

Guidance for purchasers

Equivalent proof of compliance with TCO Certified



Make the sustainable choice easy with TCO Certified



Global sustainability certification for IT products

TCO Certified is the leading sustainability certification for IT products, driving social and environmental sustainability throughout the IT product life cycle.



Comprehensive, up to date criteria

A new generation of TCO Certified is launched every three years, to meet the most pressing sustainability challenges and drive faster change.



Independent verification of compliance

Compliance is independently verified, both pre and post certification. TCO Certified also includes a system for dealing with identified instances of non-compliance.



About this document

TCO Certified offers organizations a straightforward way to manage sustainability impacts of the IT products they buy and use. TCO Certified includes comprehensive, up-to-date criteria and independent verification of criteria compliance. This combination is critical for your ability to measure progress, avoid greenwash, and use the certification with confidence.

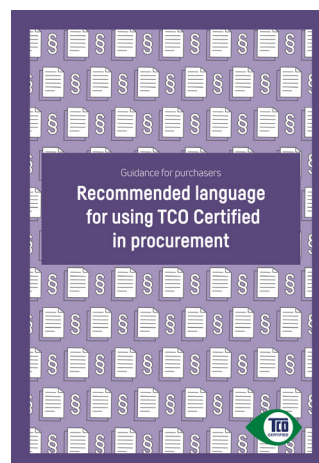
When specifying TCO Certified, purchasing authorities in some regions — particularly in the European Union — may be required to accept equivalent proof of compliance with the certification's criteria. This guide outlines how to ask for the proof that is needed for a non-certified product model to be considered equivalent to a product certified according to TCO Certified.

Need more guidance?



Guide to sustainable IT purchasing

Practical, step-by-step guide to sustainable IT procurement.



Recommended language for using TCO Certified

Sample language for including TCO Certified in tenders and policies.

TCO Certified makes sustainable procurement easier

TCO Certified is a complete and comprehensive tool for purchasing more sustainable IT products. Criteria cover both environmental and social responsibility. Each year, independent verification organizations specializing in IT products, social responsibility or other sustainability issues spend more than 20,000 hours on audits, tests and assessments to verify that IT products and their manufacturing facilities comply with the criteria in TCO Certified.

Specifying TCO Certified in your IT purchasing specifications is the best way to make sure you receive products that are verified to meet all the sustainability criteria in TCO Certified. Remember to ask your vendor for product certificates verifying that all product models delivered during the contract period are certified according to TCO Certified.

Equivalent proof – guidance for IT procurement

When specifying an ecolabel by name, some purchasing authorities, especially in the EU, may be required to accept equivalent means of proof with the same objective criteria. To date, there are no official standards for determining the equivalence between different methods of proof submitted by bidders.

Providing equivalent proof with TCO Certified is a challenging and comprehensive process. This is because verifying environmental and supply chain sustainability in IT product supply chains is incredibly complex work that requires specialist expertise and access to industry. The verification system included in TCO Certified builds on such expertise and access, and is designed to ensure accuracy, measure sustainability progress and provide the necessary reassurance to purchasers who use TCO Certified.

For a non-certified product to be considered equivalent to a certified product, the equivalent proof listed below should be presented by the supplier, and assessed by an independent verifier for accuracy.

NOTE: This is a summary only. For full criteria and verification details, please consult the criteria document for the product category you are interested in.

Criteria areas in TCO Certified and proof of compliance

All verification reports must be issued by a verifier accredited in accordance with ISO 17021 (social criteria) or ISO 17025.

Socially responsible manufacturing

(for all final assembly factories producing certified products)

Supply chain responsibility	A verification report showing: The most recent version of the brand owner's code of conduct, which must be considered consistent with the TCO Certified criterion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on the routines of how management and workers have been informed about the brand owner's code of conduct. • A completed and signed brand owner form covering one or all products. • Name and address of all final assembly factories manufacturing the product. • For each final assembly factory of the certified product: The most recent independent audit and a CAP for each non-conformity.
Supply chain transparency	A verification report showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A completed and signed self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ) consistent with that published by TCO Development.
Anti-corruption management system	A verification report showing: A completed self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ) showing processes and internal routines aligning with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ICC Rules on Combating Corruption article 10 points a-p. - ICC Guidelines on Whistleblowing.
Responsibly sourced minerals	A verification report showing: (Using an established conflict minerals reporting template as part of the brand owner's due diligence process.) A public list of smelters and refiners on the brand owner website is considered verification that the brand owner has identified the list through using a conflict minerals reporting template. Proof of brand owner participation or membership in one of the following that are considered examples of initiatives that go beyond 3TG or are global: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Partnership of Responsible Minerals (EPRM) • Responsible Minerals Initiative (RMI) • Responsible Cobalt Initiative (RCI) • Other initiatives not listed above, but that are verified to be a multi-company program that works to support responsible sourcing programs for conflict minerals and other risk minerals.

Process chemicals	A verification report showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A certificate or audit report for every final assembly factory manufacturing the product(s) to prove conformity with a structured health and safety management system (OHSAS 18001, ISO 45001, SA8000, RBA VAP, BSCI). • A completed process chemical data template, consistent with that published by the Clean Electronics Production Network (CEPN) for every final assembly factory manufacturing supplied products.
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Environmentally responsible manufacturing

Environmental management system	A verification report showing: A copy of a valid ISO 14001 certificate or EMAS registration for every final assembly factory where the product is manufactured.
Energy efficiency indicators	A verification report showing: Factory report showing energy consumption in the final assembly factory.

User health and safety

(criteria are specific to each product category)

Electrical safety, emissions, acoustic noise, keyboard design, etc.	A verification report showing: Valid CB certificate or a national certificate from a CB member (NCB) for the product showing electrical safety.
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Product Performance

(criteria are specific to each product category)

Product energy efficiency	A verification report showing: A test report(s) showing that the energy efficiency criterion for the product category, as specified in TCO Certified, is fulfilled.
Ergonomic design (image quality, keyboard, adjustability, etc.)	A verification report showing: Test reports showing that product specific criteria, as specified in TCO Certified, are fulfilled.

Product lifetime extension

(criteria are specific to each product category)

Product warranty	A verification report showing: Product warranty for a minimum of one year.
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Replaceable components	A verification report showing: A link to the service manual on the brand owner website or a pdf of the material that will be published there during the validity of the contract. Availability of critical replaceable components.
Standardized connectors	A verification report showing: The device has at least one USB-type C connector that is backwards compatible with USB 2.0.
Product durability	A verification report showing: The product meets the standard MIL-STD-810G w CHANGE1 or IEC 60068-2.
Battery longevity	A verification report showing: Minimum battery cycles, according to criteria for specific product category.
Battery replaceability	A verification report, and link to replacement instructions: A link to instructions on the brand owner website or a pdf of the material that will be published there during the validity of the contract.
Secure data removal from products	Verification report showing that either of the options below are available A. pre-installed on the product before it is shipped. B. software available for download on brand website, free of charge. C. direct link to an external website where the software is available for download, free of charge.

Reduction of hazardous substances

Heavy metals	A verification report showing: Product do not contain cadmium, mercury, lead or hexavalent chromium.
Halogens	A verification report showing: Plastic parts more than 25g do not contain flame retardants or plasticizers with halogenated substances. Product must not contain PBB, PBDE or HBCDD.
Non-halogenated substances	A verification report showing: A copy of the full certified assessment report or a certificate/summary with remote access to the full report issued by a GreenScreen® licensed profiler.
Plasticizers	A verification report showing: A copy of the full certified assessment report or a certificate/summary with remote access to the full report issued by a GreenScreen® licensed profiler.
Hazardous substances in product packaging	A verification report showing: Packaging materials do not contain lead, cadmium, mercury or hexavalent chromium. Plastics do not contain organically bound halogens.

Material recovery

Material coding of plastics	A verification report showing: Plastic parts over 25g must be material coded in accordance with ISO 11469 and ISO 1043-1, -2, -3, -4.
Product packaging	A verification report showing: Non-reusable packaging over 25g must be separable into single material types without the use of special tools.
Take-back system	A verification report showing: Brand owner or representative offers product take-back in accordance with at least one of the following: Product is sold only in markets where WEEE legislation applies. Worldwide product take-back. An additional market where WEEE does not apply.

Do you want to know more about how to use TCO Certified?

Contact our dedicated purchaser support team. Our support is free of charge and focused on helping you make a more sustainable choice easier.

Contact a team member



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Find certified products

Around 3,500 IT product models from 25+ global brands are already certified according to TCO Certified. Find them at our Product Finder at tcocertified.com.



TCO Certified is the world-leading sustainability certification for IT products. Our comprehensive criteria are designed to drive social and environmental responsibility throughout the product life cycle. Covering 11 product categories including computers, mobile devices, display products and data center products, compliance is independently verified, both pre and post certification.

Join us in driving progress toward sustainable IT products.

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