

Ranking shows no green electronics on the market

Amsterdam, 25 August 2006 – Greenpeace today launched the “Guide to Greener Electronics”, which ranks companies on their use of harmful chemicals and electronic waste recycling. (1) The guide will be used to create demand for toxic-free electronics which can be safely recycled, by informing consumers about company performance on these two issues. The scorecard ranks the 14 top mobile and PC producers and currently all fail to get a green ranking.

“The scorecard will provide a dynamic tool to green the electronics sector by setting off a race to the top. By taking back their discarded products, companies will have incentives to eliminate harmful substances used in their products, since this is the only way they can ensure safe reuse and recycling of electronic waste,” said xx.

Nokia and Dell share the top spot in the ranking. They believe that as producers they should bear individual responsibility for taking back and reusing or recycling their own-brand discarded products. Nokia leads the way on eliminating toxic chemicals, since the end of 2005 all new models of mobiles are free of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and all new components to be free of brominated flame retardants (BFRs) from the start of 2007. Dell has also set ambitious targets for eliminating these harmful substances from their products.

Third place goes to HP, followed by Sony Ericsson (4th), Samsung (5th), Sony (6th), LG Electronics (7th), Panasonic (8th), Toshiba (9th), Fujitsu Siemens Computers (10th), Apple (11th), Acer (12th) and Motorola (13th).

Lenovo is in bottom position. It earns points for chemicals management and providing some voluntary product take back programmes, but it needs to do better on all criteria.

“It is disappointing to see Apple ranking so low in the overall guide. They are meant to be world leaders in design and marketing, they should also be world leaders in environmental innovation.” said xxx Greenpeace International toxics campaigner.

Companies have the opportunity to move towards a greener ranking as the guide will be updated every quarter. However penalty points will be deducted from overall scores if Greenpeace finds a company lying, practising double standards or other corporate misconduct. For now, companies are scored solely on information publicly available on their global websites.

The scoring is weighted more heavily on the use of toxic substances in production rather than criteria on recycling, because until the use of harmful substances is eliminated in products, it is impossible to secure ‘safe’, toxic-free recycling.

For more information and interviews

XXXXXXX Greenpeace International toxics campaigner
Suzette Jackson Greenpeace International communications officer +31 6 4619
7324

Notes to editors

- (1) 'Guide to Greener Electronics' www.greenpeace.org/rankingguide
- PVC explained: Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) is a chlorinated plastic used in some electronic products and for insulation on wires and cables. PVC is one of the most widely used plastics but its production, use and disposal create toxic pollution. Chlorinated dioxins and furans are released when PVC is produced or disposed of by incineration (or simply burning). Dioxins and furans are classes of chemical compounds widely recognised as some of the most toxic chemicals ever made by humans and many are toxic even in very low concentrations.
 - BFRs explained: BFRs, used in circuit board and plastic casings, do not break down easily and build up in the environment. Long-term exposure can lead to impaired learning and memory functions. They also interfere with thyroid and oestrogen hormone systems. Exposure in the womb has been linked to behavioural problems. TBBPA, a type of BFR used in circuit boards has been linked to neurotoxicity.

The presence of high levels of BFRs in electronics products has the potential to generate brominated dioxins and furans, when the electronic waste comes to be smelted, incinerated or burnt in the open. Dioxins and furans are classes of chemical compounds widely recognised as some of the most toxic chemicals ever made by humans and many are toxic even in very low concentrations.

The electronics scorecard ranks companies on:

1. Chemicals policy and practice (5 criteria)
2. Policy and practice on taking back discarded electronic products (ewaste) and recycling (4 criteria).

On chemicals, the criteria are:

- a. A chemicals policy based on the Precautionary Principle
- b. Chemicals Management: supply chain management of chemicals via e.g. banned/restricted substance lists, policy to identify problematic substances for future elimination/substitution
- c. Timeline for phasing out all use of vinyl plastic (PVC)

- d. Timeline for phasing out all use of brominated flame retardants (BFRs) -not just those banned by European Union's or Restriction of Hazardous Substances Directive (RoHS)
- e. PVC-free and BFR-free models of electronic products on the market.

On EPR/recycling:

- a. Support for individual (financial) producer responsibility – that producers finance the end-of-life management of their products, by taking back and reusing/recycling their own-brand discarded products.
- b. Provides voluntary takeback and recycling in every country where it sells its products, even in the absence of national laws requiring Producer Responsibility for electronic waste.
- c. Provides clear information for individual customers on takeback and recycling services in all countries where there are sales of its products.
- d. Reports on amount of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) collected and recycled.