

Eco Choice Aotearoa Procedures Manual 2025

Section 2.4 Preparing New Product or Service Standards

Purpose	<p>To define procedures for preparing all new product or service standards and ensuring the processes involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are transparent. • Are independent and impartial. • Allow a balanced input from all parties; and • Meet requirements in relevant standards, principles, and guides.
Scope	Applies to all new product and service standards developed and published by Eco Choice Aotearoa.
Responsibilities & authorities	<p>The Head of Standards has authority to approve standards for publishing and is responsible for ensuring procedures are followed.</p> <p>Any person appointed to complete tasks to develop a product or service standard is responsible for following the relevant parts of this procedure.</p>
Definitions	<p>Criteria: A specific measurable or verifiable requirement.</p> <p>Verification Required: The means (testing, calculations, and measurement) to be used to demonstrate that criteria are met.</p>

Procedure

Prepare Development Brief	<p>Regardless of whether the standard is being developed internally or externally, the Head of Standards must complete a Development Brief.</p> <p>The brief will detail the technical and consultation tasks (see below) to be completed, timeframes and any special instructions.</p> <p>The Chief Executive Officer approves the brief.</p>
Technical tasks	The brief will detail the technical tasks that need to be completed to develop the standard, including:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing relevant existing standards (including those from other Global Ecolabelling Network members) and other information. • Completing a life-cycle analysis to identify environmental hotspots, as appropriate to the product category. • Determining environmental criteria and product characteristics criteria. • Preparing a draft standard. • Preparing a Verification Checklist and an Applicant Statement on Compliance. • Finalising the standard and any supporting documents after consultation.
Consultation required	<p>The brief will detail the steps or processes to be used to consult and involve interested parties. These may vary, depending on the product category and complexity of relevant issues.</p> <p>Steps or processes may involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing technical reports or working drafts for consultation. • Involving interested parties in working or advisory groups. • Discussions and/or meetings. • Any other appropriate means. <p>The process for consultation must, at a minimum, involve a formal 60-day period for comment after a proposed standard is published on the ECA website, and must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure careful and fair consideration of, and response to, all comments received. • Involve a reasonable and fair effort to achieve consensus on appropriate environmental criteria and product characteristics criteria.
Assign a Standard Development Brief	<p>The Head of Standards will complete the tasks in the Development Brief and prepare the Standard and supporting documents.</p> <p>Alternately, the Head of Standards may appoint an appropriately qualified and experienced person to do so, providing them with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of this procedure and referenced templates and forms.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of the Feasibility Profile. • Any other information considered helpful.
Execute Development Brief	The Head of Standards or appointed person will complete the tasks in the Development Brief, following the guidelines below.

Select and develop environmental criteria

Life Cycle approach to identify environmental issues	<p>A life-cycle approach must be used to identify the environmental issues relevant to the product category, and in particular to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the stages in a product's life cycle where there are environmental impacts. • Identify impacts that are and are not significant. • Ensure any environmental criteria selected will not result in impacts being shifted from one stage of the life-cycle to another (without a net environmental benefit).
Select issues for criteria	<p>Issues for which environmental criteria will be set must be selected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect the environmental issues identified as most significant. • Differentiate environmentally preferable products, based on measurable and significant differences in environmental impact. • Take account of local, regional and global environmental issues. <p>When developing criteria, if only a limited number of environmental issues are addressed, the rationale must be provided.</p>
Setting the criteria	<p>Criteria set for selected issues must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant and accurately reflect the selected environmental issues. • Based on sound scientific and engineering principles. • Set at attainable levels. • Measurable or verifiable. <p>Criteria set should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be expressed in terms of impacts on the environment and natural resources, or if not practical, in terms of environmental aspects (such as emissions to the environment).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid excluding particular processes or production methods (unless this is justified). • If excluding specific substances, have scientific support. • Be based on data that support environmental preference between products. • Take account of available technology and economic aspects. • Not inhibit innovation that would improve environmental performance. • Not create unnecessary obstacles to international trade. <p>Criteria may be made measurable using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum thresholds. • Scale point systems; and • Qualitative or quantitative indices and weighting factors. <p>These must be explained and justified.</p>
Verification requirements	<p>The means to measure and verify if criteria are met, must be defined. These should be based on scientific methods and allow accurate and reproducible results to be achieved.</p> <p>Where standard test or verification methods are set, these should be based (in order of preference) on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International standards. • Regional or national standards. • Repeatable methods using Good Laboratory Practice. • Evidence provided by the manufacturer. <p>When selecting and setting verification requirements the following should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurement accuracy and precision. • Technical and organisational feasibility of completing the tests, measurement and verification. • Availability and access to competent laboratories or other expertise and services. • Cost. <p>Any guidance required must be included on the Verification Checklist.</p>

Select product function requirements

Identify product function characteristics	<p>The characteristics important to the function of products and their fitness for purpose should be identified, taking account of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and safety requirements. • Customer performance needs.
Select key performance elements	<p>For key function characteristics, relevant performance elements should be identified. These should be expressed in terms of product performance, rather than design or descriptive characteristics.</p>
Setting criteria for product performance	<p>Where relevant product performance standards are available, criteria should be based on them, in the following order of preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International standards. • Regional standards; and • National standards
Consultation	<p>Consultation must be completed following the steps and processes set out in the Development Brief.</p> <p>The person/people responsible for consultation must ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inputs from consultation are provided to those developing environmental or product characteristic criteria. • Responses are provided on all consultation inputs; and • Records of consultation are made and kept.

Prepare Product or Service Standard

Draft standard	<p>Once environmental criteria and criteria for product function have been set, a Draft Standard is prepared using the Standard Template. The Standard must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about the process followed to prepare the Standard and an invitation to comment on the Standard. • Background information on the environmental issues that are relevant to the product category and on which the criteria are based. • A clear definition of the product category (products the Standard applies to).
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The standard criteria on legal requirements. • The environmental criteria and product function characteristic criteria. • Information on verification requirements for each criterion. • The standard requirements and notes for ECA licensed partners.
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Formally notify the Product or Service Standard

Confirm draft standard	<p>The Head of Standards confirms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All consultation processes set out in the Development Brief to prepare a Draft Standard have been completed. • The draft has been evaluated and complies with Eco Choice Aotearoa principles for Standards.
Notify draft standard	<p>The Head of Standards, in collaboration with the Engagement Manager, will upload the Draft Standard to the ECA website and solicit external comments for at least 60 days.</p> <p>This process may include promoting the draft through ECA digital channels, emailing the ECA database and Technical Advisory Panel, hosting webinars, direct outreach, or other appropriate methods.</p>

Review comments and finalise the standard

Review comments	<p>The Head of Standards reviews or appoints an appropriate person to review any comments received about the proposed new Standard. The reviewer must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all comments are recorded, considered and responded to. • Follow the processes set out in the Development Brief. <p>If significant comments are made, the Head of Standards may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require additional consultation steps to be followed; and/or • Seek the advice of The New Zealand Ecolabelling Trust Board or Technical Advisory Panel, on the most appropriate means to resolve issues raised.
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Amend or finalise documents	<p>The Head of Standards, or person appointed by the Head of Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes any amendments required to the specification document; and • Prepares a Verification/ Audit Checklist and an Applicant Statement on Compliance form for the final Standard.
Final Standard	<p>Where no comments, or no substantive comments, are received on a proposed standard, the Head of Standards may publish the new standard on the ECA website immediately after the 60-day comment period concludes.</p> <p>Where comments have been received, the Head of Standards will consider them and determine whether further research or stakeholder engagement is required before finalising the standard. Once finalised, the standard will be published on the ECA website.</p>
Update the website and notify interested parties	<p>The Head of Standards uploads the final version of the standard to the ECA website.</p> <p>The Head of Standards may notify parties the standard has been published, by email or other appropriate means.</p>