

Test guide

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



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1 Introduction

The natureplus® eco-label is the most comprehensive and most demanding type 1 label (according to ISO 14024) for building products in Europe. It takes into account the various aspects of sustainability: resource conservation, climate protection and healthy living. The criteria are defined by the non-profit natureplus association and can be found at www.natureplus-label.org.

The natureplus® eco-label is awarded by the natureplus association. The conformity assessment is carried out by the independent European assessment cooperative natureplus Institute SCE mbH, which coordinates the extensive laboratory tests and expert reports.

2 Procedure for natureplus certification (conformity assessment)

Below you will find a step-by-step guide through the assessment process. Further explanations of the forms and queries are provided directly via our upload portal in the certification process.

Please note that the test projects are organized per production site and product (group). If you would like to register more than three plants and product groups for assessment, please contact us in advance to discuss any synergies in the expert reports and laboratory tests.

Products must have a market authorization in a European country.

If you already have assessment reports or expert reports, you can also submit these. We will check whether we can recognize them. The costs will be reduced accordingly.

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

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No.	Step	Implementation
0	Registration of products/product groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Complete application for conformity assessment (description of product groups and manufacturing sites) › Submitting the documents to the inspection body via data upload or e-mail 	Applicant
1	Offer submission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Customized offer for conformity assessment including all necessary expert reports 	natureplus Institute
2	Order placement	Applicant
3	Data acquisition via the upload portal * Guided data query (digital evaluation form) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › according to the valid natureplus product guideline › RL5001 Chemicals Directive › RL5002 Origin of Wood and Wood Production (if applicable) › RL5003 Nature Conservation when Exploiting Mineral Resources (if applicable) › RL5004 Transparency and Social Responsibility › RL5020 Climate compatibility and energy efficiency 	Applicant
4	Assessment of the declaration (Evaluation - part 1/2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Assessment of the submitted documents for completeness › Assessment of the ingredients for conformity with the requirements** 	natureplus Institute
5	Production site inspection and sampling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Scheduling in coordination with production › Verification, sampling and reporting 	natureplus Institute
6	Laboratory analysis and expert reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Laboratory tests in accordance with the product guidelines by external accredited laboratories and expert reports. Existing assessment reports can be recognized if necessary 	natureplus Institute
7	Overall evaluation by the test lead (Evaluation - Part 2/2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Collection of all expert reports and data › Evaluation of the results and reporting › Identification of non-conformities and definition of conditions 	natureplus Institute
8	Process verification and award decision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Plausibility check of the results, spot checks › Summary of non-conformities and setting of deadlines › Award decision › Preparation of the assessment schedule 	natureplus Institute

9	<p>Labelling awarding process (in case of a positive decision)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Issue of the certificate › Issue of the natureplus® eco-label ® › Handover of all laboratory results and expert reports › Listing at www.natureplus-database.org and partner databases <p>In the event of a negative award decision, you will receive a report and all laboratory results and expert reports for your further use.</p>	natureplus Institute
10	<p>Entry into force of the license agreement with natureplus association</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Transmission of the license agreement › Notes on the use of the natureplus® eco-label 	natureplus e.V

* It is also possible to send data by post. This involves additional work and must be paid for separately.

** If non-conformities are already detected in this step, the assessment can be aborted to avoid follow-up costs

3 Maintenance of certification during the license period

The natureplus Institute SCE mbH uses change requests to ensure that conformity is maintained throughout the license period. For certain product categories, a further emission measurement is carried out during the license period. The assessment schedule must be adhered to.

Irrespective of this, product changes must be reported to the inspection body.

4 Procedure for natureplus recertification

The license period is 5 years. Before the license period expires, you will receive a notification and an offer to retake the exam.

5 Transfer assessments

If you want to certify new products of an already certified product group within the license period, a simplified transfer assessment is possible. This process also applies to the transfer of the natureplus licence to other brand names. It is also possible to transfer a licence to another company in this way, whereby the third-party licensee receives a separate licence agreement.

6 Test fees and laboratory prices

Test fees and laboratory prices can be found in our fee schedule.

7 Overview: Time expenditure for the applicant

These documents must be completed and provided by the manufacturer, if applicable:

Document	Description	Mandatory	Time required*
Application for conformity assessment	Listing of manufacturing sites, sales countries and products	x	0,5-1 h
-	Answering product-specific exam questions and uploading exam-relevant documents to the upload portal for certification	x	2-4 h
Annex Product Declaration	Listing of input materials and the composition of the products For the input materials: information on raw material proportions (bio-based, mineral, secondary and fossil) and information on transportation These documents must be made available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market approval (e.g. ETA) - Technical data sheet (TDS) - Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) per input materials and per end product 	x	1 h per product
Annex Building component declaration	Recording of prefabricated components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proportion in the component - Information on the proportion of raw materials (bio-based, mineral, secondary and fossil) and information on transportation 	For components only	3-4 h
Data acquisition on the origin of wood	Queries on timber extraction and origin Query of suppliers	For wood products only	0,5-1 h
Data acquisition on the origin of mineral input materials	Information on availability and transportation, information on extraction and, if applicable, renaturation or declaration by the supplier Query of suppliers	For mineral products only	0,5-1 h
Transparency and social responsibility	Manufacturer's declaration on transparency and social responsibility Query the suppliers	x	0,5-1 h
Life cycle assessments	Data acquisition for ecological assessment (energy consumption, green electricity, water consumption and wastewater, emissions. waste, packaging) If an EPD is available, this can be submitted instead, including a background report	x	2-6 h

* The assessment requires the involvement of upstream suppliers, e.g. for supply chain verifications or Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) of upstream products. The communication efforts vary greatly from individual to individual and can increase the inspection effort.

Further work steps by the applicant:

Work step	Description	Obliga- toric	Time required*
Coordination effort with specialist inspection bodies	The applicant is in contact with the following bodies in order to coordinate dates and content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Certification body (natureplus Institute) as a central partner - Test lead - Inspector of the production facility - LCA expert 	x	2-4 h
Production site inspection	The applicant prepares the on-site appointment and guides the inspector through the production for 2-4 hours.	x	3-6 h

8 Definitions of terms

Term	Definition
Ancillary input material	is an input material that is used by the unit process producing production and does not remain as such in the product
Article	is an object that during production is given a special shape, surface or design which determines its function to a greater degree than does its chemical composition
Bio-based raw material	is a biotic raw material that renews itself in short reproduction cycles (up to 200 years) or is obtained from biotic raw materials
Contamination/ residue	is an unwanted component of the product that originates from raw material extraction or production and does not fulfill any function in the product
Ingredient	is a substance/material that is part of the end product
Input Material	is a substance that is specifically used by the product manufacturer to fulfill product properties
Mixture	according to REACH is a mixture, blend or solution consisting of two or more substances
Mineral raw material	is a raw material that consists of minerals and rocks that occur in nature or are extracted from them. Coal and hydrocarbons are not counted as mineral raw materials here
Product	is the packaged, ready-to-deliver end result of the manufacturing process. A product is defined by a unique product name
Product group	<p>A product group can consist of one or more construction products. Products can be grouped together if the following conditions are met:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the production process of the products is identical. 2. the input materials are identical or deviate only slightly*. 3. the ratio of input materials in the product composition is identical or deviates only slightly*. <p>* The product group can be proposed by the applicant, the delimitation is carried out by the evaluating body. The evaluating body must include the following aspects in the decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product features - Extent of the recipe deviation - Ingredient properties
Production	is the manufacturing process of the product, but not of the preliminary products
Raw material	is a starting material that goes into the intermediate and/or end products
Substance	Chemical element and its compounds in the natural state or obtained by any manufacturing process, including any additives necessary to preserve its stability and any contamination resulting from the process used, but excluding solvents which are separated from the substance without affecting its stability and without changing its composition.