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Govt aims for energy efficiency

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Energy-efficient products are now compulsory for all future government purchases in nine categories under a revised list released by the finance ministry Wednesday.

Government agencies can only buy products that appear on the list for the nine categories - including air conditioners, computers and printers. The list may be expanded to other product categories in the future.

The list covers 10,239 products in 33 categories from 525 companies, which are to be favored for government purchase due to their high-energy efficiency. Previously, only 4,770 products from 18 categories were included on the list.

"The move is expected to promote the use of energy-efficient equipment in government agencies," Zhang Tong, assistant minister of finance, said. "By doing so, we expect to make our own contribution to the nation's energy-saving drive."

According to Zhang, per capita energy consumption of China's government employees is higher than that of average citizens, as is the energy consumption of government workplaces.

Government agencies across the nation are required to refer to the shortlist for future purchasing, and the effect will be reviewed as a factor in judging officials' work performance.

"A shortlist favoring high-efficiency products could have a far-reaching impact on the vendors," Liu Hui, president of the University of International Relations, said.

"The volume of government procurement each year is huge and has grown rapidly over the past decade."

Ministry of Finance statistics show China's government procurement amounted to 368 billion yuan last year, an average annual growth of more than 70 percent since 1996, according to Liu.

The nation passed its first Government Procurement Law in 2003, which helped improve and standardize government procurement procedure. It's estimated that the government has spent 10 percent less on procurement since the adoption of the law.

The government has set a goal of cutting its energy intensity, or the amount of energy used to generate one unit of gross domestic product, by 20 percent by 2010. The target is part of the efforts to address the nation's growing energy demand and worsening environment. (China Daily)

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