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

PE CU PRP

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Index

[1. INTRODUCTION 3](#_Toc165301277)

[2. CERTIFICATION OBJECT & SCOPE 4](#_Toc165301278)

[3. REFERENCES STANDARDS 4](#_Toc165301279)

[4. THERMS & DEFINITIONS 5](#_Toc165301280)

[5. CERTIFICATION TYPES 9](#_Toc165301281)

[5.1 INITIAL CERTIFICATION 9](#_Toc165301282)

[5.2 MONITORING CERTIFICATION 9](#_Toc165301283)

[5.3 MULTISITE CERTIFICATION 10](#_Toc165301284)

5.4 PROVISIONAL CERTIFICATION…………………………………………………………………...10

[6. ELEGIBILITY FOR CERTIFICATION 10](#_Toc165301286)

[7. OBJECT OF CONFORMITY 10](#_Toc165301287)

[8. CERTIFICATION PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT 11](#_Toc165301288)

[9. RECYCLING PROCESS AUDIT 11](#_Toc165301289)

[9.1 APPLICATION 11](#_Toc165301290)

[9.2 DOCUMENTATION REVIEW 11](#_Toc165301291)

[9.3 AUDIT 11](#_Toc165301292)

[9.4 REPORT 12](#_Toc165301293)

[9.5 NON CONFORMITIES 12](#_Toc165301294)

[9.6 CERTIFICATE EMISSION 12](#_Toc165301295)

[9.7 USE OF BRAND EXAMPLES 13](#_Toc165301296)

[10. CHANGES THAT AFFECT TO CERTIFICATION 13](#_Toc165301297)

[11. ECONOMIC TOPICS 14](#_Toc165301298)

[12. CHANGES CONTROL 14](#_Toc165301299)

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The UNE 15343 Plastic Recycling Process Audit Program certification is developed by Control Union to help the plastics industry demonstrate and guarantee the application of circular economy principles.

Growing environmental awareness in our society is fostering consumer demand not only for high-quality products, but also for products produced in an environmentally responsible manner and with the sustainable use of natural resources.

Due to this reality, Control Union has launched a certification scheme designed to promote and guarantee the sector's transition toward a Circular Economy. This approach focuses specifically on completing the production cycle, transforming plastic waste into new resources.

Our certifications comprehensively cover the traceability of recycled material. From the reception of the plastic waste, through its processing, to its reintroduction into the market as recycled material. This includes the characterization of said recycled material, its conversion into pellets for subsequent use, and, finally, the certification of the percentage of this recycled material incorporated into new products.

# 2. CERTIFICATION OBJECT & SCOPE

The objective of this certification is **to recognize the plastic recycling processes for pre-consumer and post-consumer waste that operate at a Site in accordance with the requirements established in the Recycling Process Conformity Assessment Scheme:**

Certification against this Audit Scheme allows recyclers to demonstrate their contribution to plastic waste management and transparently communicate the origin of their waste. Recycling Process Certification is the point-of-origin audit for the chain of custody of recycled plastics. Certified Organizations provide confidence to all actors in the plastics value chain for a 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.

The certification focuses on verifying the origin of the waste, traceability throughout the recycling process, and calculating the recycled content at the output. The Audit Scheme 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 for ensuring the origin of waste, traceability, and the percentage of recycled plastics in the output. The Audit Scheme operates according to the controlled mix chain of custody model described in ISO 22095:2020, which allows for the transfer of information from one actor in the value chain to another under Certification.

Use of the Certification mark is limited to those Recyclers who have 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 conformity assessment of recycled plastics 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 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 for recycled plastics

EN ISO 14021 Ecolabels and environmental declarations. Environmental self-declarations (Type II ecolabel).

EN 17615 Plastics – Environmental Aspects – Vocabulary

ISO 22095:2020 Chain of custody – General terminology and templates

ISO 9001 Quality management systems. Requirements

# 4. THERMS & DEFINITIONS

**Organization**

[ISO 22095:2020, 3.4.1]

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

**Site**

[ISO 22095:2020]

A geographically bounded location in which defined activities are carried out under the control of an organization.

**Recicler**

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

**Certification**

Certification under this Audit Scheme.

**Plastic**

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

**Recycled Plastic**

[EN/ISO 472:2013, 2.612]

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

**Traceabiltiy**

[ISO 22095:2020, 3.6.1]

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

**Segregation**

[ISO 22095:2020, 3.3.2]

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

**Controlled Blending**

[ISO 22095:2020, 3.3.3]

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

**Storage Bay**

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

**Current working hours**

The operating hours of the Recycling Process at the time of the audit.

**Allowed working hours**

The maximum number of hours that the Recycler may perform the Recycling Process under the terms of its operating licenses and permits.

**Equipment Capacity**

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

**Site Capacity**

The lowest value between the sum of the equipment capacity(ies) or the licensed input volume.

**Nominal Capacity**

The operating capacity of the Recycler's equipment relative to the weight of Input Plastic Waste accepted into the Recycling Process to produce Recycled Output. This is the capacity value calculated based on consumption figures over a given period. It considers planned production hours, throughput, and identified line availability.

**Batch**

[EN 17615:2020, 3.17]

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

**Lot**

A defined quantity of a product manufactured or produced under conditions that are presumed to be uniform.

**Input Plastics Wastes**

Plastic waste required for the Recycling Process for which the Recycler is requesting Certification.

**Input Volume**

The total weight of Input Plastic Waste delivered to the Recycler during the scoped period of time.

**Input Volumen license**

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

**Recycling 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, whether for their original or other purposes. This includes the reprocessing of organic material but does not include energy recovery and reprocessing into materials for use as fuel or for landfill operations. A Recycling Process produces a Recycled Product for which Certification is requested.

**Recycled Output**

Recycled plastic (recycled) 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 energy generation).

**Pre-processed output wastes**

Waste outputs sent for further recycling.

**Yield**

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

**Beneficial Output**

It 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 intended for energy generation).

**Recycled content**

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

**Preconsumer**

[EN 14021:2016, 7.8.1.1]

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

Note 1: This term excludes reused material, such as rework, regrind, or scrap generated in a given process that can be recovered within that same process. The same process involves manufacturing the same type of product, whether at the same or a different location.

Note 2: The term “post-industrial material” is sometimes used synonymously.

**Postconsumer**

[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 is no longer usable (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 posconsumer**

Descriptive term covering waste generated by households. Usually a synonym for 'garbage/rubbish' and 'household waste'. Household waste is the fraction of municipal waste collected from households, the final recipients of waste. However, this type of waste is not limited to households; it also includes all waste that resembles the same characteristics as households.

**Commercial postconsumer**

A descriptive term that covers waste produced by the operation of a professional, commercial, institutional, or government-owned commercial or business facility. Trade waste is synonymous with commercial waste. Trade waste is generated from the handling, transportation, retail, and storage of products and services, generally referred to as tertiary packaging. Within this category of waste, 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. Trade waste includes waste electronic and electrical equipment when returned to retailers that manage their disposal. Additionally, plastic beverage bottles that are part of deposit-return schemes are often considered trade 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]

Recovered plastic material that has been crushed and/or granulated into a free-flowing material. The term is frequently used to describe scrap plastic material generated in a plastics processing operation and reused internally. The term is also used to describe fine plastic powder used as filler in plastics recovery.

**Recycling rate**

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

**Subcontracted process**

When input plastic waste undergoes an operation, such as sorting, contamination removal, etc., before it goes through the recycling process. Subcontracted processing is not a recycling process in itself.

**Subcontracted recycling**

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

# 5. CERTIFICATION TYPES

## 5.1 INITIAL CERTIFICATION

Initial Certification must be in place 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 one year.

## 5.2 MONITORING CERTIFICATION

Monitoring certification must be completed at a site that must submit production records for the 12 months prior to the production process.

Recertification will be granted to the site when the previous year's certification is available. This certification is valid for one year.

## 5.3 MULTISITE CERTIFICATION

One or more recycling processes must be located within two or more separate sites under the same ownership. The recycler must designate one location as the primary address for certification administration purposes. All locations must be visited during the on-site audit and listed in the Audit Report and Summary Sheet. This certification is valid for one year.

## 5.4 PROVISIONAL CERTIFICATION

In case that audited company has less that 12 months of registers, but more than 3 months, and at least three batches of produced references, and accomplish with all other requirements, a provisional certificate can be provided, that will be replaced one year later for a normal certificate in the monitoring audit.

# 6. ELEGIBILITY FOR CERTIFICATION

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

Recyclers must have a recycling process(es) in operation and hold a waste management permit, a derogation authorization pursuant to Article 20 of the Waste Framework Directive, or an operating or environmental license with specific provisions on waste treatment.

# 7. OBJECT OF CONFORMITY

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

# 8. CERTIFICATION PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

# Control Union WG Spain S.A. will be responsible for planning, implementing, and managing the traceability certification process for plastic recycling, covering the entire process from receipt of the certification application to the end of the process, including the issuance of the final evaluation report and certificate.

# 9. RECYCLING PROCESS AUDIT

## 9.1 REQUEST

When an organization contacts Control Union WG Spain SA to apply for certification, they are sent an application form to complete with the necessary information. This information will be used to prepare a commercial proposal. 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 will be requested, which the client must submit before the audit. The audit plan will also include the visit date and the assigned audit team.

## 9.2 DOCUMENTATION REVIEW

Control Union will review and analyze the documentation provided by the company. Additional information may be requested if necessary.

## 9.3 AUDIT

After conducting a document review, the Union Control audit team will visit the recycler and verify that the organization has implemented the necessary processes and steps for manufacturing recycled material. This will ensure the traceability of plastic waste within a recycling process and provide a declaration of the percentage of recycled content (pre-consumer and post-consumer) in the recycled products.

During the audit, the following will be assessed:

- Processes and steps required for the manufacture of recycled material.

- Procedures and resources required 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).

- Records of waste entry and reception (delivery notes, invoices).

- Identification of whether the waste may contain known hazardous substances.

- Documentation of waste characterization according to UNE EN 15347.

- Supplier certificates, if applicable (for example, a recycler that performs pre-treatment of plastic waste, such as shredding).

- Production resources required to carry out the processes (separation, segregation, shredding, washing, drying, homogenization, extrusion, packaging, and storage).

- Specifications of the recycled material in technical data sheets. Characterization is carried out according to the 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 any.

- Calibration of the equipment used.

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

## 9.4 REPORT

El evaluador registrará los resultados de la evaluación en un informe, resumiendo la conformidad y detallando la no conformidad, incluida su evidencia de respaldo. El informe indicará los resultados con todos los requisitos de certificación.

## 9.5 NON CONFORMITIES

## If nonconformities are detected, the organization must submit a corrective action plan and evidence of correction and implementation within 12 weeks of the audit to the audit team for evaluation, approval, and remediation.

## Control Union must inform the client of all nonconformities and observations.

## The client must express their interest in continuing the certification process. In this case, Control Union will provide information on the additional assessment tasks required to verify that the nonconformities have been corrected.

## 9.6 CERTIFICATE EMISSION

Once all the necessary information is available, including the audit report and, if applicable, a corrective action plan, a technical review will be conducted, and a decision will be made to grant Certification.

The issued Certificate will be valid for one year. The type of recycled material audited, along with its respective percentage of pre-consumer or post-consumer recycled material, will be indicated in the annex.

Once your Certificate is issued, the Organization will reference it through the use of the Certification logo and mark.

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

## 9.7 USE OF BRAND EXAMPLES

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

# For further details, please refer to the Control Union Trademark Usage Regulations.

# 10. CHANGES THAT AFFECT TO CERTIFICATION

Changes to the product, process, or quality management system that would affect compliance with the Audit Scheme requirements must be communicated to Control Union so that the information can be reviewed and a decision can be made as to whether a site audit is necessary before amending the Certificate. If a site visit is necessary, its scope will be limited to certifying compliance with the requirements set out in section 9.3.

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

* Quality Management system
* Recycling Material Process Control
* Certificación del contenido de material reciclado en el producto final

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

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

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

# 11. ECONOMIC TOPICS

CU WG Spain SA will determine and communicate to organizations requesting certification the financial conditions for the activities related to the granting, monitoring, and renewal of the Certificate in the service offer.

# 12. CHANGES CONTROL

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Fecha** | **Versión** | **Resumen de Cambios** |
| 15.02.2023 | 1.0 | Creación de documento |
| 02.02.2024 | 1.1 | Se añade la introducción |
| 02.02.2024 | 1.1 | Se elimina la opción de Certificación Provisional del punto Tipos de Certificación. |
| 02.02.2024 | 1.1 | Se mejoran los textos y se indican los puntos del 1 al 12 |
| 26.04.2024 | 1.2 | 9.1 Se indica que el plan de auditoría informa la fecha de visita y el equipo auditor asignado. |
| 26.04.2024 | 1.2 | 9.2 Se mejora la redacción sobre los Cálculos de contenido de material reciclado. |
| 26.04.2024 | 1.2 | 9.3 Se mejora la redacción indicando que la visita se realizará luego de la revisión documental y se describen con mayor detalle las comprobaciones que se realizarán durante la auditoría en sitio. Se adiciona una aclaración para hacer referencia a la necesidad de certificación acreditada como única opción para recicladores que provean residuos plásticos pretratados.  |
| 26.04.2024 | 1.2 | 9.6 Se completa el texto detallando que se indicará en el anexo del certificado el respectivo porcentaje preconsumo o posconsumo de material reciclado. |
| 26.04.2024 | 1.2 | 10 Se aclara que en caso de que la visita sea necesaria, el alcance de la misma quedará limitado a la certificación de los requisitos establecidos en el punto 9.3. |
| 30-12-2024 | 1.3 | Se actualiza el plazo de 12 meses. |