



1. Preparing for Certification

A request can be made to NCPC-SL in person, by post, by telephone or by e-mail for relevant information on Certification. A “General Information Brochure” covering the NCPC Ecolabelling Certification process with relevant documents will be made available to prospective clients (Ref; www.ecolabelsrilanka.org). The company should be acquainted with the NCPC-SL certification procedure & methodology and apply in the prescribed formats, FM-EL-01 & FM-EL-02.

The company needs to establish the status of its existing ecolabelling system and technical competence with regard to the requirements of NCPC-SL for Ecolabelling Certification.

It is important for a company to make a definite plan of action for obtaining certification and nominate a responsible person to coordinate all activities related to the certification process. The person nominated should be familiar with the company’s existing Sustainability programs.

2. Eligibility for Applying for Ecolabelling Certification

The applicant company must comply with all clauses of the “Certification Criteria for Ecolabelling for specific products” (CC-EL-.xx) published by NCPC-SL.

3. Certification Procedure

3.1 Application for Certification

The applicant company shall apply to NCPC-SL in the prescribed application form (FM-EL-01) and questionnaire (FM-EL-02) and along with, at a minimum, submit the documents, supporting information and evidence that demonstrate the conformity of products to the certification criteria for certification Audit.

- a) Applicant company’s current business licence and/or legal registration;
- b) Authorization letter from the manufacturer to deal with the product(s) seeking certification (if applying on the manufacturers’ behalf);
- c) The scope of the product(s) applying for certification;
- d) Applicant company’s profile including a profile of the manufacturing/packing/collecting/farming facility;
- e) Location map of the site(s);
- f) The site evaluation report and environmental recommendation for the site from CEA;
- g) Manufacturer’s declaration of conformity to the certification scheme requirements;
- h) Product description(s) and product photos;
- i) Recent (<12 months) test reports, technical reports and/or certifications; and
- j) Payment of application fees.

3.2 Acknowledgement and Registration of Application

NCPC-SL on receipt of the application and the fees, shall issue an acknowledgement to the applicant company. After scrutiny of the application for its completeness in all respects, a unique customer reference number shall be allocated to the applicant company, which shall be used for correspondence with the applicant in the future. NCPC-SL may request additional information/clarification (s), if necessary.



Based on the documents and information provided by the applicant company, if the NCPC-SL is of the opinion that an audit cannot result in certification, the applicant company will be informed in writing giving reasons. All information about the company shall be kept strictly confidential.

3.3 Appointment of Project Officer

A Project Officer under the supervision of the Certification Manager of the certification scheme, will be appointed on behalf of NCPC-SL to deal with the application and the case file being maintained thereafter. The Project Officer shall be responsible for evaluating the adequacy of documentation and records.

3.4 Review of Documents and Records

The preliminary scrutiny of the application and supporting documents is done by the Project Officer. If there are gross inadequacies, the documents will be returned or the company will be informed of the inadequacies. If the documents do appear to be in order, the Project Officer shall study the documents in depth and audit their compliance in accordance with certification criteria.

The Project Officer shall prepare an adequacy report as necessary and communicate it to the client company. The client company shall amend the documents as requested and submit them to NCPC-SL. If the applicant company does not respond to NCPC-SL with corrections for the inadequacies before 6 months, the application shall become invalid and the company shall apply afresh.

3.5 Certification audit

The NCPC SL shall appoint a lead auditor from the pool of auditor to carry out the certification audit in respect of the applicant company. The lead auditor shall preferably have technical expertise in one of the main disciplines for which the application has been made.

The lead auditor shall have the overall responsibility of conducting the certification audit. Towards the task of on-site audit, he/she shall be assisted by a team of auditor appropriate to the scope of certification. If a auditor is not available in the certification audit team having required technical expertise, a technical expert will be appointed to assist him/her to conduct the audit effectively.

Thereafter NCPC-SL shall fix updates for on-site certification audit of the company and accompany sites in consultation with the company, the lead auditor and auditor (s). NCPC-SL may also nominate one of its officers or trainee auditor (s) to participate in the audit as an observer during the on-site audit to convey his /her observations as a auditor -in-training, whenever necessary.

The company shall be informed about the certification. A copy of this communication shall be sent to the members of the certification audit team, along with the related documents. The auditors are required to reach the place of audit, well in advance of the scheduled time of the audit.

The certification audit team reviews the company's documents and ecolabelling procedures and practices and auditors their compliance with the certification criteria of NCPC-SL. The audit report shall contain the evaluation of product environmental criteria including life cycle considerations, product function characteristics, ecolabelling practice, and all relevant materials and products examined. It shall also provide a recommendation for grant of certification or otherwise. The Audit report is prepared by the lead auditor, in the formats prescribed by NCPC-SL. The details of the non-conformances observed during the audit are handed over to the company by the Lead auditor



and the detailed audit report is sent to NCPC-SL, as quickly as possible after the completion of on-site certification audit.

Note 1: As per requirements, during the audit process, if the certification auditors deem it necessary to draw samples and conduct testing on the client company's products, the following provisions shall apply:

- **Permission for Sample Drawing and Testing:** The client company shall grant permission to the certification auditors to draw samples of their products for testing purposes during the audit/s. This is an essential part of the assessment process to audit the conformity and quality of the products.
- **Testing Costs:** The costs incurred for conducting the necessary testing shall be the responsibility of the client company. These costs include any fees associated with sample handling, transportation, laboratory testing, and relevant analyses.
- It is important to note that these testing activities are conducted with the intention of ensuring the client company's compliance with the required standards and to validate the accuracy and reliability of their testing procedures.
- By allowing auditors to draw samples and perform tests during the audit/s, the client company demonstrates its commitment to maintaining the quality of its products and the validity of its testing processes. This cooperation helps to enhance confidence in the reliability and credibility of the client company's testing and certification activities.

Note 2: Auditing of Upstream/Down-Stream Products

NCPC SL shall consider the requirements to both upstream and downstream industries involved in the supply chain as relevant to the scope of the application received to the ecolabelling certification.

a. Upstream Industry Certification:

- Upstream industries seeking eco-labeling status undergo a separate certification process specific to their products.
- The certification division of NCPC conducts audits and assessments to audit that the upstream industry complies with the necessary criteria and standards for eco-labeling.
- Once the upstream industry is audited and meets the eco-labeling requirements, the certification body issues an eco-labeling certification specifically for the upstream products.
- The certification includes relevant information about the certified products and their eco-labeling status.
- Downstream industries receiving products from the certified upstream industry request and obtain copies of the eco-labeling certification for the specific products they receive.
- The downstream industry audits the authenticity and validity of the eco-labeling certification by cross-checking it with the certification body's records.

Or else

The client/applicant company shall implement a mechanism to maintain sufficient documentation evidence to ensure the fulfillment of the Ecolabel Certification Criteria requirements throughout the product lifecycle, including both upstream and downstream processes. This documentation shall be audited by the certification team to assess the adequacy of implementation and compliance with the criteria requirements. It is crucial for the client/applicant company to establish a robust documentation system that captures and demonstrates their adherence to the Ecolabel criteria at each stage of the product's lifecycle. This will enable the certification team to effectively evaluate the company's compliance and determine eligibility for certification.



b. Maintenance of Records:

The NCPCSL shall maintains comprehensive records of all eco-labeling certifications issued to upstream industries and their corresponding downstream industries.

These records serve as evidence of the eco-labeling status throughout the supply chain.

c. Regular Audits and Assessments:

The NCPCSL shall conducts regular audits and assessments of both upstream and downstream industries to ensure ongoing compliance with eco-labeling requirements.

This includes reviewing records, conducting inspections, and auditing the proper use of the eco-labeling status by downstream industries.

3.6 Scrutiny of Certification Audit Report

The Project Officer shall check and audit the certification audit report and communicate the outcome of the audit to the company and shall ensure that the non-conformances raised by the certification audit team and not closed during the certification audit, are available with the company and are well understood by the company.

The company shall take necessary corrective actions on the remaining non-conformance(s)/ other concerns and shall submit corrective actions with documentary evidence to NCPC-SL within a maximum period of 02 months unless otherwise extended with the agreement of NCPC-SL, which is not exceeding 06 months. The Project Officer shall monitor the progress of closing non-conformances. If the corrective actions are not submitted to the NCPC-SL for enabling it to complete the certification process by 06 months or delayed until one year, a follow up audit shall be conducted. If the company takes more than one year to submit corrective actions, the company shall re-apply for certification by filling out a new application form obtained from NCPC-SL.

When there are significant non-conformance(s) identified during the on-site audit, the progress is monitored closely and NCPC-SL may arrange for a follow up audit for the closure of the non-conformance (s).

3.7 Certification Committee

After the submission of corrective actions by the company satisfactorily, the Project Officer prepares a summary of all relevant information gathered during the processing of the application, the audit report, additional information received from the company and the subsequent certifications. The summary report with recommendations of the Certification Manager is placed before the Governing Council meeting for the approval for the grant of certification.

The Team of auditor's observations/recommendations on the audit report and the CEO's recommendation shall be the deciding factors for the grant of certification or otherwise. All decisions taken by the Team of auditors shall be recorded. In case the CEO/Governing Council finds deficiencies in the audit report to arrive at a decision, the Project Officer shall obtain clarification from the Lead auditor, auditor, technical expert, or the company concerned.

The CEO's recommendation regarding the grant of certification shall be submitted to the Governing Council for formal approval. Companies are free to appeal against the findings of certification audit or decisions on certification.

3.8 Issue of Ecolabelling Certificate



When the recommendation results in the grant of certification, the Project Officer shall prepare the certificate. Before the grant of certification, the Project Officer shall obtain signatures on the Terms and Conditions for Maintaining Certification (RP-EL-02) from the company.

The certificate shall define the types of products, brand names, name of the manufacturer, and issue/Valid date/s wherever applicable.

All decisions taken by NCPC-SL regarding the grant of certification shall be open to appeal by the company is consistent with the appeal procedure of NCPC-SL.

4. Maintaining Certification

4.1 Validity of Certificate

The NCPC Ecolabel certificate shall be valid for a period of 3 years. On grant of certification, the company is able to use NCPC-SL Ecolabel on all products, covered within the scope of the certification granted. Ecolabel Sri Lanka mark may also be used on letterheads, brochures and any other material issued to its clients.

During the validity of the certification, the company must continuously comply with the requirements of NCPC-SL Ecolabelling Criteria and “Terms and Conditions for maintaining certification” (RP-EL-02).

4.2 Extension / Reduction of Scope of Certification

The company during the validity of certification may enhance or reduce the scope of certification. On submission of a new application form, NCPC-SL shall evaluate the company for extension of scope during surveillance/recertification or by organizing a supplementary/special visit. This request shall be made to the NCPC-SL two months before the surveillance or recertification.

4.3 Supplementary / Special Visit

NCPC-SL may also conduct supplementary / special visit at any time during the validity of certification, if:

- i. the NCPC-SL certification criteria has been changed.
- ii. changes have been reported to NCPC-SL affecting the company’s operations.
- iii. the certificate / Ecolabel has been misused.
- iv. a complaint has been received and the facts have to be audited.

4.4 Changes in Certification Criteria

If there is a change in the general Ecolabel certification criteria, NCPC-SL shall inform the company of this in writing indicating the transition period, which shall be not more than 6 months. On receipt of the aforesaid information, the company must confirm to NCPC-SL, its willingness to modify its system in accordance with the changes. On confirmation from the company, NCPC-SL may conduct a supplementary / special visit to evaluate the implementation of the same.

4.5 Changes Affecting Company’s Operations

In the event of the company informing NCPC-SL about any changes in the information affecting the company’s activities and operations, such as changes in legal or commercial ownership or organizational status, organizational



structure, main policies, resources and premises, equipment, environmental impacts, scope of certification or other similar change, NCPC-SL may organize a supplementary/ special visit for significant changes or review others at the next audit. In case of changes in key managerial/ technical personnel, unless a special visit is organized, NCPC-SL shall call over responsible personnel to the Ecolabel programme, interview them and then communicate with them in writing regarding their acceptability for respective work.

In the event of transfer of certification, when the legal status or the ownership of the certified company/product changes, the company shall communicate this with relevant documentary evidence. The final decision is communicated to the company along with an amended certificate.

4.6 Voluntary Withdrawal

The company at any time during the validity of certification may discontinue their certification, voluntarily by making a written request to NCPC-SL. If the company decides to regain the certification status, after it has sought voluntary withdrawal it is treated as a new application for certification and has to pay all fees for application & certification audit, as applicable at the time.

5. Surveillance

NCPC-SL shall conduct annual surveillance of all certified companies. A surveillance is aimed at examining whether the certified company is maintaining all the requirements of NCPC-SL certification criteria.

The Project Officer shall inform the certified company at least three months before the due date of certification for conducting the surveillance visit.

The company during the validity of certification may request to enhance the scope of certification for which they should apply two months before the conduct of certification audit/ surveillance. A scope extension request at the time of audit will not be considered. If a company requests scope extension independent of surveillance visit, NCPC-SL will arrange a separate audit.

The formalities involved with the surveillance audit are similar to the certification audit. The non-conformances, if any, shall have to be closed within two months of the conduct of surveillance. The summary of the surveillance report along with other relevant information shall be submitted to the CEO for continuation of certification or otherwise. NCPC-SL shall inform the company, in writing, about such decision. If the weighting factors allocated in the surveillance certification audit after corrective actions are less than that of when the initial certification was granted, CM will forward the case to the CEO for a decision.

6. Renewal of Certification

The company may apply for renewal of certification by applying in the prescribed Application forms FM-EL-01 and FM-EL-02 along with other documents submitted for the initial certification.

The application shall be accompanied with the prescribed re-certification charges. The company may request for extension of scope of certification, which should explicitly be mentioned in the application form.

The request for renewal should be submitted at least 4 months before the expiry of the validity of certification. If the company does not apply for renewal of certification, one month before the expiry of certification, it shall be presumed that the company is no longer interested in certification and the certification status of the company shall



expire on the validity date mentioned in the certificate. In such a case, the company shall have to apply afresh and the continuity of the certificate shall be disturbed. The procedure for processing of renewal application is similar to that of initial application.

If the results of recertification audit are positive and all non-conformances are closed before the expiry of the certificate and weighting factors are at acceptable level, then the validity of the certificate is extended by another three years without any discontinuity. The maximum duration that should be allowed for a company to take corrective action shall be two months, unless otherwise agreed upon, whichever should be before the expiry of certification. A new certificate is issued on renewal; however, the certificate number shall remain the same.

7. Adverse Decisions

NCPC-SL may take an adverse decision on certification of a company, if the company at any time during the validity of certification does not fulfill the NCPC-SL Ecolabel Certification Criteria and /or violates the "Terms and conditions of maintaining certification" (RP-EL-02) or does not fulfill the obligations otherwise. The conditions of taking adverse decisions, like a reduction in scope of certification, abeyance, suspension and forced withdrawal are described in respective Procedures of NCPC-SL.

In case of adverse decisions like abeyance, suspension and forced withdrawal, the company shall discontinue the use NCPC Eco-Label, in any form. The suspension and forced withdrawal status shall also be publicized.

In case the company's certification has been withdrawn by NCPC-SL, it is disqualified to participate in the certification programme for a period of at least one year. The company may apply afresh by giving valid justification for earlier withdrawal and paying all fees & expenses, as applicable at that time.

8. Appeals

All decisions taken by NCPC-SL regarding grant / continuation / renewal/ reduction/ suspension/ withdrawal of Ecolabel certification shall be open to appeal by the company, and such appeals shall be addressed to the Chairman of NCPC-SL. All such appeals will be processed under the NCPC-SL appeal procedure and the decision taken on such issue by the Governing Council of NCPC-SL will be the final.

9. Complaints

The complaints with regard to audit and certification process, decisions taken thereof or any activity related to the operations of NCPC-SL or executed by any staff member or auditor on behalf of NCPC-SL are entertained by the NCPC-SL. Complaints if any, shall be sent to the CEO of NCPC-SL in writing with proper authenticity of the informant. All such complaints or disputes arisen thereof are handled as per the procedures adopted by the NCPC-SL. Where necessary, the NCPC-SL may conduct extraordinary audit to clarify the issues pertaining to the complaint.

10. Publicity

The information with regard to certification process and concurrent changes in the process as well as in the operations of NCPC-SL, certified companies and their contact addresses and scope of certification are published in the NCPC-SL web site. In addition, withdrawal of certification, suspension of certification and termination of certification are also posted in the NCPC-SL website and /or newspapers.

11. Confidentiality



The members of the committees, auditor and NCPC-SL officials are required to maintain strict confidentiality of the information gathered regarding the companies from their various documents like manuals, procedures, work instructions, internal reports etc. and any other related information that might have been given to NCPC-SL, during the process of evaluation for grant of certification. NCPC-SL shall impose the same obligation of maintaining secrecy on those, whom they entrust the tasks of a confidential nature, as described above.

12. Liability

NCPC-SL shall not be responsible for any damages, which the company may suffer as a result of any action or negligence by those who are carrying out the tasks of Ecolabeling certification of the company and any failure to the grant of certification or abeyance / suspension / forced withdrawal of the certification.

13. Amendments to the Policies and Procedures

NCPC-SL may at any time amend the policies and procedures related to grant of certification, maintaining certification, surveillance, renewal of certification and the adverse decisions thereof. NCPC-SL shall inform the companies regarding such amendments indicating the transition period which shall be at least 6 months.