



Validation Procedure for Companies

General Information

The questionnaire/the criteria catalogue has been developed in collaboration with the Sustainable Europe Research Institute **SERI** and **ALLPLAN** (both located in Vienna), an international consulting company working in the sectors of energy and environmental management, and the Austrian jury members.

The **GREEN BRANDS Quality Seal** ensures that the awarded brands are genuinely eco-friendly and sustainable, and consequently contributes towards the protection of the environment, nature and the climate as well as preserving our precious natural resources. The **GREEN BRANDS Quality Seal and the complete evaluation process is now a registered EU Certification Mark of GREEN BRANDS Organisation GmbH** since 27th November 2019 and its copyrights are legally protected!

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Confidentiality

Any information indicated in the questionnaires will be treated with absolute confidentiality. The results and data will only be accessed by the person responsible for the validation procedure as well as by a small number of members of the **GREEN BRANDS** management and the jury members.
– All these persons are bound to absolute confidentiality.

The Company's Obligations

The Company is obliged to make truthful statements and is prepared to allow random verification of the data on location.

Any queries regarding the data as well as the verification of documents (certifications, results, etc.) will be accepted by the Company.

Making provably, intentionally incorrect statements leads to the immediate exclusion from the procedure and in case of having received the award to the subsequent dispossession of the award!

Evaluation

In any case, the Company will receive a transparent evaluation of the validation including the disclosure of the achieved points/per cent.

The result may, however, not be publicly announced, neither by the Company, nor by **GREEN BRANDS!** – This is to avoid any possible competition regarding the ranking, which might lead to confusion among the population.

There is the chance of receiving the award or the seal upon reaching or exceeding the **benchmark of 51%** of the **GREEN BRANDS Index!**

The final decision, however, lies with an independent jury!

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Data on the Company

Company name

Address (street/post code)

Sector

Description of the object
of business

Legal form

Number of employees
(incl. leased employees) in full-time equivalent

Annual turnover of the company*

Contact person/position

E-Mail

Telephone

*Annual turnover of the company (subsidiary) applying for **GREEN BRANDS** certification.

The indication of a contact person serves the purpose of clarifying ambiguous or missing data which are required for the evaluation of the questionnaire. For this reason, this should be a person who can easily be contacted by the analysing team.

Are there any significant corporate links or majority owners? Please present disaffiliations with any parent companies regarding sustainability?



Why should **your company** receive the award, or the seal **GREEN BRANDS** as an eco-friendly company? (max. 1000 characters)

Please make sure your company does not fall under the **exclusion criteria** published on our website. Please explain your compliance with the listed criteria and confirm this compliance. (up to 1000 characters)

Please point out any **violations of the law** and court-related complaints

Questionnaire Part I

Part I of the questionnaire serves the self-assessment of your ecological activities compared to common standard in your business sector. You can justify your selection with up to a maximum of 2,000 characters.

The jury will then evaluate whether the reasons given by you justify your self-assessment.

Please feel free to enclose documents for our verification purposes.

General Entrenchment of Environmental Issues in the Company

How would you assess the entrenchment of environmental issues in your company compared to common standard in your business sector?

- Our activities with regard to the field of environment lie below the sector's standard.
- Our activities with regard to the field of environment correspond to the sector's standard.
- Our activities with regard to the field of environment lie significantly over the sector's standard and they thus set us apart with regard to competitors.
- We do not know the sector's standard with regard to environmental activities.

Questionnaire Part II

Part II of the questionnaire deals with concrete questions with regard to the following topics and will be weighted according to the given percentage.

- Objectives of the company	15 %
- Environmental management systems	5 %
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	7 %
- Consumption of energy	10 %
- Consumption of resources	10 %
- Emissions (climate and air pollution)	5 %
- Transport	3 %
- Consumption of water	8 %
- Waste strategy	10 %
- Raising consciousness within the company	8 %
- Raising consciousness outside the company	9 %
- Encouraging sustainably acting customers	10 %

You can reach a total of 100 points in part II of the questionnaire. The committee reserves the right to make individual product-specific decisions for the individual validations, taking account of all eventualities.

Objectives of the Company

1. To which percentage does the proportion of ecologically sustainable products correspond to the entire turnover of the company?

- 0-20%
- 21-40%
- 41-60%
- 61-80%
- 81-100%

Please give information regarding these ecological products (link to a homepage, product information, etc.)

What makes especially your product in your opinion ecological compared to the sector's standard?

Environmental Management Systems

Environmental management can exist in different forms in a company. This section includes questions for you with regard to certified environmental management systems and the preparation of sustainability reports following recognised guidelines, etc.

2. Is the subject-matter “environment” entrenched in your company? (e. g. as an environmental management system in accordance with ISO14001, EMAS, environmental policy, etc.)

Yes

No

If you have replied with “yes” to these questions, please include respective proof (sustainability report, certification, environmental policy, etc.).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Definition of “CSR”: The term Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) describes the voluntary contribution of the economy to a sustainable development exceeding statutory requirements (compliance). CSR stands for responsible corporate acting within the actual business, starting with ecologically relevant aspects up to relations with employees and the communication and discussion with the relevant stakeholders and interest groups.

3. Is the subject-matter “sustainability” entrenched in your company? (e. g. in the form of a sustainability report, CSR, etc.)

Yes

No

4. Does the company operate a monitoring system to measure economic, social and environmental sustainability performance?

Yes

No

Consumption of Energy

The consumption of energy by companies is rising continuously just as that of private households. Despite the newest technologies and efficient gadgets, the consumption of energy cannot be reduced (rebound effect). In the following section, you will be asked to give information regarding your company’s use of energy. Please make sure to differentiate between electricity and heat energy consumption.

5. How important are energy issues (efficiency, savings) in your company?

of low importance

of medium importance

of high importance

6. Does your company have an energy management system?

Yes

No

7. Has there been a programme for a more efficient consumption of power (definition) in the last three years?

Yes

No

a) Have any measures based thereupon been implemented?

Yes

No

b) How has the initial value been determined?

measurement

estimation

c) How high was the initial value?

d) How have the savings been determined?

measurement

estimation

e) How high have the savings been after the implementation of the measures taken?

< 5% of the annual power consumption

5-15% of the annual power consumption

> 15% of the annual power consumption

8. Has there been a programme for a more efficient consumption of heat (definition) in the last three years?

Yes

No

a) Have any measures based thereupon been implemented?

Yes

No

b) How has the initial value been determined?

measurement

estimation

c) How high was the initial value?

d) How have the savings been determined?

measurement

estimation

e) How high have the savings been after the implementation of the measures taken?

< 5% of the annual energy consumption

5-15% of the annual energy consumption

> 15% of the annual energy consumption

9. Do you obtain green electricity (= electricity received exclusively out of renewable energy carriers)?

Yes

No

10. From where do you obtain heat energy?

a) Please name the primary energy carriers used.

b) Please name the technology used.

c) How high is the percentage of renewable energy carriers?

11. Does your company generate power and/or heat locally?

Yes

No

a) Please name the primary energy carriers used.

b) Please name the technology used.

c) How high is the percentage of generated power and/or heat with regard to the respective total use of energy?

12. Are your company premises in the ownership of the company or are they rented?

- in the ownership of the company; please continue with question 13
- rented; please continue with question 16

13. Has the housing technology of your company premises been rehabilitated completely within the last three years?

- Yes

- No
- No because it is a new/already rehabilitated building.

14. During this process, has there been a thermal insulation of your company's premises?

- Yes
- No

15. Which of the following have been thermally rehabilitated?

- Windows
- Doors
- Walls
- Roof
- Other

16. When choosing your company's premises, have you paid attention to thermal rehabilitation or a solid thermal state?

Yes, namely

No

17. Which energy efficiency class do your company's premises have?

Energy efficiency class

or

Specific heating energy required

kWh/sqm per annum

Unknown

18. If you have carried out a project with regard to "energy" during the last year, you can now present this project briefly.

(max. 1,000 characters) Please focus on describing the measures, the operational targets, the implementation as well as success monitoring.

Consumption of Resources

19. Is the protection of natural resources and material efficiency important for your company?

Yes

No

20. Concerning the consumption of raw materials, do you differentiate between renewable and non-renewable resources? (analogous to GRI – global reporting initiative)

Yes

No

21. Were any resource efficiency measures (material, resources, packaging, operating material) carried out in your company (e. g. implementation of new technologies) during the last three years?

Yes

No

a) If yes, how high have the savings been after the implementation of the measures taken?

< 5% of the entire consumption of resources

5-15% of the entire consumption of resources

> 15% of the entire consumption of resources

22. Is the consumption of resources important during your procurement processes? (e. g. by analysing ecological backpack, MIPS, etc.)

Yes

No

23. If you have carried out a project regarding “consumption of resources” during the last year, you can now present this project briefly. (max. 1,000 characters)

(max. 1,000 characters) Please focus on describing the measures, the operational targets, the implementation as well as success monitoring.

Emissions (Climate and Air Pollution)

Climate change is highly influenced by greenhouse gases caused by humans. In the following section, you will be asked to give information on your acting with regard to climate protection by setting targets for reducing emissions.

24. How important is the reduction of greenhouse gases in your company?

of low importance

of medium importance

of high importance

25. Has a survey with regard to the carbon footprint been carried out in the last three years?

- Yes, with regard to the Company's carbon footprint¹.
- Yes, with regard to the carbon footprint of individual products or product ranges.
- No

a) If yes, please give information regarding the system boundaries of the survey as exactly as possible.

b) Have climate protection measures been planned based upon the survey?

Yes

No

c) Have climate protection measures been implemented based upon the survey?

Yes

No

d) What was the initial value?

¹ The carbon footprint is an indicator which recognises the emissions of greenhouse gases (according to IPCC) of an organisation or a product along its life cycle.

e) Which amount of carbon emissions has been saved by means of climate protection measures?

- < 5% of the annual amount of carbon emissions
- 5-10% of the annual amount of carbon emissions
- > 15% of the annual amount of carbon emissions

26. Does a climate protection strategy with given targets regarding the reduction of emissions exist at your company and is this strategy implemented?

Yes

No

- a. If yes, please name these measures, the operative target, information on how they are implemented, the continuous monitoring of success and the measuring of results without considering the measures which you have already indicated above (carbon footprint) and in other sections.

27. Do you take part in recognised climate protection projects (Joint Implementation, Clean Development Mechanism, voluntary climate protection, climate neutrality)?

Yes

No

28. If you have carried out a project with regard to “climate protection/climate research”, you can now present this project briefly.

(max. 1,000 characters) Please focus on describing the measures, the operational targets, the implementation as well as success monitoring.

Transport

This section “transport” refers to traffic in a wider sense and environmental pollution caused in this respect. The company usually has only little impact on how employees go to their workplace, it can, however, be determined which vehicle pool is purchased or which external vehicle pool is involved. The degree of influence of the company will be taken into consideration during evaluation.

29. How important are environmentally friendly means of transport in your company?

- of low importance
- of medium importance
- of high importance

30. When purchasing new company cars (own vehicle pool as well as company cars), do you consider environmentally friendly types of cars (low-emission cars, electric cars, etc.)?

Yes

No

31. Have there been any measures within the company in order to reduce the consumption of fuel (of the internal vehicle pool, the external vehicle pool, company cars) during the last three years (e. g. trainings)?

Yes

No

32. Are business trips organised primarily ecologically (public transport instead of cars, video conference instead of flights, etc.)?

Yes

No

33. Does the company provide support for an environmentally friendly journey (e. g. annual ticket for public transport, company-internal bicycles, carpooling forums, etc.)?

Yes

No

34. If you have carried out a project with regard to “transport”, you can now present this project briefly.

(max. 1,000 characters) Please focus on describing the measures, the operational targets, the implementation as well as success monitoring.

Consumption of Water

The subject-matter of water shortage is not widespread in Central Europe yet as there are by far no deficiencies. In a global context, however, water consumption and dealing with the public good “water” is a main issue which is becoming more and more controversial. In the following section, you will be asked to give information on your point of view and your activities in the field of “water”.

35. How important is saving water for your company?

- of low importance
- of medium importance
- of high importance

36. Has a survey with regard to the water footprint been carried out in the last three years?

- Yes, with regard to the Company’s water footprint.
- Yes, with regard to the water footprint of individual products.
- No

a) If yes, please give information regarding the system boundaries of the survey as exactly as possible.

b) Have water saving measures been planned based upon the survey?

- Yes

- No

c) Have water saving measures been implemented based upon the survey?

- Yes

- No

d) What was the initial value?

e) Which amount of water has been saved?

- < 5% of the annual amount of water
- 5-10% of the annual amount of water
- > 15% of the annual amount of water

37. Is the subject-matter of sewage water relevant in your business sector?

- Yes
- No > please continue with question 39

38. Which measures exceeding statutory provisions with regard to the treating or avoidance of sewage water have been carried out in the last three years?

- Yes

- No

39. If you have carried out a project with regard to “water”, you can now present this project briefly.

(max. 1,000 characters) Please focus on describing the measures, the operational targets, the implementation as well as success monitoring.

Waste Strategy

In the production process (with regard to procuding companies) as well as in the every-day workflow, a large amount of waste is often accumulated. The difficulties with regard to waste disposal often relate to costs which arise during the disposal but also especially the final storage, whereas waste disposal sites in developed countries are becoming more and more frequent and also fuller. This leads to more emissions being created on such sites and also to the landscape being affected negatively. A large amount of waste, however, also means that there is a large consumption of resources. In the following section, you will be asked to give information on your company's handling of waste.

40. How important is the avoidance of waste for your company?

- of low importance
- of medium importance
- of high importance

41. Have any measures with regard to the avoidance of waste been actively implemented in the last three years?

- Yes

- No

a) Which amount of waste has been avoided (estimation)?

- < 5% of the annual amount of waste
- 5-10% of the annual amount of waste
- > 15% of the annual amount of waste

b) Which facts and assumption constitute the basis for these estimations?

42. Have any measures with regard to recycling been actively implemented in the last three years?

Yes

No

43. Which types of waste are recorded separately?

44. Are recycled materials used deliberately and consciously?

45. Do employees receive information on the correct disposal of waste (information material, signs, etc.)?

Yes

No

46. Does your company have a person responsible for waste management?

Yes

No

47. Does your company have a waste management concept?

Yes

No

48. Is dangerous waste accrued when carrying out the company's business? (pursuant to the Waste Management Act - Abfallwirtschaftsgesetz – AWG)

Yes

No

49. If you have carried out a project with regard to “waste”, you can now present this project briefly.

(max. 1,000 characters) Please focus on describing the measures, the operational targets, the implementation as well as success monitoring.

Raising Consciousness within the Company

For the successful implementation of any environmentally-relevant measures in a company, it is important that also the employees contribute accordingly. In order for employees to grasp the importance of their contribution and in order to implement measures accordingly, it is essential that employees develop a distinct environmental consciousness. Thus, the process of building up such consciousness within the company is very important. In the following section, you will be asked to give information on which measures your company implements in order to strengthen your employees' consciousness in this respect.

50. Do regular employee trainings / information events / discussion groups with regard to the subject-matter of "environmental protection" exist?

Yes

No

a) How often do they take place?

b) Which subject-matters are/were put in the focus?

51. Does an ecological procurement system exist in your company (complying with ecological aspects during procurement)?

Yes

No

52. Does an ecological office management exist in your company (low paper consumption, tap water instead of mineral water, eco boxes)?

Yes, namely

No

53. Which visible measures have been implemented in order to raise awareness among employees for the environmental impact of their actions during their every-day professional life?

(max. 1,000 characters) Please focus on describing the measures, the operational targets, the implementation as well as success monitoring.

54. If you have carried out a project regarding “raising consciousness”, you can now present this project briefly.

(max. 1,000 characters) Please focus on describing the measures, the operational targets, the implementation as well as success monitoring.

Raising Consciousness outside the Company

In the following section, only activities aiming primarily at raising the public's consciousness are to be mentioned. Measures taken with regard to marketing and/or public relations are not to be mentioned in this section.

55. Have you received any special awards relevant with regard to the environment or sustainability? (examples: climate protection prize, sustainability prize, environment prize, Energy Globe, etc.)

Yes

No

If yes, please enclose documents regarding the awards received (certificate, etc.)

56. Do you collaborate purposefully with NGOs on the subject-matters of environmental protection?

Yes

No

57. If you have carried out a project with regard to “raising consciousness outside the company”, you can now present this project briefly.

(max. 1,000 characters) Please focus on describing the measures, the operational targets, the implementation as well as success monitoring.

Encouraging sustainably acting customers

58. Do you carry out measures for promoting sustainable consumption?

Yes

No

Not relevant

because

59. Can your products also be rented instead of bought?

Yes

No

Not relevant

because

60. Do you offer repairs within your company?

- Yes
- No
- Not relevant

because...

61. Do you offer any guarantee exceeding the statutory minimum?

- Yes
- No
- Not relevant

because

62. Do manuals for a sustainable use of the product ranges exist?

- Yes
- No
- Not relevant

because

63. Do you provide consultancy with regard to promoting sustainable manners of use?

- Yes
- No
- Not relevant

because



Definitions

Environmental Management System

An environmental management system (EMS) is a management system of an organisation (company, authority, etc.) in which the areas of responsibility, modes of behaviour, procedures and guidelines for the implementation of the company's environmental policy are structured. Environmental management systems coordinate and regulate environmentally relevant activities of a company, reduce the environmental impact of the company and thus guarantee the company's long-term success. Thus, the basis is the strive to obtain a certifiable standard of the environmental management system (e. g. EMAS, ISO 14001).

Sustainability Report

Besides the economic aspects, a sustainability report also informs the stakeholders on ecological and social aspects of the company. Besides its annual report, the sustainability report is an important part of a company's information policy.

Global Reporting Initiative

In a participatory procedure, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) develops guidelines for the preparation of sustainability reports of large companies, smaller and medium-sized companies, governments and NGOs. For further information, please see: <http://www.globalreporting.org/Home>

Company Policy

Company policy includes measures and decisions which represent a specification of the philosophy and vision.

Energy Management

Energy Management comprises all plans for the supply, choice, establishment and operation of energy technology production units. The target is to possibly fully cover the users' energy needs.