

# IMPLEMENTING ECO-LABEL SCHEME TO PRODUCTS, SERVICES IN ROMANIA

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## **Abstract:**

*This paper presents the types of products and services in Romania that need the Eco-label, an EU requirement. Eco procedure appeared in 2002 and it is a marketing tool and sustainable development. The aim is to promote eco-label products, services whose environmental impact is reduced, having a voluntary purpose. Product categories that have the eco-label are: refrigerators, washing machines and household utensils, notebooks, soil improvers and growing media, detergents for dishwashers, footwear, textiles group, paint and varnish, mattresses, electric lamps, paper art, paper copiers, TVs, cleaners and cleaners for toilets, vacuum cleaners, floor rigid material, absorbent paper products, lubricants, tourist accommodation, camping services.*

**Key words:** Eco-label, products, services, sustainable development criteria

**JEL classification:** Q56

Organic labeling appeared in 1992, organic label helps informing the citizens on the identification of products, services, with an environmental impact.

The organic label is a graphic symbol and / or descriptive text on the product or packaging, a brochure or other document accompanying the product information and provides necessary information to the criteria of the products offered on the market.



It consists of two sections (Fig. no. 1)  
- section 1 contains the symbol Ecolabel flower  
- section 2 contains a short descriptive text – information on the reasons of the environmental label

Fig. 1. Eco-label symbol

The Eco-label can be applied both to products and services (excluding food, beverages, pharmaceuticals and medical products). Until now, the criteria were approved for 24 product groups: cleaning products, paper products, household products, garden products, electrical products and appliances, footwear, textiles, tourist accommodation and camping, heat pumps and lubricants.

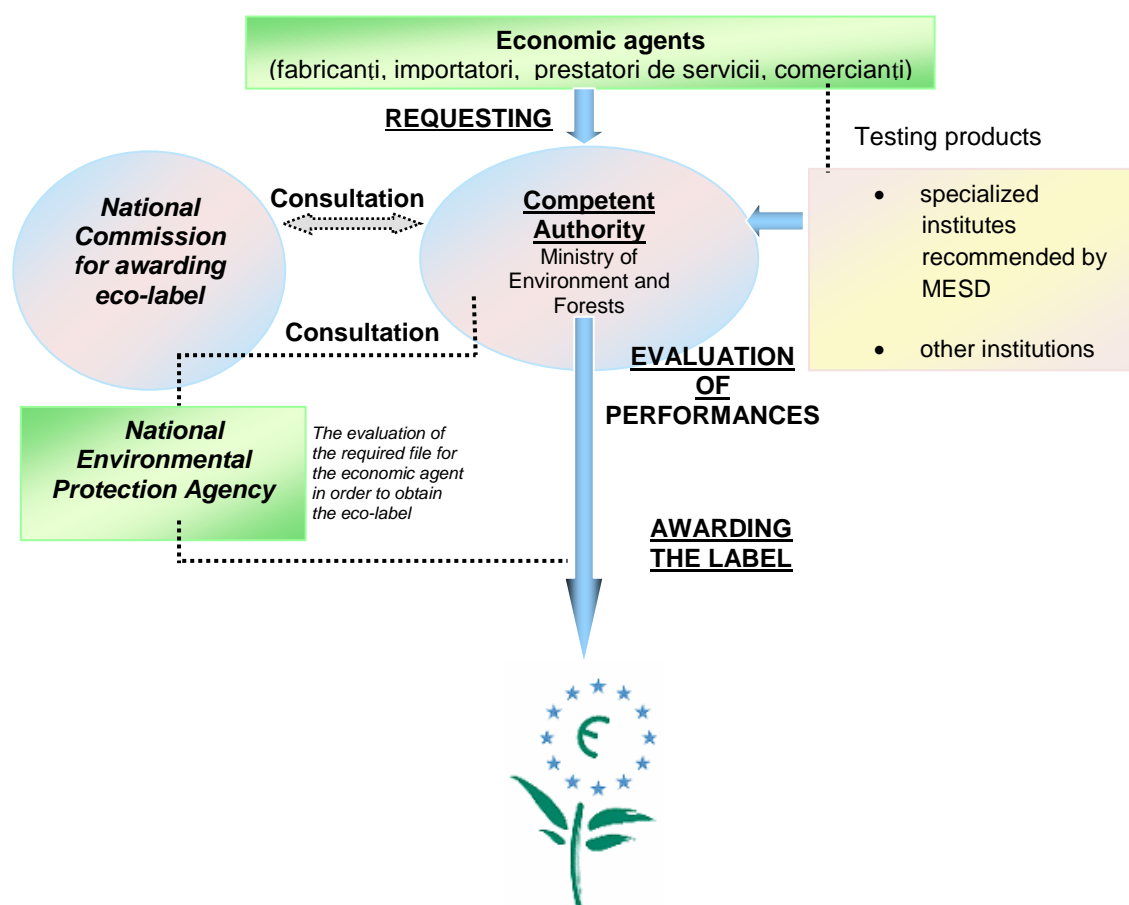
In Romania, for the implementation of eco-label scheme was set up a National Commission for awarding the Eco-label, a consultative body involved in making decisions on awarding.

In order to obtain the green label, operators (manufacturers, importers, service providers, traders) must firstly ask the eco-label from the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Request comes together with a series of test or analysis reports issued by professional institutes carrying out performance evaluation of the product (or

declaration of conformity with specific legislation - if applicable) form a file that is reviewed by the Technical Secretariat of the National Commission for granting EcoLabel. Assessment report and documents are then submitted to the Commission who usually meets quarterly and decides whether the product is given the green label (Fig. no. 2).

National Commission for awarding consists of 3 representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, a representative of the Ministry of Economy and Commerce, a representative of the National Authority for Consumer Protection, a representative of the National Environmental Guard, a representative of the Ministry of Education, 4 representatives of employers, 4 representatives of NGOs for environmental protection and consumer protection approved by them.

Fig. 2. Awarding system of Eco-label in Romania  
(source: [www.mmediu.ro](http://www.mmediu.ro))



In granting the right to use the organic label, the competent authorities agree on a contract with the applicant on terms of use of the organic label.

**Benefits of eco-label:**

- it is a collective mark of certificating products
- improves the image of the producer
- benefits for the final consumer
- is voluntary – doesn't put barriers to trade
- has a dynamic and evolving, assigned a fixed period (3-5 years)
- development of "marketing and advertising tools" to address the specific needs of consumers, without seeking to achieve an educational goal of environmental protection;

- develops a strategy of "environmental education" in order to change consumer behavior in the purchasing process, without limiting us only to disseminating information.

Organic label must contain as much information on it as possible, for the consumer to understand why organic label was given to the product.

Eco-Labeling Committee of the European Union aims to establish and revise criteria for eco-labelling, which is composed of competent authorities designated by Member States and a consultative forum to ensure balanced participation of all stakeholders.

Requests for awarding eco-label may be submitted by manufacturers, importers, service providers, merchants and retailers (for products sold under their own brand names).

The reason for requesting may be a product under one or more brand names. If the product comes from outside the European Community, the request may be submitted to the competent authority in any Member State in which the product to be marketed or sold. If a product originates in the same form, from several Member States, the application will be presented to the competent authority of one of those States.

Stages of establishing eco-label criteria:

- Feasibility and market study: internal and external trade are considered, consumer perception
- Life related issues: international standards are taken into account
- Improvement analysis: the importance of technical feasibility, industrial and commercial, market changes, consumer perception.
- Proposed criteria: relevant environmental issues are taken into account.

#### **Camping services**

Eco-label criteria are designed to limit environmental impact in the 3 stages of life cycle service (acquisition, service provision, waste). They mainly promote:

- reducing energy consumption;
- reducing water consumption;
- reducing the amount of waste;
- encouraging the use of renewable and less environmentally harmful substances;
- promoting communication and education in environmental protection

At least 22% of electricity should come from renewable energy sources, for camping areas which have access to a market that offers electricity from renewable sources of energy.

Camping Service declare to the water authority responsible for administering the possibility of connecting to a different water source (eg. public water network, surface water), in case studies in the local water management plan show evidence of an environmental impact when using current source of water.

The criterion is valid only if the camping area is not supplied with water from a public pipe. Sewage must be treated. Waste will be collected selectively.

Information must be easily accessible for visitors and staff on how to reach the camping area and other local destinations using public transportation. If no suitable public transport is provided information is offered on other means of transport, chosen due to their environmental impact.

Economic operators who have an environmental management system registered in accordance with the Order of the Minister of Agriculture, Forests, Water and Environment no. 50/2004 or certified EN ISO 14001: 2005 automatically meet these general criteria for environmental management. In these cases, how to verify compliance with the criteria in question is registered in accordance with the Order of the

Minister of Agriculture, Water and Environment no. 50/2004 or certified EN ISO 14001: 2005.

Managers of camping area must ensure staff information and training, including in the form of manuals or written procedures to ensure implementation of environmental measures and encourage environmentally responsible behaviour.

Appropriate training should be provided for all new employees in a period of 4 weeks after their employment, as for all employees at least once a year.

Managers of camping area must ensure visitors information on environmental policy, including issues of safety and fire prevention, the actions and organic label. Information must be actively communicated to visitors, right from the reception when they are handed a questionnaire where people can express their opinion on environmental aspects of the camping area. Advertisements inviting visitors to support environmental objectives must be visible and legible, placed mainly in common areas and rooms for rent.

#### **Portable computer products group**

Eco-label criteria for product group portable computers, referred to as criteria, is aimed at:

- reducing harm and risk in terms of environmental protection due to the use of energy (global warming, acidification, destruction of non-renewable energy resources) by reducing energy consumption;
- reducing harm and risk in terms of environmental protection related to the use of natural resources by encouraging the production of components that can be replaced and recyclable products and easy to maintain;
- reducing harm and risk in terms of environmental protection related to the use of hazardous chemicals, reducing their use.

#### **For the product group "TV" eco-label criteria mainly promotes:**

- reducing environmental damage or risks related to the use of energy - global warming, acidification, depletion of non-renewable resources by reducing energy consumption;
- reduce environmental damage related to the use of natural resources by encouraging the reuse, recycling and maintenance of a television;
- reducing environmental damage or risks from the use of hazardous substances by reducing their use. These criteria encourage the implementation of best practice - use of environmental best practices.

**Accommodation services for tourists** are applied for accommodation services for tourists, travelers, tenants and include provision for a fee, of overnight accommodation in appropriately equipped rooms, including at least one bed, offered as main service to tourists and passengers. Services of overnight accommodation include dining services, sports and / or access to green areas.

Criteria are used to limit environmental impact in the three stages of life cycle service, purchasing, service provision, waste. They chiefly promote:

- reducing energy consumption;
- reducing water consumption;
- reducing the amount of waste generated;
- encourage use of renewable and less environmentally harmful substances;
- promoting communication and education in environmental protection.

If the economic entity requesting eco-label is required to provide declarations, documentation, test reports or other evidence of compliance criteria, they can be provided by the operator and / or supplier / suppliers, as appropriate.

If necessary, the competent authority may require supporting documentation and may conduct independent verification.

At least 22% of electricity should come from renewable energy sources as defined under nr.1.535/2003 Government Decision on approval of the strategy to exploit renewable energy sources.

This criterion applies only if the tourist accommodation units have access to a market that offers energy generated from renewable energy sources.

Accommodation should declare the authority responsible for water supply the desire to pass water supply from another source, eg. water surface or public network, if studies in the water protection plan show that the use current source of water has a strong impact on the environment.

This criterion applies only for tourist accommodation units that are not supplied with water from the main pipeline from the public network.

All wastewater must be treated. Waste will be collected selectively.

Accommodation has to offer tourists, including conference participants, information on its environmental protection policy, the actions and organic label. Information must be provided actively to tourists at reception and informative notes that invite tourists to support environmental objectives must be clearly displayed, especially in rooms.

### **Conclusions**

This paper shows how the eco-label is made in Romania, whose products may be granted such eco-labels, which are the institutions that are involved in the procedure and the procedure for granting the label. It is also briefly shown how the award is rendered and the Eco-label criteria for some products: portable computers, televisions and camping and accommodation services for tourists.

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