

Test guide

Procedures and assistance for the application for conformity assessment with the requirements of the natureplus® eco-label



Published by:

Natureplus Institute SCE mbH, Hauptstraße 24, 69151 Neckargemünd, Germany

Version 2.0 from 01.08.2021

I Introduction

The International Association for Sustainable Building and Living – natureplus e.V. – has set itself the goal, through the awardance of a quality label (eco-label), of promoting the use of those construction products which are especially suited to achieving the goal of economic sustainability. The three classic pillars of sustainability (the environment, social aspects and the economy) are reflected in natureplus's the three fundamental requirements: the environment, health and functional quality.

Every construction activity encroaches upon the natural environment and is connected with the consumption of limited resources. Our responsibility towards future generations requires us to undertake every effort to reduce these encroachments to the lowest level possible and to limit our use of resources to a necessary minimum. In view of the foreseeable exhaustion of the reserves of fossil fuels, for example, and the dangers to the earth's climate, such an approach is the only possible means to ensure sustainable and socially equitable development. For the building sector this means promoting the use and application of construction products which help to minimize the consumption of fossil fuels and limited resources. It is natureplus's intention to help promote the commercial success of those products which fulfil these demands.

Energy-saving building methods and the avoidance of uncontrolled ventilation facilitates the accumulation of volatile chemical compounds in the interior air that are emitted by building products and the inventory contained within the building. This presents a(n) (avoidable) danger to the health of the occupants. Also, the accretion of chemical contaminants (especially phthalates/plasticisers) from building products on house dust, the increasing use of biocides in everyday products and the dangers posed by mould growth due to negative product characteristics give rise for concern. An increasing proportion of the population are exhibiting reactions, such as allergies, to the negative health-related effects of these construction products. natureplus therefore evaluates the compatibility of construction products, especially in the usage phase, according to strict standards in order to actively promote those materials which pose no risk to health and are, in addition, conducive to a healthy room climate.

The natureplus®-Eco-label is an award for construction products which meet the highest standards of sustainability by exhibiting the best possible performance in terms of the environment, health and functionality. Scope of the assessment is the building material as raw material and as component. Only the best products in a particular product group are eligible for certification in order to act as an orientation for all building professionals and consumers towards the promotion of a culture of sustainable building. The natureplus®-Eco-label has anticipated the requirements of construction products of the European Construction Products Directive EU CPR 305/2011: In the future this regulation requires a declaration of performance with evidence of the sustainable use of natural resources and of compliance with requirements in terms of low impact, over their entire life cycle, on the environmental quality or on the climate, energy efficiency and the hygiene, health and safety of people. The natureplus®-Eco-label already provides these proofs of performance in relation to the essential characteristics of construction products. This is gauged by natureplus according to criteria and requirements which, as a rule, far exceed the legal requirements and as a minimum comply in each case with the strictest recognised standards applicable.

The natureplus®-Eco-label is classified as a Type I environmental label as per ISO 14024, taking into consideration the EU Ecolabel Regulation and the EMAS regulation on environmental auditing, and is valid across the whole of Europe according to uniform criteria. The pre-requirements for a construction product to be certified with the natureplus®-Eco-label are its especially high performance characteristics in terms of the environment, health and sustainability. The main focuses are on the protection of limited resources by the minimisation of the use of petrochemical substances, sustainable raw material extraction/harvesting, resource-efficient production methods and the longevity of the products. Therefore, building products made from renewable raw materials, raw materials which are unlimited in their availability or from secondary raw materials will be favoured for certification.

1 Procedure for natureplus certification

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions!

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E-Mail: office@natureplus-institute.eu

1. Preliminary assessment

1.1. Data collection for preliminary assessment (applicant)

- › Application for Conformity Assessment (NP-101)
- › Appendix Product Declaration (NP-A5001)
- › Submitting the documents to the Enforcement Panel (by post or data upload)

1.2. Assessment of the documents (natureplus Institute SCE mbH)

- › Completeness check
- › Evaluation of the requirements from the Basic Directive 5001 Chemicals Directive
- › Determination of exclusion criteria
- › Assessment report for the preliminary assessment, assessment schedule and offer for the initial assessment

2. Initial inspection

2.1. Data collection for initial assessment according to the Product Directive (applicant)

- › Evaluation form according to the Public Procurement Directive
- › Annex 5002 Timber production and origin (if applicable)
- › Annex 5003 Nature conservation in the extraction of mineral resources (if applicable)
- › Appendix 5004 Transparency and social responsibility
- › Annex 5020 Climate compatibility and energy efficiency

2.2. Assessment of the documents (natureplus Institute SCE mbH)

2.3. Inspection of the production site and sampling

2.4. Laboratory tests according to product guideline

2.5. Collection of all expert reports and data

2.6. Evaluation of the results and report writing

2.7. Identification of deviations and definition of conditions

3. Label awarding process

3.1. Completion of the assessment

- › Issue of certificate and test mark
- › Handover of all laboratory results and expert reports
- › Entry into force of the licence agreement with natureplus e.V.

4. What happens next?

The inspection body uses change requests to ensure that conformity is maintained throughout the licence period. Independent of this, product changes must be reported to the inspection body.

Before the licence period expires, you will receive a notification and an offer to retake the exam content.

[Fees and laboratory prices can be found in our fee schedule.](#)

2 Definitions of terms

Term	Definition
Input materials	Input materials are all materials, used by the product manufacturer for the specific purpose of obtaining the desired product characteristics.
Mixtures	A mixture, according to the REACH-Regulation, is a mixture or solution composed of two or more substances.
Main components	A main constituent is any input material in the product representing more than 5 mass %.
Auxiliary materials	Any input material that is used by the unit process producing the product, but which does not constitute part of the product.
Mineral raw materials	Mineral raw materials are all inorganic raw materials which comprise naturally occurring rock or minerals or which can be derived from such materials; (coal and metals, in this context, are not counted as mineral raw materials).
Renewable raw materials	Renewable raw materials are biotic raw materials which regenerate in short reproduction cycles (up to 200 years) or which can be obtained from such materials.
Product	The Product is the packaged, ready-to-deliver end result of the manufacturing process. A product is defined by a unique product name.
Product group	Group of products with the same or similar ingredients and production processes. The products follow the same natureplus award guideline. Example: Vertically perforated bricks of different formats (same raw materials, same production), wood fibre insulation boards with different raw densities (same raw materials, same production process).
Production	Production describes the manufacturing process of the product, but not of the preliminary products.
Raw materials	Raw materials are starting materials that go into the intermediate and/or final products.
Substance	Chemical element and its compounds in the natural state or obtained by a manufacturing process, including the additives necessary to preserve its stability and the impurities resulting from the process used, but excluding solvents which can be separated from the substance without affecting its stability and without altering its composition.
Impurities/ residues	An impurity / residue is any undesired constituent, occurring as a result of the extraction or production process, which remains in the product but which serves no functional purpose.
Additives	Additives are input materials with a proportion in the product of up to 5 M-%.

II Guide to the preliminary assessment

1. Filling out the documents

Please answer every question carefully. Should it be the case that for certain questions the information/data (or documentation) does not exist, or that individual questions are not relevant for the product, it is possible to enter *not applicable* or N.A. Unanswered questions will be treated as overlooked and must be followed up and dealt with. If any points are unclear or if you have any other questions, please contact natureplus Institute SCE mbH.

All information is to be entered in the highlighted fields. **The colour for the applicant across the data collection is blue. Green markings are reserved for the test management.** By clicking on the box, the corresponding text can be inserted. For yes/no questions, the check boxes can also be activated by clicking on them: .

NP-101 Application for conformity assessment

The application must be completed in one copy. The signature provided here applies to the application as well as the annexes. The Enforcement Panel and third parties involved in the assessment are obliged to maintain the confidentiality of all information.

The information must be signed by a responsible person, e.g. from product management, technical management or the executive board.

NP-A5001 Annex to the product declaration (per manufacturing site)

This annex must be completed separately for each production site and submitted several times accordingly. Please make sure that you submit the following documents in full:

- Construction approval ETA or national construction approval(s) of the product if it is an unregulated product.
- Technical data sheet of the product
- Safety data sheet of the product
- Safety data sheets of all input materials
- Safety data sheets of the excipients

If the above documents apply to several products, the documents do not have to be submitted more than once. The scope must be clear from the document.

On page 1, first list the input materials and describe them. On page 2 you can then allocate the input materials proportionally to the products. Please note that for each product the complete input allocation must be filled in up to 100M%.

Example for filling in the documents for the preliminary assessment:

You declare two factories, each of which produces three identical products A, B and C. Plant 2 also produces product D.

For this purpose, they shall enclose the following documents:

- ✓ NP-101 Application for conformity assessment
- ✓ NP-5001 for plant 1, all 3 products A, B and C are declared
- ✓ NP-5001 for plant 2, all 4 products A, B, C and D are declared.
- ✓ supplementary annexes:
 - Technical data sheets (TDS) for product A, B, C and D
 - Safety data sheets for all input materials in the 4 products
 - European Technical Approval (if applicable)
 - Further test certificates and proofs, e.g. EPD, emission report, etc. (if applicable)

2. Sending in the documents

Electronic submission of documents (option 1)

We require the following documents from you in digital form as a PDF document.

- Application for conformity assessment
- Annex to the product declaration (to be submitted per product)
 - o Technical data sheet of the product
 - o Safety data sheets of the product
 - o Safety data sheets of the input materials

In addition, we require a hard copy or PDF scan of the original document from you:

- Application for conformity assessment signed by a responsible person
- Mandate for preliminary assessment

Please use the upload link provided by the Inspection body for electronic submission.

We cannot take responsibility for data leaks from third-party providers (mail service providers, file sharing platforms, etc.).

Especially if you wish to submit sensitive data, we recommend submitting your documents by post as described below.

Postal submission of documents (option 2)

This option involves additional work for the inspection body and may cause delays and slight additional administrative costs.

Information that reaches us by post is not digitised or copied by natureplus Institute SCE mbH and remains analogue in its original state. The documents are stored securely. This information is only made available to the responsible assessor and, where necessary, excerpts are passed on to specialist laboratories and assessors.

Please complete the data collection form in the file and return it as a hard copy (with original signature) to:

natureplus Institute SCE mbH,
Main Street 24,
D 69151 Neckargemünd

Please keep a copy of this survey form. If there are any changes in the information, these can be added to a copy and must be sent to natureplus Institute SCE mbH with the original signature.

If more products and/or manufacturing sites are to be certified than can be covered here, or if you have any other difficulties in completing the forms and annexes, please contact directly

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