Interview with New Century LED Net

June 2013

Menno Treffers, Secretary-General of the Zhaga Consortium, was interviewed by the Chinese-language LED trade publication New Century LED Net (www.ledth.com).

The Chinese-language version of the interview is available, together with a short video interview (in English) with Menno Treffers, on the New Century LED Net at: www.ledth.com/gaoduanfangtan/n956351176.html

New Century LED Net: How many members does Zhaga have now? How does Zhaga select its members?

Menno Treffers: The Zhaga Consortium was launched in February 2010, and now has more than 270 members from throughout the global lighting industry. The current list of members can be viewed on the Zhaga website at: www.zhagastandard.org/cn/about-us/our-members/. Zhaga does not have a selection process for membership; any company that shares Zhaga’s vision and goals for developing specifications for interchangeable LED light sources is welcome to join the consortium.

How many specifications (Books) has Zhaga published? What Books are already available for Zhaga certification? Please explain.

The Zhaga interface specifications are known as Books, and Zhaga has now approved eight different Books (numbers 1 to 8). Book 1 contains general information that relates to all the other Books. At first, each Book is only available to Zhaga members. When certified products reach the market,
however, each Book is published for general use, and the full specification is made available on the Zhaga website. By early 2013, Zhaga had published Books 1, 2, and 3.

Companies are now able to certify their products according to Book 2 and 3. A full list of certified products can be viewed at [www.zhagastandard.org/cn/products/certified-products.html](http://www.zhagastandard.org/cn/products/certified-products.html). Certification for other Books is expected to be available in the next few months.

*What test labs are accepted by Zhaga? What are the differences between Zhaga certification and generic LED product-quality certification?*

Zhaga certification of products requires testing by independent, third-party test lab. All test labs must receive authorization from Zhaga to test for each individual Zhaga Book. At present, there are three test labs (Dekra, VDE and UL) that are each authorized to test products according to Book 2 and Book 3. Details can be found on the Zhaga website at [www.zhagastandard.org/cn/specifications/certification.html](http://www.zhagastandard.org/cn/specifications/certification.html).

The Zhaga specifications only cover the interfaces between the LED light source and the LED luminaire. Zhaga certification delivers the message of interchangeability with other Zhaga-certified products, but does not have an intended meaning for product quality or for most aspects of product performance. There are many other product marks for safety, quality and performance, but these are all completely separate from Zhaga.

*As known, Zhaga is about the interchangeability of LED module in all types of lighting application in terms of given criteria for shape, dimensions, color and photometric. Zhaga is aiming to guide the industry to develop under such direction, so as to achieve compatibility and interchangeability. However, insiders point out that Zhaga has not yet considered the lifetime issue of LED modules. How does Zhaga view this comment and do you have any solution?*

The Zhaga interface specifications do not include requirements for specific values of lifetime. However, temperature is an important factor in determining lifetime, and each Book describes the thermal interface between the LED light source and the LED luminaire. The correct thermal interface is an essential part of ensuring that an LED luminaire maker can use different LED light sources from different suppliers. But lifetime is not part of the Zhaga specifications, and is determined by a number of factors including the detailed design and construction of the LED light sources and LED luminaires.
China has published quite a number of standards for LED. How are Zhaga’s specifications complementary to Chinese LED regulations and standards?

The lighting industry has always used many different light sources. The most successful light sources are interchangeable and are manufactured by many different companies. Until now, Zhaga has only specified seven different light sources, but the industry will need many more.

There are many opportunities to create complementary specifications for LED light sources, and Zhaga welcomes initiatives to create more choice for the lighting industry. We believe that LED module specifications developed in China have great potential for international application when they have been proved successful in the highly competitive Chinese market.

From the view point of an industry insider, non-compulsory standards will struggle to become popular among all LED enterprises. It will be very hard for such standards to be adopted in China. How do you view this argument?

It is correct to say that the Zhaga specifications are not compulsory. However, Zhaga believes there are considerable benefits in using the specifications to develop products, and these benefits will cause the LED industry to adopt Zhaga specifications on an international basis.

Component suppliers will find it easier to sell compatible products in domestic and international markets, while luminaire makers will have more choice of suppliers. R&D costs can be reduced because the luminaire maker does not have to redesign the luminaire each time a different LED module is used. For the end customer, Zhaga-based products bring reduced risk and peace of mind with the knowledge that compatible components will be available in the future, if luminaires need to be repaired or upgraded.
What are Zhaga’s future plans in the coming 3 years?

The two main roles of Zhaga will be to promote the adoption of Zhaga specifications in the global lighting market, and to develop new interface specifications according to the needs of our member companies. As more and more companies see the benefits of developing products using Zhaga specifications, the number of Zhaga-certified products on the market will increase. Certification programs will be launched for the other Zhaga Books. Also, Zhaga specifications will be developed for applications that cannot be served by the existing Zhaga specifications. The lighting industry has always needed many different light sources to serve the diversity in application requirements. Zhaga members have already suggested applications that will benefit from new interchangeable LED light sources.

China’s LED industry is developing very fast and, according to industry insiders, it has reached the stage of vertical integration. How do you view of this?

Zhaga is an international consortium of companies with over 270 members, of which more than 40 are from China (the full list of companies is at: www.zhagastandard.org/cn/about-us/our-members). The consortium welcomes more input from more Chinese companies and the Chinese LED industry in general, to ensure that the Zhaga specifications are suitable for all international requirements. Vertically-integrated LED lighting industries need to work with LED luminaires that contain LED modules, because modular architectures are necessary to separate the slow-changing technologies (luminaire design) from the fast-changing technologies (LED). Vertically-integrated companies benefit from the possibility to buy and sell LED modules, and Zhaga’s interchangeable modules are easier to sell and easier to buy.

What are your expectations and wishes for the coming LEDth Summit?

Zhaga looks forward to explaining the purpose of the Zhaga interface specifications and giving examples of where Zhaga-based products have been used successfully. We hope to be able to answer questions from the Chinese lighting industry, and we welcome feedback from industry insiders. Zhaga hopes to encourage more Chinese companies to join its consortium, reflecting the importance and strength of the country’s lighting market.

* After this article was written, certification was made available for Books 4, 7 and 8 – see www.zhagastandard.org/news/46/zhaga-starts-certification-for-books-4-7-and-8