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Panel on Environmental Affairs

Meeting on 19 July 2021

**Updated background brief on
Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme
prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat**

Purpose

This paper provides updated background information on the Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme ("MEELS"). It also gives a brief account of the major views and concerns expressed by Members when related issues were discussed by the relevant committees of the Legislative Council in recent years.

Background

2. To promote public awareness of energy saving and the choice of energy-efficient products, the Government introduced MEELS in 2008 through enactment of the Energy Efficiency (Labelling of Products) Ordinance (Cap. 598) ("the Ordinance"). Under the scheme, energy labels are required to be shown on prescribed products for supply in Hong Kong to inform consumers of the products' energy efficiency performance.¹

3. MEELS is being implemented in phases as summarized in **Appendix I**. MEELS currently covers eight types of household electrical appliances (**Appendix II**), which account for about 70% of the annual residential electricity consumption in Hong Kong.

¹ Energy labels classify prescribed products of the same types into five grades, with Grade 1 being the most energy-efficient and Grade 5 the least.

4. The Code of Practice on Energy Labelling of Products issued by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department ("EMSD") under section 42 of the Ordinance provides practical guidance and technical details to the trades about the relevant test standards, calculation methods and determination of energy efficiency grading levels of prescribed products, in accordance with which the energy efficiency performance of the product models are tested and assessed.²

Proposed fourth phase of the Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme

5. In March 2021, EMSD launched a three-month public consultation on the proposal of implementing the fourth phase of MEELS to extend its coverage to three additional types of products, namely light-emitting diode lamps (lamp wattage up to 60 W), gas cookers (power not exceeding 7 kW for each burner) and gas instantaneous water heaters (power not exceeding 70 kW).

Major views and concerns expressed by Members

6. The Panel on Environmental Affairs ("EA Panel") discussed the proposal of implementing the third phase of MEELS in January 2016. The Subcommittee on Energy Efficiency (Labelling of Products) Ordinance (Amendment of Schedule 1) Order 2017 was formed to study the related subsidiary legislation. Members' major views and concerns are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Product coverage

7. Members asked about the Administration's plan to include more products, particularly office equipment such as photocopiers and computers, in the subsequent phases of MEELS. Some Members suggested the Administration develop energy performance requirements and testing standards for potential products.

8. The Administration advised that the coverage of MEELS after the implementation of the third phase (accounting for about 70% of the annual residential electricity consumption in Hong Kong) compared favourably with that of similar schemes in other advance economies. When considering the inclusion of additional types of products into MEELS, the Administration would take into account factors including overseas practices, availability of test standards and testing laboratories, energy consumption and energy saving

² According to the Government, the test standards are in line with international standards, including those issued by the International Electrotechnical Commission and International Organization for Standardization.

potential of the products, local market conditions (e.g. market penetration rates of potential products), etc. The availability of internationally-accepted test standards was important for ensuring a level playing field for manufacturers and importers of prescribed products, and facilitating the introduction of new energy-efficient products into the local market.

Monitoring compliance and enforcement

9. Members asked about the mechanism to monitor compliance with MEELS's requirements, and enforce against non-compliance if the prescribed products could be purchased through online shops, as the sellers concerned might be located outside Hong Kong.

10. The Administration explained that EMSD regularly conducted shop inspections and selected samples of listed models for testing by independent accredited laboratories to check whether the prescribed products conformed with the energy efficiency information submitted to EMSD, and whether there was any unauthorized use of energy labels. EMSD also collaborated with the Consumer Council in conducting sample tests of prescribed products. If a listed model was found not conforming with the information submitted to EMSD, its reference number would be removed from the record of listed models and the model would not be allowed to be supplied in Hong Kong. In view of the growing popularity of online shopping, the Administration had stepped up monitoring of the supply of prescribed products through online channels. The Administration also maintained liaison with the relevant authorities of the Mainland and overseas jurisdictions for taking cross-boundary enforcement actions.

Tightening of energy efficiency grading standards

11. Members noted that according to the results of a test conducted by the Consumer Council in May 2017, the electricity consumption of 14 models of split-type inverter air conditioners could vary by up to 20%, even though all models met the requirements of Grade 1 rating in energy efficiency. Members enquired whether the Administration would consider the Consumer Council's suggestion to tighten the grading standards under MEELS to encourage the trade to introduce products of higher energy efficiency. The Administration advised that EMSD would continue to regularly review the energy efficiency grading standards of prescribed products in the light of market developments and other factors such as the phase-out rate of less energy-efficient models of a prescribed product.

Latest development

12. At the meeting on 19 July 2021, the Administration will report to EA Panel the outcome of the public consultation on the proposed implementation of the fourth phase of MEELS, and seek the Panel's support for the introduction of relevant legislative amendments.

Relevant papers

13. A list of relevant papers is set out in **Appendix III**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
12 July 2021

Summary of implementation of first three phases of Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme

- (a) The initial phase of the Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme ("MEELS"), covering three types of products, namely room air conditioners, refrigerating appliances and compact fluorescent lamps ("CFLs"), has been fully implemented since 9 November 2009.
- (b) The second phase of MEELS, extending the coverage to two more electrical products, namely washing machines and dehumidifiers, has been fully implemented since 19 September 2011.
- (c) The upgrading of energy efficiency standards for three types of products, namely room air conditioners, refrigerating appliances and washing machines, has been fully implemented since 25 November 2015.
- (d) The third phase of MEELS further extends the coverage to three additional types of electrical products, namely televisions, storage-type electric water heaters and induction cookers, and expands the scope of room air conditioners and washing machines. The third phase has been fully implemented since 1 December 2019.
- (e) To further encourage suppliers to provide more energy-efficient products to consumers, new energy efficiency grading requirements of single-package-type room air conditioners, dehumidifiers and CFLs have been set, which took effect on 31 December 2020 and will be fully implemented on 31 December 2021, after which these three types of prescribed products to be supplied in the market must bear energy labels with the new energy efficiency grading standards.

[Source: Chapter 1 of "Proposal on the Coverage of New Potential Products under the Fourth Phase of the Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme (MEELS) – Consultation Document" published by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department in March 2021.]

Appendix II

Eight types of household electrical appliances currently covered by the Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme

- (a) room air conditioners (cooling capacity not exceeding 7.5 kW);
- (b) refrigerating appliances (total storage volume not exceeding 500 litres);
- (c) compact fluorescent lamps (lamp wattage up to 60 W);
- (d) washing machines (washing capacity not exceeding 10 kg);
- (e) dehumidifiers (dehumidifying capacity not exceeding 35 litres per day);
- (f) televisions (visible diagonal screen size exceeding 50 cm but not exceeding 250 cm);
- (g) storage-type electric water heaters (water storage capacity not exceeding 50 litres); and
- (h) induction cookers (power not less than 700 W but not exceeding 3.5 kW for each heating unit, and total power not exceeding 7 kW)

[Source: Adapted from Schedule 1 to the Energy Efficiency (Labelling of Products) Ordinance (Cap. 598)]

Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme

List of relevant papers

Date	Event	Paper
25 January 2016	Meeting of Panel on Environmental Affairs	<p>Administration's paper on "Proposed Third Phase of Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme" (LC Paper No. CB(1)459/15-16(04))</p> <p>Updated background brief on "Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(1)459/15-16(05))</p> <p>Administration's follow-up paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)596/15-16(02))</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)739/15-16)</p>
June 2017	Subcommittee on Energy Efficiency (Labelling of Products) Ordinance (Amendment of Schedule 1) Order 2017	Report (LC Paper No. CB(1)1175/16-17)

Hyperlink to relevant document:

Government department	Document
Electrical and Mechanical Services Department	Proposal on the Coverage of New Potential Products under the Fourth Phase of the Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme (MEELS) – Consultation Document