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Guarantees of origin provide transparency on green electricity market

Federal Environment Agency launches green electricity register

The Register of guarantees of origins for electricity from renewable energy sources (German: HKNR) at the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) has started operations. Germany is thereby implementing a European requirement for more consumer protection in the electricity market. UBA confirms with the guarantees of origin that electricity has been sourced from renewable energies. Consumers who have opted for green electricity will benefit from the new register. The HKNR monitors the trade and distribution of this type of electricity and the guarantees of origin will prove to be reliable in preventing double counting. Producers of electricity from renewable energy sources must register themselves and their production devices within the HKNR if they wish to direct sell their electricity with a guarantee of origin. They will thus forego receipt of the feed-in-tariff or market premiums as per the Renewable Energy Sources Act.

The guarantee of origin for green electricity is comparable to a certificate of birth but is not in fact a quality label. The guarantee of origin provides notification in electronic form of where and how the electricity from renewable sources of energy was produced and fed into the grid. Producers will receive just one guarantee of origin per megawatt hour (MWh) of green electricity. This electronic document will be used to disclose electricity when delivered to the user and will then be cancelled.

The establishment of the HKNR was a requirement of EU Directive 2009/28/EC, which states that the Member States must put in place mechanisms for guarantees of origin that are accurate, reliable and fraud-resistant. The Federal Environment Agency is the competent authority for the register in Germany, as according to the provisions of the Renewable Energy Sources Act (EEG). After a registration period for operators and their facilities at www.hknr.de, UBA started to issue guarantees of origin in January for green electricity produced in Germany and to credit them the operator's account. In the future, UBA will also export and import guarantees of origin from foreign registers. UBA is currently working to define the requisite criteria for the recognition of foreign guarantees of origin in collaboration with other national registers in Europe. Upon

request from an electricity supplier, UBA will cancel the guarantee of origin for disclosing the energy-amount as "other sources of renewable energies" supplied to consumers. This ensures that the guarantee of origin certifying the attribute "renewable energy" is not sold to the consumer more than once.

Producers of electricity from renewable energy sources may sell this quality - but no more than once. In the electricity disclosure from 2014 on (for electricity delivery in 2013) only guarantees of origin that have been cancelled in the German HKNR will be accepted. An electricity supplier discloses "other renewable sources of energy" separately on the customer invoice and must have cancelled guarantees of origin for exactly the amount of electricity specified. This legal requirement ensures security and transparency for consumers when purchasing green electricity.

The right to cancel and to use a guarantee of origin for disclosure is reserved for electricity suppliers. The register can thereby prevent the previously common practice of labelling the origin of electricity through the purchase and cancellation of guarantees of origin by consumers in order to decrease their personal carbon footprint.

For more information go to www.hknr.de and www.umweltbundesamt.de/energie/hknr/index.htm.

Dessau-Roßlau, 9 January 2013