

October 2024

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change notifies Ecomark Rules, 2024

On September 26, 2024, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (“**MoEFCC**”) notified the Ecomark Rules 2024 (“**Ecomark Rules**”). This initiative is part of a broader effort to promote environmentally friendly products that minimize adverse environmental impacts. The Ecomark Rules align with the principles of ‘lifestyle for environment’, aiming to foster lower energy consumption, resource efficiency, and a circular economy while preventing misleading claims regarding the environmental attributes of products.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the Ecomark Rules is to encourage the production and consumption of eco-friendly products. By implementing the Ecomark Rules, the Government seeks to:

1. empower consumers to make informed purchasing decisions based on clear environmental criteria;
2. encourage manufacturers to transition to production of environmentally friendly products leading to promotion of green industries;
3. establish a standardised eco-labeling system that enhances transparency in product environmental claims;

Salient features

1. **Eligibility criteria:** To be granted an ecomark under the Ecomark Rules, products must have a licence or certificate from the Bureau of Indian Standards and meet specific environmental standards, including:
 - a) reduction of pollution through waste minimisation;
 - b) recyclability or use of recycled materials;
 - c) decrease in reliance on non-renewable resources; and
 - d) avoidance of environmentally harmful materials;
2. **Application and verification procedure:** The procedure for granting Ecomark involves several key steps:
 - a) applicants must submit their application using form 1 to the Central Pollution Control Board (“**CPCB**”), which will verify compliance with the necessary conditions either directly or through a registered verifier (entities registered under the Ecomark Rules, having qualification and experience in the field of environment and matters relating to ecomark);

- b) following verification, a report must be prepared within 60 (sixty) days;
 - c) if CPCB is satisfied with the findings, it will grant ecomark, which will be valid for 3 (three) years or until any changes in the criteria occur; and
 - d) renewal applications can be submitted upon expiry, adhering to the same procedures.
3. **Monitoring and compliance:** Ecomark holders are required to submit annual reports by May 31 each year. CPCB has the authority to suspend or revoke certifications if false information is provided.
 4. **Cancellation of ecomark:** If CPCB determines that an Ecomark holder has provided false information or intentionally concealed required information, it may suspend or cancel the ecomark after allowing the holder an opportunity to present their case.
 5. **Steering committee:** A steering committee will oversee implementation, while a technical committee will assist in developing criteria and verification processes. Both committees will include representatives from various government ministries and industry experts.
 6. **Web portal:** As per the Ecomark Rules, CPCB will create a web portal for ecomark applications, annual report submissions by holders, verifiers, and registered agencies, and for managing verifier registrations. Ecomark holders must submit annual reports online by May 31 for the period from April 1 of the previous year to March 31 of the current year. CPCB will also publish information on the portal, including details of ecomark holders and their products, lists of certified products, justification reports, research findings on environmental impacts, and benefits of ecomark-certified products.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Ecomark Rules represent a significant step towards promoting environmentally friendly products in India. By establishing clear criteria for certification, the rules not only empower consumers to make informed choices but also encourage manufacturers to adopt sustainable practices. With the implementation of a dedicated web portal for applications and reporting, along with rigorous compliance mechanisms, the ecomark framework aims to enhance transparency and accountability in eco-labeling. For businesses, understanding and complying with these regulations will be essential for leveraging the benefits of ecomark certification and meeting the growing consumer demand for green products.

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- Legislative, Regulatory and Policy reforms;
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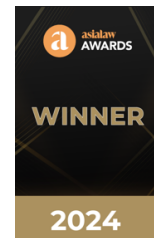


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