



GEN POSITION ON THE ISO 14024 STANDARD: Type I Environmental Labelling

The Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN) is a non-profit association of 29 third-party "ecolabelling" member organizations from around the world. These organizations set criteria for, certify, and provide a label for use in association with, products and services with lower environmental burdens and impacts than comparable products/services with the same functions. In accordance with its objective to promote and advance ecolabelling internationally, GEN officials represent the interests of ecolabelling in various international fora, and provide information/technical assistance to developing programs. GEN's "Affiliate" members, although not ecolabelling practitioners, are strong allies and supporters of the objectives and activities of the network.

"Type I environmental labelling" is defined by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in the "ISO 14024:1999 Environmental labels and declarations – Type 1 environmental labelling – Principles and procedures" Guidance Standard as:

"A voluntary, multiple-criteria based, third party program that awards a license which authorizes the use of environmental labels on products indicating overall environmental preferability of a product within a particular product category based on life cycle considerations."

ISO recognizes GEN as an "A" External Liaison Organization in its standard development process. Throughout ISO Standard development processes, GEN officials have actively participated and provided

useful and substantial input. Simultaneously, many individual GEN member officials have served as technical experts and key participants on their respective national ISO delegations.

The ISO 14024 Guidance Standard was developed with the intention of being pertinent to existing and planned ecolabelling systems. GEN recognizes the Principles contained in the Standard as a "code of good practice" to guide ecolabelling program designers, developers, managers and operators. In fact, a major condition of GEN Full membership is that a representative of an ecolabelling organization must affirm that his/her organization:

"...conforms to the GEN conditions of membership set forth in the GEN By-Laws..., and is striving to comply with the guiding principles outlined in International Organization for Standardization (ISO) voluntary standard ISO 14024..."

To validate this affirmation, GEN established an internal peer review process, GENICES (GEN Internationally Coordinated Ecolabelling System) in 2011. GENICES also serves to enhance cooperation between members on criteria development, mutual recognition, and knowledge exchange, especially when programs operate in different regions of the world. The two step peer review process begins with a written application that is then evaluated and followed by a site assessment. The GEN designated assessors document findings and recommendations for the applicant organization which addresses key aspects of operating a Type I ecolabelling program as described in ISO 14024, including elements such as criteria development, product categories, compliance and verification, etc. A full description of GENICES is found in the GENICES Member Guide.



While GEN officials see considerable value in the guidance provided by the ISO 14024 Principles, they also place great value on the GEN's own "Conditions of Membership", and the "Code of Good Practice" contained in the World Trade Organization's (WTO's) Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement. Broadly speaking, ecolabelling practitioners are striving to design, manage and operate systems and programs in ways that are recognized as legitimate, credible, practical, and appropriate by stakeholders and other observers. With the routine review of the Standard underway, the GEN Board Chair has represented GEN member interests as convener of the working group (WG) within TC 207 SC 3 since 2014.