



**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COUNCIL**

Distr.
LIMITED
E/ESCWA/ID/1999/WG.1/16
28 January 1999
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH



Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Expert Group Meeting on Standardization in the Arab Countries
Amman, 2-5 February 1999

COMMISSION
ESCWA
10 FEB 1999
LIBRARY & DOCUMENT SECTION

ENVIRONMENTAL LABELLING

Prepared by
Ahmad Hussein

Note: This document has been reproduced in the form in which it was received, without formal editing. The opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of ESCWA.

Environmental Labelling

Coming Soon: ISO 14021
Self Declared Environmental Claims -
What do we need to know?

Ahmad Husseini
ISO TC 207 Secretary
January 1999



The ISO 14020 EL Series

- ♦ **ISO 14020:** *General Principles*
- ♦ **ISO 14021:** *Self Declared Environmental Claims*
- ♦ **ISO 14024:** *Environmental Labelling Type I - Guiding Principles and procedures*
- ♦ **ISO 14025:** *Environmental Labelling Type III - Guiding Principles and procedures*



Introduction to ISO 14020: General Principles

- ◆ **Outlines 9 basic principles that are applicable to all types of environmental labelling, whether an international standard exists or not.**
- ◆ **Where a more specific standard exists which gives more detailed guidance in any of these principles, the more specific standard must be used.**



The 9 Principles of 14020

- ◆ **Environmental labels and declarations shall be accurate, verifiable, relevant and not misleading.**
- ◆ **Procedures and requirements for environmental labels and declarations shall not be prepared, adopted or applied with a view to, or with the effect of, creating unnecessary obstacles to international trade.**
- ◆ **Environmental labels and declarations shall be based on scientific methodology that is sufficiently thorough and comprehensive to support the claim and that produces results that are accurate and reproducible.**



The 9 Principles of 14020 (cont.)

- ◆ **Information concerning procedure, methodology, and any criteria used to support environmental labels and declarations shall be available and provided upon request to all interested parties.**
- ◆ **The development of environmental labels and declarations shall take into consideration all relevant aspects of the life cycle of the product.**
- ◆ **Environmental labels and declarations shall not inhibit innovation which maintains or has the potential to improve environmental performance.**



The 9 Principles in 14020 (cont.)

- ◆ **Administrative requirement of information demands related to environmental labels & declarations shall be limited to those necessary to establish conformance with applicable criteria & standards of labels & declarations.**
- ◆ **Process of developing environmental labels & declarations should include open, participatory consultation with interested parties. Reasonable efforts should be made to achieve consensus throughout the process.**
- ◆ **Information on environmental aspects of products & services relevant to an environmental label or declaration shall be available to purchasers & potential purchasers from the party making the environmental label or declaration.**



ISO 14024: Environmental Labelling Type I - Guiding Principles and procedures

- ♦ **14024 sets the procedures to be used in establishing and operating a "Type I" labelling - or "Ecologo" - programs.**
- ♦ **Type I programs are those which employ a third party certification process to verify that the product or service has achieved an acceptable standard of compliance with a pre-selected set of criteria.**
- ♦ **ISO 14024 gives guidance on the process to be used in establishing those criteria and the operating procedures for organizations running third party schemes for awarding "Ecologos".**



ISO 14025: Environmental Labelling Type III - Guiding Principles and procedures

- ♦ **This document (which will be developed as an ISO Technical Report, rather than a standard) is at a very early stage of development.**
- ♦ **Deals with third party verified schemes but rather than awarding "ecologos", Type III labels would use a standardized format to report actual data which has been collected (environmental loads, such as energy used, emissions generated, etc.) and is being communicated following a predetermined guideline.**
- ♦ **Format being proposed now is synonymous with food and drug labels that include a list of ingredients.**



ISO 14021: Self Declared Environmental Claims

- ◆ Defines some of the most commonly used environmental claims
- ◆ Establishes use guidelines for the Mobius Loop
- ◆ Suggests methodologies for tests that can be used to verify these claims.



Basic Elements of ISO 14021

-] Accurate, verifiable, non-deceptive environmental claims;
-] Increased potential for market forces to stimulate environmental improvements in production, process and products;
-] Prevention or minimization of unwarranted claims;
-] Reduction in marketplace confusion;
-] Facilitation of international trade; and
-] Increased opportunity for purchasers, potential purchasers and users of the product to make more informed choices.



Reliability

- ◆ In self-declared environmental claims, the assurance of reliability is essential.
- ◆ It is important that verification is properly conducted to avoid negative market effects such as trade barriers or unfair competition, which can arise from unreliable and deceptive environmental claims.



Relationship to Legislation

- ◆ This standard does not preclude, override, or in any way change, legally required environmental information, claims or labelling, or any other applicable legal requirement.



Relationship to LCA

- ◆ 14021 does not require a full life cycle analysis to be carried out in order to verify a self-declared environmental claim but it does expect the user of this standard to take the life cycle of the product into consideration.



Environmental Improvement

- ◆ Overall goal of environmental labels and declarations is, through communication of verifiable, accurate information, *that is not misleading*, on environmental aspects of products, to encourage demand for and supply of those products that cause less stress on the environment, thereby stimulating the potential for market driven continual environmental improvement.



Specific Requirements Clause 6.7 (a) to (g)

- ◆ **Claims including Explanatory Statements shall:**
 - be accurate and not misleading.
 - be substantiated and verified;
 - be relevant to that particular product, and used only in an appropriate context or setting;
 - be clear to the purchaser, potential purchaser or user of the product, whether the claim applies only to the product, a component, or packaging, or in relation to the provision of a service or only to an element of that service;
 - be specific as to the environmental aspect or environmental improvement which is claimed;
 - not be restated using different terminology to imply multiple benefits for a single environmental change;
 - be unlikely to result in misinterpretation;



Specific Requirements Clause 6.7 (h) to (k)

- ◆ **Claims including Explanatory Statements shall:**
 - be true not only in relation to the final product, but also shall take into consideration all relevant aspects of the product life cycle, in order to identify the potential for one impact to be increased in the process of decreasing another; NOTE: Does not necessarily mean that an LCA should be undertaken.
 - be presented in a manner which does not imply that product is endorsed or certified by an independent third party organisation when it is not;
 - not be, either directly or by implication, suggest an environmental improvement which does not exist, nor shall it exaggerate the environmental aspect of the product to which the claim relates;
 - not be made if, despite the claim being literally true, it is likely to be misinterpreted by purchasers or is misleading through the omission of relevant facts;



Specific Requirements Clause 6.7 (l) to (o)

◆ Claims including Explanatory Statements shall:

- only relate to an environmental aspect that either exists or is likely to be realised, during the life of the product;
- be presented in a manner that clearly indicates that the environmental claim & explanatory statement should be read together. Explanatory statement shall be of reasonable size & in reasonable proximity to the environmental claim it accompanies;
- where a comparative assertion of environmental superiority or improvement is made, be specific & make clear the basis for the comparison. In particular, environmental claim shall be relevant in terms of how recently any improvement was made;
- if based on a pre-existing but previously undisclosed aspect, be presented in a manner that does not lead purchasers, potential purchasers and users of the product to believe that the claim is based on a recent product or process modification;



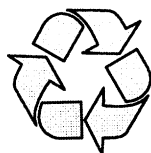
Specific Requirements Clause 6.7 (p) to (r)

◆ Claims including Explanatory Statements shall:

- not be made where they are based on the absence of ingredients or features which have never been associated with the product category;
 - be reassessed and updated as necessary to reflect changes in technology, competitive products or other circumstances that could alter the accuracy of the claim; and
 - be relevant to the area where the corresponding environmental impact occurs.
- NOTE: A process-related claim can be made anywhere, so long as the environmental impact occurs in the area where the production process is located. The size of the area will be determined by the nature of the impact.



Examples of the Mobius Loop



The Mobius loop may apply to the product or the packaging. If there is any potential for confusion about whether it applies to the product of the packaging, the symbol shall be accompanied by an explanatory statement.



Recyclable

- ◆ A characteristic of a product, packaging, or component thereof, that can be diverted from the waste stream through available processes & programmes, & can be collected, processed and returned to use in the form of raw materials or products.



Recycled

- ◆ **Recycled content**
- ◆ **Proportion, by mass, of recycled material in a product or packaging.**
- ◆ **Only pre-consumer and post-consumer materials shall be considered as recycled content, consistent with the usage of special terms.**



Other Selected Claims

- ◆ **Manufacturing and Distribution:**
 - Recycled Content
 - Reduced Resource Use
 - Recovered Energy
 - Waste Reduction
- ◆ **Product Use:**
 - Reduced Energy Consumption
 - Reduced Water Consumption
 - Extended Life Product
- ◆ **Product Disposal:**
 - Reusable and Refillable
 - Recyclable
 - Designed for Disassembly
 - Compostable
 - Degradable



Type I Labelling and Trade

- ◆ The WTO Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement allows signatory countries to introduce technical regulations in order to protect their own environment
- ◆ One interpretation is that an importing country cannot restrict imports because it does not agree with the production and processing methods (PPMs) used by the exporting country



Why there could be a conflict with the TBT Agreement?

- ◆ Type I Labelling is based on a form of LCA and the environmental impacts when the raw materials are extracted and the when the product is manufactured are essential parts of the LCA



TBT Agreement

- ◆ Applies to technical regulations
- ◆ Is aimed at preventing discrimination
- ◆ Unincorporated PPMs are a difficult issue



In defense of Type I labelling

- ◆ It isn't compulsory to take part, even though in the case of the European Ecolabel, it is set up under an EC regulation
- ◆ Type I labelling discriminates against 80 percent of all products on the market in a given category, so its effects are no greater on imported products than on local ones



ISO 14024 Type I Labelling

- ◆ Has addressed the most significant trade issues
- ◆ Its application needs to be monitored
- ◆ Whatever the ISO Standards do, there will still be discrimination in the application of PPMs in trade



Thank You

Any Questions?



January 1999

Type I Labelling and Trade

- ◆ The WTO Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement allows signatory countries to introduce technical regulations in order to protect their own environment
- ◆ One interpretation is that an importing country cannot restrict imports because it does not agree with the production and processing methods (PPMs) used by the exporting country



Why there could be a conflict with the TBT Agreement?

- ◆ Type I Labelling is based on a form of LCA and the environmental impacts when the raw materials are extracted and the when the product is manufactured are essential parts of the LCA



TBT Agreement

- ◆ Applies to technical regulations
- ◆ Is aimed at preventing discrimination
- ◆ Unincorporated PPMs are a difficult issue



In defense of Type I labelling

- ◆ It isn't compulsory to take part, even though in the case of the European Ecolabel, it is set up under an EC regulation
- ◆ Type I labelling discriminates against 80 percent of all products on the market in a given category, so its effects are no greater on imported products than on local ones



ISO 14024 Type I Labelling

- ◆ Has addressed the most significant trade issues
- ◆ Its application needs to be monitored
- ◆ Whatever the ISO Standards do, there will still be discrimination in the application of PPMs in trade



