

# Request for Proposals

## Quantitative Research for the Sustainable Packaging Coalition’s Labeling for Recovery Project

August 20, 2010

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### Summary of Deadlines

Release of Request for Proposal (RFP)	August 20, 2010
<b>Proposals due</b>	Sept. 8
Selection of firm	Sept. 17
Commencement of research	Sept. 20
<b>Draft Report Completed</b>	<b>November 15</b>
<b>Final Report Completed</b>	<b>November 30</b>

### Statement of Business

GreenBlue is a nonprofit institute that stimulates the creative redesign of industry by focusing the expertise of professional communities to create practical solutions, resources, and opportunities for implementing sustainability.

### Project Background

The proliferation of recycling-related messages and labels on primary product packaging has resulted in confusing and often inaccurate messages to consumers. Recycling-related messaging and its associated iconography on packaging, such as "please recycle" and "100% recyclable," often give the erroneous impression that a package can be recycled in a majority of communities. Studies have shown that the mobius loop and chasing arrows meant to convey both recycled content and recyclability have widespread recognition; however, recognition is not the same as accurate understanding.

This situation is compounded by the fact that the types of packaging that may be collected for recycling varies from community to community. As a consequence, there is currently no universal, harmonized standard for labeling for recycling that can be applied to all packaging

materials across all localities. The systems that do exist are material-specific, unclear or not consistently applied or accepted.

The Sustainable Packaging Coalition's Labeling for Recovery Project was initiated to address these issues, and to assist the packaging industry with a harmonized approach to meeting Federal Trade Commission (FTC) guidelines. The OPRL system in the U.K. is being used as the model, with U.S. adaptations (see Appendix A for our current designs / <http://www.onpackrecyclinglabel.org.uk/>)



The model includes three categories: widely recycled; check local (limited recycling); and not yet recycled.

### **Goal 1: Harmonize communication from industry to consumers on how they can recycle packaging.**

- Create a nationally relevant on-pack label that is relevant for all material types and packaging forms that addresses the underlying variability of collection systems.
- Improve the clarity and transparency of recycling messaging.
- Support efforts to develop a consumer-facing website that links to the label and provides consumers with information on what packaging they can recycle and where.
- Lower the barriers to effective consumer participation in local recycling systems.

### **Goal 2: Improve the reliability and completeness of recyclability claims.**

- Facilitate a national data collection effort that measures what materials and package formats can be recycled and where, thus benchmarking current collection systems.
- Ensure data collected is publicly available, current, reliable, available to a wide variety of stakeholders, and meets quality assurance criteria.
- Establish an effective business model that ensures long-term maintenance of the data set.

Goal 1 aligns with the work envisioned in this RFP; Goal 2 is being pursued under a separate data collection effort.

### **Purpose of Consumer Research**

Key Issue: Ensure the proposed recycling labeling scheme, in all of its various forms to include icons, language, and a web address, convey a clear, understandable message to the consumer on what to do with a package after its useful life. Ensure that the proposed recycling label is not confused with other possible consumer information, like the presence of recycled content. The design must meet Federal Trade Commission expectations for a "National Test".

#### Research Questions:

1. Assess potential confusion between recyclability, the purpose of this Project, with recycled content. Test whether a header saying “Disposal” or “Recyclability” would help with this potential confusion.
2. Test whether iconography on the label scheme is sufficient to convey the desired result, or if the bottom line of instruction (“widely recycled”, “limited recycling”, “not yet recycled”) is necessary to convey the proper instruction.
3. Understand if the label is used in part (i.e., for select components) or in whole (all components) causes confusion regarding the instruction.
4. Understand whether the label spurs people on to want to find out more about what can be recycled and where to look for this information.
5. Gauge how consumers react to the “Check Local” instruction and accompanying website, and assess whether the additional caveat of “Limited Recycling” (per current FTC Green Guidelines) is needed.
6. Would this label influence purchasing decisions; in other words, will the consumer have a negative connotation about the package labeled “not yet recycled”?
7. For plastics, test with and without the SPI code number to see if it assists with accurate understanding (“Plastic #1” instead of “Plastic”).

#### Critical Hypotheses to be tested:

1. Test if the label is easily confused with recycled content—even if qualifying terms are not used.
2. For the “Check Local” category, test whether the additional caveat of “Limited Recycling” provides critical additional understanding, and test if consumers understand “Check Local” does not mean the same as “Widely Recycled” (and related behaviors are consistent).
3. Test if the “not yet recycled” category influences purchasing decisions or leaves the consumer with a negative feeling about the product.
4. Test if the SPI code number for plastics provides additional benefit.

#### Research design:

- Geography: U.S. nationwide.
- Quantitative, with qualitative complement as appropriate
- Gender: include men and women

#### Instructions for Responding

Please direct any questions by September 3<sup>rd</sup> to:

Project Manager, Anne Bedarf, at [anne.bedarf@greenblue.org](mailto:anne.bedarf@greenblue.org)

Answers to questions will be posted on the [www.sustainablepackaging.org](http://www.sustainablepackaging.org) website under the Labeling for Recovery Project Page.

## **Evaluation Criteria**

**The following are the significant criteria** against which proposals will be assessed. The criteria are not listed in order of priority. This list is not exhaustive or 100% inclusive and is provided to enhance a company's ability to respond with substance:

- Methodology and its appropriateness for conducting the work. Please clearly describe the proposed research design and methodology.
- Qualifications (Professional expertise/experience in conducting qualitative and quantitative surveys)
- Reasonableness of costs (please break down costs as specifically as possible)
- References (Provide up to three relevant past performance references who can speak to your organization's experience with similar work. The name, organization, and contact information for each identified reference should be provided).

## **Terms and Conditions**

GreenBlue reserves the right to reject any and all bids received in response to this solicitation and is in no way bound to accept any proposal.

All information provided by GreenBlue as part of this solicitation must be treated as confidential.

All communications regarding this solicitation shall be directed to appropriate parties at GreenBlue. Contacting third parties involved in the project, the review panel, or any other party may be considered a conflict of interest, and could result in disqualification of the proposal.

Acceptance of a proposal does not imply acceptance of its terms and conditions. GreenBlue reserves the option to negotiate on the final terms and conditions. We additionally reserve the right to negotiate the substance of the finalists' proposals, as well as the option of accepting partial components of a proposal if appropriate. GreenBlue reserves the option to negotiate the final costs and scope of work as well as the option to limit or include third parties at GreenBlue's sole and full discretion in such negotiations.

GreenBlue will have ownership rights to all data generated by the project. GreenBlue will collaborate with the contractor on publications of findings.

Appendix A: Current Designs

