

# **Ethical Health Check Questionnaires**

## **Introduction and overview**

**August 2024 - V2.1**

## **About our benchmarking system**

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.

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.

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

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 happens, 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 (such as supplier names) 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))

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

### **(i) Types of questionnaire**

Because our ranking system asks different questions of companies in different sectors we have different questionnaires for food, non-food, electricals, clothing, services companies etc.

Our ranking system also requires higher standards of larger companies (particularly around formal policies) in many cases. This means that you'll need to use the right questionnaire for your company and product type.

If there isn't one on the website please email us to let us know and we'll arrange to send one over.

The questionnaires on the website are also PDFs. If you would prefer a word doc to fill in, please let us know too.

Emailing [ruairidh@ethicalconsumer.org](mailto:ruairidh@ethicalconsumer.org) will be the best way to do this.

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

### **(iii) Adding up your score and taking next steps**

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

There is a box at the end of the questionnaire docs to help you do this.

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.

### **(iv) 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 - with any additional documents you refer to in your evidence boxes - 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 Ruairidh ([ruairidh@ethicalconsumer.org](mailto:ruairidh@ethicalconsumer.org)) on our Best Buy Research Team with your questionnaire if this is the case.

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

### **(v) 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 and let us know.