

## **6.8 Produse de igiena si intretinere corporala ecologice (fisa de prezentare)**

### **Background document on the ecolabelling of cosmetic products**

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(contents and summary)

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## Summary

This background document contains a brief description of the product group and its effects on health and the environment, an overview of the market and the reasons underlying the requirements imposed in the criteria for cosmetic products.

The main **environmental problem** associated with cosmetic products is the release of hazardous substances into the environment, causing a strain on wastewater treatment plants and/or natural recipients. Imposing requirements on the toxicity and degradability of some of the incoming substances allows the strain on the external environment to be reduced.

Moreover there may be certain **health-related problems** associated with cosmetic products, such as allergies and unnecessary exposure to substances that are harmful to health. The criteria address these issues.

It has been decided that the product group should be as open as possible as it will include all products encompassed by the Cosmetic Directive not included in other Nordic Ecolabelling criteria documents, such as that for shampoos, conditioners and soaps.

The criteria were drawn up by a secretariat group comprising specialists from Norway, Sweden, Sweden, Finland, Iceland and Denmark. During the process of developing the criteria dialogue was maintained with a number of manufacturers, consumer organizations, public authorities and industry organizations.

## Introduction and background

This criteria document represents the first generation of criteria for cosmetic products. The criteria document will be in force from March 2004 until March 2007.

Nordic Ecolabelling conducted a preliminary study to determine whether a criteria document for cosmetic products would have the necessary relevance, potential and steerability.

**The preliminary study concluded that cosmetic products as a product group would have not only relevance, but also potential and steerability in the case of the vast majority of products.**

**The relevance** of the product group is based on the fact that there is **frequent media attention** on cosmetic products and their constituent substances, giving rise to concern on the part of consumers.

**The potential of the product group** was revealed in the long series of **tests conducted by the German magazine Oko-Test and the Danish consumer organisation "Gran Information" - now "The Information Centre for Environment and Health"**. These tests reveal that within all the product areas examined there are products that consumers are recommended not to use as well as products that are recommended. Broadly speaking, products fall within **three to five categories, ranging from "not recommended" to "recommended"**. This indicates that there is a difference between the products and hence potential, and accordingly that

**„the SWAN LABEL could help to guide consumers in the direction of choosing products that are best in terms of health and the environment“.**

It was concluded that the product group offered **steerability** in that some **consumers wish to be able to choose products that represent good choices in terms of health and the environment** - including the case of cosmetic products. Presumably the steerability of the product group will not be equally great for the entire range of cosmetic products although it is not possible to rule out in advance that a Swan Label might represent a key factor in purchasing situations. **The consumers who**

**are expected to be interested in the ecolabel are those suffering from allergies as well as parents of children and infants.** This latter group is particularly aware of the content of products.

The results of the preliminary study were put to the national ecolabelling boards and Nordic Ecolabelling in May/June 2003, and the development of criteria was initiated on this basis.

## **Other legislation and ecolabelling schemes within this area**

### **Legislation governing cosmetic products**

Cosmetic products are regulated by the Cosmetic Directive 76/768/EEC with amendments and adaptations. They are not subject to the rules on classification provided for in the Dangerous Preparations Directive 67/548/EEC.

**None of the annexes to these documents limits or prohibits the use of substances on the basis of their environmental properties.**

**Testing on animals** in the development of cosmetic products is to some extent regulated by the Cosmetic Directive. In the criteria the working group introduced a requirement **banning the use of animal testing of the final product**. Beyond this the group opted not to proceed further on this subject (apart from the legislative requirements) since any requirements imposed might conflict with the legal requirement that products must be safe in use. The requirement only applies to the final product not the ingoing substances. The working group will in the evaluation of the criteria assess the possibility of stricter requirements e.g. requirements as to animal testing on ingredients.

### **Other ecolabelling schemes**

At the time of writing, **the European Union ecolabelling scheme, the Flower**, has no criteria for cosmetic products.

The **Swedish** Society for Nature Conservation, the body that manages the Swedish **Good Environmental Choice ecolabel** does not at the time of writing have criteria in force for other cosmetic products than shampoo, conditioner and soap. However, approval of cosmetic products may be granted through the open criteria document for chemical products.

**In France**, an ecolabel exists for cosmetic products known as **Cosmebio**. Cosmebio is the result of cooperation between the French Ministry of Agriculture, ECOCERT France and an association comprising various French and European cosmetics manufacturers. The certification scheme was launched in September 2002. A variety of product ranges have been certified in accordance with the requirements of the scheme. A summary of the requirements is provided below:

- . Control of ingredients, their purity and their trace:
  - The neutral raw materials must be exempt of contaminants as heavy metals, hydrocarbons, pesticides, dioxines, GMO (genetically modified organisms), nitrates and gotten by simple processes
  - They must be Organic quality when it is possible and must represent at least 10% of ingredients
- . Forbidden to use:
  - Synthetic stains, synthetic crators, synthetic perfumes, synthetic antioxidants and emollients, synthetic oils and greases, the descended ingredients of the oil indstry, silicones
  - Animal products
- . Control of the respect of protection of the environment rules
  - Purification of dismissals, selective sorting, interdiction to use some aggressive

housekeeping products etc.

- . Tests on animals are forbidden
- . Packings must be no pollutants and to be recyclable (forbidden: PVC, PS, multilayers)
- . Control of the labelling
  - The percentage of natural origin ingredients and the one of the Bio ingredients must be indicated clearly

**Germany**, too, has a certification scheme, known as **BDiH (Bundesverband Deutscher Industri- und Handelsunternehmen)**. BDiH is an organization comprising German industrial and trading enterprises in areas such as pharmaceutical and medical products, health and care products and products for personal hygiene. A number of products have been awarded certification in accordance with the applicable requirements. Briefly stated, the requirements cover the following areas:

- Use of plant ingredients whenever possible is encouraged. Plants should be grown organically or wild-harvested
- Neither in the production nor in the product development is testing on animals to be carried out, nor outsourced to another company
- The use of inorganic salts (i.e. magnesium sulphate) and mineral ingredients is generally allowed
- Emulsifiers and surfactants may be used if they are obtained by the hydrolysis, hydrogenation or esterification or trans-esterification of the following materials:
  - Fats
  - Oils and waxes
  - Lecithin
  - Lanolin
  - Mono-, oligo- and polysaccharides
  - Proteins and lipoproteins
- The following ingredients are unacceptable:
  - Synthetic coloring agents and fragrances
  - Ethoxylated ingredients
  - Silicones, paraffins and other petroleum products
- The following preservatives may be used:
  - Benzoic acid and its salts and ethyl esters
  - Salicylic acid and its salts
  - Ascorbic acid and its salts
  - Benzyl alcohol
- Products must be labelled with the words "Preserved with ..."
- Sterilization of natural ingredients and their cosmetic end products through radioactive treatment is not allowed

## The market

The most recent sales figures for cosmetic products for 2002 are:

	Sweden (SEK)	Norway (NOK)	Finland (EURO)	Iceland (ISK)	Denmark (DKK)
Fragrances	838 million	375 million	30 million	192 million	1,043 million
Decorative cosmetics	1,770 million	1,040 million	45 million	227 million	638 million
Skin care	2,056 million	1,560 million	72 million	526 million	1,102 million
Haircare	2,168 million	1,835 million	114 million		2,025 million
Hygiene products	3,038 million	1,835 million	41 million	45 million	1,214 million