

BLUE ANGEL

The German Ecolabel



Returnable Transportation Packagings

DE-UZ 27

Basic Award Criteria

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Version 5

The Environmental Label is supported by the following four institutions:



The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety is the owner of the label. It regularly provides information on the decisions taken by the Environmental Label Jury.



The German Environmental Agency with its specialist department for "Ecodesign, Eco-Labeling and Environmentally friendly Procurement" acts as office of the Environmental Label Jury and develops the technical criteria of the Basic Criteria for Award of the Blue Angel.



The Environmental Label Jury is the independent, decision-making body for the Blue Angel and includes representatives from environmental and consumer associations, trade unions, industry, the trade, crafts, local authorities, academia, the media, churches, young people and the German federal states.



The RAL gGmbH is the awarding body for the Environmental Label. It organises the process for developing the relevant award criteria in independent expert hearings – which involve all relevant interest groups.

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This document is a translation of a German original. In case of dispute, the original document should be taken as authoritative.

1 Introduction

1.1 Preface

In cooperation with the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, the German Environmental Agency and considering the results of the expert hearings conducted by RAL gGmbH, the Environmental Label Jury has set up these Basic Criteria for the Award of the Environmental Label. RAL gGmbH has been tasked with awarding the Environmental Label.

Upon application to RAL gGmbH and on the basis of a Contract on the Use of the Environmental Label to be concluded with RAL gGmbH, the permission to use the Environmental Label may be granted to all products, provided that they comply with the requirements as specified hereinafter.

The product must comply with all the legal requirements in the country in which it is to be marketed. The applicant shall declare that the product meets this requirement.

1.2 Background

Waste avoidance is a good means to avoid large volumes of waste that also come from transport packagings. The German Kreislaufwirtschafts- und Abfallwirtschaftsgesetz (Closed Substance Cycle and Waste Management Act) gives highest priority to waste avoidance. Returnable packagings contribute effectively to the implementation of this principle of environmental policy.

1.3 Objectives of the Environmental Label

The objective of awarding the Environmental Label is to promote the use of returnable transport packagings. Clear labelling is required to inform consumers. Special information on the return system will be required in business dealings.

Apart from that, returnable packagings may not contain any hazardous substances, corresponding product return rates must be guaranteed and plastic materials must be marked. Thereby, this Environmental Label contributes to saving natural resources.

Therefore, following benefits for the environment and health are stated in the explanatory box:



2 Scope

These award criteria shall apply to transportation packagings according section 3 para. 1 No.4 of the packaging ordinance¹ used as returnable packaging according section 3 para. 3 of the packaging ordinance for the transportation of goods².

Excluded from these Basic Criteria are transportation containers for hazardous goods.

- 2.1 Returnable transportation packagings admitted to freight traffic (inter alia: rail freight transportation);
- 2.2 Laundry transportation bags;
- 2.3 Heat preserving containers (insulating containers) for foods;
- 2.4 Metal sterilization containers (for repeated use) as defined in DIN (German Industrial Standard) 58 952, Part I (packaging material for sterilized goods).
- 2.5 Returnable food crates (crates as defined in DIN 55405, Part 3).
- 2.6 Returnable plastic boxes

3 Requirements

Products mentioned under paragraph 2 above may be marked with the Environmental Label shown on page 1, provided that they comply with the following requirements:

3.1 General requirements

Packagings as defined in paras. 2.1 to 2.4 must be returnable transportation packagings according to Section 3 para.1 No.4 of the Packaging Ordinance and at the same time returnable packagings according to Section 3 para.3 of the Packaging Ordinance.

Compliance Verifications

For products under paras. 2.1. to 2.5 the applicant shall submit product descriptions used in normal business transactions in order to prove that the products are transportation packagings according to Section 3 para. 1 No. 4 of the Packaging Ordinance and at the same time returnable packagings according to Section 3 para.3 of the Packaging Ordinance.

The product description shall give detailed information on the organization of return and repeated use.

For products according to paras. 2.1 to 2.6 the applicant shall state to what extent his or her product may possibly replace non-returnable transportation packagings.

¹ Ordinance aiming at the avoidance of packaging wastes (Packaging Ordinance), dated August 21, 1998 (Federal Law Gazette I, page 2379).

² The Environmental Label Jury may decide to include other returnable transportation packagings provided that they replace non-returnable packagings to a greater extent

3.2 Returnable transportation packagings admitted to freight traffic (inter alia: rail freight transportation)

Products pursuant to para. 2.1 must additionally comply with the following requirements:

- ♦ They shall not exceed an admissible gross weight of 1 metric ton,
- ♦ when empty they shall be collapsible or stackable,
- ♦ when properly handled they shall be reusable for at least 30 times.

Compliance Verifications

For products according to para. 2.1 the applicant shall submit a manufacturer's declaration stating that the requirements have been complied with.

3.3 Laundry transportation bags

Laundry transportation bags shall be reusable for at least 500 times.

Compliance Verifications

For products according to para. 2.2 the applicant shall state the guaranteed number of reuses, provided that the product is used for its intended purpose.

3.4 Heat preserving containers (insulating containers) for foods

Heat preserving containers shall be reusable for at least 1.000 times. The production of foamed plastics to be used for thermal insulation must be halogen free. If these heat preserving containers are delivered along with dishes the latter shall be reusable.

Compliance Verifications

For heat preserving containers according to para. 2.3 the applicant shall declare compliance with the requirements.

In addition, the applicant shall name the heat insulator and the foaming agent used. If applicable, the dishes distributed along with the heat preserving containers shall be described.

3.5 Metal sterilization containers (for repeated use) as defined in DIN (German Industrial Standard) 58 952, Part I (packaging material for sterilized goods).

Metal sterilization containers shall comply with the requirements as defined in DIN 58 952, Part I, (packaging material for sterilized goods) as well as with the requirements as defined in DIN 58 953, Part 9, (Ordinance on Sterilized Goods - Use of Sterilization Containers) and they shall have a useful life in conformity with these requirements of at least 10 years.

Compliance Verifications

For products according to para. 2.4 the applicant shall declare compliance with the requirements of the corresponding DIN Standard. He or she shall also give the guaranteed useful life, provided that the product is used for its intended purpose.

3.6 Returnable food crates (crates as defined in DIN 55405, Part 3)

The returnable crates must be so designed as to make sure that they may be reused 50 times if properly handled.

Compliance Verifications

For products pursuant to para. 2.5 the applicant shall furnish proof of compliance with the requirement.

3.7 Returnable plastic boxes

Products pursuant to para. 2.6 must additionally comply with the following requirements:

- ◆ They shall not exceed an admissible gross weight of 1 metric ton,
- ◆ when empty they shall be collapsible or stackable,
- ◆ when properly handled they shall be reusable for at least 30 times.

Compliance Verifications

For products according to para. 2.6 the applicant shall submit a manufacturer's declaration stating that the requirements have been complied with.

3.8 Packaging material

The material is to be marked on the packaging. If it is made of plastic the type of plastic shall be named in accordance with DIN ISO 11 469.

Compliance Verifications

The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement.

The applicant shall name the material from which the returnable packaging is made.

3.9 Return and utilization

The applicant or a third party acting as the applicant's agent shall accept the return of malfunctioning and worn returnable transportation packagings for the purpose of reconditioning or utilization primarily by the substance, if possible for the same product. Apart from that, the acceptance of such packagings shall be offered in the product description used in business dealings.

Compliance Verifications

The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement and furnish proof of the offer to accept the return of malfunctioning and worn products by presentation of the product description used in business dealings.

In addition, the applicant shall supply information about reconditioning plans or the kind of utilization.

4 Applicants and Parties Involved

Manufacturers, distributors or users of final products according to Paragraph 2 shall be eligible for application.

Parties involved in the award process are:

- RAL gGmbH to award the Blue Angel Environmental Label,
- the federal state being home to the applicant's production site,
- Umweltbundesamt (German Environmental Agency) which after the signing of the contract receives all data and documents submitted in applications for the Blue Angel in order to be able to further develop the Basic Award Criteria.

5 Use of the Environmental Label

The use of the Environmental Label by the applicant is governed by a contract on the use of the Environmental Label concluded with RAL gGmbH.

Within the scope of such contract, the applicant undertakes to comply with the requirements under Paragraph 3 while using the Environmental Label.

Contracts on the Use of the Environmental Label are concluded to fix the terms for the certification of products under Paragraph 2. Such contracts shall run until December 31, 2023. They shall be extended by periods of one year each, unless terminated in writing by March 31, 2023 or March 31 of the respective year of extension.

After the expiry of the contract, the Environmental Label may neither be used for labelling nor for advertising purposes. This regulation shall not affect products being still in the market.

The applicant (manufacturer) shall be entitled to apply to RAL gGmbH for an extension of the right to use the ecolabel on the product entitled to the label if it is to be marketed under another brand/trade name and/or other marketing organisations.

The Contract on the Use of the Environmental Label shall specify:

- Applicant (manufacturer/distributor/user)
- Brand/trade name, product description
- Distributor (label user), i.e. the above-mentioned marketing organisations.

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