



**PAPER BY NATURE**

**Questions and Answers**

**September 2010**

***This document is intended for internal use of the PAPER BY NATURE Association and its members only.***

***It should not be handed out, under any circumstances, to persons outside the association or its members.***

***It is an aid to formulate the most accurate answers possible to external concerns.***

***This document is intended to be regularly expanded and updated.***

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## I - CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE LABEL

### 1. *Why was the PAPER BY NATURE label created?*

As a result of a growing demand from consumers and industrial labels, the PAPER BY NATURE Association and label were created in 2008 to offer a **single European reference for eco-responsible converted paper products**.

So far, no European label exists for converted paper products: the European Ecolabel EU Flower only addresses copy paper, graphic paper and tissues.

### 2. *What is the purpose of the PAPER BY NATURE label?*

PAPER BY NATURE is the only pan-European label dedicated to **reducing the environmental impact of converted paper products – from wood processing through paper manufacturing to its conversion into office products**.

The criteria of the label do not only refer to the **substrate** (paper or card stock) of the product but also to the **conversion and printing processes**.

The label is intended to encourage:

- The use of paper or paperboard substrate with low-environmental impact, sourced from sustainably managed forests;
- The reduction of emissions to water and air;
- The reduction of health risks related to hazardous substances;

### 3. What products are certified by the PAPER BY NATURE Ecolabel?

The PAPER BY NATURE Ecolabel concerns all **converted paper products** made of paper, paperboard or paper based substrate.

For example: envelopes and other paper stationery, exercise books, pads, drawing paper sheets, drawing pads, albums, diaries, binders, folders, manila products, suspension files, lever arch files, inserts, covers and any printed paper part of the final converted paper product are included in this category.

### 4. Is PAPER BY NATURE a real label?

The *International Organization for Standardization* (ISO) has defined the different practices of eco-labelling. The PAPER BY NATURE label meets the ISO 14020 standard which establishes the basic principles for development and use of environmental labels and declarations.

The PAPER BY NATURE label is awarded and **verified by a recognised independent certification body: Bureau VERITAS.**

Bureau VERITAS audits the applicant's products according to Ecolabel Criteria and Auditing Rules.

A strict certification process is implemented, including:

- An initial certification audit;
- An annual follow-up audit; and
- A re-certification every 3 years.

There is a strict mandatory monitoring process at all times; **it is mandatory that a license number is stamped on each certified product together with the PAPER BY NATURE logo.**

On the [www.paperbynature.com](http://www.paperbynature.com) website, anyone can, via this number, **identify the manufacturer of the finished product and check its status with regard to the certification** (official certificates issued by Bureau Veritas after validation of the certification process are online).

Moreover, **the Ecolabel criteria are regularly updated** so as to remain at the forefront of the best environmental practices. A round of revision is currently underway.

## II - CRITERIA

### 1. *What are the criteria for a product to become Paper by Nature certified?*

The PAPER BY NATURE label criteria are:

*NB: caution, these criteria are regularly updated and improved, as planned by the association's statutes.*

#### **Mandatory criteria relating to the fibres of the substrate (paper or paperboard substrate)**

The product must contain a minimum percentage of 40% (in 2010) of post consumer recycled fibres OR virgin wood fibres that originate from sustainably managed forests certified by independent, third party forest certification schemes.

The precise origin of the fibres must be indicated and is controlled at each audit. FSC recycled, PEFC recycled and Blue Angel labels all meet the requirements of PAPER BY NATURE for recycled fibres. FSC and PEFC labels meet the requirements of PAPER BY NATURE for certified virgin fibres.

The remaining virgin wood fibres shall be audited by an independent third party to ensure that they are not derived from controversial sources (wood from legally harvested sources; no genetically modified trees; traditional and civil rights respected in logging operations; no wood coming from protected areas or areas in the process of designation for protection; no wood coming from old growth forests and high conservation value forests; no wood from natural wooded ecosystems converted into plantations).

#### **Mandatory criteria relating to the paper or paperboard substrate manufacturing**

Substrate paper or paperboard used for manufacturing converted paper products is also subject to mandatory criteria in the field of:

- Emissions to water and air: COD, Sulphur, AOX, CO<sub>2</sub>;

- Hazardous chemical substances: Chlorine, APEOs, surfactants in de-inking formulations for recycled fibres, de-inking, biocides.

### **Mandatory criteria related to converting and printing processes**

Manufacturing and printing facilities must comply with criteria regarding:

- Chemical products used in converting and printing processes: printing inks, dyers, toners, overprinting varnishes, varnishes, adhesives, washing agents and damping solutions; biocide products; washing agents; Alkyl phenol ethoxylates – Halogenated solvents – Phthalates;
- Emissions to water (heavy metals) and to air (volatile solvents);
- Waste reduction and recycling of manufacturing waste.

### **Other criteria**

Furthermore, in order to obtain certification, a product must go beyond the sole mandatory criteria, in order to achieve a minimum score.

A scoring table establishes the minimum score that a PAPER BY NATURE product must absolutely achieve, according to the printing process and the substrate (paper or paperboard) used in the manufacturing process.

The scoring system assigns points related to the following criteria:

- EMAS or ISO 14001 certifications for facilities;
- FSC or PEFC certified fibres; EU flower or Nordic swan certified papers;
- Removal of emissions of pollutants to the air;
- Removal of waste parings;
- Use of the best techniques available in prepress and manufacturing of printing plates; and
- Use of renewable energy so as to reduce CO2 emissions.

## ***2. Are the PAPER BY NATURE criteria intended to evolve? Are they regularly reviewed?***

Building a credible and demanding environmental label requires dynamic revision processes.

The PAPER BY NATURE Association statutes provides for a regular revision of the Ecolabel criteria. The association ensures that all of the label criteria are regularly updated and improved.

**The first round of revision of the criteria is already underway and will be completed this winter with the consultation of civil society stakeholders (NGOs and consumer organisations) as well as the main industry players.**

This on-going revision process ensures that we are continually embracing the best environmental practices.

## ***3. Does PAPER BY NATURE certify recycled paper products?***

Yes, among others.

The PAPER BY NATURE label certifies converted paper products made of paper, paperboard or paper based substrate. According to the criteria adopted for 2010, **to be certified, a product must contain a minimum of 40% of post consumer recycled fibres OR virgin wood fibres that originate from sustainably managed forests certified by independent, third party forest certification schemes.**

The precise origin of the fibres must be indicated and is controlled at each audit. FSC recycled, PEFC recycled and Blue Angel labels all meet the PAPER BY NATURE requirements for recycled fibres. FSC and PEFC labels meet the PAPER BY NATURE requirements for certified virgin fibres.

The remaining virgin fibres shall be audited by an independent third party to ensure that they do not come from controversial sources.

#### ***4. How have these criteria been defined?***

The first version of the PAPER BY NATURE label criteria comes from a long consultation process between the main European players of the converted paper products industry.

They were inspired from work previously carried out by the bodies of the EU Flower label but which unfortunately did not succeed at the time. Therefore, to compensate for the absence of a European label for eco-friendly converted paper products, Paper by Nature Association members worked for over a year, and consulted with leading public stakeholders (NGOs and consumer organisations) in order to achieve the first version of the criteria, which is now in force.

Since then, as provided for in the statutes of the association, a first round of revision is underway. It should lead to a new version of the criteria in early 2011, after consultation with leading public stakeholders (NGOs and consumer organisations) as well as main industry players.

### III - VERIFICATION / CERTIFICATION

#### *1. How is the label awarded? How is the label verified? Is it trustworthy?*

The PAPER BY NATURE Ecolabel is awarded and verified by a recognised independent certification body: Bureau VERITAS. Bureau Veritas audits the applicant company according to the Ecolabel Criteria and Auditing Rules. These two documents can be accessed freely on the PAPER BY NATURE website at [www.paperbynature.com/fr/ecolabel.php](http://www.paperbynature.com/fr/ecolabel.php).

A strict certification process is implemented, including:

- An initial certification audit
- An annual follow-up audit
- Re-certification every 3 years.

There is also a strict mandatory monitoring process at all times; **it is mandatory that a license number is stamped on each certified product** together with the PAPER BY NATURE logo.

On the PAPER BY NATURE website ([www.paperbynature.com](http://www.paperbynature.com)), **anyone can, via this number, identify the manufacturer of the finished product and check its status with regard to the certification** (official certificates issued by Bureau Veritas after validation of the certification process are online).

Moreover, the **Ecolabel criteria are regularly updated** so as to remain at the forefront of the best environmental practices. A round of revision is currently underway.

#### *2. Who is the PAPER BY NATURE certifying body?*

The certifying body of the PAPER BY NATURE label is Bureau Veritas.

## IV - DIFFERENCES/COMPARISONS WITH OTHER LABELS

### *1. Why create an additional label? Is it of any use?*

The PAPER BY NATURE label is **the only pan-European Ecolabel** committed to reducing the impact of converted paper products on **the environment**, from the felling of trees through the paper manufacturing process to the final conversion into office products.

There is today no other European label dedicated to the converted paper products; the European Ecolabel EU Flower only addresses copy paper, graphic paper and tissues.

### *2. There are multiple labels regarding the paper industry. Why create a new one?*

There are actually a number of valuable existing initiatives that set environmental standards in the field of wood, paper and related industrial processes.

Some deal with sustainable forest management, from which manufacturers source their paper (FSC, PEFC), while others deal specifically with the paper manufacturing process (EU Flower, Blue Angel). Some involve internal management systems (ISO 14001), while others are interested only in the converting processes leading to the final product, or are country specific (NF environment).

This has led to lots of confusion. It is difficult for customers to directly compare the converted paper products they want to buy. PAPER BY NATURE provides consumers with **an Ecolabel incorporating the best environmental practices in Europe today. The PAPER BY NATURE label streamlines these different standards into a single label.** It thus becomes the first clear and trustworthy reference for European consumers of converted paper products, covering the whole value chain.

### ***3. What is the difference with the EU Flower?***

No other European label currently exists for converted paper products (the European Ecolabel EU Flower only addresses copy paper, graphic paper and tissues). The PAPER BY NATURE label was therefore created in 2008 in order to provide a **European reference for eco-responsible converted paper products.**

### ***4. In what way is it better than FSC? Once a product is FSC or PEFC certified, is an additional label of any use?***

There is no competition whatsoever between FSC and PAPER BY NATURE, or PEFC and PAPER BY NATURE. **These labels are complementary.**

Today, there are actually a number of valuable existing initiatives that set environmental standards, including FSC and PEFC, which specifically deal with sustainable forest management.

PAPER BY NATURE incorporates into a single label the **best environmental practices in Europe** today in various fields: sustainable forest management, paper manufacturing, internal management systems, workflow, etc.

Thus, to be PAPER BY NATURE certified, a product must contain a minimum 40% of post consumer recycled fibres OR virgin wood fibres that originate from sustainably managed forests certified by independent, third party forest certification schemes. **FSC recycled, PEFC recycled and Blue Angel labels all meet the PAPER BY NATURE requirements for recycled fibres. FSC and PEFC labels meet the PAPER BY NATURE requirements for certified virgin fibres.**

### ***5. Why do some people say that NF Environnement is better than PAPER BY NATURE? What is the difference?***

A first difference is that NF Environnement is said to be an "official" label, meaning it is controlled by government-related bodies. PAPER BY NATURE, on its side, is a private label.

Also, NF Environnement is an exclusively French label, whereas PAPER BY NATURE is a European label.

However, both labels are near equals in terms of criteria. NF Environnement has slightly higher criteria for emissions to water, but less good than PAPER BY NATURE in terms of both emissions to the air and fibre certification requirements (sustainable forest management).

## V - PAPER BY NATURE ASSOCIATION / MEMBERS

### *1. What is the PAPER BY NATURE Association? Why has it been created?*

The PAPER BY NATURE Association, registered in Brussels, was created in 2008 by the leading European players in the paper industry, who supply office products such as pads, notebooks, and envelopes. It is a non-profit association (ASBL).

It was created in order to meet the growing need expressed by consumers and the industry itself for a **European reference for sustainable converted paper products**. Before the creation of the PAPER BY NATURE label, no European label existed for converted paper products. Indeed, the EU Flower deals only with the copy paper, graphic paper and tissues.

The PAPER BY NATURE Association promotes and encourages responsible environmental practices in the paper converting industry. It also provides a framework for initiating and maintaining a constructive dialogue between industry and public stakeholders, particularly during the in the rounds of revision of the criteria.

### *2. Who are the members?*

The PAPER BY NATURE Association was created by two professional associations - FEPE (European Envelope Manufacturers Association) and the MECSEA (Manufacturers of Educational and Commercial Stationery European Association), which represent around 90% of office products paper converters in Europe. They have been joined by paper manufacturers such as Stora Enso, Arjowiggins, UPM Kymmene, as well as converters: Bong Ljungdahl AB, La Couronne, Groupe GPV, Groupe Hamelin, Fast Treillet and Victor Stationery.

### ***3. Are some NGOs members of Paper by Nature? Do they sit on the association's Ethics Committee?***

Only companies and professional associations can become members of the PAPER BY NATURE Association. A dedicated observer status has been created for NGOs. They can attend the General Assembly and the Board of Directors meetings and issue views and recommendations.

Consequently, NGOs do not sit in the Ethics Committee which decides new members' admissions. But they can be invited to attend these meetings and issue views and recommendations.

No NGO has become an observer yet. But the dialogue is continuous between NGOs, consumer associations and the PAPER BY NATURE Association, especially regarding discussions and consultations about the evolution of the label's criteria (2008, 2009, and 2011).

## VI - CERTIFIED PRODUCTS

### *1. Who are the certified companies?*

The PAPER BY NATURE label only certifies products that meet specific requirements. In no case can it certify a company.

The list of certified products (and factories that manufacture them) can be accessed freely on the PAPER BY NATURE website at:

[www.paperbynature.com/en/certifiedproducts.php](http://www.paperbynature.com/en/certifiedproducts.php)

### *2. What is the scope of Paper By Nature in Europe? How many certified products are there on the European market?*

Released early 2009, the PAPER BY NATURE label is now advertised in most major office supply catalogues.

Many European retailers have adopted the label for their own branded products, while large institutional clients such as EDF, Williams Lea, Veolia and others now request the PAPER BY NATURE certification on their products.

Close to two million products bearing the Paper by Nature label will be sold by 2010 in Europe.

The list of certified products and facilities that manufacture PAPER BY NATURE labelled products can be accessed freely on the PAPER BY NATURE website at: [www.paperbynature.com/en/certifiedproducts.php](http://www.paperbynature.com/en/certifiedproducts.php)