



Certification Process – an Overview

Information and Application

Getting to know the Green Button requirements

After a positive examination of your application, helpful documents on the Green Button requirements and audit preparation are available in the online portal in the "Audit Preparation" section.

- The indicators relevant for the initial audit are listed in the document "**Self-assessment**". In this document you can record your company's compliance with each requirement.
- The "**Guide: Due Diligence Processes**" provides assistance and explanations as well as implementation examples for the various indicators. Guiding questions on the individual core elements help you to implement the requirements. Here, you will also find an optional template for the risk analysis.

Note: Allow for sufficient **capacities** for the implementation of the requirements. The duration of audit preparation depends on internal structures and processes, such as available personnel resources and the complexity of procurement structures.

Consultation

Consultation Meeting with the Green Button Secretariat

The Green Button Secretariat is available to help you prepare for your audit and will gladly advise you on specific questions in a confidential meeting. You can book a consultation appointment via the online portal.

If you are already able to formulate specific questions, we kindly invite you to send them to the secretariat (info@gruener-knopf.de) in advance of the meeting. You may also send the completed self-assessment to the office in advance. This enables us to provide efficient and **company-specific counselling**.

Commissioning of a Certification Body

Arrange an audit appointment with a certification body; you will find the contact details in the online portal under “Document Center”. Conclude a contract with the certification body to carry out the audit.

Also inquire about possible (audit) costs with the certification body. Costs may arise with:

- Audits and surveillance audits that are to be conducted every 12 months,
- re-certifications at the end of the license period of three years,
- potential extraordinary audits, if ordered by the certification body,
- if applicable, further services by certification bodies.

Certification Audit

Preparation for the Initial Evaluation

The audit usually takes place at your company's headquarters. The duration is determined by the size of the company, usually comprising one to two days. The appointed certification body checks the fulfillment of all requirements of the Green Button Standard.

To prepare for the audit, you must send the relevant documents to your appointed certification body at least four weeks before the audit date. The relevant documents include:

- ✓ confirmed eligibility to apply (e-mail issued by the certification body),
- ✓ information you have provided about the company, e.g., number of employees, locations, production processes, larger corporations, etc.,
- ✓ evidence of compliance with the indicators relating to corporate due diligence processes, including risk analysis, policy statement, relevant product certificates (for the recognition areas of fiber and material use, wet processes, and confectionery), process descriptions, documentation,
- ✓ the completed Green Button product list (please find the template in the online portal under “Product registration”).

Further documents may be requested by the certification body. A list of the relevant documents can be found in the [certification program](#) under 7.2.2.

If the documents are not complete, the certification body reserves the right to postpone the audit, even at short notice.

You will receive the **audit plan** from the certification body at least **two weeks** before the audit.

During your **initial evaluation**, the indicators of **level A** are checked in full, and a **random sample** of the existing certification labels is carried out using the provided product list. To this end, the certification body will, among other things, conduct interviews with relevant personnel, have processes be demonstrated by you and review documents. The audit consists of an opening meeting, information gathering and a closing meeting.

Deadlines in the Green Button Program and regarding the Certification Decision

If no non-conformities and no need(s) for improvement have been identified, the certification body is required to notify you of the certification decision no later than four weeks after the audit by uploading the evaluation report to the online portal.

If you have been informed of any identified non-conformities or need(s) for improvement in the final meeting of the audit, you are required to carry out a **root cause analysis** and formulate a plan with **specific corrective actions**. Submit these to your certification body within two weeks after the audit. The certification body must then make a certification decision no later than five weeks after the audit and will make the audit report available in the online platform. The company has up to 16 weeks to implement the necessary corrections. The certification body verifies the implementation of the action plan.

If you have any remaining questions, please contact the certification body for assistance.

Licensing

Licensing Agreement with the Issuing Body

After the certificate has been issued, your company concludes a licensing agreement with the issuing body. To do this, you apply for your licensing agreement in the online portal. Upon conclusion of the licensing agreement, a one-time processing fee of 400 EUR is due for the contract period of three years.

Only the signed licensing application accepted by the issuing body entitles your company to label and advertise the approved products with the "Green Button" certification label.

During the term of the licensing agreement, it entitles your company to label approved products with the Green Button. Details on labelling and advertising can be found in the "Green Button Logo Manual". The logo manual can be found in the online portal under "Communication Materials" and will be sent to you upon conclusion of the contract.

Onboarding with the Green Button Secretariat

After the conclusion of the licensing agreement, the Green Button secretariat will invite you to an onboarding meeting to discuss the following contents:

- Presentation of the available communication materials you can use for your communication,
- presentation of the communication measures carried out by the Green Button secretariat,
- possibilities for communication on the Green Button by you as well as third parties, such as retailers.

You can register further textile products for labelling at any time via the online portal. You can find more information on this in the section "Product Registration".

Annual Surveillance Audits

Annual surveillance audits will be carried out. As long as there are no significant changes in your business practices, the surveillance audit will take about half the time of the initial audit.

- In the first surveillance audit one year after the initial audit, changes and updates are reviewed with respect to the level A indicators.
- In the second surveillance audit two years after the initial audit, level B is reviewed. This means that in addition to meeting the level A indicators, you must also demonstrate compliance with all level B indicators (level B goes into more depth on 33 of 54 indicators).

To prepare for the surveillance audits, we recommend using the self-assessment as well.

The temporal framework before and after the surveillance audit is the same as for your initial audit.

Re-certification after three Years

At the end of the three years, re-certification must take place in order to extend the licensing agreement.

