

Guidelines for a procedure for checking the criteria in respect of applications: use of test laboratories

Approved at the EU Ecolabel Competent Bodies' meeting on 8 December 2009

In our criteria document, the Assessment and verification requirements, paragraph 3 says: "Where possible, the testing should be performed by laboratories that meet the general requirements of EN ISO 17025 or equivalent". There is a need for a common practice on how this shall be interpreted, and this document describes a hierarchy of situations and conditions for acceptance of a laboratory. The situation in paragraph 1 is preferred, if this is not possible, paragraph 2 comes into force, etc.

The national competent body or eco-labelling board will consider the applications individually taking into account the following approach and making a decision according to the concrete situation without prejudice to the credibility of the European eco-labelling scheme.

1) Laboratory tests shall be performed by laboratories that are accredited for the specified test method according to ISO 17025 or GLP, where possible. The Competent Bodies accept accredited laboratories in all Member States in the EU/EEA and in countries that have signed the mutual recognition agreement according to ILAC, the international accreditation organisation. If in the Member State where the applicant submits its dossier or where the company or the concerned production plant or service is based, one or more laboratories are accredited according to ISO 17025 or GLP, applicants shall use such a laboratory, either in that Member State or another.

2) Laboratories with an accreditation for other tests than those required by the criteria can be accepted if they submit a declaration that the tests are done following the same quality management procedures as the tests for which they obtained an accreditation. In case of doubt, the competent body or national board shall inspect the lab that carries out the tests or shall select an accredited auditor who will be charged to do so.

3) If neither point 1 or 2 is possible, applicants should call on a non-accredited independent laboratory certified or approved by a Government Department or other public body in a Member State

In case of doubt, the competent body or national board shall inspect the lab that carries out the tests or shall select an accredited auditor who will be charged to do so.

4) If none of points 1 - 3 are possible, applicants may have the tests performed by an independent laboratory that is neither accredited nor approved by authorities according to point 3.

Laboratories with a quality management system shall be preferred. A laboratory situated in an organisation holding an ISO 9001- certificate, may be accepted if the scope of the certification includes the laboratory.

The competent body or national board shall verify the competence of the laboratory that carries out the tests or shall select an accredited auditor who will be charged to do so.

5) If none of the above mentioned points can be fulfilled, the applicant may have the tests carried out in a company laboratory (that is not accredited ISO 17025 or GLP, as this would be covered by point 1). The competent body or national board shall ensure that the tests are properly carried out or shall select an accredited auditor who will be charged to do so.

In this case, the laboratory shall have a quality management system. A laboratory within an organisation holding an ISO 9001- certificate, is accepted as being under appropriate quality management, if the scope of the certification includes the laboratory.

This option may also be used for continuous monitoring of the production, including discharges and emissions, and for testing fitness for use when no standard test method exists.