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Escaping A Regulatory Labyrinth: France Adopts Streamlined Approach To Food Supplement Notifications

by [Tom Gallen](#)

Companies launching food supplements in France must now navigate a new product notification platform. EcoMundo's Corinne Rayapin discusses why the change is happening and the expected benefits for both industry and consumers.

Companies launching food supplements in France can now take advantage of a more streamlined and transparent product notification system, according to the country's directorate-general for food (DGAL).

On 23 September 2024, [Compl'Alim](#) replaces the Télécicare platform for the mandatory declaration of new supplements introduced to the French market. As well as facilitating product notifications, the new platform will boast a search function to discover the regulatory status of ingredients – linking through to databases managed by the European Food Safety Authority and French agency ANSES – alongside information on marketing restrictions or mandatory labelling statements.

Corinne Rayapin, regulatory affairs officer at consultancy EcoMundo, told HBW Insight that Compl'Alim is designed to provide companies with the resources and tools necessary for the safe and legal introduction of supplements to the French market.

“All these tools will make it possible to have centralized and reliable information in one platform, which was lacking with Télécicare, and also offer more transparency and accessibility for users,” Rayapin explained.

Fresh Start Required

The wheels were set in motion for the winding down of Télécicare at the start of 2023 when the responsibility for monitoring food safety, including the management of supplement notifications, passed from the directorate-general for competition policy, consumer affairs and fraud control (DGCCRF) to DGAL. Following this transfer, a plan was put in place to suspend use of Télécicare on 1 January 2025, Rayapin noted.

But it seems the introduction of a new platform, in the form of Compl'Alim, could not come soon enough.

As France's supplements market has continued to grow – with sales up 3% to €2.7bn (\$3.0bn) last year – Télécicare, first introduced in 2016, has become an “obsolete tool,” according to DGAL. The platform is not well suited to cope with the 1,600 files submitted by companies each month, nor to help tackle the huge number of supplements sold in France not declared to the authorities, estimated to represent around 50% of the total market.

“Manufacturers, for their part, must navigate a regulatory labyrinth,” DGAL observes, “often using complex regulatory affairs departments to ensure the compliance of their products.”

By streamlining the processing of product declarations with the introduction of Compl'Alim, DGAL hopes to allow more time for monitoring and regulatory updates. It is also seeking to empower companies operating in the sector by making more accessible the “multitude of sources [used] to identify whether or not a substance is authorized and under what conditions.”

Consumer Considerations

The introduction of Compl'Alim is also motivated by a desire to inform consumers and allow the estimated 20% of French adults taking supplements to become “active participants” in the oversight of the market, DGAL says. Currently, the general public struggles to find reliable information about supplements, including whether or not a substance is authorized for use.

According to Rayapin, Compl'Alim will “make it easier for consumers to access information related to food supplements” by allowing them to check “the status (authorized/prohibited/unknown) of a product available on the market but not notified.”

In an innovation which was not possible with Télécicare, “consumers will be also able to report products [available] on the market but not notified in France,” she pointed out.

Company Benefits

Companies too will also benefit from new tools offered by Compl'Alim.

When submitting a new product declaration, the user will input the list of ingredients and product description, Rayapin explained. “According to the composition indicated, the system

will automatically direct the user to the type of notification under which the product will be registered,” as set out in Articles 15-18 of France’s Decree No. 2006-352 relating to food supplements.

“On Télécicare, the procedure was inverse; the declaration started by choosing the type of notification under the article 15 or 16 only, according to the composition of the food supplement. For notification under article 17 or 18, the user had to contact directly the authorities by e-mail.”

While commending the distinct advantages Compl’Alim offers companies over Télécicare, Rayapin warned users that the new platform remains a work in progress by the French authorities. Some tools yet to be finalized include making available for all users the catalogue of notified food supplements, along with the option for consumers to search a product’s status and report non-declared products.

“Be patient as this platform is new and still under construction, bugs and errors are to be expected,” she advised. “Follow the instructions given by e-mail or on the platform directly once available. Don’t hesitate to report any error you notice on the platform.”