



China

Chinese green product labels and standards fitting into the global market

The objective and benefits of green product labels

Nowadays, the consumers of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) are becoming increasingly aware of a products green/low carbon performance. In answer to this trend, different green product label schemes (normally known as ecolabels, environmental labels) have been developed and implemented in different countries/regions.

By getting certified to one or more of these ecolabel schemes and, by being committed to meeting the targeted environmental impacts such as reduction of energy consumption or greenhouse gases emission throughout the entire product life cycle, manufacturers can achieve a market advantage by differentiating themselves from competition.

Potential burden of green product labels

However, due to geographical variations and market segmentations, currently over 80 ecolabels for EEE products exist. Because of their large number, variety, and sometimes unequal or conflicting requirements, ecolabels can represent an additional burden for manufacturers, and cause confusion for consumers.

China's green product labeling policy

China is one of the most important green consumption markets in the world. The Chinese government has recognized that the development and implementation of green product certification standards is key to promoting green, low-carbon and circular economy and cultivating a green consumption market. For this reason it has initiated a unified system of standards, certification and labeling for green products. The system covers environment-friendly, energy-saving, water-efficient, low-carbon, recyclable, and organic products. However, when these EEE products are exported, even though they already meet local ecolabel certification standards, they have to be retested, which costs time and money.

How IEC International Standards help

To solve the problem, IEC TC 111 has carried out a feasibility study on "the harmonization of environmental performance criteria for EEE products" led by the Chinese NC. The study compiled information on some of the most influential ecolabel schemes in the global market to identify compatibility of different standards. The hope was to promote the coordination and harmonization of ecolabel standards throughout various countries and regions.

The study resulted in the publication of technical report IEC TR 63212, which confirmed the feasibility of coordinating the environmental performance criteria for EEE products at the international level and laid the foundation for a future International Standard.

This publication helps promote green design, manufacturing, and consumption of EEE products in China as well as in other countries. It also allows manufacturers to save time and money for the certification of their products, and improves the efficiency of international trade. Last but not least, it makes it possible to realize the green and low-carbon objectives declared by ecolabels goals.

