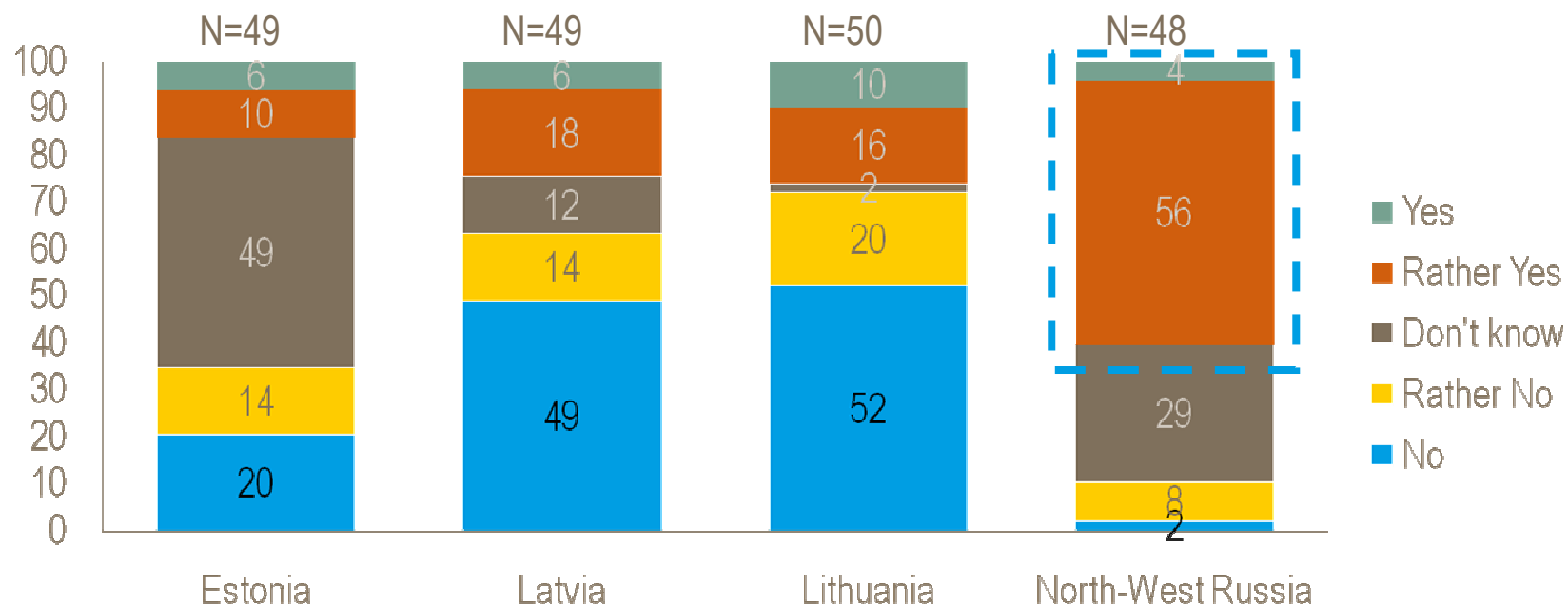
- Estonian companies prefer **Internet (69%)**, seminars (20%) and personal approach (9%)
- Latvian companies would like to receive ecolabelling related information from **Internet (49%)**, seminars (24%) and by personal approach (22%)
- Lithuanians would also prefer **Internet (43%)**, seminars (41%) and followed by personal approach (11%)
- Companies in Russia expect this information from **seminars (48%)**, Internet (42%) and personal approach (10%)

Information about ecolabelling should be spread through internet, seminars and associations

RUSSIAN COMPANIES BELIEVE THEY KNOW THE REQUIREMENTS OF ECOLABELLING BETTER THAN THE BALTIC ENTERPRISES

Are companies aware of the requirements for ecolabelling their products?

Percent / Country

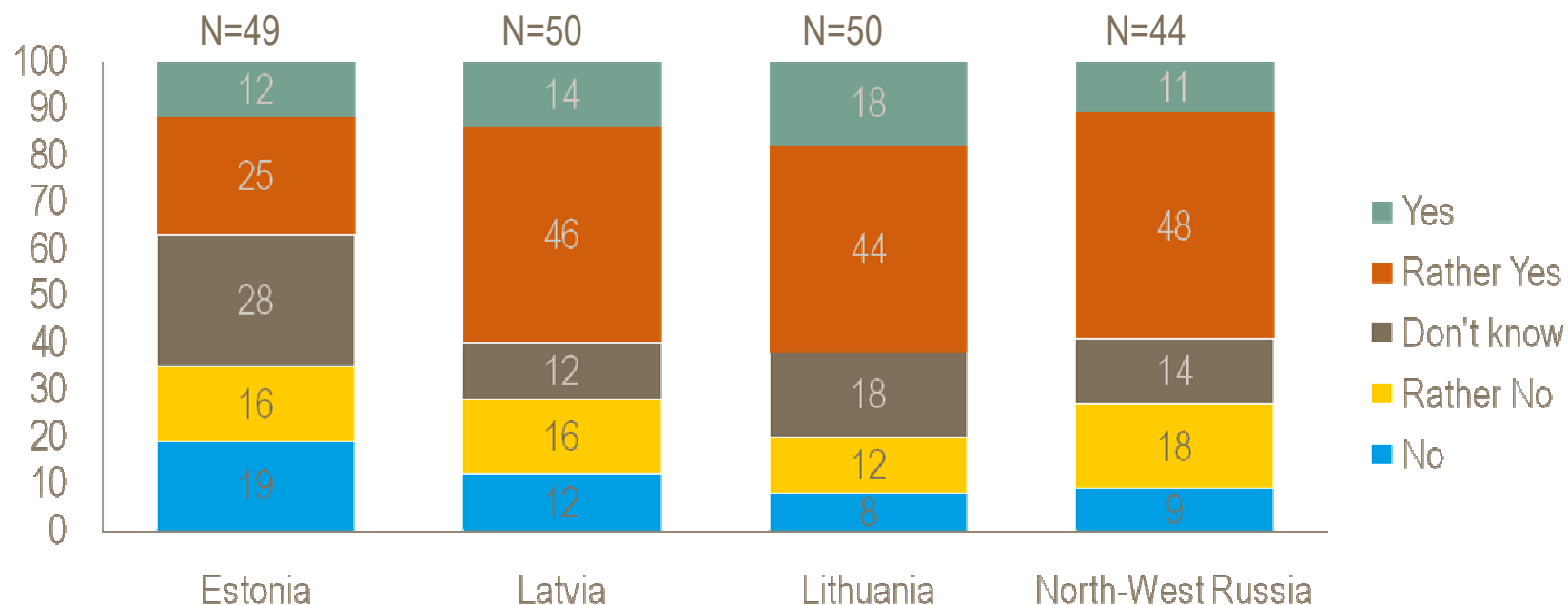


More info about benefits of ecolabelling is required

LITHUANIAN COMPANIES BELIEVE MOST IN THE BENEFITS OF ECOLABELLING

Would ecolabelling products increase export sales?

Percent / Country



Estonian companies are less sure about the benefits of ecolabelling. More info about benefits of ecolabelling is required

ECOLABELLING IS DEMANDED BY CUSTOMERS

“Ecolabelling would be most attractive if it would be a requirement from the customers. The demand can be noticed by the Association and the companies through taking part at fairs and having daily contact with the clients.”

*Mr. Tomas Braskys, Project Manager Association of
Wooden Houses Producers*

“Ecolabelling is voluntary in theory but in some cases it becomes necessary in order to enter a market. It is a positive thing because eco-labelled products are kept under strict control and represent a high standard indeed. However it is unfortunate that there is no unified ecolabel in Europe that would allow exporting to all markets. Different ecolabels segregate the markets, put double expenses on the producers and protect the regions from foreign products.”

*Mr. Tomas Urbonas, Presidium member, Lithuanian
Apparel and Textile Industry Association*

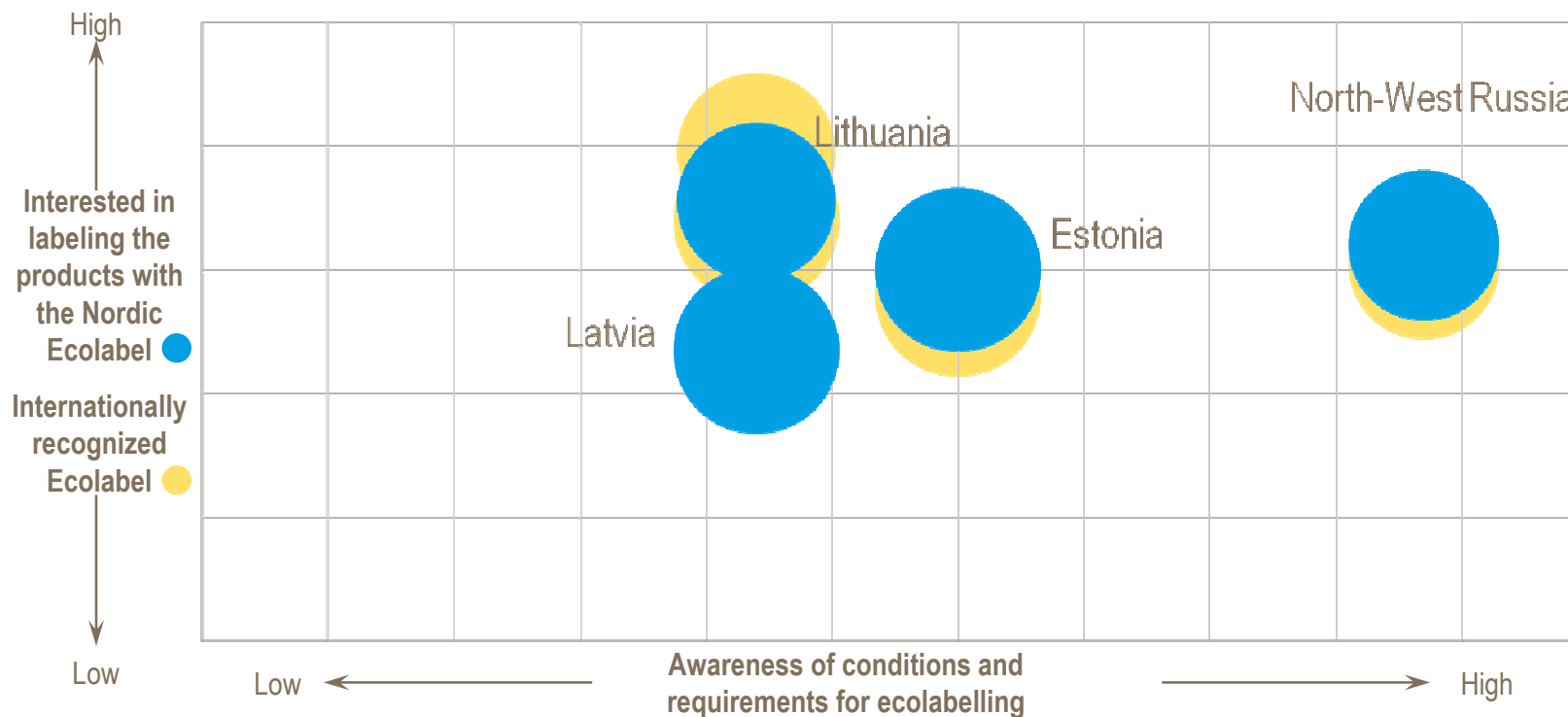
“Small companies in Russia are interested in selling their products faster, especially raw wood materials, so they are not interested in the long - term relations with the buyer and have no need in ecolabelling. On the other hand big companies want to have long relations with their buyer and they want to expand their market, so that is why they are interested in ecolabelling, they use it, some of them even have eco departments and they make annual eco reports.”

Anonymous company from Russia

“I cannot see that we could sell our products on the Nordic market without the Nordic Ecolabel. For our products the quality is the first thing, not the price. The Nordic Ecolabel is a guarantee for our clients that the quality level is at the same high level as of other Nordic producers”

*Mr. Juhan Peedimaa, chairman of the board of
Ecporint AS*

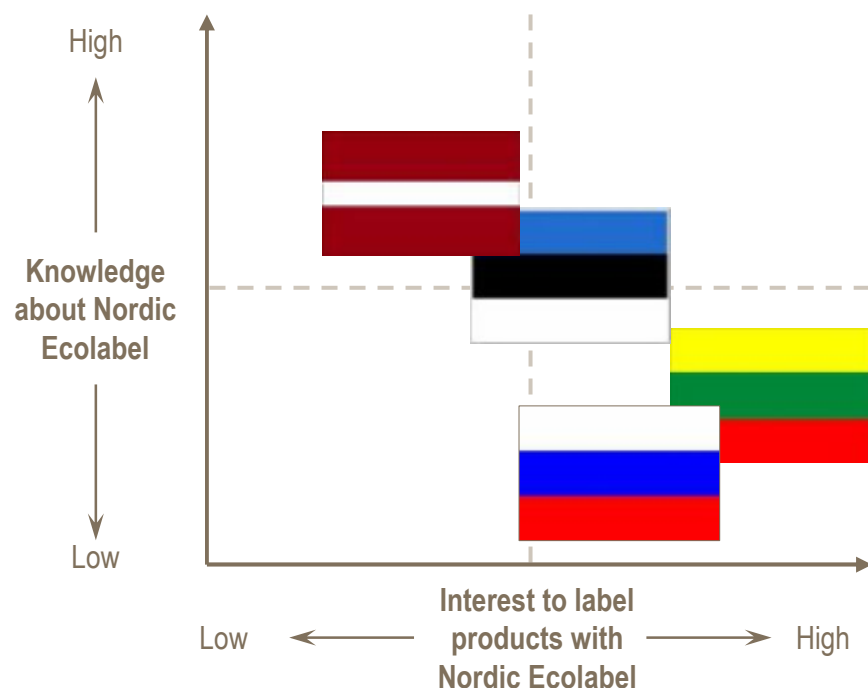
RUSSIAN COMPANIES BELIEVE THEY HAVE ENOUGH OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE NORDIC ECOLABEL



Latvian and Lithuanian companies are more attracted to other ecolabels than the Nordic Ecolabel while Estonian and North-West Russian companies prefer the Swan label

COMPANIES THAT CLAIM HAVING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE NORDIC ECOLABEL REQUIREMENTS ARE MORE HESITANT ABOUT APPLYING FOR A LICENSE

Knowledge about Nordic Ecolabel versus interest to label products with Nordic Ecolabel



Comments

- According to the survey results, companies that claim having a good knowledge about the Nordic Ecolabel tend to be cautious about the requirements and their possibilities of acquiring the license. Companies already using the Nordic Ecolabel on the other hand claim that overseeing the production process, which at first is regarded as a cost, in reality results in a mapping of the companies costs and makes the production more efficient
- Companies have the perception that ecolabelling is costly and it requires too much effort to join the ecolabelling system
- Ecolabelling is not yet a public issue, only some few companies are working with it on their own initiative. That is why the knowledge in general is relatively low

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HOW SHOULD INFORMATION BE SPREAD ABOUT ECOLABELLING?

Approaches recommended by the trade associations for successful launch of the Nordic Ecolabel:

- Successful cases from local companies is a good way of promoting ecolabelling
- The amount of different eco-labels in the market is confusing, more information about the essence of the labelling is welcomed
- The message communicated to companies should be related to financial gain through ecolabelling. Companies are driven by profit and efficiency
- Raise the public awareness about ecolabelling through media
- To make the idea of ecolabelling successfully spread, it should be introduced through seminars

"The association could send out information, but those who have a need for that have already found all info that is needed. The association is open to hear suggestions from Nordic Ecolabels."

Representative of the Association of Latvian Printing Companies

"There is not enough information on eco-labelling. However, the member companies have not yet expressed a wish for more information"

Mr. Darius Jakubauskas, Director Association of Wooden Houses Producers

DIFFERENT APPROACHES SHOULD BE USED FOR DIFFERENT MARKETS

“Those who had a need for that have already certified, those who will go to export markets in the future will also have to certify. Market demands it and that makes it compulsory to have.”

*Representative of the
Association of Latvian Textile
companies*

“It’s not my duty to know about labeling the products, but I’m sure we have all the labels and certificates needed since we export to these markets. What benefits do I receive if I share my information?”

Anonymous company from Russia

“In the process of applying for the Nordic Ecolabel certificate, we had to look over how we use our resources and keep a track on them in order to discover where our costs come from. The areas where we discovered wasting resources we now have turned it around using them more efficiently and are saving financially.”

Mr. Juhan Peedimaa, chairman of the board of Ecporint AS

“E-mails tend to not get read or answered since entrepreneurs often get around ten e-mails a day with commercials /general information and they usually do not have time to answer such mails. Another means of delivering information effectively would be through journalism –introduce the Nordic Ecolabel, how producers would gain through it.”

Mr. Rait Hiiepuu, The Estonian Forest Industries Association

RECOMMENDATIONS (1/3)

The overall knowledge about ecolabelling among export companies is relatively low



More general information about the Nordic Ecolabel needs to be spread among companies but also among the public. For people in the Baltic countries and NW Russia, ecolabelling is associated firstly with food. More attention should be drawn to the environmental aspects

Too many different ecolabels make people/companies confused



Specifics of the Nordic Ecolabel should be emphasized. Benefits that both companies and consumers could gain specifically from the Nordic Ecolabel or products labelled with that should be put into spotlight

Different market approach for different countries



The same market approach cannot be applied for the whole region since the countries are diverse and have different understandings of ecolabelling

RECOMMENDATIONS (2/3)

Companies believe that ecolabelling is very expensive and does not pay off



There are lots of myths about ecolabelling and related costs. Positive examples about local companies who have succeeded in attaining the Nordic Ecolabel should be presented in order to prove that ecolabelling is something that companies can both save and earn money on

Tough requirements in order to be ecolabelled



Companies consider requirements to be tough and would appreciate to receive more accurate information about it

The necessity to be ecolabelled is driven by consumers



Taking it one step further, consumers are the driving force of ecolabelling and creating demand for ecolabelled goods and services

RECOMMENDATIONS (3/3)

Preferred way of being informed about ecolabelling is through the internet and seminars by referring to successful reference cases from the local market



According to the interviews with the associations and companies, information about ecolabelling is expected to be found from the internet and seminars

Find a partner to cooperate with in order to promote the Nordic Ecolabel in the region



In order to efficiently work with the Nordic Ecolabel in surveyed regions, an active local partner on promotion of benefits of the Nordic Ecolabel is required, either by establishing the Nordic Ecolabel office or working through external partners

CONTACTS

Swedish Trade Council in Tallinn

Narva mnt 5
10147 Tallinn
Estonia

+372 665 18 00

estland@swedishtrade.se

Swedish Trade Council in Riga

Kr. Barona str. 13/15
LV-1011 Riga
Latvia

+371 6 782 80 46

lettland@swedishtrade.se

Swedish Trade Council in Vilnius

Eika Business Center
A. Gostauto str. 40b (floor
XII)
LT-01112 Vilnius
Lithuania

+370 5 212 61 55

litauen@swedishtrade.se

Swedish Trade Council in St.Petersburg

Sweden House
ul. Malaya
Konyushennaya 1/3,
Office B43
RU-191186 St. Petersburg

+7 812 329 25 93

russia@swedishtrade.se

www.swedishtrade.se