



RESULTS COMMUNICATION (Eco-labels)

ECO-LABELS, SELF-DECLARATIONS AND
ENVIRONMENTAL PRODUCT DECLARATIONS

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RESULTS COMMUNICATION (Eco-labels)

ECO-LABELS, SELF-DECLARATIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRODUCT DECLARATION

Eco-labels and environmental declarations are a set of voluntary tools which aim to stimulate the demand coming from final consumers and/or corporate customers of those products & services with a better environmental performance. Such environmental recognition systems have become standardized by ISO 14020, and three types of eco-labeling are recognized according to the aforementioned ISO 14020: Type I, II and III.

Eco-labels (Type I)

Eco-labels are voluntary environmental rating systems that identify - that is, they can be viewed by the end consumer - and officially certify that certain products or services within a given category, have a lower impact on the environment. The criteria that must be met for obtaining an eco-label are established in product or services categories and are based on Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) studies. This type of eco-labeling is called Type I and is standardized in ISO 14024 standard.

One of these voluntary eco-labeling systems is **EU Ecolabel¹** or **European Ecolabel¹**. EU Ecolabel covers some product categories belonging to the ErP&EE sector (e.g. electric/gas heat pumps, electric lamps, computers, laptops and TVs) and others are under study (e.g. refrigerators, washing machines and lighting). Apart from the EU Ecolabel there are other eco-labeling schemes, in the national and regional field (e.g. Nordic Swan, AENOR, The Catalanian Distintiu, Blue Angel, etc.).



- EU Ecolabel -

Self-declared environmental claims (Type II)

Self-declared environmental claims are made by the manufacturer to convey information about environmental aspects of its products or services (e.g., recyclable, reduced energy consumption, etc.). The use of a self-declared symbol is entirely optional. These statements or claims must be verifiable. This type of eco-labeling is called Type II and is standardized in ISO 14021, standard in which the guidelines on how these statements should be made are given.

Declaraciones ambientales de producto - EPD (Tipo III)

Environmental product declarations (EPD) contain standardized environmental information, based on Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) studies, in the form of impact indicators and with an explanation and interpretation of all the information provided. EPDs are generally certified or verified by third party. EPDs are a communication tool and make possible to establish comparisons between equivalent products. This type of eco-labeling is called a Type III and is standardized in ISO 14025.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/index_en.htm



There are different programs for the development of EPDs, one of which is **The International EPD® System**². This one is an EPD program, international in scope, and its secretariat belongs to the Swedish Environmental Management Council. The website of the International EPD® System has a library of PCR (Product Categories Rules), which are documents containing the requirements and tips for preparing an EPD for a certain type of product/service (e.g. machinery and electrical appliances, radio, TV and communication, household washing machines, refrigerators, etc.). The EPDs of the companies and other organizations that have decided to verify and register under this program and that have been finally published are also available. This program has a specific section for "Climate Declarations", i.e. EPDs that only address GHG emissions (greenhouse gases emissions).

Other labels and marking systems

Besides these three eco-labels (Type I, II and III), covered by ISO 14020, there are other labels and marking systems for products/services, some of them mandatory. In some cases these systems can also provide environmental information or any environmental assessment.

Compulsory marking systems of relevance to the ErP/EE sector are:

- i) CE marking,
- ii) WEEE marking, and
- iii) the new energy labeling scheme for ErP (Directive 2010/30/EU)

Voluntary marking systems include:

- i) the green dot for packaging,
- ii) the identification codes for materials and and packaging, and
- iii) other labels belonging to social organizations and industry associations are also commonly recognized and accepted (e.g. **Energy Star**³ for office equipment, or the **EPEAT**⁴ registration for computers, monitors and similar products).

PUBLICATIONS



Environmental labelling of the product. Guide of environmental criteria for the improvement of the product⁵ (Ihobe, 2008).

This guide describes the different means of environmental communication that can be put into practice by the company, both referring to products and services and referring to the company, with their advantages and disadvantages. *Available in Spanish and in Basque.*

LEGAL TEXTS

ISO 14020:2000⁶ - Environmental labels and declarations - General principles.

ISO 14024:1999⁷ - Environmental labels and declarations - Type I environmental labelling - Principles and procedures.

ISO 14021:1999⁸ - Environmental labels and declarations - Self-declared environmental claims (Type II environmental labeling).

² <http://www.environdec.com>

³ <http://www.eu-energystar.org>

⁴ <http://www.epeat.net>

⁵ <http://www.ihobe.net/Publicaciones/ficha.aspx?IdMenu=750e07f4-11a4-40da-840c-0590b91bc032&Cod=9ed9e24b-3944-4449-bc5f-5e1245c1bf72&Tipo>

⁶ http://www.iso.org/iso/catalogue_detail?csnumber=34425

⁷ http://www.iso.org/iso/catalogue_detail?csnumber=23145

⁸ http://www.iso.org/iso/catalogue_detail?csnumber=23146



[ISO 14025:2006⁹](#) - Environmental labels and declarations - Type III environmental declarations - Principles and procedures.

RECOMMENDED LINKS

[Ecolabelling.org¹⁰](#) - Ecolabelling.org is an independent and global database of eco-labels. Most existing eco-labeling schemes are collected and described in this database.

[GEDnet¹¹](#) - GEDNET is a global network for Environmental Product Declarations (Type III). The main objective of this network is to facilitate the exchange of information and to standardize criteria between different EPD programs. This site is itself a good network for knowing the different available EPD programs and its new developments in terms of PCR, and so on.

⁹ http://www.iso.org/iso/catalogue_detail?csnumber=38131

¹⁰ <http://ecolabelling.org>

¹¹ <http://www.gednet.org/>