

Hong Kong Green Label Scheme

Product Environmental Criteria for

Paper Towel (GL-001-006)



BACKGROUND

The Hong Kong Green Label Scheme (HKGLS) is an independent and voluntary scheme, which aims to identify products that are, based on life cycle analysis consideration, more environmentally preferable than other similar products with the same function. The Scheme is organized by the Green Council (GC) with contributions from the HKGLS Advisory Committee and a number of supporting organizations.

The prime objectives of HKGLS are:

- For Consumers: assist in making purchases of products that are less harmful to the environment;
- For Industry: stimulate development and production of environmentally preferable alternatives.

This specification sets out the requirements that paper towel will be required to meet in order to be licensed to use the HKGLS label. The requirements include environmental criteria and product characteristics. The specification also defines the testing and other means to be used to verify conformance with the environmental criteria and product characteristics.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The use of waste paper for production of paper towel with recycled content or from sustainable source considerably reduces burden on the environment. Process effluents can contain high concentrations of organic substances, which deplete oxygen from receiving waters. Chlorine-based and halogenated bleaches can accumulate and have toxic effects if discharged.

LABEL OBJECTIVE

The aim of the environmental criteria developed for paper towel is to:

- Promote the use of recycled paper / paper from sustainable sources as a means of conserving resources and promoting sustainable forest management.
- Reduce toxicity of process effluent generated from pulp production, minimize the environmental loading of the receiving water bodies.
- Minimizing waste production by reducing the amount of primary packaging and promoting its usability and/or recyclability.

PRODUCT DEFINITION

This document and all product environmental criteria therein apply to all paper towels with recycled contents or from sustainable sources.

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PRODUCT ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERIA

The table below sets out the environmental criteria for the product category of paper towel (GL-001-006) under the HKGLS.

Product Environmental Criteria	Verification Method(s)*
<p>1. The fibers source must meet one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 50% recycled fibre, including 20% post-consumer content; or • For virgin wood fibers, it shall originate from sustainable source with certification on chain of custody 	<p>✓ Inspection of product samples; AND</p> <p>✓ Review of supporting information; AND</p> <p>✓ Performance of on-site factory visit.</p>
<p>2. The chemical oxygen demand (COD) in the water discharge from both pulp and paper production shall not exceed 20kg/tonne of paper produced.</p>	<p>✓ Review of laboratory test report(s)ⁱ. AND</p> <p>✓ Performance of on-site factory visit.</p>
<p>3. The processing of waste papers shall be done without any dyestuff, optical brighteners and non – biodegradable complexing agents such as ethylenediamine tetraacetic acid (EDTA).</p>	<p>✓ Review of laboratory test report(s)ⁱⁱ; AND</p> <p>✓ Review of supporting information.</p>
<p>4. The recycled paper input shall not be bleached during the recycling process with chlorine or halogenated bleaching agents.</p>	<p>✓ Review of supporting information; AND</p> <p>✓ Interview with relevant personnel.</p> <p>The applicant shall <i>declare</i> compliance with the requirement.</p>
<p>5. Where surfactants are used in the manufacturing process, such as for the de-inking of recycled paper input, these surfactants shall be readily biodegradable.</p>	<p>✓ Review of supporting information; AND</p> <p>✓ Interview with relevant personnel.</p> <p>The applicant shall <i>declare</i> compliance with the requirement.</p>

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Product Environmental Criteria	Verification Method(s)*
6. Solvents used in the cleaning of production equipment shall be free of halogenated hydrocarbons.	✓ Review of supporting information; AND ✓ Interview with relevant personnel. The applicant shall <i>declare</i> compliance with the requirement.
7. Packaging requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The core of a roll of paper towel shall be made from 100% recovered fibre; • General packaging requirements (Refer to criteria for packaging materials: GL-Packaging) 	✓ Inspection of product samples; AND ✓ Review of supporting information; AND ✓ Interview with relevant personnel.

*Analytical testing should be accredited and performed by laboratories that meet the requirement laid out in the IEC/ISO 17025 or EN45001 standards or any equivalent systems e.g. HOKLAS, CNAS. Under special situation and with the approval from GC, test can be performed by in-house method by the accredited laboratory or manufacturer.

- i COD shall be determined using the method in ISO 60610, APHA 5220 or equivalent.
- Sampling for COD analysis must take place after the operation of wastewater treatment.
 - Analysis of COD must be based on an unfiltered sample.

- ii Conformance with these requirements shall be demonstrated by providing a written statement signed by the Chief Executive Officer or other authorised representative of the Applicant company. This statement shall be supported by documentation (as relevant) that:

- identifies any surfactants or foam inhibitors used;
- MSDS (materials safety data sheets); and
- test reports provided by laboratories competent to perform the relevant tests.

One of the five methods described in OECD Guidelines for testing of chemicals, Test Guidelines 301A-301E or achieve a biodegradability of at least 60% within 28 days when tested by OECD method published in the OECD technical paper report of 11 June 1976, or as listed in the Danish Environmental Protection Agency report “Environmental Health Assessment of Substances in Household Detergents and Cosmetic Detergent Products” (2001), or equivalent test.