

News story

International standards for eco-smart packaging

Environmental concerns can now be taken into account at the design stage of packaging with the advent of new global standards published by the International Standardization Organization (ISO).

Packaging should be functional, sometimes durable, transportable and most often attractive to the buyer. Thanks to these new standards, ISO 18601 to 18606, it can now also respect the environment. All aspects involved in the design of packaging are accommodated within the standards, from the materials used to the potential for reuse and ultimately recycling.

“Developing environmentally sustainable packaging solutions is considered by many to be essential but doing so involves a number of complex challenges,” said Jongkyoung Kim, Korean Agency for Technology and Standards (KATS). “These include competition, the impact on the supply chain and the effects of national regulations. They must, however, be addressed and within ISO we have done exactly that.

“These new standards introduce globally applicable guidelines, that will minimize the environmental impact of packaging at the same time as facilitating free-trade.”

Every organization that packages its goods, from the electronics to the food industry, can now use the same internationally recognized criteria regardless of the location of production.”

With the standards come a number of key benefits:

- The potential for cross-border barriers to trade are reduced as nations are less likely to develop their own regulations
- The risk of disputes resulting from a variety of national laws and regulations is reduced
- Common concepts and definitions, applicable internationally, have been introduced
- For developing countries these standards provide a crucial template that can be built upon to define national regulations
- For developed countries the standards support the simplification of the supply chain across international borders
- Companies wishing to place their environmental responsibility at the heart of the business can now demand suppliers adhere to the internationally recognized standards



Any organization wanting to know more should contact their National Standardization Organization, which can be found at <http://www.iso.org> or the secretary of the project Mrs. Sara Norman at +46 8 55 55 22 84 sara.norman@sis.se.