

About Nordic Ecolabelled

# Hotels, Restaurants and Conference Facilities



Excerpt from background to ecolabelling, chapter 6

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## Addresses

In 1989, the Nordic Council of Ministers decided to introduce a voluntary official ecolabel, the Nordic Ecolabel. These organisations/companies operate the Nordic ecolabelling system on behalf of their own country's government. For more information, see the websites:

### Denmark

Ecolabelling Denmark  
Danish Standards Foundation  
Göteborg Plads 1  
DK-2150 NORDHAVN  
Tel: +45 72 300 450  
info@ecolabel.dk  
www.ecolabel.dk

### Finland

Ecolabelling Finland  
Box 489  
FI-00101 HELSINKI  
Tel +358 9 61 22 50 00  
joutsen@ecolabel.fi  
www.ecolabel.fi

### Iceland

Ecolabelling Iceland  
Umhverfisstofnun  
Suðurlandsbraut 24  
IS-108 REYKJAVIK  
Tel: +354 591 20 00  
ust@ust.is  
www.svanurinn.is

### Norway

Miljømerking  
Henrik Ibsens gate 20  
NO-0255 OSLO  
Tel: +47 24 14 46 00  
info@svanemerket.no  
www.svanemerket.no

### Sweden

Ecolabelling Sweden  
Box 38114  
SE-100 64 STOCKHOLM  
Tel: +46 8 55 55 24 00  
info@svanen.se  
www.svanen.se

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## 6 Alternative requirements for restaurants

In autumn 2016, Nordic Ecolabelling noted that the desired goals behind ecolabelling of restaurants had not been achieved. A project to identify the reasons for this was consequently launched.

It became apparent that the RPS (Relevance – Potential – Steerability) for restaurants did not match the requirement levels and the available points we had set. A restaurant’s primary focus is food and waste. Only then do energy and water enter the picture. But that is not how our criteria are set out. Here, fulfilment of the energy requirement takes priority. We also realise that we have too small a focus on the requirements concerning food and food waste.

The energy requirements are not tailored to restaurants and staff canteens that are based in office buildings or shopping centres, for example. Few restaurants of this type have their own electricity meter, and it is both difficult and expensive to have a meter installed in order for them to monitor their own energy consumption. The same applies for water consumption. Restaurants located in the same premises as other commercial operations find it hard to pin down their exact water consumption. In addition, many staff canteens have little or no steerability when it comes to the water and energy-intensive equipment that already exists in the premises where they run their business. They simply have to make do with the equipment that is there.

The conclusion was that these obstacles in the criteria document were the leading cause of the ecolabelling goals not being achieved. The restaurant business generally shows major environmental commitment. Nordic Ecolabelling has therefore developed alternative requirements for restaurants, in the hope that these will better match the reality in the business. In practice, this means more focus on food and food waste, and less focus on energy and water consumption.

### 6.1 Overall requirements

In addition to the obligatory requirements O40–O46 and the optional point score requirements P40–P43 contained in this chapter (Alternative requirements for restaurants), the restaurant must also fulfil certain requirements in chapters 1 and 2 of the criteria document.

The table below provides an overview of the obligatory requirements that the restaurant must fulfil and the point score requirements that the restaurant is able to choose between.

Company	Obligatory requirements	Optional point score requirements
Restaurants not linked to hotels	O1, O6, O9 O11–O21 O23–O24 O26–O37 O39 O40–O46 (new requirements chapter 5)	P3, P9 P13–P15 P20, P25–P27 P29–P32 P40–P43 (new requirements chapter 5)

This table only presents the requirements that are relevant for restaurants that are not linked to some other business.

The O26 requirement that governs transport using own vehicles for catering business applies only if the catering business exceeds 30% of the total business in terms of sales.

See below under the heading “Points total” for an explanation of why some point score requirements have been deleted from the criteria document.

## 6.2 Energy

### **O40 Purchases of new energy-intensive equipment**

Restaurants generally have little or no opportunity to influence the existing water and energy-intensive equipment that is in place when a new business takes over the operation. Usually, the owner of the premises owns the equipment, and the restaurant business has to work with what is already there. However, the operational manager has a say in the purchase of new equipment, and Nordic Ecolabelling has therefore chosen to set requirements for high energy efficiency for “purchases of new energy-intensive equipment”.

The EU Ecolabel is carrying out an ongoing revision of its requirements concerning environmentally aware public procurement of “Food and Catering Services”, and they propose setting requirements concerning purchases of new energy-intensive kitchen equipment. Nordic Ecolabelling has therefore chosen to take the EU Ecolabel’s proposed requirements<sup>1</sup> as its starting point and has made an adjustment to take account of which white goods are relevant for purchase by a restaurant kitchen.

Choosing equipment with a high energy class is an important way to reduce a restaurant’s use of electricity. The difference in energy efficiency between various energy classes varies for different product groups. Refrigerators and freezers, for example, have one scale and TVs have another. As a rule of thumb, a combined fridge/freezer in energy class A+++ uses 60% less electricity than equivalents in energy class A. The actual energy use also naturally depends on how energy efficiently the product is actually used. The focus of energy labelling is on domestic products, but professional refrigerators, freezers and combined fridge-freezers have also been subject to energy rating label requirements since 1 July 2016.

In order to handle the challenge of the classes being amended/expanded and new product groups also being covered by energy labelling, Nordic Ecolabelling is setting a requirement that at least the second best energy class must be chosen when purchasing new white goods (that are covered by the EU’s Energy Labelling Directive 2010/30/EU).

White goods that are not covered by the directive must instead meet the reference values for “best available technology” as set out in the EU’s Ecodesign Directive 2009/125/EC.

### **O41 Training in efficient use of energy-intensive equipment**

To be as resource-efficient as possible, it is important to use the equipment correctly. We now know that a considerable amount of energy can be saved by using the restaurant’s kitchen equipment correctly. Nordic Ecolabelling therefore believes in the need for staff training and information on how best to use the equipment to consume as little energy as possible.

Staff should be aware of the procedures that apply when using the equipment and why they need to follow the procedures. The training must contain enough information to ensure that the staff use the equipment in an efficient way.

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<sup>1</sup> JRC Science: “Revision of the EU GPP criteria for Food Procurement and Catering Services” 2nd Technical Report, 2017. Sourced from: [http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/Food\\_Catering/docs/170127\\_EU%20GPP%20Food%20catering%20criteria\\_TR2.0.pdf](http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/Food_Catering/docs/170127_EU%20GPP%20Food%20catering%20criteria_TR2.0.pdf) (27.04.2017).

It is important that the kitchen staff is given training in how all the machines in the kitchen work. Good knowledge of how the machines operate is a foundation for working more efficiently with them. Training staff in how to adapt the use of the machines to the flow of guests is extremely important, as the kitchen equipment can often be left running unnecessarily. One example of this is that the griddle or ovens are on at times with small numbers of guests. The way dishes are chilled and regular defrosting of the chiller room are other examples of procedures that save energy and that are important to be conveyed to the staff.

#### **042 Energy and water-efficient actions – plus P40**

Most restaurants are located in a building together with other businesses and therefore do not have their own energy and water meters to measure their consumption. This applies, for example, to restaurants in shopping centres or dining rooms in other, larger premises or similar. It is therefore difficult to identify the precise level of consumption and this makes calculating the limit values for energy and water a problem.

A US study presented earlier in the background text shows that the energy consumption of a restaurant business usually breaks down as follows:

- 35% comes from food preparation
- 28% from heating and ventilation
- 18% from dishwashing
- 13% from lighting
- 6% from cold storage<sup>2</sup>

In a hospital kitchen dishwashing consumes the most energy (47%). Refrigeration, on the other hand, accounts for a larger proportion in small kitchens than in larger kitchens.<sup>3</sup>

Bearing in mind the large differences in energy impact and water consumption for different restaurant types, we have chosen to place energy and water-efficient actions for restaurants on an equal footing. We have done this by creating a proposal that brings flexibility to the requirements concerning energy and water consumption.

The wording of the requirements has been based on requirements already set out in the original criteria for restaurants, except that we have chosen to introduce “own actions” in order to reduce energy consumption. The restaurant must be able to show that the actions result in a substantial reduction in energy consumption, at least 5 % per action.

The purpose of being able to take score points on energy analysis with action proposals is to clarify the energy potential of the restaurant from an energy perspective, as well as demonstrate cost-effective measures for implementation.

We see that there is a great potential for improvement in restaurants making their own measurements of energy and water with an accompanying action plan.

Nordic Ecolabelling believes that the consumption of water during dishwashing accounts for a large proportion of the total water consumption in a restaurant, therefore we have chosen to maintain the requirement concerning water consumption of dishwashers as one of five possible actions.

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<sup>2</sup> Baldwin, C., Wilberforce, N. & Kapur, A. (2010), Restaurant and food service life cycle assessment and development of a sustainability standard, *The International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment*, Vol 16 No. 1 40–49.

<sup>3</sup> TTS, 1998.

To meet the obligatory requirement, 2 of the 5 actions must be completed.

The restaurant is awarded points if it meets more than 2 requirements. A total of max 6 points are available in P40.

## 6.3 Waste

The waste requirement for Nordic Swan Ecolabelled restaurants is good and relevant for the restaurant business, but we have not previously set any requirements concerning food waste.

In addition to the food waste requirements set out in the new chapter 5 of the criteria for restaurants, other requirements from the criteria document apply too. The limit value for waste (O6) remains in place, meaning that the restaurant must not have more than 0.80 kg unsorted waste per food guest. We also set requirements for sorting at source (O17) and clear sorting instructions where guests sort their washing up themselves (O18). We have replaced O7 (Constant measurements of limit values) with O43 (Constant measurements of waste amounts).

The remaining point score requirements are P3 Waste, where a maximum of 3 points are available depending on how far the amount of waste (in %) comes in below the obligatory limit value. Points are also available if the restaurant separates out organic waste (P20) and sends it for biological treatment.

### O43 Measurement of food waste

The goal of reducing food waste is part of the 17 global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that have succeeded the Millennium Development Goals. These goals were adopted by all member states of the UN in September 2015. The Sustainable Development Goal on Responsible Consumption has the following target, SDG 12.3: By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses. All the Nordic countries are bound by this target, and it should therefore be seen as our national target for the reduction of food waste.<sup>4</sup> Food waste is a pressing theme for today's restaurants. A large amount of food waste has serious consequences for the environment, while also having a major impact on a restaurant's finances.

Food waste is defined as food that could have been served if it had been handled differently and it occurs due to incorrect storage or due to preparing and cooking too much food for the number of guests (overproduction). The surplus food ends up in the waste bin along with other unavoidable food waste, and is usually used for composting, biogas production or energy recovery, depending on the facilities available locally.

Depending on their type, restaurants usually generate large amounts of unavoidable food waste, such as eggshells and trimmings from vegetables, meat and fish, that are not fit for human consumption. This sort of unavoidable food waste is not included in the overall food waste count and does not need to be measured.

A restaurant may have little organic unavoidable waste for many different reasons. It may buy in many peeled and preprepared foodstuffs (e.g. pre-trimmed vegetables, ready-made egg mix) or it may not be very good at sorting its organic waste. Nordic Ecolabelling therefore finds it less interesting to measure the total amount of organic waste. We want the restaurants to focus on reducing food waste, because they are able to influence this and it thus achieves the greatest environmental benefit.

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<sup>4</sup> Swedish National Food Agency, Swedish Board of Agriculture and Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. Slutrapport – Regeringsuppdrag för minskat matsvinn 2013–2015, "En bra start".

Reporting brings no direct environmental gain, but it will make the restaurants more aware and lay the foundation for future improvements and initiatives. Measurements are to be taken twice per year and each time they are to be conducted during a representative week. Nordic Ecolabelling is happy to provide templates that can be used to assist the restaurants in their analysis of food waste.

#### **P41 Actions to reduce environmental impact by reducing food waste**

In the same way that Nordic Ecolabelling has developed requirements for the measurement of food waste and various actions to reduce food waste in grocery stores, we are now setting similar requirements for restaurants.

We have focused on actions that the restaurants have good control over and on those that are relatively simple and easy to communicate with guests and staff.

Information for guests on how they themselves can affect the food waste is of great significance for two reasons: Firstly, the amount of food waste at the restaurant will fall and secondly, the restaurants' communication will influence the guests' behaviour in their own home. The information and communication with the guests should continue on a rolling basis and be varied, so the effect does not decline after a while.

Nudging<sup>5</sup> is a method that restaurants can introduce to steer their guests' behaviour in a desired direction. Nordic Ecolabelling therefore values inventiveness among the restaurants in finding new actions that nudge guests towards reducing food waste.

The role of staff is important and can influence the reduction of food waste in many different ways. Procedures concerning how ingredients should be ordered, how much food should be prepared, times when different dishes should be cooked, keeping food hot and chilling it, calculating the number of potential guests and so on, are some examples of areas where staff have a role to play.

And when food waste does occur, Nordic Ecolabelling wishes to reward those that make sure the food is used for charitable purposes. Donating food to an organisation can have various effects. In addition to the environmental effect of not discarding edible food, there is also a social effect. We feel there are great opportunities in this area. A restaurant can donate directly to a charity, which in turn will make sure that the food is consumed by people who would ordinarily not be able to afford it, or the food could be donated to an organisation that then sells the food and uses the profits for charitable purposes.

Selling surplus food from the regular business at a cheaper price is a trend that has become more prominent and easier thanks to new IT and mobile technology.

## **6.4 Food**

In addition to requirements O45 and P42 in chapter 5, other requirements from the criteria document also apply.

- O36 Non-sustainable ingredients – fish and shellfish
- O37 Ban on the use of food containing GMOs
- O39 Vegetarian dishes

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<sup>5</sup> See for example <http://awinwinworld.com>

- P29 Proportion of fish and shellfish labelled as sustainable
- P30 Vegetarian restaurant, vegetarian and/or meat-free day
- P31 Locally produced food and beverages
- P32 Drinking water

Nordic Ecolabelling sets relevant requirements for food and restaurants, and we work to minimise the environmental impact in various ways. One of the areas in which we set requirements is organic food and beverages, where we have seen the range expand and the restaurant business develop in Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland. The proportion of organic products available has risen as demand has grown. The fact that the availability of organic products has grown, not only for private customers but also for restaurants, gives us an opportunity to make sharper demands in the alternative requirements for restaurants. The availability of ingredients remains very varied across the Nordic countries, and we therefore need to continue setting differentiated requirements for each country.

#### **O44 Minimum proportion of organic foodstuffs and beverages**

The restaurant business is increasing employing existing organic certification systems for restaurants in the Nordic countries, (read more below about each country's organic certification systems). Nordic Ecolabelling has therefore chosen at obligatory level to position itself at the lowest level with some minor moderations of existing organic labelling systems for restaurants in Norway,<sup>6</sup> Sweden<sup>7</sup> and Denmark<sup>8</sup> when setting its requirements. The Finnish restaurants have a six-step scale<sup>9</sup> and we have chosen to position ourselves at Step 4 in the proposed requirements. Nordic Ecolabelling has thus accepted that there are some differences in the requirement levels between the countries, both in terms of the proportion of ecolabelled products and the calculation method. Nordic Ecolabelling appreciates the challenges that exist in being able to compare the requirements between countries, but since there is such a large difference in the market for organic goods in the Nordic countries, it is considered reasonable to adapt the requirements to each country's own system.

We will not be requiring restaurants to be certified, but they will be able to document fulfilment of our requirements using approval from an organic certification system, since we are aware that many have already achieved this. At the same time, we want to give restaurants an opportunity to report to Nordic Ecolabelling in the same way as they do for their national organic certification systems, in order to make the reporting work as easy as possible.

A restaurant earns points depending on how high a proportion of organic products they have, with a maximum of 6 points available in this requirement.

Danish restaurants may be certified by "Det Økologiske Spisemerket", which is a free state-controlled labelling scheme for food outlets in Denmark. Spisemerket comes in three forms: Bronze, Silver and Gold. Bronze is achieved if the proportion of organic goods served is within the range of 30–60%. Achieving Silver requires 60–90% and Gold requires 90–100%. The percentage is calculated on the basis of the restaurant's purchases, either in money or quantity (kg) over the course of at least three months. Alcohol and other drinks (except flavouring-free water) are to be included in the calculation. All Nordic and EU organic labelling systems are valid

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<sup>6</sup> <http://debio.no>

<sup>7</sup> <http://krav.se>

<sup>8</sup> <http://oekologisk-spisemaerke.dk>

<sup>9</sup> <http://portaatuomuunvanha.bonsait.fi/>



on the same terms, but MSC-labelled fish and shellfish is not approved and must not be included in the calculation.<sup>10</sup>

Swedish restaurants have the option of obtaining KRAV certification and achieving one, two or three stars, depending on whether the restaurant is certified at Level 1, 2 or 3. Level 1 requires at least 25% approved foodstuffs within the total purchase value. Level 2 requires at least 50% and level 3 requires at least 90%. Approved foodstuffs are defined here as everything that comes from the plant and animal kingdom, and is KRAV-certified, certified organic or MSC-certified. MSC-labelled fish and shellfish cannot be labelled as organic, but it can be included in the calculation if the restaurant so wishes. However, the proportion must not exceed 50%, since KRAV states that at least 50% of the calculated proportion of approved foodstuffs must be KRAV-labelled. Alcohol is included in the calculation, while water, tobacco and salt are excluded, since they are not able to obtain organic certification. If the restaurant buys in wild game, the purchase value of this is to be excluded from the total purchase value. The calculation should be based on purchasing data for one year, and the percentage is to be calculated based on the purchase value in SEK.

KRAV's Level 1 can also be achieved by regularly using at least 15 different organic products, 5 of which must be basics such as milk, eggs, bread, fruit, vegetables and so on. 50% of the products must be KRAV-labelled. The number of products is required to increase by at least 2 per year, until the restaurant achieves 25% approved foodstuffs.<sup>11</sup>

Nordic Ecolabelling feels there is a major difference in the degree of difficulty between the 25% alternative and the 15 product alternative, and therefore wishes, in the first instance, to focus only on the toughest level of 25% organic.

Norwegian restaurants can obtain the Debio labels Bronze, Silver and Gold. These labels are used to promote the proportion of organic/Debio-approved products in catering and food retail. The proportion of organic products is measured either in NOK (purchase value) or in weight. The Bronze label requires the proportion of organic products to be at least 15%, Silver at least 50% and Gold at least 90%.<sup>12</sup> MSC-labelled fish and shellfish cannot be labelled as organic, but it can be included in the calculation if the restaurant so wishes. The % of MSC-labelled fish must not, however, exceed 50% of the calculated total.

Debio's Bronze label can be achieved in various ways: Either at least 15% of what is served must be organic/Debio-approved, based on the purchase amount/value or weight, or at least 15 different organic products must be regularly used in the food served. In order to use the alternative of 15 regularly used products, at least 5 of these must be basics such as milk, eggs, bread, fruit, vegetables and so on.<sup>13</sup> It is up to the restaurant to decide whether it wants to include alcohol in the calculation.

Finnish restaurants do not have a system that is comparable to those in Norway, Sweden and Denmark, but the organisation EkoCentria is responsible for the "Steps to Organic" (Portaat luomuun) programme, which is a voluntary system for restaurants and restaurant chains. Over

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<sup>10</sup> "Vejledning om økologisk storkøkkendrift", taken from:

<https://www.foedevarestyrelsen.dk/SiteCollectionDocuments/Kemi%20og%20foedevarekvalitet/%C3%98kologi/%C3%98kologi%20og%20stok%C3%B8kkener/Vejledning%20om%20%C3%B8kologisk%20stork%C3%B8kkendrift%2018%20marts%202014.pdf> (27.04.2017)

<sup>11</sup> "Kravs regler", taken from: [http://www.krav.se/sites/default/files/kravs\\_regler\\_2017.pdf](http://www.krav.se/sites/default/files/kravs_regler_2017.pdf) (27.04.2017)

<sup>12</sup> "Regler for merker og merkebruk", taken from: <https://debio.no/content/uploads/2017/04/Regler-for-merker-og-merkebruk-2017-3.pdf> (27.04.2017)

<sup>13</sup> "Regler for bruk av Debio-merker i serveringer", taken from: <https://debio.no/content/uploads/2017/04/Regler-for-bruk-av-Debio-merker-i-serveringer.pdf> (27.04.2017)

2,430 restaurants in Finland signed up to the programme in March 2017. The programme focuses on improving the use of organic products on a regular basis in restaurant kitchens. It comprises 6 steps:

1. The restaurant regularly uses 1 organic product.
2. The restaurant regularly uses 2 organic products.
3. The restaurant regularly uses 4 organic products.
4. The restaurant regularly uses 8 organic products, or organic ingredients make up over 30% of the total ingredients purchased.
5. The kitchen regularly uses 20 organic products, or organic ingredients make up over 60% of the total ingredients purchased.
6. Organic alternatives are used in all ingredient groups. Non-organic products are used only where there is no organic alternative.

The term “regular”, as used by EkoCentria, requires that organic products are used at least twice a week or more.

When calculating the number of organic products, restaurants can present the figures either as a percentage of weight or in EUR. Products certified under the Luomua, Ladybird or EU organic labels are defined as “organic products” for the purposes of restaurants and EkoCentria.

The “Steps to Organic” programme has been revised and restaurants are now able to promote their organic profile with the help of a new Luomua logo, together with different numbers of stars, depending on which step the restaurant has reached. The restaurant is awarded:

- 1 star when it is at Step 2 or 3
- 2 stars when it is a Step 4
- 3 stars when it is at Step 5 or 6

Nordic Ecolabelling wishes to position itself at the same requirement level as Step 4 with the proposed requirements.<sup>14 15</sup>

Nordic Ecolabelling wishes to retain the requirement levels for restaurants in Iceland and the Baltics, since we do not have information and sufficient background knowledge to set stricter restaurant requirements here.

## **P42 Organic food and beverages**

Different numbers of points are given from country to country due to the variation in the availability of organic products. All the countries have different scales for achieving the maximum 6 points, in the form of percentages or number of items. Account has been taken of the different levels within the organic labelling systems in setting the points for this requirement.

## **6.5 Other requirements**

### **P43 Ecolabelled products and services**

The criteria document’s requirements P21 (Ecolabelled consumables), P23 (Ecolabelled durable goods) and P24 (Ecolabelled services) are tailored to hotels and have therefore been deleted from chapter 5. Nordic Ecolabelling nevertheless wishes to reward the use of ecolabelled goods and

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<sup>14</sup> Natur och Miljö, taken from: [http://www.naturochmiljo.fi/vad\\_vi\\_gor/miljo\\_och\\_livsstil/article-28656-9656-t-ekologiskt](http://www.naturochmiljo.fi/vad_vi_gor/miljo_och_livsstil/article-28656-9656-t-ekologiskt)

<sup>15</sup> Ekocentria/Stegvis mot eko, taken from: <http://portaatluomuunvanha.bonsait.fi/se/page/20>

services by creating a point score requirement (P43) containing a list of goods and services for the restaurants to choose between.

<b>Ecolabelled goods and services (amount purchased as % of total purchased volume)</b>	<b>Points</b>
Paper napkins $\geq$ 50%	1 p
Candles $\geq$ 50%	1 p
Floor care products (e.g. floor wax, polish, etc.) $\geq$ 50%	1 p
Soaking agents $\geq$ 50%	1 p
Furniture per category, chairs, tables, etc. $\geq$ 10%	1 p per product, max 2 p
Textiles (tablecloths and napkins) $\geq$ 20%	1 p
Workwear, at least one staff category, at least one garment	0.5 p
Cleaning	1 p
Car washing	1 p
Other $\geq$ 50%	1 p per product, max 2 p

#### **O45 Points total**

The total number of points restaurants can achieve in chapter 5, Alternative requirements for restaurants, is 47 points. To fulfil the obligatory requirement, at least 35% must be achieved, which equates to 16 points.

The requirement that at least 5 points must come from the Food chapter has been deleted, since the level in the obligatory food requirements has been raised.

The reason why there are now fewer points than for other businesses in the criteria document is because some point score requirements have been deleted from chapters 1 and 2, since they are not relevant to restaurants that are not part of a hotel business.