

The EU Ecolabel for Industrial & institutional dishwasher and laundry detergents

The EU Ecolabel industrial & institutional dishwasher and laundry detergents criteria provide exigent guidelines for the companies that manufacture professional-use detergents looking to lower their environmental impact and guarantee the efficiency of their environmental actions through the EU Ecolabel's third party verification guarantee. The criteria take a holistic approach through limits on the hazardous substances used, the sustainable sourcing of raw materials, the recyclability and design of packaging and the proper guidance of the product's user.

The EU Ecolabel criteria for industrial & institutional detergents are relevant for companies with pre-existing ecological standards for the products they manufacture, looking to fine tune and structure their efforts through compliance with this third-party certification. The criteria are also valid for companies hoping to make a shift from producing products with a linear life cycle to products with a more circular one, when it comes to packaging.



The product groups: industrial and institutional dishwasher and laundry detergents comprise of any dishwasher detergent, rinse or pre-soak agent and laundry detergents which are marketed and designed to be used by specialised personnel in professional dishwashers or in industrial and institutional facilities. Multi-component systems, which incorporate a number of products such as pre-soak, rinsing agents, fabric softeners and stain removers also fall in the scope of the criteria and must be tested as a whole. However, these product groups do not take into account dishwasher detergents designed for household dishwashers and washing machines or any detergents intended to be used in washers of medical devices or in special machines for the food industry.

Hotspots & Solutions

The EU Ecolabel addresses a number of environmental hotspots induced by the use of detergents :

Hotspots	Issue	EU Ecolabel Solution
Hotspot 1: Environmental Impact of Toxic Substances	<i>Some toxic substances present in conventional detergents have a negative impact on the environment.</i>	EU Ecolabel detergents for professional use machines limit the detrimental effects on the environment through the application of strict requirements. Detergents must respect minimum thresholds for critical dilution volumes, must be composed of biodegradable surfactants and comply with strict restrictions on the number of hazardous substances present. For example, there is a strict ban on EDTA (and its salts), microplastics, and triclosan amongst other substances. Very few fragrances, preservatives, colouring agents and enzymes are allowed. Substances also, cannot be toxic for reproduction or cause adverse effects and diseases like cancer to the body, as well as being a respiratory or skin sensitiser.
Hotspot 2: Deforestation and degradation	<i>Many ingoing substances used in detergent products are derived from palm oil sourced from plantations that are responsible for deforestation, the destruction of ecosystems and the relocation of local communities.</i>	The majority of detergents contain palm oil or palm kernel oil. The EU Ecolabel detergents limit the deforestation and degradation of ecosystems due to palm plantations by requiring companies to use certified sustainably produced palm oil (if it is one of their ingoing substances), which address environmental impacts on soil, biodiversity, organic carbon stocks and conservation of natural resources. Acceptable certificates include the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) (by identity preserved, segregated or mass balance) or any equivalent or stricter sustainable production scheme.
Hotspot 3: Huge amount of waste going to landfill and impossible to recycle	<i>The use of non-recyclable material and presence of contaminating toxic substances in packaging of detergents creates unnecessary waste sent to landfills and CO2 emissions.</i>	The EU Ecolabel limits the amount of plastic and waste destined to landfill by requiring certified detergent producers to respect a certain weight/utility ratio (WUR) in their packaging. Packaging must also be designed for recycling, by avoiding potential contaminants and incompatible materials that are known to reduce the quality of recyclate. Finally, the packaging disposal information must be clearly visible on detergent packaging. Spray bottles must also be refillable and reusable. In order to decrease the amount of CO2 emissions, propellants in sprays are also prohibited.

**Hotspot 4:
Inefficient use of
resources and
effectiveness**

Poorly concentrated detergent containers and lack of dosing instructions lead to unnecessary energy and water consumption.

The EU Ecolabel certification ensures less water and energy consumption by guaranteeing high quality detergents which respect satisfactory cleaning performance at the lowest temperature and dosage recommended by the manufacturer. Companies must provide documentation demonstrating that the product has been tested under the conditions specified in the 'Framework performance test for industrial and institutional detergents' and have achieved at least the minimum cleaning performance required.

**Hotspot 5:
Overuse of
detergents**

Low awareness on the appropriate cleaning procedures and unavailable dosing equipment leads to overuse of detergents.

The EU Ecolabel limits the unnecessary use of detergents by making sure products are accompanied by instructions on dosing. The environmental impact of following these guidelines incorrectly must be clearly specified on the packaging. Furthermore, for multi-component systems, it is up to companies to verify that their certified products are used with an automatic and controlled system at all premises that have adopted their products. These verifications must take place at least once a year, must be performed through customer visits, and must include calibration of the dosing equipment.



For more information...

The scheme, its feature, the actors involved, the application process:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel>

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www.ecolabel.eu