



## **TCO Certified: Backgrounder**

### **The TCO Certified label –Technology Designed for Usability and the Environment.**

Presenting TCO Certified – a new way to look at electronics - designed for You and the Planet.

TCO Certified is the label for electronics that ensures the product is designed for the environment AND usability.

For over 20 years, TCO Development has been at the forefront of environmental and user-centered design for computer equipment. Our philosophy is that every computer user should be offered product choices that are environmentally responsible and also designed for ease of use, ergonomic comfort as well as the high performance we expect. TCO Development is excited to launch a new generation certification program that leads the environmental challenge as never before, while offering unprecedented performance and design for user comfort. We believe high performance and sustainable design can go hand in hand.

### **TCO Certified – Go Beyond Green**

Buying computers and other electronics can be confusing enough. Buyers want a “green” product – and one which performs to your expectations. This combination of design attributes is what makes the TCO label unique. TCO Certified lets you Go Beyond Green.

TCO Development Supports and drives the development of technologies that are designed for performance and productivity. Each of our requirements for usability is carefully constructed, based on human factors research and close collaboration with our industry partners, independent researchers and the user community.

### **Why Usability AND Environment?**

In the US alone, E-waste amounts to more than 2 million tons per year<sup>1</sup>. Without correct end-of-life handling, this waste exposes the natural environment and humans to a number of toxic substances such as lead, mercury, cadmium and other hazardous materials. Efforts to properly handle electronics at end of life are increasing, and legislation is progressively limiting the use of hazardous materials in electronics. However, even with



legislation that supports sustainable practices, products must be designed in a way that makes it intuitive for people to use them for maximum productivity.

By including design for usability in TCO Certified, products are designed with human comfort and work patterns in mind and are less likely to prematurely enter the waste stream.

### **Why a new Program, Why now?**

The time is right for computer users to demand environmentally preferable products. Computer users want their products to be Green. In a recent study, 89 percent of respondents indicated they would like their next electronics purchase to be more energy efficient. 53 percent responded that they would be prepared to pay a higher price for a product that was more environmentally friendly<sup>ii</sup>. At the same time, we still demand top performance from those products. At TCO Development we believe you don't have to compromise. By making IT products as user friendly as possible, we potentially delay the unnecessary entry of toxic E-waste into the environment. We also ensure that products carrying our label can more easily be handled responsibly at end-of-life.

With so many green claims on the market, there is a need for manufacturers, retailers and media to inform consumers and corporate purchasers about the environmental attributes of their products. Verifiable eco-labels such as *TCO Certified* are an effective and easy to understand tool that allows users to accurately compare products and determine which products are tested to an environmental profile.

### **First Certified products – TCO Displays**

The first products to meet the new TCO Certified standard are computer displays, with the new standard TCO Displays 5.0. Computer displays have long been the cornerstone of the TCO program and this new generation standard brings with it a new level of environmental criteria. Not only does the new standard deal with the environmental impact of materials and product content, it also takes into account impact on the climate as well as a commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility by all companies certifying to the TCO standard. Products certified to TCO Displays are also tested to some of the highest standards for image performance, color rendering and visual ergonomics.

### **The design of the TCO-label communicates usability and environment**

The new TCO Certified concept offers an easy to communicate, simple tool, making it simple for buyers to recognize the TCO label. The idea behind the design of the label is



that it should communicate the two pillars of TCO Certified; environment and usability. The shape of the label is like an eye – as for the usability features such as visual ergonomics. The color of the label is green – as for environment. The shape can also look like a green leaf, also connected to the environmental aspects of the certification program.

The shape of an eye can also be seen as the strict testing procedure that is connected with the TCO certification process; only the products that meet the requirements will pass the “eye of a needle”.

### **Where can I find TCO Certified Products?**

The TCO label can be found on brand name electronics all around the world. World leading brands have chosen the TCO label for several of their high performing products as a sign of superior environmental features and design. Here are some practical ways to ensure your product is TCO Certified.

1. Check our searchable database – [www.tcodevelopment.com](http://www.tcodevelopment.com). Here you can search by product type, brand, size etc
2. Ask your product vendor and specify you would like a TCO certified product.
3. Brand sites – product information sites typically cite TCO in product specs if it carries the TCO label. TCO is also a common search term.

### **The TCO Process - An International collaboration of Stakeholders**

A cornerstone of the TCO process is our international network of stakeholders, who contribute to the content of TCO Certified. Because we are about you – the user- each step of putting a standard together is based on feedback from users and experts from around the world in the fields of environment, human factors, technology innovation and other fields that impact the kinds of products eligible to be TCO Certified.

TCO Certified is the result of an ongoing collaboration with partners around the world to ensure products carrying this label signify some of the highest performing products on the market, and that they are designed for you and the planet. This collaborative process continues as new technologies and applications evolve. We are proud to be associated with many of the world’s leading IT and Communications brands in our ongoing standards development.



## **TCO Certified and Climate Change**

Computer usage has a significant impact on climate change, and we advise users to look at their usage patterns in order to avoid unnecessary idling time from their PCs. We all know that excess energy usage is costly and contributes to the global climate challenge we now face. We believe that by making technology better and more user-friendly, we can also contribute to a more sustainable environment where technology still plays a pivotal part.

The IT industry is increasingly recognized for its role in the global climate change debate. It is uniquely positioned to create solutions both within the industry and in the wider marketplace.

Representing 2% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, on a par with the airline industry, there is a significant opportunity to reduce the environmental impact of IT through optimized use of existing technologies. Further, the IT industry can develop technologies that help business & society communicate and prosper without adverse environmental consequences.

Firstly, technological development that emphasises eco-efficient design and operation will decrease the overall energy consumption of equipment used both in the work place and in the home environment. A typical desktop consumes 65% more energy than necessary, and simple user behavioural change can drastically reduce subsequent emissions without compromising on performance and economic value creation. Secondly, IT infrastructure combined with ICT videoconferencing and project management platforms facilitate mobile & flexible work arrangements that help to reduce work specific travel. Thirdly, de-materialization, such as electronic invoicing, can reduce the carbon footprint while leading to additional benefits such as operational efficiency and cost reduction.

TCO Certified prioritizes energy efficiency in all its standards. Equipment that meets superior energy efficiency standards like those in TCO Certified is one powerful step in the move toward reducing the 2% global CO<sub>2</sub> contribution of the IT industry.

### **The label to trust**

TCO Certified products fulfill ALL the criteria in its relevant product standard – Computer Displays, Desktop / Notebook PCs, Phone Headsets. There are some labels on the market that allow the manufacturer to pick and choose which environmental features to include. This makes it difficult for users to compare products and also can be misleading as an environmental feature in one area can actually cause more harm in another. The TCO label clears up any confusion – the product meets all the criteria.



Every product model certified by TCO has also gone through rigorous testing by both the manufacturer and an independent, accredited laboratory to verify the product meets the standard. TCO also carries out regular after market checks to further ensure quality control.

### **About TCO Development**

TCO's objective is to provide users of IT equipment with high performance products that have a minimal impact on the natural environment. Since 1992 the TCO certification program has had a significant influence on improved image quality and ergonomics for displays, as well as the reduction of electromagnetic emissions from ICT products. Energy Efficiency and reduced usage of hazardous substances are also key aspects of the TCO Certification. Products covered by the TCO standards are notebook and desktop PCs, displays and phone headsets. TCO Development is headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden, with regional presence in Asia, North America and Central Europe

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<sup>i</sup> U.S. EPA

<sup>ii</sup> Consumer Electronics Association – report. Going Green: An Examination of the Green Trend and What it Means to Consumers and the CE Industry, Dec 2008.