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**GENICES Scheme Rules  
  
GEN's Internationally Coordinated Ecolabelling System – September 2024**

Global Ecolabelling Network, GEN

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# Definitions

**Conflict of Interest:**

Conflicts of interest arise when individuals or entities involved in a particular situation have competing interests that could influence their decision making or actions. Conflicts of interest may include financial interests in the audited entity, personal relationships with management of the audited entity, fee dependence or long-term client relationships.

**Ecolabel:**

Environmental statement which indicates a product fulfills the criteria of an ecolabelling program.

**Ecolabelling Program (Program):**

Environmental statement program that is multiple-attribute-based and provided by a third-party that assesses overall environmental preferability of a product within a particular product category based on life cycle considerations and awards a licence which authorises the use of specific ecolabels on products related to environmental performance.

**Intended Audience:**

Person or organisation identified by the Ecolabel Program as being one that relies on the Ecolabel to make decisions.

**Interested Party:**

A party that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by the Ecolabel Program.

**Life cycle:**

Consecutive and interlinked stages, from raw material acquisition or generation from natural resources to final disposal.

**Product:**

Any goods or service. The definition of product can refer to the process of producing the good or service.

# Purpose of this Document

This document outlines the process, requirements, and criteria for recognition by the Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN) for the GENICES Program which allows GEN Members to become Full Members.

This document provides information regarding the GENICES Program and outlines:

* Eligibility
* Associated costs
* Audit process
* Documentation requirements
* Auditor requirements
* Ongoing obligations

As the GENICES Program endorses ecolabels as aligned with ISO14024, it is structured to meet the requirements of both ISO14020 and ISO 14024. These documents are also the foundational documents for the GENICES Program.

# Introduction to GENICES

## Background to the Global Ecolabelling Network

The Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN) is the leading network of the world’s most credible and robust ecolabels. GEN is a non-profit organisation that sets the benchmark for ecolabel excellence. GEN’s vision is a world where everything is built, bought, and sold with impacts on people and planet in mind. GEN exists to make lifecycle environmental performance non-negotiable in every procurement decision. To this end, GEN has developed the GENICES Program, a framework for evaluating and auditing the programs operated by our members to enhance mutual trust and recognition among our various members, and to provide assurance that the programs are operating in accordance with ISO 14024.

## Background to GENICES

GENICES — the *Global Ecolabelling Network’s Internationally Coordinated Ecolabelling System* was launched in 2003 to enhance mutual trust and cooperation among GEN members. More specifically, the purpose of GENICES is to serve as a mechanism to evaluate programs for full membership of GEN to enhance multilateral cooperation and collaboration in criteria development and review and product certification among GEN members. It also serves as a process to enable GEN member organizations' customers to have easier access to other GEN member organizations' programs.

GENICES involves the submission of an application form and accompanying supporting documents as well as an audit to review the ways and means in which the audited organization conducts ecolabelling in line with the principles of ISO14020 and ISO 14024.

In addition to verifying that your program abides by ISO 14020 principles and ISO14024, the process can inspire your employees around a shared societal goal. The audit encourages mutual learning for continual improvement from both the GENICES candidate and the auditors.

## Purpose of GENICES

The GENICES Program audits GEN members against the most current version of ISO14024 to recognise those members who are global leaders in ecolabelling.

The GENICES Program is principles driven and does not dictate the ways an ecolabel may operate beyond meeting the requirements of ISO14024. This ensures the contextual differences between ecolabels do not hinder the potential to be granted Full Membership

The four guiding principles of GENICES are:

1. GENICES provides a mechanism for enhanced cooperation and collaboration on product certification, criteria development, and review.
2. GENICES participation is a requirement for Associate members seeking transition to Full membership and to maintain full membership.
3. The GENICES Program builds the credibility of GEN by only recognizing programs that comply with ISO14024.
4. The GENICES Program is reviewed by GEN every 5 years.

# Scope of the GENICES Program

**2.1 Eligibility**

All Associate members of GEN are required to complete the GENICES audit and be granted Full Membership.

The fees for Full Membership are outlined in the GENICES Member Guide.

**2.2 Scope of the audit**

The GENICES audit involves a review of the ecolabel’s processes regarding:

* Selection of product categories.
* Product environmental criteria and function characteristics.
* Assessment and demonstration of compliance.
* Award and maintenance of the ecolabel.
* Qualification of personnel.

With a focus on documentation, audits are generally conducted remotely. An audit may involve a site visit where the technology available is not likely to be reliable for the duration of an audit or by auditee request.

To ensure a remote audit is appropriate, the GENICES auditor shall complete the Audit Type form, shown at Appendix A. This form shall be kept on record by GEN with the audit report.

# Key Stakeholders

## Intended Audience

The intended audience of GENICES includes the key stakeholders of the relevant ecolabel, the GEN membership and key stakeholders of GEN including organisations, governments and individuals involved in sustainable procurement practices.

## Interested Parties

The intended audience of GENICES includes the key stakeholders outlined as the intended audience, as well as:

* Development and environmental non-profit organisations
* International Standards Organisation
* Various environmental government departments
* Various trade and supply chain government bodies

## Roles and Responsibilities

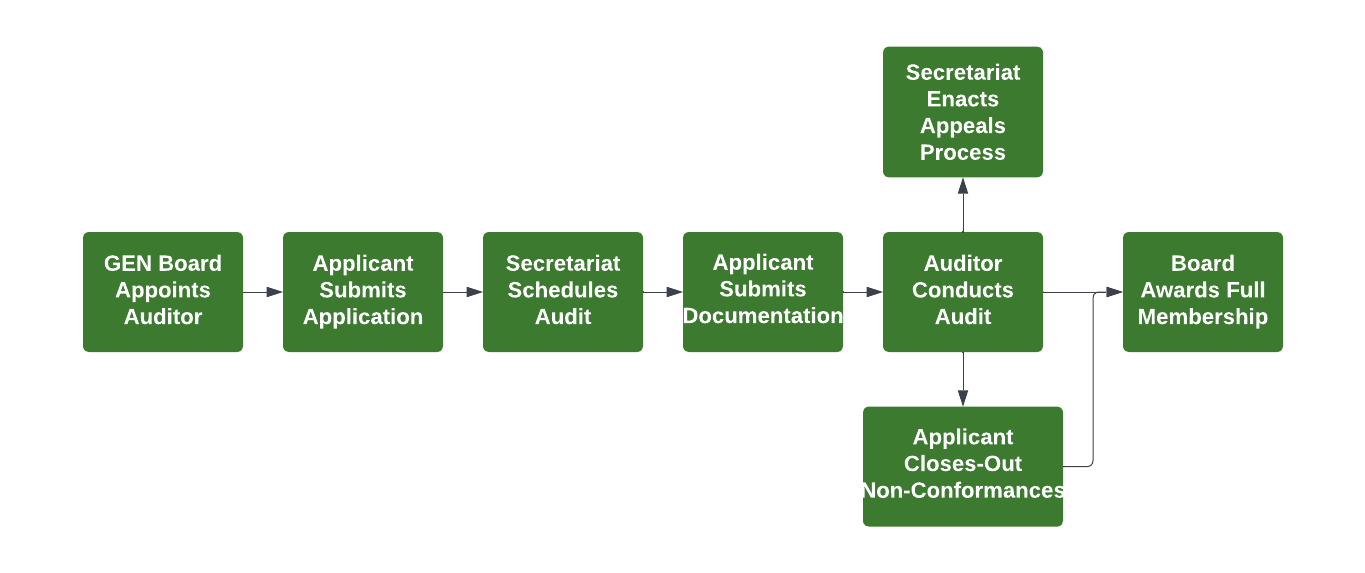
There are four parties involved in the GENICES audit.

* GEN Board:
  + GEN Board Members annually sign a conflict-of-interest declaration and confidentiality agreement. Each Board Member is responsible for ensuring any new conflicts of interest arising are declared to the Board as soon as practicable.
  + The GEN Board formally appoints the auditor prior to the audit period.
  + The GEN Board may answer questions raised by the auditor about the process of the audit but shall not influence the outcome of an audit.
  + The GEN Board is responsible for ensuring there is no conflict of interest in the review, including of any Board Members. Where a conflict of interest exists with a Board Member, this Board Member shall not be involved in any review.
  + The GEN Board conducts a final check of the audit report reviewing for:
    - Conflicts of interest.
    - Undue influence in the audit.
    - Completion of all audit processes in accordance with the audit plan and this document.
    - Where relevant, the appeal process has been appropriately conducted.
  + The GEN Board communicated the final audit decision to the Applicant.
* Secretariat
  + The Secretariat notifies upcoming auditees in November of upcoming audits in the following calendar year. The notification should include a request for the Application Form to be completed and timelines for document submission.
  + The Secretariat receives and processes applications from new applicants.
  + The Secretariat facilitates the communication between the applicant, board, and auditor, including facilitating final board review approval.
  + The Secretariat is also responsible for scheduling the audit in accordance with Section 4.4 of this document.
  + The Secretariat is responsible for following up on non-conformance reporting.
  + The Secretariat is responsible for facilitating the appeal process, should an appeal be made.
  + The Secretariat is responsible for ensuring all relevant conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements are signed by the GEN Board and the auditor.
  + Where a conflict of interest exists between the Secretariat and the Applicant, the Secretariat shall nominate another Board Member to complete these tasks such as the Standards and Technical Sub-committee Convener.
* Applicant
  + The Applicant submits the completed application form to the Secretariat and works with the Secretariat to ensure the audit is scheduled in a timely manner. The audit shall be accepted by February of the audit year.
  + The Applicant is responsible for ensuring all documentation and other evidence provided is accurate, truthful and within the authority of the Applicant to share with the auditor.
  + The Applicant shall ensure documentation is submitted to the auditor on time, as agreed in the Audit Plan.
  + The Applicant shall not hold GEN responsible for any issues arising relating to the certification of products or services under ISO14024.
* Auditor
  + The Auditor shall work with the Secretariat and Applicant to determine the audit schedule. The audit shall be completed by the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
  + The Auditor is responsible for developing an audit plan with the Applicant, including timelines for documentation to be submitted, developing the report, and finalizing the audit process.
  + The Auditor shall sign a conflict-of-interest declaration and confidentiality agreement for each audit.
  + The appointed Auditor shall conduct an independent, objective audit of the applicant and submit the audit report and decision for or against Full Membership to the GEN board.
  + The Auditor may be called to present evidence or findings in the Appeal process.
  + See Section 5 for detailed Auditor requirements.

# Process for Recognition

## Summary of Process

Figure - Process for Full Membership



## Auditor Appointed

The Board appoints the auditors at the last board meeting of the calendar year based on the list auditees. Where an Applicant is undergoing audit for the first time, two auditors shall be appointed to support the volume of work involved to adequately understand the operations of the ecolabel.

The auditors are selected to:

* Minimise perceived bias.
* Suit the language and time zone of the applicant as far as practicable and the geography of the applicant, as required.
* Understand the language of the documentation where possible. However, documentation shall be provided in English at the request of the auditor.
* Understand and be respectful of the culture of the Applicant.

The auditors are required to sign a confidentiality agreement and conflict of interest declaration for each audit.

## Submit Application

* + 1. **First audit**

The Applicant contacts the Secretariat to apply for Full Membership with a completed application form, see APPENDIX B – GENICES Application Form. The organisations who have applied to undertake Full Membership are kept confidential—they are not announced to GEN members or the public until the review process has been successfully completed.

* + 1. **Subsequent audit**

The Secretariat notifies the auditees of the need to re-audit four years into the recognition period, to be scheduled in the fifth year of recognition. The Applicant submits a completed application form to the Secretariat, see APPENDIX B – GENICES Application Form. The Secretariat reviews the application form for completeness only.

## Audit Scheduled

The Secretariat works with the Auditor and Applicant to determine a date for the audit. The audit type is determined use the Audit Type Form, see Appendix A – Audit Type Form. An onsite audit incurs an additional fee in accordance with the GENICES Member Guide. The audit plan should be developed and agreed within 4 weeks of allocation of an Auditor to an Applicant.

## Documentation Submitted

The Applicant is responsible for submitting all documentation to the auditor(s) by the agreed date. To ensure all documentation is completed and related to the relevant criterion, the Applicant shall complete column two “Evidence Submitted” in APPENDIX C – Applicant Checklist.

## Audit Conducted

The auditor commences the audit once all documentation has been received and completes the audit report template, see APPENDIX C – Applicant Checklist, in accordance with the audit plan.

## Non-Conformances Closed Out

Any non-conformances identified are closed out in accordance with Section 7 for new applicants and 8 for re-audits.

Following the successful close out of any non-conformances, the auditor may determine the Applicant has met the requirements for Full Membership. The final audit report and decision are shared with the GEN Board, excluding any members with a conflict of interest, and kept confidential by the GEN Board and Auditor. Following the integrity review by the GEN Board, the Statement of Recognition is awarded.

The appeals process is outlined in Section 11.

# Auditor Requirements

## Current Requirements

To ensure consistent, fair, and credible audits are conducted for the GENICES program, auditors appointed to the program shall:

* Be independent of the Applicant and have no conflict of interest. The auditor shall not have financial, commercial, or personal ties to the Applicant.
* Have at least 3 years’ experience working with the ISO 14024 standard, or 5 years’ experience working with the ISO 17065. This may be gained through involvement with another ecolabel.

An auditor is considered a trainee in the GENICES Program until they have completed two GENICES audits supervised by a formal GENICES auditor. After the satisfactory completion of two supervised GENICES audits, signed off by the supervising peer, the auditor is considered a formal GENICES auditor.

## Future Requirements

GENICES is working towards ISO 17065 alignment for its audit process. External auditors may be appointed to conduct GENICES audits. Any external auditors shall have membership and accreditation with European Accreditation or equivalent and meet the above requirements.

# Audit Criteria

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|  | Criterion (14024) | Guidance | Evidence |
| Re-Audit Only | |  |  |
| 0.1 | The program shall conduct a self-assessment against the GENICES Requirements at least in year 3 of the Full Membership period. | The program may conduct a self-assessment more frequently; however, the 3-year report shall be provided at re-audit.  The self-assessment is used to ensure any changes in compliance are identified by the program and, therefore, GEN able to be notified. | Self-Assessment Audit Report. |

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|  | Criterion (14024) | Guidance | Evidence |
| Accessibility | |  |  |
| 1.1 | The ecolabel program shall be voluntary in nature. (5.1)  The program, regardless of whether it is developed or operated by government sponsored agencies, is voluntary. | The program may be listed in relevant procurement policies but engagement in the program is not enforced by any agency. (5.1) | Program rules for eligibility. |
| 1.2 | All products that apply and meet the product environmental criteria shall be eligible to use the label. (5.5, 5.13) | Where overarching rules apply to all categories, these should be outlined in the program rules and be transparent to all Applicants. | Policy or procedure that indicates that all products that meet the criteria are eligible for the label.  Products and associated verification documentation of products that have not achieved the label, if available and applicable. |
| 1.3 | Fees should be kept as low as possible to maximise accessibility and be applied equitably to all applicants and licensees. (5.17)  The fee scheduled is encouraged to be made public. | Fees may include application, testing, licence fees or administration fees. (5.17)  The conditions for joining the ecolabelling program are proportionate to the size and turnover of the companies in order not to exclude small and medium businesses. | Fee schedule. |
| 1.4 | Information on existing mutual recognition agreements shall be made available. (5.19) | Mutual recognition should be encouraged and may include recognition of tests, inspections, conformity assessment, administrative procedures, and product environmental criteria. (5.19) | Review of communications regarding mutual recognition.  Review of processes for sharing information about mutual recognition.  Review of mutual recognition agreements. |

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|  | Criterion | Guidance | Evidence |
| Product Categories | | | |
| 2.1 | The program shall have a process for the selection of product categories. (6.3) | A feasibility study should be conducted and should include:   * Initial selection of possible product categories * Consultation with interested parties * Market survey * Suppliers * Environmental impacts * Potential and need for environmental improvement. * Definition of scope including product function characteristics * Availability of data * Current national and international legislation and agreements   (6.3.1)  A proposal should be developed for interested parties summarizing the findings. (6.3.2) | Program rules for product category selection.  Documentation for the most recent product category selection. |

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|  | Criterion | Guidance | Evidence |
| Product Criteria | | | |
| 3.1 | The program considers the full life cycle of the product when developing criteria. (5.6.1)  The study of life cycle stages shall show that the selection of product environmental criteria will not lead to the transfer of impacts from one stage of the life cycle to another, or from one medium to another, without a net gain of environmental benefit. (6.4.1)  Any deviation from this approach shall be justified. (5.4) | Life cycle stages to be considered in criteria development should include extraction of resources, manufacturing, distribution, use and end of life. (5.4) | Program rules for criteria development.  Product environmental criteria. |
| 3.2 | The product environmental criteria shall differentiate environmental products from others in the product category as environmentally preferable. (5.5)  The program shall identify the product life cycle stages where there is differentiation of environmental impacts. The ranges and variability of the data shall be analysed to ensure selected product environmental criteria are adequate and reflect the differences among products. (6.4.2.2) | The criteria should only differentiate between product when the differences are significant. (5.5)  The precision and accuracy of testing and verification methodologies should be considered when determining the significance of this difference. (5.5)  Where multiple methods to demonstrate compliance are available, a justification of equity should be available on request. Declarations of conformity should not be considered equal to testing or other verified data sources. | Program rules for criteria development.  Product environmental criteria.  Documentation outlining the research behind product environmental criteria. |
| 3.3 | The criteria shall be attainable. (5.6.2) | The criteria should consider the relative environmental impacts, measurement capability and accuracy. (5.6.2)  The criteria should consider relevant local, regional, and global environmental issues, available technology, and economic aspects. (6.4.2.1) | Program rules for criteria development.  Product environmental criteria.  Documentation outlining the research behind product environmental criteria.  Public comment period findings.  Where applicable, certificates and verification documentation (redacted) of products certified under the criteria. |
| 3.4 | Fitness for purpose and levels of performance shall be accounted for. (5.7)  Due consideration shall be given to product function. (6.5) | International, regional, or national standards for the product should be considered for use in the program. (5.7)  Product function should be addressed in terms of product performance and consider:   * Identification and selection of product performance elements that characterize function. * Applicability to whole product category. * Necessary levels of performance.   (6.5) | Product environmental criteria. |
| 3.5 | All product environmental criteria and product function characteristics shall be verifiable by the auditor in accordance with the requirements of the program. (5.10)  Sufficient evidence shall be available to demonstrate compliance with the determined criteria.  The program shall assign numerical values to the criteria. (6.4.2.4) | Compliance should be assessed using the following in order of preference:   * ISO and IEC standards * Other internationally recognized standards * Regional and national standards * Other repeatable and reproducible methods * Manufacturer’s evidence   (5.10)  Numerical values applied to criteria may be minimum values, thresholds, scales, or any other relevant approach. (6.4.2.4) | Product environmental criteria and evidence requirements.  Program rules for demonstrating compliance. |
| 3.6 | The product environmental criteria shall specify the source of data, where possible, and the program shall require the best quality data available. (5.11)  The best quality data available shall be required to demonstrate conformance. | The program should examine the availability of competent laboratories capable of performing included tests and should provide reference to the test methods that are required for any given criterion or characteristic. (6.4.2.5) | Product environmental criteria.  Where applicable, list of laboratories capable of performing included tests.  Program documentation regarding data quality for evidence requirements. |
| 3.7 | The development and selection of criteria shall be based on sound scientific and engineering principles. (5.14)  The criteria development and selection shall be evidence based. | The criteria should be derived from data that supports the claim of environmental preferability, considering the full life cycle. (5.14) | Program rules for the development of product environmental criteria. |
| 3.8 | Criteria that directly or indirectly require or exclude the use of particular processes or production methods without justification shall be avoided. (6.4.2.1)  Criteria shall not skew the market for towards particular processes or technologies without justification. | Any exclusions of, for example, substances should meet criterion 3.7 and may be supported by a risk assessment. (6.4.2.1) | Product environmental criteria.  Documentation outlining the research behind product environmental criteria. |
| 3.9 | Product environmental criteria and product function requirements shall be set for a predefined period and reviewed within a predefined period. (5.8.2)  Review and validity periods for criteria shall be clearly communicated and review processes aligned with this timeline. (7.4.3) | New technologies, products, environmental information, and market changes should be considered. | Program rules for reviewing product environmental criteria.  Public and/or online communications regarding review and validity periods for criteria. |
| 3.10 | Timelines for implementing revisions to criteria shall consider already labelled product. (6.7)  The implementation of labelling updates shall mitigate the risk of perverse outcomes. (6.7) | Timelines for implementing revisions should consider:   * Urgency of compliance. * Extent of change, time and complexity involved in retooling. * Avoidance of unintended commercial advantage. * Need to involve material suppliers. * Action for existing labelled product. * Time for appropriate consultation. * Complexity of administering the changes for the program. * Legislative requirements.   (6.7) | Program rules for the update of criteria and implementation of revisions, including any relevant exception processes.  Sample of communication relating to last update, where applicable. |

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|  | Criterion | Guidance | Evidence |
| Consultation | | | |
| 4.1 | Formal open consultation of interested parties shall be established. (5.9)  Interested parties shall be consulted on selecting and reviewing product categories, product environmental criteria and product function characteristics. (5.9) | Programs may determine the extent of consultation and engagement with interested parties.  The mechanism may include the use of selected groups of interested parties’ representatives e.g., advisory committee or public hearing. (6.2) | Program rules for selecting and reviewing product categories, product environmental criteria and product function characteristics.  Documented consultation for most recently updated or developed criteria.  Sample of comments from interested parties and responses to comments on draft documents. |
| 4.2 | Information shall be available to interested parties for inspection and comment where appropriate and adequate time allowed for comments to be submitted. (5.12)  Relevant, non-confidential information shall be available to interested parties with sufficient comment periods. (5.12) | The program should be able to demonstrate transparency through all stages of its development and implementation, including:   * Selection of product categories * Selection and development of product environmental criteria * Product function characteristics * Testing and verification methods * Certification and award procedures * Review periods * Validity periods * Non-confidential evidence on which award of the label is based. * Funding sources for program development * Compliance verification   (5.12) | Program rules regarding availability of information, public comment periods and transparency processes. |
| 4.3 | The program shall implement a formal consultation mechanism that facilitates full participation of interested parties.  Interested parties shall be given adequate time and access to details and information used to provide input.  Interested parties that provide comments shall receive proper consideration, and response to, their comments. (6.2) | The mechanism may include the use of selected groups of interested parties’ representatives e.g., advisory committee or public hearing.  Reasonable efforts should be made to achieve consensus throughout the process. (6.2) | Program rules for consultation.  Documentation on consultation for most recent relevant program development or update. |

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|  | Criterion | Guidance | Evidence |
| Integrity & Transparency | | | |
| 5.1 | The program shall ensure they are free from undue influence. (5.15)  The program shall demonstrate that sources of funding do not create a conflict of interest. (5.15) | The program should have processes and procedures in place to identify and mitigate the risks of conflict of interest. | Funding sources.  Conflict of interest register(s).  Program rules for conflicts of interest.  Conflict of interest declaration process for verifiers. |
| 5.2 | Confidentiality of all information identified as confidential shall be maintained. (5.18) | The program should have processes and procedures in place to ensure the adequate management of confidential information.  A non-disclosure agreement may be signed with the GENICES auditor to ensure confidential information does not limit GENICES audits. | Templates of contracts and/or terms and conditions signed with verifiers and responsible parties.  Program rules regarding confidentiality. |
| 5.3 | The product environmental criteria and product function characteristics shall be published. (6.6)  The criteria and characteristics shall be accompanied by information demonstrating:   * The establishment of the category, criteria and characteristics are in accordance with ISO14024 and ISO14020. * The criteria are objective and justifiable. * Methods are available to verify the criteria. * Interested parties were given an opportunity to participate and their views were considered.   (6.6) | The program should provide information on request that explains the meaning of the label to purchasers and the public. (6.6) | Website.  Publicly available standards.  Communications regarding most recent criteria and product function characteristics. |
| 5.4 | The program shall prepare and make available on request at a minimum:   * Product categories. * Period of validity of criteria, testing and verification methods. * Certification and award procedures. * Periodic review criteria. * Non-confidential evidence on which the award of the label is based. * Funding sources for the program development. * Compliance verification.   (7.4.3)  Evidence shall be made available that allows an interested party to determine conformance with ISO14024. (6.6) | The program may list all documentation on the program website or demonstrate that the documentation is easily accessible should it be requested. | Where applicable, evidence that this information has been provided to interested parties making a request.  Sample of non-confidential evidence.  Sample certificates awarded.  Program rules.  Website. |
| 5.5 | The program shall maintain a publicly available list of products to which the label has been awarded. (7.3)  The intended audience shall be able to confirm the validity of a label through a publicly available list. | The program should consider the needs of the intended audience to be able to understand the validity of the label applied to the product.  Allowances may be made to keep a certification confidential for a specified period of time, for example where certification is achieved prior to product launch, provided that the product is eventually listed publicly. | Website and/or certified product directory.  Program rules regarding updating the public list. |
| 5.6 | Any change that might affect continued compliance shall be escalated to the program and appropriately addressed. (7.5)  The program shall ensure any change in the product, or its manufacturing process is considered and shall require the licensee to initiate corrective action if required. (7.5)  The licensee is responsible for ensuring ongoing compliance with the program. (7.5)  The program shall include contractual obligations with the licensee to notify the program of changes when they may impact continued compliance. | The program should have process in place to be confident in the continual compliance of certified product. | Templates for contracts with the licensee.  Program rules regarding ongoing compliance.  Non-conformance process. |
| 5.7 | The program shall ensure its label is legally protected to prevent unauthorized use and have a clear and explicit policy regarding the proper use of the label. (7.6)  Any deviation from the program policy shall result in appropriate corrective action and possible expulsion of the licence. (7.6) | The program may include an escalation to an appropriate regulator for improper use of the label. | Program rules for escalation.  Trademark documentation held by the program’s legal entity. |

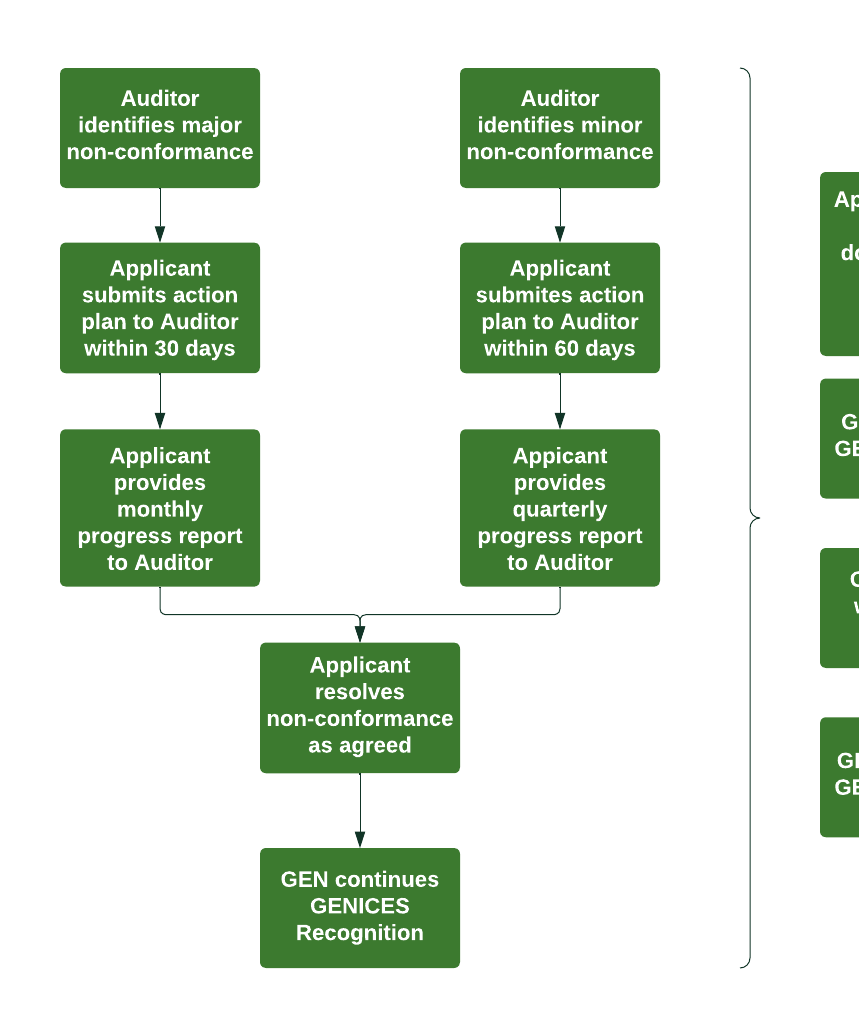
|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Criterion | Guidance | Evidence |
| Verification | | | |
| 6.1 | The program rules shall control the conditions for awarding of a licence and the use of the label. (7.2.2)  All prerequisites for awarding the licence and the use of the label shall be included in the program rules, product environmental criteria and product function characteristics. (7.2.2) | The program rules should address:   * Publicity by licensees. * Conditions of suspension, cancellation, and withdrawal of a licence. * Non-conformance and corrective action procedures. * Dispute resolution procedure, testing and verification procedures, fee structure. * Guidance for the use of logotype.   (7.2.2) | Program rules for the award of the licence. |
| 6.2 | The methodology for assessing compliance and verifying on-going compliance shall be documented and have sufficient rigour to maintain confidence in the program. (7.4.1) | The program may consider recertification timelines that align with the volatility of the relevant market. For example, where there are known regular changes in supply chains for a market, recertification may be required more frequently. | Program rule for ongoing compliance. |
| 6.3 | The program shall maintain a plan for supervision and control aligned with the program requirements. (7.4.2) | The program should have a documented complaints process with agreed timelines for resolution.  The program may consider unannounced audits and market surveillance. | Program rules for supervision and control. |
| 6.4 | The program shall obtain documentary evidence of applicant’s conformity. (7.4.3)  All data shall be of known and verifiable quality. (7.4.3) | The program should consider how this documentation is stored safely and reliably to meet criterion 5.2. | Sample of redacted documentary evidence demonstrating conformity. |
| 6.5 | The program shall establish processes to assess and develop the competence of verifiers. (5.16)  The program shall have a transparent and documented process to manage and trace verification activity. (5.16) | Programs may regularly train verifiers or require certain competencies, certifications, or memberships.  Programs may engage in a project management approach or system with verifiers to ensure traceability. | Program rules for verifiers.  Documented system of traceability for verification. |
| 6.6 | The program shall establish the competence of verifiers. (6.1)  Verifiers shall have knowledge of:   * The relevant sector and products within the sector. * Product-related environmental criteria, including the methodology used to develop the criteria. * The regulatory framework. * The program rules. * ISO14020, ISO 14024 and ISO 14021.   (6.1) | Programs may regularly train verifiers or require certain competencies, certifications, or memberships. | Program rules for verifiers.  Register of verifiers and evidence of competence, stored in accordance with relevant privacy legislation, |
| 6.7 | The program shall award a licence to use the label when it is satisfied that:   * The applicant complies with the program rules. * The product complies with the relevant product environmental criteria and product function characteristics.   (7.3)  The issuing of a licence does not oblige the licensee to use the label. (7.3)  Compliance with all product environmental criteria and product function characteristics must be verified, with the conformity assurance system covering every labelled product. |  | Program rules for awarding a licence and use of label.  Non-conformance procedure. |
| 6.8 | Any declarations of conformity permitted in the program shall follow the guidelines outlined in ISO17050. (7.4.4)  At a minimum, the declaration shall contain:   * Unique identification of the declaration. * Name and contact address of the issuer. * Identification of the object of the declaration. * Statement of conformity. * Complete and clear list of standard or other specified requirements. * Date and play of issue of the declaration. * Signature, name, and function of the authorized person(s) * Any limitation on the validity of the declaration. (ISO17050) | Additional supporting information may be provided such as a reference to any management systems involved. | Sample of most recent declarations of conformity used as to demonstrate conformity in the program.  Sample of verification documentation. |
| 6.9 | The verification shall be fully documented for all certified products as facilitated by the conformity assurance system, and all documentation shall be retained by the program or an approved verifier for the period the licence is valid and for a reasonable period, thereafter, accounting for the lifetime of the product.  Where an approved verifier retains documentation, the program shall have access to this as required. (7.4.5)  Minimum verification documentation shall include:   * Identification of the standard or method used. * Documentary evidence if verification cannot be made by testing the finished product. * Test results where necessary for verification. * Name and address of independent verifier if outside the program. | The verification documentation should also include:   * Statement of overall compliance or failure to comply. * Date of verification and accreditation state of the verifier. * Signature or e-signature of responsible person. | Sample of documentary evidence demonstrating conformity.  Program rules for the retention of documentation.  Governance structure demonstrating relationships with verifiers. |

# Non-Conformance Process (New Applicant)

## Summary of Process

Figure – Non-Conformance Process (New Applicant)

A diagram of a process

Description automatically generated

## Non-conformance Raised

If the Auditor determines that some criteria are not met, these are raised as non-conformances by the Auditor in the Audit Report, along with a decision not to award Full Membership.

Major non-conformances refer to instances where the deviation from the audit criteria reflects a systemic breakdown in processes or the absence of processes.

Minor non-conformances refer to instances where the deviation from the audit is not deemed systemic. For example, one sample of evidence may deviate from the processes outlined by the label and the cause for the deviation has been identified.

## Corrective Action Plans

When a non-conformance is raised, the Applicant shall submit a corrective action plan to the Auditor.

Corrective action plans shall outline:

* The results of a root cause analysis.
* The actions to be taken to resolve the issue.
* The actions to be taken to ensure the issue is not likely to occur again.
* The timeline for all actions
* Responsible parties for completing the actions.

Major non-conformances require a corrective action plan to be submitted within 30 days of the identification, unless otherwise agreed with the auditor. Minor non-conformances require an action plan to be submitted within 60 days of the identification, unless otherwise agreed with the Auditor.

The Auditor shall provide feedback and approve the corrective action plan within 10 business days. The Auditor shall approve the corrective action plan prior to implementation.

Corrective action plans shall include an estimated timeline for close out of non-conformances, no longer than 12 months.

## Progress Reports

Progress reports are required to provide visibility and transparency throughout the non-conformance close out process. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to submit progress reports.

These reports are prepared by the Applicant and submitted to the Auditor and the Secretariat to continually assess the risk associated with the non-conformances.

In certain circumstances, such as a continual lack of progress reported or deterioration of the non-conformance, the Auditor may make a recommendation to the GEN Board that the suspension and/or expulsion process be enacted, see Section 10.

Progress reports shall outline:

* Non-conformance details.
* Actions taken to date.
* Status update on the remaining actions.
* Responsible parties.
* Expected timeline for close-out.
* Any changes to the agreed action plan.

The Auditor may return the progress report where it does not contain sufficient detail.

Progress reports are required monthly for major non-conformances and quarterly for minor non-conformances. The Secretariat is responsible for following up on progress reports and escalating a failure to submit to the GEN Board.

## Notification to Proceed

The Applicant is required to notify the Secretariat when they believe they have addressed the non-conformance and its root cause, as per the action plan, and provide the evidence associated with the non-conforming criteria. This shall occur within 12 months of the non-conformance being raised.

The Auditor is re-appointed to assess that the non-conformance has been successfully closed out by reviewing the documentation associated with the non-conforming criteria to determine:

* The root cause of the issue has been addressed.
* The criterion is now sufficiently met.
* Any impacts arising from the non-conformance have been addressed.

The Auditor may make an update to the audit report and decide Full Membership may be awarded.

This may incur an additional, pro-rata fee as described in the GENICES Member Guide.

Where the close out occurs 12 months after the initial audit, the Applicant is required to undergo an audit on all criteria.

All non-conformances shall be closed out prior to awarding Full Membership.

# Non-Conformance Process (Re-Audit)

## Summary of Process

Figure – Non-Conformance Process (Re-Audit)



## Major and Minor Non-Conformances

Major non-conformances refer to instances where the deviation from the audit criteria reflects a systemic breakdown in processes or the absence of processes.

Minor non-conformances refer to instances where the deviation from the audit is not deemed systemic. For example, one sample of evidence may deviate from the processes outlined by the label and the cause for the deviation has been identified.

## Corrective Action Plans

When a non-conformance is raised, the Applicant shall submit a corrective action plan to the Auditor.

Corrective action plans shall outline:

* The results of a root cause analysis.
* The actions to be taken to resolve the issue.
* The actions to be taken to ensure the issue is not likely to occur again.
* The timeline for all actions
* Responsible parties for completing the actions.

Major non-conformances require a corrective action plan to be submitted within 30 days of the identification, unless otherwise agreed with the auditor. Minor non-conformances require an action plan to be submitted within 60 days of the identification, unless otherwise agreed with the Auditor.

The Auditor shall provide feedback and approve the corrective action plan within 10 business days. The Auditor shall approve the corrective action plan prior to implementation.

Major non-conformances shall be closed out within 90 days.

## Progress Reports

Progress reports are required to provide visibility and transparency throughout the non-conformance close out process. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to submit progress reports.

These reports are prepared by the Applicant and submitted to the Auditor and the Secretariat to continually assess the risk associated with the non-conformances.

In certain circumstances, such as a continual lack of progress reported or deterioration of the non-conformance, the Auditor may make a recommendation to the GEN Board that the suspension and/or expulsion process be enacted, see Section 10.

Progress reports shall outline:

* Non-conformance details.
* Actions taken to date.
* Status update on the remaining actions.
* Responsible parties.
* Expected timeline for close-out.
* Any changes to the agreed action plan.

The Auditor may return the progress report where it does not contain sufficient detail.

Progress reports are required monthly for major non-conformances and quarterly for minor non-conformances. The Secretariat is responsible for following up on progress reports and escalating a failure to submit to the GEN Board.

## Non-conformance close out

The Applicant is required to notify the Secretariat when they believe they have addressed the non-conformance and its root cause, and provide the evidence associated with the non-conforming criteria.

The Auditor is re-appointed to assess that the non-conformance has been successfully closed out by reviewing the documentation associated with the non-conforming criteria to determine:

* The root cause of the issue has been addressed.
* The criterion is now sufficiently met.
* Any impacts arising from the non-conformance have been addressed.

The Auditor may make an update to the audit report and decide Full Membership may be awarded.

This may incur an additional, pro-rata fee as described in the GENICES Member Guide.

All non-conformances shall be closed out prior to awarding Full Membership.

Where the Applicant does not expect to close out the non-conformance within the agreed timeline, an extension may be submitted to the GEN Board via the Secretariat for consideration. The final decision on extension of non-conformances close-outs sits with the GEN Board.

## Failure to Submit (Existing Full Members)

A failure to submit documentation, action plans, and/or progress reports within the required time frames may result in suspension or expulsion from GENICES.

Following a failure to submit by the agreed date, the Applicant’s Full Membership is suspended. Where the Applicant has not submitted the appropriate documentation, action plans, and/or progress reports after a further 4 weeks, the Applicant is expelled from Full Membership.

# Ongoing Obligations

## Summary of Process

Figure - 5 Year GENICES Cycle

## Recognition

An Applicant is awarded a Statement of Recognition following:

* All requirements of this document being met.
* A positive decision from the Auditor.
* A positive integrity review by the GEN Board.

Upon confirmation of Full Membership from the GEN Board, the member signs the Memorandum of Understanding and becomes a Full Member.

As a Full Member, the organisation is encouraged to engage with other GEN members who have also completed GENICES to collaborate and potentially develop common core criteria or identify ways to make certification to multiple labels easier for licensees. This expectation is outlined in the Member Charter and may involved the development of Mutual Recognition Agreements.

## Reporting

Full Members shall notify the Secretariat of any changes that may impact the conformance of the Member with the GENICES requirements. This includes:

* A change to the approach to criteria setting that no longer considers the full life cycle e.g., single-issue certification.
* A change to the consultation process that results in fewer interested parties involved.
* A change to the qualifications and/or independence of the auditors.
* A change in transparency processes such as the introduction of a paywall on product environmental criteria.
* A change in funding structure that introduces influence in criteria and product category selection.
* The label becomes mandatory.

Full Members shall submit documentation to the Secretariat to demonstrate how conformance has been maintained given the changes or withdraw from the Program.

The GEN Board may appoint an Auditor to assess the specific criteria impacted by the change.

## Maintaining conformance

Full Members shall maintain conformance with the GENICES requirements throughout the duration of their Full Membership, including paying necessary fees.

Members are required to complete a self-assessment in at least year 3 of their Full Membership period using APPENDIX C – Audit Report Template . A completed self-assessment completed in the Audit Report Template shall be provided in subsequent audits.

Full Membership is valid for 5 years, at which point the Full Member shall go through re-audit.

Subsequent GENICES audits involve the same costs and process, including the submission of an application and supporting documentation.

## Complaints & Self-Reported Non-Conformance Process

A complaint or self-report regarding non-conformance shall be investigated by the GEN Board. A self-report may include the notification to the Secretariat of material changes to the Ecolabelling Program.

The Board shall acknowledge the complaint or self-report within 3 business days. The Secretariat should be appointed to liaise with the identified organisation to gather evidence that confirms the complaint. A decision shall be communicated with the complainant within 30 calendar days.

The severity of the impact shall be classified as a minor or major non-conformance.

If a minor non-conformance is identified, Membership may be continued with resolution expected by the next audit.

If a major non-conformance is identified or the board determines the minor non-conformance(s) to pose a significant risk to the Integrity of the GENICES Program, the non-conformance process shall be followed, Section 8.

Where the Member fails to address the non-conformances within the specified timeframes, the suspension and expulsion process is enacted.

# Suspension and Expulsion

## Summary of Process

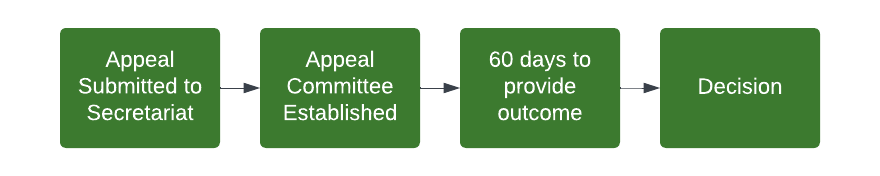
Figure - Suspension and Expulsion from GENICES

Suspension and expulsion of Full Members is an important part of maintaining the integrity of the GENICES Program. The suspension and expulsion process may be triggered by a complaint or self-report, or other failure to meet ongoing obligations.

The process for Suspension and Expulsion is outlined in the GEN By-Laws.

# Appeals

## Summary of the Process



## Detailed Process

An Applicant may appeal an audit finding or decision, suspension, or expulsion within 30 days of receipt of notification.

The Applicant shall submit the appeal to the Secretariat. Once an appeal is lodged, the timelines for corrective actions are placed on hold.

The appeal shall include:

* Rationale and reason for the appeal.
* Supporting evidence to substantiate the appeal.
* Key contacts for discussion.
* Any conflicts of interest.

Upon receiving the appeal, the Secretariat shall notify the GEN Board and agree with the Chair on an appropriate Appeal Committee.

The Appeal Committee shall consist of 3 Board Members. Where there are not enough Board Members without a conflict of interest relating to the appeal, the Board Chair and Secretariat shall appoint the Appeal Committee from the Full Membership. GEN may also engage non-GEN Members in the Appeal Committee as necessary to ensure no conflict of interest and the appropriate technical expertise.

The Appeal Committee shall sign a conflict-of-interest declaration and confidentiality agreement before details of the appeal are shared.

The Appeal Committee shall assess the evidence provided in the audit report and in the appeal. The Appeal Committee may call on the Auditor and Applicant to answer questions relating to the appeal.

The Appeal Committee shall make the decision on the appeal and notify the Secretariat, Applicant and Auditor within 60 days of the Committee being formed. Where additional time is required, this may be requested and granted by the GEN Board.

# Review of the GENICES Program

Figure - Process to review GENICES

To ensure the GENICES Program continues to meet its objectives and the expectations of interested parties, the GENICES Program shall be reviewed every 5 years by the GEN Board.

The commencement of the review shall be agreed by the Board with a commitment to adequately resource the project.

The review shall include:

* Appointment of a Working Group of interested Full Members
* Engagement with Interested Parties
* Consultation with current Full Members at a minimum

The draft amendment shall be circulated to all GEN Members for feedback and listed for public comment for a period of 60 days. GEN considers all feedback and send final proposed changes to Members prior to the AGM in accordance with the by-laws, with a summary of the commentary submitted and how this has been incorporated, or justification where it has not.

Following the finalisation of the review, all changes shall be voted on by members at the GEN AGM.

# Appendix A – Audit Type Form

When reviewing the application documents, including the previous audit report, available from the Secretariat, The Auditor shall use these questions as a guide to determine if the audit can be completed remotely or if a site visit is required. There is no single correct way to complete this initial audit type characterization. The remote audit can be completed via review of the written GENICES application, further document exchange and a video call for follow up. Ultimately, it is up to the Auditor to determine their comfort with a remote audit or site visit.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Question** | **Audit Type Scoring** | |
| Has the program experienced significant changes since the last GENICES, such as.   1. New product categories added or terminated? 2. Changes to processes of program operation (criteria development, consultation, compliance and verification, reporting?) 3. Are there new potential conflicts of interest? | ☒No significant change | ☐Significant Change |
| 0 | 2 |
| Is the program large and complex? Are the market conditions in which the program operates complex? For example, does the program operate in multiple countries. have dependencies on multiple external parties, have a significant number of product categories or number of licensees? | ☐Simple | ☒Complex |
| 0 | 1 |
| Does the program hold other ISO accreditations, such as ISO 17065? Can GENICES requirements be demonstrably met by proof of such accreditations? | ☒Yes | ☐No |
| 0 | 1 |
| Are program records and related documents available in digital formats? | ☒Digital | ☐Hard Copy |
| 0 | 1 |
| Is the English language level of proficiency among the program owners deemed sufficient to discuss program details over voice or video call? (Are all supporting documents presented in English?) | ☒Proficient | ☐Not Proficient |
| 0 | 3 |
| Is travel to the location unreasonable? e.g., for safety reasons, due to travel restrictions etc. | ☒Yes | ☐No |
| 0 | 1 |
| Are the number of sites difficult to assess in person in the specified timeframes? | ☒Yes | ☐No |
| 0 | 1 |
| Does the Applicant have a systematic implementation of its management system where records, data, etc. can be reviewed at any site, despite where the work is being performed? | ☒Yes | ☐No |
| 0 | 3 |
| TOTAL SCORE (Sum your scores from your answers to questions 1 – 8. The lower the score, the more likely the applicant is eligible for a remote audit without on-site visit. Anything 7 or above is more likely suitable for an onsite visit) |  | |

# APPENDIX B – GENICES Application Form

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **GENICES Application Form** | |
| Name of Applicant Organisation |  |
| Office Address |  |
| Website Address |  |
| Key contact for audit  Name(s):  Position Title(s):  Email Address(es):  Phone Number(s): |  |
| Name of Ecolabelling Program(s)/Scheme(s) nominated for GENICES |  |
| Product categories relevant to the nominated Program(s)/Scheme(s) |  |
| Preferred audit dates (if known) |  |
| *I attest that I have the authority to make this application on behalf of the nominated organisation and ecolabelling program(s)/scheme(s). I have reviewed the GENICES Program Rules, and the nominated organisation and all representatives shall provide correct, genuine, and truthful documentation and advice throughout the GENICES Program.*  Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Date of Submission: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |

# APPENDIX C – Audit Report Template

Applicants shall complete the column “Evidence Submitted” in this document. The Auditor is responsible for completing the remainder of the template.

## RE-AUDIT ONLY

*Requirements: The program shall conduct a self-assessment against the GENICES Requirements at least in year 3 of the Full Membership period.*

*Guidance: The program may conduct a self-assessment more frequently; however, the 3-year report shall be provided at re-audit. The self-assessment is used to ensure any changes in compliance are identified by the program and, therefore, GEN able to be notified.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requested Evidence** | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Self-Assessment Report |  | Did the program complete and pass a self-assessment in Year 3 of the Full Membership period? | Y |  |  |  |
| Was GEN notified of any changes in compliance, if applicable? | Y |  |  |  |

## ACCESSIBILITY

## The ecolabel program shall be voluntary in nature.

*Requirements: The program, regardless of whether it is developed or operated by government sponsored agencies, is voluntary.*

*Guidance: The program may be listed in relevant procurement policies but engagement in the program is not enforced by any agency.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requested Evidence** | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Program rules for eligibility. |  | Is the ecolabel program voluntary? | Y |  |  |  |

## All products that apply and meet the product environmental criteria shall be eligible to use the label.

*Requirements: Products that apply and meet the criteria of the product category are not otherwise excluded from use of the label.*

*Guidance: Where overarching rules apply to all categories, these should be outlined in the program rules and be transparent to all Applicants.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requested Evidence** | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Policy or procedure that indicates that all products that meet the criteria are eligible for the label. |  | Are any products that meet the criteria of the product category excluded from use of the label? | N |  |  |  |
| Products and associated verification documentation of products that have not achieved the label, if available and applicable. |  |  |  |  |

## Fees should be kept as low as possible to maximise accessibility and be applied equitably to all applicants and licensees.

*Guidance: Fees may include application, testing, licence fees, or administration fees. The conditions for joining the ecolabelling program are proportionate to the size and turnover of the companies in order not to exclude small and medium businesses.*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requested Evidence** | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Fee schedule. |  | Are the fees equitable for all applicants and licensees regardless of size? | Y |  |  |  |
| Are the fees kept as low as possible? | Y |  |  |  |

## Information on existing mutual recognition agreements shall be made available.

*Guidance: Mutual recognition should be encouraged and may include recognition of tests, inspections, conformity assessment, administrative procedures, and product environmental criteria.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requested Evidence** | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Review of communications regarding mutual recognition. |  | Are existing mutual recognition agreements referenced made available, at a minimum when requested? | Y |  |  |  |
| Review of processes for sharing information about mutual recognition. |  |  |  |  |
| Review of mutual recognition agreements. |  |  |  |  |

## PRODUCT CATEGORIES

## The program shall have a process for the selection of product categories.

*Guidance: A feasibility study should be conducted and should include:*

* *Initial selection of possible product categories*
* *Consultation with interested parties*
* *Market survey*
* *Suppliers*
* *Environmental impacts*
* *Potential and need for environmental improvement.*
* *Definition of scope including product function characteristics*
* *Availability of data*
* *Current national and international legislation and agreements*

*A proposal should be developed for interested parties summarizing the findings.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requested Evidence** | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Program rules for product category selection. |  | Is there a documented process for the selection of product categories? | Y |  |  |  |
| Documentation for the most recent product category selection. |  | Does the most recent documentation for selection of product categories align with the process? | Y |  |  |  |

## PRODUCT ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERIA

## The impacts across the full life cycle of the product shall be considered.

*Requirements: The program considers the full life cycle of the product when developing criteria. The study of life cycle stages shall show that the selection of product environmental criteria will not lead to the transfer of impacts from one stage of the life cycle to another, or from one medium to another, without a net gain of environmental benefit. Any deviation from this approach shall be justified.*

*Guidance: Life cycle stages to be considered in criteria development should include extraction of resources, manufacturing, distribution, use and end of life.*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requested Evidence** | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Program rules for criteria development. |  | Does the program have a documented requirement for considering the full life cycle of the product when developing criteria? | Y |  |  |  |
| Product environmental criteria. |  | Do the product environmental criteria reflect the full life cycle impacts? | Y |  |  |  |
| Are deviations from the life cycle approach, if any, justified? | Y |  |  |  |

## The product environmental criteria shall differentiate environmental products from others in the product category as environmentally preferable.

*Requirements: The program shall identify the product life cycle stages where there is differentiation of environmental impacts. The ranges and variability of the data shall be analysed to ensure selected product environmental criteria are adequate and reflect the differences among products.*

*Guidance: The criteria should only differentiate between product when the differences are significant. The precision and accuracy of testing and verification methodologies should be considered when determining the significance of this difference. Where multiple methods to demonstrate compliance are available, a justification of equity should be available on request. Declarations of conformity should not be considered equal to testing or other verified data sources.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requested Evidence** | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Program rules for criteria development. |  | Is there a documented process for determining the thresholds that adequately differentiate environmentally preferable products? | Y |  |  |  |
| Product environmental criteria. |  | If there are multiple ways to comply, can the label justify equivalence? | Y |  |  |  |
| Documentation outlining the research behind product environmental criteria. |  | Does the research conducted align with the documented process? | Y |  |  |  |
| Does the research support the thresholds set in the product environmental criteria? | Y |  |  |  |

## The criteria shall be attainable.

*Guidance: The criteria should consider the relative environmental impacts, measurement capability and accuracy. The criteria should consider relevant local, regional, and global environmental issues, available technology, and economic aspects.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requested Evidence** | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Program rules for criteria development. |  | Is there a documented process to ensure the criteria consider the relative environmental impacts, measurement capability, and accuracy? | Y |  |  |  |
| Product environmental criteria. |  | Does the research support the thresholds set in the product environmental criteria? | Y |  |  |  |
| Documentation outlining the research behind product environmental criteria and results of public comment. |  | Does the research conducted align with the documented process? | Y |  |  |  |
| Where applicable, certificates and verification documentation (redacted) of products certified under criteria. |  | Are products able to demonstrate conformance with the criteria? | Y |  |  |  |

## Fitness for purpose and levels of performance shall be accounted for.

*Requirements: Certified products shall be fit for purpose. Due consideration shall be given to product function.*

*Guidance: International, regional, or national standards for the product should be considered for use in the program. Product function should be addressed in terms of product performance and consider:*

* *Identification and selection of product performance elements that characterize function.*
* *Applicability to whole product category.*
* *Necessary levels of performance.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requested Evidence** | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Product environmental criteria. |  | Are product function characteristics required? | Y |  |  |  |

## All product environmental criteria and product function characteristics shall be verifiable by the auditor in accordance with the requirements of the program.

*Requirements: Sufficient evidence shall be available to demonstrate compliance with the determined criteria. The program shall assign numerical values to the criteria.*

*Guidance: Compliance should be assessed using the following in order of preference:*

* *ISO and IEC standards*
* *Other internationally recognized standards*
* *Regional and national standards*
* *Other repeatable and reproducible methods*
* *Manufacturer’s evidence*

*Numerical values applied to criteria may be minimum values, thresholds, scales, or any other relevant approach.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requested Evidence** | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Product environmental criteria and evidence requirements. |  | Are numerical values assigned to all product environmental criteria and product function characteristics? | Y |  |  |  |
| Program rules for demonstrating compliance. |  | Is evidence possible to collate for each criterion? | Y |  |  |  |

## The product environmental criteria shall specify the source of data where possible, and the program shall require the best quality data available.

*Requirements: The best quality data available shall be required to demonstrate conformance.*

*Guidance: The program should examine the availability of competent laboratories capable of performing included tests and should provide reference to the test methods that are required for any given criterion or characteristic.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requested Evidence** | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Product environmental criteria. |  | Do the criteria specify the data source? | Y |  |  |  |
| Where applicable, evidence of assessment of availability of competent laboratories. |  | If applicable, has the program reviewed the availability of competent laboratories capable of conducting included test? | Y |  |  |  |
| Program documentation regarding data quality for evidence requirements. |  | Does the Program preference the best quality data available? | Y |  |  |  |

## The development and selection of criteria shall be based on sound scientific and engineering principles.

*Requirements: The criteria development and selection shall be evidence based.*

*Guidance: The criteria should be derived from data that supports the claim of environmental preferability, considering the full life cycle.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requested Evidence** | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Program rules for the development of product environmental criteria. |  | Is the process for developing criteria evidence and science based? | Y |  |  |  |

## Criteria that directly or indirectly require or exclude the use of particular processes or production methods without justification shall be avoided.

*Requirements: Criteria shall not skew the market for towards particular processes or technologies without justification.*

*Guidance:* *Any exclusions of, for example, substances should meet criterion 3.7 and may be supported by a risk assessment.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Product environmental criteria. |  | Do criteria specifically exclude processes or production methods? | N |  |  |  |
| Documentation outlining the research behind product environmental criteria. |  | Does the research supporting the criteria justify any exclusions? | Y |  |  |  |

## Product environmental criteria and product function requirements shall be set for a predefined period and reviewed within a predefined period.

*Requirements: Review and validity periods for criteria shall be clearly communicated and review processes aligned with this timeline.*

*Guidance: New technologies, products, environmental information, and market changes should be considered.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Program rules for reviewing product environmental criteria. |  | | Is there a regular review period for criteria and characteristics? | Y |  |  |  |
| Public and/or online communications regarding review and validity periods for criteria. |  | | Are interested parties easily able to determine the review period? | Y |  |  |  |

## Timelines for implementing revisions to criteria shall consider already labelled product.

*Requirements: The implementation of labelling updates shall mitigate the risk of perverse outcomes.*

*Guidance: Timelines for implementing revisions should include:*

* *Urgency of compliance.*
* *Extent of change, time and complexity involved in retooling.*
* *Avoidance of unintended commercial advantage.*
* *Need to involve material suppliers.*
* *Action for existing labelled product.*
* *Time for appropriate consultation.*
* *Complexity of administering the changes for the program.*
* *Legislative requirements.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Program rules for the update of criteria and implementation of revisions, including any relevant exception processes. |  | | Do timelines for updated labelling minimise the risks of perverse outcomes for already labelled product? | Y |  |  |  |
| Sample of communication relating to last update, where applicable. |  | |

## Consultation

## Formal open consultation of interested parties shall be established.

*Requirements: Interested parties shall be consulted on selecting and reviewing product categories, product environmental criteria and product function characteristics.*

*Guidance: Programs may determine the extent of consultation and engagement with interested parties. The mechanism may include the use of selected groups of interested parties’ representatives e.g., advisory committee or public hearing.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Program rules for selecting and reviewing product categories, product environmental criteria and product function characteristics. |  | Is there a documented process for consultation of interested parties in the selection and review of product categories, environmental criteria, and function characteristics? | Y |  |  |  |
| Documented consultation for most recently updated or developed criteria. |  | Does the consultation conducted align with the documented process? | Y |  |  |  |
| Sample of comments from interested parties and responses to comments on draft documents. |  |

## Information shall be available to interested parties for inspection and comment where appropriate and adequate time allowed for comments to be submitted.

*Requirements: Relevant, non-confidential information shall be available to interested parties with sufficient comment periods.*

*Guidance: The program should be able to demonstrate transparency through all stages of its development and implementation, including:*

* *Selection of product categories*
* *Selection and development of product environmental criteria*
* *Product function characteristics*
* *Testing and verification methods*
* *Certification and award procedures*
* *Review periods*
* *Validity periods*
* *Non-confidential evidence on which award of the label is based.*
* *Funding sources for program development*
* *Compliance verification*

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| **Requested Evidence** | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Program rules regarding availability of information, public comment periods and transparency processes. |  | Is there a documented process for making information available, public comment periods and transparency processes? | Y |  |  |  |
| Can the Program demonstrate transparency through all stages of the program processes? | Y |  |  |  |

## The program shall implement a formal consultation mechanism that facilitates full participation of interested parties.

*Requirements: Interested parties shall be given adequate time and access to details and information used to provide input. Interested parties that provide comment shall receive proper consideration, and response to, their comments.*

*Guidance: The mechanism may include the use of selected groups of interested parties’ representatives e.g., advisory committee or public hearing. Reasonable efforts should be made to achieve consensus throughout the process.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Program rules for consultation. |  | | Is a formal consultation mechanism in place? | Y |  |  |  |
| Documentation on consultation for most recent relevant program development or update. |  | | Is there evidence to demonstrate this mechanism is in use? | Y |  |  |  |
| Were interested parties given adequate time and access to information to provide input? |  |  |  |
| Were comments given proper consideration and response? |  |  |  |

## Integrity and Transparency

## The program shall ensure they are free from undue influence.

*Requirements: The program shall demonstrate that sources of funding do not create a conflict of interest.*

*Guidance: The program should have processes and procedures in place to identify and mitigate the risks of conflict of interest.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Program rules for conflicts of interest. |  | | Does the Program actively manage their conflicts of interests? | Y |  |  |  |
| Conflict of interest register(s) or similar. |  | | Is there evidence to suggest the Program is under undue influence? | N |  |  |  |
| Funding Sources. |  | |
| Conflict of Interest Process for Verifiers. |  | |  |  |

## Confidentiality of all information identified as confidential shall be maintained.

*Requirements: Confidentiality shall be maintained.*

*Guidance: The program should have processes and procedures in place to ensure the adequate management of confidential information. A non-disclosure agreement may be signed with the GENICES auditor to ensure confidential information does not limit GENICES audits.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Templates of contracts and/or terms and conditions signed with verifiers and responsible parties. |  | | Is confidentiality enforced with external parties? | Y |  |  |  |
| Program rules regarding confidentiality. |  | | Is confidentiality managed through appropriate processes? | Y |  |  |  |

## The product environmental criteria and product function characteristics shall be published.

*Requirements: The criteria and characteristics shall be accompanied by information demonstrating:*

* *The establishment of the category, criteria and characteristics are in accordance with ISO14024 and ISO14020.*
* *The criteria are objective and justifiable.*
* *Methods are available to verify the criteria.*
* *Interested parties were given an opportunity to participate and their views were considered.*

*Guidance:* *The program should provide information on request that explains the meaning of the label to purchasers and the public.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Publicly available standards directory. |  | | Are the product environmental criteria and product function characteristics publicly available? | Y |  |  |  |
| Website. |  | | Is information supporting the criteria and characteristics publicly available? | Y |  |  |  |
| Communications regarding most recent criteria and product function characteristics. |  | |

## The program shall prepare and make available on request at a minimum:

## Product categories.

## Period of validity of criteria, testing and verification methods.

## Certification and award procedures.

## Periodic review criteria.

## Non-confidential evidence on which the award of the label is based.

## Funding sources for the program development.

## Compliance verification.

*Requirements: Evidence shall be made available that allows an interested party to determine conformance with ISO14024.*

*Guidance: The program may list all documentation on the program website or demonstrate that the documentation is easily accessible should it be requested.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Sample certificates awarded. |  | | Does the program have available the information necessary for an interested party to determine conformance with ISO14024? | Y |  |  |  |
| Sample of non-confidential evidence. |  | |
| Where applicable, evidence that this information has been provided to interested parties making a request. |  | |
| Website. |  | |
| Program rules. |  | | Do any Program or organisational rules prohibit this information from being shared? | N |  |  |  |

## The program shall maintain a publicly available list of products to which the label has been awarded.

*Requirements:* *The intended audience shall be able to confirm the validity of a label through a publicly available list.*

*Guidance: The program should consider the needs of the intended audience to be able to understand the validity of the label applied to product. Allowances may be made to keep a certification confidential for a specified period, for example where certification is achieved prior to product launch, provided that the product is eventually listed publicly.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Website and/or certified product directory. |  | | Is there a public list available for all products that have obtained the ecolabel? | Y |  |  |  |
| Program rules regarding updating the public list. |  | | Is the list up to date? | Y |  |  |  |

## Any change that might affect continued compliance shall be escalated to the program and appropriately addressed.

*Requirements: The program shall ensure any change in the product, or its manufacturing process is considered and shall require the licensee to initiate verified corrective action if required. The licensee is responsible for ensuring ongoing compliance with the program.*

*The program shall include contractual obligations with the licensee to notify the program of changes when they may impact continued compliance.*

*Guidance: The program should have process in place to be confident in the continual compliance of certified product.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Templates for contracts with the licensee. |  | | Is the licensee required to escalate relevant changes to the Program? | Y |  |  |  |
| Program rules regarding ongoing compliance. |  | | Is the licensee responsible for maintaining compliance? | Y |  |  |  |
| Non-conformance process. |  | | Is action taken to address non-conformances arising in the market? | Y |  |  |  |

## The program shall ensure its label is legally protected to prevent unauthorized use and have a clear and explicit policy regarding the proper use of the label.

*Requirements: Any deviation from the program policy shall result in appropriate corrective action and possible withdrawal of the licence.*

*Guidance: The program may include an escalation to an appropriate regulator for improper use of the label.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Program rules for escalation. |  | | Is the label appropriately trademarked? | Y |  |  |  |
| Trademark documentation held by the program’s legal entity. |  | | Is the Program empowered to take actions for improper use by a licensee or otherwise? | Y |  |  |  |

## Integrity and Transparency

## The program rules shall control the conditions for awarding of a licence and the use of the label.

*Requirements: All prerequisites for awarding the licence and the use of the label shall be included in the program rules, produce environmental criteria and product function characteristics.*

*Guidance:* *The program rules should address:*

* *Publicity by licensees.*
* *Conditions of suspension, cancellation, and withdrawal of a licence.*
* *Non-conformance and corrective action procedures.*
* *Dispute resolution procedure, testing and verification procedures, fee structure.*
* *Guidance for the use of logotype.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Program rules for the award of the licence. |  | | Do the program rules specify the conditions for awarding and using the label? | Y |  |  |  |

## The methodology for assessing compliance and verifying on-going compliance shall be documented and have sufficient rigour to maintain confidence in the program.

*Guidance: The program may consider recertification timelines that align with the volatility of the relevant market. For example, where there are known regular changes in supply chains for a market, recertification may be required more frequently.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Program rules for ongoing compliance. |  | | Is the process for determining and monitoring compliance documented? | Y |  |  |  |

## The program shall maintain a plan for supervision and control aligned with the program requirements.

*Guidance: The program should have a documented complaints process with agreed timelines for resolution. The program may consider unannounced audits and market surveillance.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Program rules for supervision and control. |  | | Is the Program empowered to act where compliance is not maintained? | Y |  |  |  |
|  | | Does the Program have a plan for supervision and control? | Y |  |  |  |

## The program shall obtain documentary evidence of applicant’s conformity.

*Requirements: All data shall be of known and verifiable quality.*

*Guidance: The program should consider how this documentation is stored safely and reliably to meet criterion 5.2.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Sample of redacted documentary evidence demonstrating conformity. |  | | Is data securely stored relating to an applicant's conformity? | Y |  |  |  |
| Does the documentary evidence support the conformance status of the licence(s)? | Y |  |  |  |

## The program shall establish processes to assess and develop the competence of verifiers.

*Requirements: The program shall have a transparent and documented process to manage and trace verification activity.*

*Guidance: Programs may regularly train verifiers or require certain competencies, certifications, or memberships. Programs may engage in a project management approach or system with verifiers to ensure traceability.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Program rules for verifiers. |  | | Are verifiers confirmed by the Program as competent? | Y |  |  |  |
| Documented system of traceability for verification. |  | | Is the verification activity traceable before, during and after the activity occurs? | Y |  |  |  |

## The program shall establish the competence of verifiers.

*Requirements: Verifiers shall have knowledge of:*

* *The relevant sector and products within the sector.*
* *Product-related environmental criteria, including the methodology used to develop the criteria.*
* *The regulatory framework.*
* *The program rules.*
* *ISO14020, ISO 14024 and ISO 14021.*

*Guidance: Programs may regularly train verifiers or require certain competencies, certifications, or memberships.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Program rules for verifiers. |  | | Do verifiers have the appropriate knowledge and skills to deliver the verification activity? | Y |  |  |  |
| Register of verifiers and evidence of competence, stored in accordance with relevant privacy legislation. |  | |

## The program shall award a licence to use the label when it is satisfied that:

## The applicant complies with the program rules.

## The product has been verified and documented to comply with the relevant product environmental criteria and product function characteristics.

*Requirements: The issuing of a licence does not oblige the licensee to use the label. Compliance with all product environmental criteria and product function characteristics must be verified, with the conformity assurance system covering every labelled product.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Program rules for awarding a licence and use of label. |  | | Are labels licenced following assessment of conformance with the program rules, criteria, and characteristics? | Y |  |  |  |
| Are licensees obliged to use the label? | N |  |  |  |
| Non-conformance procedure. |  | | Are non-conformances addressed at the time of audit and when identified in-market? | Y |  |  |  |

## Any declarations of conformity permitted in the program shall follow the guidelines outlined in ISO17050.

*Requirements: At a minimum, the declaration shall contain:*

* *Unique identification of the declaration.*
* *Name and contact address of the issuer.*
* *Identification of the object of the declaration.*
* *Statement of conformity.*
* *Complete and clear list of standards or other specified requirements.*
* *Date and place of issue of the declaration.*
* *Signature, name, and function of the authorized person(s)*
* *Any limitation on the validity of the declaration.*

*Guidance: Additional supporting information may be provided such as a reference to any management systems involved.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Sample of most recent declarations of conformity (redacted) used to demonstrate conformity in the program. |  | | If declarations of conformity are permitted as evidence, do they meet ISO17050? | Y |  |  |  |
| Sample of verification documentation. |  | | Is it clear in the verification documentation whether compliance is based on declared information? | Y |  |  |  |

## The verification shall be fully documented for all certified products as facilitated by the conformity assurance system, and all documentation shall be retained by the program or an approved verifier for the period the licence is valid and for a reasonable period, thereafter, accounting for the lifetime of the product. Where an approved verifier retains documentation, the program shall have access to this as required.

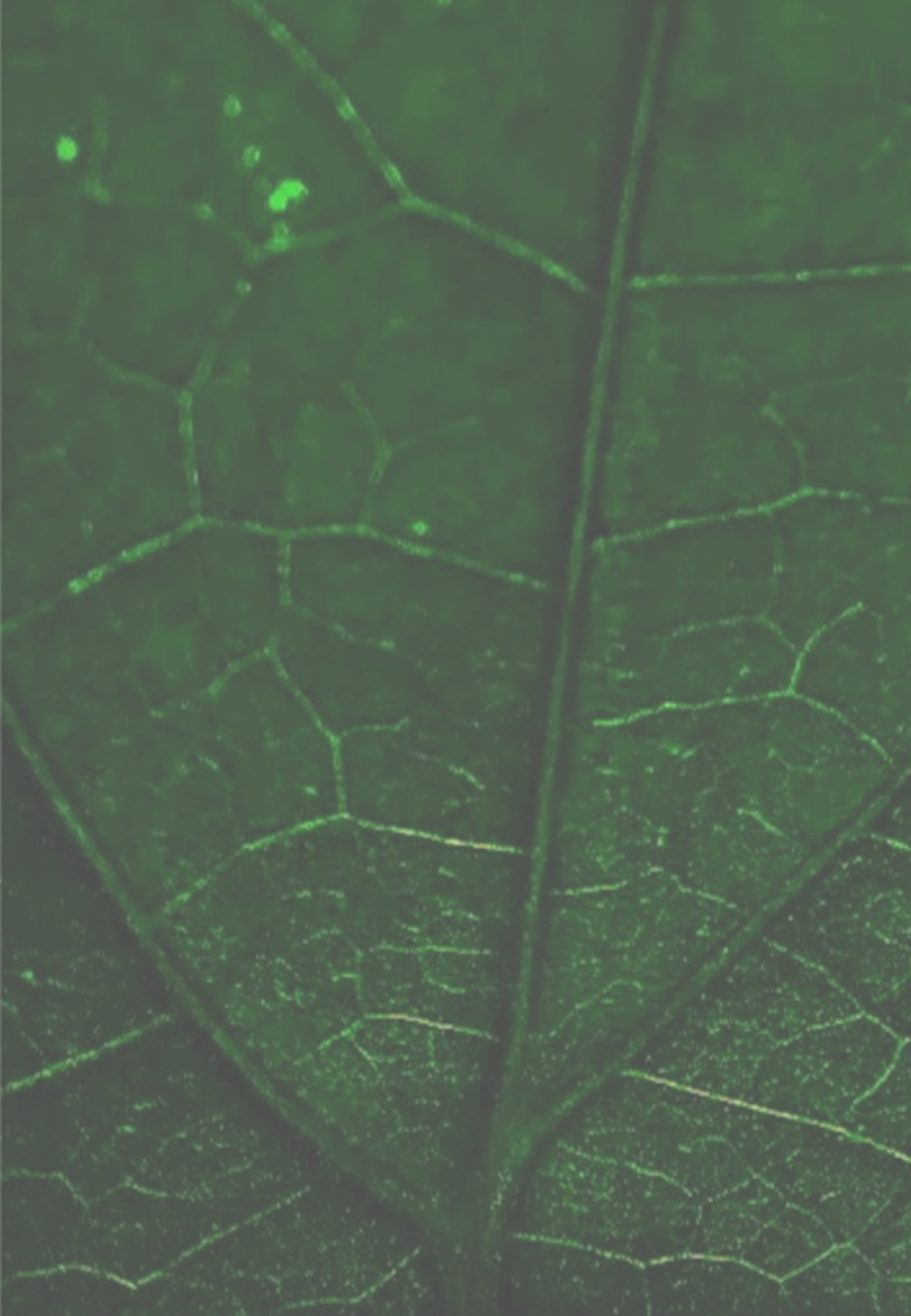
*Requirements: Minimum verification documentation shall include:*

* *Identification of the standard or method used.*
* *Documentary evidence if verification cannot be made by testing the finished product.*
* *Test results where necessary for verification.*
* *Name and address of independent verifier if outside the program.*

*Guidance: The verification documentation should also include:*

* *Statement of overall compliance or failure to comply.*
* *Date of verification and accreditation state of the verifier.*
* *Signature or e-signature of responsible person.*

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| **Requested Evidence** | | **Evidence Submitted** | **Audit Questions** | **Compliant Answer** | **Y/N** | **Comments** | **C/O/**  **Major/Minor** |
| Sample of documentary evidence demonstrating conformity. |  | | Is the verification documented, with documentation available for a reasonable period?  Are the minimum verification documentation requirements met? | Y |  |  |  |
| Program rules for the retention of documentation. |  | |
| Governance structure demonstrating relationships with verifiers. |  | | Are verifiers independent from the standard setting process and from the company/product being audited? | Y |  |  |  |

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