

Environmental labelling of products with type I labels

Ekološko označevanje proizvodov z oznakami tipa I

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Abstract: Environmental labelling is the important issue in the actual global framework for more than 20 years. Thanks to the development of a national environmental labelling program of Republic of Serbia this issue is becoming very interesting in our country.

In this paper is given a review of national and regional environmental labelling programs, as well as a review of the development of the environmental (eco) labelling. Paper is based on the basic principles of SRPS ISO 14024:2003 standard, with representation of current situation in this area in the Republic of Serbia.

Izvelek: Ekološko označevanje je pomembna tema aktualnega globalnega povezovanja že več kot dvajset let. Po zaslugi razvoja lastnega nacionalnega programa ekološkega označevanja v Republiki Srbiji je ta tema postala izredno zanimiva tudi v naši državi.

V prispevku je podan prikaz nacionalnih in regionalnih programov ekološkega označevanja, kot tudi pregled prikaza razvoja ekološkega (eko) označevanja.

Prispevek temelji na osnovnih principih standarda SRPS ISO 14024:2003 s predstavitvijo aktualnega stanja na tem področju v Republiki Srbiji.

Key words: Environmental labelling, Eco label, Type I, ISO 14024

Ključne besede: ekološko označevanje, eko-oznaka, tip I, ISO 14024

INTRODUCTION

Environmental (eco) labelling is a voluntary method of environmental performance certification and labelling practiced around the world. As primary reasons for eco labels introduction, may be isolated next three:^[1]

- promotion of development, manufacturing, advertising and using products that causes less influence on the environment,
- stimulation of manufacturing which has maximum savings of physical resources using materials liable to recycle, and
- to offer customers total and secure information about impact of a product/service on the environment.

As an answer on appearance, great number of labels and declarations within this area of life cycle considerations, ISO has identified three broad types of voluntary labels.^[2, 3]

Type I - a voluntary, multiple-criteria based, third party program that awards a license that authorizes the use of environmental labels on products indicating overall environmental preferences ability of a product within a particular product category based on life cycle considerations.

Type II - informative environmental self-declaration claims.

Type III - voluntary programs that provide quantified environmental data of a product, under pre-set categories of

parameters set by a qualified third party and based on life cycle assessment, and verified by that or another qualified third party.

Further in this paper detailed analysis of program for eco labelling fitting under the Type I is presented.

TYPE I ECO LABELLING

Standard ISO 14024 was declared in 1999, and it defines Type I eco labels. This international standard is referring to programs of environmental labelling that award eco label to those products which satisfied complex previously defined conditions. In that way label identifies products certified as suitable for the environment, and because of that, usually this type is so called „stamps of approval“. Type I label is only given to those products that are in their category classified in range from 15–20 % ecologically the most acceptable. Label points out that product ecologically seen more acceptable than products of same category, and purpose is to stimulate buying products that are ecologically acceptable. Type I environmental labelling programs are voluntary. They can be led by public or private agencies and can be national, regional and international.^[4]

The aim of Type I eco labelling program is contribution of reducing harm-

ful factors on environment by using products for which is declared are more appropriate for environment. Type I eco labelling program overcomes six basic steps: ^[1, 6]

- consultations with interested parties,
- product category determination,
- creating, testing and exchanging criteria for environmental products,
- identifications of characteristics of product functions,
- development and implementation of suitable criteria, standards and guiding, and
- certification and licensing.

General characteristic of symbols that are used with this type of eco labels is that should associate on environment, in combination with symbols which are characteristic for some country/region. Thus, to show at the same time something that country/region is recognizable for (sometimes what is characteristic is bird, flower, leaf ...) and to

take care for environment (e.g. green or blue colour).^[7]





PREVIEW OF THE CURRENT TYPE I ECO LABELLING PROGRAM
















In this chapter is given summary of all national environmental labelling programs, and short presentation of program for eco labelling of European Union, which is regional-international.^[3]

National programs for Type I eco labelling

Programs for Type I environmental labelling start to grow previously on national levels, and country (its institutions) mostly was the main initiator and organizer of development and usage of this kind of program. According to this, regional eco labelling system, with easier way of orientation to customers in buying and choosing services, and because of market coverage begun to develop. ^[3, 8] Table 1 gives us a summary of appearing program of eco labelling.

Table 1. Chronology and summary of programs for Type I eco labelling

Label	Program	Country	Starting year
	Blue Angel	Germany	1977
	TCO Development	Sweden	1980
	Environmental Choice program	Canada	1988
	BRA MILJOVAL	Sweden	1988

	White Swan	Nordic Countries	1989
	Eco Mark	Japan	1989
	Green Seal	USA	1989
	Good Environmental Choice	Australia	1989
	Environmental Choice	New Zealand	1989
	NF Environnement	France	1991
	Milieukeur	Netherlands	1991
	Eco Mark	India	1991
	Eco Mark	South Korea	1992
	Green Mark Program	Taiwan	1992
	Green Label	Singapore	1992
	Medio Ambiente	Spain	1993
	El Distintiu	Catalonia	1993
	Umweltzeichen	Austria	1993
	Prijatelj okoliša	Croatia	1993
	Environmental Friendly Product	Czech Republic	1994

	Kornyezetbarat Termek	Hungary	1994
	Green Label Program	Israel	1994
	Green Label Thailand	Thailand	1994
	Water Lily	Lithuania	1996
	Ecologically suitable product	Slovakia	1998
	Ekologiczny	Poland	2000
	Green Label	Hong Kong	2000
	Eco Label		
	Environment 2000	Zimbabwe	2000
	Vitality Leaf	Russia	2001
	The Program for Development of Ecological Marking in Ukraine	Ukraine	2002
	Green Choice Philippines	Philippines	2002
	Qualidade Ambiental	Brazil	2003
	Ecolabel Indonesia	Indonesia	2006
	Eko oznaka	Bosnia and Herzegovina	2009

Regional programs of Type I eco labelling

Ministry of council of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, in November 1989 made a decision about adopting a common programme for ecological valuation and marking by the name “Nordic Swan Label”. Use of this programme is in jurisdiction of „*Nordic Eco-labelling Board*“. Program covers 69 groups of products. Label is valid for three years, after which revision of criteria is needed.^[9]



Figure 1. Label of programme for ecological valuation and marking of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden „Nordic Swan Label”



Figure 2. Typical products with label “Nordic Swan Label”

European Union eco labelling program has come to an agreement by Ministry of environment in December 1991, defined by Council Regulation No. 880/92 in March 1992, and became legal in

October 1992. Based on the Council Regulation No. 1980/2000 document, the procedure has been revised in September 2000. This was published in The Official Journal of EU on September 21st, 2000 and took the effect three days later.^[10]



Figure 3. EU eco label

The groups of products are developed as a result of the suggestions given by all interested parties, among which are the following:^[9]

- competent national bodies,
- ecological groups/movements,
- consumers associations, and
- trade unions and tradesmen.

European Commission is responsible for constituting and revising of the criteria for each group of products by giving mandate to a board made of competent bodies and consultation forum that involves all the relevant interested parties – non-governmental organizations like European Bureau for the Environmental Protection, trade and consumers associations.^[11] Each EU

member state has its competent body for administrating of the procedure on the national level. Competent bodies that have to be independent and neutral receive requests for obtaining of an eco label and decide whether the products are satisfactory comparing to a number of criteria.

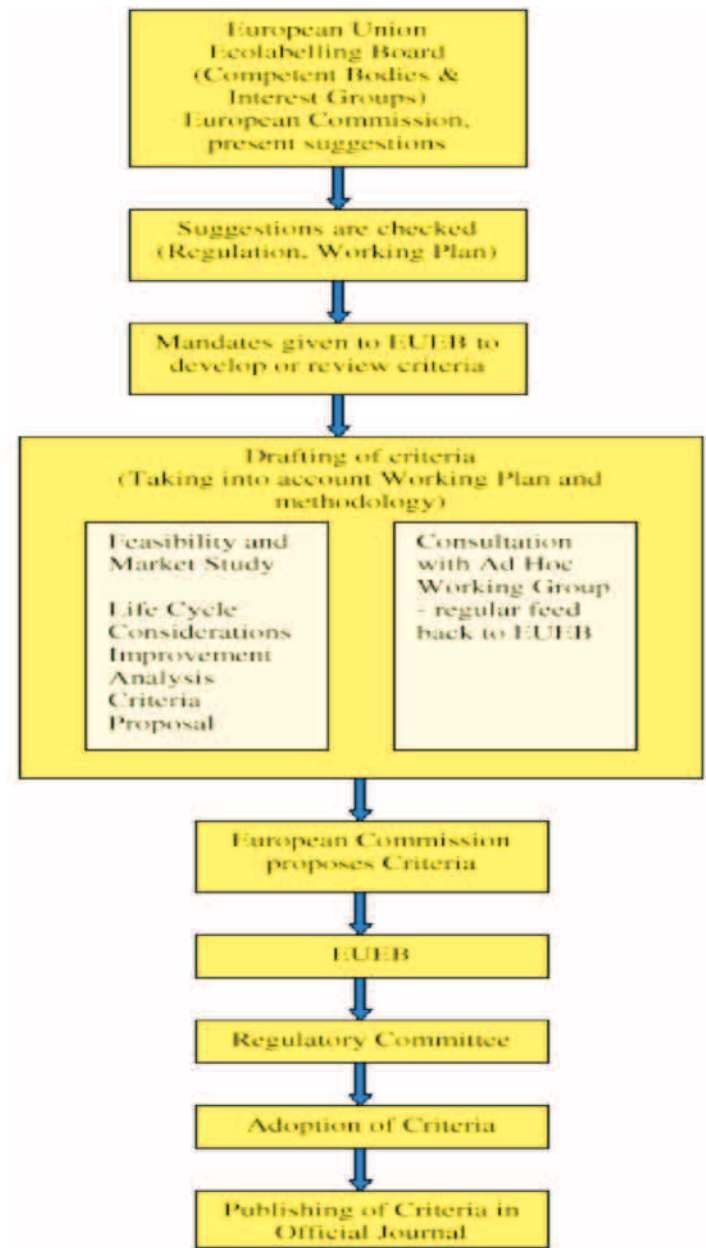


Figure 4. Criteria determination procedure scheme^[11]

The manufacturers whose products fulfil their criteria should get registration package that contains clear, step by step directions for obtaining the EU eco label from competent body. Once the application is filled out, it needs to be handed over to the national competent body who, by attaching their argumentation and recommendation, submits it to the European Commission-European Union Eco labelling Board who brings decision by voting. The procedure for getting EU eco label is graphically presented in Figure 5.

The “**Global Eco labelling Network**”- (GEN) is a non-profit association, founded in 1994 to improve and develop the eco-labelling of products and services world-wide. The EU Eco label Scheme is a full member of GEN.^[12] The mission of the GEN is to:^[12]

- serve its members, other eco labelling programs, other stakeholders, and the public by improving, promoting and developing the eco labelling of products, the credibility of eco labelling programs worldwide, and the availability of information regarding eco labelling standards from around the world,
- faster co-operation, information exchange and harmonization among its members, associates, and other eco labelling programs with regard to eco labelling,
- facilitate access to information regarding eco labelling standards from around the world,
- participate in certain international organizations in order to promote eco-labelling generally, and
- encourage the demand for, and supply of, more environmentally responsible goods and services.

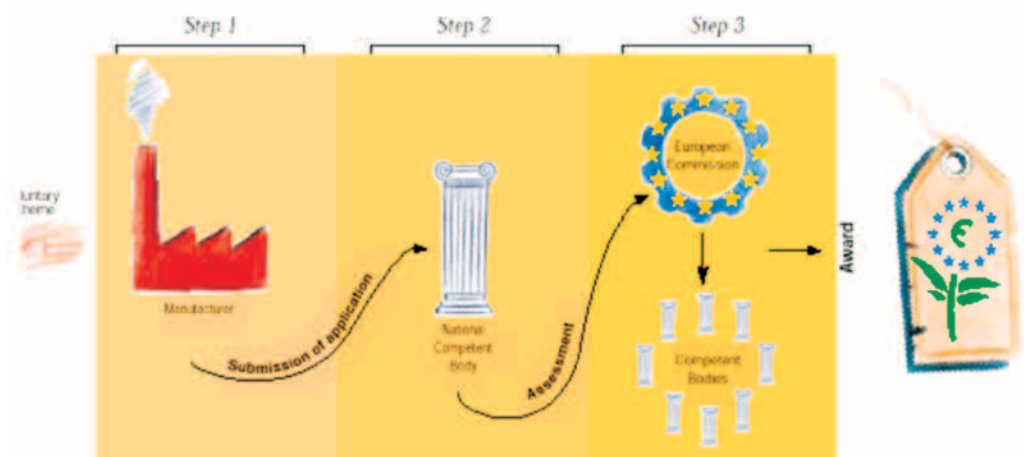


Figure 5. Procedure for getting EU eco label^[11]



Figure 6. Logo of GEN^[12]



Figure 7: Two versions of eco label of Republic of Serbia^[14]

ECO LABELLING IN SERBIA

First efforts related to this topic in R. Serbia were done by bringing up the Environmental Law, of which paragraphs no. 53 and 54 determine, respectively award and subtraction of eco label. Label is determined for products intended for universal consumption, process and service, except food, drinks and pharmaceutical products, but licence for using provides Ministry of Environment. This label would be part of Award of Licence for Eco label Application Regulation.^[13]

In march 2009 was presented and officially published “Rules on closer conditions and procedure for obtaining rights to the use of eco label, elements, layout and use of eco label for products, processes and services”,^[14] which met the prerequisites for the beginning of the implementation.

CONCLUSIONS

Presented view, which indicates that the countries with national Type I environ-

mental programs, suggests that the current informal tools for the management of environmental protection - is growing. Also, in the paper, through the two regional eco labelling programs, especially for eco labelling of the European Union, clearly points out the advantages of these programs, especially in terms of market globalization.

It is noted in the review that some Member States of the European Union (United Kingdom, Italy, Slovenia, etc.) did not develop their own programs, but have decided for the implementation of the EU as their national. This fact is interesting from the aspect of Republic of Serbia, which established the National Eco labelling Program last year. Although it is, at first glance, in conflict with the approach of above mentioned countries, the fact that “Rules on closer conditions and procedure for obtaining rights to the use of eco label, elements, layout and use of eco label for products, processes and services” made with great respect to the criteria for categorization and evaluation of products from the EU, indicates that Republic of Serbia elected a similar approach. This

will ensure not only compliance with the EU program in the future, but also quality and credibility of our program, in terms of easier access of domestic Serbian products to the EU market.

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