

Nordic Ecolabelling for  
**Cleaning Services**



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CONSULTATION

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# Contact information

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

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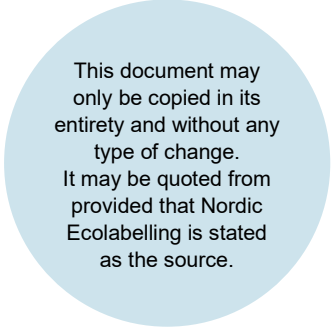
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## 1 What is a Nordic Swan Ecolabel Cleaning service?

A cleaning service certified with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel meets ambitious environmental requirements and has taken a holistic approach to its environmental work. The cleaning service takes an active and structured approach to reducing its consumption and optimising operations.

A Nordic Swan Ecolabel cleaning service:

- Strictly regulates use of chemicals, to ensure less impact on health and the environment.
- Uses a minimum of 95% ecolabelled cleaning products.
- Minimizes environmental impact from transports.
- Sorts waste to stimulate material recycling and a more circular use of resources.
- Reduce their consumption of plastic bags.
- Has staff trained in environmentally friendly cleaning methods.
- Has a quality system to ensure high quality cleaning.
- Working conditions in line with national labour law standards.

## 2 Why choose the Nordic Swan Ecolabel?

- Cleaning services may use the Nordic Swan Ecolabel trademark for marketing. The Nordic Swan Ecolabel is a very well-known and well-reputed trademark in the Nordic region.
- The Nordic Swan Ecolabel is a simple way of communicating environmental focus and commitment to the customers.
- The Nordic Swan Ecolabel identifies the most important environmental impacts and thus shows how a company can cut emissions, resource consumption and waste management.
- Environmentally suitable operations prepare cleaning services for future environmental legislation.
- Nordic Ecolabelling provides businesses with guidance on the work of environmental improvements.
- The Nordic Swan Ecolabel not only covers environmental issues but also quality requirements, since the environment and quality often go hand in hand. This means that a Nordic Swan Ecolabel licence can also be seen as a mark of quality.

## 3 What can carry the Nordic Swan Ecolabel?

Companies that offer ordinary cleaning service and/or window cleaning can be Nordic Swan Ecolabelled.

An applicant is not prevented from offering special cleaning or other services that are not covered by these criteria. These may not be marketed as part of the Nordic Swan Ecolabelled cleaning services.

Ordinary cleaning service includes regular tasks that are necessary to keep an indoor area clean. Inspections, waste management, general cleaning, and cleaning of interior windows are considered to be part of this. Inspection in this instance, means where cleaning staff in principle only go through the room to check the need for cleaning and emptying waste containers. Laundry detergents used for internal and external wash of mops and cloths are also covered by the requirements.

Ordinary cleaning service may include, but is not limited to, areas such as workplaces, restrooms, restaurants, hotels, schools, hospitals, indoor train cars and airplanes, and private homes.

Window cleaning is cleaning of window surfaces (interior and exterior).

If the company offers ordinary cleaning and window cleaning, both services can be Nordic Swan Ecolabelled. But companies that offers both services cannot only ecolabel the window cleaning service. In such cases the ordinary cleaning service must be ecolabelled for the window cleaning to be a part of the ecolabelled service. The company can choose to only apply for the ordinary cleaning service and is not obliged to ecolabel window cleaning. Marketing of Nordic Swan Ecolabelled window cleaning can only occur if the window cleaning is included in the licence.

If the company only offers window cleaning the service can be Nordic Swan Ecolabelled.

Special cleaning is not included in the product group. Nordic Ecolabelling considers the following types of cleaning to be special cleaning: Disinfection, pool cleaning, stain removal on carpets, floor care (including floor polish, sealers, floor wax, wood oil and wax removal/strippers, and impregnation of stone flooring), furniture polish, gum and glue removal, oven cleaner, graffiti removal, cleaning of antistatic rooms (Electro Static Discharge-flooring), remediation work (e.g. mould and asbestos removal), cleaning up after incidents (such as floods and fires), cleaning of ventilation ducts and industrial production facilities (e.g. clean rooms, production facilities in the food and agriculture industry), façade cleaning and washing of buildings, and operating theatres. In some cases, areas that are included in a Nordic Swan Ecolabelled cleaning contract, also require regularly special cleaning for hygiene reasons. For example, special cleaning in kitchen areas in grocery stores may require disinfection in accordance with authority requirements. It is approved by Nordic Ecolabelling that the cleaning service can offer ordinary cleaning as well as special cleaning, but the communication must be clear that only the ordinary cleaning service is ecolabelled. Disinfectants and antibacterial products are not approved in ordinary cleaning.

Hospital cleaning can be Nordic Swan Ecolabelled in areas where ordinary cleaning is carried out. Areas such as operation rooms that require a different form of cleaning for hygiene reasons, are not included in the product group, as they are defined as special cleaning.

It is the overall provided cleaning service that can be Nordic Swan Ecolabelled, and an applicant cannot apply for only a certain number of customers or one cleaning concept. Regional departments with their own accounts may apply if they are separate economic units. It must be clearly stated which specific regional department that is Nordic Swan Ecolabelled.

## 4 How to apply

### Application and costs







For information about the application process and fees for this product group, please refer to the respective national web site. For contact information see page 3.

### What is required?

The criteria for Cleaning Services and Window Cleaning (W) comprise a combination of obligatory requirements and point score requirements. The letter "O" and a number indicate obligatory requirements. These requirements must always be fulfilled. The letter "P" and a number denote point score requirements. Each requirement of this type gives a point score. The scores are then totalled. A minimum total score must be achieved to fulfil the requirements.

Window cleaning must meet all the obligatory requirements marked "(W)" after the requirement description, which is all O and P requirements except P1, O15 and O16. Marketing of Nordic Swan Ecolabelled window cleaning can only occur if the window cleaning is included in the licence.

The text describes how the applicant must demonstrate fulfilment of each requirement. There are also icons in the text to make this clearer. These icons are:

-  Enclose
-  Upload
-  Upload
-  Download
-  State data in electronic application
-  Requirement checked on site

To be awarded a Nordic Swan Ecolabel licence:

- All obligatory requirements must be fulfilled.
- A minimum of points score must be achieved depending on type of service. Use table in requirement O16 to calculate the points score.
- Nordic Ecolabelling must inspect the site.

All information submitted to Nordic Ecolabelling is treated confidentially. Suppliers can send documentation directly to Nordic Ecolabelling, and this will also be treated confidentially.

### Licence validity

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel licence is valid providing the criteria are fulfilled and until the criteria expire. The validity period of the criteria may be extended or adjusted, in which case the licence is automatically extended, and the licensee informed.

Revised criteria shall be published at least one year prior to the expiry of the present criteria. The licensee is then offered the opportunity to renew their licence.

### **On-site inspection**

In connection with handling of the application, Nordic Ecolabelling normally performs an on-site inspection visit to ensure adherence to the requirements. For such an inspection, data used for calculations, original copies of submitted certificates, test records, purchase statistics, and similar documents that support the application must be available for examination.

### **Queries**

Please contact Nordic Ecolabelling if you have any queries or require further information. See page 3 for contact information. Further information and assistance (such as calculation sheets or electronic application help) is available. Visit the relevant national website for further information.

## **5 Summary**

Cleaning is an essential part of the daily operation of workplaces, institutions, public places, etc. and the purchase of cleaning services therefore represents an important part for most larger organizations. A Nordic Swan Ecolabelled cleaning service meets ambitious environmental requirements and are among the best in their industry when it comes to environmental and quality performance.

Nordic Ecolabelling have revised the criteria and made a consultation proposal for Cleaning Services. This is done as a “partial revision” which means that only parts of the criteria have been revised. The requirement level from generation 3 is kept in 12 of the requirements in the suggested generation 4. Some requirements are updated and made clearer, but the requirement levels are the same.

For the revised and proposed criteria, the most important changes compared to generation 3 are:

- New template value for m<sup>2</sup> pr full time employee (FTE), used for the calculation of total square metres cleaned. The value is increased with 30 % from 330 000 m<sup>2</sup> to 430 000 m<sup>2</sup>. It is only permitted to use the template value for FTE if the applicant lacks information on frequency and square metres.
- Stricter requirements for total consumption of cleaning products, from previous 400 µl/m<sup>2</sup> to 300 µl/m<sup>2</sup>.
- Stricter requirements for the consumption of ecolabelled cleaning products, from 80% to 95%.
- New requirements for window cleaning and cleaning services regarding treated water production and training.
- Floor care products are no longer a part of the ecolabelled service, it is considered special cleaning. Floor care products includes floor polish,

sealers, floor wax, wood oil and wax removal/strippers, and impregnation of stone flooring.

- Requirement for “non-ecolabelled products” is updated and tightened.
- A new routine requirement for reduction of plastic bags replaces the previous point score requirement that rewarded low use of plastic bags with a calculation of consumption in  $\mu\text{m} / \text{m}^2$ .
- Previous point score requirement for the purchase of ecolabelled products and services is updated and changed.
- A new mandatory requirement for the purchase of 100% Ecolabelled tissue-, toilet- and copy paper.
- All new purchase/leasing of vehicles must be electrical or powered by biogas/natural gas.
- Maximum consumption of fuel for transport is 10% stricter. The limit value is set in kWh compared to litres for petrol in previous generation.
- A new mandatory requirement for sorting at source to secure recycling of the packaging of cleaning products.
- The mandatory requirement for total point score is updated.

## 6 Environmental impacts of the cleaning service

The cleaning service’s environmental impact is mainly linked to the consumption of materials, consumption of resources like energy, fuel and water, emissions to air and aquatic environment, as well as waste, and the purchase of ecolabelled product and services. Quality, health and working environment are important topics for the industry.

In the criteria for cleaning services, all significant environmental conditions in the life cycle are assessed. Nordic Ecolabelling has analysed the relevance, potential, and steerability (the RPS analysis). The purpose of the RPS analysis has been to clarify where the greatest environmental benefits can be achieved by setting requirements. The results of the analysis are shown in the table below and is the basis of Nordic Ecolabelling’s decisions on what areas to assign requirements for cleaning services.

Lifecycle stages	Area and assessment of R, P, S (high, medium or low)	Comments
Raw materials		
Consumption of materials	Cleaning products, chemicals R: High P: High S: High	Consumption of cleaning products is perhaps the most significant environmental impact from cleaning services. Reducing consumption of cleaning products, and thereby water consumption, will also reduce the impact of repeated heavy lifting for machinery. There is a great variation in the consumption of cleaning products, depending on the cleaning tasks involved. The consumption of cleaning products plays a key role in reducing ecotoxic substances, improving the working environment and setting targets aimed at reducing the consumption of resources. Ecolabelled cleaning products are readily available and are among the best cleaning products in terms of an environmental profile. The whole life cycle is considered and strict requirements are set concerning



		the environmental and health effects of the constituent substances, and in regard to packaging.
	Laundry detergents R: High P: High S: Medium	Laundry of cloths and mops is of great importance for the service's environmental impact. Ecolabelled laundry detergents are also easily available and are among the best products in terms of an environmental profile and performance testing.  Purchasing of Nordic Swan Ecolabelled textile service secures energy efficiency, limited amount of water use, strict environmental and health requirements as well as efficient distribution, and it is a good choice to make to ensure the most sustainable laundry.  Textile services also offers a rental service which is an environmentally friendly alternative to owning textiles or using disposable items.  Generally, there is good access to ecolabelled textile services, but in some parts of the Nordics there is less access, and the potential is reduced.
	Other cleaning equipment R: Medium P: Low S: Low	Cleaning equipment such as washing trolleys, racks, floor washing machines and others are necessary to perform the service.
	Cloths and mops R: High P: Medium S: Low	Cloths and mops are necessary products for a cleaning service. Ecolabelled microfibre cloths and mops has a documented effect on cleaning: The production of the microfibre has taken account of the environment in all stages. The cloths and mops clean without wear and tear of the surface. Unfortunately the steerability is low due to different availability and price differences in the Nordic countries.
	Plastic bags R: Medium P: Medium S: High	The use of plastic bags for waste and garbage disposal is an essential part of the cleaning service. Shared waste stations, fewer waste bins and good routines can significantly reduce the use of plastic bags. Since the bags used for waste are usually made of plastics it's a potential to limit the use of virgin, fossil plastic and encourage the use of recycled plastics. Ecolabelled plastic bags with Blue Angel is products with a high percentage of recycled plastics, and at the same time meet requirements for concentration of contaminants.
<b>Production/distribution and use phase</b>		
Consumption of resources	Energy R: High P: Medium S: Low	Energy for transport, heating of cleaning water, and energy consumption for floor washing machines and washing machines for textiles is a significant source to the climate impact. Potential varies between the different issues, but overall the steerability is generally low as the activities that require use of energy are necessary to perform the service and it is expensive to replace equipment.
	Fuel R: High P: Medium S: Medium	Fuel consumption from transports is a significant source of the service's climate impact. To reduce emissions, it is necessary to shift to more energy-efficient transports and move away from fossil fuels. The steerability of vehicle types is greatest when new leasing contracts are established, or vehicles are purchased.
Consumption of resources	Water R: High P: High S: Medium	Water consumption for ordinary cleaning is applicable, but at the same time necessary. Water consumption for window cleaning is high. The use of deionized/demineralized water also called "ultra clean water" for window cleaning has superseded the use of tap water when cleaning windows outdoors. Most companies use only deionized/demineralized water or a combination of this and tap water. The production of 100 l deionized/demineralized water differs between

		120 l and 200 l of tap water, and there is a great potential to reduce the use of tap water.
Emissions	Air Pollution R: High P: High S: Medium	Most significant air pollution is from transport with petrol and diesel vehicles. It's great variation in fuel consumption depending on short or long distances between customers. Limitation of fossil fuel together with eco-driving help reduce air pollution.
	Air environment R: High P: High S: High	The most important challenges are health problems due to vapours from cleaning agents. By avoiding perfume and allergenic preservatives, and by choosing ecolabelled cleaning products, the health of the cleaning staff is taken care of.
	Aquatic environment R: High P: High S: High	Cleaning agents from the cleaning process will end up in the aquatic environment. Wastewater from washing machines, laundries is therefore also relevant. The use of ecolabelled products is important to avoid harmful substances to the aquatic environment, together with less use of cleaning products in general and correct dosing.
End of life		
Waste	Generation of waste R: High P: High S: High	The packaging from cleaning products has a great potential in being sorted correctly and material recycled. In addition, the packaging from Nordic Swan Ecolabelled products have a higher proportion of recyclable material.
Other		
Quality	Health and working environment R: High P: High S: Medium	Due to a large number of people engaged in cleaning, the work environment conditions are a significant factor. Working conditions, indoor climate, such as ergonomic factors, impacts on the skin from chemicals and water, adverse degasification from chemical products, slippery floors, etc.
Purchase	Purchase of ecolabelled product and services R: High P: High S: Medium	Relevance and potential are high for products that are purchased and used regularly. The service is often responsible for their customers purchase of toilet and tissue paper, soap, printed matter, cloths and mops, dishwashing products, hand towel rolls, plastic bags etc. The environmental impact is reduced simply by choosing ecolabelled products and services. Unfortunately, the steerability is low in some cases due to different availability and price differences in the Nordic countries.. The cleaning services can encourage their customers to buy the ecolabelled products, but not oblige them to do so.

## 7 Justification of the requirements

Cleaning is an essential part of the daily operation in workplaces, institutions, public places, etc. and the purchase of cleaning services therefore represents an important item for most larger organizations. This applies both to the private sector and to the public sector, i.e. the state, the municipalities, and the regions, which are responsible for the operation of many kinds of institutions and workplaces, schools, hospitals, sports halls, etc.

The market consists of a few big companies, some medium-sized and many small companies. From local or national to Nordic or global. Many companies have other business areas such as facility management, building operation green keeping, security, canteen service, etc.

The market is developing in a greener direction, driven by public procurement and licencees who will make their professional work visible. The business has been focusing on “visible cleaning” which means cleaning in normal working hours to create better working conditions and recruit more employees.

New cleaning methods like less use of cleaning products and use of microfiber cloths, mops, robots, machines, as well as deionized/demineralized water for window cleaning contributes to making the physically hard work easier.

The criteria for Nordic Swan Ecolabelled cleaning services include both ordinary cleaning services and window cleaning. The criteria for cleaning services consisting of 26 mandatory requirements as well as 5 point score requirements, of which a certain proportion must be fulfilled. The requirements can be divided into the following main categories: General requirements, cleaning products, transport requirements, resource efficiency, use of ecolabelled products and services, quality requirements and requirements for ethical conditions and the working environment.

Together with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel the cleaning services can offer green cleaning with high cleaning quality and good working conditions.

## 8 Definitions

### Definitions of terms used in the criteria document

<b>Ordinary cleaning</b>	All products used for general cleaning on all flooring and surfaces, i. e. cleaning products for all-purpose, heavy duty, sanitary, acid/descaling, alkaline water, probiotic water, wash-and-wax floor, spray buffering and defoamers.
<b>Window cleaning</b>	All products used for window cleaning. The use of deionized/demineralized water such as "ultra clean water" is considered as "treated water", see definition below.
<b>Laundry detergents</b>	All products for internal and external wash of textiles including impregnation for mops and cloths.
<b>Cleaning products</b>	All chemical products used in the cleaning service, includes chemicals added to wet-wipes and mops (soap cartridges delivered in wet mops).
<b>Treated water</b>	Treated waters include deionized or demineralized water, and other waters with harmless substances in low concentrations and no surfactants. Each type of treated water must be individually evaluated by NSE, who decides whether it fits this product type or not.  The amount of treated water does not count as ordinary cleaning product, and shall not be included in the calculation in O5 consumption of cleaning products and O6, the proportion of ecolabelled cleaning products.  Water with added washing active ingredients is considered ordinary cleaning.  Note that ozonated water (ozone water) and electrochemically activated water (ECA water) are not permitted to be used due to our requirements O9 and O10 regarding classification and excluded substances.
<b>Special cleaning</b>	Chemical products used for i.e. disinfection, pool cleaning, stain removal on carpets, floor care (floor polish, sealers, floor wax, wood oil and wax removal/strippers, impregnation of stone flooring), furniture polish, gum and glue removal, oven cleaner, graffiti removal, cleaning of antistatic rooms, remediation work, clearing up after incidents, cleaning of ventilation ducts and, cleaning of industrial production facilities (e.g. such as clean rooms, production facilities in the food and agriculture industry), façade cleaning and washing of buildings, and operating theatres.  Ozonated water (ozone water) and electrochemically activated water (ECA water) must be considered as special cleaning if used. They are not permitted to be used by the ecolabelled service for ordinary cleaning.

<b>Ozon water</b>	Ozonized water is deionized and slightly acidic water with infused with ozone gas. Not approved for use.
<b>Alkaline water</b>	Filtered tap water that is electrolysed in the presence of potassium carbonate resulting in a water solution with low concentrations of potassium hydroxide and pH above 10. Ionized water, also known as "Z water". Approved for use.
<b>Ultra clean water</b>	Is water that has been highly purified, removing up to all minerals, particles, bacteria, microbes, and dissolved gases. <sup>1</sup> Approved for use.
<b>Filtered water</b>	Filtered water is tap water that has been filtered to remove impurities and
<b>Z water</b>	Z water is produced by first filtering tap water by particle, coal and reverse osmosis filters. The water is electrolysed. Approved for use.
<b>Deionized water/demineralized water</b>	Deionized/demineralized water systems are based on reverse osmosis and ion exchange/deionization water purification. The process of deionized water involves removal of ions from the water using ion exchange resins. Approved for use.
<b>Probiotic water</b>	More generally known as microbial- based cleaning products (MBCPs), utilizes microorganisms to clean surfaces or environments. These products contain microbes that can break down organic matter, eliminating odors, and outcompeting harmful microbes. Microorganisms like bacteria, fungi, bacteriophages and/or a combination of these can be used. Approved by use after inspection by Nordic Ecolabelling.
<b>ECA water</b>	Electrochemically activated water (ECA water) is the process of producing a disinfectant with the use of water, salt and electricity. The active agent in ECA water is chlorine. Not approved for use.
<b>Silver/copper water</b>	For some producers silver and copper ions are connected directly to the water intake. Silver and copper ions have a biocidal effect on bacteria in the water, disinfecting the water. Not approved for use in cleaning services.
<b>Floor care</b>	Products used for maintaining and impregnating floors such as floor polish, sealers, floor wax, wood oil and wax removal/strippers. Cleaning and care products for floors are not considered floor care but defined as ordinary cleaning.
<b>Sub-suppliers</b>	Are service providers of cleaning services, external companies that deliver services directly to the applicant's customers on behalf of the applicant and at the applicant's risk and expense.
<b>Plastic bags</b>	Plastic bags used to collect and transporting waste, e.g. small bags for waste bins (5-10 l and more) as well as larger bags mounted on cleaning trolleys etc. (100 l and more).
<b>Ecolabelled products</b>	Products and services with a valid licence for the Nordic Swan Ecolabel or the EU Ecolabel. For plastic bags, the Blue Angel is also approved. For hand soap, dish- and handwashing detergents, the Good Environmental Choice (Bra Miljöval) is also approved. For workwear, GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) is also approved.
<b>INSTA 800</b>	Nordic standard for "Cleaning quality - Measurement system for evaluation of cleaning quality".
<b>Certified environmental management system</b>	Is here defined as management systems from ISO 9001 and 14001 or EMAS.

<sup>1</sup> <https://semiconductor.samsung.com/support/tools-resources/dictionary/purity-on-another-level-ultrapure-water/>

## 9 General requirements of the applicant

### O1 Description of the company (W)

Describe the company and cleaning services offered, in accordance with Nordic Ecolabelling's "Template for reporting requirements", which can be downloaded in Nordic Ecolabelling Portal.

The use of sub-suppliers must be described.

*"Sub-suppliers" means the service provider of cleaning services (external company who deliver services directly to the applicant's customers on behalf of the applicant and at the applicant's risk and expense).*

Requirement O24 for sub-suppliers must be fulfilled.

- Describe the company and cleaning services, in accordance with "Template for reporting requirements".

### Background to requirement O1

Nordic Ecolabelling requires a detailed description of the business to obtain an accurate picture of the service. The information provides the basis for correct advice in the application process.

### O2 Square metres cleaned (W)

#### Cleaning service:

The applicant must calculate the number of square metres of floor area cleaned in one year. Use the sheet "Square metres" in "Template for reporting requirements".

Calculating the number of square metres cleaned per year must be based on contracts with cleaning frequency and square metres.

*Square metres cleaned is the surface which is cleaned in accordance with the definition of "ordinary cleaning".*

*Special cleaning and floor care (as well as window cleaning) must not be a part of the calculation.*

*See the calculation example in Appendix 1.*

Alternatively, if the applicant lacks information on frequency and square metres, this must be stated, and the calculation of the annual number of square metres must be based on the number of full-time employees (FTEs). One FTE is estimated to clean 430 000 m<sup>2</sup> per year.

Total m<sup>2</sup> per year = number of FTEs × 430 000 m<sup>2</sup>

#### Window cleaning:

The applicant must describe their system for registering window cleaning, both indoor and outdoor cleaning.

It must be specified how the cleaning service measures the execution of the job, whether it is in m<sup>2</sup>, number of windows, the number of floors, or equivalent unit.

### **Cleaning services:**

- Calculation of square metres cleaned, based on an overview of all customers showing the number of square metres cleaned per week or per month, and multiplied for one year. Use the sheet "Square metres" in "Template for reporting requirements".
- Copy of minimum three contracts stating the number of square metres.
- On-site inspection.

Alternatively:

- Calculation of square metres cleaned based on FTE pr year. Use the sheet "Square metres" in "Template for reporting requirements" for the calculation.
- Overview of employees showing the ratio of the FTEs.
- Explanation of why the applicant can't provide information on frequency and square metres per customer.

### **Window cleaning:**

- Description of the system for registration of window cleaning unit according to the requirement.
- Copy of minimum three contracts showing how the window service measures the execution of the job.

## **Background to requirement O2**

### **Definition of square metres cleaned**

Requirement O2 and the calculation of square metres cleaned are central to the criteria for cleaning services. Viewed from an LCA perspective, it is important to calculate the environmental impact in a functional unit which relates to the service. It is therefore appropriate to use "m<sup>2</sup> cleaned" as this unit. The other requirements are related to this, which makes it possible to guarantee a low environmental impact per "functional unit".

Nordic Ecolabelling is aware that m<sup>2</sup>-based cleaning is not optimal as there is a difference between e.g. deep cleaning, ordinary cleaning or vacuuming of carpets, and inspection, when cleaning staff go through the room to check that everything is OK, and empty waste containers.

### **Calculation of the number of square metres cleaned**

Most of the environmental requirements for cleaning services are calculated using the "per m<sup>2</sup>" unit. It is therefore important that the number of square metres cleaned is calculated on a correct basis.

The primary method for the company to find the number of m<sup>2</sup> cleaned is set as the calculation of m<sup>2</sup> cleaned via calculation of areas and cleaning frequency  
Many cleaning companies have invested in a planning system to which

customers' floorplans can be added, with details of the frequency at which the various areas are cleaned. This program can, relatively simply, give the cleaning company key figures for the number of m<sup>2</sup> they clean.

There is also the alternative of finding a representative figure per m<sup>2</sup>, if only statements of the number of FTEs delivered in the cleaning service is available.

### **Background to the template value for the calculation of the number of m<sup>2</sup> cleaned**

Many licence holders find it difficult enough to compile the number of m<sup>2</sup> cleaned. An alternative method has therefore been developed to be able to find the approximate number of square meters cleaned per year. This is done on the basis of the number of full-time employees (FTE's) working with cleaning. In generation 3 of the criteria for Cleaning Services it was assumed that approximately 1,950 hours per FTE is used and that a cleaning assistant can manage much more than 175 m<sup>2</sup>/hour. However, this depends on what is being cleaned. For large, open surfaces, far more than 175 m<sup>2</sup>/hour can be covered, but for many small rooms, offices with a lot of furniture, or private homes, fewer m<sup>2</sup>/hour will be covered. Nordic Ecolabelling wanted to ensure that the template value was lower than the average, to give a "worst case" in the absence of more detailed information, and this this resulted in a template value on 330,000 m<sup>2</sup>/FTE.

During the work with generation 3 Nordic Ecolabelling has received feedback that the template value was too low. Over 30 licence holders, from among all Nordic countries, as well as trade organisations have provided us with data to revise the template value for generation 4. The result spans between 290,000 and 835,000 m<sup>2</sup> per full-time employee per year. The median value is 546,000 m<sup>2</sup>/FTE. To ensure that the template value continues to be lower than the average, and in the absence of more detailed information, Nordic Ecolabelling has updated the template value to 430,000 m<sup>2</sup>/FTE, which is an increase of 30% compared to generation 3.

### **Window cleaning**

In dialog with several licence holders and window cleaning companies, it was discovered that the window cleaning contract is not based on square metres but rather on the number of windows, panes, etc. Due to this it's not possible to require details of the number of square metres cleaned windows. Nordic Ecolabelling therefore require a description of the system for window cleaning registration, to get a better understanding of the registration process, and maybe be able to set absolute requirements in the future.

## 10 Cleaning Products

### 03 Information about cleaning products (W)

An overview of all cleaning products being used. This includes:

- Ordinary cleaning
- Laundry detergents, both products for internal and external laundry
- Window cleaning
- Treated water
- Special cleaning

The name, manufacturer, function, ecolabel, and licence number (where relevant) must be stated.

Use the sheets "Cleaning products" in the "Template for reporting requirements".

**Ordinary cleaning:** *All products used for general cleaning on all flooring and surfaces, i.e. cleaning products for all-purpose, heavy duty, sanitary, acid/descaling, alkaline water, probiotic water, wash-and-wax floor, spray buffering and defoamers.*

**Laundry detergents:** *All products for internal and external wash of textiles including impregnation for mops and cloths.*

**Window cleaning:** *All products used for window cleaning. The use of deionized/demineralized water such as "ultra clean water" is considered as "treated water", see definition below.*

**Treated water:** *Treated waters include deionized or demineralized water, and other waters with harmless substances in low concentrations and no surfactants. Each type of treated water must be individually evaluated by NSE, who decides whether it fits this product type or not.*

*The amount of treated water does not count as ordinary cleaning product, and shall not be included in the calculation in O5 consumption of cleaning products and O6, the proportion of ecolabelled cleaning products.*

*Water with added washing active ingredients is considered ordinary cleaning.*

*Note that ozonated water (ozone water) and electrochemically activated water (ECA water) are not permitted to be used due to our requirements O9 and O10 regarding classification and excluded substances.*

**Special cleaning is not a part of the ecolabelled service:** *Chemical products used for i.e. disinfection, pool cleaning, stain removal on carpets, floor care (floor polish, sealers, floor wax, wood oil and wax removal/strippers), furniture polish, impregnation of stone flooring, gum and glue removal, oven cleaner, graffiti removal, cleaning of antistatic rooms, remediation work, clearing up after incidents, cleaning of ventilation ducts and, cleaning of industrial production facilities (e.g. such as clean rooms, production facilities in the food and agriculture industry), façade cleaning and washing of buildings, and operating theatres.*

*Ozonated water (ozone water) and electrochemically activated water (ECA water) must be considered as special cleaning if used. They are not permitted to be used by the ecolabelled service for ordinary cleaning.*

*See Appendix 3 for more examples of cleaning products.*



Safety data sheets (in line with Annex II to REACH, Regulation (EC) 1907/2006) and user information must be available where the cleaning products are used, either digitally or on paper.

- ☒ Procurement list for cleaning products that are in current use.
- ☒ Overview of all cleaning products. State the name, manufacturer, category, function, ecolabel, and licence number, where relevant.  
Use the sheet "Cleaning products" in the "Template for reporting requirements".
- 🔗 Please state how safety data sheets are available for the customers of the cleaning service.
- 📍 Safety data sheets and user information are checked during inspection visits.

### **Background to requirement O3**

A list of cleaning products that are in current use, with the name, manufacturer and function is necessary because Nordic Ecolabelling should be able to verify whether the applicant meet the requirements. Safety data sheets ensure that it is known what to do in the event of occupational accidents and show the product's classification.

The cleaning products must be categorized correctly so that Nordic Ecolabelling can set correct requirements for the various categories. The categories are ordinary cleaning, laundry detergents, window cleaning, treated water and special cleaning.

Special cleaning is not a part of the ecolabelled service. Disinfectant is categorized as special cleaning.

Treated waters include deionized or demineralized water, and other waters with harmless substances in low concentrations and no surfactants.

Deionized/demineralized water - also called "ultra clean water"- has become more and more common to use in window cleaning. New treated waters types, marketed with a cleaning effect appear on the market continuously, for example water with added oxygen. The different treatments of the water can affect the water's pH and properties and Nordic Ecolabelling therefore wants to establish an overview of everything that is used by the cleaning service, even if the products are only marketed as "water". Each type of treated water must be individually evaluated by NSE, who decides whether it fits this product type or not.

The use of disinfectant and alternatives to chemical disinfectant for ordinary cleaning, as well as "chemical-free cleaning" has also increased in recent years. New products have appeared on the market and among the alternatives to "chemical-free cleaning" and chemical disinfectants are ozonated water (ozone water) and electrochemically activated water (ECA water).

Ozonized water is produced by infusing water with ozone gas. Ozone itself is a toxic gas and dangerous to humans even at low concentrations. According to the adopted opinion from the European "Committee for Risk Assessment", RAC, the

following harmonized classifications should apply to ozone<sup>2</sup>: Muta. 2 H341 Suspected of causing genetic defects, and Carc. 2 H351 suspected of causing cancer, Acute Tox 2 H330 fatal if inhaled, STOT SE 2 H370 causes damage to organs, STOT RE 1 H372 causes damage to organs through prolonged and repeated exposure, Aquatic Acute 1 H400 very toxic to aquatic life, Aquatic Chronic 1 H410 very toxic to aquatic life with long lasting effects, and Ox. Gas 1 H270 may cause or intensify fire, oxidizer.

Nordic Swan Ecolabelling has decided to ban the use of ozone water for ordinary cleaning even though the CMR classification is not yet implemented in CLP due to the precautionary principle.

Electrochemically activated water (ECA water) is often marketed as harmless and consisting only of water and salt. This is not correct. The product is produced at the user site by sending electricity through salt water, which causes the formation of hypochlorite and hypochlorous acid. Hypochlorite and other reactive chlorine compounds are ingredients used in disinfectant and antibacterial products. The ingredients can form organic chlorine compound, which are harmful to the Use of disinfectants in areas where there is no real need for disinfection, can contribute to the development of resistance in microorganisms. Nordic Ecolabelling therefore does not allow the use of ECA water as ordinary cleaning at Nordic Swan Ecolabelled companies.

#### O4 Correct dosing (W)

To ensure correct dosing, according to the manufacturer's recommendation, all employees must use dosing equipment or measuring cups, where cleaning takes place.

Additionally, companies equipped with internal laundry facilities for cloths, mops, and cleaning machines must also incorporate the use of dosing equipment. This must be part of the company's procedures.

☒ Copies of procedures for correct dosing.

🕒 Checked during inspection visits.

#### Background to requirement O4

One of the greatest environmental impacts on using chemical cleaning agents is the over-dosing of chemicals. This is often because the person in question does not have correct measuring/dosing equipment and they wish to be sure that they do not dose too low. By requiring dosing devices/measuring cups to be made available to cleaning staff, Nordic Ecolabelling is preventing over-dosing, as far as possible.

#### O5 Consumption of cleaning products (W)

The total consumption of **ordinary cleaning** and **laundry detergents** must not exceed 300 microlitres/m<sup>2</sup>.

Consumption is calculated on the basis of the total volume of ordinary cleaning products (including water in the product) and laundry detergents used both internally and externally in the Nordic Swan Ecolabelled service.

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<sup>2</sup> RAC Opinion proposing harmonised classification and labelling at EU level of ozone, March 2023: <https://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/e0d136d8-50af-00b6-2795-1207b902072f>

The volume of products for window cleaning is not included in the calculation but must be stated separately.

Use the sheet "Cleaning products" in the "Template for reporting requirements".

*For laundry detergent in powder form 1 g must be counted as 5 ml to calculate the consumption.*

*Cleaning products for special cleaning purposes is excluded from the calculation.*

*Treated water is excluded from the calculation.*

*Products that are purchased by the cleaning company for the customer, without this being directly related to the cleaning service, such as filling of dishwasher detergent in the customer's dishwashers, filling of liquid hand detergent for the customer's use, or hand soap in toilets, is not included.*

*See description of "ordinary cleaning", "laundry detergents" and "window cleaning" in O3, and examples of cleaning products in Appendix 3.*

- Calculation of consumption in accordance with the requirement per m<sup>2</sup>. Use the sheet "Cleaning products" in the "Template for reporting requirements".
- Purchasing statistics from all chemical suppliers. Enter the name of the chemical and the quantity purchased annually.
- State the volume of cleaning products used for window cleaning, separately from other consumption of cleaning products.

When using external laundries for washing of cloths and mops, the following must be documented, in order to calculate the total consumption of cleaning products:

- Confirmation from the laundry of the volume of laundry detergent used per kg of mops and cloths. Alternatively, the template value of 11 ml/kg can be used.
- A confirmation or invoice from the laundry showing the number of kg of mops and cloths that are laundered per year.

## **Background to requirement O5**

The consumption of cleaning products plays a key role in reducing ecotoxic substances, improving the working environment and setting targets aimed at reducing the consumption of resources.

Together with transport, consumption of cleaning products is perhaps the most significant environmental impact from cleaning services. Reducing consumption of cleaning products, and thereby water consumption, will also reduce the impact of repeated heavy lifting for machinery. There is a great variation in the consumption of cleaning products, depending on the cleaning tasks involved.

The use of microfibre mops or cloths use less chemicals during the actual cleaning, but these are not "chemical-free" methods, since cleaning products are used to wash mops and cloths after use (10-40 % of the total consumption, is the experience from licensing).

In isolated terms, the degree of soiling/dirt has a great influence on the amount of cleaning products used. In overall terms, however, the degree of soiling is less significant, the more different customers the cleaning company have.

As the environment is affected, whether laundering takes place internally or externally, external consumption of cleaning products must also be included.

When using external laundries, the products used to wash the applicant's mops and cloths are included. The alternative to using the laundry's data is to use a conservative template value (11 ml/kg) based on experience from the licensing of textile detergents for professional use. Textile detergent in powder form must be multiplied by five to calculate the consumption of cleaning products. This is to compensate for the water content of liquid products, so that the consumption of cleaning products, whether in liquid or powder form, is comparable.

The threshold value for consumption is tightened from 400 to 300 microlitres/ m<sup>2</sup> after a review of licences. There is variation in the data, but the new threshold value should be realistic on the basis of licence data. The limit value allows flexibility of different sites.

The volume of products used for cleaning windows is only set as an information requirement because it is difficult to relate the consumption to a specific unit. "Square metres cleaned" is not suitable in this case since cleaning companies do not use this unit for their tasks.

Cleaning products that are used by sub-suppliers:

- If the sub-supplier uses the applicant's cleaning products (that the applicant has purchased) - the volume of products must be included
- If the sub-supplier is Nordic Swan Ecolabelled and use their own cleaning products - the volume of products must not be included (as for Textile services and use of sub-suppliers)
- If the sub-supplier is not Nordic Swan Ecolabelled and use their own cleaning products, the volume of products must not be included - but, as in the criteria for Textile services, the chemicals must fulfil the requirements on hazard classification and substances.

## P1 Consumption of cleaning products

The applicant receives points for low consumption of **ordinary cleaning and laundry detergents**.

A maximum of 5 points can be achieved for this point requirement.

Consumption, microlitres / m <sup>2</sup> area cleaned	Points
less than 50 microlitres / m <sup>2</sup>	5 p
51-100 microlitres / m <sup>2</sup>	4 p
101-150 microlitres / m <sup>2</sup>	3 p
151-200 microlitres / m <sup>2</sup>	2 p
201-250 microlitres / m <sup>2</sup>	1 p

For an explanation of the calculation, see O5.

*The volume of cleaning products used for window cleaning must not be included in the calculation of consumption related to consumption per m<sup>2</sup>.*

- Calculation of consumption according to O5.

## Background to requirement P1

With this point score requirement Nordic Ecolabelling promotes the companies that has a lower consumption than the obligatory requirement and wish to stimulate to the use of water and microfiber cloths and mops where applicable.

### O6 Proportion of ecolabelled cleaning products (W)

Minimum 95 % of the **ordinary cleaning, laundry detergents** and **window-cleaning** used by the cleaning service must be ecolabelled.

Use the sheet "Cleaning products" in the "Template for reporting requirements".

*Consumption is calculated on the basis of the total volume of ordinary cleaning products, window cleaning and laundry detergents both internally and externally used in the Nordic Swan Ecolabelled service.*

*Ecolabelled is defined as the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, the EU Ecolabel or Good Environmental Choice (Bra Miljöval).*

*The ratio is calculated as a % by volume of the total volume of ordinary cleaning, laundry detergents and window cleaning used per year.*

*See description of "ordinary cleaning", "laundry detergents" and "window cleaning" in O3 and examples of cleaning products in Appendix 3.*

*Treated water is excluded from the calculation.*

- ☒ Calculation of the proportion of ecolabelled chemical products in accordance with the requirement. Use the sheet "Cleaning products" in the "Template for reporting requirements".

## Background to requirement O6

As previously stated, the use of cleaning products play a significant role in the cleaning companies' environmental impact. A large proportion of the products used in ordinary cleaning can be ecolabelled under the ecolabelling systems in the Nordic region (such as the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, the EU Ecolabel or Good Environmental Choice). The ratio of ecolabelled cleaning agents provide good opportunities to choose an ecofriendly solution.

The requirement is easy to document, as the suppliers can provide lists of the cleaning products that are ecolabelled and not ecolabelled together with the amounts purchased.

Experience with this requirement shows that companies that apply for Nordic Swan Ecolabelling typically cut down the amounts of the various products they use, and significantly increase the ratio of ecolabelled products. Data collected for the evaluation in 2023 shows that the mean value for the Nordic Swan Ecolabelled companies is 96%. The requirement is therefore tightened from 80 % to 95 %.

Textile detergents for washing mops and cloths is to be included, both for internal and external laundering.

## P2 Ecolabelled cleaning products (W)

The applicant receives points for a high proportion of ecolabelled consumption of **ordinary cleaning, laundry detergents and window-cleaning**.

A maximum of 3 points can be achieved for this point requirement.

Ratio of ecolabelled cleaning products	Points
If the ratio of ecolabelled is 100% by volume	3 p
If the ratio of ecolabelled is 98-99% by volume	2 p
If the ratio of ecolabelled is 97-98% by volume	1 p

- Calculation of ecolabelled consumption according to O6.

### Background to requirement P2

With this point score requirement Nordic Ecolabelling promotes the cleaning services that has higher amount of ecolabelled cleaning products than the obligatory requirement and wish to stimulate and encourage to 100 % ecolabelled cleaning products in the future.

## O7 Information about treated water (W)

*This requirement is only relevant for companies using treated water.*

Information about the different treated water that are used:

- Amount pr year
- Produced at place or purchased
- Type of treatment
- Area of use
- Reason for its use

- Information according to the requirement.

### Background to requirement O7

Treated waters include deionized or demineralized water, and other waters with harmless substances in low concentrations and no surfactants.

New types of treated waters, marketed with a cleaning effect appear on the market, as well as "chemical-free cleaning" and "alternatives to chemical disinfectants and others. The different treatment of the water can affect the water's pH and properties. Nordic Ecolabelling wants to establish an overview of the details regarding the use of such products to be able to set relevant requirements for the products.

## O8 Treated water production (W)

*This requirement is only relevant for companies using treated water.*

- A maximum of 150 l of water must be used to produce 100 l of treated water.

*This applies regardless of whether treated water is produced internally or purchased externally.*

- If treated water is produced internally, the applicant must have a routine to ensure that the company's treated water system is regularly maintained and that water consumption is minimised.

*This applies to the filling of chemical agents (granules, salt tablets, ion exchange resin, etc.), replacement of filters and membranes as well as servicing of facilities for optimal production of treated water.*

- Documentation showing that the requirement is met.
- Routine according to the requirement

### **Background to requirement O8**

The use of treated water, such as deionized/demineralized water, so called "ultra clean water" for window cleaning has superseded the use of tap water when cleaning windows outdoors. Most companies use only deionized/demineralized water or a combination of this and tap water. For cleaning windows indoors, tap water and glass cleaner/detergent is used. In some cases, deionized/demineralized water is used indoors, but this is not the norm.

Window cleaning companies that Nordic Ecolabelling has contacted state the following advantages of using deionized/demineralized water for window cleaning:

- No other cleaning products are used
- No need for ladders or electrical lifts (saves fuel)
- Better working environment and better ergonomics compared to the use of lifts and ladders
- Financial savings
- Greater variety in the work
- Time saving
- Easier to access the surfaces to be cleaned, as many places cannot be accessed by ladders or lifts

The window cleaning companies indicate the following disadvantages:

- Poorer quality (compared to traditional polishing, where scraping and drying is done afterwards)
- Increased water consumption
- Energy consumption
- Expensive at start-up (purchase of a lot of equipment compared to traditional cleaning)
- Requires heating of the water tank in cold temperatures
- Requires good training of cleaning personnel when working at heights
- Ergonomics challenge, when working with long poles and at heights

Deionized/demineralized water systems are based on reverse osmosis and ion exchange/deionization water purification. Systems are available in different sizes for installation in smaller vans and larger vans (from approx. 375 l) or on trailers (800-1000 l), as mobile plants on trolleys (purifying water as it is consumed) or as stationary plants for installation in buildings, from which water can be tapped

and filled in the car's water tank, according to information from Purewash<sup>3</sup> and Ecostream<sup>4</sup>, among others.

The companies estimate that between 120 l and 200 l of tap water (tap water) is used to produce 100 l of deionized/demineralized water. If the company has internal production, water consumption for the production can be measured directly. If the company buys deionized/demineralized water externally, water consumption for the production can be documented by the producer.

It is considered that it is not possible to set requirements for the energy consumption of deionized/demineralized water plants. Several companies buy clean water externally and thus have no influence on this.

There are several advantages to using deionized/demineralized water. At the same time, water consumption is high, and Nordic Ecolabelling therefore requires a maximum amount of water for production, as well as routines to ensure that the system is maintained so that water consumption is minimized.

### P3 Water consumption for treated water (W)

*This requirement is only relevant for companies using treated water.*

The applicant receives points for low water consumption in treated water production.

A maximum of 2 points can be achieved for this point requirement.

Water consumption	Point
≤ 130 litres for produciton of 100 litres clean water	2 p
131 - 140 litres for produciton of 100 litres clean water	1 p

☒ Documentation of water consumption according to O8.

### O9 Non-ecolabelled cleaning products, hazard classification (W)

**Ordinary cleaning products, laundry detergents, treated water and window cleaning** that are not ecolabelled must not be classified with the hazard codes described in the table below.

*OBS: Documentation of the laundry products is not necessary when using Nordic Swan Ecolabelled laundries.*

*See description of "ordinary cleaning products", "laundry detergents" and "window cleaning" in O3 and examples of cleaning products in Appendix 3.*

*Products included in wet-wipes and added to mops such as soap cartridges delivered in wet mops must also meet the requirement. Laundry detergents used to wash mops and cloths in internal and external laundries are also included.*

<sup>3</sup> Accessed on April 22, 2024 <https://www.purewash.dk/vinduespuudsning/rentvandsproduktion/>

<sup>4</sup> Accessed on April 22, 2024 <https://www.nowas.dk/produkter/184-rentvandssystemer-amp-vaskeanlaeg/17379-ecostream-rentvandsanlaeg-375-ltr-med-100-m-slange/>



**Table 1 Classification of the product**

<b>CLP Regulation 1272/2008</b>		
<b>Hazard class</b>	<b>Hazard class and category</b>	<b>Hazard code</b>
Hazardous to the aquatic environment	Acute category 1 Chronic categories 1-4	H400, H410, H411, H412*, H413
Acute toxicity	Acute Tox 1-4	H300, H310, H330, H301, H311, H331, H302**, H312**, H332**
Specific target organ toxicity, single exposure/repeated exposure	STOT SE 1-2 STOT SE 3 (solely applies for spray products) STOT RE 1-2	H370, H371 H372, H373  H335 (solely applies to spray products***)
Skin corrosion/irritation	Category 1A, 1B, 1C	H314 (solely applies to spray products***)
Eye damage	Eye Dam.1 (solely applies for spray products)	H318 (solely applies to spray products***)
Aspiration hazard	Category 1	H304
Respiratory or skin sensitisation	Resp. Sens. 1, 1A or 1B Skin Sens. 1, 1A or 1B	H334, H317 or EUH208 "Contains 'name of the sensitizing substance'. May cause an allergic reaction." ****
Carcinogenic	Category 1A/1B/2	H350, H351
Germ cell mutagenicity	Category 1A/1B/2	H340, H341
Reproductive toxicity	Category 1A/1B/2/Lact	H360, H361, H362
Endocrine disruption for human health	ED HH 1 ED HH 2	EUH380 EUH381
Endocrine disruption for the environment	ED ENV 1 ED ENV 2	EUH431 EUH431
Persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic properties	PBT	EUH440
Very persistent, very bioaccumulative properties	vPvB	EUH441
Persistent, Mobile and Toxic properties	PMT	EUH450
Very Persistent, Very Mobile properties	vPvM	EUH451

*Note that the manufacturer is responsible for the classification.*

*\*Textile detergents with hydrogen peroxide (CAS-no. 7722-84-1) are exempted from H412 if dosing is done via an automatic dosing system.*

*\*\*Professional products may be labelled H302, H312 and H332 if the packaging is designed so that the user is not in contact with the product.*

*\*\*\*Spray bottles or equivalent equipment with nozzles that do not form a cloud of spray may be labelled H335 and H318.*

*\*\*\*\*Textile detergents that are labelled H334, H317 or labelled with EUH 208 and the clause "Contains (name of the sensitizing substance). May cause an allergic reaction" due to enzyme content is exempted. It is assumed, however, that enzymes are encapsulated or in a slurry.*

- Appendix 4 or equivalent declaration completed and signed.
- The product's safety data sheet in accordance with Appendix II of REACH (Regulation 1907/2006/EC).
- If the product is labelled H302, H312 or H332 a description of the packaging's design must be enclosed.
- Declaration from the cleaning company that products classified as H318 and H335 are not to be used in spray bottles in either diluted or undiluted form.

## Background to requirement O9

The use of cleaning products is of great significance to the environmental impact of cleaning services. Requirements of non- ecolabelled products are selected based on Nordic Ecolabelling's objective to reduce ecotoxic substances in the aquatic environment, and to safeguard the working environment. The table in requirement O8 (non-ecolabelled products, hazard classification) is updated in accordance with the CLP regulation and harmonized with the requirements for Nordic Swan Ecolabelling of Cleaning Agents. In addition, prohibition of substances which are labelled EUH 208 "Contains" (name of the sensitizing substance) May cause an allergic reaction", as well as spray products classified as H335 (STOT SE category 3), H314 (Skin corrosion, Category 1A, 1B, 1C) or H318 (Serious eye damage, category 1) are excluded. It is specified that the requirement also applies to chemicals added to mops at laundries (e.g. as a cartridge which releases soap during use).

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel has also included the new CLP classifications to align with the European Green Deal's goal of a toxic-free environment. This inclusion reflects the need to establish hazard identification for endocrine disruptors and addresses criteria for environmental toxicity, persistency, mobility, and bioaccumulation. By incorporating these classifications, Nordic Swan Ecolabel ensures that the criteria relate to up-to-date scientific understanding and regulatory compliance. Additionally, the inclusion of PMT and vPvM substances is crucial due to their persistence, mobility, and potential impact on water quality. The Nordic Swan Ecolabel aims for comprehensive hazard identification and protection of the environment and human health.

## O10 Non-ecolabelled cleaning products, excluded substances (W)

The following substances or substance groups must not be present as ingoing substances in **ordinary cleaning products, laundry detergents, treated water** and **window cleaning** products that are not ecolabelled. Impurities are not regarded as ingoing substances and are exempt from this requirement. See definition of ingoing substances and impurities in Appendix 3.

*Cleaning products included in wet-wipes and/or added to cloths and mops (soap cartridges delivered in wet mops, antibacterial and/or nano silver coating) are also subject to this requirement. Laundry detergents used to wash mops and cloths (both internal laundering and at external laundries) are also included. If washing at Nordic Swan Ecolabelled laundries, documentation of the cleaning products used is not necessary.*

- Alkylphenols (AP) e.g. butylated hydroxy anisole (BHA, CAS No. 25013-16-5), alkylphenol ethoxylates (APEO), and other alkylphenol derivatives (APD)

*An exemption is made for BHT (CAS No. 128-37-0) in perfumes in the amount of  $\leq 100$  ppm, provided that the amount in the product is  $\leq 1$  ppm.*

- Benzalkonium chloride (CAS No. 63449-41-2)
- Bisphenols and bisphenol derivatives belonging to the group of 34 substances that have been identified by ECHA for further EU regulatory risk management that are known or potential endocrine disruptors for the environment or for human health, or that can be identified as toxic for reproduction<sup>5</sup>
- Boric acid, borates, and perborates
- Linear alkylbenzene sulphonates (LAS)
- Ethylenediamine tetraacetate\* (EDTA, CAS No. 6381-92-6) and its salts and Diethylenetriamine pentaacetate (DTPA, CAS No. 67-43-6) and its salts.
- Nanomaterials/particles\*\*
- Nitromusk and polycyclic musk compounds
- NTA (nitrilotriacetic acid), CAS-no. 139-13-9 and its salts
- Microplastics
- Methyldibromo glutaronitrile (MG, CAS No. 35691-65-7)
- Optical brighteners
- Organic chlorine compounds, hypochlorites and hypochlorous acid.  
*Exemption: Complexing agents of the MGDA and GLDA type may contain NTA impurities in the raw material in concentrations of less than 0.2% if the concentration of NTA in the final product is below 0.1%.*
- PBT and vPvB substances in accordance with REACH Annex XIII, including substances under investigation according to the ECHA PBT assessment list <https://echa.europa.eu/pbt/-/dislist/details/0b0236e1889ab857>
- Phosphates
- Phthalates (esters of phthalic acid, CAS No. 88-99-3)
- Poly- and perfluorinated substances (PFAS)
- Siloxanes
- Silver, colloidal silver and nanosilver
- Substances on the REACH Candidate list of SVHC substances <https://www.echa.europa.eu/candidate-list-table>
- Triclosan
- VOC

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<sup>5</sup> Assessment of regulatory needs: Bisphenols, ECHA, 16 December 2021: Section 2.1: Bisphenols for which further EU RRM is proposed: <https://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/c2a8b29d-0e2d-7df8-dac1-2433e2477b02>

*Volatile organic compounds are defined in accordance with the European Commission's directive 1999/13/EC on the limitation of emissions of volatile organic compounds with steam pressure > 0.01 kPa at 20°C.*

*Exemption for isopropanol, ethanol (including denaturing agents) and fragrances. Note that fragrances, isopropanol and ethanol (including denaturing agents) must still fulfil all other requirements in this criteria document.*

- Potential or identified endocrine disruptors according to any of the EU member state initiative "Endocrine Disruptor Lists" List I; II; and III:
  - <https://edlists.org/the-ed-lists/list-i-substances-identified-asendocrine-disruptors-by-the-eu>
  - <https://edlists.org/the-ed-lists/list-ii-substances-under-eu-investigation-endocrine-disruption>
  - <https://edlists.org/the-ed-lists/list-iii-substances-identified-asendocrine-disruptors-by-participating-national-authorities>

*N.B. A substance which is transferred to one of the corresponding sublists called "Substances no longer on list", and no longer appears on any of List I-III, is no longer excluded. The exception is those substances on sublist II which were evaluated under a regulation or directive which doesn't have provisions for identifying EDs (e.g. the cosmetic products regulation). For those substances, ED properties may still have been confirmed or suspected. Nordic Ecolabelling will evaluate the circumstances case-by-case, based on the background information indicated on sublist II.*

*Quaternary ammonium compounds, which are not aerobically or anaerobically biodegradable\*\*\*\* (such as DTDMAC, DSDMAC, DHTDMAC and DADMAC).*

*\*\* Nanomaterials/-particles are defined according to the EU Commission Recommendation on the Definition of Nanomaterial (2022/C 229/01)<sup>6</sup>:*

*'Nanomaterials' means a natural, incidental, or manufactured material consisting of solid particles that are present, either on their own or as identifiable constituent particles in aggregates or agglomerates, and where 50 % or more of these particles in the number-based size distribution fulfil at least one of the following conditions:*

*(a) one or more external dimensions of the particle are in the size range 1 nm to 100 nm;*

*(b) the particle has an elongated shape, such as a rod, fibre or tube, where two external dimensions are smaller than 1 nm and the other dimension is larger than 100 nm;*

*(c) the particle has a plate-like shape, where one external dimension is smaller than 1 nm and the other dimensions are larger than 100 nm. In the determination of the particle numberbased size distribution, particles with at least two orthogonal external dimensions larger than 100 µm need not be considered. However, a material with a specific surface area by volume of < 6 m<sup>2</sup> /cm<sup>3</sup> must not be considered a nanomaterial.*

*Examples include ZnO, TiO<sub>2</sub>, SiO<sub>2</sub>, Ag and laponite with particles of nanosize in concentrations above 50%. Polymer emulsions are not considered to be a nanomaterial.*

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<sup>6</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022H0614\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022H0614(01)&from=EN)

Appendix 3 completed and signed.

## Background to requirement

The substances that may not be included now generally correspond to equivalent requirements in Nordic Swan Ecolabelling of Cleaning Agents, with the exception of the definitions of ingoing substances and nanomaterials, which have been updated.

### *Alkylphenols (AP), alkylphenol ethoxylates (APEO) and other alkylphenol derivatives (APD)*

Alkylphenols is a group of mainly non-ionic surfactants that are produced in large volumes and their use leads to widespread release to the aquatic environment. APEOs are highly toxic to aquatic organisms and degrade to more environmentally persistent compounds (APDs). Ethoxylated nonylphenol and several other alkylphenols are included in the Candidate List due to endocrine disrupting properties. Other alkylphenols are polyalkylated phenols such as butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT) and butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA) which have antioxidant properties. An exception is made for BHT in perfumes with the limit of  $\leq 100$  ppm provided that the amount in the cosmetic products does not exceed 1 ppm. This exemption is made since BHT is used to ensure the stability of the perfume mixture which can affect the stability of the entire product.

### *Bisphenols and bisphenol derivatives*

Several bisphenols with the general bisphenol structure and bisphenol derivatives which have constituents with structural properties common to bisphenols are now prohibited. Based on the potential for widespread use and available information on potential endocrine disruptors, reproductive toxicity and PBT/vPvB properties, 34 substances were identified in need for further regulatory risk management in EU<sup>7</sup>.

### *Benzalkonium chloride*

Benzalkonium chlorides (BACs) is part of a group of chemicals with wide applications due to their antimicrobial properties against bacteria, fungi and viruses. There is a risk that frequent and widespread use of BACs in commercial products can generative selective environments for microbes and contribute to resistance to antibiotics. Furthermore, there is a risk to consumer exposure due to their toxicity and allergenic properties.

### *Boric acid, borates, and perborates*

Boric acid, borates and perborates have many uses, such as stain removal, oxidizing and bleaching agents. In cosmetic products they are used as oxidisers and buffers in oral hygiene products and as whiteners. They are classified as toxic to reproduction and poses a risk to consumers.

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<sup>7</sup> Annex XV restriction report <https://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/450ca46b-493f-fd0c-afec-c3aea39de487>

### *Linear alkylbenzene sulphonates (LAS)*

LAS is a major anionic surfactant with important applications within household detergents and industrial cleaning agents. LAS is relatively rapidly aerobically degraded, but only very slowly or not at all degraded under anaerobic conditions. Therefore, LAS is mostly found in very high concentrations in sewage sludge and enters the soil compartment as a result of sludge application.

### *Ethylenediamine tetraacetate*

Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (EDTA) and diethylenetriaminepentaacetate (DTPA) is used in many products, such as detergents, liquid soaps, and cosmetics to improve stability. EDTA, DTPA and their salts are not readily degradable, furthermore, they are both classified toxic for reproduction and pose a risk to consumers. For EDTA, the EU's risk assessment states that under the conditions at municipal water treatment plants EDTA is either not broken down or only breaks down to a slight degree. Up to date in Europe, EDTA has been replaced in virtually all consumer products by readily biodegradable alternatives such as MGDA (methylglycine diacetic acid) and GLDA (glutamic acid diacetic acid).

### *Nanomaterials/-particles*

Nanomaterials are a diverse group of materials under the size of 100 nm. Due to their small size and large surface area nanoparticles are often more reactive and may have other properties compared to larger particles of the same material. Further, different sizes, shapes, surface modifications and coatings can also change their physical and chemical properties. Nanoparticles can cross biological membranes and thus be taken up by cells and organs. One of the main concerns are linked to free nanoparticles, as some of these – when inhaled – can reach deep into the lungs, where the uptake into the blood is more likely.

There is concern among public authorities, scientists, environmental organisations, and others about the insufficient knowledge regarding the potential detrimental effects on health and the environment<sup>8,9</sup>. Nordic Ecolabelling takes these concerns seriously and applies the precautionary principle to exclude potentially hazardous nanomaterials from products.

### *Microplastics*

Microplastics are synthetic polymer microparticles as defined in REACH Regulation ((EC) No 1907/2006), Annex XVII, Entry no. 78: Synthetic polymers that are solid and which fulfil both of the following conditions:

- (a) are contained in particles and constitute at least 1 % by weight of those particles; or build a continuous surface coating on particles;

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<sup>8</sup> UNEP (2017) Frontiers 2017 Emerging Issues of Environmental Concern. United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi. [https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/22255/Frontiers\\_2017\\_EN.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/22255/Frontiers_2017_EN.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

<sup>9</sup> SCCS (2019) Guidance on the Safety Assessment of Nanomaterials in Cosmetics. SCCS/1611/19. [https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/scientific\\_committees/consumer\\_safety/doc/sccs\\_o\\_233.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/scientific_committees/consumer_safety/doc/sccs_o_233.pdf)

(b) at least 1 % by weight of the particles referred to in point (a) fulfil either of the following conditions:

- i. all dimensions of the particles are equal to or less than 5 mm;
- ii. the length of the particles is equal to or less than 15 mm and their length to diameter ratio is greater than 3.

The following polymers are excluded from this designation:

- (a) polymers that are the result of a polymerisation process that has taken place in nature, independently of the process through which they have been extracted, which are not chemically modified substances;
- (b) polymers that are degradable as proved in accordance with Appendix 15 [to REACH, Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006].
- (c) polymers that have a solubility greater than 2 g/L as proved in accordance with Appendix 16 [to REACH, Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006].
- (d) polymers that do not contain carbon atoms in their chemical structure.

N.B. The following "Conditions of restriction" paragraphs apply: 1 (concentration limit in mixtures), 2 (definitions), 3 (particle size limits). The remaining points do not apply, e.g. 4 (Paragraph 1 shall not apply to the placing on the market of:), 5 (derogations), e.g. 5 (b) "synthetic polymer microparticles the physical properties of which are permanently modified during intended end use in such a way that the polymer no longer falls within the scope of this entry".

Microplastics can have harmful effects on health and the environment. This is due to size, low degradability, and the fact that they accumulate in living organisms such as fish and shellfish and affect them physically or because they carry harmful chemicals with them. There is a lack of knowledge about the effect of plastic, and Nordic Ecolabelling therefore wants to contribute to reducing emissions of microplastics to the environment.

#### *Methyldibromo glutaronitrile (MG, CAS No. 35691-65-7)*

Methyldibromo glutaronitrile (MDBGN) has applications within cosmetics and industrial products and is a bromine-containing preservative. MDBGN has been shown to be a sensitizer and cause for allergic contact dermatitis and is therefore banned for use in stay-on and rinse-off products.

#### *Nitromusk and polycyclic musk compounds*

Nitromusks and polycyclic musks generally have undesirable properties regarding both health and the environment. Some such compounds are already excluded from use via the requirement concerning CMR substances.

#### *NTA (nitrioltriacetic acid), CAS-no. 139-13-9 and its salts*

NTA is an anthropogenic substance and does not naturally occur in the environment and is present in the environment as a result of its release in sewage from processing. NTA is generally used in industrial cleaning products and is considered to be persistent and classified as carcinogenic.

### *Optical brighteners*

Optical brighteners are not readily biodegradable. They are however photodegradeable in the presence of light, which has been showed by different studies. Optical brighteners absorb to the sludge in the water treatment plants, which is not wanted, since there is a wish to keep the sludge as free from chemicals as possible.

### *Organic chlorine compounds, hypochlorites and hypochlorous acid*

Organic chlorine compounds, hypochlorites and hypochlorous acid are sometimes used as disinfecting and antibacterial substances and as bleaching agents. Organic chlorine compounds can be, or lead to the formation of, toxic and bioaccumulative substances that are difficult to break down. Chlorine-based bleaching agents generally have undesirable health and environmental properties. Hypochlorous acid is not classified, and hypochlorites have the classification Acute toxicity (H400) and thus, they are not covered by the general requirement concerning environmentally hazardous substances. However, both pose an environmental risk due to the possibility of organic chlorine compounds forming.

Disinfectant is not a part of the product group, but still we wish to make it clear that electrochemically activated water (ECA water) forms hypochlorite and is not permitted as ordinary cleaning, due to our ban of "reactive chlorine compounds, such as sodium hypochlorite". Ozonated water is not allowed because of the harmful effect on health from ozone.

### *PBT and vPvB*

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are used in many types of products due to their water and dirt repellent properties. These compounds constitute a group of substances that have highly problematic intrinsic hazardous properties. They are extremely persistent and accumulate in the body. They are spread all over the globe, from the large oceans to the Arctic, and are found in e.g. wild birds and fish and their eggs. Also, shorter chain compounds (2–6 carbon atoms) have been discovered in nature. The substances in this group are suspected to be endocrine disruptors, carcinogenic and to have a negative impact on the human immune system. PFOA, APFO (ammoniumpentadecafluorooctanoate) and certain fluoro acids are included in the Candidate List due to being reprotoxic, as well as having PBT properties.

### *Phthalates (esters of phthalic acid, CAS No. 88-99-3)*

Several phthalates are identified as endocrine disruptors and some of them are classified as reprotoxic. For these reasons several phthalates are included in the Candidate list. Based on their hazardous properties, phthalates pose a threat to the environment and human health and there is a ban on this group of substances.

### *Poly- and perfluorinated substances (PFAS)*

Per- and polyfluorinated substances (PFAS) are used in many types of products due to their water and dirt repellent properties. These compounds constitute a



group of substances that have highly problematic intrinsic hazardous properties. They are extremely persistent and accumulate in the body. They are spread all over the globe, from the large oceans to the Arctic, and are found in e.g., wild birds and fish and their eggs. Also, shorter chain compounds (2–6 carbon atoms) have been discovered in nature. The substances in this group are suspected to be endocrine disruptors, carcinogenic and to have a negative impact on the human immune system. Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), Ammonium pentadecafluorooctanoate (APFO) and certain fluoro acids are included in the Candidate List due to being reprotoxic, as well as having PBT properties.

### *Siloxanes*

Siloxanes are substances that have a widespread use in cosmetic products, such as skin care, hair care and make-up. The most commonly used siloxanes in cosmetic products are the cyclic siloxanes cyclotetrasiloxane (D4), cyclopentasiloxane (D5) and cyclohexasiloxane (D6) and the linear polydimethylsiloxane (PDMS) also known as dimethicone. The cyclic siloxanes D4, D5 and D6 are toxic to human health and the environment having PBT and/or vPvB properties, whereas dimethicone is not considered toxic or bioaccumulative. However, there is a concern that over time, dimethicone will slowly degrade into smaller units exerting the same properties as the cyclic siloxanes<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, the use of both cyclic and linear siloxanes is prohibited with the exemption for leave-on products, where linear siloxanes can be used as the products are intended to stay on the skin and not be rinsed off released directly into the wastewater.

### *Silver, colloidal silver and nanosilver*

Silver is antibacterial agent used in various consumer products, typically in nano form, where it has a greater effect per total amount of silver. Silver is hazardous to health with since it is classified as reprotoxic and under assessment for endocrine disruptive properties. In addition, silver is extremely hazardous to the environment, classified H400 and H410 with an M factor of 10-1000 depending on particle size.

### *Substances on the REACH Candidate list of SVHC substances*

<https://www.echa.europa.eu/candidate-list-table>

The Candidate List identifies substances of very high concern which fulfil the criteria in article 57 of the REACH Regulation (EC 1907/2006). The list includes carcinogenic; mutagenic; and reprotoxic substances (CMR, categories 1A and 1B in accordance with the CLP Regulation); and PBT (persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic) and vPvB (very persistent and very bioaccumulative) substances (as defined in REACH Annex XIII). In addition, two more substance groups are included if they are of equivalent level of concern (ELoC) as the ones previously mentioned. These are endocrine disruptors and substances which are environmentally hazardous without fulfilling the requirements for PBT or vPvB. Based on these adverse characteristics, Nordic Ecolabelling prohibits substances

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<sup>10</sup> Danish Environmental Protection Agency, Survey, and risk assessment of siloxanes in cosmetic products, Survey of chemical sub-stances in consumer products No. 185, June 2021

on the Candidate List. This means that we take action ahead of the legislation and ban the substances before they are subject to authorization and restriction in accordance with REACH.

*Potential or identified endocrine disruptors according to any of the EU member state initiative "Endocrine Disruptor Lists" List I; II; and III:*

Endocrine disruptors (EDs) are chemicals that alter the functioning of the endocrine (hormone) system and consequently cause adverse health effects. The term potential EDs is used for chemicals with properties that make them suspected to be EDs. The hormone system regulates many vital processes in living organisms and when normal signaling is disturbed, adverse effects may result. EDs raise high concern for their risk of causing serious negative impact on the environment as well as on human health specifically. Special concern is raised for effects on reproduction and development and about possible links to increases in public health diseases. While effects in wildlife populations have been confirmed, evidence is pointing to effects also in humans.

PBT and vPvB are abbreviations for substances that are persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic, and very persistent and very bioaccumulative, respectively, in accordance with REACH Annex XIII. This means that they are not biodegradable and that they accumulate in living organisms. Based on these adverse characteristics they pose a threat to the environment and human health. They are prohibited in all Nordic Swan Ecolabel products.

*Triclosan*

Triclosan is an antibacterial agent used in different products such as toothpaste and deodorants. An antibacterial agent is a substance that inhibits or stops growth of microorganisms such as bacteria, fungi, or protozoa (single-celled organisms) and can be applied on a treated article or constituent in a chemical product. It is suspected that some antibacterial agents are contributing to the increasing resistance to antibiotics in society. Consequently, the bacteria are developing new methods of resisting the effects of the antibiotic. This, in turn, can lead to certain diseases becoming more difficult to treat. Furthermore, they can harm bacteria that are necessary for the treatment of water at water treatment plants. Therefore, products containing antibacterial agents should be avoided.

*VOC*

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are to be considered particularly concerning due to their inherent properties. They can be absorbed through the lungs and skin and cause damage to various organs. Prolonged exposure to certain organic solvents can cause chronic damage to the brain and nervous system, while other organic solvents can cause cancer or reproductive damage<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Bruckner, J. V., Anand, S. S., & Warren, D. A. (2008). Toxic effects of solvents and vapors. Casarett and Doull's Toxicology: The Basic Science of Poison, 7th Ed. Klaassen CD (Eds.), 981-1051.

## O11 Perfume and preservatives in aerosol forming spray products (W)

Aerosol forming spray products containing perfumes and/or allergenic preservatives classified H317 or H334 is not allowed for manual use. This may include "ready to use" products and products transferred to the spray bottle/trigger spray bottle by the cleaning firm.

- Description of procedures and equipment to show compliance with the requirement.
- In the list of cleaning products that are in current use, note which products are sprays or are refilled to spray bottles. Use the sheet "Cleaning products" in the "Template for reporting requirements".

### Background to requirement O11

The background to this requirement comes from the report "Cleaning sprays, chemicals, asthma and COPD"<sup>12</sup> (Bakke JV. Nilsen S. Renholdssprayer, kjemikalier, astma og kols. Allergi i Praksis 2014; 3) which has shown that persons who have worked with cleaning for more than one year are at significantly greater risk of developing asthma and COPD than the rest of the population.

An overview from 2006 (Steinar K. Nilsen, cand. real (PhD), senior researcher, SINTEF Byggforsk) showed that cleaning work increases the risk of asthma for professional cleaners and other occupations that are involved in cleaning work.

To reduce this risk for the employees of a company offering Nordic Swan Ecolabelled cleaning services, we have prohibited the use of perfumes and sensitising preservatives in products used in spray bottles by the employees.

Perfume and allergenic preservatives may not be included in current requirements of spray products in Nordic Swan Ecolabelled Cleaning Agents (K9 e) for perfume and requirement K5 for preservatives. Other cleaning agents are not subject to equivalent limitations.

To ensure that products transferred to spray bottles/trigger spray bottles by the cleaning company itself do not contain perfume or allergenic preservatives either, a procedure to ensure this is required to be drawn up (e.g. by always checking the safety data sheet or product information sheet for the relevant products).

## 11 Transport requirements

If the applicant does not have transport as a part of the daily business, the transport requirements are not relevant and do not apply. This may apply to cleaning services that work exclusively at one location, like at a hospital, a university, a parliament building, or similar.

## O12 Purchase of vehicles (W)

Newly purchased and newly leased vehicles must be powered by biogas/natural gas (CNG/CBG LNG/LBG), electricity or hydrogen.

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<sup>12</sup> [Bakke JV. Nilsen S. Renholdssprayer, kjemikalier, astma og kols. Allergi i Praksis 2014; 3](#)

Exemption:

Window cleaning vehicles with lift and/or water tanks are exempted from the requirement but must comply with the latest applicable Euronorm.

*The requirement concerns all vehicles newly purchased or leased by the company, regardless of whether the vehicles are newly produced or pre-owned.*

*The requirement concerns the applicant's own and leased passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles and other vehicles that are driven in relation to cleaning and window cleaning services. Vehicles used by cleaning assistants, planners, inspectors, etc. as part of their work are thus subject to the requirement.*

- Procurement procedures to ensure that newly acquired and newly leased vehicles fulfil the requirement.

## Background to the requirement O12

For cleaning services, fuel consumption from transports is a significant source of the service's climate impact. To reduce emissions, it is necessary to shift to more energy-efficient transports and move away from fossil fuels. The steerability of vehicle types is greatest when new leasing contracts are established, or vehicles are purchased. Combined with the possibility of collecting a point for low fuel consumption, this is a good way to limit the climate impact from the transportation activities of cleaning services.

In the previous criteria generation, newly purchases or leased vehicles had to meet the latest Euronorm standards. In this generation of criteria, the requirement has been tightened. Now all new purchase of vehicles must run on electricity, natural gas/biogas or hydrogen. This helps to ensure a continuous transition to vehicles with less climate impact. This means that plug-in hybrids are not accepted when purchasing new cars. The requirement applies from the application for the Nordic Swan Ecolabelling licence.

Electric cars have become increasingly available in recent years, especially among private cars and light goods vehicles, which are the most commonly used vehicles in the cleaning service sector. All Nordic countries have a high enough availability of electric cars in order for Nordic Ecolabelling to set this requirement. Depending on the country, as much as 18-80 percent of newly registered private cars are electric.

Nordic Ecolabelling considers long-term sustainable vehicles to primarily refer to electrified vehicles. However, natural gas/biogas (CNG/CBG) and hydrogen are also considered good alternatives. This is in line with the Swedish procurement agency's most advanced sustainability requirements for personal cars and light goods vehicles.<sup>13,14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> [Hållbarhetskrav för Energi/koldioxidkrav på lätta lastbilar | Upphandlingsmyndigheten](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Hållbarhetskrav för Energi/koldioxidkrav för fordon med maximalt fyra sittplatser utöver förarplatsen | Upphandlingsmyndigheten](#)

### O13 Maximum consumption of fuel for transport (W)

*The requirement covers all motorized vehicles used by cleaning assistants, planners and inspectors in connection to cleaning/window cleaning.*

The total consumption of fuel for transport must not exceed 70 kWh/100 km.

Vehicles with a lift and/or water tanks used for window cleaning are exempt from the requirement.

Use the sheet "Transportation" in the "Template for reporting requirements", if relevant.

*The fuel consumption is converted to energy (kWh) by multiplying the consumption (liters or kg) with the following conversion factors:*

Fuel	Unit of consumption	Conversion factor / Energy value <sup>15</sup>
Petrol	liter	8,6 kWh/liter
Diesel	liter	9,8 kWh/liter
HVO100	liter	9,4 kWh/liter
E85	liter	6,4 kWh/liter
Biogas / Natural gas (CNG/CBG/LNG/LBG)	kg	13,5 kWh/kg
Electricity	kWh	1 kWh/kWh
B100	liter	9,2 kWh/liter

*Nordic Ecolabelling can approve other conversion factors based on lower calorific value for other types of fuel (e.g. gas), if these can be documented.*

*If private cars are used, and travel expenses are paid at a per kilometre rate, the calculation may be performed as follows: either use a factor of 11 litres petrol per 100 km – or use the car's own stated fuel consumption under WLTP (Worldwide harmonised Light vehicle Test Procedure) multiplied by 1.3.*

- ☒ Fuel consumption in kWh/100 km: Calculation of the total annual consumption of fuel for transport per 100 km driven. General data from the car manufacturer concerning the vehicle's fuel economy is not sufficient. Use the sheet "Transportation" in the "Template for reporting requirements", if relevant.
- 🔗 Documentation for the consumption of fuel and the number of kilometers driven is checked during inspection visits.

#### Background to requirement O13

Together with consumption of chemicals, petrol and diesel consumption account for the most significant environmental impacts from cleaning services. Transport indicators are set up based on Nordic Ecolabelling's aim to reduce energy consumption and reduce airborne environmental pollution.

In a few cases, a high level of private vehicles are used for work purposes, where employees are compensated for actual mileage and not fuel consumption. In such cases, there is little steerability for the company and often not possible to establish the actual fuel consumption. The value of 11 litres petrol per 100 km can be assumed to be a conservative figure. Alternatively, the base figure of 1.3 x

<sup>15</sup> «Drivmedel 2022», Energimyndigheten 2023, ER 2023:19. <https://energimyndigheten.a-w2m.se/Home.mvc?ResourceId=216291>

car's fuel consumption based on Worldwide harmonised Light vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP) can be used. The reason for multiplying by a factor is that the fuel consumption measured in tests is lower than the actual consumption for normal transport. The Commissions has made a report<sup>16</sup> that stated the following "The first data from a sample of 600 000 cars indicates that the real-world fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from diesel and petrol vehicles on the road are around 20% higher than indicated by the official values from the standardised WLTP type-approval test used for regulatory purposes. This discrepancy is in line with what the Commission had anticipated". The factor of 1.3 is used to ensure that it is not an immediate calculation advantage to use this option.

The requirement covers all motorized vehicles. If bikes are used for transport, this will contribute positively to the accounts.

Cars and vehicles with a lift and/or water tanks is exempted from the requirement as they are a necessary tool for window cleaning purposes. Because of the size and weight of the cars with lift and/or water tanks, the vehicles are often heavier, and with a higher need and consumption of fuel. Nordic Ecolabelling does not have enough data to make requirements for these types of vehicles, and the potential and steerability is low.

#### P4 Fuel consumption for transport (W)

The applicant receives points for low fuel consumption.

A maximum of 4 points can be achieved for this point requirement.

Point score requirement	Points
Fuel consumption for transport between 35 kWh/100 km	4 p
Fuel consumption for transport between 45 kWh/100 km	3 p
Fuel consumption for transport between 55 kWh/100 km	2 p
Fuel consumption for transport between 65 kWh/100 km	1 p
100 % of the cleaners are traveling with bike or public transport between cleaning assignments.	4 p
More than 50 % of the cleaners are traveling with bike or public transport between cleaning assignments.	2 p
100% of the company's vehicles used by the cleaning service is electrical or powered by biogas/natural gas.	2 p

- Documentation showing that the requirement is met. Calculation of fuel consumption is documented in requirement O12.

#### Background to requirement P4

Nordic Ecolabelling promotes the companies that has a low fuel consumption and has implemented measures that lead to lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for transport between cleaning assignments.

<sup>16</sup> Commission report under Article 12(3) of Regulation (EU) 2019/631 on the evolution of the real-world CO<sub>2</sub> emissions gap for passenger cars and light commercial vehicles and containing the anonymised and aggregated real-world datasets referred to in Article 12 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/392, March 2024, [https://climate.ec.europa.eu/document/download/b644d4fe-1385-4b56-98d9-21e7e9f3601b\\_en?filename=report.pdf](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/document/download/b644d4fe-1385-4b56-98d9-21e7e9f3601b_en?filename=report.pdf)

## 12 Resource efficiency

### O14 Sorting at source (W)

The cleaning service must have routines for securing that the packaging of the cleaning products and the cleaning service's general waste is recycled. The waste must be sorted at source into relevant fractions, in accordance with what the waste contractor offers.

*Relevant fractions for a cleaning service are - amongst others, but not limited to - hard and soft plastics, paper, cardboard, and textiles as well as general waste. The routines must show how recycling is ensured amongst the cleaning service's employees.*

- ☒ Routines describing how recycling is ensured amongst the cleaning service's employees.

#### Background to requirement O14

The cleaning service must recycle the packaging of the cleaning products; These products are often made of plastics that can and should be recycled in order to ensure a circular economy of the packaging material. The goals set for material recycling in the European Union and the Nordics is not on the right trajectory<sup>17</sup>, and ensuring that plastic waste is recycled is key in reducing GHG emissions from the production of new materials, which usually stems from petroleum<sup>18</sup>. The Nordic Swan ecolabelled cleaning products must comply with material requirements in regards to packaging aimed at ensuring that the packaging can be (material) recycled, and the Nordic Swan ecolabelled cleaning services play an important role in ensuring that the packaging is put into the recycling loop as the European Parliament states that "...the low share of plastic recycling in the EU means significant losses for the economy as well as for the environment. It is estimated that 95% of the value of plastic packaging material is lost to the economy after a short first-use cycle".<sup>19</sup>

### O15 Reduction of plastic bags

The cleaning service must have routines ensuring that they reduce their consumption of plastic bags. When using plastic bags ecolabelled or recycled materials should be chosen.

The routine must include the following:

- How the cleaning service influence the customer(s) to reduce the amount of waste bins, reduce the frequency of the changing of plastic bags as well as assesses the need for plastic bags in different types of waste bins.
- A plan to replace purchase of virgin plastic bags with ecolabelled or recycled materials.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/many-eu-member-states>

<sup>18</sup> <https://avfallnorge.no/om-bransjen/plastavfall>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20181212STO21610/plastic-waste-and-recycling-in-the-eu-facts-and-figures>

*In this instance ecolabelling means Blue Angel (Blauer Engel).*

*Plastic bag includes those used for collecting and transporting waste, e.g. small bags for waste bins (5-10 l and more) as well as larger bags mounted on cleaning trolleys etc. (100 l and more).*

- Routine ensuring the requirement of reducing consumption of plastic bags is met.

### **Background to the requirement O15**

The use of plastic bags for waste and garbage disposal is an essential part of the cleaning service. Since the bags used for waste and garbage disposal are usually made of plastics it makes sense to limit the use of virgin, fossil feedstock and encourage the use of recycled plastics. The plastic bags are used for waste, and as such, the plastic does not have to be of a high quality, compared to the plastic and recycled plastics used in other types of packaging and the food packaging industry. Recycling plastics help conserve this raw material and to reduce piles of waste. There are multiple suppliers in the Nordic countries that supplies recycled garbage bags. The suppliers can offer different sizes ranging from 10 L - 240 L bags in different colours. When using of plastic bags, ecolabelled by Blue Angel and/ or plastic bags made from recycled material is preferred.

Nordic Ecolabelling want our licencees to nudge their customers into reducing their plastic waste and use of plastic bags. Nudging means measures that influence the customer's behaviour to reduce the use of plastic bags, such as minimize the number of bins and change garbage bags less often where it's not needed. This can be done by for example reducing the number of waste bins on site at the customer(s) and thus change garbage bags less often where it's not needed.

## **13 Use of ecolabelled products and services**

### **O16 Purchase of ecolabelled tissue paper and copy paper**

- Tissue paper: 100 % of purchased tissue paper must be ecolabelled. Tissue paper includes toilet paper, kitchen rolls and paper towels.
- Copy/printing paper: 100 % of purchased copy/printing paper must be ecolabelled.

*Applies when the cleaning service is responsible for the purchase and replenishing at customers as well as the cleaning service's own use.*

*In this instance, ecolabelled means products with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel or the EU Ecolabel.*

- Documentation of purchased tissue paper, showing that the purchases are ecolabelled.
- Documentation of purchased copy/printing paper, showing that the purchases are ecolabelled.



## Background to requirement O16

Cleaning services are often responsible for replenishing paper, i.e. toilet paper and paper towels at the customer's premises. If ecolabelled products are used in these cases, the cleaning service has an influence on further environmental benefits with regard to their services.

Nordic Ecolabelling requires the purchasing of ecolabelled products and services, as these have a lower environmental impact compared with non-ecolabelled purchases<sup>20</sup>. Nordic Ecolabelling's environmental requirements for tissue paper cover everything from forestry and the choice of raw materials to low energy consumption and low carbon emissions, cleaning emissions to air and water and control of the use of chemicals and eutrophying and acidifying substances such as sulphur and nitrogen oxides. Labelling only with the PEFC or FSC logo is not sufficient, however, as these labels only cover the forest raw material. Paper labelled with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel or the EU Ecolabel ensures that, as well as the forest raw material being sustainable, the manufacturing process has low emissions to air and water. It is manufactured with efficient energy use and a limited amount of chemicals. Copy/printing paper refers to ordinary white, office paper. Tissue paper includes toilet paper, kitchen rolls and paper towels.

## P5 Purchase of ecolabelled products and services (W)

Use of ecolabelled products and services gives points as stated in the table below.

A maximum of 6 points can be achieved for this point requirement.

### Points for using ecolabelled products and services

Point score requirements for products and services	Point conditions	Point
100% of the cloths and mops used at the customers are ecolabelled. 75% of the cloths and mops used at the customers are ecolabelled. Ecolabelled in this instance means products that carry the Nordic Swan Ecolabel or EU Ecolabel	This includes cloths and mops of all materials.	2 p  1p
100% of the laundry service is ecolabelled. Minimum 75% of the laundry service is ecolabelled. Minimum 50% of the laundry service is ecolabelled. Ecolabelled in this instance means services that carry the Nordic Swan Ecolabel.	External laundry services which are purchased must be ecolabelled.	3 p  2 p  1 p
Minimum 50% of car washes take place in ecolabelled vehicle wash installations that carry the Nordic Swan Ecolabel.	Applies to washing all vehicles of the cleaning company.	1 p
100% of the soap at customers' toilets is ecolabelled. Ecolabelled in this instance means products that carry the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, the EU Ecolabel or Bra	Applies when the company is responsible for the purchase and replenishing of soap at the customers.	2 p

<sup>20</sup> [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/circular-economy/eu-ecolabel/about-eu-ecolabel\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/circular-economy/eu-ecolabel/about-eu-ecolabel_en)

Miljöval (the Good Environmental Choice),		
100 % of purchased tissue paper are ecolabelled with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel.	Applies when the cleaning service is responsible for the purchase and replenishing at customers as well as the cleaning service's own use.	2 p
100% of the cloth hand towel rolls at the customers are ecolabelled and carry the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, or the EU Ecolabel..	Applies when the cleaning company is responsible for handling cloth hand towel rolls at the customers.	1 p
100% of the workwear in one category purchased for cleaning personnel is ecolabelled. Ecolabelled in this instance means products that carry the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, the EU Ecolabel or GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard).	Applies when the cleaning service purchases ecolabelled workwear such as piquet shirts, t-shirts, pants, hoodies, jackets, etc.	1 p
100 % of dish- and handwashing detergents purchased by the company is ecolabelled with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, the EU Ecolabel or Bra Miljöval (the Good Environmental Choice).	Applies when the company is responsible for the purchase and replenishing of dish- and handwashing detergents at the customers.	1 p
100% of plastic bags in one category of bags purchased by the cleaning service is ecolabelled with Blue Angel.	Applies when the company is responsible for the purchase and replenishing at the customers.	1 p
Printed matter: 100% of outsourced printed matter must be from a Nordic Swan Ecolabelled printing company or be certified with the EU Ecolabel. Printed matter means, for example, advertising, brochures, notepads and letter paper with logo.	Applies when the company purchases printed matters as advertising, brochures, notepads and letter paper with logo for the ecolabelled service. Licence number and name of printing company is needed.	1 p
<b>Other</b>		
Innovative environmental measures: For example measures that promote recycling and reuse of end-of-life products and equipment. It may be end-of-life microfiber products, employee textiles, end-of-life equipment or similar. Nordic Ecolabelling determines whether the measure qualifies for points.	Description of inovative environmental measure.	1 p (max two categories)

- Overview of the cleaning service's purchases of ecolabelled products and services (state supplier, and if ecolabelled: the licence number), and a calculation of the proportion of ecolabelled products and services in relation to the total amount.

### Background to requirement P5

Nordic Ecolabelling wants to encourage and award the purchases and good environmental practices that the cleaning service implements and performs. Cleaning services are often responsible for replenishing toilet paper, hand soap and paper towels etc, at the customers premises. In these cases, the cleaning

service has a direct influence on the consumable goods used. Ecolabelled products and services has documented a lower environmental impact compared to non-ecolabelled products and services<sup>21</sup>.

The requirement for the percentage of ecolabelled products is calculated on the basis of the total amount of goods the cleaning service purchases: If the customer don't want the cleaning service to purchase these goods, the cleaning service is not accountable for these purchases.

Hand cloth towels: Once the hand cloth towels have reached their end of life, the towel rolls are collected and can be used as cleaning cloths, etc.

Hand soap and hand detergents: Is used in big quantities and as such one must take into account what chemicals are released to the sewage system. Ecolabelled soap complies with strict requirements both for environmental and health concerns as well as limiting the content of allergenic and bio-accumulative substances. There are multiple products available in the market, therefore the cleaning service can obtain one point if 100% of the hand soap is ecolabelled.

Tissue paper: The use of Nordic Swan Ecolabelled tissue paper is awarded with points, because of its focus on climate considerations during production. The requirements set strict limits for energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, with no allowance for fossil oil or coal. Energy requirements and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the Nordic Swan Ecolabelled tissue paper fulfil significantly stricter requirements than the EU Ecolabel. Given the widespread use of tissue products, small choices matter for the environment.

Work wear: the textile industry is responsible for huge emissions of greenhouse gases every year, both in regard to production and end-of-use waste management. Nordic Ecolabelling rewards cleaning services using ecolabelled work wear as these fabrics must comply with requirements to the production processes as well as quality requirements to the textile and user phase of the product.

Cloths and mops: Necessary products in a cleaning service. Ecolabelled microfibre cloths and mops has a documented effect on cleaning: The cloths and mops clean without wear and tear of the surface. The cloths are very durable and are designed to withstand at least 200 washes at 60 degrees Celsius. The production of the microfibre has taken account of the environment in all stages.

Car wash installations: Cars and transport vehicles are an essential part of many cleaning services. An ecolabelled car wash installation only uses ecolabelled detergents. The wastewater (often containing heavy metals, oils and hazardous chemicals) is treated before leaving the car wash. The amount of water used per wash is constricted to 90 litres compared to up to 400 litres per wash in conventional car wash installations.

Laundry service: For cleaning services using an external laundry service, Nordic Ecolabelling rewards the use of ecolabelled laundry services. A Nordic Swan Ecolabelled laundry service is energy efficient and has a lower climate impact compared to non-ecolabelled laundries. It consumes limited amounts of water and only uses chemicals complying with stringent environmental and health

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<sup>21</sup> [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/circular-economy/eu-ecolabel/about-eu-ecolabel\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/circular-economy/eu-ecolabel/about-eu-ecolabel_en)

requirements. It also reduces the environmental impact of transport involved in distribution.

Plastic bags: The Nordic Swan Ecolabelling wants to reward companies using plastic bags that are ecolabelled with Blue Angel. Garbage bags are usually made from plastic. Plastic is a valuable material since it is made from one of our most valuable resources, oil. Recycling plastics help conserve this raw material and to reduce piles of waste. Nordic Ecolabelling want to reward cleaning services using ecolabelled recycled plastic bags, and through our licenced cleaning services create a demand for these plastic bags in the market. By using recycled plastic we reduce the consumption of virgin, fossil feedstock and thus the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the production and waste management of plastic bags. Ecolabelled plastic bags with Blue Angel is to promote products with a high percentage of recycled plastics. The ecolabelled bags provide a high level of protection to consumers and the environment by establishing basic requirements for the use and concentration of contaminants. "Sustainable environmental effects are achieved by combining these two fundamental fields of requirements: protection of resources and control of contaminant levels".<sup>22</sup>

Nordic Ecolabelling reward cleaning services purchasing 100% of all printed matter from an ecolabelled printing company. Printed matter means for example flyers, brochures, pads and stationery with the company's logo. It is not obligatory for the printed matter to be ecolabelled, but it must be from an ecolabelled printing company.

## 14 Summary of points

### O17 Obligatory requirement concerning points achieved (W)

The service must meet a minimum point score according to the table below.

**Point score for combinations of cleaning services (CS) and window cleaning (W)**

Point score requirement	CS and W including transport and use of clean water	CS and/or W including transport, without use of clean water	CS without transport	W including use of clean water	W without use of clean water
P1 Consumption	5 p	5	5	-	-
P2 Ecolabelled consumption	3 p	3	3	3	3
P3 Water consumption for clean water	2 p	-	-	2	-
P4 Fuel consumption for transport	4 p	4	-	4	4
P5 Purchase of ecolabelled products and services	6 p	6	6	6	6
<b>Maximum point score</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Obligatory point score</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>

<sup>22</sup> Basic Award Criteria Edition January 2019 Version 8: BLUE ANGEL The German Ecolabel, Products made from Recycled Plastics

- Calculation of total point score. The sheet "Summary of points" in the "Template for reporting requirements" can be used to document the requirement.

## 15 Quality

### O18 System to follow up on cleaning quality (W)

The cleaning service must have a system for the monitoring of cleaning quality which gives objective and reproducible results. Objectivity and reproducibility can be achieved, for example, if the customer and cleaning company have agreed on the quality level and how the result is to be assessed. As a minimum, the cleaning service must prepare the following (in writing):

- Management and control procedures.

The procedure must contain information confirming: How the quality of the work is agreed, how follow-up of the results is carried out, that quality checks are carried out on all objects, who carries out the control checks and what reporting system is used.

- Procedures for drawing up inspection reports.

*If the cleaning company has a system for evaluation of cleaning quality in accordance with the Nordic standard INSTA800 "Cleaning quality – Measurement system for evaluation of cleaning quality", this requirement will be fulfilled.*

- Procedures and any forms used in connection to the quality control.

#### Background to requirement O18

It is not possible to set absolute requirements for the quality of cleaning, as it must be up to the customer and the cleaning company to agree on the quality, based on the customers requirements and needs. Like other products and services for which Nordic Ecolabelling set requirements, Nordic Swan Ecolabelled cleaning services also depend on the best possible quality assurance. Certain minimum requirements have therefore been drawn up, including a system to follow up on the agreed upon quality of cleaning.

There is a Nordic framework for quality control systems and a standardised Nordic system for the measurement and inspection of the agreed upon cleaning quality – INSTA 800. INSTA 800 is more detailed and as such complies with the European standard. The latter is EN 13549 (2001) "Cleaning services – Basic requirements and recommendations for quality measuring systems".

### O19 Work instructions (W)

The applicant must prepare work instructions in writing or video material. These must cover the tasks that are included in the cleaning service.

There must be work instructions, which can include the information specified below, for the most common cleaning tasks. The instructions must be drawn up so as not to prevent variation in the work:

- Description: brief description of the work tasks (such as cleaning of corridors, cleaning of toilets, etc.)
- Frequency: how often the task is to be performed (e.g. daily, weekly, annually, etc.) or the agreed upon quality must be achieved
- Object cleaned: which surfaces in the room are to be cleaned (e.g. floor, walls, fixtures, etc.)
- Current methods: description of methods and relevant equipment, machines and cleaning products (several alternatives may be relevant and the employee chooses depending on e.g. degree of soiling)

If the applicant has a certified environmental management system (ISO 9001 or 14001, or EMAS) which covers the cleaning that is to be ecolabelled, the requirement may be fulfilled by this system.

- Written work instructions.
- If the applicant has a certified environmental management system, a copy of the certificate is submitted, as well as a copy of the sections of the system which concern work instructions.

### **Background to requirement O19**

In order to perform cleaning of the agreed upon quality and with the right handling of cleaning products and machines, it is important that cleaning personnel have written instructions for the performance of the work and information about cleaning products they can use.

This information and these instructions must contribute as optimal as possible to the performance of cleaning in compliance with the ecolabelling requirements.

### **O20 Procedures in the event of changes, non-conformities and complaints (W)**

The cleaning company must ensure via procedures or instructions that:

- In the event of planned changes that affect the requirements of the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, the contact person must notify Nordic Ecolabelling in writing before the changes are implemented. This may relate, for example, to a change of non ecolabelled cleaning products or cleaning methods.
- In the event of unforeseen non-conformities that affect how the ecolabelling requirements are fulfilled, the contact person must immediately notify Nordic Ecolabelling in writing.
- There is a system for handling customer complaints.

- Copy of procedures in the event of planned changes, unforeseen non-conformities and claims.

### **Background to requirement O20**

By ensuring that the cleaning service has a quality management system that can handle complaints, non-conformances and information to Nordic Ecolabelling in conjunction with changes, Nordic Ecolabelling assures that the company always makes sure that their ongoing changes/improvements in the company are in accordance with the Nordic Swan Ecolabelling requirements.

## O21 Maintaining the licence (W)

The cleaning service must ensure continued compliance with the requirements during the validity period of the Nordic Swan Ecolabel licence.

Documentation for the requirements may be requested and controlled.

*Nordic Ecolabelling's audit on a cleaning service may include an examination of all the requirements or just a selection. This may involve an audit in situ or a request for documentation to be provided. Information about follow-up and deadline for reporting is given in advance.*

- Confirmation that the business ensures compliance with the requirements during the validity period of the Nordic Swan Ecolabel licence.

### Background to requirement O21

To ensure that in the duration of the licence the cleaning service complies with the requirements of the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, a procedure must be in place for maintaining the licence. Nordic Ecolabelling's audit on a cleaning service may include an examination of all the requirements above or just a selection. This may involve an audit in situ or a request for documentation to be provided.

## 16 Ethics and working environment

### O22 Training of personnel (W)

The cleaning service must have a plan for training its personnel on the basis of the following key topics:

- Information on cleaning products/agents, methods, equipment and machines.
- Information on health, safety and the environment.
- Training in ecofriendly driving for relevant personnel, such as inspectors, operations managers and cleaning assistants with a lot of daily driving between customers.
- Information on waste management.
- Training in the use of clean water equipment – including ergonomics when working at height with ladders or lifts, as well as measures to reduce water consumption.

*Relevant for cleaning services using "clean water" for window cleaning.*

*The training plan must state when the training is to be completed, and the personnel groups that are to undergo training. The plan for training of new employees must state how soon after their employment the training is to take place.*

*There must also be a brief description of the nature of the training.*

*Planned training can be shorter for personnel who have already undergone cleaning training or have practical cleaning experience.*

*The recommendations from EFCI and UNI-Europe concerning training topics can be used. See Appendix 6.*

- Training plan according to the requirement.

## Background to requirement O22

Nordic Ecolabelling considers training to be very important in order to e.g. handle chemicals on a safe, healthy and environmentally responsible basis.

Education and training are also important to eliminate the general perception that cleaning is unskilled work. Marie Aurell from Linköping University in Sweden has researched work and identity within the cleaning sector. Important aspects of work and identity issues are ethical, cultural and service-related. These aspects are discussed in an article by Marja Aulanko, in which she shows how cleaning is far more than technical performance.

The criteria's examples of training have been prepared on the basis of a technical memo from Ecolabelling Denmark, in which a number of existing training programmes were assessed. The memo concerns training under AMU (Arbejdsmarkedssuddannelserne in Denmark), PRYL (Projekt Yrkesbevis Lokalvårdere in Sweden) and EFCL/Uni-Europa (European Federation of Cleaning Industries/EU Trade Union).

Ecodriving is also included in the requirements of the content of training. Ecodriving is training in driving with the best possible fuel economy, and surveys show that this can ensure a reduction of fuel consumption of 5-10%.

It is important to point out that using temporary employees does not prevent licence holders from ensuring that these employees also have a suitable level of training, enabling them to fulfil the ecolabelling requirements, and ensuring them a good working environment.

## O23 Ethical requirements (W)

The following requirements apply to both own employed and those who are subcontractors who provide a complete service. The requirement applies to all employees within the cleaning service that is to be Nordic Swan Ecolabelled.

- Be registered for VAT and employer tax purposes and (in Finland) be "förskottssuppbördsregistrede".
- The cleaning company may not be in arrears with payment of taxes and duties.
- The licence applicant must comply with agreements concluded between the social partners (employer's organization and employee's organization/trade union), so-called collective agreement\*, see references below:

Alternatively:

Salaries, holidays, working hours and insurance cover, including collective pension provision, must be at least on a par with the terms and conditions set out in the agreement specified above.

### Sweden:

Kollektivavtal Serviceentreprenad mellan Almega Tjänsteförbunden och Fastighetsanställdas förbund och SEKO (Facket för service och kommunikation).



[Almega Tjänsteföretagen - Städ i egen regi - Fastighetsanställdas Förbund](#)

or

Kollektivavtal Serviceentreprenad mellan Almega Tjänsteförbunden och Svenska Kommunalarbetareförbundet.

or

Arbetsrättsliga villkor enligt Upphandlingsmyndighetens kriterietjänst KravID 11168:2 enligt bilaga 1a eller 1b.

[Hållbarhetskrav för Arbetsrättsliga villkor för städtjänster | Upphandlingsmyndigheten](#)

**Denmark:**

Service-overenskomst 2023-2025 indgået mellem DI Overenskomst II (SBA) og 3F Privat Service, Hotel og Restauration.

[DI \(SBA\) og 3F Privat Service, Hotel og Restauration](#)

Vinduespolerer-overenskomst 2023 - 2025, indgået mellem DI Overenskomst II (SBA) og 3F Fagligt Fælles Forbund, Transportgruppen.

[DI \(SBA\) og 3F Fagligt Fælles Forbund, Transportgruppen](#)

Serviceoverenskomsten 2023 – 2025 mellem Dansk Erhverv Arbejdsgiver (Danske Service) og 3F Privat Service, Hotel og Restauration.

[Dansk Erhverv Arbejdsgiver \(Danske Service\) og 3F Privat Service, Hotel og Restauration](#)

Overenskomst 2023-2025 for vinduespolerer mellem Dansk Erhverv Arbejdsgiver (Danske Service) og 3F Fagligt Fælles Forbund, Transportgruppen.

[Dansk Erhverv Arbejdsgiver\(Danske Service\) og 3F Fagligt Fælles Forbund, Transportgruppen](#)

**Norway:**

Confirmation of being listed in the register of approved cleaning businesses.

[Renholdsregisteret \(arbeidstilsynet.no\)](#)

**Finland:**

Real estate service industry collective agreement (Kiinteistöpalvelualan työehtosopimus) or similar.

<https://www.pam.fi/tes/kiinteistopalvelualan-tyoehtosopimus/>

**Iceland:**

Employers' organization: Samtök Atvinnulífsins (SA).

Employees organisations: Efling & Starfsgreinasambandið (SGS).

- The cleaning service's accounts must be approved by an auditor.
- Hold a liability insurance.
- All employees must have visible name tags or company cards/personal cards, so that the customer can see who is performing the service, and so employees can identify themselves with valid ID documents. In Norway an HMS card is required, and in Sweden, Service ID or ID 06.

\* Note that in Norway all suppliers and sub-suppliers of cleaning services must be entered in a register of approved cleaning businesses, Arbeidstilsynet: Renholdsregisteret.

*If the cleaning service does not follow recommendations and decisions imposed by competent bodies, such as the labour court, industrial arbitration, or consumer complaints body, Nordic Ecolabelling can withdraw the licence.*

- Signed Appendix 5.
- If the applicant does not comply to collective agreement: Written agreement/contract/Code of Conduct between the licensee and employee/subcontractor, showing that the licensee sets requirements for collective agreements or for labor standards on a par with collective agreements with possible national adaptations.
- Procedures and program on and follow-up of compliance with the terms of the agreement/contract/Code of Conduct.

### Background to requirement O23

In recent years, there has been frequent debate in the Nordic countries concerning cleaning services that use illicit work/undeclared labour and do not comply with working environment regulations<sup>23</sup>. The industry which over time has been characterized by high work pressure, lack of overtime pays and bad working condition.<sup>24</sup> The employees in the cleaning industry are susceptible to exploitation in working life: many employees with a foreign background, few requirements for education, physically demanding work, and often inconvenient working hours. Error! Bookmark not defined. Industry organizations, labour inspectorates and cleaning services have established better collaborations over time and the industry has become professionalized and the majority of the actors act serious.

Applicants and potential applicants have expressed their frustration with the unequal competition with companies that base their services on undeclared employees, and as a consequence significant lower prices. Nordic Ecolabelling assesses that it is not sufficient to refer to national legislation in the criteria document, but that the Nordic Swan Ecolabel must set requirements that help to ensure that only cleaning companies with serious, sustainable working conditions achieve the Nordic Swan Ecolabel. Nordic Ecolabelling set ethical requirements to make sure only serious and legitimate cleaning services operated with a Nordic Swan Ecolabelled, and that the rights and working conditions for the employees are secured. The purpose of the requirement is not for Nordic Ecolabelling to act as a new version of a trade union, but in general to ensure good and serious conditions for employees in a Nordic Swan Ecolabelled cleaning service.

### O24 Requirements for subsuppliers (W)

A) Subsuppliers who provide a complete service (workforce, cleaning products, etc) must meet one of the following requirements:

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<sup>23</sup> [Osund konkurrens - Arbetsmiljöverket \(av.se\)](https://osundkonkurrens-arbetsmiljoverket.av.se)

<sup>24</sup> Arbeidstilsynet, March 2023: <https://arbeidstilsynet.no/nyheter/arbeidstilsynet-kontrollerer-renholdsbransjen/>

1. The subsupplier is a Nordic Swan Ecolabelled cleaning service.
2. The subsupplier meet Nordic Swan Ecolabel's ethical requirement . The cleaning products used by the subsupplier in delivering the Nordic Swan Ecolabelled service must meet requirements. This proportion may comprise a maximum of 15% of the applicant's sales.

The licensee must specify in the contract with the customer which objects will be cleaned by non-Nordic Swan Ecolabelled subsuppliers.

- If subsupplier is Nordic Swan Ecolabelled, state name and licence number. Otherwise see Appendix 6.
- Calculation of the proportion of the applicant's sales that are accounted for by subsuppliers. Template for reporting requirements can be used.
- Procedure to ensure that the licensee specifies in the contract with the customer which objects will be cleaned by non-Nordic Swan Ecolabelled subsuppliers.

B) Subs suppliers who only provide the workforce must meet one of the following requirements:

1. The subsupplier is a Nordic Swan Ecolabelled cleaning service.
2. The subsupplier is covered by the applicant's training programme (O21). Square metres (O2) that are delivered to the Nordic Swan Ecolabelled service and associated transport (O12), use of cleaning products (O5 and O6) are included in the applicant's own calculations. The subsupplier must comply with the following ethical requirements:
  - Cleaning must be performed by the subsupplier's own personnel. The subsupplier may not hire another subsupplier.
  - Be registered for VAT and employer tax purposes and (in Finland) be "förskottssuppbördsregistrede".
  - The cleaning company may not be in arrears with payment of taxes and duties.
  - All employees must have visible name tags or company cards/personal cards, so that the customer can see who is performing the service, and so that employees can identify themselves with valid ID documents.

*\*Note that in Norway all suppliers and subsuppliers of cleaning services must be entered on a register of approved cleaning businesses.*

- If subsupplier is Nordic Swan Ecolabelled, state name and licence number. Otherwise see Appendix 8

## Background to requirement O24

According to a survey by Service Entreprenörerna Almega in Sweden, nearly half the companies use subsuppliers. More than four out of ten companies themselves work as subsuppliers<sup>25</sup>. To ensure that non-Nordic Swan Ecolabelled

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<sup>25</sup> [220922-branschrappport-stad-och-service.pdf \(almega.se\)](https://www.almega.se/220922-branschrappport-stad-och-service.pdf)

subsuppliers are also at the professional end of the market, certain minimum requirements are set.

Subsuppliers are used in different ways and for different reasons across the Nordic countries. In order to cover the whole of the Nordic region and at the same time be meaningful, a distinction is drawn between the different types of subsuppliers.

### O25 Documentation of Nordic Swan Ecolabelling requirements (W)

All documents concerning the Nordic Swan Ecolabelling licence must be available at the licence holder.

☞ Checked during inspection visits.

## 17 Licence maintenance

The purpose of the licence maintenance is to ensure that fundamental quality assurance is dealt with appropriately.

### O26 Customer complaints (W)

The licensee must guarantee that the quality of the Nordic Swan Ecolabel service does not deteriorate during the validity period of the licence. Therefore, the licensee must keep an archive over customer complaints.

Note that the original routine must be in one Nordic language or in English.

☒ Upload your company's routine for handling and archiving customer complaints.

### Background to requirement O26

Nordic Ecolabelling requires that your company has implemented a customer complaint handling system. To document your company's customer complaint handling, you must upload your company's routine describing these activities. The routine should be dated and signed and will normally be part of your company's quality management system.

If your company does not have a routine for customer complaint handling, it is possible to upload a description of how your company perform these activities. During the on-site visit, Nordic Ecolabelling will check that the customer complaint handling is implemented in your company as described. The customer complaints archive will also be checked during the visit.

## 18 Changes compared to previous generation

Overview of changes to criteria for 076 generation 4 compared with previous generation 3.

Proposed requirement generation 4	Requirement generation 3	Same requirement	Change	New requirement	Comment
O1	O1	X			Requirement is updated
O2	O2		X		Requirement is updated. The template value

					cleaned square metres for one full-time employee is changed from 330 000 to 430 000 m <sup>2</sup> /year
O3	O3		X		Requirement is updated, clear definitions of the cleaning types.
O4	O4	X			
O5	O5		X		Total consumption of cleaning products is reduced from 400 to 300 µl/m <sup>2</sup> .
P1	P1		X		The point scores are tightened according to O5.
O6	O6		X		Proportion of ecolabelled cleaning products is tightened from 80 to 95%.
P2	P2		X		Points for proportion of ecolabelled, tightened according to O6.
O7	-			X	Information about the use of Treated water
O8	-			X	Treated water production
P3	-			X	Water consumption for treated water
O9	O7		X		Updated according to changes in ECHA and the EU.
O10	O8		X		Updated according to changes in ECHA and the EU, and more excluded substances is added to the list
-	O9				Requirement removed due to floor care products defined as special cleaning.
O11	O10	X			
O12	O11		X		Changes to fuels for new vehicles, they must be powered by biogas/natural gas, electricity or hydrogen
O13	O12		X		Tightening of the limit value, change in the functional unit and conversion factor.
P4	P3/P4		X		Changes to point alternatives, and

					changes according to O13.
-	P5				Point requirement for fuel consumption in ml/m <sup>2</sup> removed.
O14	-			X	New requirement ref. circular economy for packaging and waste generated by the cleaning service.
O15	-			X	New requirement for the reduction of plastic bags.
O16	-			X	New requirement for purchase of ecolabelled tissue paper and copy paper.
P5	P6		X	X	The point score alternatives are updated, and several of the percentages to achieve points are tightened. New point score options are added.
O17	O13		X		Summary of point score and point score options are updated. Different minimum value for different types of services.
O18	O14	X			
O19	O15	X			
O20	O16	X			
O21	O17	X			Minor changes to the wording of the headline/name of the requirement.
O18	-				Requirement is removed as it is updated by signing the application form.
O22	O19		X		Updated with the use of treated water/clean water production.
O23	O20		X		Updated and minor changes.
O24	O21	X			
O25	O22	X			
O26	-			X	New requirement regarding customer complaints.

## Regulations for the Nordic Ecolabelling of services

To easily identify Nordic Swan Ecolabelled services, the licence number and a descriptive sub text shall always accompany the Nordic Swan Ecolabel.

The descriptive sub text for 076 Cleaning service/Window cleaning is:

### **Cleaning service/Window cleaning**

More information on graphical guidelines, regulations and fees can be found at [www.nordic-swan-ecolabel.org/regulations](http://www.nordic-swan-ecolabel.org/regulations)

## Follow-up inspections

Nordic Ecolabelling may decide to check whether the cleaning service fulfils Nordic Ecolabelling requirements during the licence period. This may involve a site visit, random sampling, or similar test.

The licence may be revoked if it is evident that the cleaning service does not meet the requirements.

## Criteria version history

Nordic Ecolabelling adopted version 4 of the criteria for 076 Cleaning services on DAY MONTH YEAR. The criteria are valid until DAY MONTH YEAR.

## Future criteria generation

Requirements relevant to the next generation will be included after the consultation period.

## Appendix 1 Example calculation: m<sup>2</sup> cleaned per year

### Standard cleaning

In the case of a contract, number of square metres cleaned in the course of the year can be obtained from information on the floor area and number of cleaning days per year covered by the contract. For example:

**Number of square metres cleaned in the course of the year for a contract =  $n \times d$**

where  $n$  is the average number of square metres per day and  $d$  is the number of cleaning occasions/cleaning days per year.

If different premises covered by one and the same contract have different cleaning frequencies, the applicant may use a weighted average number of square metres per day.

Example: An office of 1000 square metres is covered by a contract, with the sanitary areas being cleaned 5 times per week and the offices 2 times per week. If the sanitary areas make up 4% (i.e. 40 square metres) of the area, the average number of square metres per day ( $n$ ) is:

$$n = (40 \times 5 + 960 \times 2) / 5 = 424 \text{ square metres per day}$$

If the contract covers 235 cleaning days per year ( $d$ ), the number of square metres cleaned in the course of the year is equal to  $235 \times 424 = 99,640$  square metres for the contract in question.

### Periodic cleaning and maintenance of floors

For each individual contract the applicant totals the number of square metres of floor area which undergoes period cleaning and/or maintenance, and the number of times this is carried out in the course of the year. The number of square metres cleaned in the course of the year for periodic cleaning and maintenance of floors is the total number of square metres from all these contracts. If periodic cleaning takes place every other year, for example, the annual number of square metres is half the square metres covered by the contract.

### Total number of square metres cleaned in the course of the year

The applicant adds together the number of square metres cleaned in the course of the year for all contracts to give the total number.



## Appendix 2      Chemical products relevant for the cleaning service

This appendix provides description and examples of different types of cleaning products that may be relevant, and how they are defined in the Nordic Swan Ecolabelled criteria.

### **Ordinary cleaning:**

All products used for general cleaning on all flooring and surfaces. I. e. all-purpose cleaners and washing up liquids, heavy duty, sanitary cleaners, acid cleaner for sanitary facilities / descaling products, brown soap, soap based floor cleaners, alkaline water, probiotic water, wash-and-wax floor, spray buffering and defoamers, impregnates for mop cloths with a cleaning and disinfecting effect, stain removers, scouring creams, defoamers, and spray products with microorganisms used to clean surfaces such as flooring. In the case where an applicant must use single-use mops, the chemicals in the mops must comply with the requirements.

### **Laundry detergents:**

All products for internal and external wash of textiles including impregnation for mops and cloths.

### **Window cleaning:**

All products used for window cleaning, including deionized water such as ultra clean water.

### **Special cleaning (and is not a part of the ecolabelled service):**

Chemical products i.e. used for disinfection, pool cleaning, stain removal on carpets, floor care and floor finish/wax (including floor polish, sealers, floor wax, wood oil and wax removal/strippers), wood oil, furniture polish, impregnation of stone flooring, gum and glue removal, oven cleaner, graffiti removal, cleaning of antistatic rooms, remediation work, clearing up after incidents, cleaning of ventilation ducts and, cleaning of industrial production facilities (e.g. such as clean rooms, production facilities in the food and agriculture industry), façade cleaning and washing of buildings, and operating theatres.

Cleaning of the cleaning machines is not a part of the criteria, therefore the tablets used for cleaning the cleaning machines are not included.

Ozonated water (ozone water) and electrochemically activated water (ECA water) must be considered as special cleaning if used. It's not permitted to be used by the ecolabelled service for ordinary cleaning.

## Appendix 3      Appendix for producers of non-ecolabelled cleaning products

## Appendix 4 Examples of training

The following list comprises examples of topics which may be included in training and examples of elaborations. The following modules/topics largely correspond to the recommendations from EFCI and UNI-Europa.

- Cleaning of various items of furniture.
- Cleaning of floor surfaces.
- Cleaning of washrooms and sanitary installations.
- Recognition and sorting of waste into relevant fractions, e.g. plastic, glass, metal, organic, inorganic waste, etc.
- Causal relations that may exist between choice of cleaning agent, dosage, incorrect work routines, and effects on resource consumption and emissions to the environment.
- Personal health and safety in terms of choice and application of cleaning agents, planning and execution of cleaning tasks. Safety provisions. Work stress as a result of incorrect work routines and incorrect handling of cleaning agents.
- Effectiveness in terms of relations with people at the workplace.
- Promotion of own organisation.
- Development through work.
- Ecofriendly driving.

The following table provides elaborations of selected topics. Many but not all of the topics are relevant to both managers and assistants

Topic areas	Topics	Explanation
Technology	Specialist knowledge of cleaning equipment and application technologies	Adequate insight into personal planning of relevant work areas in relation to desired quality (customer requirements) and the cleaning plan. Use of relevant and standard cleaning technologies and machines.
	Specialist knowledge of chemical products (cleaning agents and chemical substances), and concepts such as pH and water hardness	Choice of cleaning agents on the basis of dirt, surfaces, environment and hygiene requirements. Where the environment is concerned, training should be provided in causal connections between choice of cleaning agent, dosage, incorrect work routines, and effects on resource consumption and emissions to the environment. Training must be provided in content and application of cleaning agents.
	Materials for floors/walls and furniture	Ability to identify surface material (e.g. linoleum, plastic, concrete, terrazzo, etc.) and choose correct cleaning agent or treatment method and carry out correct cleaning technique.
	Damage and wear	Ability to report damage, damp, etc. in order to be able to report to persons responsible for maintenance of the building.
	Quality assurance	Ability to assess the quality of the work carried out and to draw up measures for corrective cleaning in accordance with the cleaning plan and customer requirements.
		Familiarity with quality control system.

<b>External environment</b>	<b>Environment</b>	Training in relevant environmental legislation and in national lists of undesirable substances in cleaning agents. Training is provided in causal connections between choice of cleaning agent, dosage, incorrect work routines, and effects on resource consumption and emissions to the environment.
	<b>Nordic Ecolabelling</b>	Training in Nordic Ecolabelling and Nordic Swan Ecolabelling criteria for cleaning services.
	<b>Environmentally friendly driving</b>	Training in fuel-efficient driving. Journey planning.
<b>Working environment</b>	<b>Working environment, safety and protection</b>	Training in safety provisions, relevant working environment legislation, hazard classification, and supplier and workplace instructions and so on, to ensure adequate personal safety when carrying out cleaning.
	<b>Ergonomics and working environment</b>	Link between incorrect work routines, working postures and occupational injuries. Training in correct work routines for the work carried out.
	<b>Work planning</b>	Drawing up and structuring cleaning plans, packing cleaning trolleys, planning the work in relation to cleaning plan, quality, rota, load, etc.
<b>Service</b>		Customer service and dialogue.
<b>Management</b>		Instruction techniques for cleaning managers, finance and cost calculations, occupational psychology, staff administration

## Appendix 5 Ethical requirements

## Appendix 6      Subsuppliers who provide a complete service (workforce, cleaning products, etc) - option A in O23 Requirements for subsuppliers

### **Ethical requirements:**

Attach documentation according to Appendix 6 Ethical requirements.

### **Requirements for cleaning product used when delivering Nordic Swan Ecolabelled services – following must be attached:**

- ☞ List of cleaning products in current use. Use the sheet "Cleaning products" in the "Template for reporting requirements".

*Appendix 3 provides description and examples of different types of cleaning products, that may be relevant, and how they are defined in the Nordic Swan Ecolabelled criteria.*

Nordic Ecolabelling will check whether the cleaning products fulfil the requirements O8, O9 and O10.

### **We hereby confirm:**

Our firm perform cleaning services for cleaning company:

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Date	Signature contact person
Name of company	Repeat in block capitals

## Appendix 7      Subsuppliers who only provide workforce - option B in O23 Requirements for subsuppliers

### **Registration confirming registration for VAT and Employer's National Insurance contributions:**

**In Denmark:** Copy of registration confirming registration for VAT and Employer's National Insurance contributions with CVR number (company registration number).

**In Sweden:** Copy of duly completed form from the tax authorities (SKV 4820).

#### **In Norway:**

- Tax Certificate.
- From the Tax Agency (Form 1244): VAT documentation
- From the Municipal Tax Office/Tax Collector/Tax Authority: documentation of Employer's National Insurance contribution.

**In Finland:** Overview from the FODS (Tax Administration) information service.

#### **In Iceland:**

### **Taxes and fees**

**In Denmark:** Certificate from SKAT that no amounts are owed to the Danish tax authorities.

**In Sweden:** Copy of the enterprise's most recent tax statement from the tax authorities.

**In Norway:** Any default will be shown on the tax certificate, see item "Registration confirming registration for VAT and Employer's National Insurance contributions".

**In Finland:** Declaration that no amounts are owed to the tax authorities.

#### **In Iceland:**

### **We hereby confirm:**

- All employees must have visible name tags or company cards/personal cards, so that the customer can see who is performing the service, and so that employees can identify themselves with valid ID documents.
- We are covered by the applicant's training programme (O21).

Date	Signature contact person
Name of company	Repeat in block capitals