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# The Eco-Choice Ecolabel Programme Service Standard

## Business Services



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## Use of This Standard

This voluntary environmental labeling standard may be used by competent environmental assessors to establish cleaning service providers' compliance with the Heritage Eco-Choice Ecolabel Programme. Services that are certified with the mark of conformity in terms of this standard have been independently assessed and demonstrate compliance to the environmental and social performance criteria detailed in this standard. The overall goal of environmental labels and declarations is the communication of verifiable and accurate information, which is not misleading, on environmental aspects of products and services. This encourages the demand for, and supply of, those products and services that cause less stress on the environment, thereby stimulating the potential for market-driven continuous environmental improvement.

This standard identifies environmental, quality, regulatory and social performance criteria that cleaning services provided on the South African market can meet in order to be considered as good "environment practice". Cleaning Service providers that have been certified to this standard have the opportunity to receive higher market recognition and a compliance and certification creates a marketing advantage in government and business procurement programs, as well as broad consumer preference.

This standard can be used by cleaning service providers to guide their environmental programs by using the environmental criteria as key performance benchmarks to reduce the environmental loads resulting from their activities. The standard is necessarily restricted in its identification of environmental loads under the direct control of the service provider. Providers should consider other environmental measures, which are not included in this standard, in their activities and aim for even higher levels of environmental performance where technically possible.

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### ***Eco-Choice Ecolabel Programme***

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## ECO-CHOICE ECOLABEL PROGRAMME STANDARD FOR BUSINESS SERVICES

# Business Services

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### Purpose

This Standard specifies environmental performance requirements of a broad range of environmentally managed services for the Eco-Choice Ecolabel Program. The program complies with ISO 14024: "Environmental labels and declarations - Guiding principles" which requires environmental labeling specifications to include criteria that are objective, reasonable and verifiable.

This standard specifies requirements for the use of energy and water by a business service provider as well as the systems which should be in place to support waste management and product procurement. Requirements for the arrangement of cleaning, maintenance and cultural programs exist as well as compliances with regulatory bodies concerning the environment and occupational health and safety.

### Definitions

**Appliance** includes: all items from kitchen, bathroom, meeting and work areas which consume energy and perform a function.

**Business Service** refers to any management, business, human, financial, legal, technical or consulting service

**Label** means the Eco-Choice Ecolabel Programme Label for certification of service providers.

**Product** is a broad term covering both goods, which are physical objects, and services.

**Renewable Energy** is an energy resource that is rapidly replaced by natural processes. Examples include: biomass, geothermal, hydro, solar, tidal and wind.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Purpose

This Standard seeks to define good environmental performance benchmarks for service providers involved in administration. It is a voluntary environmental labeling standard administered by Eco-Choice Ecolabel Programme which specifies minimum environmental performance criteria for the sector. Members of the sector who adhere to the standard will demonstrate environmental preference over their peers.

### 1.2. Background

The services sector and in particular cleaning services have become a dominant economic activity across the world. In southern Africa, it is estimated that this sector accounts for approximately three-quarters of national economic activity and for creating three out of every five jobs. Services also provide essential inputs, such as energy, communications and transport, into nearly everything produced on a national scale and they have become an important part of the global economy, accounting for the dominant share of output and employment in most industrialised countries.

Over the past decades, the share of GDP accounted for by the services sector has continually and significantly increased. Growth in the sector's share of employment has been even stronger - increasing by almost 20 percent from the mid 1960s. At the same time, the environmentally damaging effects of the commercial sector have become more apparent. The 2008 South African *State of the Environment Report* reflects the impacts that the services sector has on global warming by their contributions to energy and water consumption and waste creation.

The primary purpose of this standard is to define environmental performance criteria for the provision of services, in particular the environmental impact resulting from activities undertaken by service providers. In many cases the service provider has no control over the environmental impacts of the built environment itself; however, a significant environmental impact is attributable to the energy, waste and water consumption habits of service providers and their procurement and consumption of materials either directly or on behalf of their clients. This Standard is limited to activities that are directly controlled by the service provider without imposing requirements on the built environment or client specifically.

The Green Building Council of South Africa provides comprehensive environmental performance criteria for buildings and structures, including retail centres, and defines environmental performance benchmarks for the built environment. The Green Star Rating Scheme administered by the Green Building Council of South Africa provides the appropriate framework for encouraging environmentally preferable building design, construction and renovation. More information may be found on the Green Building Council website: <http://www.gbcsa.co.za>

An environmentally efficient commercial sector is preferable because it reduces the demand for virgin raw materials at the same time as limiting the emission of various wastes. While direct impacts such as these are most obvious, there are also indirect impacts such as those on human health and wellbeing.

## 2 STANDARD CATEGORY SCOPE

This standard is applicable to business administrative services provided on behalf of a company by any external service provider. This includes the following categories:

- Business services (e.g. management and business strategy)
- Legal and insurance services
- Management of resources (e.g. human, financial or intellectual)
- Marketing and advertising
- Support for a product or service (e.g. call centres and technical support)
- Consulting to the businesses listed above

This standard is not applicable to:

- Accommodation
- Cafes and restaurants
- Construction
- Distribution services
- Manufacturing facilities
- Mining operations
- Public services
- Utilities (e.g. electricity, gas and water)
- Wholesale or retail trade
- Laboratory facilities
- Educational facilities
- Childcare services
- Property services
- The built environment

This standard applies only to the extent that the applicant has control over the facility being used. For example, a service provider with no control over existing infrastructure is not expected to be responsible for hardware or furnishings that are provided under the lease or service contract, but is expected to where appropriate make whatever operational and procurement changes possible to ensure the minimisation of environmental impacts resulting from their activities.

Developers and building owners may wish to consider using the Green Star rating tools provided by the Green Building Council of South Africa to assist in the environmentally conscious design and construction of new facilities or refurbishment of existing facilities.

### Use of the Eco-Choice Label

The Label must be used appropriately by certified organisations in line with the licensing agreement offered to successful applicants. This includes specification of the certified service and licence number alongside any display of the label. The Label must not be used to over-represent the extent and scope of certification under this Standard.

Certification under this Standard applies only to the administrative function of the retailer seeking certification. The Label must not be associated with goods or with other services excluded by this scope that are provided by the retailer, or as part of advertising material for those goods or services.

Physical goods may be certified by Eco-Choice under the relevant product category standard and may only then carry the Eco-Choice Label for goods. The Eco-Choice label for retail services does not in any way constitute endorsement of products provided by the retailer.

### 3 ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

#### 3.1 Energy Use

##### 3.1.1 Energy Measurement

Energy use must be measured and recorded on a minimum quarterly basis. Total energy use should be broken down into categories including, as a minimum: electricity, gas, renewable electricity. This energy data must be specific to the applicant and able to be audited by viewing receipts from their energy supplier.

##### 3.1.2 Energy Usage

This section does not include fuel use from company vehicles.

For grid electricity, either:

- A minimum of 20% renewable electricity must be sourced from a recognised and approved Green Power provider, or
- A minimum of 20% of the total electricity used from non-renewable sources must be offset by a carbon credit provider acceptable to Eco-Choice.

For other non-renewable energy sources, (e.g., gas):

- A minimum of 20% of the total energy used from non-renewable sources must be offset by a carbon credit provider acceptable to Eco-Choice.

##### 3.1.3 Lighting

This section may not apply where a service provider can prove they have no control over the systems in place after a written request to the property owner or manager.

All non emergency lighting must be switched off after hours.

No incandescent lamps may be installed. An exception is made for applications where there is no low-energy lamp on the market for the fitting, or where fitness for purpose cannot be demonstrated using a low-energy lamp.

##### 3.1.4 Heating and Cooling

This section may not apply where a service provider can prove they have no control over the systems in place after a written request to the property owner or manager.

Cooling and heating systems must have their thermostats set no lower than 20°C for summer months and no higher than 24°C for winter months.

All heating and cooling systems must be switched off after hours. Exemptions may be granted where energy usage measurements demonstrate improved overall efficiency from continuous operation.

##### 3.1.5 Hot Water

Hot water systems involving hot water storage (e.g., urns) must not be installed. Existing systems may be used, but may only be replaced at end-of-life with energy efficient alternatives, such as flash-heating systems (Hydroboil); gas-preheaters or non-storage-based systems.

##### 3.1.6 Power Management

All appliances including computers capable of power management must have these features switched on. Where possible a maximum time of 15 minutes should be set for an appliance to be inactive before it enters 'suspend' mode.

All computers must be turned off after hours. Computers performing a constant business function, such as servers, are exempt from this requirement if display devices that are able to be turned off are switched off when not in active use.

### **3.2 Water Use**

This section may not apply where a tenant can prove they have no control over the systems in place after a written request to the property owner or manager.

All water output fittings must have a minimum 3 star water conservation rating. Hoses must be equipped with automatic trigger mechanisms to minimise water use.

No apparent water leaks (from taps or bathrooms) may be present on site.

### **3.3 Waste**

#### **3.3.1 Data Collection**

At least 98 % of waste by volume must be recorded and disposal receipts maintained. A spreadsheet containing, as a minimum, categories for waste type, weight, date, disposal method and cost (e.g., recycling, landfill, specific waste collection service) must be used for waste management purposes.

#### **3.3.2 Specific Waste Collection**

IT equipment, office equipment, printing ink, toner refills, fluorescent tubes or any other materials with hazardous content must be collected for reuse, recycling or appropriate disposal by the manufacturer.

Chain of custody evidence must be available for all hazardous waste streams.

#### **3.3.3 Paper Recycling**

At least 70% of waste paper must be collected for recycling. Environmental prompts must be in place in all areas where large quantities of paper are used (i.e., printers, photocopiers) directing personnel to recycle paper wherever possible. Recycling bins must be in place in these areas.

#### **3.3.4 Double Sided (Duplex) Printing**

Printers capable of double sided (Duplex) printing must have this set as the default method. Exceptions may be made for dedicated single purpose printers (e.g., letterhead).

### **3.4 Procurement**

#### **3.4.1 Procurement System**

A procurement policy in general conformance with the "Green Business Procurement Guidelines" must be established which includes the majority of products purchased, including, as a minimum, IT equipment and printing consumables, paper products, sanitary papers, lighting, cleaning products and furniture. This system should maintain receipts and define the product, source, quantity, cost, end of life options and environmental credentials for procurement decisions. The procurement system should also specify all materials designated as hazardous.

#### **3.4.2 Environmental Preference**

Procurement policies must give preference to environmentally preferable products. Environmentally preferable products are those licenced by Eco-Choice or other recognised third party environmental certification schemes.

#### **3.4.3 Purchasing**

All paper purchased must contain at least 50% environmentally preferable fibre (recycled or FSC certified) and be Elemental Chlorine Free (ECF or TCF) or be certified by Eco-Choice. Exceptions may be made in cases where the intended function of the paper cannot be performed by this type of paper (e.g. archival).

### 3.5 Transport

Company or fleet vehicles must be serviced regularly maintained according to the vehicle manufacturers recommendations.

All distances travelled by company vehicles must be recorded in a log book(s).

Air travel undertaken by staff on official travel for the company must be recorded.

### 3.6 Working Conditions

Cleaning and maintenance requirements only apply when the service provider has control of the relevant contract or arrangements.

#### 3.6.1 Facilities Maintenance

A facilities maintenance policy must be in place. Any contract/arrangement must comply with local health and hygiene and any applicable national standard.

#### 3.6.2 Cleaning Products

Cleaning products containing the following substances must not be used: Any ingredient carrying the risk phrases:

R42 - May cause sensitization by inhalation.

R43 - May cause sensitization by skin contact.

R48 - Danger of serious damage to health by prolonged exposure.

R50 - Very toxic to aquatic organisms.

R51 - Toxic to aquatic organisms.

R53 - May cause long-term adverse effects in the aquatic environment.

R58 - May cause long-term adverse effects in the environment.

R68 - Possible risk of irreversible effects.

Any ingredient classified as Class 1, 2a or 2b by the IARC

see: <http://monographs.iarc.fr/ENG/Classification/index.php>

#### 3.6.3 Chemical Exposure

The expected exposure of all staff to cleaning or other chemicals must be lower than the requirements set for OH&S by legislation or by a relevant regulatory body.

### 3.7 Awareness Programs

#### 3.7.1 Environmental Manager

A nominated individual must be responsible for environmental management. Eco-Choice must be notified if this individual changes during the certification period.

#### 3.7.2 Environmental Goals

Clearly defined environmental goals of the organisation, as a minimum established by this standard, must be readily accessible to staff and clients.

#### 3.7.3 Education of Staff

All current staff, including cleaning contractors, must be educated about how to use the environmental systems in place for this standard.

New staff must be educated about how to use the environmental systems as a part of their introduction to the workplace. Education must be followed up to ensure that workers understand and use the environmental systems in place.

#### **3.7.4 Environmental Prompts**

Where temporary staff or customers come into contact with environmental systems, prompts must be in place to explain their use.

### 3.6 Ethical Trading Practices

While some aspects of service provision are not covered under this standard, namely the ethical operation or indirect environmental or social impact of the service itself, it is expected that significant social impacts or environmental loads will be managed by the service provider. If an aspect of the service provision is grossly mismanaged or the service provision directly supports socially or environmentally damaging activities, which are not directly covered by the above environmental performance criteria, assessors may recommend against certification under this Standard.

#### **4 COMPLIANCE TO ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS**

The applicant is required to comply with relevant environmental legislation and government regulations at the Local, National and Regional levels, if these have been issued. An applicant's compliance with these criteria may be established by undertaking a series of random checks; and/or by gathering samples of applicant operational procedures and documents from approved assessors as evidence to support compliance during the verification. Where an applicant is bound by foreign jurisdiction, that jurisdiction's environmental regulations will apply. Where the applicant is subject to a guilty verdict by a legally constituted court in the last 24 months on the basis of a breach of any environmental legislation or permits, there must be evidence of corrective action. Failure to provide such evidence shall disqualify the applicant.

#### **5 COMPLIANCE TO LABOUR, ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND SAFETY REGULATIONS**

The applicant shall demonstrate that all employees are protected in terms of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (Act 75; 1997) and Amendments (2002).

The applicant shall demonstrate general compliance to the terms of the Labour Relations Act (Act 66; 1995); the Occupational, Health and Safety Act (Act 85; 1993) and any other legislation related to anti-discrimination; sexism; child labour or applicable labour standards. Where the applicant is subject to a breach order by a government agency, or a guilty verdict by a South African Court within the last 24 months, there must be evidence of corrective action.

Where the applicant is from a foreign jurisdiction, the applicant shall demonstrate compliance to that jurisdiction's anti-discrimination, occupational health and safety, and workers' compensations regulations. Where the applicant is subject to a breach order by a government agency, or a guilty verdict by a legal court in their respective country within the last 24 months on the basis of a the breach of anti-discrimination, occupational health and safety, and workers' compensation regulations, there must be evidence of corrective action.

The applicant's compliance with these criteria may be established by undertaking a series of random checks; gathering samples of applicant operational procedures and documents from approved assessors; and/or by providing a self-declaration document signed by an executive officer of the applicant organisation as evidence to support compliance during verification.

## **6 EVIDENCE OF CONFORMANCE**

### **6.1 Audit Methodology**

Conformance with this standard shall be demonstrated by undertaking an assessment under the above criteria by an approved assessor, following the certification and verification procedures detailed in the Heritage Green Business Management System, which generally follows the environmental auditing requirements of ISO 14 001.

### **6.2 Assessor Competency**

The Eco-Choice Ecolabel Program classifies approved assessors as:

- a. Assessors registered by Heritage as environmental professionals that hold expertise relevant for an assessment, and who have undertaken training in the procedures of the Eco-Choice Ecolabel Program; or
- b. Environmental auditors accredited with the SANAS.

### **6.3 Suitable Sources**

Audit evidence should be of such a quality and quantity that competent environmental auditors, working independently of each other, will reach similar audit findings from evaluation of the same audit evidence against the same audit criteria.

Suitable sources of information to establish compliance may be, but are not limited to:

- a. Technical specification of a product.
- b. Obvious characteristics of the product under examination.
- c. Scientific test results and reports.
- d. Environmental management system and audit reports and results.
- e. Life-cycle assessment of each stage of the product life-cycle via a physical audit and examination.
- f. Life-cycle assessment via scientific testing.
- g. A statement of confirmation by an executive officer.
- h. An assessment of company or government records, including minutes of meetings, policy documents and receipts.
- i. Other material that can be considered objective evidence.

### **6.4 Laboratory Testing**

New testing shall be undertaken by a laboratory accredited by the SANAS, or similar overseas accreditation agents who can conduct the relevant tests and/or provide documentation detailing environmental performance against the criteria of this standard. The test results should be presented in a prescribed manner or from a laboratory acceptable to Eco-Choice Ecolabel Programme.

If test results or environmental auditing results are not available, and/or there is insufficient data to establish full compliance with the criteria required by this standard, then certification cannot be awarded.