

Good Environmental Choice Australia

Environmental Performance Standard

Reusable Plastic Bags

Core SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals):



SDGs: 3, 6, 12, 14,15



Issued by: Good Environmental Choice Australia Ltd

Level 3, Suite 312, 77 Dunning Ave, Rosebery, NSW 2018

+61 (02) 9699 2850

standards@geca.org.au

www.geca.eco



USE OF GECA STANDARDS

This standard identifies environmental, quality, regulatory, social and ethical criteria that the top environmentally and socially performing products sold in the Australian marketplace can meet in order to be recognised by GECA as “environmentally and socially preferable”.

This standard seeks to set the benchmark for environmentally and socially preferable products. The Australian Ecolabel Program is based on the international standard ISO 14024: “Environmental Labels and Declarations - Guiding Principles” (<https://www.iso.org/standard/72458.html>) which requires environmental labelling specifications to include criteria that are objective, reasonable and verifiable.

This standard may be used by GECA-approved assessor to verify whether a product fully conforms to the criteria set by this standard. Where a product is certified under the Australian Ecolabel Program, it may display the GECA ecolabel (the “Environmental Choice Australia Mark”) to show that the product has been independently assessed and demonstrates conformance with the environmental and social criteria detailed in this standard.

The purpose of voluntary environmental labels and declarations is the communication of verifiable and accurate information for the numerous environmental and social aspects of goods and services. As required by the Trade Practices Act the information cannot be misleading. Such information encourages the demand for, and supply of, those products that cause less harm to the environment, thereby stimulating the potential for market-driven continuous environmental improvement. Where a company has a product certified as conforming to this standard, it may gain a marketing advantage in government and business procurement programs, as well as greater market recognition in general because of its independently verified environmental and social attributes.

The principles of life cycle analysis have been used to set criteria to address relevant environmental loads typical in a product category. As such, this standard may also offer guidance for Australian and international producers to reduce the environmentally harmful impacts of their product(s). Producers may use the environmental, health and social criteria in this standard to design and refine the processing, manufacturing and delivery of their product(s). In addition, producers may find other environmental issues and more measures along the product's life cycle, which are beyond the content of this standard. Producers are encouraged to include and adapt improvements in their environment programs and designs to aim for even better environmental results where technically possible. GECA welcomes feedback where this has been achieved.

While all GECA ecolabelling standards are voluntary, they contain criteria that address compliance with specific laws. In addition, a GECA standard may recognise specific Australian Standards. A prerequisite for certification under the GECA ecolabel is to satisfy the relevant Australian or International Standard, where it is required by law. However, Australian Standards typically define “fit-for-purpose” criteria and usually do not provide assurance of environmental and social preferability. GECA ecolabelling standards go beyond Australian Standards and define an environmental benchmark for the product category.

For further information please contact:

Good Environmental Choice Australia Ltd
Standards Division
Phone: +61 (02) 9699 2850
E-mail: standards@geca.org.au

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Reusable Plastic Bags

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Status:	Current
Current Version:	2.0
Date Published:	27 Apr 2020

Previous Versions	Date Published	Summary of Changes
1.0	February 2018	New standard based on GECA standards Recycled Plastic Products (GECA 02-2007), Recycled Products (RPv1.0i-2015) and Blue Angel Products made from Recycled Plastics (RAL-UZ 30a March 2016)
2.0	April 2020	Revision (after 18 months): Clarification of definitions, removal of PLA plastics from transportation packaging, reference to waste hierarchy and Australian Recycling Label, also change of GECA address, change of text in "USE OF GECA, STANDARDS", change of text in "HOW to APPLY FOR GECA CERTIFICATION", change of DOCUMENT HISTORY, replacing OHSAS18001 by ISO45001:2018 in DoC 19.3, change of link to non-compliant organisations list regarding workplace gender equality DoC 20.4, change of exemption, audit, auditor and auditing body to exception, assessment, assessor and assurance provider, respectively according to new scheme rules, adding definitions of above terminologies, new social criteria 22 and 23 about modern slavery and human and labour rights, addition of SDGs.

HOW TO APPLY FOR GECA CERTIFICATION

Manufacturers or service suppliers interested in GECA certification using the Environmental Choice Australia Ecolabel are encouraged to read carefully through the entire standard and to evaluate whether their products are likely to conform to the standard and to pass the assessment process.

To launch an application, please complete the enquiry form on our website <http://www.geca.eco/contact-us/> or contact GECA via email info@geca.org.au and GECA will forward you an application form. The completed application form is to be sent to GECA by email.

After receiving the completed application form and the application fee, GECA refers the verification process to an approved assurance provider. The assurance provider contacts the applicant and gives a clear overview of the steps needed to achieve certification for their particular product type.

Note: GECA reserves the right to refuse, suspend or postpone an application if (a) the organisation does not meet minimum compliance with Environmental Law, Labour Law, Fair Pay, Work, Health and Safety, Lawful behaviour (e.g. pending or ongoing lawsuits) (b) the organisation does not have transparent reporting that is available/accessible on request (c) the core mission of the organisation and/or product is in conflict with GECA's mission and/or is perceived by GECA to pose a risk to the GECA brand or reputation.



STRUCTURE OF THE STANDARD

Each section within this standard contains criteria and Demonstration of Conformance (DoC). The criteria state the requirements for the product and applicant company with respect to its environmental performance. The DoCs list the information required to verify compliance to the criteria. Selected sections also contain introductory text which outlines the purpose behind the criteria or the reason for its inclusion in the standard.

REQUESTING ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

DoC items are listed for each criterion. The GECA approved assessor/s will request additional information to ensure conformance on a case by case basis. Hence, the conformance items listed below are considered a guide to the minimum Demonstration of Conformance items that will be required from the applicant company.



DEFINITIONS & ACRONYMS

Assessment: Process performed by the assessor to determine if the product conforms with the applicable GECA Standard.

Assessment report: Full document composed by the assurance provider that states how the nominated product conforms or fails to conform to GECA standards. This report shall include appropriate and substantial evidence to justify conformance decision.

Assessor: The individual performing the assessment as an employee or contractor of the Assurance Provider.

Assurance provider: Person or organisation accredited by the Independent Appointment Panel performing the conformance assessment.

ASTM: American Society for Testing and Materials.

Demonstration of Conformance (DoC): Defines sources of evidence acceptable to GECA to demonstrate compliance with each criterion of the standard. An applicant manufacturer must provide documentation to the approved assurance providers in order to demonstrate conformance of its products under assessment. For further information on Demonstration of Conformance requirements see *Evidence of Conformance* at the end of this standard.

Exception: An exception is granted when an applicant is given permission by the GECA CEO or Board to become certified despite not meeting a particular criterion in the standard as identified during the assessment process, usually with a mandatory transition period.

GECA: Good Environmental Choice Australia Ltd.

GECA Approved Assessor: An Assessor that has been accredited to assess against GECA's Scheme Rules.

Label means the Good Environmental Choice Australia Label.

Recycled Content includes:

- **Post-Consumer:** Material generated by households, or by commercial, industrial and institutional facilities in their role as end-users of the product, which has been discarded. This includes returns of material from the distribution chain through a product stewardship process.
- **Pre-Consumer:** Material diverted from the waste stream during a manufacturing process. It is material that has been discarded prior to consumer use and may include defective product, sawdust, unused trimmings etc. It is collected from a manufacturing process to be used in another. Excluded is re-utilisation of materials such as rework, regrind or scrap generated in a process and capable of being reclaimed within the same process that generated it.
- **Reusable Plastic Bag:** A shopping bag that can be reused many times for the intended purpose of the bag, that is, as a carrier bag. It is an alternative to single-use paper or plastic bags. This does not include any bags marketed as single use. The handle and/or base may consist of materials other than plastic. The bag must be able to be used for its original purpose at the minimum required uses to have an environmental impact less than a single use bag. See: [Page 79 of The Danish Environmental Protection Agency's LCA of grocery carrier bags \(2018\),
https://www2.mst.dk/udgiv/publications/2018/02/978-87-93614-73-4.pdf](https://www2.mst.dk/udgiv/publications/2018/02/978-87-93614-73-4.pdf).



BACKGROUND

Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) is a not-for-profit organisation running an independently assessed green certification program. GECA develops standards against which environmentally preferable products can get certified. These standards are designed to reward top performing products and services.

Plastic bags are commonly used by a large number of consumers for carrying products. Currently, vast numbers of Australian consumers use disposable bags for carrying their shopping, with over 7 billion single-use plastic bags in circulation each year. Many plastic bags are made from petroleum and natural gas which are non-renewable resources. They can also be made from coal and cellulose. Furthermore, as these plastics degrade, plastic particles accumulate in the environment and, in some cases, animals.

Plastic bags contribute to a range of environmental impacts, such as waterway pollution, landfill constraints, wildlife impacts, litter, marine health and resource depletion. Progress in the plastics industry has allowed the development of recycling systems for plastics with a comparatively lower level of environmental load compared to virgin materials. These recycled products have appropriate strength and performance characteristics making them suitable for their intended purpose. To further diminish the environmental damage of plastic bags, single use bags are excluded from the scope of this standards due to their short lifespan.

The primary purpose of this standard is to define environmental performance criteria for reusable plastic bags. Reusable plastic bags are environmentally preferable because they reduce demand for virgin plastic materials and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, thus relieving the environmental burdens.

This standard specifies several requirements for reusable plastic bags, including the minimum quantities of recycled plastic by weight in certified products. It also restricts certain other treatments or coatings that would restrict further recycling, and requires the use of resin codes to encourage further post-consumer recycling, where available. When a product is certified against Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA)'s Reusable Plastic Bag standard, consumers can be sure that the product has been assessed to be made for purpose, and to meet human health, environmental and ethical impact criteria. GECA certification removes doubt and confusion and makes identifying environmentally and socially preferable products easier.



FIT FOR PURPOSE CRITERIA

SDG 12

STANDARD CATEGORY SCOPE

This standard is applicable to reusable plastic bags and excludes biodegradable bags, compostable bags and those made of PLA plastics.

Fitness for Purpose

To be certified, the product(s) must be fit to perform its intended purpose or application. A minimum level of quality and durability is implicit before the GECA ecolabel can be displayed on the product. The applicant must ensure that the product is fit for its intended purpose.

Criterion 1: The product shall be fit for its intended purpose, including reusability and recyclability or product stewardship, and shall meet performance requirements of relevant Australian standards; or the product meets the applicable and accepted standard in its target market if it is to be exported. If there is no relevant Australian Standard, the product can demonstrate sufficient quality by providing testing reports from an independent organisation or case studies from installations demonstrating suitability and quality for the intended purpose of the product.

The bag thickness must be at least 35 µm (based on South Australian Plastic Shopping Bags (Waste Avoidance) Act 2008 to distinguish single-use from reusable plastic bags).

The bag must be fit for purpose to be reused for its original use a minimum number of times that ensures the impact in all life cycle categories is less than a single use bag. See: Page 79 of The Danish Environmental Protection Agency's LCA of grocery carrier bags (2018), <https://www2.mst.dk/udgiv/publications/2018/02/978-87-93614-73-4.pdf>.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 1.1: Documentation identifying applicable standards or performance requirements met by the product supported by relevant test reports and results; and

DoC 1.2: Documentation showing that a QMS is in place which includes the production process and is certified; and

DoC 1.3: Complete product specification, including type of material used; content of each material including recycled and virgin content; grade/level of recycled material used; thickness, dimension and weight of plastic bag; and

DoC 1.4: Material specification of purchased recycled material; and

DoC 1.5: Certificate of purchased recycled material; and

DoC 1.6: Purchasing invoice of recycled material; required to provide in monthly basis for review; and

DoC 1.7: Mass balance record of recycled material; required to provide in monthly basis for review; and

DoC 1.8: Recycled material consumption record; required to provide in monthly basis for review.



MATERIAL REQUIREMENTS

Recycled Content

Criterion 2: The quantity of recycled material must be significant in order to be recognised as being environmentally preferable to virgin materials. There are sometimes limitations to recycled content use due to strength and other requirements and the following level has been set as minimum requirement for certification. The percentage of post-consumer materials in the finished plastic bags should be at least 80% by weight.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 2.1: Declaration of conformance supported by relevant quality control and production documentation, including purchase receipts of recycled content.

Criterion 3: Post Consumption Recycling, Coatings, Labels and Other Treatment Recyclability and Product Stewardship

Certified products must be recyclable at the end of their normal life. For materials that cannot be recycled in mainstream recycling schemes, manufacturers of certified products must have an existing product stewardship offer, such as RedCycle, or other market offering product take-back at end of life for the certified product range. Products that are taken back under such a program shall not be disposed of in landfill or by incineration.

The Waste Hierarchy should be employed when determining appropriate end of life considerations for reusable plastic bags, placing emphasis on avoidance, then reuse and finally appropriate methods of recycling. Closed loop solutions should also be encouraged. For example, the recovery of reusable bags at the end of their life to feed into the creation of Boomerang Bags.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 3.1: Demonstration of an acceptable product stewardship program must include documentation outlining the proposed material flows for products collected at end of life and internal documentation confirming the establishment and function of a take-back research program where final disposal arrangements are not currently in place; and/or

DoC 3.2: Evidence of recyclability or copy of PREP Assessment Report(<https://prep.org.au/main/content/home>).

Criterion 4: Impregnations or Coatings

The reusable plastic bags must not be impregnated, labelled, coated or otherwise treated in a manner which would prevent post-consumer recycling.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 4.1: Details of materials used including information on the input of recycled and virgin materials reported by weight if applicable; and

DoC 4.2: Evidence of recyclability or copy of PREP Assessment Report; and/or

DoC 4.3: Details of re-use programs for products and within the applicant company.

Criterion 5: Separability

Non-homogeneous certified products must be easily separable with common tools at the normal end of life to facilitate recycling of individual components. For example, a string handle or strengthened base of another material. Non-



homogenous certified products must clearly display instructions for separation and recycling of components.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 5.1: For non-homogeneous products, written plan detailing the disassembly of the components and outlining recycling pathways for each component; and

DoC 5.2: Demonstration of suitable instructions for recycling on the bag or the Australian Recycling Label <https://recyclingnearyou.com.au/arl/>; and

DoC 5.3: Demonstration of FSC or PEFC certification for handles or base inserts made of cardboard or paper; and/or

DoC 5.4: Demonstration of GECA Textiles and Leather certification, Standard 100 OEKO-TEX certification or equivalent.



HEALTH CRITERIA

SDG 3

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The criteria in this section are intended to address some of the main hazardous substances found across this product category which may be added to the final product or to product ingredients during manufacturing. The intention is to reduce the use of hazardous materials and to prevent pollutants entering the environment and to protect human health.

Banned Substances

Certain substances or compound classes have been identified as particularly harmful for human health and/or the environment.

Criterion 6: In order to promote the reduction of pollutant hazards in the manufacture, use, or disposal of products the following substances (and where appropriate, their compounds) must not be added to products or used during manufacture*:

- Compounds or ingredients that are or may decompose into substances that are classified as a known or suspected endocrine disruptor, carcinogen, mutagen or teratogen, including:
 - any R45 (H350), R46 (H340), R48 (H372, H373), R49 (H350) substances,
 - IARC group 1 or 2A substances,
 - EU consolidated list of C/M/R category 1 or 2 substances
- Substances of Very High Concern listed on the REACH Candidate list (<http://echa.europa.eu/candidate-list-table>).
- The requirements of Annex XVII, Item 23 of the REACH Regulation regarding the ban on the use of cadmium compounds, as amended, shall be complied with.

DoC 6.1: SDS, chemical names and CAS numbers for each ingredient added to the product or used during manufacture.

Note:

It is accepted that the above substances may have been used in previous lifecycles. These trace levels may not exceed 0.1% by weight.

*This only refers to the manufacturing process of the ecolabelled products but not to any manufacturing processes in previous lifecycles.

Criterion 7: The following compounds, their functional derivatives or in-situ precursors shall not be added to finished products, their component parts or be used for the manufacturing process

- Aniline based amines;
- Aziridine or polyaziridines;
- Elemental halogens (e.g. fluorine, chlorine);
- Fluoropolymer additives or coatings;
- Methylene chloride or other halogenated organic compounds (e.g. solvents, binding agents);
- Phthalates that at the time of application are classified with risk phrases H360, H361;
- Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDE), polybrominated biphenyls (PBB) or any other halogenated flame retardants
- 1,3 butadiene.
- Carcinogenic substances of category 1A, 1B or 2 according to Table 3.1 of Annex VI of Regulation (EC) 1272/2008 or in TRGS 905

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- Mutagenic substances of category 1A, 1B or 2 according to Table 3.1 of Annex VI of Regulation (EC) 1272/2008 or in TRGS 905
- Reprotoxic substances of category 1A, 1B or 2 according to Table 3.1 of Annex VI of Regulation (EC) 1272/2008 or in TRGS 905
- Persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (PBT substances) or very persistent or very accumulative (vPvB substances) according to the criteria of Annex XIII to the REACH Regulation or of very high concern for other reasons and which have been included in the list (so-called List of Candidates) set up in accordance with REACH, Article 59, paragraph 1.

Moreover, no substances may be added that are labelled with the following R or H phrases in accordance with Table 3.2 of Annex VI to Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 or meet the criteria for such classification:

- H 370 (R 39/23/24/25/26/27/28) Causes damage to organs
- H 371 (R 68/20/21/22) May cause damage to organs
- H 372 (R 48/25/24/23) Causes damage to organs
- H 373 (R 48/20/21/22) May cause damage to organs

- H 410 (R 50/53) Very toxic to aquatic life with long lasting effects

DoC 7.1: SDS, chemical names and CAS numbers for each ingredient added to the product or used during manufacture.

Note:

It is accepted that the above substances may have been used in previous lifecycles. These trace levels may not exceed 0.1% by weight.

*This only refers to the manufacturing process of the ecolabelled product(s) but not to any manufacturing processes in previous lifecycles.

Limited Substances

Criterion 8: The use of the following substances in the production of the product is limited to a total of 0.1% w/w:

- Respiratory and contact sensitisers classified with R42 (H334) or R43 (H317);
- Acutely toxic compounds R23 (H330, H331), R24 (H311), R25 (H301), R26 (H330), R27 (H310) or R28 (H300)

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 8.1: SDS, chemical names and CAS numbers for each ingredient added to the product or used during manufacture.

Criterion 9: The use of aquatic ecotoxic substances with long lasting effects classified with R51/53 (H411), R 52/53 (H412) or R53 (H413) is limited to a total of 1% w/w.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 9.1: SDS, chemical names and CAS numbers for each ingredient added to the product or used during manufacture.



ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERIA

SDGs 14, 15

Criterion 10: Soil and Water Management

If mixed plastic waste is used to manufacture finished products all products made thereof that will come in direct contact with soil and water must not have any adverse impact on the environment.

DoC 10.1: Executive Declaration of compliance to this criterion; and/or

DoC 10.2: Relevant test reports undertaken by an independent testing body

DESIGN FOR ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Information

Criterion 11: Ensure that appropriate information describing disposal methods or product stewardship scheme for the product will be provided at the time of sale to encourage further recycling. This information should be printed directly on the bag.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 11.1: Examples of information printed on the bag; and

DoC 11.2: Visual inspection of sample bag with printed information

Packaging Used in Transportation Requirements

Any packaging used for reasons other than transportation must be justified by the manufacturer.

Criterion 12: Packaging for transportation must comply with at least one of the following:

- Each material constituting >20% by weight of the total primary and secondary packaging used, must contain at least 50% recycled content by weight;
- Each material constituting >20% by weight of the total primary and secondary packaging used, must be compostable to a relevant ASTM or ISO standard;
- Each material constituting >20% by weight of the total primary and secondary packaging used, must be biodegradable to a relevant ASTM or ISO standard such as ASTM D5511; or
- Each separable item constituting >20% by weight of the total primary and secondary packaging, must be recyclable. This may be demonstrated using the Packaging Recyclability Evaluation Portal (PREP) which informs the use of the Australasian Recycling Label or other evidence of recyclability.

Paper and cardboard packaging must be either certified under recognised forest certification scheme (e.g. FSC or PEFC) or contain at least 30% recycled content by weight.

Material used for the transport of products (tertiary packaging) and whose disposal is not the responsibility of the end consumer may be excepted from the above requirements if they are re-used by the applicant, or are recyclable in specialist recycling facilities.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 12.1: Details of materials used in the product and their manufacture, including information on the input of recycled and virgin materials reported by weight if applicable. The recycled content can be averaged over a 12-month period to find the amount or range of recycled content; and /or

DoC 12.2: Evidence of recyclability or copy of PREP Assessment Report; and/or

DoC 12.3: Evidence of certification under relevant forest certification scheme; and/or

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DoC 12.4: Details of re-use programs for transport materials within the applicant company.

Criterion 13: Plastic packaging must be marked with a plastics identification code. It is not mandatory for small components including caps and pump-spray nozzles to be marked.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 13.1: Visual inspection of each plastic component of the packaging.

Criterion 14: Packaging must not be pressurised.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 14.1: Signed declaration from an Executive Officer of the manufacturing company, stating that the packaging is not pressurised.

Waste Management

Waste management as part of the manufacturing process can be a key factor in reducing a manufacturer's environmental impact and operating costs.

Criterion 15: The manufacturer must have effective policies and procedures to minimise waste, including measures to recycle waste materials from the production process.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 15.1: A copy of relevant policies and procedures in use by the company, with relevant sections highlighted.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLAIMS

Criterion 16: Any environmental claims beyond the scope of this Standard that have been applied to a product must comply with ISO 14021, and the applicant must be able to verify these claims to GECA.

Any product making greenhouse related claims must comply with ISO 14064-3 "Specification with guidance for the validation and verification of greenhouse gas assertions" and be able to verify these claims to GECA.

For claims outside the scope of ISO 14021 or ISO 14064, clear statement of the test method and the conditions under which the product was tested is required, along with a clear explanation of the relevance of the test method to the environmental claim.

The applicant or manufacturer must not claim that the product is 'odour free', 'low odour', 'no odour' or similar if odour-masking agents are used.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 16.1: A copy of any relevant advertising material currently in use; and

DoC 16.2: Relevant documentation confirming the grounds of the claim and its compliance with this criterion. and

A signed declaration from the Chief Executive Officer or authorised representative of the relevant company (e.g. the supplier) stating that any environmental claims made by the company regarding the product in the future will be verified using ISO 14021 and / or GECA certification.



SOCIAL CRITERIA

SDGs 5, 10

SOCIAL AND LEGAL COMPLIANCE

This section addresses compliance with law and the societal attributes of the manufacturer and the applicant company. Criteria for social aspects of the product are required under the international standard on ecolabelling (ISO 14024), and this section is common to all GECA standards. Equivalent sections are included in standards of all other GEN member ecolabelling bodies around the world. The social aspect partially addresses the third dimension of sustainability - Society. This was first understood by manufacturers under the name Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). In this standard social criteria include laws for equal opportunity, safety and protection of workers. GECA certification cannot be given to any company that illegally exploits workers or their families.

Note: In cases where there is a conflict between GECA requirements in this section and relevant legislation or regulations introduced by governments and agencies, national legislation overrides state legislation and state legislation overrides regulations and standards issued by GECA.

Environmental Legislation

Criterion 17: The manufacturer(s) of the product and the applicant company are required by law to comply with relevant environmental legislation and government orders at the Local, State and Commonwealth levels (if these have been issued). Where a manufacturer is from an overseas jurisdiction, it is that jurisdiction's environmental regulations that apply. Where the manufacturer has been found guilty of a breach of any environmental legislation or permit(s) within the last 2-years there must be evidence of corrective action.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 17.1: Signed declaration from an Executive Officer of the organisation stating compliance to environmental legislation and government orders; as well as declaration of any breaches of environmental legislation or permits and the date of the breach. Applicant must:

- provide a Legal Register listing applicable environmental legislation (including applicable Regulations under that legislation) in, or as an attachment to, this declaration. The Legal Register must, for each applicable Act and Regulation listed, state whether the manufacturer and applicant company comply; or
- have a certified ISO 14001, Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) or equivalent environmental management system in place; and

DoC 17.2: Any relevant permits granted by the EPA or an equivalent national body; and

DoC 17.3: Evidence of corrective action following a guilty verdict, if applicable.

In this criterion, 'Regulation' means an entire regulatory instrument (for example, the Environmentally Hazardous Chemicals Regulation 2008) and not the individual sections, provisions or clauses of a regulatory instrument.

Fair Pay (Minimum entitlements including wages)

Criterion 18: All employees and contractors must receive at least the applicable minimum wage including penalty rates, allowances and superannuation and be provided all other minimum entitlements including in relation to hours, leave and termination. All employees shall be covered by a Federal or State award; a certified industrial agreement or a registered agreement as determined by the Australian Government Fair Work Ombudsman, or a State or Territory Workplace Relations Agency; or a workplace agreement in compliance with Fair Work Act 2009 section 61 – National Employment Standard. A manufacturer / applicant company shall demonstrate compliance to the following requirements as taken from the ILO Convention: Convention 100 – Equal Remuneration Convention.

Where a manufacturer is from an overseas jurisdiction, it is that jurisdiction's equivalent regulations that apply.

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Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 18.1: Signed declaration of compliance from an Executive Officer of the organisation confirming compliance with all minimum entitlements including wages; and

DoC 18.2: List of applicable awards, certified industrial agreements or registered agreements and the number of workers to which they apply, and number of workers not covered by such; and

DoC 18.3: Text or template of a typical workplace agreement offered to employees of the company; and sample payslips

DoC 18.4: Evidence of corrective action following identification of a breach of legislation, if applicable.

Workplace Safety

Criterion 19: A manufacturer/ applicant company must demonstrate compliance to the following requirements as taken from the ILO Conventions:

a) Convention 155 – Occupational Safety and Health and its accompanying Recommendation No. 164;

b) Convention 161 – Occupational Health Services and its accompanying Recommendation No. 171;

And

general compliance with State or Territory Legislation concerning Occupational, Health and Safety (OHS) / Work Health and Safety (WHS) and/or the Commonwealth Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988, where applicable. Where a manufacturer is from an overseas jurisdiction, it is that jurisdiction's equivalent regulations that apply. Where a producer/applicant company has been found guilty of a breach of relevant legislation within the last 2 years, there shall be evidence of corrective action.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 19.1: Signed declaration from an Executive Officer of the organisation stating compliance to workplace legislation and government orders, as well as declaration of any breaches of legislation and the date of the breach. Applicants must list all applicable legislation in, or as an attachment to, this declaration;

DoC 19.2: Copy of the company Occupational / Workplace H&S policy and procedures;

DoC 19.3: Copy of employee induction records, training records, meeting records and risk assessments; or current ISO 45001:2018 (former OHSAS 18001), AS/NZS 4801 or equivalent certification; or third party certification stating compliance to OH&S Act 2004 and the OH&S Regulations 2007 or equivalent jurisdiction specific legislation; and

DoC 19.4: Evidence of corrective action following a guilty verdict, if applicable.

Equal Opportunity

Criterion 20: The manufacturer and/or applicant company shall demonstrate general compliance with the requirements of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975, Sex Discrimination Act 1984, Disability Discrimination Act 1992, Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 and complementary State Legislation. The manufacturer cannot be in the list of 'named' or non-compliant employers under the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012. Where a manufacturer / applicant company is from an overseas jurisdiction, it is that jurisdiction's equivalent regulations that apply. Where a manufacturer has been found guilty of a breach of relevant legislation within the last 2-years, there must be evidence of corrective action.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 20.1: Signed declaration of compliance from an Executive Officer of the organisation;

DoC 20.2: Copy of relevant company policies and procedures;

DoC 20.3: Evidence of corrective action following a guilty verdict, if applicable; and

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DoC 20.4: The assessor will verify that the company does not appear on the following list:
<https://www.wgea.gov.au/non-compliant-list>

Lawful Conduct

Criterion 21: The manufacturer (director) / applicant company shall not have been convicted of any breach of criminal law, any breach of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 or the Corporations Act 2001, including prosecution or de-listing by the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX) or international equivalent. Where a manufacturer is from an overseas jurisdiction, it is that jurisdiction's equivalent regulations that apply. Where a manufacturer has been found guilty of a breach of relevant legislation within the last 2-years, there must be evidence of corrective action.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 21.1: Signed declaration from an Executive Officer of the organisation; and

DoC 21.2: Evidence of corrective action following a guilty verdict, if applicable.

Modern Slavery

Criterion 22: The applicant company shall promote the elimination of Modern Slavery through collaboration with their supply chain, in accordance with the Australian Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act 2018 or NSW Modern Slavery Act 2018 and the following requirements as taken from the ILO Conventions:

- a) Conventions 29 and 105 – Elimination of Forced and Compulsory Labour; and
- b) Convention 182 – Worst Forms of Child Labour

Where an applicant has found instances of modern slavery in their business operations and or supply chains in the past two years, there shall be evidence of a corrective action.

This criterion shall be valid for applicant companies of any size and it not restricted to any annual revenue threshold.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 22.1: Copy of the published Modern Slavery Statement from within the previous 12 months. The Modern Slavery Statement shall comply with the seven mandatory criteria of the Act as below:

- a) Identify the reporting entity
- b) Describe reporting entity's structure, operations and supply chains
- c) Describe the risks of modern slavery practices in the operations and supply chains of the reporting entity and any entities it owns or controls
- d) Describe the actions taken by the reporting entity and any entities it owns or controls to assess and address these risks, including due diligence and remediation processes
- e) Describe how the reporting entity assesses the effectiveness of these actions
- f) Describe the process of consultation with any entities the reporting entity owns or controls
- g) In addition to the modern slavery report, some supporting documents may be asked to be cited at the main site of manufacturing during the on-site assessment:

If unable to be presented, a rationale will be required; also in case that supportive documentation is unavailable at time of certification, a grace period of 3 year or one certification period may be granted (no more than one certification period will be given).

The documents may include but not limited to the following documentation to support the modern slavery report:

- h) Employment records
- i) List of contractors

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- j) Leave entitlements policy
- k) Any relevant Human Resources policy
- l) Payslips/ wage scales/ remuneration policy
- m) Minimum age of employment policy
- n) Any other relevant information

Where an organisation has not previously reported on the Australian Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act 2018 or NSW Modern Slavery Act 2018 and does not meet the reporting threshold of the NSW or Commonwealth legislation, the organisation shall publish a Modern Slavery Statement within 3 years of Certification on a voluntary basis. A grace period of up to 1 cycle of certification may be granted depending on the company's reporting period.

Human Rights including Labour Rights

Criterion 23: The service provider /applicant company shall respect internationally recognised human rights including labour rights, including the rights set out in:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work

The service provider / applicant company shall also take steps to ensure human rights are respected in its supply chain.

Where a service provider has been found to breach this criterion in the past two years, there must be evidence of corrective action.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 23.1: The service provider / applicant shall provide evidence of its commitments to human rights including labour rights (e.g. policies, published reports containing disclosure in relation to human rights (e.g. sustainability report), commitments to international initiatives such as the UN Global Compact); and

DoC 23.2: The manufacturer/applicant shall provide a map of at least one tier of their supply chain (this is related to the products undergoing application for certification); and

DoC 23.3: Evidence of implementation of a Supplier 'Code of Conduct' which includes human rights including labour rights, health and safety of workers and environmental compliance; and

DoC 23.4: Evidence of assessment of suppliers in relation to human rights and recommendations for improvements in their supply chain; and

DoC 23.5: Evidence of ISO 20400 implementation; or

DoC 23.6: Evidence of valid SA8000 certification, or other equivalent certification; or

DoC 23.7: Evidence of being a signatory to the UN Global Compact; or

DoC 23.8: SEDEX membership (<https://www.sedexglobal.com/>); or

DoC 23.9: GRI 400 Report (Global Report Initiative) <https://www.globalreporting.org/standards/gri-standards-download-center/?q=36c8c7e6-f3ac-4f25-b744-e5474b9ef279>.

And

DoC 23.10: Evidence of corrective action, if applicable.

If DoCs 23.5 – 23.9 cannot be provided, manufacturer/ applicant shall provide:

DoC 23.11: Evidence of commitment to achieve certification in accordance with DoC 23.6 within one year; or



DoC 23.12: Evidence of becoming a signatory to the UN Global Compact within six months.

and

DoC 23.13: Evidence of corrective action, if applicable.

GECA acknowledges that this is an emerging area of compliance and conformance. Therefore, alternative certifications, standards, ethical membership organisations or compliance reporting may be recognised as demonstration of conformance where an exception is granted by the GECA Board.



EVIDENCE OF CONFORMANCE

Demonstration of Conformance (DoC)

This section lists the sources of evidence which may be considered during a conformance assessment to establish compliance with this standard. This list is provided in order to guide the applicant manufacturer through the requirements of the standard and to facilitate the preparation of an application.

The DoC requirements as specified, along with each criterion in the standard, define specific sources of evidence acceptable to GECA. Where specific standards or test methods are required, it is intended that the most recent version of the applicable standard or method are used. In cases where criteria offer several DoC requirements, it is the sole decision of the approved assurance provider to choose the appropriate option during the preliminary stage of the assessment. If any or none of the recommended DoC requirements stipulated for a particular criterion in the standard are applicable or presented for valid reasons for a product under assessment, then the appointed CAB may choose an alternative but equivalent source of evidence. In cases where alternative sources of evidence have been accepted for the verification of the product, the CAB will inform GECA by providing a report on the details as far as appropriate. GECA will use this information to continuously improve the DoC requirements stipulated by each standard.

The DoC requirements are summarised in Appendix A to assist applicants in preparing documentation for the verification process with a GECA accredited CAB.



APPLICATION CHECKLIST

The Application Checklist is intended to guide the applicant company through the application and verification process. The company may collect all information that is required for the verification of the product and attach the relevant documents to their application. The table below summarises the DoC requirements for each criterion in the standard.

Criterion Number	Criterion Content	Demonstration of Conformance See standard body for details	Evidence Attached	Complies Y/ N or NA
Fitness For Purpose				
Criterion 1	The product shall be fit for its intended purpose, including reusability and recyclability or product stewardship.	Documentation identifying applicable standards or performance requirements met by the product supported by relevant test reports and results	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Documentation showing that a QMS is in place which includes the production process and is certified	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Complete product specification, including type of material used; content of each material including recycled and virgin content; grade/level of recycled material used; thickness, dimension and weight of plastic bag	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Material specification of purchased recycled material	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Certificate of purchased recycled material; or Purchasing invoice of recycled material; required to provide in monthly basis for review; or Mass balance record of recycled material; required to provide in monthly basis for review; or Recycled material consumption record; required to provide in monthly basis for review.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Material Requirements				
Criterion 2	Recycled Content: The percentage of post-consumer materials in the finished plastic bags should be at least 80% by weight.	Declaration of conformance supported by relevant quality control and production documentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Criterion 3	Recyclability and Product Stewardship	Demonstration of an acceptable product stewardship program must include documentation outlining the proposed material flows for products collected at end of life and internal documentation confirming the establishment and function of a take-back research program where final disposal arrangements are not currently in place; and/or	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Evidence of recyclability or copy of PREP Assessment Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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Criterion Number	Criterion Content	Demonstration of Conformance See standard body for details	Evidence Attached	Complies Y/ N or NA
Criterion 4	Impregnations or Coatings	Details of materials used including information on the input of recycled and virgin materials reported by weight if applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Evidence of recyclability or copy of PREP Assessment Report; and/or	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Details of re-use programs for products and within the applicant company	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Criterion 5	Separability	For non-homogeneous products, written plan detailing the disassembly of the components and outlining recycling pathways for each component	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Demonstration of FSC or PEFC certification for handles or base inserts made of cardboard or paper	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Demonstration of GECA Textiles and Leather certification, Standard 100 OEKO-TEX certification or equivalent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Hazardous Materials				
Criterion 6	Banned Substances – reduction of pollutant hazards	SDS, chemical names and CAS numbers for each ingredient added to the product or used during manufacture	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Criterion 7	Banned Substances – continued	SDS, chemical names and CAS numbers for each ingredient added to the product or used during manufacture	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Criterion 8	Limited Substances – part 1	SDS, chemical names and CAS numbers for each ingredient added to the product or used during manufacture	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Criterion 9	Limited Substances – part 2	SDS, chemical names and CAS numbers for each ingredient added to the product or used during manufacture	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Design for Environment				
Criterion 10	Soil and Water Management	Executive Declaration of compliance to this criterion; and/or	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Relevant test reports undertaken by an independent testing body	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Criterion 11	Environmental Information	Examples of information provided at time of sale	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Documented process to ensure information is provided at time of sale	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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Criterion Number	Criterion Content	Demonstration of Conformance See standard body for details	Evidence Attached	Complies Y/ N or NA
Criterion 12	Packaging for Transportation	Details of materials used in the product and their manufacture, including information on the input of recycled and virgin materials reported by weight if applicable. The recycled content can be averaged over a 12-month period to find the amount or range of recycled content; and /or	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Evidence of recyclability or copy of PREP Assessment Report; and/or	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Evidence of certification under relevant forest certification scheme; and/or	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Details of re-use programs for transport materials within the applicant company	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Criterion 13	Plastic Packaging	Visual inspection of each plastic component of the packaging	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Criterion 14	Packaging must not be pressurised	Signed declaration from an Executive Officer of the manufacturing company, stating that the packaging is not pressurised	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Criterion 15	Waste Management	A copy of relevant policies and procedures in use by the company, with relevant sections highlighted	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Environmental Claims				
Criterion 16	Environmental claims must comply with ISO 14021	A copy of any relevant advertising material currently in use	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Relevant documentation confirming the grounds of the claim and its compliance with this criterion	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		A signed declaration from the Chief Executive Officer or authorised representative of the relevant company (e.g. the supplier) stating that any environmental claims made by the company regarding the product in the future will be verified using ISO 14021 and / or GECA certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Social and Legal Compliance				
Criterion 17	Environmental Legislation	Signed declaration from an Executive Officer of the organisation stating compliance to environmental legislation and government orders; as well as declaration of any breaches of environmental legislation or permits and the date of the breach	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Any relevant permits granted by the EPA or an equivalent national body	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Evidence of corrective action following a guilty verdict, if applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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Criterion Number	Criterion Content	Demonstration of Conformance See standard body for details	Evidence Attached	Complies Y/ N or NA
Criterion 18	Fair Pay	Signed declaration of compliance from an Executive Officer of the organisation confirming compliance with all minimum entitlements including wages	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		List of applicable awards, certified industrial agreements or registered agreements and the number of workers to which they apply, and number of workers not covered by suc	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Text or template of a typical workplace agreement offered to employees of the company and sample payslips Evidence of corrective action following identification of a breach of legislation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Criterion 19	Workplace Safety	Signed declaration from an Executive Officer of the organisation stating compliance to workplace legislation and government orders, as well as declaration of any breaches of legislation and the date of the breach. Applicants must list all applicable legislation in, or as an attachment to, this declaration	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Copy of the company Occupational / Workplace H&S policy and procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Copy of employee induction records, training records, meeting records and risk assessments; or current ISO 45001:2018 (former OHSAS 18001), AS/NZS 4801 or equivalent certification; or third party certification stating compliance to OH&S Act 2004 and the OH&S Regulations 2007 or equivalent jurisdiction specific legislation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Evidence of corrective action following a guilty verdict, if applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Criterion 20	Equal Opportunity	Signed declaration of compliance from an Executive Officer of the organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Copy of relevant company policies and procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Evidence of corrective action following a guilty verdict, if applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		The assessor will verify that the company does not appear on the following list: https://www.wgea.gov.au/about-legislation/complying-act	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Criterion 21	Lawful Conduct	Signed declaration from an Executive Officer of the organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Evidence of corrective action following a guilty verdict, if applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	

[illegible]