



european level

The European evaluation  
and certification system  
for environmentally friendly  
and socially responsible  
office furniture

# european level



The sustainability certification programme for office and non-domestic furniture for indoor use

## NOT JUST ANOTHER STANDARD FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Many different environmental certificates for office and facility furniture have been issued for years, but most of them cover only limited aspects of sustainability. In addition, some of these certificates are in competition with one another. As a result, even experts may find it hard to disentangle the jumble of certificates and their respective requirements. Therefore, the FEMB sustainability standard and the European LEVEL certificate were created to provide guidance for developers, producers and buyers of office and facility furniture looking for comprehensive information about sustainability criteria.

- + The only **accredited** furniture standard for green economy.
- + The most **comprehensive** sustainability standard for furniture.
- + European LEVEL can **cover** other labels for furniture.
- + Legally based and accredited schemes are **recognized**.
- + Benchmarks and thresholds of other labels are **integrated**.
- + **Matches** market requirements for circular economy/procurement.
- + **Unique** world-wide credibility through official accreditation.





## about sustainability

The term 'sustainability' refers to general processes that do not deplete the resources they rely on.

### SUSTAINABILITY APPROACH

There is little debate today about the importance of the issue of sustainability. Sustainability is not only about environmental questions. It implies a much broader approach to social, economic and environmental questions. Often these issues are intertwined and cannot be dealt with separately.

A sustainability-oriented approach takes constant change into account and aims to balance the consumption of limited resources with the fulfilment of human needs. In order to achieve environmental sustainability, we need to take a close look at how natural systems work, how they remain diverse and how they produce everything that is needed for keeping an ecosystem in balance. Social relationships need thorough care for long-lasting existence.

Companies have a responsibility to conserve scarce natural resources and to support their social environment. They have to find ways to use resources efficiently in order to keep any negative effects of this use within reasonable bounds.



*LEVEL certifications are a first step towards managing the responsibility for natural resources and the social environment.*





## about level

LEVEL is based on the FEMB Sustainability Standard. Thus LEVEL is the first European certification that covers all relevant aspects of sustainability.

### CERTIFICATION PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

In the level certification process, not only the Product, but the Facility or Facilities that produced it, and the organisation itself are all scored according to sustainability criteria in the four impact areas of Materials, Energy & Atmosphere, Human & Ecosystem Health, and Social Responsibility.

In order to be level certified, products must meet certain minimum requirements (prerequisites) in each impact area, before going on to earn additional credits necessary to achieve certification at a given conformance level. It requires serious effort by manufacturers to measure their manufacturing process inputs and outputs, incorporate new material formulations, create design protocols, and formalize corporate actions around social responsibility.



*LEVEL takes a global approach and covers the European requirements for Green Public Procurement and Circular Economy concepts.*

level includes four impact areas of Materials, Energy & Atmosphere, Human & Ecosystem Health, and Social Responsibility.



MATERIALS



ENERGY & ATMOSPHERE

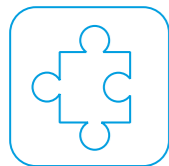


HUMAN & ECOSYSTEM HEALTH



SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# four impact areas



## MATERIALS

This impact area addresses material and natural resource considerations such as the product design process, the impact of specific materials, the efficient use of materials, recycled content, water and waste management, packaging, and product life cycle impacts.

- Wood and wood-based materials
- Plastic parts
- Surface coatings
- Adhesives and glues
- Textiles, leather and upholstery materials
- Flame retardants and phthalates
- Packaging materials
- Life cycle assessment
- Efficient use of materials
- Recycled content
- Extended product responsibility
- Product performance
- Water and solid waste management



## ENERGY & ATMOSPHERE

This impact area addresses energy and atmospheric considerations such as the establishment of an energy policy, energy and greenhouse gas audits, the reduction of energy impacts, the use and generation of renewable energy, product-embodied energy, and greenhouse gas reporting.

- Energy policy
- Defining energy performance baseline
- Creating energy performance rating system
- Providing rating system certification
- Energy management system
- Embodied energy
- Finished product energy consumption
- Transportation
- On-site and off-site renewable energy
- Greenhouse gases



## HUMAN & ECOSYSTEM HEALTH

This impact area addresses the ways that human and natural ecosystem health is affected by the chemical constituents used in furniture products, the production processes, and the operations and maintenance of facilities.

- Demonstration of compliance
- Key chemical, risk and EMS policy
- EMAS, ISO 14001 or equivalent
- A chemical management plan (CMP) for facilities
- Effects of product, process and maintenance chemicals
- Reduction / elimination of chemicals of concern
- Low-emission furniture



## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

This impact area addresses management practices that are designed to detect, respond to and avoid threats to employee and community health and safety. Among the criteria for certification are inclusiveness, good corporate citizenship, community engagement, and the incorporation of these practices into the supply chain.

- Employee health and safety management
- Labour and human rights
- Social responsibility policy
- External health and safety management standard
- Inclusiveness programmes
- Community outreach
- Social responsibility reporting
- Promoting of social responsibility in the supply chain



# certifying a product



## BASIS OF THE CERTIFICATION

The certification is based on the sustainability requirements for office and non-domestic furniture for indoor use that were developed by FEMB, the European Office Furniture Federation, using as a basis the American standard ANSI/BIFMA e3 together with the European criteria for Green Public Procurement and the specifications of several voluntary ecolabels.

## CERTIFIERS

In order to achieve a level certification, a manufacturer must contract with a certification body accredited according to ISO 17065. That certification body then uses the FEMB Sustainability Standard to conduct the audit function, measure all required information, verify compliance and certify the specific product with the level conformance mark.

## PREPARATIONS

Manufacturers of office and non-domestic furniture can also use the FEMB sustainability standard as a benchmark for the internal evaluation of their products. However, the LEVEL conformance mark may only be used on the basis of a third party certification by independent testing bodies.

Consult the level website [www.levelcertified.eu](http://www.levelcertified.eu) for a current list of authorized third-party certification bodies.



LEVEL has three thresholds of certification. Products can be awarded a LEVEL 1, LEVEL 2 or LEVEL 3 conformance mark based on the combined score they achieve in their sustainability evaluation. Currently the highest achievable rank is LEVEL 3.

	points				
	prerequisites	product	facility	Organisation	totals
Materials	15	21	4	4	29
Energy & Atmosphere	3	5	13	4	22
Human & Ecosystem Health	3	18	13	0	31
Social Responsibility	2	0	2	10	12



Fédération Européenne du Mobilier de  
Bureau (FEMB)

Horsechestnut House  
Hollybush Lane  
Burghfield Common  
Berkshire  
RG7 3JL  
United Kindom

[info@femb.org](mailto:info@femb.org)  
[www.femb.org](http://www.femb.org)  
[www.levelcertified.eu](http://www.levelcertified.eu)