Energy and Water Efficiency Labeling in China

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Introduction
Integral to China’s national policies has been and continues to be the conservation and efficient use of energy. Initiated in 1993, the China Environmental Label included energy conservation as one of its evaluation requirements. Although a voluntary initiative, this Label marked the start of Energy Labeling in China.

In 1997, the Energy Conservation Law was published which established the energy efficiency certification and labeling scheme. In November 1998, China officially rolled out the certification scheme and the China Energy Label.

In 2005, the National “11th Five Year Plan” reinforced the importance of establishing energy conservation and efficiency schemes. This was reinforced in the recent National “13th Five Year Plan” (2015-2020) which lays down enhanced policies on energy conservation and efficiency and once again emphasizes the importance of the labeling system to encourage the development and use of energy efficient products.

This White Paper provides an overview of both mandatory and voluntary energy, as well as water efficiency, labels currently applicable in China and the products to which they apply. The key information applicable to the Energy Labels is also set out in a Quick Guide Reference Table contained in the Annex for ease of review.

China Energy Label

Purpose: Launched in November 1998, the China Energy Label (CEL) is a mandatory energy efficiency label aimed at strengthening energy conservation management and improving energy efficiency of products. It is compulsory for products listed in the Catalogue of Products Subject to Energy Efficiency Label.

Scope: Products listed in the Catalogue of Products subject to Energy Efficiency Label: household refrigerators, room air conditioners, washing machines, unit air conditioners, self-ballasted lamp
for general use, high pressure sodium lamps, small and medium three-phase asynchronous motors, water chillers, domestic gas instantaneous water heaters and gas fired heating and hot water combi-boilers; variable speed room air conditioners, multi-split air conditioning (heat pump) system, electrical storage water heaters, household induction cookers, computer monitors, copiers, printers and fax machines, automatic rice cookers, electric fans, AC contactors, displacement air compressor, power transformers, fan systems, flat screen televisions, household and similar microwave ovens, digital television adaptors (set-top boxes), refrigerated display cabinets with remote condensing units, domestic solar water heating systems, microcomputers, range hoods, heat pump water heaters, domestic gas cooking appliances, commercial gas cooking appliances, water-source (ground-source) heat pumps, lithium bromide absorption chillers, non-directional self-ballasted LED-lamps for general lighting services, and projectors.

Legal basis:
- Energy Conservation Law, Presidential Order No. 77, 1997
- China Energy Conservation Product Certification Management Regulations, 1999
- Catalogue of Products Subject to Energy Efficiency Labeling, Announcement No. 14, 2016
- National mandatory GB standards (available on the Standardization Administration of China website)

China Environmental Label

Purpose: Initiated in 1993, the Environmental Label is a voluntary “testifying label” which indicates that the products meet specific requirements for quality and environmental protection. Compared to other products, the Environmental Labeling products are regarded as superior in terms of safety and energy conservation. In 2006, according to the Opinion of the Implementing of Governmental Procurement of Environmental Labeling Products, government institutions and organizations are required to purchase and use products bearing the China Environmental Label.
**Scope:** China Environmental Labeling Type I Product Certification covers 98 product categories including electrical and electronic equipment, household appliances, construction products, lighting equipment, textile products, batteries, toys, etc. Detailed products list and certification standards are available on the Ministry of Environmental Protection website.

**Legal Basis:**
- Notice on Implementing Environmental Labeling Scheme in China, No. 176, 1993
- In 2006, Ministry of Finance and MEP jointly issued “Opinion of the Implementing of Governmental Procurement of environmental labeling Products”.
- In 2008, MEP issued “Administrative Measures on use of China Environmental label

**Energy Efficiency Star**

**Purpose:** Initiated on 21 July 2012, the “Energy Efficiency Star” program is voluntary and aims to help the public to choose energy efficient products which are more technologically advanced and which are more environmentally friendly.

**Scope:** The “Energy Efficiency Star” constitutes of two parts: consumer products and industrial equipment. The consumer products covered include: washing machines, water heaters (excluding air-sourced heat pump water heaters), flat screen TVs, room air-conditioners, and household refrigerators. The List of Energy Efficiency Star Products is updated every year.

**Legal base:**
- “Energy Efficiency Star” Certified Products List, Announcement No. 49, 2017
Purpose: The Top Runner Program, initiated in December 2014, is based on the energy efficiency labeling system but is voluntary for now as it is still in the trial stage. The Implementation Plan states that this system will be incorporated into the energy labeling system and become compulsory in the future.

Scope: It applies to products that already meet the requirements for the energy label. The products currently covered by the Top Runner program are: variable speed room air conditioners, household refrigerators, washing machines, flat panel televisions, and lighting products. It will gradually be extended to office equipment, industrial equipment, and transportation tools.

Legal basis:
- Energy Efficiency “Top Runner” System Implementation Plan, Notice No. 3001, 2014
- Top Runner Program for Energy Efficiency for Household Refrigerators, Implementation Rules, Notice No. 2071, 2017
- Top Runner Program for Energy Efficiency for Electric Washing Machines, Implementation Rules, Notice No. 2071, 2017
- Top Runner Program for Energy Efficiency for Lighting Products, Implementation Rules, Notice No. 2071, 2017
- Top Runner Program for Energy Efficiency of Flat Panel Televisions, Implementation Rules, Notice No. 2071, 2017
- Top Runner Program for Energy Efficiency for Variable Speed Room Air Conditioners, Implementation Rules, Notice No. 2071, 2017
China Green Product

_Purpose:_ On 7 December 2016, the State established the Green Products Standards, Certification and Labeling System which is a voluntary system aiming to integrate energy efficient, water efficient, low-carbon, recycled and organic products into the green products system. By 2020, the State will formulate a unified product catalogue and develop standards and labeling requirements to ensure the enforcement of the green product system.

_Scope:_ Products listed in the Catalogue of Green Product Labeling and Certification which will be published by AQSIQ. The first batch of 13 products evaluation rules have been submitted to AQSIQ for approval.

_Legal basis:_
- State Council Opinion on Establishing Green Products Standards, Certification and Labeling System
- Administrative Measures on Green Product Labeling and Certification
- GB/T 33761-2017 General Principles for Green Product Assessment

China Water Efficiency Label

_Purpose:_ On 13 September 2017, the Chinese National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) published Order No. 6 setting out Administrative Measures on the Water Efficiency Label to establish a water efficiency labeling system. The Chinese Water Efficiency Label is a voluntary mark of conformity that operates by way of company self-declaration.
Scope: Products listed in the Catalogue of Products Subject to Water Efficiency Label shall bear a Water Efficiency Label on the product or the product packaging. The product instruction/manual shall also contain information on the Water Efficiency Label. Network traders and sellers shall display the Label on the main product information displaying website. The Catalogue is not yet published.

Legal basis:
- Administrative Measures on Water Efficiency Labeling, Order No. 6, 2017

China Water Efficiency “Top Runner” Label

Purpose: The Water Efficiency “Top Runner” Label is a voluntary initiative based on the Water Efficiency Label and aims to further promote high water efficiency products.

Scope: It applies to products using water including toilets, water nozzles, washing machines, water purifiers, etc. The Catalogue of Water Efficiency “Top Runner” Products will be published in the near future and updated every two years.

Legal basis:

CQC Energy Conservation Label

Purpose: The CQC Energy Conservation Labeling scheme is one of the voluntary certification and labeling programs launched by the CQC and aims to demonstrate that the products meet energy or water conservation requirements.
**Scope:** Energy conservation labeling products covered include electrical and electronic products, office equipment, lighting equipment, electromechanical products, electric transmission and transformation equipment; water conservation labeling products include products used for industrial water treatment, city and urban water usage, agriculture, and other water utilization. A full list of products is available on the China Quality Certification Centre website.

**Legal basis:**
- Administrative Measures on Energy Conservation Products Certification
- Administrative Measures on CQC Marks

**Conclusion**

The aim of this White Paper has been to provide an overview of both mandatory and voluntary energy and water efficiency labels currently applicable in China as well as the products to which they apply.

The paper focused on energy labels for consumer products. China has also implemented several energy efficient product promotion schemes such as the “Project of Energy Saving Products Benefiting the People”, the “High Efficiency Lighting Products Promotion Program”, and the “Government Procurement of Energy-saving Products”.

In addition, the National “13th Five Year Plan” (2015-2020) lays down more policies on energy conservation and efficiency and once again emphasizes the importance of the labeling system with particular reference to the water efficiency label and green products label.

This paper demonstrates that there have been clear improvements in energy efficiency with the introduction of several legislative measures by the Chinese authorities. This is largely a result of the growing conviction by the Chinese authorities that one of the most efficient ways of reducing the impact of climate change is by implementing cost-effective energy efficiency policies.
## Annex

### Table - Quick Guide Reference Energy Labels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Mandatory/ Voluntary</th>
<th>Responsible Authority</th>
<th>Applicants</th>
<th>Products covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China Energy Label</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>MIIT; AQSIQ; CQC</td>
<td>Manufacturers</td>
<td>Catalogue of Products Subject to Energy Efficiency Labeling, Announcement No. 14, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China Environmental Labeling</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP); Environmental Certification Center of MEP</td>
<td>All enterprises</td>
<td>98 products including electrical and electronic equipment, household appliances, construction products, lighting equipment, textile products, batteries, toys, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Runner</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>MIIT</td>
<td>Manufacturers</td>
<td>Variable speed room air conditioners, household refrigerators, washing machines, flat panel televisions, and lighting products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Efficiency Star</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>MIIT</td>
<td>All enterprises</td>
<td>Industrial equipment and consumer products which include washing machine, water heater (excluding air-sourced heat pump water heater), flat screen TV, room air-conditioner, and household refrigerators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China Green Product</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>AQSIQ; CQC</td>
<td>Manufacturers Importers Importers Sellers</td>
<td>Catalogue of Green Products Labeling and Certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China Water Efficiency Label</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>NDRC; Ministry of Water Resource; AQSIQ; CNCA</td>
<td>Manufacturers Importers</td>
<td>Catalogue of Products Subject to Water Efficiency Label (not published yet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Efficiency “Top Runner” Label</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>NDRC; Ministry of Water Resource; Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development; AQSIQ</td>
<td>Manufacturers</td>
<td>Products using water including toilet, water nozzle, washing machine, water purifier, etc; The Catalogue of Water Efficiency “Top Runner” Products (not published yet)</td>
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<td>CQC Energy Conservation labeling</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Importers</td>
<td>Sellers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**About the Author:**

Amy Chen is a Regulatory Compliance Specialist with Compliance & Risks, specializing in environmental law for China and Taiwan. She keeps clients up to date on areas including REACH, RoHS, WEEE, and energy labelling. Amy is a native Chinese speaker and has a Master of International Commercial Laws from the University of Limerick, and a Bachelor of Law degree from University College Cork.
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