

# Recycled Content Standard

*Environmental Certification Services*



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## 1.0 Purpose, Structure, and Intended Uses

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### 1.1. Purpose

The purpose of the Standard is to describe the requirements for third-party substantiation of the recycled content claims asserted by companies with regard to specific products. This Standard allows a company to demonstrate that:

1. Its products contain materials that are classified using definitions based on ISO 14021:1999(E) Environmental labels and declarations – Self-declared environmental claims (Type II environmental labeling) and United States Code of Federal Regulations Title 40: Protection of the Environment, Part 261- Identification and Listing of Hazardous Waste;
2. Its marketing claims conform with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims; and
3. Its products contain materials that conform with the Material & Resources criteria for Recycled Content for building products according to the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) Leadership Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building rating system.

### 1.2. Structure of the Standard

The Standard provides:

1. The requirements for qualifying and quantifying materials that serve as the basis for recycled content claims asserted by companies about products;
2. Guidelines for suppliers and private label users; and
3. Labeling requirements that are applicable to all certified products.

### 1.3. Intended Users

Intended users of this Standard are product manufacturers (including individuals, businesses, organizations, or agencies) seeking third-party certification of conformance of selected products to the requirements of this Standard, as well as individuals, businesses, organizations, agencies, or consumers interested in purchasing products meeting the requirements of the Standard. The Standard also provides guidelines for material suppliers and private label users.

### 1.4. Voluntary Standard

This Standard is voluntary. It is not intended to replace any legal or regulatory requirements that may be applicable to user operations.

## 2.0 Scope, Goals, and Limitations

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### 2.1. Scope

The Standard applies to any material used in a product for which the manufacturer is making a claim about the recycled content and type of material in the final product. The Standard allows the input materials to be qualified and quantified for the purposes of making a percentage-based recycled content claim. This includes, but is not limited to, materials that may be classified as post-consumer or pre-consumer recycled. The term “shall” is used throughout the Standard to indicate mandatory requirements. The term “should” is used throughout the Standard to indicate preferred requirements.

### 2.2. Goals

The major goals of this Standard are:

1. To provide a uniform standard by which to assess and provide third-party certification of the recycled content of products for manufacturers making Type II environmental claims; and
2. To engender confidence in the marketplace that SCS-labeled products consistently meet the requirements of this Standard [and its normative references].

### 2.3. Limitations

#### 2.3.1. Health and Safety

The Standard does not address safety, health and performance concerns, if any, associated with its use. Users shall note that compliance with the requirements of this Standard is no guarantee of regulatory compliance at the time of certification or in the period between audits.

It is the responsibility of the user to establish appropriate conditions for such considerations and to determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.

#### 2.3.2. Environmental Tradeoffs

The Standard does not address any environmental tradeoffs that may be associated with the life-cycle phases of the product(s). Therefore, there may be environmental tradeoffs associated with a certified entity and/or the product it produces.

### 3.0 Key Terminology

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Specific terms and definitions are provided below.

**Affidavit.** A written statement of facts voluntarily made by an affiant under an oath or affirmation administered by a person authorized to do so by law.

**Bill of Materials (BOM).** A list of the raw materials, sub-components, components, parts and quantities of each needed to manufacture an end product.

**Certification Assessment.** Independent evaluation of a product claim using specific, predetermined criteria and procedures with assurance of data reliability.

**Certified Product.** Finished product and raw materials, subassemblies, components and accessories for which a manufacturer has demonstrated full conformance to the requirements of the standard, and for which the manufacturer is therefore authorized to apply the SCS Certification Label, as evidence that the product complies with the program requirements.

**Chain of Custody.** The path that a material/product takes from its point of production to the end consumer, consisting of each entity that takes legal and/or physical possession along this pathway.

**Claim.** Oral, written, implied, or symbolic representation, statement, or advertising or other form of communication presented to the public or buyers of products that relates to a product's environmental claim such as the percentage of recycled content. An environmental marketing claim must be consistent and compliant with Federal Trade Commission guidelines.

**Component.** A material or ingredient used in the manufacture of a product.

**Content.** Proportion, by mass, of a type of material in a product or packaging.

**Data Review Period.** The 12-month period of time represented by the data submitted for an assessment. This is typically comprised of the four most recent consecutive quarters, and at a minimum the most recent quarter. The data review period shall be the same for all data included in the review. Data provided for this period shall be for materials used for salable production only.

*Note: In the case that requested data are not available for the most recent twelve consecutive months because of an acceptable circumstance, the data review period shall be set by SCS. Acceptable circumstances are subject to the discretion of SCS. If certification is granted based on a limited data review period, additional data may be requested to verify the claim after initial certification, per the auditor's recommendation.*

**Total Production.** The total amount of product coming off the manufacturing line, including any waste from trimming or finishing, defective products, and all non-saleable material.

**Manufacturer.** Organization or individual responsible for the production of the product undergoing certification assessment.

**Manufacturing Site.** The physical location where the production of the product undergoing certification assessment occurs.

**Post-Consumer Material.** Material generated by households or by commercial, industrial, and institutional facilities in their role as end-users of the product that can no longer be used for its intended purpose. This includes returns of materials from the distribution chain. (Source: ISO 14021:1999)

*Note: For the purposes of the SCS certification program this is being interpreted to mean that any material returned from the distribution chain must meet the requirement of being from end-users to be considered post-consumer.*

**Pre-Consumer Material.** Material diverted from the waste stream during the manufacturing process. Excluded is the reutilization of materials such as rework, regrind or scrap generated in a process and capable of being reclaimed within the same process that generated it. (Source: ISO 14021:1999)

**Private Label Customer.** The primary entity that purchases a SCS certified product directly from a SCS Certified Client for the purpose of selling said product as a private label product, with only label and/or packaging modifications.

**Product.** A product is an item with defined materials, function, and styles. It is often associated with a specific stock-keeping unit (SKU). Ancillary materials are considered when defining a product.

**Product Category.** A product category is a grouping of products that have similar key material basis and serve a similar function. When considering the material basis, ancillary materials are not considered. Ancillary materials are generally considered to be minor components constituting <2% of the product, but final determination is at the discretion of the auditor.

**Product Line.** A product line is a grouping products that have similar key materials basis and similar secondary material basis, and serve a similar function. When considering the material basis, ancillary materials are not considered. Secondary materials may relate to type, style, fabrication method, or specific function.

**Post-Industrial Material.** Another name for pre-consumer material. Use of the term, “post-industrial material” has been phased out.

**Recycled Content.** Proportion, by mass, of recycled material in a product or packaging. Only pre-consumer and post-consumer materials shall be considered as recycled content. (Source: ISO 14021:1999)

**Recycled Material.** Material that has been reprocessed from recovered [reclaimed] material by means of a manufacturing process and made into a final product or into a component for incorporation into a final product. (Source: ISO 14021:1999)

*Note: SCS may interpret a material to be recycled if it is “used, reused, or reclaimed” according to United States Government Code of Federal Regulations Title 40: Protection of Environment Part 261.1:*

*(4) A material is “reclaimed” if it is processed to recover a usable product, or if it is regenerated...*

*(5) A material is “used or reused” if it is either:*

*(i) Employed as an ingredient (including use as an intermediate) in an industrial process to make a product (for example, distillation bottoms from one process used as feedstock in another process). However, a material will not satisfy this condition if distinct components of the material are recovered as separate end products (as when metals are recovered from metal-containing secondary materials); or*

*(ii) Employed in a particular function or application as an effective substitute for a commercial product (for example, spent pickle liquor used as phosphorous precipitant and sludge conditioner in wastewater treatment).*

**Records.** Any information in written, visual, or electronic form that documents the activities undertaken by a user to demonstrate conformance with this Standard.

**Stakeholders.** People who are, or who might be, affected by any action taken by users of this Standard. Examples include: customers, workers, partners, contractors, suppliers, etc.

**Scrap.** Rejected or discarded material generated by a manufacturing process. Scrap cannot be claimed as pre-consumer recycled material if it is fed back into and reused in the same process that generated it without any further processing before reuse. Examples of scrap include material from manufacturing equipment (e.g. start up/shut down material), side/end trimmings, material generated from sanding, off-spec/non-conforming product, etc.

**SCS Supplier Affidavit Form.** A form that is required from suppliers of recycled material. The form requires disclosure that the supplier has done business with the manufacturer, information about the company (e.g. length of time in business, business license, etc.) and information about the type of recycled material provided (e.g. amount sold, source of recycled material, waste stream source, etc.). The form must be signed by a duly authorized representative.

**Single Production Unit.** A finished product in its ready for sale state (e.g. a door, a table top, a spool of yarn, etc).

**Standard.** When capitalized, refers to this Standard (SCS Recycled Content Standard).

**Supplier.** Organization that supplies a material, product or service to the manufacturer. Brokers are not considered suppliers unless they provide a physical chain of custody from actual suppliers.

**Traceability.** The ability to trace materials and/or products sequentially throughout a manufacturing process and/or value chain in a way that is verifiable through objective evidence.

**Waste.** Anything for which the generator or holder has no further use and which is discarded or is released to the environment (Source: ISO 14021:1999).

**Waste Stream.** The aggregate flow of waste material from homes, businesses, institutions and industry that is recycled, burned or landfilled.

**Waste Stream Source.** The specific origin of a waste material.



## 4.0 Referenced Documents

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### 4.1. Normative References

The following normative documents contain provisions that, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this Standard.

1. ISO 14021:1999, “Environmental labels and declarations – Self-declared environmental claims (Type II environmental labeling).”
2. ISO 14024:1999, “Environmental labels and declarations – Type I environmental labeling – Principles and procedures.”
3. ISO 14020:2000, “Environmental labels and declarations – General principles.”

### 4.2. Additional References

1. U.S. Green Building Council Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design (LEED) Green Rating Guides (available at: [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org))
2. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims (available at: [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov))
3. ISO 9001:2000, “Quality management systems – Requirements.”
4. ISO 14001:2004, “Environmental management systems – Requirements with guidance for use.”
5. ISO/IEC Guide 65:1996, “General requirements for bodies operating product certification systems”

## 5.0 Requirements

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This section of the Standard describes general conformance requirements for manufacturers.

### 5.1. Chain of Custody Requirements

#### 5.1.1. Traceability

Traceability practices shall be employed by the manufacturer to ensure that products conforming to the Standard can have their material basis tracked back to the origin of all input materials.

#### 5.1.2. Segregation

The manufacturer shall maintain a documented procedure for segregating and clearly identifying conformant and non-conformant products in stages such as receiving, storage, transfer to shipping, and shipping.

### **5.1.3. Manufacturing Process Description**

The manufacturer shall provide a diagram and/or a description of the manufacturing process showing how recycled materials are tracked and how a chain of custody is maintained. It shall also describe all inputs of materials, all internal material flows (e.g., reuse or recycling of scrap), and all material outputs (including, but not limited to, finished products, intermediary products, and waste).

## **5.2. Requirements for Material Qualification & Quantification**

### **5.2.1. Material Qualification**

#### **5.2.1.1. Product Performance Testing**

The manufacturer shall provide documentation of product efficacy and/or performance tests specific to product type that are, if applicable, recognized by national performance standards (ASTM, ANSI, etc.). Examples include performance testing for strength, flexural, fire resistance, etc.

#### **5.2.1.2. Supplier Verification & Validation**

The manufacturer shall provide a signed SCS Supplier Affidavit Form from all suppliers of recycled material providing  $\geq 2\%$  of total recycled material by weight. A signed SCS Supplier Affidavit Form must be received from suppliers of recycled material accounting for at least 95% of material by weight. Suppliers may be contacted by SCS to confirm validity and, on condition of their consent, may be subject to further review.

At its discretion, SCS may choose to employ alternative or supplemental means of qualifying sources of recycled material, not limited to an on-site audit of the supplier.

If SCS is unable to obtain information considered necessary to determine product conformance, the assessment may cease and the product may be deemed non-certifiable.

#### **5.2.1.3. Records of Suppliers**

The manufacturer shall maintain records that demonstrate it has an active business relationship with each supplier of recycled material. These records might include invoices, bills of lading, or delivery receipts.

### **5.2.2. Material Quantification**

#### **5.2.2.1. Material Supply Data**

The amount of recycled material obtained from each supplier of material under review shall be maintained and provided for the data review period. Data should be provided on a dry weight basis in tons.

#### **5.2.2.2. Product Component Information**

The manufacturer shall provide a bill of materials (BOM) or similar documentation that describes the dry weight of each component in a single production unit. This documentation should identify the dry weight of virgin, pre- and post-consumer recycled material in a single production unit.

#### **5.2.2.3. Scrap Reuse and Waste Rates**

For the material used in each product under review, the manufacturer shall maintain records for the data review period of the amounts and units of measurement for scrap generated and reused and the waste generated and sent to disposal, incineration, or additional recycling.

#### **5.2.2.4. Production Totals**

For each product line/product under review, the manufacturer shall provide production totals (weight of units produced) for the data review period. Total production is the total amount of product coming off the manufacturing line, including any waste from trimming or finishing, defective products, and all non-saleable material

#### **5.2.2.5. Recycled Material Inventories**

The manufacturer shall maintain inventory records of the amount and types of recycled materials used in the product for the data review period.

#### **5.2.2.6. Mass Balance**

For the scope of every assessment, a mass balance calculation with the data supplied in 5.2.2 must demonstrate that there are sufficient supplies of recycled material to produce the amount of product reported.

## 6.0 Evaluation of Requirements

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### 6.1. Desk Audit

The manufacturer shall submit all necessary forms, records, documents, and data to SCS for review. The auditor will review the submitted evidence and assess the manufacturer's conformance with respect to the requirements of the Standard (Section 5.0 Requirements).

### 6.2. Site Audit

The manufacturer and/or supplier(s) of recycled material may undergo site audit(s) if deemed necessary based on the submitted evidence and ability of the auditor to assess the manufacturer's and/or supplier's conformance to the Standard.

### 6.3. Audit Findings

After the completion of the desk or site audit the auditor may have formal audit findings regarding the degree of the manufacturer's compliance with the requirements of the Standard. The three types of findings include:

#### 6.3.1. Non-Conformity

Non-conformities, defined as non-fulfillment of a specified requirement, shall be adequately resolved through root-cause analysis and corrective/preventative action before certification can be granted.

#### 6.3.2. New Information Request

New information request, defined as a request for mandatory information that may be necessary to determine compliance, shall be adequately resolved through root-cause analysis and corrective/preventative action within an established deadline.

#### 6.3.3. Opportunity for Improvement

An opportunity for improvement, defined as a concept that will surpass minimum requirements, should be adequately resolved through root-cause analysis and corrective/preventative action within an established deadline.

## 7.0 Guidelines for Private Label Users

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### 7.1. Private Label Customers

#### 7.2.1. Conditions for Use of Certification Label

Private Label Customers are permitted to use the SCS Certification Label as a pass-through certified claim only, as delineated in the *SCS Private Label Requirements Annex* to the *SCS Services Agreement* and the *SCS Certification, Validation and Verification Program Labeling and Language Guidelines*.

#### 7.2.2. No Changes

Private Label Customers are not permitted to make any changes to the final product before it is sold, or embellish the recycled content or other environmental claims associated with the product.

#### 7.2.3. Application and Fees

Such users are required to obtain permission for private label use by obtaining and completing the *SCS Private Label Application* form, and are subject to rules and administrative fees for using the SCS Certification Label.

## 8.0 Certification and Continued Conformance

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### 8.1. Certification

Once a product qualifies for certification, based on conformance with the Standard, an SCS Recycled Content certificate of achievement is issued. Certificates are valid for one year, provided that the manufacturer maintains conformance with the requirements.

### 8.2. Continued Conformance

An annual audit to demonstrate continued conformance with the Standard is required if the manufacturer wishes to continue making a certified claim.

### 8.3. Notice of Change

If the manufacturer makes changes to its products or processes that affect its conformance with the requirements of the Standard, it shall notify SCS of these changes.

## 9.0 Labeling Requirements

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### 9.1. National Requirements

All uses of the SCS Certification Label or references to the certification on the product and in product advertising shall be conducted in conformance with U.S. Federal Trade Commission guidelines or other national guidelines if outside of the U.S.

### 9.2. SCS Requirements

#### 9.2.1. Guidelines

The manufacturer shall comply with the requirements of the SCS Certification, Validation and Verification Program Labeling and Language Guidelines at all times.<sup>1</sup>

#### 9.2.2. Trade names

A certified and non-certified product cannot have the same trade name or trademarked designation.

## 10.0 Complaints, Appeals and Disputes

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### 10.1. Complaints

All complaints, appeals and disputes are handled in accordance with the *SCS Complaint, Appeals and Disputes Procedure*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Provided as a supplement to the SCS Assessment Services Agreement. This document is also available on the SCS website at: [www.scscertified.com](http://www.scscertified.com) and upon request.

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