

Climate and circular profile

The revision has focused on creating criteria with a strong climate and circular profile. This is done, among other things, by setting requirements for energy consumption in the production of materials where possible, requiring a certain proportion of renewable/recycled/reused materials in the product and requiring the use of recycled materials where it is challenging to set requirements on the production of virgin raw material, e.g. oil for plastic production and mining for metal production. There are also a number of new requirements related to circular aspects such as that parts can be replaced and that the components in the furniture can be easily assembled from one another, requirements for warranty time and updated quality requirements that help ensure a long life span. Chemical requirements in general, and requirements for chemicals in recycled materials will also be positive in a circular perspective to avoid recycling of pollutants.

New materials and product group definition

The criteria have been expanded with the materials paper and other renewable raw materials such as down, feathers, straw and the like for use as filler material. Nordic Ecolabelling also plans to extend the criteria with requirements for natural stone and agglomerated stone. These requirements should mainly be based on the requirements set by EU Ecolabel's criteria for hard coverings, but as these criteria are under review in the EU, the final requirements are not determined.

It has also been clarified that countertops can be Nordic Ecolabelled according to the criteria for furniture. This has previously been unclear. Lamps can no longer be Nordic Ecolabelled.

Structure

The structure of the criteria has been changed so that the requirements for each material, including the chemical requirements, are mainly grouped under separate chapters. This is done to clarify which requirements apply and to drop referrals back and forth in the criteria.

Overall requirement for the share of renewable/recycled/reused materials

Nordic Ecolabelling has introduced a new overall requirement stating that each product must contain a certain proportion of renewable/recycled/reused materials. For office chairs, the requirement is at least 50% by weight. For other products, the requirement is at least 70% by weight. Office chairs are often very complex products that consist of many parts and different materials and therefore have a lower limit. Mattresses are exempt from the requirement, as it is challenging to find padding materials based on renewable and/or recycled materials. However, other more comprehensive requirements for mattresses are set in the new criteria, including emission requirements and stricter requirements for textiles.

This is a requirement that, overall, covers many environmental aspects such as climate, biodiversity and circularity. It is set to stimulate good material choices and designs and to promote furniture that can contribute to a reduced environmental and climate impact.

Metal

The requirement for recycled metal is tightened by the proportion of recycled aluminum (Al) and steel being at least 70% by weight of Al or steel or a combination of these. There are clearer requirements for traceability in the supply chain. The requirement applies if metal is included with 30% by weight of metal in the product.

Nordic Ecolabelling is aware that this is a strict requirement and that it may require switching of suppliers. Nordic Ecolabelling does not believe the requirement will contribute significantly to more recycling of metal and this is not the main reason for the requirement. Nordic Ecolabelling does not see that it is possible to impose requirements for the extraction of raw materials and requirements for energy consumption in the production of metal. Metal is also a material that, compared to other materials, has a high climate impact and is also associated with a number of other environmental problems, e.g. emissions and waste from mining. Nordic Ecolabelling therefore considers it important to have a high proportion of recycled metal to ensure good climate and environmental requirements for furniture with a high proportion of metal.

Chromium coating is still allowed under given conditions. It is limited to parts where there is heavy wear and only CrIII is allowed. Requirement to an emission-free process where the waste is collected and sent to an approved waste recipient is set for all metallization, including zinc.

Chemicals and emission requirements

More extensive chemical requirements are set, including the chemical requirements being extended with bans on substances on the Candidate List, substances that are suspected of endocrine disruptors and bans on substances that are classified CMR category 2. There are also more requirements for chemicals in recycled material.

New emission requirements are set for foamed padding materials such as latex foam and PUR foam. The requirements can be documented with a certificate for Oeko-tex 100 or CertiPur. Material approved according to EU Ecolabel criteria for furniture or mattresses is also approved.

Previously, requirements for VOC content in the chemical or amount of VOC applied to the product were only set for surface treatment of wood and wood-based materials. Now the same type of requirements are set for VOC when coating metal and plastic.

Textiles and leather

The requirement model for textiles and leather has been changed so that requirements are depending on function and use and not related to the amount in weight%. The requirements are mainly based on requirements in the consultation version for new revised criteria for Swan labeling of textiles and leather (these will be submitted for consultation by March 2020).

Some basic requirements are set to be met regardless of the amount of textile in the furniture, such as a ban on antibacterial substances, requirements for flame retardants and chromium content for leather.

Textiles and leather which are the outer cover of e.g. sofas, chairs and mattresses are subject to more extensive chemical requirements as well as requirements for fiber production or origin for leather. Fiber production requirements are new in this generation.



For other parts of the furniture that consists of textile, testing of the finished textile is required for a number of chemicals that can be documented with an Oeko-tex 100 certificate.

In addition, the quality requirements for textiles and leather have been tightened in some areas, for example the requirement for durability for public furniture is increased to 80,000.

Tree list

Nordic Ecolabelling will note that there is a revision of the requirement for species of wood that are not allowed to be used in Nordic Ecolabelled products, the so-called tree list. As this work has not been completed, the current requirements are included in the consultation version of the criteria for furniture.

