


## 6.3 Factsheet Better Biomass

This factsheet aims to provide accessible and factual information on the Better Biomass certification scheme. This factsheet presents the actual status of the scheme in March 2023. For more detailed information on the system, the reader may visit the website of the certification scheme or contact the scheme owner.

*Disclaimer: The information contained in this factsheet is for informational purpose only and cannot be used in replacement of the official Better Biomass standards and procedures*

Table 11 Factsheet Better Biomass

Scheme Feature	Description
<b>General</b>	
Name of scheme	Better Biomass
Scheme owner	Better Biomass is managed by NEN, the Netherlands Standardization Institute. As member of CEN and ISO, NEN will ensure that the sustainability criteria and conformity assessment processes are and will remain aligned with the relevant European (EN) and international (ISO) standards. Better Biomass is an international certification system for solid, liquid and gaseous biomass. The Better Biomass certificate is used to demonstrate the sustainability of the biomass used for energy, fuels or bio-based products.
Website	<a href="https://www.betterbiomass.com/">https://www.betterbiomass.com/</a>
Label provided	
Operational since	2011
Number of active certificates	155 ( <a href="https://betterbiomass.nl/en/certificate-holders/">https://betterbiomass.nl/en/certificate-holders/</a> , March 2023)
Standard ownership	Private
General objective	The mission of NEN is to develop and manage standards and certification schemes with high impact and social and broad stakeholders. The aim of developing and managing schemes by NEN is to ensure the support for the relevant scheme in the market and to increase the uniformity of the conformity assessment.
<b>Scope</b>	
Biomass feedstock coverage	Any type of biomass
Sector/Product group coverage	Energy, fuels or bio-based products. In the 2015 update of the standards the scope was extended to the sustainably produced biomass for biobased products.
Supply chain coverage	Applicable to all elements of the supply chains. Biomass production, feedstock processing, intermediary and final product production
Geographic focus of the standard	Global
<b>Governance, Standard Development and Certification Requirements</b>	
Scheme governance	Better Biomass is managed by NEN (Stichting Koninklijk Nederlands Normalisatie Instituut). The Committee of Experts, composed of range of stakeholders, is responsible for supervising the functioning of the standard and the certification scheme and for adjusting the certification scheme, if necessary. The certification system is supported by the NEN Scheme management manual which is administered by NEN and is

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	provided to all parties concerned, like members of the Committee of Experts and certification bodies that have entered into an agreement with NEN.
Standard documents	NEN Certification Scheme NCS 8080 describes the certification scheme for sustainably produced biomass for bioenergy and bio-based products based on Netherlands Technical Agreements NTA 8080-1:2015 and NTA 8080-2:2015. NTA 8080-1:2015 Sustainably produced biomass for bioenergy and bio-based products – Part 1: Sustainability requirements and NTA 8080-2:2015 Sustainably produced biomass for bioenergy and bio-based products – Part 2: Chain-of-custody requirements. Better Biomass interpretation documents.
Transparency and accessibility of standard documents	The Better Biomass certification scheme (NCS 8080:2018-08) can be downloaded from the Better Biomass website. NTA 8080-1:2015 and NTA 8080-2:2015 standards can be downloaded via the NEN webshop free of charge.
Multi-stakeholder participation in standard development	NEN aspires to offer a broadly supported certificate that has an added value, particularly in relation of the organization with its external stakeholder. NEN strives for a balanced representation of relevant stakeholders in the development and management of schemes. The Committee of Experts is composed of representatives of industry, societal organizations and government.
Compliance with ISEAL's Standards-Setting, Impacts and Assurance Codes of Good Practice	Better Biomass/NEN is currently not an ISEAL community member and do not demonstrate compliance to ISEAL's Standards-Setting, Impacts and Assurance Codes of Good Practice. NEN as scheme owner complies with the requirements set by the Dutch Accreditation Council.
Compliance with regional, national, international laws	NTA 8080-1, section 5.6 "The organization shall, as far as applicable, demonstrably acquainted with laws and regulations that relate to the sustainability aspects in the NTA". It is further written that applicable laws and regulation prevail. Furthermore, criterion 4.1 "No violation of national laws and regulations that are applicable to biomass production and the production area".
Reference to standards and policies	The NCS 8080, NTA 8080-1 and NTA 8080-2 include references to the applicable standards and guidelines. Additionally, on its website links to background documents including Standards and Legislation, regulations and supporting documents are provided: <a href="https://betterbiomass.nl/en/certification-documents/background-documents/">https://betterbiomass.nl/en/certification-documents/background-documents/</a>
Obligation for certification	Better Biomass certification applies to producer (produce biomass or collect residual flows), processor (process biomass), trader and end-user (use processed biomass for application in bioenergy and biobased products). Organizations that only transport producer or processed biomass are not included in the scope of the standards. A biomass flow that is used for bioenergy or bio-based products at the end of the chain is regarded fully sustainable, if all organizations that are classified as 'producer', 'processor', 'trader' or 'end-user' are in the possession of a valid certificate.
Certification process	The process for being granted a Better Biomass certificate includes: Preparation, Initial audit, Granting of certificate and Maintenance of certificate. Preparation concerns performing of a self-assessment and implementing improvements based on that, contacting a certification body and becoming a member. Based on the initial audit the certificate may be granted. The organisation will be published on the register of certificate holders and can use the logo. Maintenance of certificate concern surveillance audits carried out annually and re-certification in order to extend the certificate for another five years.
Traceability and Chain of custody	NTA 8080-2 describes the requirements on the chain of custody from biomass production to final application in order to assure the traceability of the origin of the biomass. For the application in biobased products, the organization may use the chain of custody models of segregation and mass balance approaches. Three different approaches for applying the mass balance are described in the standard. The organisation at the end of the chain of custody for the application of biobased products shall issue a declaration that includes the biogenic content of the product (physical and assigned) and share of sustainably produced biomass in the biogenic share of the product.
Verification of compliance	The verification of compliance with the NTA 8080 requirements as well as the issuance of Better Biomass certificates are performed by recognised third-party certification bodies who have entered into an agreement with NEN.
Accreditation of Certification Bodies	NEN solely enters into agreement with certification bodies having an applicable accreditation declaration from an IAF/MRA partner. In the Netherlands the Dutch Accreditation Council RvA is the accreditation body that is IAF/MRA partner and accredits certification bodies to the application of this certification scheme. Certification body shall be recognised on the basis of the requirements in ISO/IEC 17065 or equivalent to this.
Training of auditors and staff and qualification and evaluation of competencies	The competences of the audit team shall comply with ISO/IEC 17065 and the guidelines given for this in ISO 19011, supplemented with the requirements described in the Better Biomass certification scheme (NCS 8080:2018-08).
Audit process	The initial certification audit and recertification audit consist of two stages: a) Stage 1 concerns the preliminary investigation. The certification body assesses all the necessary documents, at the organization itself if required, carries out a risk analysis and draws up the audit plan on the

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	basis of inter alia these documents. b) Stage 2 concerns the assessment of the organization. The audit team of the certification body assesses the organization on site. Based on the initial audit the certificate may be granted. The surveillance audit only consists of stage 2 and involves the activities to be carried out at the location to assess all applicable requirements.
Frequency of audit	The Better Biomass certificate is issued for a maximum period of five years. During the validity of the certificate, audits shall be carried out at least once a year (surveillance audits).
Internal audit	The organisation investigates whether it meets the certification requirements (self-assessment). A useful tool to coordinate the improvements is a project plan that describes the necessary actions, the persons involved, the resources needed and the time frame.
Certification claims and labels	Organization of which the assessed production processes comply with the applicable requirements of NTA 8080-1 and NTA 8080-2 in accordance with the assessment criteria of the certification scheme will be issued the 'Better Biomass' certificate. This is the new name for the 'NTA 8080 Approved' certificate. Conditions for the use of logo is described in NEN Scheme management manual as well as in NCS 8080 certification scheme.
Sanctions, non-conformities and suspension	In NCS 8080, the verification method of the requirements of NTA 8080-1 and NTA 8080-2, and to which type of scope these requirements apply i.e., 'producer', 'processor', 'trader' or 'end-user', is specified. The category 'producer' is subdivided into the following organizations: biomass producers (e.g., farmers, foresters); smallholders; collectors of primary residual flows (originating from the agriculture, the forestry, and associated sectors including fisheries and aquaculture); collectors of non-primary residual flows (originating from industrial and household waste). Non-compliance with a specific requirement result in a non-conformity. A non-conformity could be classified as a critical, major or minor non-conformity. NCS 8080 Table 5 shows which non-conformities shall be classified as critical or as major. Other non-conformities may be classified as minor. In case of granting the 'Better Biomass' certificate or in case of recertification, the organization may not have any critical or major non-conformities. At a surveillance audit an organization may have minor and major non-conformities, but no critical non-conformities. If the organization has a major non-conformity, the organization shall provide a proposal for improvement within two weeks after receipt of the audit report from the certification body and shall correct the observed non-conformity within three months subsequently and demonstrate this to the certification body.
Complaint and appeal mechanisms	NEN Scheme Management deals with complaints about the functioning of the committees, the implementation of the committees' activities and the incorrect and/or unlawful use of certification marks by third parties. NEN wide complaints procedure is followed. Additionally, the certification body shall have a documented process about the receipt, evaluation and decision-making of objections. The certification body shall have a procedure for complaints and appeals. Further information on the treatment of objections and appeals is provided on the website <a href="https://betterbiomass.nl/en/about-us/queries-complaints/">https://betterbiomass.nl/en/about-us/queries-complaints/</a> as well as NEN Scheme management manual. For the organisations, NTA 8080-1 section 5.8 requires the organisation to keep registration of the complaints received including how the complaints have been dealt with and the measures that have been taken to prevent repetition of these complaints.
Guarantee smallholder inclusiveness of the standard	The category 'producer' is subdivided into different type of organizations where different requirements are applicable referred to as scope in NCS 8080. Here smallholders are differentiated from biomass producers and less verification requirements apply for this group to ease certification.
Promote continuous improvement	NTAs are reviewed at least once every three years for their being up to date and valid. Internal monitoring is carried out and the scheme owner shall organize at least annually an auditors meeting to support harmonization and unambiguous implementation of the Better Biomass certification scheme. The organizations to be certified should adhere to Monitoring, measurement, analysis, evaluation and continual improvement requirement in NTA 8080-1 section 5.7.
Assurance of quality	The scheme manager and the Committee of Experts guarantee the quality of the published scheme. During the duration of a scheme, this can lead to changes in the scheme. The quality assurance of the scheme requires independent monitoring of the implementation of the scheme. The scheme manager conducts periodic reviews of the licensee to ensure the quality of the application of a scheme and to determine the follow-up to the rules.
Impact assessment	No public document reporting on Impact of the scheme has been found.
Risk management	Risk analysis is part of the assessment process in verification of the requirements by the certification body taking into account the following: a) administrative organization; b) quality of documented information; c) responsibilities and competences of personnel; and d) origin and nature of raw materials; e) annual volumes; f) number of transactions; g) complexity of processes; h) existence of other certifications; i) changes compared with previous year; and j) information from external parties related to scope of certification including possible complaints.

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Cost of certification	The tariffs for certificate holders consist of an annual fee for each certificate and an annual membership fee or annual payment per metric ton. Members are exempt from payment per metric ton and registration costs and receive membership benefits. Membership fee is based on the annual turnover of the organisation. Companies can also choose for a payment of € 0,0312 per metric ton (with a minimum total of € 100). An up-to-date overview of the fee structure can be obtained from <a href="https://betterbiomass.nl/en/certification/certification-roadmap/">https://betterbiomass.nl/en/certification/certification-roadmap/</a>
<b>Sustainability Principles and Criteria</b>	
Reference Document	NTA 8080-1:2015 Sustainably produced biomass for bioenergy and bio-based products – Part 1: Sustainability requirements
Major Must and Minor Must	NCS 8080 Table 5 shows which requirements shall be classified as critical or as major. Others may be classified as minor.
<b>Environmental</b>	
Reduce GHG emissions	6.2.1.2 Greenhouse gas emission savings for biobased products – When using biomass for bio-based products, the organisation shall have access to the data on the own greenhouse gas emissions and the greenhouse gas emissions in the preceding chain. Calculation methodology is provided in Annex C. For biobased products, no requirements are set on the net greenhouse gas emission saving due to lack of (unambiguous) fossil reference.
Protection of land with high carbon stock	6.2.2 High carbon stock, 6.2.2.1 The organization may not produce biomass from land with high carbon stock, namely land that had one of the following statuses on 1 January 2008 or earlier and no longer has this status: a) wetland, b) continuously forested areas, c) land spanning more than one hectare with trees higher than five metres, d) peatland
Protection of peatland	Covered under 6.2.2 High carbon stock
Promote sustainable forest management	6.2.2.4 The organisation shall have written proof for all solid biomass from forests that the production location from which the timber originates, is managed in order to maintain in the long-term or to increase carbon stocks by demonstrating that the carbon cycle remains at least maintained. This proof can be provided in the form of a plan for (sustainable) forest management or similar evidence. Additionally, 6.2.2.5 and 6.2.2.6 are included in the Better Biomass interpretation document N° 8 related to RED II sustainability criteria for forest biomass: one to minimise the risk of using forest biomass derived from unsustainable production; and another to ensure compliance with land use, land-use change and forestry requirements.
Protection of land with a high biodiversity value	6.4.1 Land with high biodiversity value - The organization may not produce biomass from land with high biodiversity value, namely land that had one of the following statuses on 1 January 2008, whether or not the land continues to have that status: a) primary forest and other wooded land, b) areas designated by law or by the relevant competent authority for nature protection purposes & areas for the protection of rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems or species, and c) highly biodiverse grassland
Restoration, preservation and strengthening of biodiversity	6.4.2 Restoration, preservation and strengthening of biodiversity - Include consideration for buffers for riparian vegetation zones and ecological corridors and for the use of genetically modified crops and invasive species.
Sustainable use of water	6.5.2.2 Renewable sources and the availability of water - The organization must ensure that the use of surface and groundwater does not exceed the natural replenishment of the surface or groundwater system over a five-year average. No water from non-renewable sources shall be used. Link to Water Footprint Network is provided for data on water availability in the region.
Maintaining and enhancing water quality	6.5.2.1 Preservation and improvement of water quality - Include consideration for the measurement of biological oxygen demand and for risks to ground and surface water as a result of the use of chemicals.
Maintaining and enhancing soil quality and productivity	6.5.1.1 Preservation and improving soil quality - Include consideration for: a) erosion, b) nutrient balance, c) soil organic matter, d) soil fertility and soil structure; e) soil salination; and f) use of chemicals. Link is provided to BioESoil to assess the impacts on soil quality.
Soil quality consideration for use of residual flows	6.5.1.2 Use of residual flows - The organization must ensure that the use of residual flows does not conflict with other established, local essential functions for the preservation of the soil and soil quality.
Prohibition on the use of hazardous/toxic chemicals	6.5.1.1 and 6.5.2.1 requires that the use of pesticides that are classified as type 1A or type 1B by the World Health Organization, and the use of chlorified hydrocarbons are excluded
Implement best practices for the use of (agro)chemicals	Consideration of use of chemicals implicitly covered under 6.5.1.1 soil quality and 6.5.2.1 water quality – risks for the soil/water as a consequence of the storage and the use of chemicals and other business processes are prevented and controlled. In the case of forestry, chemicals are used only if the maximum use of ecological processes and sustainable alternatives proves to be insufficient.
Restrict air pollution, promote good air quality	6.5.3.1 Restricting emissions and air pollution – The organisation shall take any measures that are necessary to ensure that the emission of harmful substances into the air as a result of the production, processing and transport of biomass at the production location is limited. 6.5.3.2 No burning as part of the installation or management

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Limit the risk of Indirect Land Use Change (ILUC)	This sustainability aspect is only required for organizations that market their biomass as 'ILUC low risk'. 6.3.3 ILUC low risk - The organization can opt or may be required to market its biomass as ILUC low risk. Then the organisation shall reduce the risk of ILUC in the biomass chain by choosing one or more of the possible solutions: 1) growing biomass on previously unused land; 2) additional productivity increase, on top of the trend line; 3) integrating existing agriculture or forestry with additional biomass production; and 4) use of waste and residual flows that had no other application before. Link is provided to the Low Indirect Impact Biofuel (LIIB) certification module for this purpose.
<b>Circularity</b>	
Promote waste reduction and responsible waste management	6.5.4.1 Waste management - The organization must take measures necessary to ensure that the practices applied in its business operations are aimed at the responsible waste management. This includes prevention of waste, reuse of waste, separation of waste for recycling, recovery of waste other than reuse or recycling, and responsible disposal of waste.
Raw material efficiency	6.3.2 Raw materials - efficient use of biomass - Biomass should be used as resource-efficient as possible over the entire life cycle and continued to be used (Cascading). 6.5.4.2 Use of residual flows - The organization shall take measures to ensure that residual flows from the production and processing process of biomass are put to optimum use.
Efficient use of energy	Implicitly covered under 6.3.2 efficient use of biomass.
Promote use of renewable sources	-
Promote material circularity	Implicitly covered under 6.3.2 which considers continued use of biomass as a raw material, cascading use.
<b>Social</b>	
Compliance with labour rights	Covered by sections 6.7.3.1 Child labour, 6.7.1.1 Fair salary and remuneration, 6.7.3.5 Association and collective bargaining rights, and 6.7.1.4 Grievance mechanism. No explicit section for Forced and compulsory labour, and Discrimination. NTA 8080-2 directly refers to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, with regard to non-discrimination, child labour, forced and compulsory labour, disciplinary practices, safety practices, the freedom of trade union association and the rights of indigenous peoples. Provisions in 6.7.1 and 6.7.3 concretize the practices that should at least be implemented.
Respect wellbeing of workers	Covered by sections 6.7.3.2 Contract, 6.7.3.6 Training, 6.7.1.3 Occupational health and safety, 6.7.3.7 Harassment and violence, and 6.7.1.2 Hours of work and overtime. NTA 8080-2 directly refers to the Tripartite declaration of principles concerning multinational enterprises and social policy of International Labour Organisation concerning employment, labour relations, health and safety, training and education, diversity and equal opportunities, and complaints handling. Provisions in 6.7.1 and 6.7.3 concretize the practices that should at least be implemented.
Respect property and usage rights	Covered by 6.7.4 Property and usage rights
Respect wellbeing of the local population	Health and safety of local community covered by 6.7.5.1 health and safety relating to the infrastructure, hazardous substances and materials, emissions and secretions, health and disease Local services covered by 6.6.1 The organisation shall demonstrate that its activities have a positive impact on the access to infrastructure and basic facilities (a house, sanitary facilities, education, healthcare, water, energy, etc.) in the region concerned. Engagement with local community covered by 6.7.2 Responsible contact with (local) stakeholders, as well as with 5.5 Stakeholder consultation - 5.5.1 The organization shall consult the stakeholders who have some interest in the area where the production location is or will be established
Food security	6.3.1 If the organization makes use of local biomass flows or natural resources (e.g., land, water and raw materials) that are essential to the basic needs of the local population, it shall monitor the local prices thereof. In the event of significant increases in prices, the organization shall demonstrate that such increases are not due to its activities.
<b>Economic</b>	
Financial and economic viability	Implicitly covered under 5.7 Monitoring, measurement, analysis, evaluation and continual improvement
Fair business practices, Integrity	6.7.6 Integrity of the company – 6.7.6.3 The organization shall take any measures that are necessary to effectively fight corruption within the organization.
Promote local development, Inclusive economic growth	6.6.1 The organization shall demonstrate that its activities have a positive impact on the average income in the region concerned 6.6.2 The organization shall demonstrate that it tries to recruit new staff from among the local population; 6.6.4 The organization shall demonstrate that local suppliers, if present, have been contacted when purchasing products and outsourcing services; 6.7.5.2 The organization shall take measures that are necessary in order to positively influence the local population as regards creating employment

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Use of knowledge and technology	6.7.4.4 The organization shall compensate the local population for the application of their traditional knowledge
Fair trade and market practices	-
Risk assessment and management	Risk analysis is mentioned under 6.4.2.2 risk of invasiveness of alien species, 6.5.1.1 erosion risk, 6.5.1.1 and 2.1 risk from chemicals use on soil and water quality, and 6.7.6.1 related to fighting corruption.

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Sources:

- Better Biomass website <https://betterbiomass.nl/> (Last visited: 30 March 2023)
- Better Biomass certification documents <https://betterbiomass.nl/en/certification-documents/current-certification-documents/> (Last visited: 30 March 2023)