

Audit Program UNE-EN 15343 of Control Union WG
Spain S.A. for the Certification of the Plastic
Recycling Process.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The UNE 15343 Plastic Recycling Process Audit Program Certification developed by Control Union is designed to assist the plastics industry in demonstrating and ensuring the application of circular economy principles. The growing environmental awareness in our society is driving consumer demand not only for high-quality products but also for products that are produced responsibly, regarding environmental sustainability and the responsible use of natural resources.

In response to this reality, Control Union has launched a certification scheme designed to promote and ensure the transition of the sector towards a Circular Economy. This approach focuses especially on completing the production cycle, transforming plastic waste into new resources.

Our certifications comprehensively cover the traceability of recycled material. This includes everything from the reception of plastic waste, its processing, and its reintroduction into the market as recycled material. This process encompasses the characterization of recycled material, its conversion into pellets for subsequent use, and finally, the certification of the percentage of recycled material incorporated into new products.

2. OBJECT AND CERTIFICATION SCOPE

The aim of this certification is to **Recognize plastic recycling processes for pre-consumer and post-consumer waste operating at a site according to the requirements established in the Recycling Process Conformity Assessment Scheme.**

Certification under this Audit Scheme allows Recyclers to demonstrate their contribution to plastic waste management and transparently communicate the origin of the waste. The Recycling Process Certification serves as the point-of-origin audit for the chain of custody of recycled plastics. Certified Organizations provide confidence to all stakeholders in the plastics value chain for the continued increase in the use of recycled plastics.

The requirements of the Audit Scheme are aligned with those of EN 15343:2007 and ISO 22095:2020.

Certification focuses on verifying the origin of the waste, traceability throughout the Recycling Process, and calculating the recycled content in the output. The Audit Scheme
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covers the requirements that Organizations must meet regarding traceability according to EN 15343:2007, quality management systems, and environmental and administrative operational performance for waste recycling, as well as chain of custody.

The chain of custody defines the requirements to ensure the origin of the waste, traceability, and the percentage of recycled plastics in the output. The Audit Scheme operates in accordance with the controlled mixture chain of custody model as described in ISO 22095:2020, which allows the transfer of information from one stakeholder in the value chain to another under Certification.

The use of the Certification mark is limited to those Recyclers who obtained a certificate through Control Union based on this Audit Scheme

3. REFERENCE STANDARDS

- EN 15342 Recycled plastics - Characterization of recycled polystyrene (PS)
- EN 15343 Plastics - Recycled plastics - Traceability and assessment of plastics recycling and recycled content
- EN 15344 Recycled plastics - Characterization of recycled polyethylene (PE)
- EN 15345 Recycled plastics - Characterization of recycled polypropylene (PP)
- EN 15346 Recycled plastics - Characterization of recycled poly(vinyl chloride) (PVC)
- EN 15347 Recycled plastics - Characterization of recycled plastic waste
- EN 15348 Recycled plastics - Characterization of recycled poly(ethylene terephthalate) (PET)
- EN 15353:2006 Plastics - Recycled plastics - Guidelines for the development of standards on recycled plastics
- EN ISO 14021 Environmental labels and declarations - Self-declared environmental claims (Type II environmental labelling)
- EN 17615 Plastics - Environmental aspects - Vocabulary
- ISO 22095:2020 Chain of custody - General terminology and models
- ISO 9001 Quality management systems - Requirements.

4. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Organization

[ISO 22095:2020, 3.4.1]

An entity or group of persons and facilities with an arrangement of identifiable responsibilities, authorities and relationships and objectives.

Site

[ISO 22095:2020]

Location with geographical boundaries in which defined activities are carried out under the control of an organization.

Recycler

Organization applying for Certification for one or more Recycling Processes at a site.

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Certification

Certification under this Audit Scheme.

Plastic

A material consisting of a polymer as defined in point 5 of Article 3 of Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006, to which additives or other substances may have been added and which may function as the main structural component of the final products, except for natural polymers which have not been chemically modified.

Recycled Plastic

[EN/ISO 472:2013, 2.612]

Plastic prepared through transformation in a production process from plastic waste materials for the original purpose or for other purposes but excluding energy recovery. In a broad sense, plastic recycling covers any reuse of waste material or discarded items, including pyrolysis to recover useful organic chemicals. Recycled plastics may or may not be reformulated by adding fillers, plasticizers, stabilizers, pigments, etc.

Traceability

[ISO 22095:2020, 3.6.1]

Ability to track the history, application, location or source(s) (s) of a material or product along the supply chain.

Segregation

[ISO 22095:2020, 3.3.2]

A chain of custody model in which the specific characteristics of a material or product are maintained from the initial entry to the final exit. Note 1 to input: The addition of material with different characteristics and/or grade to the input is not allowed. Note 2 to input: Commonly, material from more than one source contributes to a chain of custody under the segregated model.

Controlled mixture

[ISO 22095:2020, 3.3.3]

Chain of custody model in which materials or products with a set of specific characteristics are mixed according to a certain criterion with materials or products without that set of characteristics resulting in a known proportion of the characteristics specified in the final result.

Storage bay

A defined storage area where a known number of incoming plastic waste batches can be kept separate and isolated from other batches of incoming plastic waste and pollution.

Current operating hours

The schedule of operation of the Recycling Process at the time of audit.

Hours of operation allowed

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The maximum number of hours the Recycler can run the Recycling Process under the terms of their licenses and operating permits.

Equipment capacity

The maximum theoretical capacity of the Recycler's equipment with respect to the weight of Input Plastic Waste that can be accepted in the Recycling Process to produce a Recycled Product.

Site capacity

The lower of the sum of the(s) capacity(s) of the equipment or the licensed input volume.

Nominal capacity

The operational capacity of the Recycler's equipment regarding the weight of Plastic Waste Input accepted in the Recycling Process to produce Recycled Output. It is the capacity value calculated based on consumption figures during a specified period. It considers planned production hours, performance, and identified line availability

Batch

[EN 17615:2020, 3.17]

Quantity of material considered as a single unit and having a unique reference.

Lot

Defined quantity of a product manufactured or produced under conditions that are presumed uniform.

Incoming plastic residue

The degree of plastic waste required for the Recycling Process for which the Recycler is applying for Certification.

Input Volume

The total weight of Input Plastic Waste delivered to the Recycler over a given period of time.

Input Volume Licensee

The total weight of all plastic waste that the Recycler can accept under the terms of its operating license within a given period of time.

Recycle Process

[art. 3(17) DO L 312 22.11.2008, p. 3]

Any recovery operation by which waste materials are reprocessed into products, materials, or substances, either for the original purposes or for other uses. It includes the reprocessing of organic material but excludes energy recovery and reprocessing into materials to be used as fuels or for landfill operations. A Recycling Process produces a Recycled Product for which Certification is requested.

Recycled output



Recycled (recycled) plastic produced by the Recycling Process that can be used as a substitute for virgin polymer or other raw materials to manufacture products (excluding products for power generation).

Pre-processed residue Output

Waste outflows sent for recycling.

Yield

The amount of recycled output (in percentage) produced from a given tonnage of input waste plastic.

Beneficial Output

Beneficial Output refers to all Recycled Output, including by-products produced from the Recycling Process that can be used as a direct replacement for virgin polymer or other raw material to manufacture goods (excluding those for power generation).

Recycled Content

[CEN/TR 15353:2004, adapted] Percentage by weight of recycled plastics in a product. Percentage by weight of Recycled Input Certified in Output. It must be defined between Pre-consumption Material and Post-consumer Material.

Pre-consumer

[EN 14021:2016, 7.8.1.1]

Descriptive term that covers material diverted from the waste stream during a manufacturing process.

Note 1: This term excludes reused material, such as rework, crushing or waste that has been generated in a given process and can be recovered within that same process. The same process involves the manufacturing operation for the same type of product either in the same location or in a different one.

Note 2: The term "post-industrial material" is sometimes used as a synonym.

Post-consumer

[EN 14021:2016, 7.8.1.1]

A descriptive term covering material, generated by end-users of products, that has served its intended purpose or can no longer be used (including material returned within the distribution chain). For specific materials such as PVC, industry definitions apply.

Note 1: The term "post-use" is sometimes used synonymously

Household post-consumer

Descriptive term that covers the waste generated by households. Generally, it is a synonym for 'garbage/trash' and 'domestic waste'. Domestic waste is the fraction of municipal waste collected from households, the final depositories of the waste. However, this type of waste is not limited to households, as it also includes all waste that shares the same characteristics.



Commercial postconsumer

Descriptive term encompassing waste produced by the operation of a professional, commercial, institutional, or governmental facility. Commercial waste is synonymous with business waste. Commercial waste is generated from handling, transportation, retailing, and storage of products and services, commonly referred to as tertiary packaging. Within this waste category, we also find waste generated by public institutions (schools, museums, libraries, government buildings, hospitals, and the like) or by commerce, small businesses, and office buildings. Commercial waste includes waste from electronic and electrical appliances when these are returned to businesses managing disposal. Additionally, plastic bottles for beverages that are part of deposit-return schemes are typically considered commercial waste, as the ultimate holder of the product to be disposed of is the retail center where these bottles are collected.

Waste, scrap, shredded material

[EN/ISO 472:2013, 2.1707]

Plastic material recovered crushed and/or granulated in the form of fluid material. The term is often used to describe plastic material in the form of scrap generated in a plastics processing operation and reused internally. The term is also used to describe the fine plastic powder used as filler in the recovery of plastics.

Recycled Rate

The amount of municipal waste recycled shall be the amount of municipal waste at the calculation point. The amount of municipal waste entering the recycling operation will include specific materials. May include non-specific materials only to the extent that their presence is permissible for the specific recycling operation.

Outsourced processing

When the Input Plastic Waste has an operation performed by a third party, for example, classification, pollution elimination, etc., before they go through the Recycling Process. Outsourced processing is not a recycling process.

Outsourced recycling

Input plastic waste delivered to the Recycler that is recycled by toll by a third-party recycler also certified under this Audit Scheme where the Recycler retains ownership of the third-party recycler's recycled output (recycling under toll).

5. 5. CERTIFICATION TYPES

5.1 INITIAL CERTIFICATION

The Initial Certification must occur for one or more Recycling Processes within a Site that can provide production records for the previous 12 months of operation. This Certification is valid for 1 year.

5.2 RECERTIFICATION

Recertification must be conducted at a Site that can provide production records for the 12 months preceding the Production Process. Recertification will be granted to the Site when the Certification from the previous year is available. This Certification is valid for 1 year.

5.3 MULTI-SITE CERTIFICATION

The Certification must occur for one or more Recycling Processes within two or more separate Sites under the same ownership. The recycler must designate one location as the primary address for administrative purposes of Certification. All locations must be visited during the on-site audit and listed in the Audit Report and Summary Sheet. This Certification is valid for 1 year.

6. ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTIFICATION

Certification can only be granted to recyclers who have processes capable of recycling pre-consumer and/or post-consumer plastic waste into new plastic products.

Recyclers must have in place a Recycling Process/es holding either a waste management permit, an exemption authorization under Article 20 of the Waste Framework Directive, or an operating license or environmental license with specific provisions regarding waste treatment.

7. OBJECT OF CONFORMITY

The certification allows recyclers with plastic recycling processes to demonstrate compliance with the certification under Control Union's recycling process audit scheme in line with the requirements of EN 15343:2007

8. CERTIFICATION PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Control Union WG Spain S.A. will be responsible for the tasks associated with planning, conducting, and managing the certification process for traceability in the plastic recycling process, covering from the reception of the certification request to the completion of the process, including the issuance of the final evaluation report and certificate.

9. RECYCLED PROCESS AUDIT

9.1 APPLICATION

When an organization contacts Control Union WG Spain SA to request certification, a request form is sent to them to complete with the necessary information. With this information, the commercial proposal will be prepared. Once the client accepts the offer, the audit date will be coordinated, then the audit plan will be sent, and through it, information, and documentation that the client must send before the audit will be

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requested. The audit plan will also inform the client of the visit date and the assigned audit team.

9.2 DOCUMENTATION REVIEW

Control Union WG Spain SA will review and analyse the documentation provided by the company.

The following will be requested:

- Certificates from suppliers (percentage of post-consumer / total percentage of recycled plastic).
- Product codes of the materials for which certification is required.
- Calculations of recycled material content incorporated into the products. The calculation methodology will be validated during the audit and could be used for possible scope extensions of the certificate.
- Technical data of the products within the scope of certification (product specifications, list of materials, formulation).
- Metrology of relevant equipment, flow meters, and test equipment records.
- Production records for the last 12 months.
- Quality control records for the last 12 months.
- Description of the stock management system. Annual stock control records.
- List of subcontractors used (if applicable).
- Records of subcontracted production (if applicable).

If necessary, part of the documentation may be reviewed during the on-site visit. Additional information may also be requested.

9.3 AUDIT

After the documentation review, the Control Union audit team will visit the recycler and verify that the organization has implemented the necessary processes and stages to produce recycled material, ensuring the traceability of plastic waste within the recycling process, and providing a statement of the percentage of recycled content (pre-consumer and post-consumer) in the recycled products.

During the audit, the following will be evaluated:

- Processes and stages necessary to produce recycled material.
- Procedures and means necessary to ensure the process.
- Reception of plastic waste: Control of incoming waste identifying the type (PP, PE, etc.), quantity, origin (pre-consumer, post-consumer), and presentation (big bags, sacks, bales, or others).
- Entry and reception records of waste for the last 12 months (delivery notes, invoices, names, weights, and dates).
- Identification of whether the waste may contain known hazardous substances.
- Waste characterization documentation according to UNE EN 15347.

- Supplier certificates if applicable (e.g., recycler performing pre-treatment of plastic waste such as shredding).
- Production means necessary to carry out the processes (separation, segregation, shredding, washing, drying, homogenization, extrusion, packaging, and storage).
- Quality controls of waste and inputs.
- Specifications of recycled material in technical data sheets. Characterization is performed according to applicable standards:
 - EN15342 for recycled polystyrene (PS)
 - EN15344 for recycled polyethylene (PE)
 - EN15345 for recycled polypropylene (PP)
 - EN15346 for recycled poly(vinyl chloride) (PVC)
 - EN15348 for recycled poly(ethylene terephthalate) (PET)
- Mass balance to determine the percentage of pre-consumer and post-consumer material, if applicable.
- Calibration of the equipment used.
- Stock management.
- Production records for the last 12 months.
- Calculations of recycled material content incorporated into the products.
- Traceability of recycled material from origin to final product to confirm the percentage of recycled material. Exercises will be conducted.
- Processed output records for the last 12 months.
- Evidence of treatment or use of by-products.
- Records of subcontracted recycling (if applicable).

Control Union recognizes other certificates issued by independent certification entities that have the corresponding accreditation for the certification of the plastic recycling process.

9.4 REPORT

The auditor will record the assessment results in a report, summarizing conformity and detailing non-conformities, including supporting evidence. The report will indicate the outcomes concerning all certification requirements.

9.5 NON-CONFORMITIES

If non-conformities are detected, the organization must submit a corrective action plan and evidence of correction and implementation within 40 days after the audit to the audit team for evaluation and approval to address the non-conformities.

Control Union must inform the client of all non-conformities and observations.

The client must indicate if they are interested in continuing the certification process. If so, Control Union will provide information on the additional evaluation tasks necessary to verify that the non-conformities have been corrected.

9.6 CERTIFICATION ISSUANCE

Once all the necessary information is gathered, such as the audit report and, if applicable, a corrective action plan, a technical review will be conducted, and the decision to grant the certification will be made.

The issued certificate will be valid for one year. The annex will indicate the type of recycled material that has been audited along with its respective pre-consumer or post-consumer recycled material percentage.

Once the organization has its certificate, it may reference it by using the certification logo and mark.

If the decision is made not to grant the certification, the reasons will be explained in detail.

9.7 USE OF LOGO EXAMPLE

The Organization that has received the Certification may use the mark as shown below



For more details, see the Regulation of Use of the Union Control mark.

10. CHANGES THAT AFFECT CERTIFICATION

Changes in the product, process, or quality management system that would affect conformity with the requirements of the Audit Scheme must be communicated to Control Union. This information will be reviewed to decide if an on-site audit is necessary before modifying the certificate. If the visit is necessary, its scope will be limited to the certification of the requirements outlined in section 9.3.

The scope of the visit will be limited to the certification of the following requirements:

Quality management system

Control processes over the recycled material

Certification of the recycled material content in the final product

When the Recycler wishes to extend the scope of conformity assessment, add or remove products, change suppliers or types of waste, or change the proportion of recycled content in a Recycled Product, this must be communicated to CU to modify the certificate. The modifications will be indicated on the certificate without changing the validity period.

Extending certification to new products or changes in the percentage of recycled content will require CU to verify new formulas, product data sheets, and production records for the relevant production batches.

After the technical review of the report with the results, Control Union will decide on the necessary modifications to the certificate, which will be in accordance with the current situation.

11. ECONOMIC MATTERS

CU WG Spain SA will determine and communicate to the organizations that request the certification the economic conditions corresponding to the activities related to the concession, monitoring, and renewal of the Certificate in the offer for the service.

12. CONTROL DE CAMBIOS

Fecha	Versión	Resumen de Cambios
15.02.2023	1.0	Document Creation
02.02.2024	1.1	Introduction added
02.02.2024	1.1	The Provisional Certification option is removed from the Certification Types point.
02.02.2024	1.1	Text is improved and points 1 to 12 are indicated
26.04.2024	1.2	9.1 It is indicated that the audit plan reports the date of visit and the audit team assigned
26.04.2024	1.2	9.2 The wording on the Calculation of content of recycled material is improved.

26.04.2024	1.2	9.3 The wording is improved by indicating that the visit will be carried out after the document review and the on-site audits are described in greater detail. A clarification is added to refer to the need for accredited certification as the only option for recyclers providing pretreated plastic waste.
26.04.2024	1.2	9.6 The text is completed by specifying that the relevant pre-consumption or post-consumption percentage of recycled material shall be indicated in the annex to the certificate.
26.04.2024	1.2	10 It is clarified that if the visit is necessary, the scope of the visit shall be limited to the certification of the requirements set out in point 9.3.
23.05.2024	1.3	9.2 The list of documents to be requested is explained in greater detail.
23.05.2024	1.3	9.3 The requirements are described in more detail.