

To all CABs accredited/applicant for the PRD scheme
To the associations of conformity assessment bodies

SUBJECT **Certification and Inspection Department**
Informative Circular DC N° 07/2023 – Provisions regarding accreditation for the VinylPlus® Product Label v.1.4. scheme.

Introduction

In recent years there has been a marked increase in awareness regarding the use and marketing of increasingly sustainable substances/products.

The European Commission has also issued important documents in this regard including, in 2015, the "European Union Action Plan for the Circular Economy" and, in 2018, the "European Strategy for Plastics in the Circular Economy" as well as in 2020 the "Chemicals strategy for Sustainability Towards a Toxic-Free Environment".

On these two areas of interest, the PVC supply chain had already defined its own voluntary commitment for the sustainable development of the European PVC industry, called VinylPlus®, with the aim of creating a long-term sustainability model for the entire supply chain throughout the EU-28 as well as in Norway and Switzerland (www.vinylplus.org).

Subsequently, to make companies in the PVC supply chain increasingly aware of the importance of sustainability, the VinylPlus® Product Label was defined whose main criteria include: responsible sourcing of PVC, resin and additives; the controlled management of the life cycle and recycling; sustainable energy policies and organizational and supply chain management. Some of the actions reflect the concern of the CSS "Chemicals strategy for Sustainability" for toxic substances in products.

The VinylPlus® Product Label contributes to the Circular Plastic Alliance's goal of reaching 10 million tonnes of recycled plastic in Europe by 2025, by facilitating the audit of data reported in the Recotrace data collection system. The Recotrace audit can take place as part of the VinylPlus Product Label certification process.

The key requirements on which the VinylPlus® Product Label is based are available at the following link <https://productlabel.vinylplus.eu/>.

The main objective of the VinylPlus® Product Label is to help companies promote their products for the superior performance they offer and for their contribution to sustainability and the circular economy.

The Product Label also aims to help planners, consumers and procurement decision-makers identify PVC products and solutions in the construction sector that best contribute to sustainable development.

The Label is therefore the homogeneous reference for companies in the PVC supply chain and one of the possible references for compliance with Green Public Procurement within the Minimum Environmental Criteria, especially in the construction sector.

By adhering to this Label, companies obtain greater visibility and credibility from the institutions and the market, demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainable development and involving their suppliers of raw materials and services in this effort on one hand and its clients on the other.

Normative context

VinylPlus® Product Label was developed in compliance with internationally recognized reference schemes and aims to guide member companies on how to make some of the indications given by the Voluntary Commitment of the European PVC chain and by the Reach Regulation applicable.

The VinylPlus® Product Label was developed by the European PVC value chain association, VinylPlus, in cooperation with two external stakeholders, BRE Global and The Natural Step.

The scheme applies for the certification of a single product or a range of PVC products used in the construction sector.

VinylPlus® Product Label is the first brand, at national and European level, which specifically regulates the sustainability of PVC items by setting requirements not only for the product but also for the manufacturing companies.

The scheme has been structured so that compliance can also be demonstrated through the presence in the company of:

- certified management systems under accreditation in conformity with UNI EN ISO 9001:2015, UNI EN ISO 14001:2015, UNI ISO 45001:2018;
- supply chain policies officially defined by VinylPlus;
- involvement actions of all interested parties.

Accreditation process

The verifications necessary for the issue of the VinylPlus® Product Label v.1.4 must be carried out by accredited certification bodies according to the standard UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17065:2012.

The accreditation certificate shall state as the scope of accreditation "PVC products in the building and construction sector in accordance with VinylPlus® Product Label v.1.4".

Various cases may be presented, based on the ACCREDIA accreditations already held by the Certification Body that applies for accreditation or extension.

In cases where the CB already has accreditations issued by other Accreditation Bodies, an assessment must be carried out on a case-by-case basis, according to the applicable EA/IAF MLA agreements.

The requirements of RG-01 and RG-01-03 for the granting of accreditation and extension remain unchanged.

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| A | CB already accredited for the scheme ISO/IEC 17065:2012 | Document review of 1 day (to be performed if possible at the CB). 1 witness assessment of a duration appropriate to the client organization's size, with a minimum of 1 day. |
| B | CB not yet accredited for the scheme ISO/IEC 17065:2012, but accredited for other accreditation schemes | Document review of 1 day (to be performed if possible at the CB). Assessment of 2 days duration at the CB's premises. 1 witness assessment of a duration appropriate to the client organization's size, with a minimum of 1 day. |
| C | CB not yet accredited for any scheme | Document review of 1 day. Assessment of 4 days duration at the CB's premises. 1 witness assessment of a duration appropriate to the client organization's size, with a minimum of 1 day. |

Documentation to be presented to ACCREDIA for document review:

- a) evidence of training in accordance with VinylPlus Product Label v 1.4;
- b) checklist or guidelines or instructions prepared by the CB for the audit team;
- c) procedure for creating and managing audit teams;
- d) list of upcoming audit activities (data necessary to then plan the witness assessment);
- e) procedures/contractual regulations applicable to the assessment, as well as the internal procedures for the management of the file (from the offer to the issuance of the certificate);
- f) for CBs NOT accredited to ISO/IEC 17065, in addition to the documents listed above, also the documents requested in the accreditation application must be sent.

Maintenance of accreditation

In order to maintain the accreditation, throughout the accreditation cycle, except for particular situations (e.g.: management of complaints and feedbacks, modifications to the certification scheme, changes in the structure of the Body...), the following assessments will be performed:

- if the CB has issued fewer than 50 certificates, 1 witness assessment and 1 on-site assessment must be performed;
- if the CB has issued between 51 and 200 certificates, 2 witness assessments and 1 on-site assessment must be performed;
- if the CB has issued more than 201 certificates, 2 witness assessments and 2 on-site assessments must be performed.

Kind regards,

Dott.ssa Mariagrazia Lanza

Vice Direttore Dipartimento
Certificazione e Ispezione