

BEST Practices for Lead Battery Manufacturers

FAQs on the Better Environmental Sustainability Standard (BEST) 1001 for Lead Battery Manufacturers

1) How does the BEST Standard fit with existing laws and regulations?

The Better Environmental Sustainability Targets (BEST) Standard 1001 is intended to go beyond minimal regulatory requirements and instead provide a voluntary framework for companies seeking recognition for doing more. In some cases the standard may be similar to current regulatory requirements, but BEST certification requires an independent verification process to ensure that key parameters are being met on a consistent basis. If regulatory requirements at a lead battery manufacturing plant are more stringent or require more frequent verification than outlined in BEST, then the regulatory provisions shall take precedence and become the de facto requirement in that jurisdiction.

2) Who will provide independent verification that battery plants meet these standards?

OK Environment, Inc., a subsidiary of OK International, accredits certification bodies and approves specific auditors who conduct independent audits at lead battery plants. Two certification bodies are currently accredited.

3) How can a lead battery company get permission to put the BEST eco-label on their products?

The license for the use of the BEST eco-label is offered by OK International, a non-governmental organization (NGO), to battery companies that have demonstrated compliance with the BEST standard. Battery plants that demonstrate compliance with an annual audit can enter into a license agreement, pay the required license fees, and display the logo on their products.

4) What is the value of the eco-label?

The value of any eco-label ultimately rests on the integrity, transparency, and independence of the standard setting process. Standards that have been developed in an open and transparent manner are more likely to achieve their environmental objectives. The value of the BEST certification will grow with its adoption and as more bulk consumers institute preferred purchasing programs.

5) Why is the BEST Standard an international standard if it is initially started in India?

The program is being implemented first in India, but because the industry is fairly uniform with similar inputs and outputs throughout the world, the BEST Standard 1001 is intended to be applied globally.

6) What is the relationship between an international accreditation organization and a regulatory agency?

The BEST Standard is designed to operate as part of an international accreditation organization. The BEST Standard was developed through a multistakeholder process that included input from national regulatory agencies as well as companies and NGOs operating internationally. One advantage that international accreditation organizations have is that they have worldwide mutual recognition for certifications issued by accredited auditors and therefore are not viewed as trade restrictive.

7) How can the quality of the auditors be maintained?

Accredited certification bodies will utilize auditors who have sufficient background and have obtained training to conduct BEST audits. OK Environment with input from its board of directors, will provide oversight of the auditor's performance, hear any appeals, and resolve disputes that may arise.

8) What is the governance structure of the International Secretariat, OK Environment?

The Board of Directors of OK Environment, Inc. includes all key stakeholder groups with distinguished members from all relevant sectors. The Board has two members representing battery companies, two representing bulk purchasers, two from NGOs, and two appointed by the Board of Directors of OK International. The board president position is also held in common with the Board of Directors of OK International.