



## GS-C1

## Green Seal Pilot Sustainability Standard for Product Manufacturers

### **An Overview**

The GS-C1 Pilot Sustainability Standard for Product Manufacturers certifies socially and environmentally responsible businesses so consumers can make informed choices; helps companies save money by reducing the resources they use; and improves their brand and sales position.

The pilot standard has three leadership levels companies can meet: Bronze, or entry level, which denotes the company is making progress; Silver, which certifies the company has a solid record of achievement across most of its business; and Gold, the highest level.

### **The Scope of GS-C1**

The pilot standard applies to all product manufacturers. A pilot phase of the program runs from 12 to 18 months from the launch date this fall. Companies can get certified during this phase. All companies must start at Bronze but can quickly move up to Silver and then Gold.

The standard requires strong action in five broad areas: Transparency and accountability at the corporate level; aggressive goals and strong results across a range of key social and environmental sectors; effective and accountable supplier-management practices; scientific assessments of the life cycle of key product lines; and ambitious requirements for third-party certification of the company's products.

## **BRONZE LEVEL**

### ***Corporate-Level Requirements***

A policy defining the company's commitment to the issues in this standard; a public description of the roles of its board and employees in implementing this policy; an environmental management system; a policy requiring the purchase of socially and environmentally preferable products and services for its non-manufacturing operations; an annual report that meets the requirements of GRI Level B or C or the equivalent; demonstrated compliance with laws and regulations

### ***Key Social And Environmental Sector Requirements***

#### **Labor and Workplace**

Conform to essential sections of the SA8000 Social Accountability Standard;

institute programs to increase employment for historically underrepresented groups and people with barriers to employment; invest in community development to create opportunity where the company operates or sources its products, and report annually on progress



#### **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Complete an emissions inventory that meets the requirements of EPA Climate Leaders or the equivalent; set a reduction goal; plan to meet the goal; report publicly on annual progress

#### **Water Use**

Set measurable, public goals for cutting water use; monitor water bills monthly to document progress, and report publicly on annual performance

ENVIRONMENTAL  
LEADERSHIP STANDARDS



CERTIFICATION FOR  
PRODUCTS, SERVICES,  
PROPERTIES & COMPANIES



PARTNERSHIPS IN  
GREEN PURCHASING &  
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT



SUSTAINABILITY  
RESEARCH & LIFE CYCLE  
ANALYSIS



(BRONZE Level requirements continued)

## **Waste Reduction and Management**

Set public goals for reducing waste; track waste production quarterly; demonstrate in the company's most recent audit that it has diverted the landfill it generates by at least 25 percent

## **Toxicity**

Create a chemical-safety program that reduces or removes hazardous chemicals from products and processes; publicly report progress annually

## **Indigenous Peoples**

Document and disclose publicly the potential impacts of operations on indigenous peoples; have a policy to protect their rights consistent with the World Bank's Indigenous Peoples Policy or the equivalent and create a plan to avoid or mitigate any potential impacts

## **Biological Diversity**

Inventory the impact on biodiversity and disclose it publicly; formulate a plan to mitigate or eliminate any potential impacts

## **Social and Environmental Impact Assessment**

Plan to screen major projects or investments for their impact on society and the environment and assess projects likely to have impacts

## **Supplier Management**

Hold first-tier suppliers to a code of conduct for environmental and social responsibility; monitor these suppliers for compliance; identify the company's biggest suppliers and have in place a plan to reduce these impacts; effectively integrate this information into purchasing decision making and report annually on progress

## **Product Life Cycle Impacts**

Life Cycle Assessment (LCA): Certifier will identify up to five product systems with higher impacts

than other products; conduct LCAs on them; assessments will follow ISO14040 and 14044 methodology and evaluate impacts, from raw material acquisition to disposal of the product; the company and the certifying organization will devise goals and LCA action plan for mitigating these impacts; and the company will measure and report on progress at least annually

Implement actions in the LCA action plan relating to raw materials, manufacturing, packaging, transport, use, and end of product life

## ***Product Environmental Certification***

For product categories where third-party certification programs exist, show:

- EITHER at least 5 percent of its products, representing at least one product, are certified by a third party;
- OR at least 15 products are certified by a third party
- Commitment to achieve certification of at least 25 percent of its products and a plan in place to achieve this objective
- Annual progress that meets the targets and timetables of the plan

## ***Continuous Improvement***

Write a commitment to the practices in this standard; create a plan that includes goals to meet the standard; demonstrate annual improvement and make the report public; companies at the Bronze level shall meet Silver requirements within three years of initial certification

## ***Labeling***

Claims that a company has been certified by this program shall be based on third-party certification



## **SILVER LEVEL**

Meet all the requirements for BRONZE plus:

### ***Corporate-Level Requirements***

Show evidence of lobbying activities on public policy or laws affecting the workplace, health and the environment; the annual report must meet GRI level A (or B for small businesses); make written social and environmental procedures available to employees; conduct training on these procedures and policies

### ***Key Social And Environmental Sector Requirements***

#### **Labor and Workplace**

Conform to all the standards of the SA8000 standards; plan to meet OSHA's VPP or SHARP programs for a significant percentage of the company's U.S. facilities and create a plan for SA 8000 workplace certification of a significant percentage of overseas operations

#### **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Continue to demonstrate annual progress toward the company's GHG emissions reduction goal

#### **Water Use**

Have a plan to achieve water use reduction goal and reduce water use by 10 percent or greater from a baseline no more recent than a year ago and no more distant than three years ago

#### **Waste Reduction and Management**

Institute a plan to reduce waste and track waste generation at least monthly; demonstrate total waste reduction by production volume; reduce waste diverted to landfills by 50 percent based on the latest audit; research recycling operations

#### **Toxicity**

Demonstrate achievements in replacing or eliminating at least 75 percent of hazardous chemicals

### **Social and Environmental Impacts**

Publicly report on implementation of the company's social and environmental impact-assessment policy at least annually

### ***Supplier Management***

Company must require first-tier suppliers to follow the SA8000 standard plus educate all suppliers about these standards and demonstrate achievement in substantially reducing the social and environmental impact of at least 75 percent of the company's highest-priority suppliers

### ***Product Life Cycle Impacts***

Conduct LCAs on at least three product processes with an internal-level LCA; demonstrate the company is making all reasonable efforts to achieve reductions in environmental impacts; report annually on progress; and demonstrate significant impact reductions

### ***Requirements:***

#### **Product Raw Materials**

Have a plan for increasing sustainability of raw materials in products

#### **Product Manufacturing**

Meet Bronze standards plus have a plan for reducing impacts of manufacturing

#### **Product Packaging**

Have a management plan to reduce packaging and increase sustainability

#### **Product Transport**

Institute a transportation management plan and use fuel-efficient vehicles for at least 25 percent of miles driven annually

#### **Product Use**

Plan to reduce the environmental impact from the use of its products





(SILVER Level requirements continued)

### **End of Product Life**

Develop a plan to reduce end-of-product-life impact

### ***Product Environmental Certification***

- For product categories where third-party certification programs exist:

- Show that at least 25 percent of its products are certified by a third party;
- Commit to achieve certification of at least 50 percent of its products and have a plan in place to achieve this objective; demonstrate annual progress and meet targets and timetables of plan

## **GOLD LEVEL**

Meet all the requirements for BRONZE and SILVER plus:

### ***Corporate-Level Requirements***

Have the EMS plan certified by a third party; the annual report must meet GRI level A+

### ***Key Social And Environmental Sector Requirements***

#### **Labor and Workplace**

Conform to all the requirements of the SA 8000 standard; demonstrate major progress in workplace certification

#### **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Company must achieve its GHG emission reduction goal; company must develop aggressive new emissions reduction goal that meets EPA Climate Leaders requirements

#### **Water Use**

Have a plan to reduce water use by 20 percent or greater from a baseline no more recent than a year ago and no more distant than three years ago

#### **Waste Reduction and Management**

Reduce waste diverted to landfills by 80 percent based on the latest audit

#### **Toxicity**

Demonstrate achievement in replacing or eliminating all hazardous chemicals

#### **Supplier Management**

Demonstrate achievement in substantially reducing social and environmental impact of all high-priority suppliers

#### ***Product Life Cycle Impact Assessment***

LCAs shall be peer review by third parties; demonstrate innovation and leadership in its efforts to reduce product life cycle impacts

#### **Product Packaging**

Demonstrate significant, measurable improvement and eliminate hazardous materials in all packaging

#### **Product Transport**

Use fuel-efficient vehicles for at least 50 percent of miles driven annually

#### ***Product Environmental Certification***

- For product categories where third-party certification programs exist:
- Show that at least 50 percent of its products are certified by a third party;
- Commit to achieve certification of at least 80 percent of its products; have a plan in place to achieve this objective; demonstrate annual progress and meet targets and timetables of plan

