





## Guidelines for Criteria Development for ABNT Environmental Quality Label

PG-12.01

Date: Fev. 2009

Page Nº 2/7

### 1 Objective

This general procedure establishes the principles and the systematic for the development of the criteria which will be used as reference during the conformity evaluation of products and services of Organizations interested in obtaining the license to use the ABNT Environmental Quality Label.

### 2 Normative references

The documents listed below contain dispositions which, when cited in this text, constitute valid requirements for this procedure. The editions indicated were valid at the time of this publication. Because the documents are subject to revision, it is recommended to those who use this procedure investigate the utilization of the most recent edition of the documents indicated. ABNT maintains a registry of all valid documents.

- ABNT ISO/IEC Guia 7:1994 - Guidelines for drafting of standards suitable for use for conformity assessment
- ABNT ISO/IEC Guia 59:1994 - Code of good practice for standardization
- ABNT NBR ISO 14024:2004 - Environmental labels and declarations - Type I environmental labelling - Principles and procedures
- PG-11 - General Procedure for ABNT Environmental Quality Label

### 3 Definitions

For proper understanding of this procedure the definitions of the standard ABNT NBR ISO 14024 shall be used.

### 4 Principles of ABNT Environmental Quality Label

**4.1** The ABNT Environmental Quality Label is an ecolabel that follows the principles of ABNT NBR ISO 14024 for Type 1 Ecolabelling. The ABNT Environmental Quality Label is based on the principles of transparency, participation and consensus which constitute the spirit of Normalization and Certification.

**4.2** The ABNT Environmental Quality Label is regulated in a voluntary certification program, which aims to promote the improvement of environmental quality of products, services and processes, by means of the mobilization of market power through the consciousness of consumers and producers.

**4.3** The criteria established for a specific category of products shall cover comparable products, that is, products that have the same function or equivalent use and that can be compared to one another in accordance to the same criteria.

**4.4** The ABNT Environmental Quality Label identifies products which have a lower impact on the environment when compared to similar products, taking into consideration aspects relating to its life cycle.

**4.5** The products to be certified shall be fit to purpose.

**4.6** The criteria shall consider the national environmental characteristics, as well as international tendencies, in order to facilitate the participation in agreements of recognition with other countries.



**4.7** The ABNT Environmental Quality Label shall not create any difficulty or discrimination, through administrative or technological, for products and services be they national or foreign.

**4.8** The criteria shall be revised periodically with the aim of improving product performance indexes and to include technological advances that guarantee environmental quality as a whole.

**4.9** The objective of the ABNT Environmental Quality Label is the certification of consuming products, semi completed products, processes, enterprises and services, based on a multiple criteria approach.

## **5 Criteria development**

### **5.1 Preparation**

**5.1.1** The criteria establish the various technical requirements applied to a category of products, defining all specific demands such as: characteristics, tests, tests and evaluation methodologies, audits, inspections, etc.

**5.1.2** The criteria preparation shall follow the recommendations of this Guideline, complemented by ABNT ABNT ISO/IEC Guia 7 and by ABNT ISO/IEC Guide 59.

**5.1.3** The criteria preparation shall take into consideration the determinations of the Technical Barriers Agreement to Trade, of the World Trade Organization.

**5.1.4** The criteria preparation shall take into consideration the evaluation of technical and economic viability for the application of the certification criteria and also inspection and test methods, so that certification costs are acceptable to the market.

**5.1.5** The set of criteria shall be prepared in accordance to the specifications below:

- a) Definition of the category of products involved, the range and variations of this category;
- b) The adoption of criteria which take into consideration the environmental impact associated to aspects related to the product life cycle, measurement capacity and accuracy;
- c) The preparation of a clear justification in case the environmental impact related to the products life cycle has not been taken into consideration in the environmental criteria preparation;
- d) The establishment of acceptable requirements and limit values, scientifically based, objectives and impartial. When the criteria cannot be associated to limit values, they shall specify the processes for the evaluation of the relevant product and processes characteristics for decision making regarding Label concession;
- e) The determination of the tests and/or evaluation methodologies, qualitatives and quantitatives, which demonstrate the products conformity according to the criteria;
- f) The specification of standards or specifications relative to fitness to purpose, durability, security etc;
- g) Definition of the way and method for presentation of the information to be issued for users;
- h) The discription of all special conformity evaluation procedures for the product certification;
- i) Definition of the period for updates and revisions;
- j) Evaluation of the possibility of using existing criteria. As a general rule, the Ecolabelling Group - GRA – is responsible for the preparation of the criteria for the certification of products/services. However, if it does exist ecological criteria that are accepted by a specific sector or are currently in



preparation, the Group will evaluate its reliability and propose its use, making whatever modifications are necessary according to local reality;

- k) The criteria shall not be limited to the products of a single enterprise. When an enterprise proposes any criteria for a given product it is in its own best interest to first examine how the limits of the product's category are defined;
- l) A product shall not be subject to the requirements of more than one set criteria. ABNT has the responsibility of assuring that the different groups of Technical Criteria are mutually consistent;
- m) To hold open consultations to interested parties, if such is viable.

**5.1.6** The criteria shall be written in a clear and precise manner resulting in an exact and uniform interpretation, avoiding vague wording such as "strong enough" "around to" etc.

## **5.2 Composition of criteria documents**

The document that determines the criteria for each category of products shall contain at least the parts listed below:

- a) Objective;
- b) Field of application;
- c) Normative references;
- d) Definitions;
- e) Criteria;
- f) Period of validity.

### **5.2.1 Objective**

The chapter "objective" shall inform the reader that the document establishes the normative reference which will be used for the conformity evaluation of the product/service in question, for the concession, maintenance or cancelation of the license to use the ABNT Environmental Quality Label.

### **5.2.2 Field of application**

In this chapter, it shall identified the different products which have the same function, or which can be considered as possible substitutes and can be compared to each other using the same criteria, under the conditions compatible with the considerations defined in item 4.2.

### **5.2.3 Normative references**

All the normative documents necessary for the performance of the activity of conformity evaluation shall be contained in this item, such as: testing standards, audit standards, technical specifications, legal and regulatory documents etc.

### **5.2.4 Definitions**

The chapter "definitions" shall present or make reference to all the definitions necessary for the correct understanding of the document containing the criteria relative to the category of products in question.



### 5.2.5 Criteria

This chapter shall establish all requirements that shall be complied to by the products included in the category in question, so that they are entitled to the acquisition of the ABNT Environmental Quality Label. It shall contain at minimum:

- a) Requirements relative to environmental impact based on indicators derived from considerations regarding the products life cycle;
- b) Requirements related to fitness to purpose of the product;
- c) Requirements related to conformity determination.

#### 5.2.5.1 Requirements relative to environmental impact based on indicators derived from considerations regarding the products life cycle.

The ABNT Environmental Quality Label shall maintain its selective character. The criteria preparation shall be initiated using the principles stated in item 4 of this procedure and shall take similar products that are available on the market into consideration. The criteria for granting of the ABNT Environmental Quality Label shall establish a level of requirements that indicates the environmental preference for the product in question, from within a specific product category based on considerations of the life cycle.

The process for establishing criteria shall take local, regional and global environmental questions into consideration, as well as available technology and economic aspects.

The criteria shall be chosen through a systematic examination, using Table 1, below to facilitate the analysis of the impact on the environment.

**Table 1: Matrix for Potential Criteria for Certification**

Stage of Life Cycle	Environmental Indicators					
	Energy	Resources	Emissions into			Other
	Renewable/ Non renewable	Renewable/ Non renewable	Water	Air	Soil	
Extraction of resources						
Production						
Distribution						
Use						
Final Disposition						

Some of the subdivisions in the table may not be taken into consideration provided acceptable justification is presented, such as, the impossibility of completion due to technological problems. In these cases the item that was not considered may be included at a later date during criteria revisions.



Guidelines for Criteria Development for  
ABNT Environmental Quality Label

PG-12.01

Date: Fev. 2009

Page Nº 6/7

Even for subdivisions of the above table that are not considered, enterprises that have been granted the license for the use of the Label shall adhere to applicable environmental legislation.

The document that establishes the criteria shall include the table presented above, set up so as to clearly indicate the boxes that contain certification criteria and also indicating, when appropriate, the principal parameter and its limit.

A simplified version of this table can be used to inform consumers on the content of ABNT Environmental Quality certification, showing only the boxes which contain criteria for a specific category of products.

For each chosen criteria, the requirements shall be described in 2 parts:

- a) precise declaration of the characteristic imposed to the companies which desire the label for their products (for example, "does not contain a specific chemical product", "does not exceed a determined level of noise", "contains a specific amount of recyclable material" etc);
- b) identification of standards, or when appropriate, an outline of standards and other consultation documents where the level of requirements is defined. When the establishment of criteria, for any reason, does not achieve to go deep enough, being impossible to specify objectively and unequivocally the requirement levels, the criteria, if adopted, shall make this fact absolutely clear.

#### **5.2.5.2 Requirements related to fitness to purpose of the product**

The technical criteria shall include a list of requirements to be complied with by the product in order to obtain an acceptable level of competence for the intended use. These requirements can be related to: product security, its level of performance or specification of minimum characteristics pertinent to aptitude for intended use (efficacy, durability etc).

#### **5.2.5.3 Requirements related to conformity determination**

Product conformity is based on:

- a) Verification of the commitments assumed in the solicitant's contract, before and after receiving the license for use of the Label, in relation to the conformity of the certified products offered for sale, according to the criteria;
- b) Determination of the conformity of the product, under the responsibility of ABNT, through appropriate evaluation processes, before the acceptance of the product and, in continuation, regular intervals.

These procedures are defined in the criteria along the following general lines:

- a) The methods used to know the conformity to a specific criteria shall be adapted to the level required defined by the relative importance of that criteria in relation to the total impact of the product on the environment.
- b) During the evaluation, information resulting from an existing process are possible be taken into consideration provided its credibility is assured (for example: proof of conformity with ABNT technical standards or other certificates).



### 5.2.6 Period of validity

In this chapter the criteria's period of validity shall be established, at which time an evaluation of the criteria's adequacy shall take place.

The criteria's text shall specifically state that corporations which obtain certification shall agree to continue to obey the criteria when their revisions are published.

## 6 Packaging

The packaging, by its function, might be focused by two aspects:

- a) As part of the product – the multiple criteria approach (item 4.9) considers the packing as part of the product. As packaging is part of almost every category of product and to avoid the creation of a series of inconsistent criteria through individual definition for each category, the Technical Criteria for packaging shall be grouped into a single document addressing packaging in a general way in the scope of the ABNT Environmental Quality Label.
- b) As a product - the certification and concession of the ABNT Environmental Quality Label packaging is conceded if the previous item has been satisfied and only if the Label is placed in a satisfactory manner eliminating any confusion between the certification of the packaging and the certification of the product.

## 7 Products marketed under the name of the distributor

A product released to the market under a distributor's name may also qualify for certification, provided the product satisfies all the requirements of the Rules and for concession of the ABNT Environmental Quality Label.

## 8 Approval

The basic text developed by the GRA will be submitted to public consultation through the site of ABNT Certification Body for a period of 30 days. After this period the comments received will be considered and the GRA will be recommended to approve the criteria.

## 9 Updates and revisions

9.1 The GRA shall establish a time period for validity and the revision and updating of criteria.

9.2 The Systems Certification Management of ABNT and the GRA shall remain alert to changes in scientific knowledge, industrial practices and consumer expectations, keeping updates of both criteria and their area of influence in mind.

9.3 Based on scientific knowledge, on industrial practices and consumer expectations, the GRA can require Technical Criteria updates from ABNT before the stipulated time period is finished.