

Getting started with the Digital Product Passport (DPP)

Introduction

Many companies are hearing about the Digital Product Passport (DPP) for the first time and are wondering what it means for their organisation in practice.

Although not all legislation and requirements have been finalised yet, it is worth preparing now. By structuring your product data properly and using GS1 standards, you can already lay a solid foundation for the DPP.

What information will you need to share in the future? And what steps can you take today? We help you get started.

What is the DPP?

The Digital Product Passport (DPP) is an instrument under the European Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR). It makes relevant product information digitally accessible, contributing to greater transparency, sustainability and circularity.

You can think of the DPP as a digital identity card for a product. Through a QR code, users can access information about materials, maintenance, repair and recycling. In this way, the DPP helps extend the useful life of products and enables materials to be reused more effectively.



What role does GS1 play in the DPP?

In a circular economy, more parties exchange product data than in a linear model.

As a result, data sharing becomes more complex. Reliable product identification and common agreements on data exchange are needed to create a DPP correctly and give the right users access to the right information.

GS1 plays a central role by providing standards that harmonise data flows throughout the circular value chain.

For example:

- GTIN (Global Trade Item Number) for the unique identification of products;
- GLN (Global Location Number) for the identification of organisations and locations;
- QR code by GS1 to make product information digitally accessible;
- and many other standards for exchanging data in a consistent way.

GS1 standards therefore form an important building block for the DPP.

The Digital Product Passport (DPP)

Which products will the DPP apply to?

The DPP will be introduced gradually for different categories of products placed on the European market. For each sector, the European Commission will determine which data must be included and when these requirements will become mandatory. Food, animal feed and certain medical products are currently out of scope.

Important to know

Although not all details have been finalised yet, the direction is clear: companies will need to make more product information digitally available.

Depending on the product category, this may include information about:

- the product and its components;
- its composition and the materials used;
- maintenance and repair;
- the product's lifespan;
- reuse and recycling;
- relevant sustainability information.

This information must be easy to share with customers, suppliers, repairers, recycling companies and public authorities, among others.

That is why it is important to **start identifying which product and sustainability data is already available within your organisation**, where this data is managed and which information is still missing. A solid foundation of structured product data is an important building block for the future DPP.

There is also greater clarity about access to the DPP: **the QR code by GS1 is an approved data carrier for giving users access to the information in the DPP.**

How does the QR code by GS1 work?

A practical example shows how the QR code by GS1 works.

An office chair manufacturer places a QR code by GS1 on the packaging. The code contains a standardised GS1 identifier that uniquely identifies the product.

When a user scans the code, they are directed via the web to the relevant digital information. The QR code therefore does not necessarily contain all the product data itself. Instead, it acts as a standardised gateway to the information managed by the manufacturer.

This offers organisations three key benefits:

- **A dynamic code, up-to-date information:** the manufacturer can update the information behind the QR code without having to replace the code on the packaging.
- **Targeted access:** consumers, repairers, recycling companies or regulatory authorities can be directed to information relevant to their role.
- **Goes beyond the DPP:** in addition to the DPP, the same code can also provide access to user instructions, warranties, spare parts or product authentication. And it scans at the checkout!

Although the exact requirements are still being developed, companies can already start preparing by selecting an initial product and identifying what information is available, where it is managed and which data is still missing.



The DPP step-by-step



Step 1: Take stock of your products

Start by identifying which products may fall within the scope of the DPP and check whether each product has a unique identifier, such as a GTIN. For each product, record which identification is already in place and where further action is needed.

For products that do not yet have a GTIN, now is a good time to determine which identification will be needed to link them correctly to digital product information in the future.



Step 2: Map your product data

For each product, create an overview of the data currently available and record where it is managed, for example in your ERP system, Excel files, supplier systems or technical data sheets.



Step 3: Identify missing information

Compare the available data with the information that may be required.

Record which data is missing, which supplier or internal department you need to request it from and who is responsible for following up.



Step 4: Make product information digitally accessible

Bring the available information together in one central location.

Consider how this information can later be made accessible via a QR code by GS1. Consider adding a QR code by GS1 to your packaging now, so customers and partners can access reliable product information with a single scan.



Step 5: Start small

Choose one product or product line and test the entire process: collecting product data, requesting missing information, assigning responsibilities, managing data and sharing the information digitally.

Want to know more?

Visit our website via www.gs1belu.org,
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