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## **natureplus® Manual for the Certification of Building Products**

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### ***Applicable Document No. 01 – Product Assessment Guidelines***

For reasons of readability, only the masculine form will be used in this document. Naturally, this is also intended to include women.

### **Information on this document**

Within the framework of the assessment and certification process, natureplus is responsible for informing applicants about the assessment criteria, procedures, costs and additional services offered. To these ends, natureplus has prepared the following assessment guidelines which can be issued to interested manufacturers.

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## A. CERTIFICATION PROCESS

### 1. Interest in certification / Application for assessment procedure

If you are interested in a certification the natureplus® head office or the natureplus® representative in your country (Austria, Switzerland, Italy, France, the Benelux, UK) will help you to assess if your product might be suitable for certification. A decisive factor in this assessment is the product composition. This is however only the case when an appropriate natureplus® award guideline for your product already exists. The award guidelines can be found in the internet on [www.natureplus.org](http://www.natureplus.org) under “Certification Criteria”.

If a natureplus® award guideline for your product doesn't yet exist, enquire at the natureplus® head office if it is planned to create such a guideline. It may be possible to bring forward the deadline for the creation of the relevant award guideline. As a natureplus® member, you have the opportunity to take an active part in the definition/preparation of the award criteria.

If it is considered that your product might be suitable for certification, you will receive the following documents from the natureplus® head office:

- Data Capture Form for the Product Declaration, including a checklist of the required documentation (available online under [www.natureplus.org](http://www.natureplus.org) in the “Downloads” section in WORD format for ease of completion)
- Assessment and licensing contracts / the natureplus® Terms and Conditions of Business

The Preliminary Assessment Procedure may be commissioned by means of an informal written communication sent together with the completed Data Capture Form and the associated documentation. All sections of the Data Capture Form must be completed in full (in the case of queries please contact the natureplus® head office or the natureplus® representative in your country). Please include all documentation (in German or English) contained in the checklist.

Upon receipt of your commission, the natureplus® head office will inform you, as soon as possible, which Assessor is responsible and will act as the Leading Conformity Assessment Body in guiding you through the process.

### 2. Preliminary Assessment Procedure

On the basis of the information contained in the Data Capture Form and the accompanying documentation, the Assessor will evaluate the conformity of your product with the requirements of the natureplus® award guidelines and thereby the **suitability for certification** of the product. This evaluation is performed according to a fixed price.

Upon completion you will receive the Report on the Preliminary Assessment Procedure including any additional conditions which must be fulfilled (e.g. full completion of the declaration, the subsequent submission of documents etc.) within the framework of the Main Assessment Procedure. The Report on the Preliminary Assessment Procedure is only used for internal information purposes and must not be published. It does not confer the right to dis-

play the natureplus® Eco-Label or to indicate the successful completion of a natureplus® certification procedure.

On completion of the Preliminary Assessment Procedure, the Assessor will produce an Assessment Plan for the Main Assessment Procedure based upon the appropriate award guidelines. Together with the natureplus® Price List, this Assessment Plan forms the basis of the costs of the Assessment Procedure, which will be summarised in our quotation (see below).

### 3. Main Assessment Procedure

You will receive a detailed and binding quotation for the natureplus® Main Assessment Procedure from the natureplus® head office. The Main Assessment Procedure will commence upon receipt of your signed commission. It is recommended that the appointments for the Production Site Inspections are agreed with the Assessor as soon as possible.

Upon receipt of your commission, the **Production Site Inspection(s)** and the **taking of samples** will be performed by the Inspector/Assessor commissioned by natureplus®. We only inspect production sites in Europe and consequently only those products which are produced in them. The inspection serves to verify the accuracy of the information you have provided, the assessment of ILO-standards, the recording of data for the LCA and the collection of data on the chemicals employed on the basis of the safety/technical data sheets. The samples will be taken from the current production runs. You will be informed in advance which documents must be made available. A written report will be prepared upon completion of the Production Site Inspection.

The **laboratory tests** will then be performed on the samples taken during the Production Site Inspection in accordance with the appropriate award guidelines. At the same time, the Report on the Life-Cycle Analysis and the calculation of the **LCA-indicators** will be produced by the expert assessor who has been commissioned with this task. The Assessor will assess the compliance with all the relevant natureplus® criteria relating to your product as well as the fulfilment of any conditions resulting from the Preliminary Assessment Procedure. Subsequently, the final report will be produced. It is possible that this will recommend the fulfilment of certain additional conditions. These conditions must be fulfilled punctually (see Pt. B.1).

If any of the threshold limits in the laboratory tests are exceeded, it is possible, upon completion of a product optimisation, to repeat the relevant laboratory tests.

### 4. Award Decision / Validation Commission

The independent natureplus® Validation Commission reviews all reports and writes an award recommendation for the Certification Body which will make a final decision on the award of the Eco-Label. Our head office will inform you without delay on the decision reached on the certification/award of the licence.

Our head office will provide you with all reports (final report including the sub-sections: Report on the Production Site Inspection, Report on the Life-Cycle Analysis and the Report on

the Laboratory Analysis) promptly. These reports are your property and may only be published with your express permission.

## 5. Award of the Eco-label

Directly after the decision on the certification you will receive your individual Eco-Label with your license number from the natureplus® head office in an electronic file. This file contains several different designs and data formats which can immediately be used for your publications. An appointment should be agreed with the head office for the hand-over of the certification certificate. Your product will then be presented in the internet under [www.natureplus.org](http://www.natureplus.org). In order to do so, we require separate electronic data files containing a product photo, the technical data sheet and also your active cooperation in the updating of our product database on baubook® with the technical details of the product properties/characteristics and a description of the areas of application of the product. You will receive direct access to the database in which you can present your product.

Upon award of the natureplus® Eco-Label you will become responsible for the payment of the licensing fee. This annually levied fee is based on the turnover of your natureplus® certified product. Further information can be found in the natureplus® Price List.

## B. FOLLOWING THE CERTIFICATION

### 1. Additional Conditions

It should be noted that any additional conditions resulting from the Main Assessment Procedure must be fulfilled according to the deadlines laid down. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the revocation of the natureplus® Eco-Label licence.

### 2. Changes in the production process / to the products

The natureplus® head office must be informed in advance of any changes planned in the production process or to the components of the certified product. Together with the Assessment Institute, the natureplus® head office will then clarify if these changes do, or will, influence compliance with the certification requirements and if any subsequent analysis is required.

### 3. Label usage / Declaration

You may and should only use your individual natureplus® Eco-Label in direct connection with the certified product. For all other uses of the natureplus® logo, for example in advertisement texts, image brochures etc, you will receive, upon request, a specially designed natureplus® logo as well as text suggestions on how best to present the natureplus® organisation. Please agree with the natureplus® head office in advance all publications in which the copyrighted natureplus® logo is used.

The natureplus®-compliant declaration of the components and the technical data of the certified product is an important topic. If you are intending to produce new product labels, product data sheets, brochures etc., an example of each should be sent, unsolicited, to our head office. It is recommended that you consult with us before commissioning a print run!

#### **4. Follow-Up Assessment Procedure**

At the end of 12 and 24 months, after the award of the Eco-Label, Follow-Up Assessment Procedures will be conducted. These may involve laboratory analyses in accordance with any additional conditions stipulated in the Report on the Main Assessment Procedure. You will be informed of this in good time by the head office and will receive a corresponding invoice as well as documentation on sample taking. The taking of samples must be performed by an independent body e.g. a notary, official environmental agency, expert assessor. Upon successful completion of the Laboratory Analysis Procedure you will receive the Report on the Follow-Up Assessment Procedure.

#### **5. Repeat Assessment Procedure**

The license for the use of the natureplus® Eco-Label is valid for three years. At the end of the 36 months, from the date of the award of the license, a Repeat Assessment Procedure is conducted. In principle, this encompasses the same assessment requirements as the Main Assessment Procedure (see A.3). However, some of the assessments conducted are less expensive in the Repeat Assessment Procedure. You will be reminded of this in good time by the head office and can decide if you wish to continue with the certification and to commission the Repeat Assessment Procedure or else to cancel the licensing contract. In the last case, permission to continue using the natureplus® Eco-Label will cease.

### **C. INVOICING**

The natureplus® Price List (available online) and the natureplus® Terms and Conditions of Business shall apply to all costs connected with the natureplus® Product Assessment Procedures and the award of the licence for the use of the natureplus®-brand name.

Upon completion of the Preliminary Assessment Procedure, you will receive the first invoice. As a rule, upon receipt of your commission for the Main Assessment Procedure, an advance payment is expected. Upon completion of the Main Assessment Procedure and the award of the natureplus® Eco-Label, you will receive the final invoice.

### **D. LANGUAGES / TRANSLATIONS**

As standard, the natureplus Assessment Reports are produced in German or English. It should be clarified in advance with the relevant Assessment Institute in which language they require the reports. The Data Capture Form and other documents must also be provided to the relevant Assessment Institute in German or English. The costs for any translations which may be required shall be borne by the applicant.