

**BLUE ANGEL**

**The German Ecolabel**



**Returnable Transportation Packagings**

**DE-UZ 27**

**Basic Award Criteria**

**Edition August 2019**

**Version 7**

## The Environmental Label is supported by the following four institutions:



Federal Ministry  
for the Environment, Nature Conservation  
and Nuclear Safety

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 ordinance<sup>1</sup> used as returnable packaging according section 3 para. 3 of the packaging ordinance for the transportation of goods<sup>2</sup>.

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
- 2.7** Pallets

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

## 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.*

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

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

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.*

### **3.2 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.*

### **3.3 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.*

### **3.4 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.*

### **3.5 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.*

### **3.6 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.*

### **3.7 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.*

### **3.8 Origin of the wood**

It must be ensured that all of the processed wood is sourced from legal and sustainably managed forests. In addition, at least 70% of the wood or 70% of the primary raw materials for the woodbased materials must be from certified sources. The Blue Angel cannot be awarded to products manufactured using wood found on the list of protected tree species according to CITES and Regulation (EC) 338/97 published by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)<sup>3</sup>.

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall verify the legality of the wood sources in accordance with EU Regulation 995/2010<sup>4</sup>.*

*Compliance with the requirement for using wood from sustainable forestry can be verified in the following ways:*

- *The applicant shall present a record of the woods used each year at the whole production site that specifies the percentage of certified woods used (Annex 2 in accordance to DE-UZ 38). A valid certification number from the raw material supplier and an example delivery note that includes a corresponding statement on the certification of the material shall be submitted for certified wood. Certificates from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the PEFC (Programme*

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<sup>3</sup>[https://www.bfn.de/sites/default/files/BfN/cites/Dokumente/barrierefrei-holzliste-cop-18\\_01.pdf](https://www.bfn.de/sites/default/files/BfN/cites/Dokumente/barrierefrei-holzliste-cop-18_01.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> OJ L 295 from 12 November 2010

for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes) verifying sustainable forestry and a chain of custody (CoC) will be accepted. Comparable certificates and individual verifications are also possible and will be recognised if the applicant can verify compliance with the criteria defined by the FSC or PEFC for the relevant country of origin. As with the federal decree for the purchase of wood products, verification of comparability must be confirmed by the Thünen Institute or the BfN.

- If the applicant themselves has chain of custody (CoC) certification according to FSC or PEFC criteria and the product is sold using PEFC or FSC product labels, the applicant shall state his valid certification number, declare compliance with the requirement and submit the consumer information included with the product label (Annex 2 in accordance to DE-UZ 38). This means that the FSC/PEFC label/mark (FSC 100 %, FSC Mix or PEFC) must be printed on the product and/or the associated information.

- The manufacturer shall state the types of wood used and their countries of origin (Annex 2 in accordance to DE-UZ 38).

### **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, 2025. They shall be extended by periods of one year each, unless terminated in writing by March 31, 2025 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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