

Socomec gets involved in a European Commission “UPS” pilot project – an acknowledgement of environmental commitment

Benfeld, February 10, 2014

The Socomec Group, a pioneering manufacturer of UPS systems in France is part of a consortium that has been selected by the European Commission to draw up specific guidelines for measuring the environmental performance of UPS machines throughout their lifecycle.

Towards a single “green UPS” market

The proliferation of environmental guidelines in Europe (more than 400) shows the lack of a common definition of what really constitutes a so-called ‘green product’. Such a situation is likely to mislead or confuse the consumer and is an obstacle to the free movement of products marketed as being green.

The European Commission is well aware of this situation and has therefore launched a project to draw up a unique framework for the environmental evaluation of products: the ‘single market for green products initiative’. The framework should be applied to all the products from the European market, covering all sectors and subject to an environmental communication. It should therefore bring clear, comparable and reliable information on the environmental performances of such products.

The European Commission has tabled two methods for evaluating the environmental performance of manufactured green products throughout their lifecycle – the PEF (Product Environmental Footprint) and the OEF (Organisation Environmental Footprint). The Commission has recommended the use of these methods to all stakeholders (Member States, companies, private organizations, etc.) and announced a three-year trial period to draw up guidelines specific to the products and sectors concerned through a process involving all stakeholders.

Given the stakes involved, a consortium made up of European UPS manufacturers (Schneider, Socomec, Eaton, Emerson, Legrand), professional trade associations (Gimélec, CEMEP) and environmental experts (Ecopassport, SGS) volunteered for the pilot phase launched by the Commission that aims to draw up the guidelines for evaluating the product environmental footprint (PEF). Out of the 90 candidates covering a wide variety of products, the European Commission finally selected 14, including our “UPS” consortium.

For Jean-Marc Hornsperger, the company’s director of technological development, "Three factors were central to the Commission’s decision. First, the extent of the market in Europe for the UPS manufacturers involved. Second, the diversity of the UPS applications: B2B and B2C, residential/domestic, SMBs, industry, datacentres, etc. And last but not least, the availability of a pre-existing framework that is European in scope and of a level of maturity thanks to the work of Ecopassport/CEMEP that has been piloted by Socomec."

Acknowledgement of a real environmental commitment

Since 2011, Socomec has been committed to the drawing up of product environmental profiles (PEP). A 'PEP' is an eco-declaration that sets out the environmental characteristics of a product from its design through to the end of its lifecycle: the mass balance, the substances used, its carbon footprint, environmental certificates, etc. Nicolas Zehnder, Group environmental manager, was authorized in January 2013 for independent PEP certification which allows Socomec greater control of the costs of certification, to limit the leaking of sensitive data and to make gains in flexibility in the PEP process.

At the same time, Socomec is actively involved in the internationalization of the Ecopassport association and the definition of PEP constraints. In particular, Socomec is piloting a joint working group between the Ecopassport association and the European association of UPS manufacturers (CEMEP) with a view to establishing the European guidelines for the drawing up and content of the PEP for UPS machines. "It took almost two years to establish consensus positions between manufacturers", points out Nicolas Zehnder. "This specification will soon be published and its application will become obligatory for all manufacturers of UPS machines who intend to issue a certified PEP within the European market. "

ABOUT SOCOMEC

Founded in 1922, SOCOMEC is an independent, industrial group with a workforce of 3000 people spread over 21 subsidiaries in the world. Our core business – the availability, control and safety of low voltage electrical networks with increased focus on our customers' power performance. In 2012, SOCOMEC posted a turnover of 441 M€.



MORE INFORMATION

Alain GAMBIA
Corporate Communication &
Sustainable Development Manager
tel. +33 (0)3 88 57 41 38
Email: alain.gambia@socomec.com
www.socomec.com