


6.10 Factsheet Blue Angel

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

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

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Scheme Feature	Description
General	
Name of scheme	Blue Angel
Scheme owner	The German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) is the owner of the Blue Angel, and it carries a high level of responsibility when it comes to using the label for providing reliable product information. It promotes the Blue Angel to the public, companies and associations, as well as within the political arena. The Blue Angel has been the ecolabel of the German federal government for more than 40 years. It is awarded to environmentally friendly products and services.
Website	https://www.blauer-engel.de/en/
Label provided	
Operational since	1978
Number of active certificates	The Blue Angel has currently 95 product groups and has awarded more than 20,000 products and services from more than 1,600 companies.
Standard ownership	The Blue Angel is a private, independent and voluntary ecolabel.
General objective	The Blue Angel aims to provide private customers, large institutional consumers and public institutions with reliable guidance for environmentally conscious purchasing. The ecolabel aims to promote eco-friendly innovations by creating a specific demand for environmentally friendly products, and in turn help to minimise environmental pollution.
Scope	
Biomass feedstock coverage	A wide range of biomass is covered by the Blue Angel. The Blue Angel uses certification system for verification of feedstock sustainability such as certified recycled or forestry biomass (FSC, PEFC or equivalent rules sustainable management according to FAO), as well as for agricultural biomass and biological wastes. The label is provided and not on the raw materials.
Sector/Product group coverage	The ecolabel covers a wide spectrum of products and services. The Blue Angel certification is applicable to different products and services. There are 8 product categories: household/drugstore, living/textile, green IT/household appliance, construction products, heating/energy, paper/stationary, vehicles/ mobility and services/municipality. No fuels and energy generation is covered, only products related to these (e.g., energy meters, stoves for wood, car sharing services, catalytic converters for motor vehicles). For this project the 6 sectors are: plastics, construction, woodworking, textiles, paper and chemicals. Therefore, these categories of Blue Angel are most relevant: household/drugstore, living/textile, construction products, paper/stationery and services/municipality.
Supply chain coverage	The Blue Angel covers the whole supply chain. The environmental label takes a holistic view of the life cycle of the product – from its production and use through to its disposal and recycling.

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Geographic focus of the standard	The Blue Angel focuses on German government's environmental policy; however the ecolabel is used globally in international markets. The Blue Angel has now concluded "mutual recognition agreements". These agreements usually include close collaboration in the development of award criteria and mutual testing and certification of applications for the use of the labels. This helps companies to also use the ecolabel of the other country. Blue Angel has agreements with Austria, China, Japan and South Korea.
Governance, Standard Development and Certification Requirements	
Scheme governance	The German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) is the owner of the label. It defines the fundamental guidelines for the award of the Blue Angel and appoints the members of the Environmental Label Jury. The German Environment Agency (UBA) develops the Basic Award Criteria on a scientific basis that a product or service must comply with in order to be certified with the Blue Angel. UBA also regularly checks the criteria to ensure they conform to the latest technological standards. The Environmental Label Jury is an independent, impartial, and voluntary body that ensures the reliability of the Blue Angel and decides which new product groups are added and discusses and approves the Basic Award Criteria proposed by the UBA. An independent organisation, RAL gGmbH (a non-profit private limited company) checks compliance with the requirements after the submission of the product-specific application by a company and concludes contracts on the use of the Blue Angel with the companies.
Standard documents	Blue Angel provides for each product group the Basic Award Criteria and application documents to help through the application process. They can be downloaded from the website: https://www.blauer-engel.de/en/products , where the list of labelled products is also available. The Blue Angel provides additional guidelines e.g., regarding use of logo are also available at: https://www.blauer-engel.de/sites/default/files/2021-11/Logo-Guidelines-Blue-Angel-Edition-November-2021.pdf .
Transparency and accessibility of standard documents	The Blue Angel sets the requirements that all certified products must comply with. The Blue Angel is transparent and publishes all of the Basic Award Criteria (in German and English), as well as information on the background to the different labels, companies, certified products and updates to each product group.
Multi-stakeholder participation in standard development	The Blue Angel has a multistakeholder participation. The German Environment Agency (UBA) develops requirements (so-called Basic Award Criteria) for each specific product group based on scientific publications. The experts at the UBA are responsible for any updates that are required due to changes in technological standards and for periodic reviews of the criteria, sometimes in cooperation with other independent scientific institutions and experts. Interested stakeholders, such as companies, scientists and NGOs from the relevant product sector, are also involved in the development of the Basic Award Criteria and dialogue is maintained with them. The Environmental Label Jury is the decision-making body and is comprised by a multistakeholder with 15 representatives from environmental and consumer associations, trade unions, industry, the trade, crafts, local authorities, academia, the media, churches, young people and the German federal states.
Compliance with ISEAL's Standards-Setting, Impacts and Assurance Codes of Good Practice	The Blue Angel is an ISO 14024 (2018) Type 1 Ecolabel and conforms to the requirements of this international standard along with the more general ISO 14020 (2022). The Blue Angel does not refer to ISEAL codes. However, certification schemes that the Blue Angel accepts as documentation for responsibly sourced raw materials, must comply with ISEAL codes.
Compliance with regional, national, international laws	Compliance with the relevant German and European legislation and international laws is written in the Basic Award Criteria.
Reference to standards and policies	The Blue Angel is an ISO 14024 Type 1 ecolabel and a member of the Global Ecolabelling Network. In the Basic Award Criteria per product category reference to the relevant standards and legislation are provided. Standards at national, European and International level (DIN, EN, ISO standard) are referenced.
Obligation for certification	The Blue Angel is awarded to a company that offers or produces its products or services in a particularly environmentally friendly way and fulfils the established product criteria. The Blue Angel may only be used for the end product that has been awarded the label.
Certification process	The Blue Angel application process is as follows: 1. Find Basic Award Criteria for your product or service. 2. Download the documentation for application. 3. Submit the documentation to the online application portal exclusively. Following application RAL checks the application for the use of the environmental label for compliance with the stipulated requirements and concludes contract on the use of the environmental label with the supplier/manufacturer.
Traceability and Chain of custody	The manufacturer of the Blue Angel ecolabelled product must show that raw material suppliers are certified and provide information about traceability system. The applicable chain of custody system is provided per product group, e.g., mass Balance, is accepted as traceability systems for palm oil palm kernel oil and their derivatives, but other product groups also use identity preserved and segregation models. The supplier of wood raw materials must have a valid Chain of Custody (CoC) certification under the FSC / PEFC schemes.

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Verification of compliance	The Blue Angel is a Type 1 Ecolabel and requires independent third-party certification which is carried out by RAL gGmbH as an independent certification body.
Accreditation of Certification Bodies	The RAL gGmbH as an independent certification body, checks compliance with the requirements after the submission of the product-specific application by a company and concludes contracts on the use of the Blue Angel with the companies. The Blue Angel is a TYPE I environmental label, based on ISO 17065 and the DIN ISO 14024 international standard, a its independent product testing and transparent processes for the development and award of the label. The general list of accredited testing institutions in Germany can be found at e.g. www.dakks.de/content/datenbank-akkreditierter-stellen and the overview of the European accreditation members at: www.european-accreditation.org/ea-members .
Training of auditors and staff and qualification and evaluation of competencies	Not explicitly provided in public documents.
Audit process	RAL gGmbH inspects the completeness and accuracy of the documents provided as evidence of compliance with the relevant criteria and requirement. If the product satisfies the relevant requirements, the parties enter into an agreement on the use of the Blue Angel.
Frequency of audit	Use of the Blue Angel ecolabel is limited to the period of validity of the Basic Award Criteria which are reviewed and prolonged with or without revision every 2 to 4 years. In case of revision re-certification and a new auditing is required. The company needs to submit a new application based on the amended criteria. Specific information is provided on license validity in each product group criteria document. The company receives notification about the termination of the existing contract and information on the new criteria.
Internal audit	No requirement on self-assessment or internal audit provided in public documents.
Certification claims and labels	The Blue Angel Guidelines are designed to be used by all label holders and label users whose products comply with the requirements of the Basic Award Criteria. Label holders and label users of the Blue Angel certification are permitted to use the logo on the relevant product for their advertising and communication measures after concluding a contract on the use of the environmental label with RAL gGmbH.
Sanctions, non-conformities and suspension	The RAL gGmbH does not conclude the contract on the Use of the Environmental label before consulting the respective State Ministry for the Environment and before reviewing the submitted documents for correctness and completeness and the results of the testing laboratories. In the event of misuse of the Blue Angel a warning letter will be sent to the label user and in the event of breach of the Basic Award Criteria the eco-label can be withdrawn.
Complaint and appeal mechanisms	The complaint and appeal mechanism of the Blue Angel is not explicitly described in public documents. However, there is feedback channel online to reach the Blue Angel. https://www.blauer-engel.de/en/blue-angel/feedback
Guarantee smallholder inclusiveness of the standard	Not explicitly provided in public documents.
Promote continuous improvement	The Blue Angel is a Type 1 Ecolabel according to the standard ISO 14024 which requires a development through continuous improvements and regular evaluation, review of the requirements and tightens the requirements based on the latest environmental knowledge and market developments. As a member of GEN, the scheme is evaluated against ISO 14024 regularly within every five-six years in the GENICES process by colleagues under the auspices of the GEN board.
Assurance of quality	Aspect of quality management is considered in the requirements for product properties that ensure quality The Blue Angel guarantees that a product places less burden on the environment and fulfils high standards with respect to the protection of human health while also having the same fitness for use and quality as other products. Longevity, ability to repair and recyclability are also considered for the product quality.
Impact assessment	The Blue Angel guarantees that a product does less damage to the environment based on scientific investigations, its own studies, and market research, the German Environment Agency (UBA) creates requirements specific to product groups ("award criteria") as a prerequisite for being certified with the ecolabel. The aim is to identify the key environmentally relevant areas for each group of products in which considerable impacts on the environment can be reduced or even avoided.
Risk management	Aspect of risk management is considered indirectly in the Blue Angel by using the international agreements as a reference for internal purposes and also in the sense of precautionary risk management. Overall, the Blue Angel eco-label's risk management approach is focused on preventing harm to the environment and human health by addressing potential hazards at every stage of a product's lifecycle.
Cost of certification	The certification cost includes a one-off fee of 400 EUR (plus the statutory level of VAT) for processing the application, plus an annual fee which depends on the total annual turnover of the products (goods and services). The annual fee varies between 320 EUR-10,500 EUR depending on the total annual turnover of the products per Basic Criteria for the Award of the Environmental Label. If no annual turnover is generated the

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	applicant shall pay at least the lowest annual fee category). A processing fee of €200 (plus the statutory level of VAT) must be paid to RAL gGmbH by the applicant for the conclusion of each contract extension. More detailed and updated fee information can be reviewed at: https://www.blauer-engel.de/en/certification/costs-applying-label
Sustainability Principles and Criteria	
Reference Document	There is not a single document summarizing and describing the sustainability principles and criteria requirements for all products or product categories. However, the Blue Angel considers in the award criteria the following aspects: resource-saving production, sustainable production of resources, avoidance of harmful substances in the product, reduced emissions of harmful substances in the ground, air, water and indoors, reduced noise and electromagnetic radiation, efficient use, energy or water, longevity, ability to repair and recycle the product, compliance with international occupational safety standards, take-back systems and shared-use services, e.g. car sharing. General information on the guiding environmental principle can be found at: https://www.blauer-engel.de/en/publications/detail/brief-information-guiding-principles-behind-blue-angel-environmental-label-0
Major Must and Minor Must	n/a
Environmental	
General information	The Blue Angel sets environmental requirements for each product group taking a holistic view of the life cycle of the product – from its production and use through to its disposal and recycling. Relevant information found related to these environmental aspects are provided below. This includes criteria on low energy consumption, low emissions to water, air and soil and the preservation of resources. It also takes into account aspects, such as low levels of pollutants and restriction on hazardous materials. There is specific consideration on the use of sustainable and renewable raw materials in some product categories. To ensure that biological raw materials are sustainably sourced, the Blue Angel assesses and accepts credible third-party standards and certification schemes e.g., FSC and PEFC for sustainable forestry in products which include fibre raw materials. For agricultural products the following certification systems are considered suitable to verify sustainable cultivation: RSPO (Roundtable on Sustainable Palmoil), ISCC (International Sustainable & Carbon Certification), RSB (Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterial), Roundtable Responsible Soy (RTRS) und ProTerra (ProTerra Foundation) or a comparable certification system whose scope and requirement standards are equivalent to one of the named certification systems. If not explicitly included in Blue Angel criteria, the criteria below may be covered indirectly through recognition of these sustainability certification schemes. Additionally, In the project "Implementation of sustainability criteria for the material use of biomass in the context of the Blue Angel" concrete sustainability requirements for individual bio-based products will be developed where three product groups are considered: biobased plastics (as material grade), biobased lubricating oils and hydraulic fluids (as final product) and biobased detergents and cleaners (as final product).
Reduce GHG emissions	The Blue Angel focuses on preventing and reducing and as far as possible eliminate pollution to air arising from industrial activities. The Blue Angel requests for some products related to construction materials a product-specific environmental product declaration (EPD) pursuant to DIN EN 15804 which includes parameter for GHG emission reporting as Global warming potential (GWP).
Protection of land with high carbon stock	Indirectly covered by setting restrictions on the use of certain raw materials that are not produced or sourced in a sustainable way and by accepting certification for sustainable forest and agricultural feedstocks that are listed above.
Protection of peatland	Indirectly covered through accepting recognized sustainability certification standards such as ISCC, RSB where this criterion is covered.
Promote sustainable forest management	The Blue Angel requires that wood raw materials used in Blue Angel ecolabelled products must come from legal sources. Moreover, at least 50 percent of the total amount of wood used for wood-based materials shall be sourced from sustainable forests. Compliance with the requirement for using wood from sustainable forestry can be verified according to the FSC or PEFC certification. For some product groups 100 percent certification is required e.g., nappies, thermal paper.
Protection of land with a high biodiversity value	The Blue Angel indirectly promotes conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources. The Blue Angel eco-label has specific criteria to protect biodiversity in various product categories such as paper, cleaning products, and textiles, among others. These criteria aim to promote the sustainable use of natural resources, reduce negative impacts on biodiversity, and support the conservation of species and ecosystems. For this, the Blue Angel uses recognized sustainable certification schemes to prevent the increased risk of deforestation and which are associated with a serious loss of biodiversity and losses to ecosystem services. Materials sourced from animal, plant or wood species listed either in CITES23 in Annexes I, II or III24 or which originate from a region included on the IUCN Red List25 and are classified in the categories "critically endangered", "endangered" or "vulnerable" are excluded from the scope of these Basic Award Criteria
Restoration, preservation and strengthening of biodiversity	The Blue Angel has taken measures to protect and strength biodiversity, for example: genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in certain agricultural products like cotton production and the use of recycle paper.

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Sustainable use of water	For selected product groups the ecolabel sets requirements for sustainable water consumption and demands that measures be taken to reduce the amount of unwanted chemicals in water. An important area covered by the Blue Angel is resource-conserving and the efficient use of water. The Ecolabel has strict requirements for the use of pesticides in cultivation of cotton and other raw materials. Other requirements limit the use of unwanted dyes and other chemical substances in the manufacturing of, for example, textiles and paper.
Maintaining and enhancing water quality	The Blue Angel takes measurements to reduce the amount of unwanted chemicals to water bodies and sets requirements for treatment of wastewater. The Ecolabel has strict requirements for the use of pesticides in cultivation of cotton and other raw materials. Other requirements limit the use of unwanted dyes and other chemical substances in the manufacturing of, for example, textiles and paper. For some product groups related to construction materials it is also required to report Eutrophication potential (EP), according to EN 15804.
Maintaining and enhancing soil quality and productivity	The Blue Angel eco-label maintains and enhances soil quality and productivity by considering soil management practices, organic production, reduced use of hazardous substances to the soil, life cycle assessment. This approach ensures that the products certified do not have significant negative impacts on soil quality and productivity, such as erosion, soil contamination, or the depletion of natural resources.
Soil quality consideration for use of residual flows	Indirectly covered through accepting recognized sustainability certification standards such as ISCC, RSB where this criterion is covered.
Prohibition on the use of hazardous/toxic chemicals	Compliance with the German and European chemicals legislation as well as with the industry-related regulations is considered a matter of course for Blue Angel ecolabelled products (this includes above all REACH Regulation, Annex XVII, Persistent Organic Pollutant Regulation (POP) Annex I, CLP Regulation, ChemVerbotsV (Chemicals Prohibition Ordinance), Decopaint Directive, GefStoffV (Ordinance on Hazardous Substances), VDL-RL 01, Council Directive 92/112/EEC, 25. BImSchV (25th Federal Immission Protection Ordinance), Biocidal Products Regulation (BPR), VerpackG (German Packaging Act), etc. The ecolabel helps reducing the amount of hazardous substances in the products and that pollute air, soil, water and indoor spaces e.g., the use of chlorine, halogenated bleaching agents and not readily biodegradable complexing agents is also prohibited during the production process of recycled paper.
Implement best practices for the use of (agro)chemicals	Indirectly covered through accepting recognized sustainability certification standards such as ISCC, RSB where this criterion is covered.
Restrict air pollution, promote good air quality	The Blue Angel has explicit requirement for indoor air quality limiting the emission volatile organic substances as well as other type of sulfur, nitrogen oxide and dust emissions that may arise from processing.
Limit the risk of Indirect Land Use Change (ILUC)	Indirectly covered through accepting recognized sustainability certification standards such as RSB which also has an add-on to address ILUC.
Circularity	
General information	The Blue Angel promotes circular economy by promoting durability, reparability and recyclability in products. Requirements exist for efficient use of products and use of low level of energy or water.
Promote waste reduction and responsible waste management	Waste reduction and waste management is an explicit criterion covered by some product groups, otherwise also covered by accepting recognized sustainability certification schemes. The Blue Angel strives to reduce waste, also by promoting reuse and recyclability of materials e.g., paper and plastic.
Raw material efficiency	The Blue Angel emphasizes resource efficiency both for products and services and strive to make producers shift towards more renewable resources and sustainable types of technology.
Efficient use of energy	The Blue Angel promotes the efficient energy use and promotes less use of fossil fuels. For some product groups limits are set in the energy consumption in the production process
Promote use of renewable sources	The Blue Angel promotes and stimulates the use of renewable resources in different product criteria (e.g., lubricant, surfactant, plastics used in nappies, colorants used in paper products). In some product group criteria (e.g., thermal and sanitary paper) it is explicitly required that the consumed electricity should be sourced from renewable energies.
Promote material circularity	The requirements placed on the products themselves and their packages and containers are designed to promote the use of post-consumer recycled materials and thus support the goal of a circular economy. Also, criteria exist on the fitness for use, durability and not allowing hazardous substances that may well impede recycling. The Blue Angel follows the perspective reflected in the environmental policy targets at EU level within the scope of the EU Commission circular economy activities. The Blue Angel is part of the Circular Economy Labels and Information Schemes (CELIS) which is composed by the group of labels, certifications, standards of information schemes that fully or partially address one or more resource efficiency or circular economy elements.

Social

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General information	The Blue Angel is at its core an environmental label, but it increasingly focuses on other aspects such as working conditions during the production process. The Blue Angel criteria for some product groups also include some social requirements such as textiles and leather. For textiles the social and human rights requirements for the recognition of certification labels are according to the Green Button 2.0 and for leather, the applicant undertakes to comply with the Code of Conduct for the Leather Industry. Relevant information found related to these social aspects are provided below. Social criteria are still rare in the Blue Angel, especially when it comes to social aspects during raw material extraction. However, the German Federal Environment Agency (UBA) commissioned the project "Extended integration of social aspects in the Blue Angel eco-label" to analyse the expectations and interests of consumers and enterprises regarding the integration of social criteria.
Compliance with labour rights	Basic Award Criteria updates for some product groups also includes social aspects related to manufacturing conditions e.g., observance of the International Labour Organization (ILO) core conventions. That means, for example, that there is no child labour, no forced labour, no discrimination, and there is freedom of association and fair salary.
Respect wellbeing of workers	This aspect is indirectly covered through recognition of voluntary sustainability certification schemes. Additionally, the Blue Angel has requirements set for substances that are hazardous to health and the environment in products and manufacturing. This helps to prevent both users and factory workers from being exposed to harmful chemicals. The Blue Angel also has for some product groups requirement on the reduction in noise and electromagnetic radiation during the production.
Respect property and usage rights	This aspect is indirectly covered through recognition of voluntary sustainability certification schemes where this requirement is covered.
Respect wellbeing of the local population	This aspect is indirectly covered through recognition of voluntary sustainability certification schemes. Additionally, the Blue Angel lends itself for the labelling of products that are low-emission and thus non-hazardous to health.
Food security	This aspect is indirectly covered through recognition of voluntary sustainability certification schemes.
Economic	
General information	The Blue Angel criteria focuses mainly on environmental aspects, health aspects and some social aspect of concern in a few product groups. Economic aspects are outside scope. Relevant information found related to economic aspects are provided below.
Financial and economic viability	The Blue Angel is reacting to new challenges and helping shape the change in the economy towards a more sustainable growth by providing market benefits to products and services that are environmentally sustainable. Also related to use of wood it is required that it is sourced from sustainable forests which are managed in a verifiably economically viable, environmentally sound and socially responsible way.
Fair business practices, Integrity	-
Promote local development, Inclusive economic growth	-
Use of knowledge and technology	-
Fair trade and market practices	-
Risk assessment and management	-

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Sources:

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- OECD Environment Working Paper No. 183. Labelling and Information Schemes for the Circular Economy (2021). [https://one.oecd.org/document/ENV/WKP\(2021\)15/En/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/ENV/WKP(2021)15/En/pdf) . (Last visited: April 2023)
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- Blue Angel criteria for Textiles DE-UZ 154. Version 1, January 2023.
- Blue Angel criteria for products made from recycled Plastics DE-UZ 30. Version 8, Edition January 2019
- Blue Angel criteria for Graphic paper and cardboard made from 100% recovered paper DE-UZ 14a. Version 5, January 2020
- Blue Angel criteria for Low-emission and low-pollutant paints and varnishes DE-UZ 12a. Version 8, January 2019
- Blue Angel criteria for Laundry detergent DE-UZ 202. Version 1, Edition January 2022.
- Blue Angel criteria for Sanitary paper DE-UZ 5. Version 1, Edition January 2022.
- Blue Angel criteria for Biodegradable Lubricants and Hydraulic Fluids DE-UZ 178. Version 2, Edition January 2022.
- Blue Angel criteria for Nappies, feminine hygiene and incontinence products (absorbent hygiene products, AHP) DE-UZ 208. Version 3, Edition January 2021.
- Blue Angel criteria for Low-emission Flooring Adhesives and other Installation Materials DE-UZ 113. Version 7, Edition January 2019.
- Blue Angel criteria for Thermal Paper DE-UZ 223. Version 2, Edition January 2022.
- Blue Angel criteria for Flushing Water Additives Compatible with Wastewater Treatment Plants. DE-UZ 84b, Version 2, March 2013