

Good Environmental Choice Australia Environmental Performance Standard

International Ecolabelled Products



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USE OF GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL CHOICE AUSTRALIA (GECA) STANDARDS

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

This standard seeks to set the benchmark for environmentally preferable products. The Australian Ecolabel Program is based on the international standard ISO 14024: “Environmental Labels and Declarations - Guiding Principles” which requires environmental labelling specifications to include criteria that are objective, reasonable and verifiable.

This standard may be used by GECA appointed conformity assessment bodies 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 audited 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 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 attributes.

The principles of life cycle management 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 producers to reduce the environmentally harmful impacts of their product(s). Producers may use the environmental 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, nevertheless 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 preferability. GECA ecolabelling standards go beyond Australian Standards and define an environmental benchmark for the product category.

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Standards Title

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Status: Current
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Previous Versions	Date Published	Summary of Changes
1.1	June, 2007	Mutual Recognition Agreement replaced by GENICES, EU-Ecolabel or other international ecolabel scheme. Introduction of environmental claim criterion.
2.0i	July, 2017	Update: Inclusion of notes in 'How to apply for GECA Certification' and 'Social and Legal Compliance' sections.

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 contact GECA by phone, email or via the GECA website (www.geca.org.au). The completed application form can be sent to GECA either by mail, fax or email.

After receiving the completed application form and the application fee, GECA refers the verification process to an appointed auditing body. The auditing body 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

Demonstration of Conformance items are listed for each criterion. The GECA approved auditor/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

AS: Australian Standard.

ASTM: American Society for Testing and Materials.

CAB: Conformity Assessment Body as described by GECA's Scheme Rules. CABs are often referred to as 'auditors', however only GECA appointed auditors may be used to obtain GECA certification.

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 appointed auditing body in order to demonstrate conformance of its products under assessment. For further information on Demonstration of Conformance requirements see *Appendix A - Evidence of Conformance* at the end of this standard.

EPA: Environmental Protection Agency, or Environmental Protection Authority.

ISO: International Organization for Standardization.

GECA: Good Environmental Choice Australia Ltd.

GECA Mark: The Environmental Choice Australia Mark, the mark awarded to applicants complying with GECA ecolabelling standards after assessment by a GECA appointed auditing body.

GEN: Global Eco-labelling Network.

GENICES: Global Eco-labelling Network's Internationally Coordinated Eco-labelling System.

Producer/Manufacturer: For the purpose of this standard these terms comprise both manufacturers of a product as well as service suppliers. These may not necessarily be the companies that apply for GECA certification, since certification can also be awarded to retailers of a product. However, for some criteria it is required that the original manufacturer of the product conforms to particular requirements.



BACKGROUND

A GECA product standard sets limits for the most material environmental loads attributable to goods and/or services throughout their life cycle. This particular standard seeks to recognise environmental benchmarks set by a member certified under the Global Eco-labelling Network's Internationally Coordinated Eco-labelling System (GENICES), by the EU-Ecolabel, and by other equivalent international ecolabels in cases where GECA has confidence in the environmental stringency, accuracy and procedures used by the overseas organisations. The scope is intended for products and services sold in the Australian market that fall into a product or service category that is currently not covered by an existing GECA standard.

GECA reserves the right to assess the applicable scheme and standard to ensure conformance to the objectives of the Australian Ecolabel program.

The criteria are used for environmental labelling, implemented by GECA as part of the Australian Ecolabelling program. This Standard is voluntary, and after verification, enables certified products to display an environmental label (ecolabel) as implemented by GECA to show it is environmentally preferable.

Current GENICES member, EU-Ecolabel or other equivalent GECA approved international ecolabel certificate is considered sufficient Demonstration of Conformance against Criteria 2 - Criterion 8 in this standard where the overseas standard covers equivalent criteria.

Site audits are not required as part of product / services auditing against this standard.



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STANDARD CATEGORY SCOPE

Criterion 1: The scope of this standard is applicable to products which:

- fall into a product or service category that is currently not covered by an existing GECA standard; and
- are certified by an equivalent GECA approved international ecolabel.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 1.1: A brief description of the product(s) or product range as they apply to the scope of this standard.

DoC 1.2: Copy of current GENICES certified GEN member ecolabel certificate, EU-Ecolabel certificate or other international ecolabel certificate.

DoC 1.3: Conformation that the scope of the international standard has been approved by GECA.

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.

Applicable Standards and Demonstrated Performance

Criterion 2: The product must:

- meet the performance requirements of relevant Australian or international standards for its intended application; or
- be tested to relevant ASTM performance standards or equivalent; or
- demonstrate sufficient market acceptance, quality or suitability in the Australian market.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 2.1: Test reports for all relevant quality and performance tests showing that the product has been assessed by external or internal laboratory testing; or

DoC 2.2: Report or other evidence demonstrating fitness for purpose, market acceptance, suitability or quality.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLAIMS

Environmental claims are one of the tools utilised by consumers when attempting to make environmentally preferable choices and therefore it is essential that such claims are true and substantiated.

Criterion 3: Any environmental claims beyond the scope of the standard the product is certified against 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.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 3.1: A copy of any relevant advertising material currently in use; and

DoC 3.2: Relevant documentation confirming the grounds of the claim and its compliance with this criterion.



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 4: 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 4.1: 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 4.2: Any relevant permits granted by the EPA or an equivalent national body; and

DoC 4.3: 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

Criterion 5: All employees must be covered by a Federal or State award; a certified industrial agreement or a registered agreement as determined by the Australian Government Workplace Authority, or a State or Territory Workplace Relations Agency; or a workplace agreement in compliance with Workplace Relations Act 1996 Part 7 - The Australian Fair Pay and Conditions Standard. Where a manufacturer is from an overseas jurisdiction, the jurisdiction's equivalent regulations apply.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 5.1: Signed declaration of compliance from an Executive Officer of the organisation;

DoC 5.2: Text or template of a typical workplace agreement offered to employees of the company; and

DoC 5.3: Sample payslips.



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Workplace Safety

Criterion 6: The manufacturer/applicant company must demonstrate general compliance with State or Territory Legislation concerning Occupational and Workplace Health and Safety 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 manufacturer / applicant company 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 6.1: 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 6.2: Copy of the company Occupational/Workplace H&S policy and procedures;

DoC 6.3: Copy of employee induction records, training records, meeting records and risk assessments; or current 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 6.4: Evidence of corrective action following a guilty verdict, if applicable.

Equal Opportunity

Criterion 7: The manufacturer and/or applicant company must demonstrate general compliance with the requirements of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975, Sex Discrimination Act 1984, Disability Discrimination Act 1992, Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999 and complementary State Legislation and Regulations. The applicant company and manufacturer(s) cannot be in the list of 'named' or non-compliant employers under the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999. Where the applicant company or manufacturer is from an overseas jurisdiction, it is that jurisdiction's equivalent regulations that apply. Where the applicant or manufacturer has been found guilty of a breach of relevant legislation within the last 2-years, there must be evidence of corrective action.

Demonstration on Conformance

DoC 7.1: Signed declaration from an Executive Officer of the organisation;

DoC 7.2: Copy of relevant company policies and procedures;

DoC 7.3: Evidence of corrective action following a guilty verdict, if applicable; and

DoC 7.4: The auditor will verify that the company does not appear on the following list:

www.wgea.gov.au/report/compliance

Lawful Conduct

Criterion 8: The manufacturer/applicant company must not have been convicted of any breach of criminal law, any breach of the Trade Practices Act 1974 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 8.1: Signed declaration from an Executive Officer of organisation; and

DoC 8.2: Evidence of corrective action following a guilty verdict, if applicable.



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 appointed auditing body to choose the appropriate option during the preliminary stage of the assessment. If none of the recommended DoC requirements stipulated for a particular criterion in the standard are applicable 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.



APPENDIX A 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
Category Scope				
Criterion 1	GEN-member, EU Ecolabel or other international ecolabel certified product	List and description of products.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Current international ecolabel certificate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Conformation that the scope of the international standard has been approved by GECA.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Fitness For Purpose				
Criterion 2	Applicable standards and demonstrated performance	Test report for relevant quality and performance test, or report or other evidence demonstrating fitness for purpose, market acceptance, suitability or quality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Environmental Claims				
Criterion 3	Public claims made by applicant	Statement of conformance signed by ab Executive Officer (EO), with report showing compliance to ISO 14021.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Environmental Legislation				
Criterion 4	Applicable environmental legislation and government orders	Statement of conformance signed by EO, with declaration of breaches and applicable legislation and Legal Register listing applicable environmental legislation or certified environmental management system in place.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Applicable permits granted by EPA.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Evidence of corrective action (if applicable).	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Fair Pay				
Criterion 5	Coverage of employees under certified agreements	Statement of conformance signed by EO.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Sample workplace agreement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Sample payslips.	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Criterion Number	Criterion Content	Demonstration of Conformance See standard body for details	Evidence Attached	Complies Y/ N or NA
Workplace Safety				
Criterion 6	Compliance with state or territory legislation	Statement of conformance signed by EO, with declaration of breaches and applicable legislation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Copy of Occupational and Workplace H&S policies and procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Copy of employee induction, training, and meeting record and risk assessments; or current OHSAS 18001, AS/NZS 4801 or equivalent certification; or other third party certification.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Evidence of corrective action (if applicable).	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Equal Opportunity				
Criterion 7	Compliance with Racial Discrimination Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Disability Discrimination Act, Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act and complementary State Legislation and Regulations.	Statement of conformance signed by EO.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Copy of relevant policies and procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Evidence of corrective action (if applicable).		
		Does not appear on list of non-compliant organisations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Lawful Conduct				
Criterion 8	No breaches of Trade Practices Act or Corporations Act.	Statement of conformance signed by EO.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Evidence of corrective action (if applicable).	<input type="checkbox"/>	