

Evaluation criteria for furniture and wood products

The aim of the following criteria is to evaluate the involvement of furniture and wood products manufacturers (owners of brands) in environmental and social sustainability in terms of 8 categories. **In order for the brand to be included in the Polish Green Network's "Good Shopping" guide, it has to comply with at least one of the criteria 1–5 to an at least satisfactory extent.** The criteria in the categories 6–8 are additional **(it is not enough to fulfill them alone for your brand to be included in the guide.)**

These criteria can be subject to change as sustainable consumption and production develops in Poland. The Polish Green Network reserves the right to modify the criteria at any time and without stating the reasons.

These criteria have been developed for **producers**, not for agents and sellers.

Unless stated otherwise, the percentages refer to the amount of a given product or raw material as compared to the company's total annual sales of products of the same kind or/and made of the same raw material.

Meaning of the colours

GREEN – very good result in this field

YELLOW – satisfactory result, sufficient

RED – unsatisfactory result, a fail

NO COLOUR – not applicable

1. Eco-friendly materials

This category concerns the use of natural and eco-friendly raw materials. Wood and timber, being a renewable raw material, is environmentally friendly provided that its harvesting does not destroy forests. Eco-friendly wood harvesting means ensuring the conservation of forest ecosystems in their natural state, which includes limiting logging to the level that makes natural forest regeneration possible, not introducing non-indigenous plants, in particular genetically modified ones, protecting rare plant and animal species, avoiding the use of artificial fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals that are harmful to the environment.

This criterion refers only to the production of raw materials, including timber and wood-derived materials (the first stage in the production chain). Thus, it does not include the processing of the raw material (e.g. gluing, dyeing, impregnating, coating, processing, finishing etc.)

A brand is rated **GREEN**

- if 80-100% of the raw materials it uses is environmentally friendly timber (or wood-derived materials) certified by an independent certifying body, meeting the criteria of the Forest Stewardship Council "Pure"/100% certificate (including: FSC "Pure"/100%, Soil Association, Rainforest Alliance, Fairtrade) **(in case of exotic wood this index must be 100%)**

A brand is rated **YELLOW**

- if 40-80% of the raw materials it uses is environmentally friendly timber certified by an independent certifying body, meeting the criteria of the Forest Stewardship Council "Pure"/100% certificate (including: FSC "Pure"/100%, Soil Association, Rainforest Alliance, Fairtrade) **(in case of exotic wood this index must be 80%)**

OR

- if 80-100% of the raw materials it uses is environmentally friendly timber certified by an independent certifying body, meeting the criteria of the Forest Stewardship Council "Mixed"

certificate (including: FSC “Mixed”, Soil Association, Rainforest Alliance, Fairtrade) **(in case of exotic wood this index must be 100%)**

OR

- if 80-100% of the raw materials it uses is environmentally friendly timber from forests or plantations that do not degrade forest ecosystems (according to the above mentioned criteria, which is verified based on the description provided by the company), located in the territory of the European Union member states (excluding Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary and Italy)¹, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States, or/and harvested by local communities on a small scale and derived from the following tree species, among others:
 - beech (except New Zealand beech, red beech and silver beech)
 - birch
 - oak
 - ash (except satin ash)
 - maple
 - European larch
 - pine
 - spruce
 - alder

OR

- if 80-100% of the raw materials it uses is environmentally friendly timber from forests or plantations that do not degrade forest ecosystems (according to the above mentioned criteria, which is verified based on the description provided by the company) and derived from the following tree species:
 - bamboo
 - rubber tree

A brand is rated **RED**

- if the raw materials it uses do not meet any of the above criteria (this does not concern recycled materials.)

2. Recycled materials

This category concerns the use of recycled materials to make furniture and wood products as well as the creation of up-cycled furniture and wood products. The category also permits the use of recycled plastics.

A brand is rated **GREEN**

- if it uses 80-100% of recycled wood or wood-derived products (certified by an independent certifying body meeting the criteria of the Forest Stewardship Council “Recycled” certificate)
OR
- if it uses 80-100% of recycled plastics (which is verified based on the description provided by the company)
OR
- if 80-100% of products come from up-cycling (which is verified based on the description provided by the company.)

A brand is rated **YELLOW**

- if it uses 80-100% of recycled wood or wood-derived products (which is verified based on the description provided by the company)
OR
- if it uses 40-80% of recycled wood or wood-derived products (certified by an independent certifying body meeting the criteria of the Forest Stewardship Council “Recycled” certificate)
OR

¹ These countries received a low Corruption Perceptions Index in 2011 (<http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2011/results>), issued by Transparency International. The index is used for risk assessment by certified entrepreneurs who purchase FSC Controlled Wood.

- if it uses 40-80% of recycled plastics (which is verified based on the description provided by the company)
- OR
- if 40-80% of products come from up-cycling (which is verified based on the description provided by the company).

A brand is rated **RED**

- if the raw materials it uses do not meet any of the above criteria (this does not concern eco-friendly raw materials and natural raw materials produced in an environmentally friendly way.)

3. Eco-friendly processing

This category concerns the use of production methods (processing of timber and wood-derived materials) that are more environmentally friendly. Such processing does not use or limits the use of environmentally hazardous or harmful substances, carcinogens and allergens (such as volatile organic compounds in paints and varnishes used, glues with toluene and formaldehyde, wood preservatives containing chromium etc.) It is also important to use an environmental management system with procedures to minimise waste and pollution at production sites, a waste water treatment system, and sustainable management of water and energy throughout the product life cycle.

A brand is rated **GREEN**

- if 80-100% of materials used are processed in an eco-friendly way, which is confirmed by such certificates as: Blue Angel (the certificate for wood and wood-based products), Ecolabel (the certificate for wooden furniture and wooden flooring)

OR

- if 80-100% of materials used are processed in an eco-friendly way (in compliance with the above mentioned criteria, which is verified based on the description provided by the company.)

A brand is rated **YELLOW**

- if 40-80% of materials used are processed in an eco-friendly way, which is confirmed by such certificates as: Blue Angel (the certificate for wood and wood-based products), Ecolabel (the certificate for wooden furniture and wooden flooring)

OR

- if 40-80% of materials used are processed in an eco-friendly way (in compliance with the above mentioned criteria, which is verified based on the description provided by the company.)

A brand is rated **RED**

- if the processing methods it uses do not meet any of the above criteria.

4. Fair Trade

This category refers to the use of fair trade relations with producers from the countries of the Global South². This is guaranteed by the Fair Trade movement which seeks greater equity in trading with small producers from the Global South and aims at ensuring them a better life. Fair Trade is guaranteed by either the International Fairtrade Certification Mark on a product or by the company's participation in the international trade according to the World Fair Trade Organization standards³.

A brand is rated **GREEN**

- if 80-100% of raw materials it uses are Fairtrade certified

² According to the UN classification – the least developed countries and developing countries: Africa, South America, Central America, the Caribbean, Asia (excluding Japan), Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) – <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49regin.htm>

³ http://www.wfto.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2&Itemid=14

OR

- if it sells 80-100% of its products in accordance with the World Fair Trade Organization standards.

A brand is rated **YELLOW**

- if 40-80% of raw materials it uses are Fairtrade certified

OR

- if it sells 40-80% of its products in accordance with the World Fair Trade Organization standards.

A brand is rated **RED**

- therefore, that the Fairtrade standards for wood were established in 2010 and are still in test phase, there is no red grade signifying an unsatisfactory, failing result for this category.

5. Labour standards

This category concerns third-party certified support of working conditions which comply with the labour standards of the International Labour Organization (ILO) at these production stages where there is high risk of violation of workers' rights⁴.

These labour standards are laid down in the ILO core conventions, ILO conventions, ILO recommendations.

- Employment is freely chosen (no forced labour) (ILO Conventions 29 and 105)
- There is no discrimination in employment and occupation (ILO Conventions 100 and 111)
- No exploitation of child labour (ILO Conventions 138 and 182)
- Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining (ILO Conventions 87 and 98)
- Payment of a living wage (ILO Conventions 26 and 131)
- Limiting working hours to eight hours a day (ILO Convention 1)
- Safe and healthy working conditions (following ILO Convention 155)
- Legally-binding employment relationship

A brand is rated **GREEN**

There is no independent organization or standard that would guarantee the fulfillment of this criterion by manufacturers of furniture and wood products on such a good level (a very good result in this field).

A brand is rated **YELLOW**

- if at least 80% of its products (as compared to the total annual sales) are certified with FSC, PEFC, Soil Association or Fairtrade

OR

- if at least 80% of its entire supply chain is certified with SA 8000

A brand is rated **RED**

- if it does not meet any of the above criteria (this concerns only the production stages taking place in the countries of the Global South.)

6. Social economy

This category refers to conducting economic activity based on the rules of social entrepreneurship and supporting disadvantaged people (socially excluded or endangered with social exclusion)⁵. Social economy enterprises (such as cooperatives, mutual societies, NGOs and others) encourage

⁴ This concerns in particular the least developed countries and developing countries. According to the UN classification these are: Africa, South America, Central America, the Caribbean, Asia (excluding Japan), Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) – <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49regin.htm> and these stage of production which are labour intensive

⁵ People who are unemployed, disabled, homeless, alcoholics, addicts, refugees, single parents, ex-prisoners, people with no experience and no specific skills, endangered with unemployment.

solidarity and cohesion. They are often characterised by a democratic operation, solidarity amongst its members and by the integration of disadvantaged people (socially excluded and endangered with social exclusion).

A company is rated **GREEN**

- if its annual profits are used for social or not-for-profit purposes

AND

- more than 40% of its employees come from disadvantaged background

A company is rated **YELLOW**

- if its annual profits are used for social or not-for-profit purposes

OR

- more than 40% of its employees come from disadvantaged background.

A company is rated **RED**

- in this category there is no red grade signifying an unsatisfactory, failing result.

7. Traceability

This category refers to the transparency of the supply chain. This means each production process unit must be known, publicly accessible to everyone and can be traced back by consumers. For the consumer, it must also be possible to gain insight into all the steps of the production process of the product they are purchasing.

A company is rated **GREEN**

- if it discloses 80%-100% of manufacturers and suppliers (name of company and country of production) and this information is publicly accessible to everyone

OR

- if it uses a product identification system (e.g. product code).

A company is rated **YELLOW**

- if it discloses information about the most important suppliers of the supply chain and this covers 40%-80% of the supply chain.

A company is rated **RED**

- in this category there is no red grade signifying an unsatisfactory, failing result.

8. Operating locally

This category means the company's operations are conducted locally, supporting domestic economy and contributing to the reduction of pollution and CO2 emissions resulting from transportation and storing of goods. If your company operates locally, the entire production and distribution chain and the associated currency circulation is contained within a given area.

A company is rated **GREEN**

- if 80-100% of production (including obtaining and processing of raw materials) and distribution of products takes place in Poland.

A company is rated **YELLOW**

- if 40-80% of production (including obtaining and processing of raw materials) and distribution of products takes place in Poland

OR

- if 80-100% of production (including obtaining and processing of raw materials) and distribution of products takes place in Europe.

A company is rated **RED**

- in this category there is no red grade signifying an unsatisfactory, failing result.

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