



ECOLABEL CERTIFICATION GUIDE

A guide to the GECA ecolabel certification

CONTENTS

Preparation for Success	3
Getting Started	4
Certification Checklist	6
Reading the Standard	8
Demonstrations of Conformance	10
Exceptions Process Guide	14
Your Points of Contact	16
Understanding Conformance Action Plans	19
The GECA Portal	22
Essential Paperwork	23
Marketing & Promotion	24
Recognition	26
Other Services & Support	27

PREPARATION FOR SUCCESS

01 Read The GECA Standard



02 Prepare Your Team



03 Gather All Demonstration of Conformance



04 Correct Naming Convention



05 Prepare Site & Information



06 Ask Us For Help!



WELCOME TO THE GECA ECOLABEL CERTIFICATION GUIDE

It's great to see that you're taking the first steps toward your certification journey with GECA.

This guide has been developed to support you as you work through the GECA certification process for the first time. Whether you're seeking certification for a product or service, complying with these standards demonstrates your organisation's commitment to reducing environmental and social impacts and to making better choices for people and the planet.

We understand that the process may feel unfamiliar or complex at first. That's why we've created this guide to walk you through it step by step, providing clear explanations, practical tools, and helpful tips to make the experience more manageable. It's intended to give you the information and confidence you need to meet the standard's requirements and move through the assessment with clarity.

In the pages ahead, you'll find guidance on how GECA's standards are structured, what kind of evidence is required, and how to prepare strong supporting documentation. You'll also learn how the certification process works, from application through to final approval, and who to contact along the way if you need assistance.

Whether you're at the very beginning or preparing to submit your documents, this guide will help you understand what's expected and how to get it right the first time.

CONTENT OF THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to help you prepare a clear and complete application for GECA certification. One of the most important parts of this process is submitting your Demonstrations of Conformance (DoCs), the documentation that shows how your product or service meets the criteria in the GECA standard. You'll find a dedicated section explaining what makes a good DoC, how to organise your documentation, and how to avoid common mistakes.

We'll walk you through the full assessment process, from uploading your documentation and undergoing a desktop review to completing your on-site assessment and receiving the final report. Each stage is explained so you know what to expect and how to prepare.

You'll find an overview of key points of contact on page 15, with guidance on when to reach out to your GECA account manager or your appointed assessor, depending on the nature of your enquiry.

The section on exceptions outlines when and how to request one, as well as what happens during the review process.

You'll also be introduced to the GECA Portal, where you'll upload and manage all required documentation. This section includes helpful information on how to use the system and what to expect once your submission is underway.

Before your certification is finalised, there are a few final steps involving essential paperwork, such as signing the Trademark Licence Agreement and submitting your annual turnover declaration, and turnover evidence.

Once certified, the guide outlines how GECA can help you promote your certification through marketing support and provides a summary of who recognises the GECA ecolabel, including procurement programs and key industry sectors.

CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST



LEGEND

- Work with GECA
- Work with Assurance Providers & Assessors

- | | | |
|-----------|---|--------------------------|
| 01 | Read the GECA Standard | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 02 | Consultation with dedicated GECA account manager | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 03 | Prepare team for upcoming GECA assessment process | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 04 | Gather all Demonstration of Conformance (DoC) documentation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 05 | Name or file all documentation to according to each DoC | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 06 | Complete Pre-Assessment Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 07 | Get started in the GECA Portal by booking in a portal consultation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 08 | Request a quote from third-party assurance providers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 09 | Review & accept quote | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 | Upload all DoC documentation to the desktop review in the GECA Portal | <input type="checkbox"/> |

CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST



LEGEND

- Work with GECA
- Work with Assurance Providers & Assessors

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| ● 11 | Book in site assessment with assessor | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ● 12 | Prepare site for visit | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ● 13 | Work with the assessor to close any non-conformances (ask GECA for assistance if you need help!) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ● 14 | Review assessment report | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ● 15 | Sign agreements & declarations | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ● 16 | Complete business information survey | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ● 17 | Certificate of Conformance issued by Assurance Provider | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ● 18 | GECA Certificate Issued, successfully certified! | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ● 19 | Prepare for re-certification! This is required every 3 years. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

SCOPE OF THE STANDARD & EXCLUSIONS

The first criterion of every standard outlines what products or services can be certified.

Always check the exclusions section of the standard scope to ensure the products or services to be certified are covered.

If a product type is not listed in the standard scope, don't worry – there's a clause in majority of the standards that states:

“Other environmentally innovative products that do not directly fit into the above types may be considered for certification provided the product fulfils the requirements of relevant sections of this standard. Other types of products may be added to the scope at a later date”

WHAT TO EXPECT IN GECA STANDARDS

Names of Standard Section

The standard is separated into different sections, including:

- GN = General
- MS = Material & Substance Safety
- HS = Health & Social
- EV = Environment

Hazard Statements

There is criteria in GECA standards that limit or ban the use of chemicals with hazard statements.

The chemicals could appear in any materials, such a glue, fabric, varnish, cleaning solutions, machinery maintenance products, and more.

Modern Slavery Criteria

Criteria around modern slavery and social practices are included in all GECA standards.

The requirements include publishing a modern slavery statement and registering it on the official government website.

Checklist

All required demonstration of conformance are listed at the end of each standard, making it easier to determine what documents will need to be provided ahead of the assessment!

HOW TO READ GECA STANDARDS

The criteria in the GECA standards are broken up by explaining what the criterion is about and what Demonstration of Conformance (DoC) is required to meet the criterion.

As an example, please see the image here.

8 Environmental Claims

Outlines a section of the standard about a specific topic

Criterion 30

Is the first criterion in this section of the standard

DoC 30.1 and DoC 30.2

Outlines the required DoC needed to conform to the criterion

Environmental claims are one of the tools utilised by consumers when attempting to make environmentally preferable choices and therefore it is essential that such claims are true and substantiated.

Criterion 30: The applicant's public claims regarding the product's environmental performance beyond this standard's scope (other than GECA certified content) shall be independently verified as compliant with ISO 14021: Environmental Labels and Declarations – 'Self-Declared Environmental Claims' (Type II Environmental Labelling) requirements. Also refer to the GECA Rules for the Use of the Good Environmental Choice Australia Mark.

Any product making greenhouse related claims must comply with ISO 14064-3 "Specification with guidance for the validation and verification of greenhouse gas assertions" and be able to verify these claims to GECA.

For claims outside the scope of ISO 14021 or ISO 14064, clear statement of the test method and the conditions under which the product was tested is required, along with a clear explanation of the relevance of the test method to the environmental claim.

The applicant or manufacturer must not claim that the product is 'odour free', 'low odour', 'no odour' or similar if odour-masking agents are used.

Demonstration of Conformance

DoC 30.1: A copy of any relevant advertising material currently in use; and

DoC 30.2: Relevant documentation confirming the grounds of the claim and its compliance with this

SUBMITTING DEMONSTRATIONS OF CONFORMANCE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

01

When submitting your application, make sure you provide evidence against each criterion listed in the GECA standard. This evidence is referred to as a Demonstration of Conformance (DoC).

02

Refer to the specific DoC requirements listed for each criterion. These outline the minimum documentation you need to submit. Documentation should provide sufficient, relevant information to fully address the requirement. Your assessor may request additional information if necessary.

03

Prepare and submit the appropriate type of documentation for each criterion. This may include items such as independent test reports, SDSs, ingredient lists with CAS numbers, signed declarations, certification documents, or product labels. Templates are available to assist with this.

04

Ensure that each document clearly demonstrates how the product meets the relevant requirement. Documents that do not directly relate to the criterion may be flagged for clarification or further evidence.

05

If you are using the same document across multiple criteria, confirm that it is directly relevant to each one. Avoid reusing documents that only partially apply.

06

Make sure all documents are up to date. For example, SDSs must be no more than five years old, and third-party certificates must be current.

07

If you believe a particular DoC is not relevant to your product, speak with your GECA account manager or assessor before excluding it from your submission.

08

Arrange for any required laboratory testing to be carried out in accordance with the testing methodology listed in the standard.

09

Maintain records and processes that demonstrate how you meet the criteria on an ongoing basis. This may include internal checklists, procedures, or supplier declarations.

10

Use the Application Checklist at the end of the standard to help track your submission. This checklist allows you to confirm that you've included the correct documentation for each requirement.

TIPS FOR A SMOOTH ASSESSMENT

Start by reviewing the GECA standard in full

This will help you understand what's required and how your product aligns with the criteria. Pay close attention to the Demonstration of Conformance (DoC) requirements listed throughout.

Use the Application Checklist to stay organised

Found at the end of the standard, this checklist is handy to track which documents you've prepared and whether they meet the requirements. It's a valuable planning tool for both you and your assessor.

Label your documents clearly

Use consistent file names that reference the criterion or DoC they relate to (e.g. "DoC_6.1_Ingredient_List.pdf"). This makes it easier for the assessor to verify your documentation.

Keep your documentation concise and relevant

Avoid including lengthy reports unless they directly address the criterion. Highlight the key sections or pages to save time during the review process. Check that your SDSs and test reports are current.

Check that your SDSs and test reports are current

SDSs must be less than five years old, and laboratory tests should be recent and from accredited labs. Outdated or incomplete files may delay your assessment.

Allow enough time for supplier engagement

If your evidence depends on supplier declarations, certifications, or product specifications, contact suppliers early to avoid bottlenecks.

Communicate early & often with your assessor and GECA account manager

If you're unsure whether something meets a requirement, or if you think a criterion may not apply, ask before you submit. This can save time and reduce unnecessary follow-up.

Document your internal processes

Having systems in place to manage compliance (e.g. restricted substance checklists, regular reviews of formulations) can demonstrate a proactive approach and support ongoing certification.

Prepare for the possibility of additional evidence requests

Your assessor may need further clarification during the assessment. This is a normal part of the process and helps ensure a thorough and transparent review.

Maintain a clear version history if changes are made

If you update your formulation, packaging, or documentation during the assessment, ensure your files reflect the latest version and clearly note the changes.



ASSESSMENT PROCESS

01 REQUEST A QUOTE

Once a quote has been requested in the GECA Portal, the assurance providers will provide a quote within 10 business days.

02 ACCEPT QUOTE

Once all quotes have been submitted the quotes can be reviewed. Accept the quote from the chosen assurance provider to continue the assessment.

03 DESKTOP REVIEW

All documentation for the desktop review portion of an assessment is to be uploaded in the GECA Portal. Once all documentation is uploaded, the assigned assessor will review the documents and determine if it conforms to each criteria in the standard.

04 ONSITE ASSESSMENT

An assessor will visit the manufacturing site(s) listed on the quote request to assess the site and determine if it conforms to the criteria in the standard.

05 NON-CONFORMANCES

If an assessor has determined that some documents or elements have been observed during the on-site assessment that do not meet the criteria in the standard, the criteria will be marked as a non-conformance, where additional evidence or corrective action will be required to be provided to mark the criteria as conformed.

06 ONSITE ASSESSMENT

An assessor will visit the manufacturing site(s) listed on the quote request to assess the site and determine if it conforms to the criteria in the standard.

07 CERTIFICATE OF CONFORMANCE

Once the assessment report is approved by all parties, the assurance provider will issue a Certificate of Conformance stating that the products or services that underwent assessment against a GECA standard meet the criteria and are eligible for certification.

*Note: this does not mean the products or services are now GECA certified. Only when GECA has issued a GECA certificate are the products or services considered GECA certified.

08 GECA TRADEMARK LICENCE AGREEMENT & TURNOVER DECLARATION

Before the GECA Certificate can be issued the GECA Trademark Licence Agreement is to be signed and the Turnover Declaration for the coming year is to be completed.

09 GECA CERTIFICATE

Once all the agreements and declarations are completed, the GECA Certificate will be issued and the products or services will be officially GECA certified!

A survey will be sent for completion outlining details to be displayed on the company profile page on the GECA website.

10 RECERTIFICATION

To uphold your certification, an annual licence fee is required and re-assessment is required every 3 years. This process is then repeated.

Assessments for new applicants must be completed within 12 months

PLEASE NOTE: All licensees undergoing recertification must finalise their assessment before certificate expiry, and if the assessment has started but not yet finalised and the certificate expires, they must hold a current letter of support. Only 2 x letters of support will be issued, valid for 3 months each giving an additional 6-months post expiry, and these will now be charged at \$500 + GST.

GECA

Client Engagement Team

Your first point of contact for any questions about the certification process. This team coordinates your certification journey and provides general support along the way.

Standards & Technical Team

This team develops and maintains GECA's standards. They're here to help with technical enquiries and are responsible for reviewing conformance action plans and assessment reports.

Communications Team

Led by GECA's Head of Communications, this team helps share and promote your certification across our communication channels.

THIRD-PARTY ASSURANCE PROVIDERS & ASSESSORS

All GECA assessments, both desktop and on-site are carried out by independent third-party assurance providers and assessors. They are responsible for reviewing your documentation, evaluating your demonstration of conformance (DoC), and addressing any non-conformances that may arise during the assessment.

Using third parties helps ensure that GECA remains impartial. It also strengthens the transparency and integrity of the certification process, giving everyone confidence in the results.

CONSULTANTS

Some businesses choose to engage a consultant to support them through the GECA certification process. Consultants are independent professionals who can assist with tasks such as understanding how to meet the criteria, uploading documentation to the GECA Portal, and managing communication with GECA or the third-party assurance provider.

While hiring a consultant comes at an additional cost, they can be a valuable resource, especially if you're looking for extra support to streamline the assessment process.

WHO TO CONTACT & WHEN

<p>Stage 1: Pre-Application & Requesting Quotes</p>	<p>Contact: GECA Client Engagement Team</p> <p>For: Initial consultation covering certification process Submitting your quote request Questions re pre-assessment survey & ingredients template General guidance before starting</p>
<p>Stage 2: Proposal Acceptance & Assigning Assessor</p>	<p>Contact: Your selected Assurance Provider</p> <p>For: Reviewing and signing your contract Coordinating the introductory meeting Confirming roles, timelines, and expectations</p>
<p>Stage 3: Uploading Documentation</p>	<p>Contact: GECA Client Engagement Team</p> <p>For: Help with using the GECA Portal Clarification on required Demonstrations of Conformance (DoCs) Questions about document formatting & submission</p>
<p>Stage 4: Desktop Review</p>	<p>Contact: Assessor</p> <p>For: Responding to non-conformances Clarifying feedback on submitted documents Discussing potential exceptions or exemptions</p>

<p>Stage 5: On-site Assessment</p>	<p>Contact: Assessor</p> <p>For:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinating the on-site visit • Addressing any remaining requirements in person • Providing final documentation or clarification
<p>Stage 6: Assessment Report</p>	<p>Contact: Assessor GECA Client Engagement Team</p> <p>For: Reviewing the final report Resolving outstanding items Confirming readiness for certification</p>
<p>Stage 7: Certificate of Conformance</p>	<p>Contact: Assurance Provider</p> <p>For: Confirmation of certification outcome Questions about certification scope and coverage</p>
<p>Stage 8: Trademark Licence & Turnover Declaration</p>	<p>Contact: GECA Client Engagement Team</p> <p>For: Submitting the Trademark Licence Agreement Completing the Annual Turnover Declaration Finalising certificate details</p>
<p>Stage 9: Issuing the GECA Certificate</p>	<p>Contact: GECA Client Engagement Team</p> <p>For: Receiving your certificate Accessing marketing support Providing feedback via optional survey</p>

UNDERSTANDING CONFORMANCE ACTION PLANS

At GECA, we understand that every journey to certification is unique. That's why we have conformance action plans (CAP) available to provide flexibility when it's genuinely needed.

You can request a *conformance action plan* when:

- Meeting a requirement in the standard isn't currently commercially feasible
- You're in the process of transitioning to new requirements
- Other exceptional circumstances apply

However, *conformance action plans* are not intended to:

- Avoid criteria that don't align with your existing processes
- Delay action with no clear plan for change
- Compensate for poor planning or preparation

It's important to know that a conformance action plan is temporary by nature and are rarely renewed.

They're carefully considered and not guaranteed, so while we'll always review requests thoughtfully, approval isn't assured.

So, what happens if you think you might need a *conformance action plan*?

See the next page for the step-by-step process for requesting a conformance action plan, from identifying the need, to submitting your request and understanding what comes next. Let's take a closer look at how it works.

01 BEGINNING THE CONFORMANCE ACTION PLAN PROCESS

When it has been established that a conformance action plan is required for a demonstration of conformance, the assessor will inform the client what the non-conformance are, what information they will need to submit for the exception request; such as SDS documents, CAS numbers, supporting evidence, or currently submitted documentation.

The assessor will then inform the GECA Account Manager of the conformance action plan, and the account manager will open the conformance action plan request menu in the GECA Portal.

02 CONFORMANCE ACTION PLAN REQUEST SUBMISSION

The client is notified that the conformance action plan can be applied for via the GECA Portal.

The client completes the conformance action plan request form in the GECA Portal, filling out all fields with as much information and detail as possible, and submitting the request.

03 REVIEWING & APPROVING THE CONFORMANCE ACTION PLAN REQUEST

The assessor will be notified via the GECA Portal to review the conformance action plan request and approve that all the information submitted in the request is correct, and include any comments related to the criterion or non-conformance.

04 GECA TO REVIEW THE CONFORMANCE ACTION PLAN REQUEST

Once the desktop review and on-site assessment are complete, GECA will then begin the review of any conformance action plan requests.

If any additional information is required, the GECA standards team will reach out to the assessor or the client. The GECA standards team will also provide a proposed action plan for the client to agree to.

05 CONFORMANCE ACTION PLAN REQUEST PROCESSING TIME

The time it takes for GECA to review and process a conformance action plan request is up to 60 days.

Once the conformance action plan has been reviewed by the GECA standards team, the GECA CEO is to review the conformance action plan request. If the conformance action plan is for low or medium risk, approval can be possible on the spot. If the conformance action plan is high risk the GECA Board will be required to review the conformance action plan and come to a decision on approval.

- 60 Business Days -

CAP OUTCOMES

01 CONFORMANCE ACTION PLAN REQUEST APPROVED

Once the conformance action plan has been approved by the GECA CEO or the GECA Board the client will receive a Conformance Action Plan Summary and Declaration to sign and return to GECA.

The GECA Account Manager will email the signed declaration to the assurance provider and the assessor for their record.

The assessor is to mark the criteria as 'conform with conditions' in the GECA Portal noting an exception has been granted and requires corrective action within the specified timeframe.

02 CONFORMANCE ACTION PLAN ASSESSMENT

Before the specified timeframe has lapsed for the exception, the GECA Account Manager will contact the client to check on the status of the conformance action plan. The GECA Account Manager will contact the assurance provider to request a quote for the client to re-assess the criterion the conformance action plan was applied to.

The client will submit the documentation to the previous assessor to review against the criteria for the conformance action plan.

1. The assessor determines the DoC conforms
2. The assessor updates the assessment report with notes on additional evidence for demonstration of conformance
3. The assurance provider will update the *Certificate of Conformance* and issue it to the client
4. The GECA Account Manager updates the GECA Certificate and issues the updated certificate to the client

After this, the assessment is completed.

03 CONFORMANCE ACTION PLAN REQUEST DENIED

If the conformance action plan is not granted by the GECA CEO or the GECA Board, the GECA account manager will contact the client with the decision. The client will have an additional 30 days to conform to the criteria by providing additional DoC or by requesting a revised action plan to demonstrate they can bring the DoC to conformance.

If the additional DoC provided still does not conform to criterion the client or specified products will not be GECA Certified and removed from the certificate and GECA website, or not pass certification.

INTRODUCTION TO THE GECA PORTAL

The GECA Portal is your central hub for managing the certification process, bringing together your documentation, feedback, and communication in one secure, accessible location.

It's the place to upload your Demonstrations of Conformance (DoCs) to the relevant criteria, helping your assessor review your submission clearly and efficiently.

You can view and respond to assessor feedback, track requests for more information, and monitor your progress, keeping everything organised and reducing back-and-forth communication.

All documentation is securely stored for easy access during future assessments or recertification, helping you save time and stay on track throughout your certification journey.

FEATURES & FUNCTIONS



**Upload all
Demonstrations of
Conformance**



**Review Notes from the
Assessor**



**Information Stored for
Future Assessments**

GECA PORTAL RESOURCES

[Video guides](#)

[Written Guides](#)

ESSENTIAL PAPERWORK

Prior to receiving your GECA certificate, there are a few final steps for you to complete;

- **Trademark License Agreement** - this is the contract outlining how your company can use the GECA Ecolabel mark in your public-facing packaging and promotion.
- **Turnover Declaration & Evidence** - this is used to forecast the upcoming years revenue from GECA-certified products or services, along with required supporting evidence.
- **'Understanding Your Business Better' form** - GECA uses this information to generate a company profile page with your products/services for the GECA website, social media promotion, and other information that's for internal-use by GECA to support your certification.

THE BELOW DOCUMENTS NEED TO BE COMPLETED ON AN ANNUAL BASIS:

- **Annual Turnover Declaration** - this form is used to report the previous years revenue earned from GECA-certified products or services, along with required supporting evidence.
- **Yearly Declaration of No Change** - this form is used to state if there's been any change to the GECA-certified product or service, which may include any change in manufacturing, product composition, or within the production process or service delivery.

MARKETING & PROMOTIONS



01 PROFILE PAGE

A profile page will be created on the GECA website showcasing your company, all certified products or services, and other relevant information.

02 SOCIAL MEDIA

GECA will promote certified products or services across all social media channels, reaching many audiences and industries.

03 CASE STUDY

You can opt in for a case study, the goal is to highlight how a certified product or service has been successfully used, demonstrating its impact and value.

04 NEWSLETTER

Certification or recertification of a licensee will be announced in GECA's bi-monthly newsletter, celebrating the accomplishment.

05 **CROSS-PROMOTION**

We love collaborating with our licensees! Joint marketing opportunities include co-branded content, support around key milestones or events, and more!

06 **CASE STUDY**

We love talking about our licensees and when relevant we'll reference your products or services with our contacts in the industry!

07 **BRAND GUIDELINES**

Guidelines and access to logos are provided with details on how to best utilise the GECA logo across marketing and packaging.

08 **MARKETING TOOLKIT**

The Marketing Toolkit gives key insight on how to best promote your GECA certification and communicate its value to your customers and stakeholders.

09 **SPECIFIERS & PROCURERS**

Specifiers and procurers across multiple industries use the GECA database as a trusted resource for certified products and services.

WHO RECOGNISES GECA CERTIFICATION?

GECA certification is recognised by a range of respected organisations across Australia and internationally.

These include the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA), which references GECA standards within the Green Star rating system; the Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN), a global federation of Type 1 ecolabels; and the National Australian Built Environment Rating System (NABERS). GECA is also acknowledged by the Infrastructure Sustainability Council, the WELL Building Standard, and several Australian Government procurement frameworks.

This recognition means that GECA-certified products and services can help meet sustainability targets and contribute to a variety of industry certifications and responsible sourcing requirements.



Australian Government



OTHER AVAILABLE SERVICES & SUPPORT

01 GAP ANALYSIS

GECA offers GAP Analysis service to compare other ecolabel certifications within GEN against GECA's standards.

02 WEBINARS

GECA hosts quarterly webinars to assist with the certification process, answer questions in real time, provide updates and support to all clients.

03 CONSULTATIONS

One-on-one consultations with your dedicated GECA account manager are available at any point in the process.

04 TEAM TRAINING

If requested, a member of the client engagement team will come to your office to present training around the benefits of GECA.

05 CHECK-INS

Throughout your certification journey your dedicated GECA account manager will check-in to see how things are going and provide you with important updates, content, support around key milestones or events, and more!

06 CLAIMS AUTHENTICATION

Another available service is our Claims Authentication. This service can also be integrated into the ecolabel certification process.

CONNECT WITH US

PHONE

(02) 9699 2850

EMAIL

info@geca.org.au

WEBSITE

www.geca.eco

