

# Ecolabels – criteria harmonisation and recognition arrangements

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## Introduction

According to the Ecolabel Index at: <http://www.ecolabelindex.com/>, there are currently 450 different Ecolabels in 197 countries covering 25 industry sectors. Of these, some 70 affect the ICT industry. Depending on customer demand and the competitive situation, DIGITALEUROPE members seek anything from 5 – 25 of these labels, often several labels for the same product models. Since many years, criteria harmonization and mutual recognition arrangements between Ecolabels have been on the wish list of the global ICT industry, but unfortunately, very little of this has happened.

Article 6 of the EU Ecolabel framework regulation (EC) No 66/2010 states that the EU Ecolabel criteria should recognise established criteria of other environmental labels to enhance synergies. Given the impact of the Ecolabel criteria in public procurement, the global ICT industry would like to re-iterate its request for global criteria harmonisation and mutual recognition arrangements.

### Criteria harmonisation and recognition arrangement advantages

Clear advantages are reduced administration and in most cases reduced cost for label applications and annual license fees. Another important aspect in an industry with frequent model changes is reduced time to market. However, the most significant cost savings relate to simplified product design, especially regarding chemical substance criteria harmonisation.

Below are examples of some of the most important instances of criteria harmonisation and recognition arrangements.

## North America

### Energy Star - [www.ecolabelindex.com](http://www.ecolabelindex.com)

Of all these, the US EPA Energy Star programme is the most frequently accepted by other countries and Ecolabel programmes.

EPA has entered into agreements with foreign governments to promote specific ENERGY STAR qualified products in their markets. These partnerships are intended to unify voluntary energy-efficiency labelling programmes in major global markets and make it easier for partners to participate by providing a single set of energy-efficiency qualifications, instead of a patchwork of varying country-specific requirements. Organisations that sell ENERGY STAR qualified products in other countries are held to the same technical or eligibility requirements as the U.S. programmes, see:

[http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=partners.intl\\_implementation](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=partners.intl_implementation)

Examples of other Ecolabels that require Energy Star certification as the core for their mandatory energy requirements for computers, monitors and Imaging Equipment are: EPEAT, TCO and Nordic Swan. Regions and countries that have adopted the programme: Australia, Canada, European Union, EFTA, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland and Taiwan.

## Europe

### Nordic Swan (NS)

For imaging equipment, partial criteria harmonisation with current Blue Angel and Japanese Eco Mark exist since several years.

#### Nordic Swan criteria harmonisation with Blue Angel

If a product is approved under the Blue Angel or Eco Mark criteria (RAL-UZ 171/Product Category No. 155, or later versions) it is easier to apply for a Nordic Ecolabel license. Such applicants may use appendix 2 that describes the additional documentation needed for a Nordic Ecolabel license.

If the product does not have Blue Angel or Eco Mark license, the product must fulfil the requirements in sections 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Further information about Blue Angel or Eco Mark can be found at the following Internet addresses: Blue Angel: [www.blauer-engel.de/en/index.php](http://www.blauer-engel.de/en/index.php) and Eco Mark: [www.ecomark.jp/english/](http://www.ecomark.jp/english/)

### Valid Blue Angel or Eco Mark license

If the product has a valid Blue Angel license (RAL-UZ 171, or later versions), the following requirements need to be fulfilled:

- Re-used plastic, O4, Disassembly, O5, Flame retardants in plastic and rubber, O11, Phthalates in external power cable, O12, Re-cycled material in packaging, O15, Double-sided copying, O17, Consumables, O18,
- Working Conditions, O21, Chapter 5, Quality and regulatory requirements

If the product has a valid Eco Mark-license (Eco Mark Product Category No. 155, or later versions), the following requirements need to be fulfilled:

- Re-used plastic, O4, Special requirements as to products with combined toner cartridges, O6, Flame retardants in plastic and rubber, O11, Phthalates in external power cable, O12, Chemicals used during production, O13, Plastic materials in packaging, O14, Re-cycled material in packaging, O15, Double-sided copying, O17, Consumables, O18, Sound power, O20, Working Conditions, O21, Chapter 5, Quality and regulatory requirements.

Note: the above is an important administrative simplification, however, there is no fee reduction given by the Nordic Swan. Also important to understand is that Blue Angel does not have this arrangement with the Nordic Swan.

## Asia Pacific Japan

### Korea Eco-Label (KOECO)

KOECO has a "full" mutual recognition agreement with the Japan Eco Mark for printer products. I.e. Japan Eco Mark certified printer products get automatically the KOECO label without having to go through the whole certification process.

Furthermore, KOECO has a mutual agreement on the certification process delegation with Blue Angel, Nordic Swan, and the Taiwanese Green Mark. This agreement allows each agency to conduct the certification process on behalf of other Ecolabel programmes. Example: a Korea-based company that wants Blue Angel certification can submit its application for Blue Angel to the KOECO agency. The KOECO agency can then go through Blue Angel certification process and provide the official certification on behalf of the Blue Angel if the test results are successful.

### Taiwan Green Mark (TGM)

TGM is a good and successful Ecolabel example for leveraging EPEAT GOLD to facilitate market access for computers and display products. Though the Taiwan Green Mark agency did not sign MoU with EPEAT agency, it automatically recognises EPEAT Gold certificate and accept it for issuing the TGM Ecolabel for computers and monitors.

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## ABOUT DIGITALEUROPE

DIGITALEUROPE represents the digital technology industry in Europe. Our members include some of the world's largest IT, telecoms and consumer electronics companies and national associations from every part of Europe. DIGITALEUROPE wants European businesses and citizens to benefit fully from digital technologies and for Europe to grow, attract and sustain the world's best digital technology companies.

DIGITALEUROPE ensures industry participation in the development and implementation of EU policies. DIGITALEUROPE's members include 58 corporate members and 37 national trade associations from across Europe. Our website provides further information on our recent news and activities: <http://www.digitaleurope.org>

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