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# newsletter

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Eco Certification



*The Environmental Information System acronymed as ENVIS was implemented by the Ministry of Environment & Forests by end of 6th Five Year Plan as a Plan Scheme for environmental information collection, collation, storage, retrieval and dissemination to policy planners, decision makers, scientists and environmentalists, researchers, academicians and other stakeholders.*

*The Ministry of Environment and Forests has identified Consumer Education and Research Centre (CERC), Ahmedabad, as one of the centers to collect and disseminate information on "Eco-labelling and Promotion of Eco-friendly Products". The main objective of this ENVIS Centre is to disseminate information on Eco products, International, and National Eco labeling programs.*

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**Eco Certification**

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# Foreword

How to go green and protect the environment? Nowadays, consumer and environmental concerns have become major issues in the marketplace. Environment protection and sustainable development is an important aspect to make planet livable. The environment protection is an issue that makes every section of the society the consumer, the industry, and the government- to think about the planet where they live. Consumer products with eco labeling and different types of eco certification enlighten consumers that a product with eco mark is more environmentally friendly than other products of the same category.



Environmental certification is a solution helping manufacturers to maintain a reliable assurance system of products with minimum impact on environment. The eco certified products are more environmentally friendly than their counterparts. It helps consumers to make more informed choices, understand the implications of their buying decisions and avoid being taken in by “Green” claims.

The market for such eco-labelled and environment friendly products has been expanding rapidly, and more and more consumers across the world are getting aware of the importance of sustainable consumption and production practices.

The eco labels play an important role in adopting more sustainable consumption patterns. Ensuing the Rio Earth Summit, Agenda 21 identified eco certification as a way to encourage consumers to adopt more sustainable consumption patterns through the buying of products, which have less hazardous impact on environment. Consumers easily can be fooled by deceptive claims about the environment and it creates consumers' distrust and confusion over environmental claims of manufacturers. The “World Summit on Sustainable Development Plan of Implementation to address unsustainable consumption advocates 'developing and adopting on a voluntary basis effective, transparent, verifiable, non-misleading and non-discriminatory consumer information tools' (UNEP, 2002,p.7).

An international consensus was generated during the UN Earth Summit Conference 1992 to integrate environmental issues into manufacturing procedures. The motive was to influence the consumption patterns in order to accomplish sustainable development.

The “Green” living implicates to make commitment towards everyday selections, which conserve energy, reduce pollution, and minimize waste. To lead a more eco-friendly lifestyle, we have to be aware about the products with eco label that benefits the global environment. The present issue makes readers aware about importance of eco certification and organisations involved in certification processes.

# Eco Certification

Eco certification is a form of environmental regulation and development where a company can choose to comply with predefined processes or objectives set forth by the certifying agencies. Eco labeling is a voluntary method of environmental performance certification. Different organisations/certifying agencies are offering eco certification to products and services based on their environmental preferences i.e. based on life cycle analysis. They provide a logo - an eco label certified under their standards.

## *Indian Scenario*

In India, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), a statutory organisation, has launched the eco-labeling scheme known as 'Eco Mark' in 1991. This scheme has adopted the cradle to grave approach i.e. from raw material extraction, to manufacturing, and to disposal. It has identified 16 product categories but it has failed to take off even more than two decades after its launch. Till date, the product categories paper, wood substitutes, and finished leather manufacturers have applied for the Eco Mark. Eco Mark is a voluntary non-binding scheme.

The Green Signal is India's first comprehensive sustainability eco label. It functions under the aegis of the Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship (CIIE) at the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA). It was launched in 2011 with a view to certifying service providers and manufacturers by examining their manufacturing processes to ensure that their processes are environmentally sustainable. It is a life cycle-based certification



## *International Scenario*

Different eco labeling programmes are available across the world. These are generally sponsored by government or managed by private sectors and are voluntary.

The International Organization for Standardization has developed standards for environmental labeling with the ISO 14000 family. The US based Green Seal is a non-profit organization that uses science-based programs. EcoLogo Program is environmental standard and certification mark created by Government of Canada. Blue Angel of Germany is the oldest voluntary eco label programme in the world, and it covers about 11,700 products and services in 125 product categories. Ecolabel is a voluntary label of European Union. In other European Countries France, Croatia, the Netherlands, Austria, Scandinavia, Sweden, Slovakia, Spain, Czech Republic, and Hungary also have their own programmes. In Russia, Vitality Leaf Ecolabel is a voluntary ecolabelling program.

In Brazil, the Associacao Brasileira de Normas Tecnicas (ABNT) in collaboration with the Brazilian government has launched the eco-label in 1993 based on life-cycle analyses. In 1991 Australia had developed the 'Environmental Choice' eco-label but has revamped in 2001 as 'Environmental Choice Australia'. The New Zealand Ministry of the Environment launched New Zealand's eco-label "Environmental Choice New Zealand" in 1990.

Asian countries have also developed eco-label programmes. The countries are People's Republic of China, India, Israel, Japan, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand. Hong Kong has two programmes on eco-label. The Hong Kong Eco-label is managed by Hong Kong Federation of Environmental Protection (HKFEP) Limited and the Hong Kong Green Label Scheme (HKGLS) established in the year of 2000 is managed and awarded by the non-governmental organization Green Council (GC) in association with the Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC).

Source: [http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/govt-s-eco-mark-scheme-fails-to-gain-momentum-even-after-19-years-110051400043\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/govt-s-eco-mark-scheme-fails-to-gain-momentum-even-after-19-years-110051400043_1.html), [http://cpcb.nic.in/Eco\\_Label.php](http://cpcb.nic.in/Eco_Label.php) [http://www.blauer-engel.de/en/blauer\\_engel/whats\\_behind\\_it/national\\_eco-labels\\_worldwide.php](http://www.blauer-engel.de/en/blauer_engel/whats_behind_it/national_eco-labels_worldwide.php)



# Eco mark - An Indian Scheme of certification

Eco Mark is a voluntary eco-labeling scheme launched by the Government of India in 1991 for identification of environment friendly products. The criterion of cradle-to-grave approach is adopted. The 'Eco Mark' label is awarded to consumer products that meet the specified environmental criteria and the quality requirements of Indian Standards. Any product with the Eco Mark will be the right environmental choice.

## *Objective of the Scheme:*

The specific objectives of the scheme are

- To provide an incentive for manufacturers and importers to reduce adverse environmental impact of products.
- To reward genuine initiatives by companies to reduce adverse environmental impact of their products.
- To assist consumers to become environmentally responsible in their daily lives by providing information to take account of environmental factors in their purchase decisions.
- To encourage citizens to purchase products which have less harmful environmental impacts.
- Ultimately to improve the quality of the environment and to encourage the sustainable management of resources.

## *Criteria for Ecomark*

The basic criteria cover broad environmental levels and aspects, but are specific at the product level. A product is examined in terms of the following main environmental impacts:

- that they have substantially less potential for pollution than other comparable products in production, usage and disposal.
- that they are recycled, recyclable, made from recycled products or bio-degradable, where comparable products are not;
- that they make significant contribution to saving non-renewable resources including non-renewable energy sources and natural resources compared with comparable products;

- That the product must contribute to a reduction of the adverse primary criteria which has the highest environmental impact associated with the use of the product, and which will be specifically set for each of the product categories.

Apart from these key points a product is examined, there are general and specific requirements also.

Product General Requirements: The product general requirements deal with the issues of compliance of the pollution control acts; raising environmental awareness among consumers etc., in addition to safety, quality, and performance of the products.



Product Specific Requirements:

- Production process including source of raw materials;
- Use of natural resources;
- Likely impact of the environment;
- Energy conservation in the production of the product;
- Disposal of the product and its container;
- Utilisation of "Waste" and recycled materials;
- Suitability for recycling or packaging; and Biodegradability;
- Effect and extent of waste arising from the production process;

## *Mechanism of Scheme*

For each product category, three committees - Steering Committee, Technical Committee, and Bureau of Indian Standards - involved with the criteria development and the award of the Eco Mark.

The Steering Committee, set up in the MoEF, determines the product categories for coverage under the scheme and also formulates strategies for promotion, implementation, future development, and improvements in the working of the scheme.

The Technical Committee, set up in the CPCB, identifies the specific product to be selected and the individual criteria to be adopted, including, wherever possible, inter-se priority between the criteria if there be more than one.

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) assesses and certifies the products and draw up a contract with the manufactures, allowing the use of the label, on payment of a fee.

### *Eco Mark Logo*

The logo of Eco mark an earthen pot is distinctive as it puts across its environmental message. It signifies the use of renewable resources like clay/earth that does not produce harmful waste and consumes very limited energy in making. Its solid and graceful form represents both the strength and fragility, which also characterize the ecosystem.



### *Eco Mark Licence*

The procedures to get the licence of Eco Mark from Bureau of Indian Standards, manufacturers have to follow the same procedure applicable for getting licence under its Product Certification Marks Scheme.

To get this licence, manufacturers have to apply on a prescribed application form. It is available from BIS Headquarters as well as its Regional and Branch offices. Forms are also available from any of the BIS office. There is no fee for an application form. While submission, manufacturers have to submit duly

completed form with requisite fees i.e., Rs. 500.00. It is payable at a place where the application is to be submitted.

The licence is granted initially for the period of one year that is renewable for a period of two years at a time subsequently on the basis of performance of the unit in the preceding year/s. Before applying for the Eco mark to BIS, the manufacturers should have the ISI mark on the product for quality and safety criteria. BIS officers inspect and collect the samples for factory testing and independent testing to assess the conformity of the product with requirements specified in the Indian Standards for Eco Mark. A licence is granted if products conform to the relevant criteria. The applicant shall pay the charges for inspection and testing of samples in independent laboratory. The manufacturers are authorized to use logo of Eco Mark on their products after getting permission for licence from BIS. Under this scheme, the Standard Mark of the Bureau shall be single mark being a combination of the ISI Mark and the Eco-logo.

Source: [http://www.cpcb.nic.in/Eco\\_Label.php](http://www.cpcb.nic.in/Eco_Label.php)

# INDOCERT- Indian Organic Certification Agency

INDOCERT is a nationally and internationally operating, certification body established in India. In 2002 it got accreditation for organic certification by National Accreditation Body (NAB), Govt as per Indian National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) regulated by Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA). It does inspection and certification as per the National Standards for Organic Production. It is accredited as per ISO 17021 & ISO 22003 by National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB, QCI, India) for providing Food Safety Management System Certification based on ISO 22000:2005 and IS 343:2000 (HACCP). It also has accreditation of National Accreditation Board for Education and Training (NABET, QCI, India)- Accreditation for conducting awareness training programme on Food Hygiene (GMP/GHP) (certificate) and accreditation for conducting lead auditor training course for FSMS (ISO 22000:2005) Auditors.

In 2005 Deutsches Akkreditierungssystem Prüfwesen (DAP), Germany had approved INDOCERT as an EN 45011/ISO 65 accredited certification body. It is under the scope EEC Regulation 2092/91 (European Organic Standards) and EUREPGAP (fresh fruits and vegetables).

INDOCERT does certification for the export market according to rules equivalent to Regulation EC No. 834/2007 (EU Regulations) and USDA's National Organic Program (NOP). Agricultural Marketing Services of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has also approved and recognized the 'Indian Organic Seal' on the products that are certified by organic certification bodies accredited by APEDA for products to export to the U.S. It has authorized INDOCERT to certify products as per technical standards of USDA's NOP.

INDOCERT is recognized as equivalent certification body (listed in the List of inspection and certification bodies recognized from EU). On June 20th 2012 the European Commission implemented the Regulation (EU) No. 508/2012 by amending Regulation (EC) No

1235/2008 with the actualized and consolidated List of Third Countries and the List of Control Bodies and Control Authorities for the Purpose of Equivalence. Therefore no import authorizations will be needed anymore after July 1st 2012 for imports of organic products certified by the Certification Bodies and originating from the listed countries, as mentioned in the Annex III and IV of the Regulation (EU) No 508/2012. The product categories, which are recognized as equivalent, are specified accordingly for each country.

Besides acting as certifying agency, it also provides training, conduct awareness programmes, and disseminate relevant information. The Swiss State Secretariat of Economic Affairs (SECO) is financially contributing to the set-up and consolidation of INDOCERT. It is technically collaborated with two well-reputed Swiss Organic Agriculture Institutions: FiBL (Research Institute of Organic Agriculture) and bio.inspecta (Swiss certification agency).

## Services

INDOCERT gives services of Inspection and Certification.

Inspection Services: INDOCERT offers inspection services for

Organic Aquaculture: Naturland of Germany and Bio Suisse of Switzerland have authorised it for the inspection of hatchery, individual farms, farmer groups, feed mills, and processing plants. It inspects as per their organic aquaculture standards.

Organic Cosmetics: Italy based Institute for Ethical and Environmental Certification (ICEA) is providing Bio Eco Cosmetics Certification in association with INDOCERT. It inspects cosmetics as per Environment-friendly Cosmetics Standard of ICEA.

**Organic Textiles:** In collaboration with ICEA, Italy it provides organic certification to textiles. As per Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) it certifies organic textile products and garments.

**Fair Trade:** INDOCERT do inspection for Fair Trade Certification. Standards are set in accordance with the ISEAL (International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling) Code of Good Practice on Standard Setting.

**Certification Services:** It offers certification in

**Organic Agriculture:** Organic Crop and Animal Husbandry certification as per world wide accepted standards- NPOP, Gol, E U regulations for organic production (EC.No.834/2007) , and Standards of US Department of Agriculture and National Organic Programme (USDANOP).

For the collection of Wild Plants, certification is required to market as organic. Wild products are derived from a self-sustainable growing environment. This should be compiled with NPOP, Gol (Considered equivalent to council regulation (EC) No. 834/2007) , Swiss organic farming ordinance for plant products originating in India, and USDANOP .

**Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) Certification:** It is providing FSMS Certification based on ISO 22000:2005 and Irish Standard I.S. 343.

The UTZ Certified as a certification body to certify coffee, cocoa, and tea products approve INDOCERT to carry out Good Inside Code of Conduct and Chain of Custody certification. INDOCERT can also certify producer groups and agricultural farms.

**Organic Aquaculture:** It offers services for inspection and certification of organic aquaculture production and processing as per rules equivalent to Reg. (EC) No. 834/2007.

**SAN-RA (Sustainable Agriculture Network-Rainforest Alliance):** INDOCERT is approved by SAN-RA as certification body. It is also on the process of getting accreditation from International Organic Accreditation Service (IOAS) to become an accredited certification body for the SAN-RA program. The SAN promotes efficient and productive agriculture, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable community development by creating social and environmental standards.

INDOCERT also evaluates inputs used in organic production and approves their compliance with the National Standards for Organic Production.



Besides these services INDOCERT also offers trainers training programme on organic standards/internal control system and awareness programme on GLOBALGAP.

Source:  
[http://www.fairtrade.net/setting\\_the\\_standards.html](http://www.fairtrade.net/setting_the_standards.html)  
<http://www.indocert.org/>



# ECOCERT- Certification Body for Sustainable Development

Ecocert is an international inspection and certification body, which can offer certification service as per the range of organic standards, public and private, national, and international and also as per Fair Trade and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) standards. It operates in more than 120 countries across the continents and certifies more than 80,000 products. Ecocert globally provides inspection and certification services that guarantee safety for environment and mankind.



Headquarters in south of France in L'sle Jourdain, Ecocert began life in 1992, providing certification services for organic food. By 2000, the company had expanded into textiles and cosmetics and in 2007 added its Fair Trade Certification to address the socio-environmental concerns in the supply chains. In 2009, it allied itself with Global Organic Textile Standards (GOTS). Ecocert launched Ecocert Organic Standards (EOS) in 2012, which has got equivalence to European standards for organic. Ever since the launch of the first version of Ecocert's organic standards for cosmetics, Ecocert triggered a booming market for organic cosmetics - starting from Europe and spreading to the USA, Japan to other parts of the world. Right now 11,000 products from 800 companies are controlled by the Ecocert cosmetic regulations.

Ecocert is not just a certification body but also an organisation committed to promote the organic lifestyles throughout the world through its diverse certification programmes for food, clothing, and cosmetics products. Ecocert's mission is 'To provide quality organic certification services which encourages adoption of organic lifestyles'.

Organic agriculture is supposed to offer the chemical free goods to consumers and safety to the farm workers, freedom from the exposure to hazardous agrochemicals, conservation of natural resources.

Worldwide market appreciation of organic products has gone up tremendously, owing to the enhanced awareness for healthy food among consumers. Organic products, which until now were mainly being exported from India, are now finding more consumers in the domestic market. There is also a growing awareness of the dangers of consumable food grown with the aid of chemicals. Food contaminated by chemicals or grown from genetically modified seeds and planting material is unhealthy as compared with naturally grown food.

When consumers like you choose to buy organic products, you need to know that you are getting exactly what you pay for. The organic logo and labeling system is the mechanism that makes this possible. Organic certification is designed to provide you with complete confidence that the goods you buy are produced entirely in-line with the Organic Farming regulations, an equivalent or identical strict set of rules. There are public and private standards for organic cultivation, processing, and handling. Organic standards define precisely the minimum requirements that a farm or product should meet in order to be 'certified organic'. Certifying bodies like Ecocert review applications from farmers and processors for certification eligibility, and qualified inspectors conduct annual onsite inspections of organic operations. Farmers, processors, and handlers must at all times respect the relevant rules contained in the Regulations. They are subject to inspections by the inspection bodies or authorities to ensure their compliance with organic legislation. Every facility, including farm, is subject to yearly renewal of certification it has obtained. During the year too, to ensure the compliance to the standards, surveillance inspections are carried out.

In 2000, the Government of India released the National Standards for Organic Products (NSOP) under the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP). It stipulates that inspection and certification by a nationally accredited certification body is mandatory for labeling and selling products as "organic".

Ecocert India operations started in June 2002. In India, Ecocert operates from Aurangabad, for the south Asian countries. The Founder, Late Dr. Alexander Daniel served the International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM) for more than ten years. His passion for the promotion of organic farming provided a social dimension to organic production. Ecocert India has witnessed remarkable growth since the beginning with its certification services in almost all the states and neighboring countries. Ecocert is involved in development of the domestic organic segment for the past seven years and is active along with organic farmer's movement, processors, traders, and retailers to promote consumption of organic produce in India.

Ecocert is accredited to certify in accordance to various public organic standards viz. NPOP (Indian), EC 834/2007 and 889/2008 (European), USDA NOP (US), JAS (Japanese) and COS (Canada). Ecocert is also accredited for private standards like Demeter, BioSuisse, and Naturland.

Ecocert India has certified over three hundred thousand hectares of land for more than 300 of its clients constituting Processors, Exporters, Farmers' Groups, and Individual Farmers. The main objective of Ecocert is to promote the India Organic logo in the international markets and the Agmark India Organic logo in the Indian markets and give recognition to organic produce from India. Ecocert, with its core concern for the small holders in south Asian countries, is committed to provide affordable and trusted services of inspection, certification, and training for the organic farmers through its wide

network of localized inspectors. Regular audits by its Head Office and Accreditation agencies help Ecocert sustain the faith of the clients and consumers.



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## The Eco Mark Program

Since 1977 the Japan Environment Association (JEA) has dedicated its activities to the enhancement of public awareness and the assistance to people's environmental conservation events. The JEA promotes the environment-friendly products through its Eco Mark Program since 1989. It certifies the products and the Eco Mark is labeled on products which are relatively less harmful to the environment compared to similar products during the entire life cycle cradle to grave approach i.e., from exploiting and collecting the product materials, to the manufacturing, distribution, use and consumption, disposal, and recycling. A committee comprised of academics, governments, consumer groups, and experts from various industries sets standards and carries out the certification. Eco Mark Program operates according to ISO Standards ISO 14020 and ISO 14024. The JEA have consultative bodies - "Steering Committee", "Planning and Strategy Committee", "Criteria Deliberation Committee" and "Product Certification Committee", and Product Category-based Criteria Development Committees (hereafter referred to Criteria Development Committees).

These committees formulate draft criteria for each proposed product category whenever required. The Eco Mark meeting composed of specialists in various fields is to be held to listen to opinions of the people about the Eco Mark Program. Japan Environment Association holds the trademark right.

Eco Mark Program make more informed choices for a sustainable life style and eventually an environmentally sound society. It publishes the "Eco Mark News." It provides information related to Eco Mark Program like newly selected Eco Mark product category and proposals for certification criteria on the basis of the "General Procedures for the Eco Mark Program".

Eco Mark is designed to "protect earth and environment by ourselves E." "E" stands for both "Environment" and "Earth" which are embraced by the hands surrounding the earth gently. The Eco Mark symbolizes protecting the earth and the environment with our own hands.

Source: <http://www.ecomark.jp/english/>

Write to us  
We value your views and suggestions. Please send us your feedback on this issue.  
We would also like to have your contribution on the information relevant to  
the Eco product and Eco labeling.  
Please mail: [cerc-env@nic.in](mailto:cerc-env@nic.in)

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सर्वे सं सुखान्तिं ॥

