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THE EUROPEAN UNION ECO-LABELLING SCHEME FOR TEXTILES

ECOLOGICAL CRITERIA FOR BED LINEN AND T-SHIRTS

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(as published in the Official Journal of the European Communities No. L 116/30 of 11.05.96)

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This bulletin is an update of Export Quality No. 48 of February 1996 on Eco-labelling and other Environmental Quality Requirements in Textiles and Clothing which included the provisional criteria existing in early 1996.

Key features

This bulletin updates the information contained in the ITC Export Quality bulletin No. 48 of February 1996 entitled "Eco-labelling and other Environmental Quality Requirements in Textiles and Clothing" which included the provisional criteria in existence one year ago.

The Commission of the European Communities adopted the Commission Decision (96/304/EC) of 22 April 1996 establishing the ecological criteria for the award of the Community Eco-label to bed linen and T-shirts, which has been published in the Official Journal of the European Communities No. L 116/30 of 11 May 1996.

The criteria were based on a life cycle or "cradle-to-grave" analysis of the environmental impacts of this product group (see Figure 1), the most important among them being due to the use of pesticides in cotton growing, harmful processes during the production of polyester and the use of

harmful substances during the processing, making up and finishing of bed linen and T-shirts.

Consequently, the criteria established relate to pesticide residues in the cotton yarn, VOC emissions and use of antimony in polyester production, use of detergents, bleaching agents, dyes and pigments during wet processing, and VOCs and formaldehyde in the final printing and finishing of bed linen and T-shirts. Other criteria refer to waste water treatment and liquid effluents during production, to fitness for use parameters and to the test methods to be used as per international or industry methods.

The full description of the criteria is reproduced here for the benefit of developing country exporters of textiles and clothing to the E. U., given the potential effect of the EU eco-label in the significant volume of exports of T-shirts and bed linen to this market by developing countries, as was shown in our bulletin No. 48.

Figure 1: Product Life Cycle Analysis

INDICATIVE ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Environmental aspects	Product life-cycle				
	Pre-production	Production	Distribution (including packaging)	Use	Re-use/ Recycle/ Disposal
Air quality					
Water quality					
Soil protection					
Waste reduction					
Energy savings					
Natural resource management					
Global warming prevention					
Ozone layer protection					
Environmental safety					
Noise					
<u>Eco-system protection</u>					

O Products covered

The products covered should be made of 100 % cotton or blends of cotton and polyester including, for bed linen: bed sheet, pillowcase, valences, removable, washable quilt or duvet covers (which may be equipped with buttons or fasteners of different materials); T-shirts are knitted, unadorned, crew-neck, short or long sleeved garments, designed for outerwear (embroidery and printing is permitted, with the exception of plastisol-based printing).

Other products that might be included in the near future (studies are under way in 1997) are curtains, carpets, furniture coverings and clothes made out of other fibres such as wool, synthetic fibers, viscose, acetate, linen, silk and blends of fibres.

() Market access advantage

Although eco-labelling remains a voluntary requirement in Europe and other major markets, it may represent however a significant market access advantage for those producers and exporters that may qualify to this award, which importers and traders in Europe (and most probably the environmentally conscious consumers) would appreciate. Ecolabeling may also be used by retailers or importers as a selection criterium for suppliers.

Eco-labeling increases costs

The cost of qualifying for the award and of obtaining and maintaining it remains, however, a critical factor with regard to this and other eco labelling schemes. The requirements include the adoption of new -environment friendly- production systems, the use or non use of certain chemicals, the introduction of waste treatment facilities, the use of modern testing laboratory facilities and of subsequent certification practices that need to be recognized by the target market authorities or the importers, most of which is not available in developing countries and would imply additional costs.

O Need of technical assistance

This is certainly an opportunity for governments in textile and garment export oriented countries to play a timely and significant support role by introducing technical assistance schemes including awareness creation, training, consultancy services, testing, certification and accreditation facilities which could be internationally recognized through mutual recognition agreements, in order to facilitate compliance to the eco-labelling requirements.

At the same time, this is an opportunity to industrialized, developed countries such as the E. U. countries, to provide technical and financial assistance to developing countries needing and willing to introduce such schemes, to facilitate continuous trade with those countries.

O How to proceed

Interested persons and institutions (producers, exporters, trade promotion bodies, exporters associations, etc.) considering the possibility of using or promoting the use of the EU Eco-label for T-shirts and bed linen should, in addition to reviewing carefully the text of the European Union Commission Decision establishing the ecological criteria (attached to this bulletin), contact the Competent Body in the E. U. country where the product will first be marketed or imported and request the Application Form for Eco-labelling of Textile Products which provides guidance on how to establish the data necessary for an application and describes the procedures for controlling continuous compliance with the criteria, once the eco-label has been granted, the fees involved, etc. An Application Form has already been prepared by the Agenzia Nazionale per la Protezione dell'Ambiente (ANPA - Italy) and may be requested from the European Commission, the Competent Bodies or the ANPA (see addresses below).

European Commission Decision 96/304/EC of 22 April 1996 establishing the ecological criteria for the award of the Community eco-label to bed linen and T-shirts

(as published in the Official Journal of the European
Communities No. L 116/30 of 11.5.96)

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,
Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European
Community,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EEC) No 880/92 of
23 March 1992 on a Community eco-label award
scheme ⁽¹⁾, and in particular the second subparagraph of
Article 5 (1) thereof,

Whereas the first subparagraph of Articles 5 (1) of Regula-
tion (EEC) No 880/92 provides that the conditions for the
award of the Community eco-label shall be defined by
product group;

Whereas Article 10 (2) of Regulation (EEC) No 880/92
states that the environmental performance of a product
shall be assessed by reference to the specific criteria for
product groups;

Whereas in accordance with Article 6 of Regulation (EEC)
No 880/92 the Commission has consulted the principal
interest groups within a consultation forum;

Whereas the measures set out in this Decision are in
accordance with the opinion of the committee set up
under Article 7 of Regulation (EEC) No 880/92,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The product groups covered by the ecological criteria are:

- (a) 'bed linen', namely bed sheets, pillowcases, valances
and removable, washable quilt or duvet covers, and
- (b) T-shirts.

In all cases, the fibre materials for the final fabric must be
100 % cotton or blends of cotton and polyester.

Bed linen covered may be equipped with buttons or
fasteners of different materials.

T-shirts are knitted, unadorned, crew-neck, short- or long-
sleeved garments, designed for outerwear. Embroidery and
printing, with the exception of plastisol-based printing,
are allowed. Only sewing thread may be used for embroi-
dery. T-shirts must be for final sale to the public without
modification.

Article 2

The environmental performance and the fitness for use of
the product groups as defined in Article 1 shall be
assessed by reference to the specific ecological and
fitness-for-use criteria set out in the Annex.

Article 3

The product group definition and the criteria for the
product groups shall be valid for a period of three years
from the date on which this Decision takes effect.

Article 4

For administrative purposes the code number assigned to
the product groups shall be '010'.

Article 5

This Decision is addressed to the Member States.

Done at Brussels, 22 April 1996.

For the Commission

Ritt BJERREGAARD

Member of the Commission

(1) OJ No L 99, 11 4. 1992, p.

A N N E X

In order to qualify for an eco-label the product must comply with the following criteria, unless indicated otherwise, and as appropriate for the fibre. Criteria should be tested in accordance with the Appendix. Where no tests are mentioned, Competent bodies should rely as appropriate on declarations, appropriate documentation and/or independent verifications.

Functional unit

The functional unit, to which inputs and outputs should be related is:

1 kg of textile at textile norm conditions (65 % RH t 2 % and 20 ° C t 2 ° C) in the final fabric prior to cutting. (These norm conditions are specified in ISO 139. Textiles - standard atmospheres for conditioning and testing).

A. ECOLOGICAL CRITERIA

RAW MATERIALS

1. Cotton

Cotton yam must have no residues of any pesticide active substances mentioned in the Annex to Directive 79/117/EEC⁽¹⁾ as last amended by Directive 91/188/EEC⁽²⁾ as well as no residues of any pesticide active substance not authorized in the Member States of the European Community for cotton production in accordance with the provisions of Directive 91/414/EEC⁽³⁾.

Tests on the yarn shall be made four times a year and cover at least aldrine, captafol, camphechlor, chlordane, DDT, dieldrine, endrine, heptachlor, hexachlorobenzene and 2, 4, 5-T. For yams containing at least 50 % organic cotton which is shown to have been produced in conformity with the production and inspection requirements as laid down in Council Regulation (EEC No 2092/91) ⁽⁴⁾ the frequency of testing shall be once a year. No testing required for 100 % organic cotton produced and inspected in accordance with Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91.

2. Volatile organic compounds (VOC) emissions during production of polyester

The emission of VOC5 during polymerization of polyester must not exceed 1,2 g VOC/kg of produced polyester resin.

3. Residues of antimony in polyester fibres

The amount of antimony in the polyester fibres must not exceed 300 ppm.

4. PCP

Pentachlorophenol (PCP) and its salts and esters must not be used during the life cycle of the product before use. Frequency of testing - four times a year.

WEAVING

5. Size

Size must be either recycled or readily biodegradable. Recycling to be 75 % efficient

WET PROCESSING

PRE-TREATMENT - WASHING, SOFTENING, BLEACHING

6. Detergents, fabric softeners, complexing agents

No use of alkylphenolethoxylates (APEO), bis(hydrogenated tallow alkyl) dimethyl ammonium chloride (DTDMAC), distcaryl dimethyl ammonium chloride (DSDMAC), di(hardened tallow) dimethyl ammonium chloride (DHTDMAC), nitrilotriacetic acid (NTA) or ethylene diamine tetra acetate (EDTA).

7. Bleaching agents

In general, AOX emissions in the mixed bleaching effluent must be less than 40 mg/functional unit. In the case of fragile fabrics (degree of polymerisation below 1800) intended for white end products, AOX emissions must be less than 100 mg/functional unit

(1) OJ No L 33, N. 2 1979, p. 36.
(2) Of No 1. 92. 13 4 1991, p 42
(3) O/ No 1. 230, 19 8 1991, p 1.
(4) OJ No 1. 198, 22. 7 1991, p 1

DYEING AND FINISHING

8. Dyes, pigments and carriers

- (a) The levels of ionic metal impurities for dyestuffs must not exceed the following values (in ppm) for the following metals:

	ppm
Arsenic	50
Cadmium	20
Chromium	100
Copper	250
Mercury	4
Nickel	200
Lead	100
Antimony	50
Tin	250
Zinc	1 500

- (b) The levels of ionic metal impurities for pigments must not exceed the following values (in ppm) for the following metals

	PPM
Arsenic	250
Cadmium	50
Chromium	100
Mercury	25
Lead	100
Antimony	250
Zinc	1 000

No use of metal complex dyes based on the following metals: arsenic, cadmium, chromium, mercury, nickel, lead, antimony, tin, zinc or copper. Copper is, however, allowed for knitted products.

No use of metal complex pigments based on the following metals: arsenic, cadmium, chromium, mercury, nickel, lead, antimony, tin and zinc. A maximum content of 4,5 % copper is permitted.

No use of dyes which can release or be cleaved to carcinogenic aromatic amines, or are themselves classified as carcinogenic in accordance with Council Directive 67/548/EEC ⁽¹⁾, as last amended by Commission Directive 94/69/EC ⁽²⁾ and Council Directive 88/379/EEC ⁽³⁾, as last amended by Commission Directive 93/18/EEC ⁽⁴⁾.

No use of carriers containing chlorine or other halogens

9. Printing

No chemical products or printing pastes containing more than 5 % VOCs may be used during printing. No additional VOCs allowed.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No 196, 16. 8. 1967, p. 1.
⁽²⁾ OJ No L 381, 31. 12. 1994, p. 1.
⁽³⁾ OJ No L 187, 16. 7. 1988, p. 14
⁽⁴⁾ OJ No L 104, 21. 4. 1993, p. 46

10. Finishing

The amount of free and partly hydrolysable formaldehyde in the final fabric must not exceed 30 ppm in baby products and 75 ppm in other products.

WASTE WATER FROM WET TREATMENT

11. Waste water treatment

Waste water from wet processing must be treated either at the production facility or at the sewage treatment plant. In the case of production facility treatment the following limits for discharges to surface waters must be observed: pH 6,5-9 t° below 30° C (natural conditions permitting).

12. Organics to water

Waste water discharges from wet processing must have a COD of below 25 g/functional unit after treatment.

B. FITNESS FOR USE CRITERIA

1. Mechanical and physical properties

- (a) *Durability of easy care and durable press finishes during washing (only for textile products designated as easy care; 'non-iron; permanent press' or the like)*

Level/limit: Minimum DP3

Dimensional changes

Level/limit: knitwear 6 % length and width (T-shirts)
woven products 5 % warp and weft (bed linen).

2. Colour fastness

- (a) *Washing*

Level/limit: colour change: 3-4
staining. 3-4

For products with both light and dark colours, a supplementary test should be added.

Level/limit the change of appearance should be compared to an unwashed sample.
colour change: 3-4
cross staining. 3-4

- (b) *Perspiration*

Level/limit: colour change and staining. 3-4

- (c) *Wet and dry rubbing*

Level/limit dry rubbing 4 and wet rubbing 2-3

- (d) *Light*

Level/limit: 4.

Products which consist of unbleached and undyed fibres do not have to comply with the colour fastness criteria, but information on deviations in colour fastness must be provided to the consumer.

Appendix

TEST METHODS FOR CRITERIA

A. ECOLOGICAL CRITERIA

Criterion 1

Test methods: US EPA 8081 'Organochlorine pesticides and PCBs as arochlors by gas chromatography: capillary column technique', US EPA 8141 A 'Organophosphorus compounds by gas chromatography: capillary column technique' and US EPA 8151 'Chlorinated herbicides by GC using methylation or pentafluorobenzoylation derivatization: capillary column technique'. Positive results, if any, shall be confirmed according to the US EPA 8270 method 'Semivolatile organic compounds by gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS). Capillary column technology'.

Tests prior to wet treatment on the yarn used for manufacture of the product The content of each plant protection product and harvest-aid chemical listed in Criterion 1 must not exceed 0,05 mg per kg yarn (sensitivity of test method permitting).

Criterion 2

Test method: EPA stationary source sampling methods, 2S A.

VOCs in this context are defined as any organic compound having at 293,15 K a vapour pressure of 0,01 kPa or more, or having a corresponding volatility under the particular conditions of use, and which is used alone or in combination with other agents to dissolve raw materials, products or waste materials, or is used as a cleaning agent to dissolve contaminants, or as a dissolver, dispersion medium, viscosity adjuster, surface tension adjuster, plasticiser or preservative.

Criterion 3

Test method: Direct determination (by AAS or equivalent method) of the total amount of metal in the fibres.

Criterion 4

Test method: GC with Electron Capture Detection. Test on the grey fabric prior to wet treatment and on the final product The contents of pentachlorophenol must not exceed 0,05 mg per kg fibre.

Criterion 5

Test method: OECD 301 A-F readily biodegradability tests.

Criterion 7

Test method: If bleaching agents containing chlorine or chlorine compounds are not used, AOX need not be measured. If chlorine or chlorine compounds are used, AOX to be measured in accordance with ISO 9562.

Criterion 8 (/)

Test method: (in absence of declaration of non-use): DIN 38 409-8-

Criterion 10

Test method: Japanese method 'Law 112'.

Criterion 12

Test method: ISO 6060 Water quality: Determination of the chemical oxygen demand.

B. FITNESS FOR USE CRITERIA

Criterion 1 (a)

Test method: ISO 7768: Appearance of easy care and durable press fabrics after domestic washing and drying.

Criterion 1 (b)

Test method: ISO 5077: Determination of dimensional change in washing and drying. For ISO 5077 (three washes and tumble dryings). The temperature for washing and drying shall be in accordance with the manufacturers instructions.

Criterion 2 (a)

Test method: ISO 105-C06. Colour fastness to domestic and commercial laundering.

In products with both light and dark colours, the standard washing test stated above shall be supplemented with a test with wash of a complete product as specified below.

Test method: Washing according to ISO 6330.

Criterion 2 (b)

Test method: ISO 105-1304. Colour fastness to perspiration.

Criterion 2 (c)

Test method: ISO IOS-X12. Colour fastness to rubbing.

Criterion 2 (d)

Test method: ISO 105-1302. Colour fastness to artificial light. Xenon arc fading lamp test.

Further developments in the EU Eco-labelling Scheme

In the five year period of operation of the EU Eco-labeling Scheme (established by the Council Regulation (EEC) No. 880/92) ecological criteria

for different product groups have been adopted and published, as follows:

Product groups	Published Official Journal (Q1)
Washing: machines	L 198 of 7 August 1993
Dishwashers	L 198 of 7 August 1993
Soil improvers	L 364 of 31 December 1994
Toilet paper	L 364 of 31 December 1994
Paper kitchen rolls	L 364 of 31 December 1994
Laundry, detergents	L 217 of 13 September 1995
Single-ended light bulbs	L 302 of 15 December 1995
Paint and varnishes	L 4 of 6 January 1996
Bed linen and T-shirts	L 116 of 11 May 1996
Double-ended light bulbs	L 128 of 29 May 1996
Washing machines (rev)	L 191 of 1 August 1996
Copying paper	L 192 of 2 August 1996

Criteria under development include footwear, cat-litter, bed mattresses, batteries for consumer goods, floor-cleaning products, sanitary-cleaning products, detergents for dishwashers, shampoos, rubbish bags, personal computers and textile products.

The E.U. Eco-label had been granted by the end of 1996 to seven European manufacturers covering 45 products in the following categories: washing machines, kitchen towels, toilet paper and indoor paints and varnishes.

~ **First five year revision of the EU Eco-label**

The E.U Eco-label Award Scheme is now under revision and a proposal is being presented to the E.U. Council in this regard. The main issues of the revision are the following:

Reduced fees are being considered for manufacturers of developing countries in order to promote their participation in the scheme.

Compatibility with international standards and trade rules will be ensured, particularly with regard to the new ISO Environmental Management Standards (ISO 14000 series and

its relevant standards on ecolabelling and life cycle analyses) and with the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and the new guidelines that will emerge from the WTO Committee on Trade and the Environment. The aim is to ensure full access, non-discrimination and transparency for foreign producers.

It is proposed to set up a European Eco-label Organization (EEO) as a private, international association of the Eco-label Competent Bodies, which should establish and update the eco-label criteria and the corresponding assessment and verification requirements as well as coordinate the activities of the competent bodies.

- Retailers may have the possibility to apply for the eco-label.
- Compatibility and coordination with other eco-label schemes.

The label itself would be altered to give more information to the consumers including the identification of key environmental aspects and the awarding of one, two or three "flowers" according to the levels of performance in those aspects.

Developments in other eco-label schemes

The German eco-label "Blue Angel", in operation since 1977, now covers about 80 product groups. A number of 4 350 products of 1 000 companies bear the label, including 15 % of non-German companies.

The "Canada Environmental Choice" was established in 1988, covers 46 product groups and 750 products.

The "US Green Seal Programme" started in 1989, covers 50 product groups and 234 products.

The "Japanese Eco Mark" was established in 1989 and by 1992 it covered 49 product groups and more than 2 300 labels had been awarded.

The Scandinavian eco-label "Nordic Swan" covering Norway, Sweden, Iceland and Finland, was created in 1989 and includes about 40 product groups, 287 licenses granted and 1 000 products labeled, mainly detergents and paper products.

The Austrian eco-label "Umweltzeichen-Baume", established in 1991, has been granted to 34 products from 23 companies.

The Dutch eco-label "Stitching Milieukeur" was set up in 1992 and has been awarded to 32 products (mainly paper products) from 26 companies.

The French eco-label "NF-Environnement" was established in 1992.

The Spanish eco-label "AENOR - Medio Ambiente" was set up in 1993.

The New Zealand "Environmental Choice New Zealand", established in 1990, is now reviewing the technical specification criteria for its 18 product groups which include batteries (zinc air, carbon zinc, lead acid), recycled plastic products, detergents (laundry, hand and machine dishwashing), lubricating oil, paints, papers (fine, newsprint, sanitary, moulded, macerated, recycled, paperboard) and wool carpets. Environmental Choice N.Z. is inviting comments from interested parties (such as New Zealand's international trading partners) on the new draft specifications which can be consulted through Internet at the TELARC's homepage (<http://www.telarc.govt.nz>), or through hard copies requested from TELARC's Auckland office (TELARC New Zealand, Level One, 630 Great South Road, Greenlane, Auckland 1130,

Private Bag 28901, Remuera, Auckland 1136, New Zealand. Tel 9525 0100, fax 9525 1900. (The closing date for comments is at the end of May 1997).

Other eco-label schemes are operational in Brazil, Croatia, Greece, India, Indonesia, Israel, Luxembourg, People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea (Eco-Mark), Singapore, Sweden (Good Environmental Choice), Taiwan (Province of China), Thailand, USA (Scientific Certification Systems), etc., bringing the total number of schemes worldwide to around 30, a half of which are associated in the Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN) who is planning its second annual meeting in Tokyo, next September, to review such matters as the ISO 14000 series standards, the revised EU Ecolabelling Scheme, trade and harmonization, and the marketing of schemes. Interested persons and institutions may wish to visit the GEN's Internet homepage (<http://www.interchg.ubc.ca/ecolabel/gen.html>).

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