

**Hong Kong Green Label Scheme**  
**Product Environmental Criteria for**  
**Paper Envelope with Recycled Content (GL-001-002)**



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## **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 papers envelope 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 envelope with recycled content considerably reduces the amount of waste paper. Moreover, production of pulp results in significant 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 envelope with recycled content is to:

- Promote the use of recycled paper as a means of conserving resources and reducing the amount of waste paper entering the waste stream.
- 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 envelopes with recycled contents.

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**PRODUCT ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERIA**

The table below sets out the environmental criteria for the product category of Paper Envelope with recycled content (GL-001-002) under the HKGLS.

Product Environmental Criteria	Verification Method(s)*
1. The recycled paper shall contain at least 50% recycled fibre, including 20% post-consumer fibre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Inspection of product samples;</li> <li>✓ Review of supporting information; AND</li> <li>✓ Performance of on-site factory visit.</li> </ul>
2. The envelope shall not use water-insoluble glues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Review of supporting information; AND</li> <li>✓ Interview with relevant personnel.</li> </ul> <p>The applicant shall provide the MSDS the glues ingredients and provide <i>declare</i> with authorized person signature showing compliance with the requirement.</p>
3. The chemical oxygen demand (COD) in the water discharge from both pulp and paper production shall not exceed 20kg/tonne of paper produced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Review of laboratory test report(s)<sup>i</sup>. AND</li> <li>✓ Performance of on-site factory visit.</li> </ul>
4. The manufacturing processing shall be done without any dyestuff, optical brighteners and non – biodegradable complexing agents such as ethylenediamine tetraacetic acid (EDTA).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Review of laboratory test report(s)<sup>ii</sup>; AND</li> <li>✓ Review of supporting information.</li> </ul>

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Product Environmental Criteria	Verification Method(s)*
5. The recycled paper input shall not be bleached during the recycling process with chlorine.	✓ Review of supporting information; AND ✓ Interview with relevant personnel.  The applicant shall <i>declare</i> compliance with the requirement.
6. Where surfactants are used in the manufacturing process, such as for the de-inking of recycled paper input, these surfactants shall be readily biodegradable.	✓ Review of supporting information; AND ✓ Interview with relevant personnel.
7. Solvents used in the cleaning of production equipment shall be free of halogenated hydrocarbons.	✓ Review of supporting information; AND ✓ Interview with relevant personnel.
8. Packaging requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General packaging requirements (Refer to criteria for packaging materials: GL-Packaging)</li> </ul>	✓ 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.

<sup>i</sup> 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.

<sup>ii</sup> 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:

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- 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.