

Appendix Table of Comments to Technical Report 1 for Absorbent Hygiene Products (May 2022)

Scope and definitions

Comments received in AHWG1/written form	JRC Dir. B response
<p>Proposed scope: Absorbent Hygiene Products and Menstrual Cups</p> <p>1. The product group 'absorbent hygiene products' shall comprise any sanitary article whose function is to absorb and retain human fluids such as urine, faeces, sweat, menstrual fluid and milk - excluding textile products.</p>	COMMENT ACCEPTED
<p>TR. 1.0, p. 9 <i>@Stakeholders' views on the new wording proposed for AHP is welcomed.</i> Absorbent Hygiene Products and Menstrual Cups The wording is from our perspective ok.</p>	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED
<p>Technical Report, page 8 and 9 „medical-grade silicone” No official definition of “medical grade silicone”. Alternative formulation proposal: “silicones tested according to relevant biocompatibility criteria and showing no adverse effects in these criteria”</p>	COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED
<p>It is needed to clarify some points in the reports about silicones as there is no official definition of medical grade silicone.</p>	The reference to medical grade silicone has been removed. Reference to biocompatibility tests is not proposed in the product group definition, but was added as part of the criterion on Fitness for use.
<p>Extension of the scope We support the proposition to include menstrual cups in the scope of the EU Ecolabel criteria for Absorbent Hygiene Products.</p>	COMMENTS ACKNOWLEDGED
<p>TR. 1.0, p. 9 <i>@ Do stakeholders agree on the inclusion of reusable menstrual cups in the product group scope?</i> Yes, we agree</p>	
<p>Pag 8- The product group 'menstrual cups' shall comprise reusable flexible cups or barriers worn inside the body to retain and collect menstrual fluid, and usually made of medical-grade silicone, rubber, latex, or elastomer. Major We are in favour of extending the scope to menstrual cups. It is a completely different product group that needs different criteria but since the menstrual cup has lower environmental impacts compered to single-use menstrual products (according to the preliminary report), this criteria set shouldn't be too large. The market uptake is growing and also regular supermarkets offer those products already, so it can have an additional value to have those EU Ecolabeled</p>	
<p>We support the inclusion of menstrual cups in the scope</p>	COMMENTS ACCEPTED
<p>Scope We support to make criteria for reusable products but does not think these should be included in AHP. The function is the same but since the ingoing materials and the functional unit is different, we think it will be too difficult include both disposable and reusable products in the same criteria. If the inclusion of these products is still considered a more comprehensive LCA study shall be made to identify environmental hotspots and identify areas for improvements. Most products are made of 100% medical silicone – how can we set requirements to differentiate the environmental best products?</p>	
<p>The product group 'menstrual cups' shall comprise reusable flexible cups or barriers worn inside the body to retain and collect menstrual fluid, and usually made of medical-grade silicone, rubber, latex, or elastomer.</p>	A new PEF analysis was carried out on reusable menstrual cups made of silicone and presented in the TR2.0, in order to identify the environmental hotspots and identify the areas for improvement specific to these products.

<p><i>Inclusion / exclusion of menstrual cups For the time being, we understand that none of the criteria has already been adapted to the menstrual cup's components and /or fabrication process. Considering the rationale above-mentioned, we must reconsider this inclusion, even though the product offers the same functionality.</i></p> <p><i>To support this rationale, please consider Nordic Swan Sanitary Products 6.8. scope: (...) Relevant disposable products in addition to those specified above may be included in the product group upon request if they are viewed as sanitary products. <u>This applies only to products made of materials for which requirements are imposed in the criteria</u>. Nordic Ecolabelling will decide which new products may be included in the product group.</i></p>	
<p><i>Reusable menstrual cups differ from the main AHP product group and an LCA approach would need to set very different system boundaries on reusable and disposable AHP. An LCA for reusable menstrual cups would also be needed.</i></p>	
<p><i>We understand that the new scope description (3) excludes products falling under the Medical Devices Regulation (EU) 2017/745. We would like to ask for a clarification on whether incontinence products that are not declared as medical devices (i.e. that are not CE marked) could be included in the scope of the EU Ecolabel for Absorbent Hygiene Products. Indeed, two French manufacturers of absorbent hygiene products indicated that they produce incontinence products which are not declared as medical devices and follow the same production process as absorbent hygiene products.</i></p>	<p>COMMENTS ACCEPTED</p> <p>The product group scope definition was revised to allow incontinence products that are not declared as medical devices (i.e. that are not CE marked) to apply for the EU Ecolabel.</p> <p>This was clarified in the TR2.0 and will be also explained in the User Manual that will be published with the adoption of the criteria.</p>
<p><i>All incontinence products are not medical devices, for example those "lighter duty" products, which can be purchased in ordinary supermarkets. It should be clearly stated in the criteria document which incontinence products are out of scope and which are in the scope (if any).</i></p>	
<p><i>The product groups 'absorbent hygiene products' and 'menstrual cups' shall not include incontinence products Major It was pity that you didn't solve the issue with medical devices. It would have been beneficial for everybody if there were EU Ecolabelled inco products for public procurement to purchase.</i></p>	
<p><i>p.8 3. The product groups 'absorbent hygiene products' and 'menstrual cups' shall not include incontinence products and any other type of products falling under the scope of Council Directive 93/42/EEC amended by Regulation (EU) 2017/745. Correction/simplification of the wording: The product groups 'absorbent hygiene products' and 'menstrual cups' shall not include products falling under the scope of Council Directive 93/42/EEC amended by Regulation (EU) 2017/745. Rationale: Incontinence products are without doubt meeting the definition and falling within the scope of AHP but are excluded by falling under the scope of CD 93/42/EEC amended by Regulation (EU) 2017/745.</i></p>	<p>COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED</p> <p>The wording proposed in TR2 takes into account this comment. However, not all incontinence products are registered as medical devices. The scope definition as proposed TR2 allows incontinence products to be in the scope as long as they are not registered as medical devices.</p>
<p><i>Moreover, we wish to make the following comments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>- We would like to point out that the case of menstrual sponges should be clarified, as they are not textile products and therefore seem to be covered by the new scope description (1).</i> 	<p>COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED</p> <p>Menstrual sponges are worn inside the body to retain and absorb menstrual fluid and can be made of natural sea sponges or synthetic materials such as polyurethane, polyether or polyvinyl alcohol foams. In general natural sea sponges can be reused several times while synthetic sponges are disposable. Due to the differences in material composition and the absence of market data, the menstrual sponges are not included in the scope of the product group 'absorbent hygiene products' and 'reusable menstrual cups'.</p> <p>References:</p> <p>https://flo.health/menstrual-cycle/lifestyle/hygiene-and-beauty/menstrual-sponge</p> <p>https://menstrualcupreviews.net/sea-sponge-menstrual-soft-tampons-product-reviews/</p> <p>https://menstrual-sponges.com/</p> <p>There are not market data available.</p>

<p>- One stakeholder would like to point out another product that should be clarified in the scope: non-reusable menstrual cups, which are currently produced by brands such as Flex Company in the United States ("Softdisc"). Including them in the scope description (2) (for instance by making the word "reusable" optional) could provide an applicable framework if non-reusable menstrual cups are sold in Europe in the future.</p>	<p>COMMENT REJECTED</p> <p>Disposable menstrual cups are not included in the revised scope because of the low market relevance, the large amount of waste associated (which goes against the principles of the Green Deal and the Circular Economy Action Plan), and the negative feedback from stakeholders.</p>
<p>We would like to raise attention on the possible inconsistency concerning baby diapers, for which the restriction of skin sensitizing substances in textiles which is in progress at EU level will be applicable, even though diapers are not considered textile products in the EU Ecolabel for Absorbent Hygiene Products. We consider it important to take this restriction into account to avoid distortions between the EU Ecolabel and the REACH regulation. The following link indicates the proposed concentrations to restrict formaldehyde: https://echa.europa.eu/fr/substance-information/-/substanceinfo/100.256.332.</p>	<p>COMMENT REJECTED</p> <p>It was not possible to identify any proposed concentration to restrict formaldehyde at the link indicated by the stakeholder. In any case, the revision of EU Ecolabel criteria follows a separate process compared to REACH. Being the EU Ecolabel a voluntary scheme for environmental excellence, it is possible that limit concentrations are stricter than mandatory regulation, if the revision process shows that such stricter limits are indeed needed. Stakeholders have the right to submit derogation requests in case it is considered not possible to fulfil the proposed limits.</p>
<p>Technical report, p. 8, "3 scope and definition" Product scope Are hybrid diapering solutions, composed of disposable inserts made of the same single-use AHPs materials in scope?</p> <p>Pag 8- "we are welcoming very much the integration of reusable products like menstruation cups in the product scope of the guideline. As you explained, Austria is also aware that some reusable products like reusable breast pads or panty liners fall within the scope of the textile criteria. Thus we fully support the proposed procedure (to refer to the scope of the textile criteria). On the contrary, we do not support this way when it comes to reusable diapers - as they often use disposable inlays. Furthermore we question the reasoning by claiming that reusable diapers are a niche product - this may be the case now, but being aware of a long validity period of the guideline (between four to eight years), we like to refer to the EU Circular Economy Action Plan and are thus hoping that reusable hygiene products like washable diapers may become more and more important, even becoming a mainstream product within the next years. It may also be important to explicitly address this product group within the EU Ecolabel, as it would make the EU Ecolabel more known and improve its uptake among the next generation of consumers."</p>	<p>COMMENTS CLARIFIED</p> <p>According to the revised product scope definition, "any sanitary article whose function is to absorb and retain human urine, faeces, sweat, menstrual fluid and milk - excluding textile products" are allowed in the scope. Therefore, the disposable inserts in a hybrid diaper may be included in the scope, provided that such inserts are sold as products to the consumer.</p>
<p>p.8 The product group 'absorbent hygiene products' shall comprise any sanitary article whose function is to absorb and retain human urine, faeces, sweat, menstrual fluid and milk - excluding textile products.</p> <p>Inclusion / exclusion of reusable products (diapers, sanitary pads, breast pads) The question raised about the inclusion of reusable products in the scope of EE AHP seems to miss the point: the scope is here defined by the similarity of fabrication processes enabling a comparison through LCAs. The general design of EE is based on environmental impact assessment and need therefore similar/comparable processes and raw materials.</p> <p>If the concern is to offer the possibility for reusable products to access an EE, the EE Textile suits perfectly.</p>	<p>COMMENT ACCEPTED</p>
<p>We have a license for reusable textile diapers and we don't see any reasons for why such a product cannot be included in the current EU Ecolabel criteria for Textile products</p>	<p>COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED</p>
<p>We would support the possible of reusable alternatives in the scope due to the environmental benefits of reusable alternatives.</p>	<p>COMMENT REJECTED</p> <p>Reusable AHP options (for feminine care and baby diapers) were assessed in the methodology for expanding the product group scope, however they did not fulfilled the score to be included.</p>
<p>NGOs are working on reusable baby diapers and although they currently present a niche market, interest is raising due to durability, less chemicals or less waste production.</p>	<p>COMMENT REJECTED</p> <p>Baby diapers are made from textiles and for this reason, they cannot really be targeted in the AHP group, rather they should be addressed in the EU Ecolabel criteria for textiles.</p>

definitions Definition of plastic materials is not aligned with the EU Single Use Plastics Directive. We propose to harmonise.	COMMENTS ACCEPTED
definitions Definition of plastic materials is not aligned with the EU Single Use Plastics Directive.	
TR, section 3, page 10. Add MMCF to the definition In the list of definitions, to avoid misunderstanding and misuse of terms, we suggest to add the definition of manmade cellulose fibers (MMCF) to the list.	COMMENT ACCEPTED A definition for MMCF has been added to the Technical Report.
TR 1.0 DEFINITIONS "additional packaging" p. 10 10) 'Additional packaging' means any component (with protective or hygienic function) of the absorbent hygiene product that is removed before the use of the product, e.g. the individual wrap or film where some products are contained within the primary packaging (mainly for tampons and sanitary pads), the release liner or paper in baby diapers and sanitary pads, or the applicator for tampons. The additional packaging can also be the cloth bag where menstrual cups are usually sold with. Wording: Following European Parliament and Council Directive 94/62/EC of 20 December 1994 on packaging and packaging waste, Article 3, Definitions For the purposes of this Directive: 1. 'packaging` shall mean all products made of any materials of any nature to be <u>used for the containment, protection, handling, delivery and presentation of goods</u> , from raw materials to processed goods, from the producer to the user or the consumer. 'Non-returnable` items used for the same purposes shall also be considered to constitute packaging. "the applicator for tampons" is not a packaging item. It must be removed of the list and identified individually as "functional aid" to use the tampon.	COMMENT REJECTED The term 'additional packaging' has been modified to 'additional component' to align with the nomenclature used in other ecolabels type I (Blue Angel and Nordic Swan). The definition of 'additional component' is 'any component (with protective or hygienic function) of the absorbent hygiene product that is removed before the use of the product, e.g. the individual wrap or film where some products are contained within the primary packaging (mainly for tampons and sanitary pads), the release liner or paper in baby diapers and sanitary pads, or the applicator for tampons. The additional component can also be the cloth bag where menstrual cups are usually sold with'.
Additional packaging' means any component (with protective or hygienic function) of the absorbent hygiene product that is removed before the use of the product, e.g. the individual wrap or film where some products are contained within the primary packaging (mainly for tampons and sanitary pads), the release liner or paper in baby diapers and sanitary pads, or the applicator for tampons. Major This new definition is fine. Does this mean that the silicone requirement does not apply for release paper?	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED The silicone requirement still applies to the release liner. The release liner (or paper) is an additional component (see previous comment for change in the term) in close contact with the final product.
TR. 1.0, p. 11 @ definition of: 12) 'Recyclability capacity' means the amount (mass or percentage) of an item available for recycling. From our perspective is the definition too unspecific; the recyclability of what? The materials should be integrated at this point. And it should be added: under realistic conditions in a company.	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED 'Recyclability capacity' has been defined for criterion 8- Packaging. Definitions in Section 3 of TR2 of relevance are: (9) 'Recyclability capacity' means the amount (mass or percentage) of an item available for recycling. . (10) 'Recycled content' means the amount of an item (by area, length, volume or mass) sourced from post-consumer and/or post-industrial recycled material. (11) 'Recycling' means, in accordance with Article 3 of Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council , any recovery operation by which waste materials are reprocessed into products, materials or substances whether for the original or other purposes. It includes the reprocessing of organic material but does not include energy recovery and the reprocessing into materials that are to be used as fuels or for backfilling operations'.
Directive 93/42/CEE du Conseil du 14 juin 1993 concernant les dispositifs médicaux du 12 juillet 1993 et es modifications ultérieures (Règlement (UE) 2017/745 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 5 avril 2017 relatif aux dispositifs médicaux). Major Il manque le nouveau règlement européen: le MDR 2017/745	COMMENT REJECTED The Medical Devices Regulation is mentioned in the TR1.0, in the page numbered as 3. Further clarification is done in Section 3 of TR2.

Assessment and verification

Comments received in AHWG1/written form	JRC Dir. B response
<p>Technical report, p. 12, 4 Assessment and verification Change management “Changes in suppliers and production sites pertaining to products to which the EU Ecolabel has been granted shall be notified to Competent Bodies, together with supporting information to enable verification of continued compliance with the criteria.”</p> <p>Can you confirm that product changes are possible while the EU Ecolabel is on pack? What is the exact process?</p> <p>What is missing but very important is a statement of „Initial certification“ (i.e. full scope of document) and „change management“ (i.e. pre-define what documentation or partial new measurement scope needs to be delivered in case of typical change management: i) supply point expansion on same chemical/feedstock composition, ii) usage reduction of same materials (CAS), iii) BCP situations with certain deviations. Etc. And define what other cases would require full re-certification</p>	
<p>TR 1.0</p> <p>ASSESSMENT & VERIFICATION</p> <p>p. 12 Changes in suppliers and production sites pertaining to products to which the EU Ecolabel has been granted shall be notified to Competent Bodies, together with supporting information to enable verification of continued compliance with the criteria.</p> <p>Point of vigilance</p> <p>Presumably a CB issue, to be shared with CBs / to be translated into specific rules/delays (User Manual)?</p> <p>Today, the change notification process is cumbersome in terms of data generation, case compilation and can take up to 6 months to be fully completed. The European Ecolabel should allow a more dynamic change management approach to follow the reality of the product without compromising its promise to always reward excellence. Managing change and how manufacturers ensure the quality of their products despite changes should be rewarded rather than penalized by an overly complex process.</p>	
<p>Technical report v1.0</p> <p>-Assessment and verification</p> <p>-Proposed assessment and verification</p> <p>-p12 : “Changes in suppliers and production sites pertaining to products to which the EU Ecolabel has been granted shall be notified to Competent Bodies...” Clarify and simplify the change management process</p> <p><u>We recommend taking advantage of the revision of the criteria to bring some simplifications related to the management of changes on EU Ecolabel awarded products.</u> The following statement should be further clarified: “Changes in suppliers and production sites pertaining to products to which the EU Ecolabel has been granted shall be notified to Competent Bodies, together with supporting information to enable verification of continued compliance with the criteria. “</p> <p>The paper should address in a more detailed way the “change management” process by providing guidelines on the level of documentation to be shared in the case of raw material, supplier, production and/or supply chain changes. For instance, it will be helpful to define the level of changes requiring minimal documentation such as acceptance of a scientific/ technical rationale as well as small laboratory work in opposition to the cases requiring major data submission for the Ecolabel criteria affected by the respective material change(s) or even full re-certification. A more detailed definition of what is regarded as “significant change” may help. Also, a certification of the PROCESS to ensure the continued use of sustainable materials, rather than certification of each material and each change, may be considered.</p> <p>The current process to notify about a change can be heavy in terms of generation of data, compilation of dossier sections and can take up to 3/6 months to be fully completed.</p> <p>EU Ecolabel should allow for a more dynamic change management approach to follow product reality without compromising on its promise to always reward excellence. The management of change and how manufacturers guarantee the quality of their products despite the changes should be rewarded instead of being penalized by a too complex process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As example, it happens that some changes must be operated in a very short period, like within few weeks, to ensure continuity of the production. These changes are usually related to raw materials or supply chain changes. They are unpredictable and dependant of 	<p>COMMENTS ACKNOWLEDGED</p> <p>These comments will be discussed with the Competent Bodies and the correct procedure clarified in the User Manual that will be published together with the adoption of the new EU Ecolabel criteria.</p>

external factors. Today EU Ecolabel is not set up to allow these last-minute changes as the submission process covering all criteria is very complex. The only solution for AHP manufacturer is to stop the production of awarded products creating a product shortage for the consumers.

- *Another example is the very dynamic the innovation cycle in the AHP business where materials can evolve in average every 6 months. The objective of this ongoing innovation is to constantly push the boundaries of absorption and performance while improving the environmental footprint of the product across its life cycle. The complete administrative handling of a product change under EU Ecolabel may take between 3 to 6 months and can overlap with the start of a new innovation cycle. Current solution is to slow down rhythm of changes to secure labelling and to minimize disruption. For EU Ecolabel, this means that the portfolio of awarded products may become outdated and would not reflect the best industry practices few years after the initial certification.*

CRITERION 1: Product description (please note the content of criterion 1 is moved to the general assessment and verification section).

Comments received in AHWG1/written form	JRC Dir. B response
<p><i>Absorbent Hygiene Products_Draft Technical report 1_FINAL.pdf.</i></p> <p><i>Proposed criterion 1: Product description</i></p> <p><i>Page 16 Attention: there is a concern where the customers correlate the weight of the product (printed in the pack) more with product and not with performance. This point could be a disadvantage for market reasons, so consider the composition and remove the description of weight in the products (only units number).</i></p>	<p>COMMENT REJECTED</p> <p>In the TR1 it was already proposed to remove the requirement of displaying the information of the product on the packaging.</p>
<p><i>This criterion should remain on the ECOLABEL.</i></p> <p><i>We recommend to describe the full composition of the product on the packaging and on merchant websites. The name of the components should be recognized by the European Regulation and be sorted by weight order.</i></p>	<p>COMMENTS PARTIALLY ACCEPTED</p> <p>In TR2, it is proposed to maintain the content of criterion 1, requiring the applicant to submit information about the total weight of each product and of each component within the product. However, it is proposed to move it to the general assessment and verification text.</p>
<p><i>TR. 1.0, p. 17 @ In your opinion, should criterion 1 be maintained, or withdrawn?</i></p> <p><i>From our perspective should the criterion 1 be maintained.</i></p>	
<p><i>In your opinion, should criterion 1 be maintained, or withdrawn? Major "This criterion should be kept and split to two. In the criterion 1 it should be required that the applicant submits a detailed description of the product. There should be declared the function of the product and all the components, materials and additives used in the manufacturing of the product together with the information about the weight of each material and additive.</i></p>	
<p><i>Pag 16- "As this is not really a requirement, wouldn't it be possible to ask for a product description in the ""assessment and verification"" part p12?</i></p>	<p>COMMENT ACCEPTED</p> <p>The content of criterion 1 was moved to the general assessment and verification text</p>
<p><i>Pag 16- the total weight of the product and packaging Major "Would it be possible to set a maximal weight threshold for some types of products? The preliminary report mentions a clear correlation between the environmental performance and the weight of the products.</i></p> <p><i>I thought also that the purpose of this criterion was to collect data to set a limit during the revision of the criteria.</i></p>	<p>COMMENT REJECTED</p> <p>It is not possible to set such criterion, because the JRC does not have access to such data. Moreover, it is not a linear relation between weight and performance, but there are other parameters that play a role: type of material, layering, production process, etc.</p>

CRITERION 2: Fluff Pulp (please note this is now criterion 1)

Sub-criterion 2.1 Sourcing of fluff pulp (please note this is now sub-criterion 1.1)

Comments received in AHWG1/written form	JRC Dir. B response
<p><i>We do not understand the reason to harmonise the criterion with graphic paper as fluff pulp does not come from EU.</i></p> <p><i>Technical report, Section 5.2 criterion 2 Fluff pulp General comment The following is stated: "More than 90% of the pulpwood used is sourced from the EU.</i></p> <p><i>The supply chain for absorbent hygiene products is global. The United States makes up 85% of the global fluff pulp capacity [RISI Fastmarkets, 2019]. The 90% pulpwood referenced in the quote is used for graphic paper, tissue paper and tissue paper products. These statistics do not refer to absorbent hygiene products.</i></p> <p><i>The regulatory and environmental context in the States is different, therefore applying EU Ecolabel criteria based on European requirements broadly across all mills hoping to participate in the EU Ecolabel can have unintended consequences, as outlined in this statement. We suggest incorporating US mill environmental performance into the process for creating EU Ecolabel standards to be representative of the entire market.</i></p>	<p>COMMENTS ACCEPTED</p> <p>A new section on the market analysis of fluff pulp was added to the TR2 – please check chapter 5.3 and its sub-chapters</p>
<p><i>Section 5.2 criterion 2 Fluff pulp of the technical report General comment The supply chain for absorbent hygiene products is global. The United States makes up the majority of the global fluff pulp capacity. In general, the environmental legal and regulatory framework in the U.S. is different than the EU, and the EU Ecolabel criteria should take into account relevant factors and robust requirements already in place related to U.S. pulp mills. Applying EU Ecolabel criteria based on European requirements broadly across all mills can create an undue burden and have unintended consequences by, among other things, setting criteria that require mills outside the EU to increase chemical or energy usage to comply. We suggest incorporating U.S. mill environmental performance into the process for creating EU Ecolabel standards to be representative of the entire market, particularly considering that the majority of the global fluff pulp capacity is located in the U.S.</i></p>	
<p><i>- p. 19 Global fluff pulp production Approximately 85% of global fluff pulp capacity is located within the United States, primarily from facilities operating within the Southeast. European markets for fluff pulp represented 25% of total demand for fluff pulp in 2018. International Paper, Georgia-Pacific, and Domtar made up 77% of the global fluff pulp capacity in 2018, and all these company's facilities are located within the United States. Since the United States is the global leader for fluff pulp production, it is essential that environmental and energy performance from US facilities be considered for relevant EU Ecolabel criteria development.</i></p>	
<p><i>Section 5.2 criterion 2 Fluff pulp of the technical report General comment The supply chain for absorbent hygiene products is global. The United States makes up 85% of the global fluff pulp capacity [RISI Fastmarkets, 2019]. Additionally, an internal review estimates that over 75% of European-consumed fluff pulp is produced in the US.</i></p> <p><i>The regulatory and environmental context in the States is different, therefore applying EU Ecolabel criteria based on European requirements broadly across all mills hoping to participate in the EU Ecolabel can have unintended consequences, such as higher energy and chemical use for little or no environmental benefit. We suggest incorporating US mill environmental performance into the process for creating EU Ecolabel standards to be representative of the entire market.</i></p> <p><i>A memo outlining global fluff production environmental performance created by the National Council for Air and Stream Improvement was submitted previously and we suggest using that information along with any other fluff pulp specific resources available to generate appropriate limits. An alternative would be to maintain the current criteria which we view as strict but reasonable.</i></p>	
<p><i>On the principal, the proposal of harmonisation with EE Tissue Paper/Graphic Paper seems not sufficiently substantiated.</i></p> <p><i>Following information shared during the AHWG#1, 85% of the Fluff pulp for baby diapers are sourced in the US, because of specific technical qualities.</i></p> <p><i>In any case, Fluff pulp sourcing has specific characteristics and the regulatory and environmental context in the United States is different. We consider as fully relevant the necessity to have more data and information from US Fluff Pulp producers. If we miss this point, there is a great risk of not being able to obtain/maintain the conformity of baby diapers (the major share of AHP market).</i></p>	

<p>-p19: -"more than 90% of the pulpwood used is sourced from EU"</p> <p>-p30-Table 3 Describe specificities of fluff pulp used on AHP and why it is coming from North America Fluff pulp used in AHP product is selected for its absorbing properties. It is a different pulp vs the one used for paper. This absorbing pulp is coming from softwood trees that are known to have long cellulose fibres chains such as Southern Softwood Kraft (SSK). Hard wood trees have smaller cellulose chain with lower absorbing properties, so they are not considered for the AHP pulp supply. If we would have to integrate pulp derived from hardwood, we would have to significantly increase the amount of pulp to compensate its lower performance, and this would result inevitably in worsening the environmental profile of the AHP.</p> <p>While some softwood forests can be found in Europe, it is estimated that most of the global fluff sourcing for AHP products in Europe comes from the US.</p> <p>The regulatory and environmental context of the US mills are very different and should be taken into consideration in the definition of the limits for the EU Ecolabel (see p30, table3). We encourage the discussion with pulp Industry experts to collect detailed understanding of the pulp sourcing for AHP as well as an understanding of the American environmental requirements for pulp production to establish the emissions limits.</p> <p>As most of fluff pulp comes from US, an analysis of the US fluff pulp situation is missing.</p>			
Technical report, Section 5.2 criterion 2 Fluff pulp	General comment	Fluff pulp is a renewable material. This is something to be encouraged, not punished by stringent requirements. Therefore, we would like to state that the current requirements are good enough.	COMMENTS ACKNOWLEDGED
Section 5.2 criterion 2 Fluff pulp of the technical report	General comment	Fluff pulp is a renewable material. Consistent with goals to reduce waste, the EU Ecolabel criteria should encourage use of renewal materials such as fluff pulp by incorporating reasonable requirements for all fluff pulp mills globally. The current requirements appear to be sufficient in this regard.	
Technical report, Section 5.2 criterion 2 Fluff pulp, p. 30	Nordic Swan reference	In the Technical report, the Swan levels for fluff pulp emissions are missing out in table 3. It is declared that the values are "Not found". The information can be found in the "Paper product – Basic module", version 2.6.	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED
Absorbent Hygiene Products_Draft Technical report 1_FINAL.pdf. 5.2 CRITERION 2: Fluff Pulp Page 18 Reference to graphic paper "...from the manufacturer of EU Ecolabel graphic paper and for all virgin fibres used in the product or production line." Should be replaced by: "...from the manufacturer of EU Ecolabel AHP and for all virgin fibres used in the product or production line."			COMMENTS ACCEPTED
TR: 18 Criterion 2.1 In the assessment and verification text there is an error in that the reference to graphic papers does not seem relevant. Probably it is a typo, it would not be correct even tissue paper because we are talking about fibers / pulps.			
Harmonization of the percentage certified is encouraged.			COMMENTS ACCEPTED The level of ambition of this sub-criterion has been confirmed at 70%. Please see the TR2 for further details of the underlying analysis
TR: 21 Criterion 2.1	We agree with the proposed ambition level of 70% for fluff pulp: yes for harmonisation		
2.1	We support the harmonization with pulp criteria, including the increased level of sustainable grown fibers		
Technical report, section 5.2, page 18	Criterion 2, sub-criteria 2.1 "sourcing"	FSC support increasing the ambition to 70%. Proposed text below:	
All pulp fibres shall be covered by valid chain of custody certificates issued by an independent third party certification scheme such as FSC. A minimum of 70 % pulp fibres shall be covered by valid Sustainable Forestry Management certificates issued by an independent third party certification scheme such as FSC.			
Do you agree with the proposed ambition level for fluff pulp?	Major	Yes	
Should the requirement on sustainable fibre sourcing be harmonised with other EU Ecolabel criteria for paper based products, e.g. EU Ecolabel for graphic paper, tissue paper, and tissue paper products?	Major	Yes, but the requirement must be adapted to AHP so that it is relevant.	

We agree on sourcing criterion and encourage harmonisation with graphic pulp	
The change to 70% certified pulp is a good step towards 100%.	
We started to engage with another standard apart from FSC and PEFC: 70% is fine.	
The EU Ecolabel should be a sustainable certificate. Although pulp comes from US, BREF-BAT should be followed. In addition, we have Green Deal, Biodiversity Strategy, etc so for instance 70% certified sourcing is the way to reach 100%.	
Why does the threshold is 70% and not 100% of certified pulp ? The threshold should be 100%.	COMMENTS REJECTED
TR. 1.0, p. 21 @ Should the requirement on sustainable fibre sourcing be harmonised with other EU Ecolabel criteria for paper based products, e.g. EU Ecolabel for graphic paper, tissue paper, and tissue paper products? We totally support a harmonization, but the harmonization should have an aim of 100%.	The level of ambition of this sub-criterion has been confirmed at 70%, as a compromise between availability of certified materials and the objective of sustainable forest. Please see the TR2 for further details of the underlying analysis
TR. 1.0, p. 18 In our last comments we suggested to aim of a share of 70 % of certified products. If you use FSC or PEFC as a proof for sustainable forestry management you will not reach the 70 % target. This is because FSC, for examples, includes only 70 % wood coming from sustainable managed wood. This means that in the end less than 50 % of the whole 6material comes from sustainably managed forests. Therefore, we suggest to have 100 % in order to reach 70 %. To have an ambitious aim is important because it is important that more and more forests obtain a certification such as that of FSC. The loss of forests (or wood) is a very important driver for the loss of biodiversity in different countries. The Blue Angel also demands for 100 % and the latest certifications shown that this level is feasible.	COMMENT CLARIFIED There is probably a misunderstanding about the different systems. The 70% certified fibres is true only with the %-system. If you use the credit system, you need 100% certified fibres to be allowed to label your product as FSC mix. So, with the %- system, if you have the right to label the product with FSC mix, then your product fulfils the requirement 70% certified fibres automatically. You don 't calculate 70% out of 70%. With the credit system, if your FSC account shows that you have deducted 70% of the amount of certified fibres for your EU Ecolabelled product that you have sold then the requirement is fulfilled. Please see also section 5.3.1 in TR2 for further details
TR. 1.0, p. 21 @ Do you agree with the proposed ambition level for fluff pulp? Please see comment above. We propose the aim 100% in order reach 70 % with the labels FSC and PEFC.	
We agree on the harmonisation with graphic paper but the 70% certification seems like a quite high value for this fluff pulp.	
There is limited FSC and PEFC Certified forestlands globally. In the United States, net certified forest area only reaches 13 percent (https://usforests.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=dfe7da49c651424eb39a14c61c4d5f7f). Even in some regions with limited certified forest, the area of forest is increasing. (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: Forest and forest Sector United States of America, 2016, http://www.fao.org/forestry/country/57478/en/usa/ , Accessed 1.29.2018). The proposed certified percentage increase disadvantages certain areas of the world that have smaller land ownership characteristics (e.g., Southeastern USA, where the majority of the fluff pulp originates). Cost and administrative requirements of current certification schemes are challenging for small landowners, even if they match all criteria. If the focus is on solely increasing FSC and PEFC certified fiber, it can discourage small landowners from participating in the supply chain. Strong demand & markets enable small landowners to continue to grow trees instead of converting land to non-forest uses, including livestock, agriculture, mining, and development. Therefore, responsible sourcing practices, measured by PEFC Controlled Sources and FSC Controlled Wood would be more applicable in regions with small land ownership characteristics and should be allowed.	COMMENTS REJECTED The level of ambition of this sub-criterion has been confirmed at 70%, as a compromise between availability of certified materials and the objective of sustainable forest. Please see the TR2 for further details of the underlying analysis
FSC, PEFC, and other relevant and established Sustainable Forestry Management Certifications should be allowed to set the criteria for what is sustainable wood and fibres. The Eco Label criteria shall not discriminate between models for calculating and allocating the amounts of certified wood/fiber between, or within certification schemes. E.g. for wood fiber sourcing both FSC Mix Credit and FSC Mix% should both be valid.	COMMENTS ACCEPTED
Both FSC claim types, FSC Mixed Credit and FSC Mix % should be approved.	Both FSC control systems, percentage and credit systems, are accepted. See also section 5.3.1 in TR2 for further details. This will be further specified in the user manual
Section 5.2 criterion 2 Fluff pulp of the technical report Proposed criterion 2.1: Sourcing FSC, PEFC, and other relevant and established Sustainable Forestry Management Certifications already have robust systems and criteria in place to encourage sustainable practices and therefore, should be allowed to set the criteria for sustainable fibres and all methods	

for allocating certified fibre within these standards should be allowed by EU Ecolabel. Therefore, both FSC mix credits and FSC % should be allowed.	
<p>Section 5.2 criterion 2 Fluff pulp of the technical report Proposed criterion 2.1: Sourcing</p> <p>FSC and other Sustainable Forestry Management certification platforms should be allowed to set the criteria for sustainable fibres. Therefore, FSC Mix Credit should be allowed as a mechanism to meet certified fiber criteria in addition to any FSC Mix % claims. Only allowing a transfer system approach creates a barrier in places where forestland ownership is more fragmented when compared to large industrial timber managers.</p> <p>Additionally, there is no (known) commercially available fluff in the US from any manufacturer that would not commonly come with an FSC Mix Credit of PEFC volume credit claim. Credit systems are the normal accounting method and percentage claims are less common and also can be misleading.</p> <p>A different standard, other than the current labelling thresholds, would create uncertainty within the standards. We recommend allowing FSC and PEFC to create labelling requirements for certified forest products and harmonizing with those standards.</p>	
Should FSC Mix Credit be used instead of FSC Mix %? Could both be considered? Major I think that this question is based on a misunderstanding. Both FSC mix credit and % are accepted already. Our experience is that the credit system is more widely used. The required 25% certified fibres does not refer to FSC mix %. It can be calculated from both systems.	
Percentage and credit systems are both accepted	
Both mix credit and mix percentage should be approved	
All recognized forest certification schemes should be approved.	
<p>Technical report, Section 5.2 criterion 2 Fluff pulp Proposed criterion 2.1: Sourcing</p> <p>FSC, PEFC, and other relevant and established Sustainable Forestry Management Certifications should be allowed to set the criteria for what is sustainable wood and fibres. The Eco Label criteria shall not discriminate between models for calculating and allocating the amounts of certified wood/fiber between, or within certification schemes. E.g. for wood fiber sourcing both FSC Mix Credit and FSC Mix% should both be valid.</p>	
<p>TR. 1.0, p. 21 @ Should FSC Mix Credit be used instead of FSC Mix %? Could both be considered?</p> <p>We suggest to use the mass balance/credit principle instead of the percentage system. We do not support the idea to have both systems.</p>	<p>COMMENT REJECTED</p> <p>Both FSC control systems, percentage and credit systems, are already accepted. See also section 5.3.1 in TR2 for further details</p>
<p>Recycled fibers</p> <p>We would like to raise attention on the traceability of recycled fibers. Using recycled fibers implies a more difficult traceability, with a risk of previous contamination that would be reintroduced into the production circuit, which raises questions for this type of product. Given the current maturity of the sector, we recommend not to include criteria on recycled fibers.</p>	
<p>It seems that there are no products in the market which are using recycled content. The EU Ecolabel might not need to exclude this possibility but should clearly establish requirements to ensure compliance of any potential recycled materials with the same restrictions on hazardous substances which apply to virgin materials.</p>	
<p>We understand however that it is challenging for manufacturers to source recycled materials that comply with the same requirements as virgin materials. Therefore, in practice we think that is difficult setting a mandatory recycled content without applying strict standards which are needed for this product group. To prevent migration between outer and inner layers it might be needed to include functional barriers (e.g. Italy only allows use of recycled paper in contact with food if it includes an inner bag (usually made of plastic) that prevents contamination).</p>	
<p>Technical report, Section 5.2 criterion 2 Fluff pulp, p. 21 Answer to question The following question is raised: "Could recycled fibre be used in a final product? If yes, for which components? If not, which are the reasons behind?"</p>	<p>COMMENTS ACCEPTED</p> <p>Given the best practice of the market of not including recycled fibres due to product safety aspects, it is not proposed to include a requirement on recycled fibres</p>

Depending on the recycling approach, it is known that recycled materials may be loaded with unwanted substances. Before setting a criterion, a review of existing data should be conducted. At this stage and in the absence of external information on recycled pulp, recycled pulp should not be considered for the EU Ecolabel	
-p21: "Points for discussion" Comment on recycled pulp Depending on the recycling approach, it is known that recycled materials may be loaded on unwanted substances. Before setting a criterion, a review of existing data should be conducted. At this stage and in the absence of external information on recycled pulp, recycled pulp should not be considered for the EU Ecolabel.	
Is the JRC not concerned about the product safety aspects if using recycled fiber?	
Page 18 Reference to recycled pulp "The applicant shall provide audited accounting documents that demonstrate that at least 70 % of the materials allocated to the product or production line originate from forests or areas managed according to sustainable forestry management principles that meet the requirements set out by the relevant independent chain of custody scheme and/or originate from recycled materials."	
TR. 1.0, p. 21 @ Could recycled fibre be used in a final product? If yes, for which components? If not, which are the reasons behind? Generally, from a technical perspective we support the idea to include recycled fibres. But from our perspective there is no producer that currently includes recycled fibres due to the sensitivity of the products (esp. diapers for babies/children).	
Could recycled fibre be used in a final product? If yes, for which components? If not, which are the reasons behind? Major There might be issues with impurities that may affect product safety but this question can be answered best by the AHP producers	
We would like to question the safety of recycled fibres	
Accepting recycling fibres adds the difficulty of checking the traceability of recycled fibres.	
all producers of baby diapers have very high product safety measures which do not allow recycled fibres. Recycled fibres are not even allowed in the close contact to contact with skin layer, because of the risk of migration. This is an industry best practice (not a regulation) which cannot be modified.	
We question the suitability of pulp recycling: recycled content is not to be used in the final product for safety reasons.	
We have concerns on the inclusion of recycled fibres (criteria 2 and 3) (question (2)) for primary packaging or the product itself due to concerns about traceability and risk of contamination.	
We have concerns on the inclusion of recycled fibres and suggest to carefully consider this criterion due to concerns about the potential migration of hazardous substances, even from layers that are not directly in contact with the body of the product	
Technical report version 1.0 (September 2021) - Section "2.1: Sourcing" - Page 18-21 Recycled fibers We would like to raise attention on the traceability of recycled fibers. Using recycled fibers implies a more difficult traceability, with a risk of previous contamination that would be reintroduced into the production circuit, which raises questions for this type of product. Given the current maturity of the sector, we recommend not to include criteria on recycled fibers.	
We very much favour the inclusion of recycled fibres and would like to point to the producer's responsibilities of making sure that no trace substances go into the body.	COMMENT REJECTED It is not feasible at this stage to set a requirement on the mandatory content of recycled fibres
The applicant shall provide audited accounting documents that demonstrate that at least 70 % of the materials allocated to the product or production line originate from forests or areas managed according to sustainable forestry management principles that meet the requirements set out by the relevant independent chain of custody scheme and/or originate from recycled materials. Major Fluff pulp is also used in airlaid and it should be written out that the airlaid supplier shall allocate credits to the airlaid delivered to the EU Ecolabelled AHP product. The number of credits must be given in the invoice.	COMMENT ACCEPTED The clarification was added to the assessment and verification text

Sub-criterion 2.2 Bleaching of fluff pulp (please note this is now sub-criterion 1.2)

Comments received in AHWG1/written form	JRC Dir. B response
- p. 22 Receiving water impacts Ecolabels are designed, in part, to identify products produced in a manner that is preferable from an environmental impact perspective. To that end, one might consider not only the composition of treated effluent from the production of various products, but also receiving water characteristics at the production site that are pertinent to the potential for environmental impacts.	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED
Absorbent Hygiene Products_Draft Technical report 1_FINAL.pdf. Proposed criterion 2.2: Bleaching Page 22 Reference to paper "AOX does not need to be measured in the effluent from non-integrated paper production or in the effluents from pulp production without bleaching or where bleaching is performed with chlorine-free substances."	COMMENT ACCEPTED
Should be replaced by: "AOX does not need to be measured in the effluent from non-integrated AHP production or in the effluents from pulp production without bleaching or where bleaching is performed with chlorine-free substances."	
The applicant shall provide a declaration of compliance with this criterion, supported by a list of the different ECF pulps used in the pulp mix, their respective weightings and their individual amount of AOX emissions, expressed as kg AOX/ADt pulp. Should be replaced by: The applicant shall provide a declaration of compliance with this criterion, supported by the amount of AOX emission measured in the ECF pulp. In the case of different fluff pulp grades must be provided the individual AOX emission corresponding to each one. Consideration about this topic: "It is relevant to stress that the EU Ecolabel for graphic paper, tissue paper and tissue paper products does not consider an average AOX value of all incoming pulps, but allocate requirements on each pulp stream present in the pulp mix used in a final product. This ensures that the AOX emission is not mathematically diluted, and that each incoming pulp meets the requirement." There is no mixes of pulps during a fluff pulp process (as is the case in tissue and graphic papers), so there is no reason to provide individuals values of AOX containing the "mixes of pulp proportionally". What can occur is that one mill has different pulp grades, so in this case must be provide the individual AOX measurement to each final product (grade).	COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED The sentence was modified into the following: "The applicant shall provide a declaration of compliance with this criterion, supported by a list of the the AOX emission relative to the different ECF-bleached pulps used in the pulp mix, their respective weightings and their individual amount of AOX emissions, expressed as kg AOX/ADt pulp. In case different pulp grades are used, the applicant shall provide the individual AOX emission corresponding to each pulp." Please check Section 5.3.2 for more details
Technical report, Section 5.2 criterion 2 Fluff pulp Proposed criterion 2.2: Bleaching The first sentence of the criterion 2.2 on p25 states "refers to elemental chlorine free (ECF) pulp". Please can you confirm the criterion also applies to TCF?	COMMENT CLARIFIED Mills performing totally chlorine free (TCF) bleaching discharge virtually no chlorinated organics, as they are not formed in bleaching. Therefore, this criterion does not apply to TCF bleached pulps.
2.2. Bleaching, p. 21-25 AOX We promote harmonization of the criteria between other paper grades using pulp.	COMMENTS PARTIALLY ACCEPTED The proposed limit value in the TR2 is 0.14 kg AOX/ADt. Please check Section 5.3.2 for more details on the underlying analysis.
TR: 25 Criterion 2.2 We are in favour of the proposed value for AOX	
TR: 1.0, p. 26 @ Do stakeholders agree to increase an ambition level by lowering the reference value to 0.14 kg AOX/ADt for each pulp in a pulp mix? Yes, we agree to increase the ambition level.	
Do stakeholders agree to increase an ambition level by lowering the reference value to 0.14 kg AOX/ADt for each pulp in a pulp mix? Major Yes, but the level must be properly verified	
The Technical Report showed that there were plants complying with a lower AOX value since 2015 thus showing the possibility to go stricter (desired value of 0.1 kg AOX/ADt).	

<p>Lowering the values of AOX is important as AHP are already disposable and contaminant products. EU Ecolabel should be a sustainable certificate. Although pulp comes from US, BREF-BAT should be followed.</p>	
<p>Absorbent Hygiene Products_Draft Technical report 1_FINAL.pdf. 2.2: Bleaching Page 24</p> <p>Brief analysis of the influence of bleaching process on the presence of polyhalogenated organic compounds in a final product "In this sense, it is not possible to assess neither the origin of pulp nor the nature or performance of the bleaching process used. Given that, as indicated by market analysis, the vast majority of fluff pulp is externally sourced, it is not possible to ensure if the bleaching process was conducted in line with the BATs conclusions and therefore meeting the requirement of Commission Implementing Decision 2014/687/EU (EC, 2014)25:" The customers that buy fluff pulp from big suppliers receive the information about the bleaching sequence and the AOX emission, so as the customer of fluff pulp will be diaper companies and not the final customer on the supermarket, those technical information can be easily accessed by these companies (even easily when recognized the ecolabeled fluff pulp).</p>	<p>COMMENT CLARIFIED The referenced text in the TR1 referred to the results of the ANSES study, and not to the information available to EU Ecolabel applicants.</p>
<p>Technical report, Section 5.2 criterion 2 Fluff pulp Proposed criterion 2.2: Bleaching Reducing the AOX level beyond current levels (0,17 kg AOX/ADT) will likely not achieve statistically different reductions of environmental impact to aquatic ecosystems.</p> <p>AOX is sometimes considered a measure of the generation of toxic, chlorinated substances. There was some historic validity to this position when use of chlorine for pulp bleaching was commonplace (ca. 1990s and prior). However, following conversion to ECF bleaching in the early 2000s, studies of effluent characteristics at ECF mills have suggested little or no evidence of ecotoxicity related to AOX. A report by Solomon, et. al. (1997) concluded that TCF (totally chlorine free) and ECF both have negligible (insignificant) environmental risk to aquatic ecosystems.</p> <p>Technical report, Section 5.2 criterion 2 Fluff pulp Proposed criterion 2.2: Bleaching Reducing the AOX level beyond current levels will not achieve significant reduction of environmental risk to aquatic ecosystems. Following conversion to ECF bleaching in the early 2000s, studies of effluent characteristics at ECF mills have suggested little or no evidence of ecotoxicity related to AOX. Based on the above, TCF (totally chlorine free) and ECF both have insignificant environmental risk to aquatic ecosystems and are equally good alternatives when it comes to environmental performance. The fluff pulp used for absorbent hygiene products is typically not mixed for the manufacturing of the products since the diaper manufacturing is a totally dry converting process; it is possible for wet processes like paper making. Hence, the possibility to get a lower AOX-level by using mixes of ECF and TCF is limited, and it is suggested to keep the present level for AOX-emissions.</p>	<p>COMMENTS REJECTED The situation of bleached pulps has been analysed, however unfortunately with little data from the US. Other EU ecolabels set stricter AOX limits than the EU Ecolabel, demonstrating that it is possible to achieve higher reductions of AOX emissions. Please see the details in Section 5.3.2.</p>
<p>Section 5.2 criterion 2 Fluff pulp of the technical report Proposed criterion 2.2: Bleaching Reducing the AOX level beyond current levels will likely not achieve significant reduction of environmental impact to aquatic ecosystems. AOX is sometimes considered a measure of the generation of toxic, chlorinated substances. There was some historic validity to this position when use of chlorine for pulp bleaching was commonplace (ca. 1990s and prior). However, following conversion to ECF bleaching in the early 2000s, studies of effluent characteristics at ECF mills have suggested little or no evidence of ecotoxicity related to AOX. A report by Solomon, et.al. (Solomon, K., Bright, D., Hodson, P., Lehtinen, K., McKague, B., and Rodgers, J. 1997. Evaluation of the ecological risks associated with the use of chlorine dioxide for the bleaching of pulp: scientific progress since 1993.) concluded that TCF (totally chlorine free) and ECF both have negligible (insignificant) environmental impact to aquatic ecosystems.</p> <p>Graphic paper contains primarily hardwood chemical pulp, whereas fluff pulp is made from softwood. Hardwood pulps require less bleaching chemicals than softwood pulps to achieve a given brightness, thus hardwood pulps produce less AOX than softwood pulps. As such, it is reasonable to have different AOX limits for hardwood and softwood pulps, so we recommend the current limit of 0.17 kg AOX / ADT of pulp for fluff pulp. The attached NCASI report (Environmental Footprint Comparison Tool – Effects of Decreased Release of Chlorinated Compounds) includes a section on discharge to water addressing dioxins, furans, and AOX. Another source of information is NCASI (Memo "ANSES report on the safety of disposable diapers").</p>	

<p><i>Revision of EU Ecolabel Criteria for Absorbent Hygiene Products</i> 5.2 Criterion Fluff Pulp – Existing criterion 2.2 Bleaching AOX Limit Reduced from 0.17 kg/ADt to 0.14 kg/ADt There is no identified correlation between residual AOX in fluff pulp and AOX in wastewater effluent. The biggest correlation with AOX in effluent is more closely related to the type of wastewater treatment system and water retention time as longer retention times allow for more organic material degradation. Therefore, the reasoning that is presented in the technical document related to AOX in the final product is not relevant to the effluent AOX discussion.</p>	
<p><i>We disagree to lowering the AOX value</i></p>	
<p><i>Revision of EU Ecolabel Criteria for Absorbent Hygiene Products</i> 5.2 Criterion Fluff Pulp – Existing criterion 2.2 Bleaching AOX Limit Reduced from 0.17 kg/ADt to 0.14 kg/ADt The primary issue with AOX testing is that there is a high level of measurement uncertainty. For example, variations of up to 30% are seen between on-site measurements done by the mills and by external laboratories that tested the same sample. This is also confirmed in Annex C of the ISO 9562 standard (French version) where data based on the measurements of 56 laboratories show discrepancies in results between 10-30% for the same sample.</p> <p><i>Another issue with AOX testing is that studies have shown ECF bleaching sequences tend to produce substances with lesser degrees of halogenation, which are more treatable in biological wastewater systems. Unfortunately, the environmental relevance of some harmful chlorinated substances has been extrapolated to the AOX produced as a whole, without evidence of the aforementioned chemicals of concern. Modern ECF processes virtually eliminate, not just reduce, dioxin, furans and other persistent chlorinated organics. Those chemicals of concern are no longer detectable in mill effluents and, consequentially, the EU Commission recognized ECF bleaching as the Best Available Technology. Thus, scientific evidence does not support the proposal to lower the AOX limit, which has high levels of measurement uncertainty.</i></p> <p><i>We suggest keeping the current AOX criteria.</i></p>	<p>COMMENT REJECTED</p> <p>The ISO standard gives guidance for checking the completeness of the total adsorption. This is a parameter that should be provided in the test report.</p> <p>Moreover, the EU Ecolabel requires the average of 12 samples, which would reduce the risk for unrepresentative samples.</p> <p>Moreover, the BREF did not recognize ECF bleaching as the Best Available Technology. The BREF indicated a AOX limit of 0.2 kg AOX/ADt as BAT, but this limit can be achieved in a number of ways, and ECF bleaching depending on the sequences and other parameters can have very low or very high AOX emissions.</p> <p>Finally, other EU ecolabels set stricter AOX limits than the EU Ecolabel, demonstrating that it is possible to achieve higher reductions of AOX emissions. Please see more details in Section 5.3.2.</p>
<p><i>Brief analysis of the influence of bleaching process on the presence of polyhalogenated organic compounds in a final product</i> This study was done in the diaper collected “in the market” and not on the materials separately. In both companies I worked at, the pulps were sent to the examination and nothing was found in the fluff pulp fibres (final product) related to dioxin, furans and DL pdb ‘s to ECF process. Although also to guarantee this point there are laboratories that carry out these analyses. Reference: Galab Laboratories</p> <p><i>Specifically DL biphenyls are related to the plastic industry.</i></p> <p><i>Recommendation: as this topic is not well studied the information about the ANSES publication must be in an attachment in the end of the document. The reason is not to generate a concern without more scientific studies.</i></p> <p><i>“Last but not least, the lack of data on the AOX emission from the bleaching process of pulps used to manufacture products that were analysed by ANSES does not enable the correlation of the AOX emission levels with the presence of polyhalogenated organic compounds in pulp.”</i></p> <p><i>Stakeholder mentioned that ANSES study measured dioxins in the final product (baby diapers) and assumed they came from the fluff pulp (a natural material) without differing if the fluff pulp was ECF/TCF, however that link between bleaching and dioxins has not been proved.</i></p>	<p>COMMENTS ACKNOWLEDGED</p>
<p><i>Revision of EU Ecolabel Criteria for Absorbent Hygiene Products</i> 5.2 Criterion Fluff Pulp – Existing criterion 2.2 Bleaching Test report to support declaration that chlorine (Cl₂) gas was not used.</p> <p><i>The test proposed as part of this criteria is not something regularly done. In our experience, this type of test does not exist. ISO 9562 test methods refer to AOX testing in wastewater, not ensuring that chlorine gas has not been used for bleaching.</i></p> <p><i>Additionally, ECF and TCF bleaching are the primary methods of bleaching. To our knowledge, there are no pulp and paper manufacturers operating in the United States that use chlorine gas bleaching. A declaration from the fluff pulp producer should suffice.</i></p> <p><i>We suggest clarifying this requirement or eliminating altogether.</i></p>	<p>COMMENTS ACCEPTED</p>

<p>The applicant shall provide a declaration from the pulp manufacturer that elemental chlorine (Cl₂) gas was not used. The declaration shall be supported by a test report</p> <p>Major Our experience from Nordic Swan and from EU Ecolabel is that it is enough with a declaration. We have not found any pulp mill using Cl₂ bleaching for a very long time. If test report is required as a supporting document it means that all fluff pulps must be tested, even TCF fluff pulps. The testing in this case does not give any added value because pulps bleached with Cl₂-gas don't pass the criterion AOX emission < 0,14 kg/tonne</p>	
<p>declaration that Chlorine gas is not used would be enough, otherwise test methods would be too much for each fluff pulp, because all producers would need to provide that information.</p>	
<p>a chlorine bleaching test is not necessary, as Cl₂ (g) is not widely used anymore.</p>	
<p>It is very important to fully understand if we are talking about criteria applied in raw materials or in the final products. This should be specified in the criteria.</p>	<p>COMMENT CLARIFIED</p> <p>The criterion applies on the raw material used in the final product. This will be clarified in the User Manual</p>
<p>Information on the emissions shall be expressed as the annual average from measurements taken at least once every 2 months.</p> <p>Major The measuring frequency "at least every 2 months" does not give you "annual average". The samples should be 24 h samples taken every week. 6 samples per year does not tell you what the annual average is. The pulp mill can actually choose to report 6 very low test results when the actual average value is much higher.</p>	<p>COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED</p> <p>It was clarified that the annual average is to be calculated from at least 12 measurements taken at least once every month. This is in line with the Industrial Emissions Directive and the respective BREF.</p>
<p>The applicant shall provide a declaration of compliance with this criterion, supported by a list of the different ECF pulps used in the pulp mix, their respective weightings and their individual amount of AOX emissions, expressed as kg AOX/ADt pulp.</p> <p>Major "Normally the fluff pulps are not mixed at the AHP production, only one fluff pulp is used at a time. However, there might be special cases where different pulps are mixed together and dried to give one fluff pulp used in the AHP production. It is unclear here if the requirement: ""AOX emissions from the production of each pulp each used in EU Ecolabel absorbent hygienic product shall not exceed 0,140 kg/ADt."" refers only to the fluff pulp used in the AHP production or does it apply also to each pulp in the pulp mix used to produce the dry fluff pulp delivered to the AHP mill?"</p>	<p>COMMENT CLARIFIED</p> <p>The limit refers to the fluff pulp used in the AHP production, as it is understood that mixing of pulp/fluff is not common for AHP. However, in case mixing is done, the average of the mix of pulps shall be < 0.14 kg AOX/ADt.</p>

Sub-criterion 2.4: Emission of COD and phosphorous (P) to water and sulphur (S) compounds and NO_x to air from production (please note this is now sub-criterion 1.3)

Comments received in AHWG1/written form	JRC Dir. B response
<p>Absorbent Hygiene Products_Draft Technical report 1_FINAL.pdf.</p> <p>Proposed criterion 2.4:</p> <p>Page 28 Reference to paper</p> <p>"The reference values for each pulp type used and for the paper production."</p> <p>Should be replaced by:</p> <p>"The reference values for each pulp type used and for the AHP production"</p>	<p>COMMENTS REJECTED</p> <p>The part of the sentence referring to the paper production has been deleted as AHP production does not lead to emissions of P to wastewater (it is a dry process).</p>
<p>Absorbent Hygiene Products_Draft Technical report 1_FINAL.pdf.</p> <p>Proposed criterion 2.4:</p> <p>Page 29 Reference to paper</p> <p>"The electricity in this calculation is the electricity produced at the co-generation plant. The heat in this calculation is the net heat delivered from the co-generation plant to the pulp/paper production."</p> <p>Should be replaced by:</p>	

<p><i>"The electricity in this calculation is the electricity produced at the co-generation plant. The heat in this calculation is the net heat delivered from the co-generation plant to the pulp/AHP production."</i></p>	
<p>Absorbent Hygiene Products_Draft Technical report 1_FINAL.pdf. Proposed criterion 2.4: Page 31 Reference to paper <i>"The paper pulp product is usually stored on reels for further fluffing in a hammer mill/defibrator, which fibreizes the fluff pulp sheets into loose fibres by means of small hammers that rotate at high speed"</i></p>	<p>COMMENT ACCEPTED Please note that this sentence has been moved to Section 5.3.2</p>
<p><i>In the Technical Report, for some reason, the values for the Nordic Swan criteria for the different emissions is labelled as "not found". These values are listed in the document "Paper products - Base module" version 2.6, valid to 31 Dec 2023 and should be updated in the table. See extra DOC</i></p>	
<p>I realize that the reason for this is that it may not have been observed that the emission levels are not present in the document "Nordic Ecolabelling for Sanitary Products", but are to be found in the document "Paper products – Basic module", version 2.6, 31 December 2023, appendix 3. From criteria document on Sanitary products:</p> <div data-bbox="203 576 642 687" data-label="Text"> <p>O16 Cellulose-based pulp/fluff/air-laid, production requirements (≥10.0 weight-%) The cellulose-based pulp/fluff/air-laid must fulfil the requirements R1-R6, R8-R10 and R12-R18 in the Basic module for paper products, version 2 and all the requirements in the Chemical Module, version 2, or corresponding requirements in later versions. For the requirements concerning energy consumption and emissions, the following limits and reference values apply:</p> </div> <p>I would therefore like the Technical report, table 3, to be updated immediately with the relevant values for the Nordic Swan as in the attached document. It gives a better background to comments on suggested levels for fluff pulp production.</p>	<p>COMMENTS ACCEPTED The table was updated in the TR2.</p>
<p><i>How can the reference values established by EU ecolabel criteria for graphic paper, tissue paper, and tissue paper products be adapted to the fluff pulp market situation? Major JRC should investigate the emission situation in USA because most of the fluff pulps come from there. Keep in mind that there are also other criteria in the document where it is proposed much more stringent levels than before, so that together the whole proposed criteria set may close out 99% of the fluff pulps on the market. The criteria set has the best environmental effect if it is possible to fulfil it by making improvements in the production and not if it closes out all the producers.</i></p>	
<p><i>Graphic paper production utilises primarily hardwood chemical pulp, whereas fluff pulp is based on softwood. This should be taken into account when designing the process criteria. A general copy paste from the graphic paper EU Ecolabel criteria without justification is not appropriate.</i></p> <p><i>Wastewater requirements should be attainable given the primary water treatment technology in the industry and criteria should be appropriate for the local water dynamics. US water regulatory limits are created specifically for receiving waters. The current Graphic Paper criteria does not take into account the local circumstances that have been granted in the mills' operating permits, and environmental context in various regions of the world. The effect of phosphorus, as a nutrient, is limited in sub-tropical coastal waters in the US (EKONO 2015). A large number of mills, located near these waters, are consequently disqualified when applying the strict limitations on phosphorus discharges. Using criteria that do not consider the local context may not enhance environmental performance and might even have negative unintended consequences (e.g., additional chemical and energy usage to remove phosphorus).</i></p> <p><i>Traditionally, nutrient discharges have been the focus in the European countries where the receiving waters are shallow, nutrient limited and prone to eutrophication which emphasizes that the local context is very important for water treatment limits. There must be flexibility on nutrient limits based on where the mills are located and the effect of these residual nutrient loads in water effluent, or on technology the mill has implemented to treat wastewater. A large majority of phosphorus in pulp mill systems, particularly in the United States, originates in wood and very little is added to the process. The variation in phosphorus contribution from wood has already been acknowledged in the EU Ecolabel criteria for graphic paper (originating from the BAT study). We advise to consider these variations of wood phosphorus levels in fluff pulp production.</i></p>	<p>COMMENT ACCEPTED An analysis of the situation was performed. However, publicly available data from the US are very limited.</p>

<p>The relevance of phosphorus as a contributor to effluent impacts on receiving waters is very site-specific and not well-characterized by effluent loads alone. Unlike the other environmental parameters, phosphorus does not track well with pulp production, as it is not tied to energy and chemical usage. Therefore, we recommend maintaining flexibility on the nutrient limits based on incoming water and wood contributions to a mill's phosphorous balance.</p>	
<p>Graphic paper production utilises primarily hardwood chemical pulp, whereas fluff pulp is based on softwood. This should be considered when designing the process criteria. Simply adopting the graphic paper EU Ecolabel criteria for hygiene products is not appropriate because it does not take into account unique matters related to fluff pulp production.</p>	
<p>Wastewater requirements should be reasonable given existing robust regulatory requirements and the primary water treatment technology in the industry. Criteria should be appropriate for the local water dynamics. U.S. water regulatory limits are set with specific consideration of receiving waters. The current graphic paper criteria do not take into account the local circumstances that are reflected in the mills' specific operating permits, as well as specific and environmental conditions and regulatory schemes in various regions of the world. A large number of mills, located near sub-tropical coastal waters, are disqualified when applying the strict limitations on phosphorus discharges. Using criteria that do not consider the local context may not enhance environmental performance and might even have negative unintended consequences (e.g., additional chemical and energy usage to remove phosphorus).</p>	
<p>Traditionally, nutrient discharges have been the focus in the European countries where the receiving waters are shallow, nutrient limited and prone to eutrophication—which illustrates how the local context is very important for water treatment limits. There must be flexibility on nutrient limits based on where the mills are located and the effect of these residual nutrient loads in water effluent and/or on the specific technology the mill has implemented to treat wastewater. A large majority of phosphorus in pulp mill systems, particularly in the U.S., originates in wood and very little is added to the process. The variation in phosphorus contribution from wood has already been acknowledged in the EU Ecolabel criteria for graphic paper (originating from the BAT study). We advise to consider these variations of wood phosphorus levels in fluff pulp production.</p>	
<p>The relevance of phosphorus as a contributor to effluent impacts on receiving waters is very site-specific and not well-characterized by effluent loads alone. [NCASI "Fluff Pulp Environmental and Energy Characteristics", 2021 p.10]. Unlike the other environmental parameters, phosphorus does not track well with pulp production, as it is not tied to energy and chemical usage. Therefore, we recommend maintaining flexibility on the nutrient limits based on incoming water and wood contributions to a mill's phosphorous balance. The NCASI memo, Fluff Pulp Environmental and Energy Characteristics – 8-18-21, which has been shared with you directly from NCASI is also attached here for your reference.</p>	
<p>Technical report, Section 5.2 criterion 2 Fluff pulp, Page 32 Proposed criterion 2.4: emissions From the Point for discussion: How can the reference values established by the EU ecolabel criteria for graphic paper, tissue paper and tissue paper products be adapted to the fluff pulp market situation? The supply chain for absorbent hygiene products is global. The United States makes up 85% of the global fluff pulp capacity and the proposed ambition level is not feasible; the regulatory and environmental context in the US is different. Therefore, applying EU Ecolabel criteria, based on European pulps for graphic and tissue paper, for fluff pulp production will have unintended consequences. Present limits allow for good suppliers to provide fluff pulp of high environmental and quality standards.</p>	
<p>3. The factor should not be changed from 1,5 to 1,3 (p. 28) to allow for converting. If there were no converting pulp to fluff pulp, a group of specialty fluff pulps would be eliminated from the market (e.g. un- and semi-bleached).</p>	<p>COMMENTS ACCEPTED The value was brought back to 1.5, in alignment with the requirement in Nordic Swan and Blue Angel</p>
<p>We would suggest to modify the factor from 1.3 to 1.5 (page 28 of Technical Report) as these values leave no room for converting.</p>	
<p>TR: 27 Criterion 2.4 We are in favour of the proposed value (1,3)</p>	<p>COMMENT REJECTED The value was brought back to 1.5, in alignment with the requirement in Nordic Swan and Blue Angel</p>
<p>2.4. Emissions of COD, P, S and NOx</p>	<p>COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED</p>

1. Why are there different reference levels for different pulps (Sulphite vs. Sulphate, CTMP, unbleached etc.)? In the suggested way of calculating, some environmentally more attractive solutions may be omitted.	There are different limits for different pulps in line with what prescribed by the Best Available Technologies-Associated Emission Levels, the Nordic Swan and EU Ecolabel for graphic paper, tissue paper and tissue paper products. New possibilities for other pulps were added in the TR2
2. Missing unbleached and semi-bleached pulp. The reference values should be at the level of the bleached pulps or there should be one reference value, which is the one for the most commonly used pulp.	COMMENTS ACCEPTED New possibilities for other pulps were added in the TR2
unbleached and CTMB bleached pulp are missing	
Tr 1.0, p.28, table 1 @ Should a categorization of the different pulps used be established and set up appropriate criteria for each? For sulphate (or bleached chemical pulp (other than sulphite): not For sulphite and CTMP: yes	
- p. 27 COD In 2020 NCASI completed a literature review describing the science concerning the relationship between COD and biological responses in both laboratory and field studies (NCASI 2020b). Findings from published laboratory and field studies using pulp and paper mill effluents demonstrated an inconsistent relationship between COD concentrations and measurable biological effects. Analysis of more than 10 years of pulp and paper mill effluent bioassay and chemistry data generated by NCASI also showed that the association between COD and bioassay response was not consistent across WET test organisms, especially in those commonly used for NPDES permitting (Ceriodaphnia dubia and Raphidocelis subcapitata). Taken together, findings from this report suggest that scientific evidence is insufficient to indicate a clear link between elevated COD in properly treated mill effluents and adverse biological effects in the laboratory or in natural systems.	COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED Please see Section 5.3.3 in the TR2 for a newly developed section and analysis of the COD limits
- p. 26 Phosphorous The EU Ecolabel criteria for graphic paper is based upon total phosphorus and no distinction is made among the various forms of phosphorus in pulp and paper effluents. Inorganic nutrient forms of phosphorus are more readily available for algal growth compared to organic forms of nitrogen and phosphorus. NCASI has conducted numerous studies on the management and discharge of nutrients from pulp and paper facilities and a synthesis of NCASI work is available in Technical Bulletin No. 937 (NCASI 2007). It should be recognized that only a portion of residual nitrogen and phosphorus discharge is readily bioavailable for algal growth (NCASI 2004; 2009). Activated sludge treatment (AST) and aerated stabilization basins (ASBs) are the most common secondary treatment technologies used by the forest products industry in North America. While providing similar levels of treatment, ASTs and ASBs utilize different approaches to removing BOD and TSS. ASTs are characterized by a sludge return process which increases the effective biomass concentration and results in high substrate removal rates and short hydraulic retention times. In contrast ASBs do not have a sludge return process which results in lower biomass concentrations, lower rates of substrate removal and longer hydraulic retention times. Sludge return necessitates the inclusion of secondary clarification and sludge handling and disposal for ASTs while ASBs internally clarify, store, and digest the generated sludge. The primary sources of phosphorus to pulp and paper mill effluents are raw materials (i.e., wood and intake water) and any supplemental phosphorus added to aid wastewater treatment. Incremental phosphorus may be components of internal process chemical additives, however, these sources are typically very minor (NCASI 2001). Therefore, in cases where a mill does not need to add supplemental wastewater phosphorus (as is the case with some ASBs, owing to internal recycling of phosphorus), effluent phosphorus loads will be largely a function of the raw material phosphorus content, which can vary depending upon mill site specific conditions. Nearly all mills operating ASTs require the use of supplemental nutrients, including phosphorus, and many mills operating ASBs also supplement nutrients to ensure adequate biological treatment of wastewaters. While ASTs generally produce a lower effluent wastewater phosphorus load, they add more phosphorus to the treatment process wastewater and dispose of more via residual solids. ASBs require lower amounts of nutrients by virtue of their design which allows for some internal recycling of nutrients. To put this into some perspective, if an ASB and AST treated an identical pulp mill wastewater, it is likely that the AST will have a lower effluent phosphorus concentration than the ASB yet would require more external phosphorus inputs while generating more waste phosphorus in the form of residual solids. Operation of ASBs tends to be more common within the United States pulp and paper industry compared to the EU pulp and paper industry. There are 100 pulp and paper facilities in the United States that operate an ASB for secondary wastewater treatment. These ASB systems treat approximately half of the volume of pulp and paper wastewater treated via secondary wastewater treatment systems in the United States.	COMMENTS PARTIALLY ACCEPTED Please see Section 5.3.3 in the TR2 for a newly developed section and analysis of the P limits

<p>Effluent nutrient loads do not necessarily correlate with in-mill sources of nutrients, such as those from wood and process chemicals, because the latter amounts are frequently insufficient to support biological treatment of the wastewaters. Phosphorus discharges can lead to concerns about eutrophication. Eutrophication is the overabundance of aquatic plants which cause deleterious chemical and biological water quality impacts and in many, but not all, cases can be caused by the oversupply of phosphorus to freshwater systems. Prior to concluding that any discharge of phosphorus might contribute to eutrophication, it is important to consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-stream biological responses to overall phosphorus loads depend on the site-specific characteristics of the receiving stream (e.g., atmospheric deposition, vegetation, season and weather, geology, biological uptake and cycling), including physical and hydrologic conditions, as well as in-stream dilution and the relative composition and form of nutrients. Accordingly, the contribution of a pulp and paper mill effluent to phosphorus-related water quality problems cannot be quantified based on final effluent phosphorus loads alone. • Phosphorus is frequently the limiting nutrient (i.e., the one that controls plant growth) in freshwater environments. In such systems, if there is a eutrophication problem, reduction in phosphorus (and not nitrogen which is also needed for plant growth) will likely reduce the impacts of eutrophication. However, in estuary or marine systems, nitrogen is most often the limiting nutrient and efforts to reduce phosphorus would not be expected to result in any eutrophication reductions. Thus, the relevance of phosphorus as a contributor to effluent impacts on receiving waters is very site-specific and not well-characterized by effluent concentration alone. • Many studies have shown that not all the phosphorus detected by total phosphorus (TP) measurements are available for algae growth. In the United States, the Water Environment Research Foundation (WERF) has sponsored a significant research program investigating many aspects of effluent nutrients, in general, and bioavailability, in particular. A principal conclusion from this work is the recognition that as wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) are asked to achieve very low effluent phosphorus concentrations, it becomes increasingly important from both a resource allocation and sustainability standpoint to understand whether the discharged phosphorus can contribute to algae growth. Several organic phosphorus compounds commonly found in pulp and paper wastewaters have been identified as non-available for plant growth. Considered collectively, the science presented suggests that there is significant uncertainty with assuming a reliable correlation between in-mill phosphorus contributions to wastewater and effluent loads of phosphorus; and that reductions in phosphorus will equate to environmental improvements. 	
<p>P levels are of concern as wastewater control technologies are different in the US. Nutrients as P are eliminated in Europe but not in the US where raw water entering the process may have higher P levels than what is proposed by JRC, so no supplier from US could fulfil that requirement</p>	
<p>Revision of EU Ecolabel Criteria for Absorbent Hygiene Products</p> <p>5.2 Criterion Fluff Pulp – Existing criterion 2.4 Bleaching Proposal to lower Phosphorus reference value from 0.045 kg/ADt to 0.025 kg/ADt (with the exception of mills using eucalyptus from regions with higher levels of phosphorus) Wastewater requirements are very strict, not only are they mostly unattainable given the primary water treatment technology in the United States, but also are not appropriate for the local water dynamics. US water regulatory limits are created specifically for receiving waters. This limit will exclude almost all US mills from participating in EU Ecolabel approved products, including all International Paper mills.</p> <p>Most mills in the United States utilize aerated stabilization basin (ASB) WWTP systems. These systems are much larger and have higher retention times than the more commonly used in the EU activated sludge treatment plants (AST). ASB systems are much more efficient at reducing oxygen-depleting substances but need higher levels of nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen, AST systems can achieve lower levels of nutrients. There is also nutrient buildup in the ASB systems due to the biological activity occurring, so it is impossible or at the very least, very difficult to reduce nutrient levels in ASB systems to the very low levels proposed without using a chemical flocculants. Our North American mills with the best performing wastewater treatment systems (20 day retention time, very low AOX, BOD and COD, best phosphorus control technology) have difficulty meeting 0.045 kg/tonne, the current reference value for phosphorus.</p> <p>This criteria, with a drastic reduction in phosphorus reference value without a similar reduction in COD gives a disadvantage to mills using ASB systems when compared to AST utilizing mills.</p> <p>Our position is that there must be flexibility on nutrient limits based on where the mills are located and the effect of these residual nutrient concentrations in water effluent, or on technology the mill has implemented to treat wastewater. We recommend leaving the current phosphorus reference value in the criteria.</p>	

<p><i>Proposal to lower Phosphorus reference value from 0.045 kg/ADt to 0.025 kg/ADt (with the exception of mills using eucalyptus from regions with higher levels of phosphorus) It is not clear that continuing to reduce phosphorus to these low levels have a positive impact on the environment. The main concern related to phosphorus is eutrophication. The relevance of phosphorus as a contributor to effluent impacts on receiving waters is very site-specific and not well-characterized by effluent concentration alone (refer to NCASI memo).</i></p> <p><i>This criteria proposal includes all forms of phosphorus, including a significant fraction, which is not bioavailable for eutrophication and algal growth.</i></p> <p><i>US nutrient regulations are site specific and take the types of phosphorus and receiving water body needs into consideration when creating operating permits. Coastal water bodies aren't as sensitive to phosphorus as freshwater closed lake systems.</i></p> <p><i>We recommend leaving the current phosphorus reference value in the criteria, or providing flexibility based on mill location in the reference values.</i></p>	
<p><i>Technical report, Section 5.2 criterion 2 Fluff pulp Footnote 1, p. 28 Footnote 1, p. 28 states "Net emissions of P are considered in the calculation. The P naturally contained in wood raw materials and in water can be subtracted from the total emissions of P. Reductions up to 0,010 kg/ADT shall be accepted"</i></p> <p><i>A rationale is not provided for the reduction allowance of wood raw materials and water contribution up to 0.01 kg/ADt. Please provide the basis for this numerical reduction for us to be able to comment on the reduction allowance.</i></p> <p><i>Section 5.2 criterion 2 Fluff pulp of the technical report Footnote 1, p. 28</i> <i>Footnote 1, p. 28 states, "Net emissions of P are considered in the calculation. The P naturally contained in wood raw materials and in water can be subtracted from the total emissions of P. Reductions up to 0,010 kg/ADT shall be accepted"</i></p> <p><i>A rationale is not provided for the reduction allowance of wood raw materials and water contribution up to 0.01 kg/ADt. Please provide the basis for this numerical reduction.</i></p> <p><i>The value of 0.01 kg/ADt allowed to be subtracted for P naturally contained in wood and raw materials also seems arbitrary with no supporting arguments.</i></p> <p><i>In internal studies conducted the amount of phosphorus in wood as a raw material contributes to 0.11 kg/ADt (so the mills generally achieve lower phosphorus discharge than is naturally contained in wood raw materials). In some cases, surface water phosphorus levels are also high, especially where there is agricultural activity upstream. Receiving water may have higher levels of phosphorus than pulp production effluent. Mills downstream of agricultural facilities are unnecessarily penalized due only to their physical location. The 0.01 kg/ADt therefore seems arbitrary and does not reflect the true context.</i></p> <p><i>There is a precedent for flexibility with the phosphorus limit and we suggest a higher reference for phosphorus from Southeastern US Pine fluff than currently proposed.</i></p>	<p>COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED A clarification is given in Section 5.3.3 for the footnote to the P limits. This value is not proposed to be raised for the moment, as additional evidence is needed.</p>
<p><i>5.2 Criterion Fluff Pulp – Existing criterion 2.4 Emission of COD and phosphorus (P) to water and sulfur (S) compounds and NOx to air from production Proposal to lower Phosphorus reference value from 0.045 kg/ADt to 0.025 kg/ADt (with the exception of mills using eucalyptus from regions with higher levels of phosphorus) It is not clear why there are two separate phosphorus reference values for sulphate mills, one for eucalyptus from regions with higher levels of phosphorus. It is also not clear why the phosphorus limit for sulphite mills is unchanged in this proposed criteria.</i></p> <p><i>- p. 28 Higher emission levels of phosphorous for mills using eucalyptus from certain regions An accommodation is made in the proposed criterion 2.4 for phosphorous limits for mills using eucalyptus from regions with higher levels of phosphorous (e.g. Iberian eucalyptus). The proposed limit for such mills is 3.6 times higher than for mills not using eucalyptus, and double the current limit for mills not using eucalyptus.</i></p>	<p>COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED A clarification is given in Section 5.3.3 for the P limits of eucalyptus pulp, as the higher values are based on the Best Available Technologies-Associated Emission Levels for the production of pulp, paper and board.</p>

<p>References provided in the technical report do not appear to support this higher limit accommodation. Requests for additional supporting information from the European Commission DG Joint Research Centre have not been fulfilled as of now.</p> <p>We recommend more consideration to the science, theory, and practical factors affecting the levels of phosphorus in treated effluents, and consider the appropriateness of basing phosphorus targets on the performance of mills responsible for the majority fluff pulp production.</p>	
<p>There is higher (Pref) for mills using eucalyptus from regions with higher levels of phosphorous (e.g. Iberian eucalyptus). I cannot find the source for these higher phosphorous limits in eucalyptus After reviewing the references provided in the Technical Report.</p> <p>Can you please point me to the reference that was used when calculating the higher (Pref) for eucalyptus pulp?</p>	
<p>Tr 1.0, p.28, table 1 We support the increasing ambition levels of different parameters. One question: why did you decrease the ambition level of Sref (bleach chemical pulp (sulphite)) from 0,6 to 0,75 kg /ADT?</p>	<p>COMMENT ACCEPTED</p> <p>The limit was decreased to 0.5 kg SO2/ADt in the TR2</p>
<p>The EU Ecolabel criteria document for 'Graphic and Tissue 2019' as also 'AHP 2014' are not detailed enough on what air emission sources are considered for sulphur and NOx. Further information on the specific processes and sources is asked for to improve clarity, particularly on the diffuse emissions. The standard needs to include requirements detailing which sources require monitoring and provide some flexibility based on local regulatory requirements concerning measurement techniques or frequencies. It is also crucial that US monitoring, test methods and sampling frequency are accepted as part of the EU Ecolabel assessment and verification process. If the monitoring standards required in the country of production are not recognized this has the potential to be very cost prohibitive and should not be left up to interpretation.</p>	
<p>The EU Ecolabel criteria document for 'Graphic and Tissue 2019' as also 'EU Ecolabel for AHP 2014' https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014D0763&from=EN are not detailed enough on what air emission sources are considered for sulphur and NOx. Further information on the specific processes and sources is asked for to improve clarity, particularly on the diffuse emissions. The standard needs to clarify which sources require monitoring and provide some flexibility based on local regulatory requirements concerning measurement techniques or frequencies. It is also crucial that the robust U.S. monitoring, test methods and sampling frequency are accepted as part of the EU Ecolabel assessment and verification process. If the monitoring standards required in the country of production are not recognized this has the potential to be infeasible and therefore, should not be left up to interpretation.</p>	
<p>- p. 28 Air emissions It is unclear what air emission sources are considered for sulphur and NOx emission characteristics within the EU Ecolabel document for graphic paper. The EU BREF is acknowledged as a primary reference for data within the EU Ecolabel document. The EU BREF includes air emissions from kraft recovery boilers, lime kilns, NCG burners, and any fugitive emissions, so sulphur and NOx emission contributions from power boilers are not considered within the EU BREF document. The EU Ecolabel document references EKONO benchmarking information, which does include sulfur and NOx emissions from power boilers, but then states that the "EUEL reference value for kraft pulp is based on the sum of upper BAT-AEL emission thresholds for 4 sources: weak gases burners, recovery boiler, lime kiln and residual weak gases." The EU Ecolabel document discusses how "power boilers (including biomass boilers) generate significant NOx emissions" but then only specifies recovery boilers, lime kilns, and TRS burners for BAT-AEL values. It is assumed that only process emissions, i.e., excluding emissions from power boilers, are considered in EU Ecolabel criteria development, and the values within Table 2 reflect this assumption. Depending upon the facility, process non-condensable gases may be burned in a variety of ways; in lime kilns, power boilers, kraft recovery boilers, or separate incinerators. Excluding power boiler air emissions for the EU Ecolabel criteria may create the situation where different air emission sources are being considered in the criteria development.</p>	<p>COMMENTS PARTIALLY ACCEPTED</p> <p>The sources of air emissions that should be considered by the applicant have been further clarified in Section 5.3.3 of the TR2. Such information is proposed to be included in the User Manual</p>
<p>A list of emission sources with required reporting should be included. There are over 50 sources of sulfur air emissions in an average pulp mill, if a list is not provided, sites may only chose a subset of those sources to report on, particularly if they don't have site-specific data. In addition, there is no indication if fugitives from waste water treatment systems need to be included in the air emissions determinations.</p> <p>It is also not clear if all the potential sources were used in creating the proposed reference value for sulfur. For example, the values in NCASI's memo, showing the median sulfur emissions at 0.2 kg/t SO2 only includes process emissions (pulping, not power and not water treatment). This also does not include TRS or H2SO4 emissions.</p> <p>Until we understand the minimum set of sources and compounds that should be included, any discussion about the relevance of the proposed criteria will not be valid. We suggest a comprehensive minimum list of sources be included in the criteria and literature emission factors be provided for sites that do not have site-specific data.</p>	

There are nearly 80 different sources of S emissions across a pulp mill and for so a requirement for continuous emission monitoring is not possible. This would add a lot of cost into the system without adding much value because emission values do not fluctuate that much.	
<p>Technical report, Section 5.2 criterion 2 Fluff pulp minimum measurement frequency of S and NOx The continuous measurement requirement for emissions of S and NOx is not practical. Instead, we propose to align this minimum measurement frequency to the environmental permit of the boiler, as is clarified for COD emissions.</p> <p>In all cases, emissions of S and NOx shall be measured on a continuous basis (for emissions from boilers with a capacity exceeding 50 MW) or a periodic basis (at least once a year for boilers and driers with a capacity less than or equal to 50 MW each).</p> <p>This monitoring requirement alone will exclude all International Paper fluff pulp mills in the United States. Monitoring methods and frequencies are heavily regulated in the United States and this requirement directly contradicts some of our operating permits. In places where this requirement does not directly contradict our permit, continuous emission monitoring is very costly, and would be impossible to remove once applied. If a mill no longer requires these monitors due to EU Ecolabel requirements, they would not be allowed to remove them, and would need to continually maintain these monitors for the length of time the mill operates. This therefore creates a long-term risk that is difficult to justify.</p> <p>As this is only a monitoring requirement, there is no added value from an environmental perspective. We suggest maintaining the current monitoring requirements for sulfur and NOx air emissions.</p> <p>Reported emission values for S to air shall include both oxidised and reduced S emissions. Major "It should be written clearly that both SO2 and TRS must be measured continuously from all boilers >50 MW. It was mentioned at the working group meeting that >70% of the fluff pulps on the European market comes from outside Europe.</p> <p>The legislation there is quite different from the European legislation, especially when it comes to the air emission measurements. To install a continuous air emission measurement device is expensive and JRC should investigate what the situation is as regards the fluff pulp producers. Perhaps it is not comparable to the pulp producers delivering the graphic and tissue paper pulps. There may be need for a compromise if you don't wish to close out producers outside Europe."</p>	<p>COMMENTS PARTIALLY ACCEPTED</p> <p>The measurement frequency has been decreased to at least once every six months. Please see Section 5.3.3 for further details</p>
<p>The minimum measurement frequency, unless specified otherwise in the operating permit, shall be daily for COD emissions</p> <p>In the United States, BOD5 is a reporting requirement for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) discharge permits. Most mills are not required to test COD for their permits but they do to assess the health of their WWTP systems.</p> <p>Daily testing of COD therefore is extremely burdensome and costly, there is no documentation describing why this requirement would be included. This also does not add any value because COD tests do not vary widely.</p> <p>We suggest requiring weekly COD tests, rather than daily, to be consistent with phosphorus and most other permit requirements.</p>	<p>COMMENTS ACCEPTED</p> <p>The measurement frequency has been decreased to weekly measurements. Please see Section 5.3.3 for further details</p>
The minimum measurement frequency, unless specified otherwise in the operating permit, shall be daily for COD emissions and weekly for Total P emissions. Major Delete "unless specified otherwise in the operating permit". All fluff pulp mills should have the same measuring frequency, otherwise it is not fair. If you write like that then you may need to accept fluff pulps that come from the mill where COD and P are measured once a year.	

Sub-criterion 2.5 Emissions of CO2 from production (please note this is now sub-criterion 1.4)

Comments received in AHWG1/written form	JRC Dir. B response			
Tr 1.0, p.28, table 1 @ Should the amount of CO2 emissions from non-renewable energy sources per tonne of pulp produced be updated? Yes, we support an update. We would really appreciate an analysis of the data, if possible.	COMMENT ACCEPTED The data were revised against EU Regulation 601/2012 and other ecolabelling schemes setting the same type of criterion			
The EU regulates CO2 emissions from the industrial sector within their emissions trading program (CH4 emissions are not considered and only N2O emissions from nitric, adipic, and glyoxylic acids, and glyoxal production are regulated) (NCASI 2020). It is unclear from the EU Ecolabel document whether N2O and CH4 are included within the CO2 emissions criterion. Emissions for purchased electricity are calculated by using reported annual purchased electricity amounts from facilities and an emission factor of 384 kg CO2/MWh, which is a European average, and is the purchased electricity emission factor used in the EU Ecolabel report for graphic papers.	COMMENT CLARIFIED N2O and CH4 are already included in the reference values given for CO2 emissions for different types of fuels.			
2.5. CO2 emissions 1. The JRC should not prescribe the energy to be used.	COMMENT CLARIFIED The applicant is free to use any source of energy. However, different sources of energy lead to different environmental performance, and this is taken into account in the reference values in Table 2			
2. CO2-free nuclear energy is missing from the list.	COMMENT ACCEPTED It was clarified in the assessment and verification text that the reference value for nuclear energy is zero g CO2/MJ.			
3. AHP should not have its own special CO2 factors and they should be aligned with other relevant EU and national regulations. Table 2 to be removed, page 33 in the TR.	COMMENT REJECTED The CO2 factors in Table 2 are in line with existing Regulations, more specifically with Regulation 601/2012 and Regulation 2018/2066			
4. We want a guarantee of origin to be allowed to reduce CO2 emissions when buying electricity from the grid.	COMMENT CLARIFIED This option is already possible. This was clarified in the assessment and verification text, that now says: "For grid electricity, the value provided above (the European average) shall be used unless the applicant presents documentation establishing that energy from renewable sources is purchased, in which case the applicant may use the factor for the purchased electricity (contract for specified electricity or National Inventories), instead of the value quoted."			
Absorbent Hygiene Products_Draft Technical report 1_FINAL.pdf. Proposed criterion 2.5 Page 33 CO2 factor of grid electricity This value in the table should be removed or actualized with the value in next page <table><tr><td>Grid Electricity</td><td>400</td><td>g CO2 fossil/kWh</td></tr></table> For grid electricity, an emission calculation factor of 376 (kg CO2/MWh) shall be used in accordance with the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/331.	Grid Electricity	400	g CO2 fossil/kWh	COMMENT ACCEPTED This was changed in the criterion. The right calculation factor is 376 kg CO2/MWh
Grid Electricity	400	g CO2 fossil/kWh		

<p><i>Absorbent Hygiene Products_Draft Technical report 1_FINAL.pdf.</i></p> <p><i>Proposed criterion 2.5</i></p> <p><i>Page 34 CO2 factor of grid electricity</i></p> <p>For grid electricity, the value provided above (the European average) shall be used unless the applicant presents documentation establishing the average value for its suppliers of electricity (contracting suppliers or National Inventories).</p>	COMMENTS ACCEPTED
<p><i>The applicant shall also provide a single CO2 emission value for the relevant paper machine(s) used to produce EU Ecolabel fluff pulp.</i></p> <p><i>Major Please clarify this sentence. I don't think that there is any paper machine involved in the fluff production</i></p>	
<p><i>For grid electricity, the value provided above (the European average) shall be used unless the applicant presents documentation establishing the average value for its suppliers of electricity (contracting suppliers), in which case the applicant may use this value instead of the value quoted. The documentation used as proof of compliance shall include technical specifications that indicate the average value (i.e. copy of a contract). Major "It was discussed and agreed at a CB Forum meeting that this text is very unclear and it is difficult to understand what is meant. Therefore, the text was clarified in the UM (the Excel-file) and the interpretation is now:</i></p> <p><i>For grid electricity, the European average factor 384 (kg CO2/MWh) shall be used unless the applicant presents documentation establishing that energy from renewable sources is purchased, (contract for specified electricity) in which case the applicant may use the factor for the purchased electricity, instead of the value quoted.</i></p>	COMMENTS ACKNOWLEDGED
<p><i>Should the amount of CO2 emissions from non-renewable energy sources per tonne of pulp produced be updated? Major 450 is still relevant but if you change the European average CO2 factor then you need to check the level of the limit as well.</i></p> <p><i>We would like to call for stakeholders to provide input on the reference values for CO2 emissions from different energy sources presented in Table 2. Major You should refer to Annex VI of Regulation (EU) No 601/2012 on the monitoring and reporting of greenhouse gas emissions.</i></p>	

CRITERION 3: Man-made cellulose fibres (including viscose, modal, lyocell, cupro, triacetate) (please note this is now criterion 2)

Comments received in AHWG1/written form	JRC Dir. B response
TR, TR, section 5.3 criterion 3, page 41 point of discussion COD and Zinc emission requirements We would be happy to provide any additional information and data on the waste water from viscose process, if the working group decides to include them. In our view Ecolabel should cover all the important environmental aspects through the life cycle of the material as it has intended, and this should be consistent with the LCA studies.	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED

Sub-criterion 3.1 Sourcing of man-made cellulose fibres (please note this is now sub-criterion 2.1)

Comments received in AHWG1/written form	JRC Dir. B response
TR: 36 Criterion 3.1 We are in favour	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED
3.1 We support the 70% certified fibers	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED
TR, section 5.3 criterion 3: 3.1 Improper comparison between pulp and paper industry and dissolving pulp There is a significant difference between paper pulp and dissolving wood pulp business. Dissolving pulp (EU and elsewhere) is a substantially smaller market in comparison, less backward integrated, thus has a very different business and market position. There are five dissolving wood pulp producers in the EU, the rest are elsewhere. There are only two staple viscose producers in the EU and the majority of viscose production is in China. The sourcing network is not EU focused.	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED
TR, section 5.3 criterion 3: 3.1 Change of the certified sourcing from 25% to 70% Considering statistics, the following is taken from State of Europe's forests SoEF_2020.pdf (foresteurope.org): Nearly 105 mil ha, 52% of the forest area in reporting countries, is certified (incl RUS; Belarus). About 80 mil ha is certified by PEFC and 52 mil ha by FSC. Over 28 mil ha is certified by both schemes... So we suggest to evaluate additional source of information and not to limit to the paper industry in the EU. Unfortunately there are no public numbers available on certification % of DWP mills.	COMMENTS ACKNOWLEDGED The level of ambition of this sub-criterion has been set at 60%. Please refer to the TR2 for further details of the underlying analysis.
TR, section 5.3 criterion 3: 3.1 Change of the certified sourcing from 25% to 70% in align with other labels Nordic Swan for textile has been under revision. The current draft give the following criteria statements, which does not support the change to 70%.	
TR, section 5.3 criterion 3: 3.1 Change of the certified sourcing from 25% to 70% Furthermore, we support some of the comments and observations made by EDANA and others, e.g. Swedish CB, during the first call on the fluff pulp. Based on the previous comments, and based on our own experience regarding sourcing and dissolving wood pulp production, we strongly request the proposed criteria be re-evaluated.	
Technical report, section 5.3, page 36 Criterion 3, sub-criteria 3.1 "sourcing of man-made cellulose fibres" FSC supports increasing the ambition to 70%. Proposed text below. All pulp fibres shall be covered by valid chain of custody certificates issued by an independent third party certification scheme such as FSC. A minimum of 70 % pulp fibres shall be covered by valid Sustainable Forestry Management certificates issued by an independent third party certification scheme such as FSC.	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED
Why does the threshold is 70% and not 100% of certified pulp ? The threshold should be 100%.	

<p><i>Tr 1.0, p. 36, proposed criterion 3.1: Sourcing</i></p> <p><i>Please see our comment above. We also suggest the threshold of man-made cellulose fibres covered by Sustainable Forest Management certificates to increase to 100%.</i></p>	<p>COMMENT REJECTED</p> <p>The level of ambition of this sub-criterion has set at 60%, as a compromise between availability of certified materials and the objective of sustainable certification. Please see the TR2 for further details of the underlying analysis</p>
<p><i>Please adapt the wording to “man-made cellulose fibres”. (see a), second paragraph); here and at other places you still write pulp fibres.</i></p>	<p>COMMENT ACCEPTED</p> <p>It has been clarified that criterion 2 applies to man-made cellulose fibres in the final product, not pulp fibres. When referring to the fibres is noted they are man-made cellulose fibres (MMCF).</p>
<p><i>Invoices shall be provided which document that 70% of certified fibres have been allocated to the material they supply to the Absorbent Hygiene Product producer. Major Man-made fibres are not often delivered directly to AHP producers but to the nonwoven and airlaid producers. It should be written out that they allocate the credits to the NW/airlaid delivered to the EU Ecolabelled AHP product. The number of credits must be given in the invoice.</i></p>	<p>COMMENT ACCEPTED</p> <p>Please find clarification added in sub-criterion 2.1 (section 5.4.1).</p>
<p><i>Invoices shall be provided which document that 70% of certified fibres have been allocated to the material they supply to the Absorbent Hygiene Product producer. Major See my comment on sourcing under the chapter for fluff pulp</i></p>	<p>COMMENT ACCEPTED</p> <p>Please find clarification added in sub-criterion 2.1 (section 5.4.1).</p>

Sub-criterion 3.2 Bleaching of man-made cellulose fibres (please note this is now sub-criterion 2.2)

Comments received in AHWG1/written form	JRC Dir. B response
<p>- Revision of EU Ecolabel criteria for Absorbent Hygiene Products</p> <p>- Criterion 3.2: Bleaching</p> <p>- p. 37 AOX AOX is sometimes considered a measure of the generation of toxic, chlorinated substances. There was some historic validity to this position when use of chlorine for pulp bleaching was commonplace (ca. 1990s and prior). However, following conversion to Elemental Chlorine Free (ECF) bleaching in the early 2000s, studies of effluent characteristics at ECF mills have suggested little or no evidence of ecotoxicity related to AOX. A report by Solomon, et. al. (1997) concluded that: The clear weight of the evidence is that bleaching with 100% ClO₂ substitution (ECF bleaching) produces chlorinated substances, such as mono- and di-substituted chlorophenols. These are similar in composition and structure to naturally occurring chlorinated substances, and, as opposed to compounds with three, four, or more chlorine atoms in the molecule, are invariably less persistent and less bioaccumulative. The environmental effects, persistence, and modes of degradation in the environment of these chlorinated substances are well understood. Exposure concentrations of chlorinated substances detected in mill effluent continue to be generally low and do not suggest that acute or chronic effects will result from their presence. This risk assessment for chlorinated substances produced as a direct result of bleaching using</p>	<p>COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED</p>

<p><i>CIO2 reconfirms the earlier conclusion that the chlorinated substances produced as a direct result of bleaching using CIO2, and subjected to secondary biological treatment, present a negligible (insignificant) environmental risk to aquatic ecosystems.</i></p> <p><i>While it true that some pulps can be manufactured with TCF (totally chlorine free) processes yielding very low AOX levels, there is not convincing evidence that well-treated ECF effluents are environmentally preferable to well-treated TCF effluents. A report prepared by AMEC (2006) provides the most extensive treatment on the topic. Among the 53 concluding statements in the report are that:</i></p> <p><i>27. There is no systematic difference in [toxicity] effect intensity or effect pattern between the whole mill effluents from mills employing ECF or TCF bleaching.</i></p> <p><i>28. There is no indication of a difference between ECF and TCF bleaching in terms of acute and chronic toxic effects on aquatic eco-systems.</i></p> <p><i>36. The analysis of properties of ECF and TCF bleached market pulps produced in different regions of the world has shown that these pulps display different properties. Possible reasons for this observation include climate, harvest age and maturity, wood species, processing conditions including the bleaching sequence, and customer requirements. Consequently, this analysis is influenced by many more factors than ECF and TCF bleaching processes alone and it is not possible to generalise about which bleaching process is superior with respect to pulp properties. With regard to induction of detoxification enzymes and reproductive effects of mill effluents, Hewitt et al. (2006) notes that "[t]he initial uncertainty regarding the role of chlorine bleaching and dioxins in these responses was resolved by the mid-1990s, when it was determined that effects were not correlated with effluent adsorbable organic halogen (AOX) levels and that releases of dioxins had decreased substantially."</i></p> <p><i>In 1992 the Province of British Columbia in Canada implemented provincial regulations requiring elimination of AOX from pulp bleach plants by the end of 2002, effectively mandating the use of TCF bleaching sequences. However, a Scientific Advisory Panel convened by the government reviewed the basis for this requirement and, in 2001, concluded that there was no evidence to indicate that reduction of AOX beyond that achievable by ECF bleaching would result in any demonstrable environmental benefit (Carey et al. 2002).</i></p>	
<p><i>TR, 37 Criterion 3.2 We are in favour</i></p>	<p>COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED</p>
<p><i>TR, TR, section 5.3 criterion 3: 3.2. page 37 AOX and OX The choice between AOX and OCl(OX) should stay as 'or' not 'and'. For verification, OCl on product can only be done by spot sampling, and AOX in waste water is continuously or much more frequent. So when spot sampling might show irregular OX level, AOX is a much more consistent parameter over a period of time. Therefore, the facility should be given the choice to proof one of the parameters is within the limit.</i></p>	<p>COMMENT REJECTED</p> <p>Given that AOX is more consistent it should be performed. In addition, in alignment with other ecolabels type 1, OCl measure is also requested.</p>
<p><i>Tr 1.0, p. 37, proposed criterion 3.2: Bleaching of man-made cellulose fibres What is the reason behind to propose 0,150 kg/ADT instead of 0,140 kg/ADT (see criterion 2.2). From our perspective the same technique is used. Therefore, we would propose to have the same limits (i.e. 0,140 kg/ADT)</i></p>	<p>COMMENT REJECTED</p> <p>The 0,140 was a errata (typo) in the text. Please find clarification added in sub-criterion 2.2 (section 5.4.2)</p>
<p><i>a test report showing compliance with either the AOX o Major A test report is not enough to show th compliance with the AOX requirement. AOX should be measured once a week and the pulp producer must calculate the test results to kg AOX/tonne pulp (as annual average).</i></p>	<p>COMMENT ACCEPTED</p> <p>Please find clarification added in sub-criterion 2.2 (section 5.4.2)</p>

Sub-criterion 3.4 Production of man-made cellulose fibres (please note this is now sub-criterion 2.3)

Comments received in AHWG1/written form	JRC Dir. B response
<p>TR, TR, section 5.3 criterion 3: 3.4. Sulphur emission Sulphur emission to air cannot be directly measured. Thus there should be a clear definition and method of calculation defined in the ecolabel. We suggest that this criteria should be seen as 'draft' and defined when the mentioned clarification and method is aligned in the working group. Note: although most labels refer to sulphur emission to air as one of the key criteria for viscose, they also do not have a clearly defined method to verify.</p>	
<p>Should measurement frequency or test method be defined for sulphur emissions? Major Absolutely yes</p>	
<p>Tr 1.0, p. 41 @ Should COD and Zinc emission requirements for man-made cellulose fibres be included? Yes, we suggest to include. We suggest following limits according to the Blue Angel for textiles:</p> <p>3.2.2.4.3 Emissions to water in the production of viscose fibres</p> <p>The waste water from the production of viscose fibres must not exceed the following values (expressed as annual averages) when discharged to surface waters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.3 g zinc /kg filament fibres produced, • 0.16 g zinc /kg staple fibres produced, • 0.04 g AOX /kg viscose fibres produced, • 20 g COD /kg viscose fibres produced, • 0.3 mg sulphide/l. <p>This requirement does not apply for approved discharge into an urban waste water treatment plant that meets at least the requirements of the Council Directive of 21 May 1991 concerning urban waste water treatment (91/271/EEC).</p> <p>Compliance verification</p> <p>The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirements in Annex 1 and submit a declaration of compliance from the operator of the plant (viscose producer), as well as a test report. The following methods may be used for completing these tests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zinc: EN ISO 11885, • AOX value: EN ISO 9562, • COD: ISO 6060 or DIN ISO 15705 or DIN 38409-41, or DIN 38409-44, • Sulphide: DIN 38405-27 or ISO 10530. <p>The discharge of pollutants is determined from the concentration values and the corresponding waste water flow volumes related to the samples.</p>	<p>COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED</p> <p>Please refer to new proposal for sub-criterion 2.3 (section 5.4.3 in TR2).</p>
<p>Tr 1.0, p. 41 @ Should measurement frequency or test method be defined for sulphur emissions? 2-hour composite sample and DIN 38405-D27</p>	
<p>Tr 1.0, p. 41 @ Should the specific requirement for carbon disulphide, emission into air be added to this criterion? In the old BREF: CS2: 80-100 kg/t produced viscose fibres</p>	

CRITERION 4 Cotton and other natural cellulosic seed fibres (please note this is now criterion 3)

Sub-criterion 4.1 Sourcing and traceability of cotton and other natural cellulosic seed fibres (please note this is now sub-criterion 3.1)

Comments received in AHWG1/written form	JRC Dir. B response
<p>TR: 42 Criterion 4.1 <i>We would be in favour of organic cotton only. BCI is not a well-known scheme.</i></p> <p>4.0 <i>We support the changes as proposed. We do not support BCI cotton as an alternative since the ambition level is not high enough and organic cotton is considered "best in class" by consumers.</i></p> <p>Tr 1.0, p. 43 <i>@ Should BCI cotton certification be accepted as a proof of compliance?</i> <i>No, not all BCI-cotton is organically grown. So, it could happen that in the baby diaper is normal cotton.</i></p>	COMMENTS ACCEPTED
<p>Tr 1.0, p. 43 <i>@ Which are the certification schemes that could be considered equivalent, and could be specifically.</i> <i>In the textile area we only accept GOTS.</i></p>	
<p><i>Why does the tampon string is exempted from this criterion ? Even it is less than 3% weight of the total product, the tampon string should be included.</i></p>	<p>COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED</p> <p>COMMENT CLARIFIED The tampon string is exempted as this requirement contradicts with strength properties of the string, as also set in Nordic Swan</p>

Sub-criterion 4.2 Bleaching of cotton and other natural cellulosic seed fibres (please note this is now sub-criterion 3.2)

Comments received in AHWG1/written form	JRC Dir. B response
<p><i>Technical report version 1.0 (September 2021)</i> - Section "4.2: Bleaching of cotton and other natural cellulosic seed fibres" - Page 43-44 <i>Harmonization with proposed changes for criteria 2.2 and 3.3.</i> <i>We recommend aligning criteria "4.2: Bleaching of cotton and other natural cellulosic seed fibres" with the proposed changes in criteria 2.2 and 3.2, where the exclusion of chlorine gas was changed to an exclusion of elemental chlorine gas (Cl₂), or to explain why this change is not applicable here. We would also like to point out that to our knowledge, manufacturers do not use chlorine gaz for bleaching anymore.</i></p>	COMMENT ACCEPTED

CRITERION 5: Plastic materials and superabsorbent polymers (please note this is now criterion 4)

Sub-criterion 5.1 Production of polymers and plastic materials (please note this is now criterion 4.1)

Comments received in AHWG1/written form	JRC Dir. B response
<i>TR, section 4.1, page 14 table 2 Modify the title for section 5 The proposed change of title of section 5 adds misunderstanding. Polymer is a definition including synthetic polymer, MMCF and natural polymer. So we propose to change to production of synthetic polymer and plastic material</i>	COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED Criterion 5 (actually now is criterion 4) has been revised. The new title is 'Synthetic polymers and plastic materials'. It includes production of synthetic polymers and plastic materials and the new inclusion of bio-based plastic materials.
<i>TR version 1.0 (September 2021) - Section "5.1: Production of polymers and plastic materials" - Page 45 Introducing a new criterion on the percentage of materials from renewable sources products) One of the stakeholders (manufacturer of absorbent hygiene would like to suggest the inclusion of a new criterion to introduce a minimum percentage of materials from renewable sources used, as the general tendency on the market of absorbent hygiene products is to increase their proportion in the product. An LCA analysis on this stakeholder's products demonstrated that 84% of their CO2 emissions come from raw materials, and that one of the reasons for the lower emissions observed on their products compared to standard diapers are largely due to the use of materials from renewable sources. They will send the results of the LCA at the same time.</i>	COMMENT ACCEPTED A sub-criterion on bio-based plastic materials has been added.
<i>We would like to raise awareness on the vague definition of bioplastics. In this label, only biobased plastics are concerned so « biobased plastics » should be used instead of bioplastics.</i>	COMMENT ACCEPTED The term used is bio-based plastic materials.
<i>A percentage of bio sourced plastics should be imposed in the SAP.</i>	COMMENT REJECTED Refer to the criterion text however a specific percentage in SAP cannot be imposed.
<i>5.1 We suggest setting requirement on a reduction plan for water or energy. ISO 14001 or 5001 or equivalent plan should be accepted. This will make the requirement more verifiable and still without setting specific targets which is very difficult.</i>	COMMENT ACCEPTED The assessment and verification of sub-criterion 4.1 should be done in accordance to ISO 14001 and/or 50001.
<i>Pag 45- The applicant shall provide a declaration of compliance with the requirement from the suppliers. The declaration shall be supported by a report describing in detail the procedures adopted by the suppliers in order to fulfil the requirement for each of the sites concerned. Major This requirement is not meaningful at all. What is meant by "a report describing in detail the procedures adopted". The CB accepts sustainability reports and short explanations. All factories are different and the processes are different. CBs are not experts on polymer production so they don't know what to ask and on what basis can they then reject a production site? This criterion does not give any added value. Just delete it.</i>	COMMENT REJECTED This criterion request compliance of the plants producing synthetic polymers and plastic materials in accordance to ISO 14001 and/or 50001.

CRITERION 6: Excluded and restricted substances (please note this is now criterion 7)

Sub-criterion 6.1. Restrictions on substances classified under Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council (1) and

Sub-criterion 6.2: Restrictions on Substances of Very High Concern (SVHCs) (please note this is now sub-criterion 7.1)

Comments received in AHWG1/written form	JRC Dir. B response
TR, section 4.1, page 14, table2 Chemicals in section 6 We support the change to have a separate section on chemicals. It adds clarity.	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED
Technical report version 1.0 (September 2021) - Sections "6.1: Restrictions on substances classified under Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council" and "6.2: Restrictions on Substances of Very High Concern (SVHCs)" - Page 55-60 Inclusion of a 0,10% threshold (weight by weight) on different hazard classes We generally support criteria aiming at reducing or even eliminating chemical substances in the components of products, finished products or chemicals used during their manufacturing process.	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED
However, we wish to make the following comments: - We would like to raise attention on the difficulty of comparing substances with different hazards within the same group. The proposed threshold of 0.10% (weight by weight) in criteria 6.1 and 6.2 could be problematic as it does not consider the specific characteristics of each of the substances listed, both from a health point of view (single-use absorbent hygiene products and menstrual cups being in prolonged contact with the skin and mucous membranes) and from an environmental point of view. These substances have different effects, different properties, different analytical methods and the adoption of a common threshold for all substances that will be included in this EU Ecolabel does not seem relevant to us. We suggest examining to what extent the more restrictive criteria of the Nordic Swan label could be retained in the revision of the standard.	COMMENTS ACCEPTED The approach used in the Blue Angel and Nordic Swan was reviewed and a proposal was made in the TR2, accordingly.
6.1 We suggest adding a new requirement and setting specific requirements for some H-phrases like H317, which should be excluded. If not in all chemicals, then in all chemicals used in the final product, eg adhesives. A suggestion could be to take O3 and O4 from the Nordic Swan version 6.6 – this will both be on a mixture level and also on the substance level in each mixture/chemical used. SVHC are regulated in the Nordic Swan O6, among other groups. These limitations have been enforced in several years hence shown that this is possible.	
We also think that the limit is too high for this product group that comes in close contact with the skin and with products intended for vulnerable consumers. The limit should be strenghtened. In our opinion the same limits as for the leave-on cosmetics should be used: 0.0010%	
Pag 59- The limit is too high for this product group that comes in close contact with the skin and with products intended for vulnerable consumers. We should not accept these substances in this product category and the limit should be strenghtened to the detection limit.	
We agree with the lower limits for hazardous substances for ingoing substances	
5.2 We suggest that 5.2 shall be as strict in the new requirement hence a weight reference shall be made to materials and not the final product.	
We have concerns that the currently proposed wording of the criteria allows for intentional use of hazardous substances while they should be excluded completely. if the current wording, which explicitly allows the use of hazardous chemicals, were to be maintained, consumer organisations would not be able to promote EU Ecolabel products	

¹ Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures, amending and repealing Directives 67/548/EEC and 1999/45/EC, and amending Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 (OJ L 353, 31.12.2008, p. 1).

We agreed with setting a lower threshold for substances that meet the criteria for CMRs or SVHCs (currently at 0.1%)	
We in principle support restricting hazardous substances at lower concentrations	
We agree on setting lower restriction limits for hazardous substances (as done by the Blue Angel) to also cover trace substances	
We agree with the need to set different requirements with regards to restrictions on hazardous substances and suggest to follow the example of Nordic Swan which sets requirements for ingoing substances, allowing for easier verification by CBs and better understandability for producers	
<p>There should of course be 0% CMR or SVHC in the EU Ecolabelled AHPs. The challenge, however, is how to prove that. The AHP producer and their suppliers can declare that they have not intentionally added such substances in the materials or product. Still, there might be impurities of them in the materials. The only way to know if that kind of substances are there, is to analyse the materials. We get often statements from the suppliers like "SVHCs are not intentionally added and we don't expect such to be present in the materials, however we don't test the materials for them" The question is then, can that be accepted as a proof? We don't accept it. In the Swan label we have the limit 100 ppm for the impurities in the material and we must get the declaration stating that the impurities are below the limit. The strange thing is that some suppliers sign very easily the correct declaration while others add the condition that they have not analysed the materials but trust the declarations from their sub-suppliers. A new question is then, can we trust the suppliers who just sign the declaration? (I write all this because these issues really take a lot of time and energy when we assess applications)</p> <p>So, ideally, the materials in the EU Ecolabelled AHPs should be tested for CMRs and SVHCs. However, this is not possible to be done because of the high number of tests that must then be conducted and the cost for them. Therefore, we propose that you find and identify the CMRs and SVHCs substances that might retain in the material by checking the processes, process chemicals and additives that are used in the material production. (I think that when you manufacture a specific plastics then it the same kind of chemicals are used in same kind of processes) Then you could require the AHP applicant to analyse the materials for these specific substances and ask for a declaration for absence of the others (where there is a less risk that such are there).</p>	<p>COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED</p> <p>This aspect is very relevant, and a discussion has been started with the manufacturers to understand what substances may be found in the final product.</p>
The current proposal sets a maximum limit of 0.1% w/w of the final product or its component for CMRs or SVHCs. Several stakeholders have however asked for lowering these limits to 'no presence' (analytical limit of detection). How to verify this? Should the final product be analyzed in a laboratory against all possible CMRs and SVHCs?	
<p>We are in favor of lowering the threshold for the presence of CMRs and SVHCs. However, we believe that care should be taken in the way this lowering is worded: a 0% threshold does not correspond to the analytical detection limit. According to a French stakeholder, the terms usually used are: limit of quantification and limit of detection.</p> <p>The limit of detection is lower than the limit of quantification and, unless we have mistaken, when the limit of detection is reached but not the limit of quantification, it is arbitrarily considered that the concentration of the substance in the mixture or material is equal to the limit of quantification divided by two.</p> <p>If it is the absence of detection that is intended, it is possible to require more simply that the substance is not detected (which is not quite equivalent to 0% - this threshold seems being unattainable for regulatory reasons (contrary to CMR and SVHC, included in the REACH regulation) and for technical reasons (as explained, inability of the equipment).</p> <p>Note that the limit of detection and the limit of quantification depend on the analytical method, so it will be necessary to define precisely which test methods should be used for each of the substances targeted.</p>	<p>COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED</p> <p>A clarification has been made in the TR2 on the difference between limit of detection (LoD) and limit of quantification (LoQ). This is proposed to be added to the user manual. In the context of the EU Ecolabel it is proposed that it is the LoQ that applies.</p> <p>A dialogue has been started with the manufacturers to know more about the analytical method, since to our knowledge no harmonised analytical method exists for AHPs</p>
TR, TR, section 5.7 criterion 6, 6.1, page 55 Restricted substances in expression The concentration limit of 0.1 % should be calculated for substances, no matter if they are used in form of pure substances or as component of a mixture. So we proposal to replace "shall not contain substances or mixtures in concentrations greater than 0,10% (weight by weight)..." with "shall not contain substances (alone or in mixture) in concentrations greater than 0,10% (weight by weight)...."	<p>COMMENT ACCEPTED</p> <p>This change is proposed as part of the TR2</p>
Pag 55- 0,10% Major "Does this mean that the final product can contain classified substances and mixtures up to 0.01% or is the limit meant for the component articles in the final product. In my opinion the formulation is not very clear.	<p>COMMENT CLARIFIED</p> <p>The wording is proposed to change as part of the TR2. The new wording says that classified substances are not allowed in the final product (according to the limit of detection)</p>

Tr 1.0, p. 58 No	@ Is there any additional clarifications needed about the proposed wording?	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED
TR, TR, section 5.7 criterion 6, 6.1 and 6.3 Derogation on TiO2 Titanium dioxide should be derogated in concentrations up to 1 %. We would be happy to provide more data and information on this.		COMMENT ACCEPTED This change is proposed as part of the TR2. This is in line with the current approach in Nordic Swan and Blue Angel
Tr 1.0, p. 58 derogation if used in quantities >0.1% of the treated article or component part; See criterion 6.3). No	@ Areas there any derogation requests foreseen? (note: titanium dioxide is now a pigment that would require derogation if used in quantities >0.1% of the treated article or component part; See criterion 6.3).	COMMENT REJECTED This change is proposed as part of the TR2. This is in line with the current approach in Nordic Swan and Blue Angel, and considers the reclassification of TiO2 as a breathable powder, which is not the form which is used for in absorbent hygiene products in the scope of the EU Ecolabel.
We are not in favour of a derogation for the use of nano-TiO2		
As raised before (see attached mail which went, by the way, unanswered) the Hydrocarbon Solvent Producer Associations, a Cefic Sector Group would like to raise again awareness to the fact that the hazard identified as H304 is NOT related to aspiration TOXICITY but is based on phys chem property of viscosity. A substance or product with H304 is not toxic but due to the viscosity "May be fatal if swallowed and enters airways". Please see an overview on aspiration hazard and toxicity in our dedicated paper: https://www.esig.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/H304_HSPA_standalone_final.pdf We kindly ask you therefore to correct this in the draft technical report Suggestion: Under 5.2 and 6.3 it should be removed from the line — acutely toxic, categories 1 and 2 (H300, H310, H330, H304) Under 6.1 it should either be removed or corrected (we would advise to remove it as the hazard is based on the phys chem property – and not on toxicity -to avoid further confusion)		COMMENT REJECTED We welcome the information shared with the JRC, however the hazard class H304 is on the list of the substances to be restricted in the horizontal criterion for chemical substances for all product groups (not only absorbent hygiene products). The type of property that triggers a H classification is not relevant here. Should a H304 classified substance need derogation for its use in AHPs, a derogation request should be submitted. This will be evaluated by the JRC.
We are sending in attachment an analytical method developed to detect or quantify certain chemical substances in single-use baby diapers at the stage of the finished product that could be used as a reference ("France - Analytical method - Comment n°5" – the method is also mentioned in the preliminary report of the JRC). See supporting information in pdf- Stratégie d'investigation du Service Commun des Laboratoires (SCL) sur la sécurité des couches pour bébé		COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED
TR, TR, section 5.7 criterion 6, 6.1, page 56 'Relevant Chemicals' in Assessment and verification A definition for "Relevant Chemicals" should be part of section 6.1, e.g. "Relevant chemicals are chemicals that are used and may end up in the final product".		COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED The wording relevant chemicals was removed.

Sub-criterion 6.3: Specific restrictions (please note this is now sub-criterion 7.3)

Comments received in AHWG1/written form	JRC Dir. B response
<p>Section 3.7.3, criterion 6.3(a) Substances not to be present It cannot be excluded that the mentioned substances are not present. It can only be guaranteed that the amount is below a detection limit of a selected method.</p> <p>We therefore suggest modifying as follows: "The following substances shall not be intentionally added in the product, regardless of the concentration, neither in a as part of the product, nor as in a part of any mixture included in the product, nor as impurities."</p>	
<p>p. 60-61 6.3(a) Specified excluded substances The following substances shall not be present in the product, regardless of the concentration, neither as part of the product, as part of any mixture included in the product, nor as impurities: (...) The wording maintains the confusion between danger and risk. The requirement "shall not be present" is unrealistic and not feasible (moreover not measurable). We will therefore support a proposal that allows the manufacturers to report reasonably on how they meet their obligations to bring safe products to the market. Reference to EDANA Stewardship Program Codex™ would be then supported by manufacturers. https://www.edana.org/how-we-take-action/edana-stewardship-programme-for-absorbent-hygiene-products/the-edana-absorbent-hygiene-product-stewardship-programme-codex</p>	
<p>The following is stated: "This criterion lists the substances and compounds that shall not be detectable in the product, regardless of the concentration, in any form, not even as impurities (which are defined according to what stated in section 3)."</p> <p>It cannot be excluded that the mentioned substances are not present. It can only be guaranteed that the amount is below a detection limit of a selected method. We suggest clarifying or removing.</p> <p>Furthermore, we would suggest clarifying the methodology to assess absence of substances. For inspiration, you can refer to Oekotex Standard 100 or the EDANA Stewardship Programme for Absorbent Hygiene Products.</p>	<p>COMMENTS PARTIALLY ACCEPTED</p> <p>The introducing sentence in sub-criterion 7.3.a was modified to take into account the comments received. Impurities are now allowed to be present in the product (see Section 5.9.3 for details of what is meant by impurity). The limit threshold is not zero, but it is the limit of detection (LoD).</p> <p>The OEKO TEX Standard 100 and the EDANA Stewardship Programme were reviewed and will be taken into account; however these documents do not contain information about the LoD or the LoQ for different substances analysed according to a specific test method.</p>
<p>One French stakeholder disagrees with the wording used at the beginning of the criterion ("The following substances shall not be present in the product, regardless of the concentration, neither as part of the product, as part of any mixture included in the product, nor as impurities"), as it seems impossible to put in place and generates confusion between hazard and risk. This stakeholder would be in favor of an amendment allowing manufacturers to specify the safety of their products in a reasonable way.</p>	<p>Stakeholders are invited to provide relevant information on the tests performed on the final AHP or on individual materials.</p>
<p>Health and safety are foundational requirements that should never be compromised when looking at environmental footprint of a product. This is an „AND“ and not an „OR“. The different actions taken to lower environmental impact of a product through its life cycle, must maintain the trace impurities profile of the finished product.</p> <p>We support transparency and reassurance for consumers regarding trace levels of impurities found in AHP. Any request for substance limitations as described in criterion 6.3.a „not to be present in a product“ is very absolute without a defined and enforceable threshold and hence technically not achievable. Thresholds should be substance specific and associated to a validated analytical method. ECHA is providing guidelines on their website on how to define Limit Of Restriction (LOR) as 3 folds the Limit Of Quantification (LOQ). You can consult ECHA document on the following link Forum Methodology. In addition, the voluntary EDANA Stewardship Programme Codex™ provides a set of criteria bound to a test method that could be reapplied for some substances listed in the criterion 6.3.a such as phthalates and formaldehyde. To learn more, you can visit the following Internet page The Stewardship Programme Codex™ EDANA</p>	<p>See Section 5.9.3 for further discussion on the concentration limits.</p>
<p>6.3- The following substances shall not be present in the product, regardless of the concentration, neither as part of the product, as part of any mixture included in the product, nor as impurities: Major "This criterion, as it is written now, is completely impossible to verify. When you know how many different materials a AHP consists of and how long the supply chain is then you understand that you are not going to get the declarations needed. No supplier will sign a declaration that there are zero impurities in their material, not because they think that there are</p>	

<p>but because they can't guarantee the absence, because they are relying on the information they get from their suppliers. Only way to show absence of these substances is to analyse each material for ALL of the banned substances before the production of the AHP. Nordic Swan has the limit 100 ppm for impurities and it is very difficult to get the verifications. So all materials need to be tested for all the mentioned banned substances, even when it is not relevant. What is the reason that for example fluff pulp needs to be tested for all of them? What is the risk to find them there? I think that this criterion should be about the materials where there is a risk to find these substances.</p> <p>What do you mean by "recardless concentration"? Zero or the detection limit?</p>	
<p>Technical report, p. 60, section 5.7.3, criterion 6.3(a) Acrylamide The list refers to substances in general. Superabsorbent polymers therefore do not need to be mentioned.</p> <p>We suggest modifying as follows: "Acrylamide shall not be intentionally added to superabsorbent polymers"</p>	COMMENT ACCEPTED
<p>Section 3.7.3, criterion 6.3(a) CMIT CMIT and MIT can sometimes be found in water-based inks for printing, since a water-based ink needs preservatives. The substance is present at very low amounts in the finished products but can also be detected as impurities without being intentionally added (can be a trace substance in process water from pulp and paper making).</p>	COMMENTS ACKNOWLEDGED
<p>TR, TR, section 5.7 criterion 6, 6.3 MIT and CMIT We would like to seek consensus and the possibility of place limits on MIT and CMIT, instead of introducing ban on the substance. Please indicate what would be the required information and data for this purpose.</p>	<p>According to the new wording proposed in the TR2, CMIT and MIT can be present as impurities in an AHP up to 0.0100% w/w, which would solve the issue of them being present in process water from the pulp manufacturing.</p> <p>Any further data that would be highly appreciated is when CMIT and MIT are added to the product, to fulfil what functions, in what concentrations, and if alternatives to MIT and CMIT have been tested already. All data can be sent to: JRC-B5-ABSORBENT-HYGIENE-PRODUCTS@ec.europa.eu</p>
<p>When you ban a whole group of substances as phthalates then you need to make a list of all CAS numbers in the group because otherwise the applicant will ask the CB which phthalates exactly they should analyse and we wouldn't know.</p>	COMMENT ACCEPTED
<p>"Phthalates" are a large group of chemicals, with each member having different regulatory status and toxicology profile. There are plenty of data that show that High Molecular Weight (HMW) phthalates are safe for use in all consumer applications (i.e. 11 year EU Risk Assessments on DINP and DIDP published in 2006 in the EU Official Journal, extensive evaluation of new data between 2009 and 2013 by ECHA with the conclusion that no further risks were identified and further ECHA RAC conclusions on DINP not warranting a classification (2018)). We support science and thorough regulatory assessments as the basis for EU Ecolabels and any other legislative and non-legislative initiative promoted by the European Union.</p> <p>Ecolabels should not be used to discriminate substances that have been proven safe (e.g., RAC opinion on DINP/DIDP in 2018, DEP assessment in 2015)"</p>	<p>COMMENT REJECTED</p> <p>Some phthalates are on REACH's Authorisation List because toxic for reproduction, for example: DEHP, DBP, BBP, DIBP, DPP, DiPP, and DHNUP. Some other phthalates are inscribed on the EU's priority list of substances that should be investigated more closely for endocrine disruption. The phthalates DINP, DIDP and DNOP are listed onto Annex XVII of REACH, restricting their use as substances or in mixtures, in concentrations > 0.1% in childcare articles that can be placed in the mouth of children. Hygiene products are classified as childcare articles, and they are in contact with the child's skin for many hours.</p> <p>Stakeholders are welcome to submit a derogation request for relevant phthalates, if needed, providing the necessary data to substantiate the derogation request.</p>
<p>In addition to the list of forbidden substances, we recommend to include the OEKOTEX class 1 certification for the products. The OEKOTEX certification ensure the consumer safety regarding endocrine disruptors. This must be the minimum required for the Ecolabel certification.</p>	COMMENT REJECTED
<p>In the specific case of Endocrine Disruptors and when referring to them, a list should be referenced on the criterion to drive clarity on the substances of concerned.</p>	COMMENTS PARTIALLY ACCEPTED
<p>We recommend extending the list of identified substances with lists currently under development by French stakeholder ANSES, which will establish endocrine disruptors by categories according to the level of evidence available (three categories: proven, presumed, suspected).</p>	<p>For what concerns identified EDs, there are many lists depending on whether the evaluation of the substances was performed according to different Regulations (REACH, the biocidal products Regulation and the plant protection products regulation). The</p>

<p>More than the ANSES lists, the lists drawn up jointly by the Belgian, Danish, French, Dutch, Spanish and Swedish authorities have the approval of most of the Member States. In the future, when it comes to identifying these substances, we suggest that you take into account the ANSES lists and these European lists</p> <p>Link to the lists : ED list The ED Lists Endocrine Disruptor List</p>	<p>Member States list I provides clarity here, however this list cannot be referenced directly in the legal texts because it is not an official EU document. It is proposed to reference such a list in the User Manual.</p> <p>For what concerns suspected EDs, also the actual list cannot be referenced as it is not a document with a legal validity. Also in this case it is proposed to add such a list in the User Manual.</p> <p>The ANSES list is under development and cannot be referenced.</p>
<p>Technical report, p. 60, section 5.7.3, criterion 6.3(a) Organotin compounds The list refers to substances in general. It has not to be mentioned that organotin compounds are used as a catalyst in the production of silicone polymers.</p> <p>We suggest modifying as follows: "Organotin compounds used as a catalysts in the production of silicone polymers"</p>	COMMENT ACCEPTED
<p>Nanosilver in menstrual cups</p> <p>Two French stakeholders would like to raise concerns on the use of nanosilver or microsilver in menstrual cups for their antibacterial properties, without any clinical study on the interaction with good bacteria of the vaginal flora. We propose to take this concern into account when verifying the relevance of criterion 6.3(a) Specified excluded substances" for menstrual cups.</p>	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED
<p>We support the exclusion of fragrances for the entire product category, in particular fragrances and ingredients of fragrances mixtures listed in Annex III of Regulation (EC) No. 1223/2009 on cosmetic products, due to the prolonged use of absorbent hygiene product in contact with skin and mucous membranes. This has already been recommended by French stakeholder ANSES in recent studies on menstrual products and baby diapers, as can be read in the links below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Menstrual hygiene products (link to the conclusion and report) - Baby diapers: a study at French level (link to the conclusion and report) and a restriction proposal at EU level within the framework of REACH. 	<p>COMMENTS ACCEPTED</p> <p>In the second technical report, fragrances are proposed to be excluded in all AHPs.</p>
<p>TR: 49 Criterion 6.3/6.4 we are against the use of fragrances and lotions for any type of product falling under this decision</p>	
<p>6.3 Denmark suggests excluding fragrances in all products. The restriction as referred to in 6.1 and 6.2 is not relevant, hence the fragrance is added in quantities below the limits which is valid in these points.</p> <p>Same for lotion – a not needed chemical which comes into contact with the baby skin.</p>	
<p>Fragrances without EU fragrance allergens as listed in the EU Cosmetic Regulation are proven to be safe and could be permitted by the EU Ecolabel AHP product.</p>	
<p>Sub-criterion 6.3(b) Fragrances Fragrances without EU fragrance allergens as listed in the EU Cosmetic Regulation are proven to be safe and could be permitted by the EU Ecolabel AHP product.</p>	
<p>Tr 1.0, p. 61, 6.3 (b) Fragrances Fragrances should be prohibited for all products. Due to the fact that incontinence products are not included into the product scope there is no reason to permit fragrances.</p>	
<p>Tr 1.0, p. 67 @ Should a tighter threshold limit be set for individual hazardous substances present in fragrances applied in feminine pads and panty-liners?</p> <p>We propose to exclude fragrances.</p>	
<p>Tr 1.0, p. 67 @ Should the use of fragrances not be permitted in the EU Ecolabel AHP product?</p> <p>Yes, we support to prohibit fragrances in AHP products.</p>	
<p>-criterion 6.3(b): Fragrances Major "We are in favor of a full ban of fragrances in this product group. Those substances have no essential function in this product group and a lot of perfumes contains contact allergenes which should be avoided in this product group.</p>	
<p>Exclusion of lotions</p> <p>We support the exclusion of lotions for the entire product category for the same reasons as the exclusion of fragrances.</p>	COMMENTS ACCEPTED

Tr 1.0, p. 61, 6.3 (c) Lotions lotions or not.	Lotions should also be banned for diapers. Parents should decide for themselves whether they use lotions or not.	In the second technical report, lotions are proposed to be excluded in all AHPs.
Tr 1.0, p. 61, 6.3 (c) Lotions The product and any component part thereof.	Please add:	
"We are in favor of a full ban of lotions. Lotions have no essential function in this product group and as they can contain contact allergenes (e.g. preservatives) they should be avoided in this product group.		
<p>Technical report v1.0</p> <p>-First proposal for criterion 6.3: specific restrictions</p> <p>-6.3.c) p61 Comment on lotions Given the central role diapers have on diapered area skin and the important skin has on the baby's health and well-being (infection risk, discomfort, pain, itch, irritation), ointments have demonstrated a clear functional and core benefit on diapers to help preserving the integrity of the baby skin.</p> <p>Baby bottom skin is covered by a diaper to absorb and retain urine and faeces, 24 hours a day and for approximatively 2.5 years. The baby skin in the diaper area is exposed to a warm and wet environment with presence of some irritants such as faeces which could lead to compromised skin.</p> <p>Bottom dermatitis is the most common skin conditions affecting infants and young children worldwide and every baby will experience a bout of dermatitis at some point. More than half of babies between 4 and 15 months of age develop the condition at least once in a two-month period, and it can prompt parents to seek medical attention. (Source: Setting the record Straight on Diaper Rash and Disposable Diapers, Jocelyn N et al, Clinical Paediatrics 2014).</p> <p>Diapers with a very low amount of pharmaceutical grade petrolatum-based ointment create a beneficial protective water-repellent layer and a long history of safe marketing use (over 20 years). This nearly invisible layer creates a barrier to prevent wetness and irritants such as digestive, proteolytic enzymes present in baby stool, to be in contact with baby skin. It has been proven than humid environment combined to proteolytic enzymes may damage integrity of baby bottom skin. (Source: Setting the record Straight on Diaper Rash and Disposable Diapers, Jocelyn N et al, Clinical Paediatrics 2014). In addition, elevation in skin pH, a risk factor for the development of disease (e.g., diaper dermatitis) can be increased when urea in the infant urine is converted to ammonium via enzymatic activity in the bacteria in stool and on skin. (Source: Etiologic Factors in Diaper Dermatitis: The Role of Urine). This is supported by recommendations and even prophylactic use of emollients by physicians and in hospitals (i.e., premature infants) to maintain or enhance skin barrier function. (Source: Recommendations from a European Roundtable Meeting on Best Practice Healthy Infant Skin Care: Beginning Bottom: at the Evidence-Based Care of Diaper Dermatitis). A clinical study involving over 60 children showed that using diapers with petrolatum-based ointment significantly reduced the severity of skin irritation in the gluteal, anal, and genital area compared with the control group. These data represent the demonstration that a petrolatum containing diaper could impact positively baby's skin condition. Source - "A disposable diaper which continuously administers a topical petrolatum formulation to the skin. It has been shown to reduce the severity of diaper rash significantly as compared to a conventional disposable diaper." Odio et al, Ped Derm 2000."</p> <p>A recent clinical study placed in 2021 compared a European diaper, with an ointment formulation on the topsheet (currently marketed in the US) to the same diaper without the ointment formulation. Results show that more infants using the ointment containing diaper were "rash free" and fewer infants experienced moderate-to-severe diaper rash (values of 1.5 or greater) when compared to the non-ointment containing diaper. Importantly, these data demonstrate that a diaper containing a small amount of such an ointment can significantly reduce the incidence and severity of diaper dermatitis to the baby wearing the product with is meaningful to worried parents and babies who suffer from the discomfort, pain and sleep disruptions from periodic diaper dermatitis episodes.</p> <p>We conclude that these recent data, confirm that our diaper which contains a formulation has been clinically demonstrated to reduce skin rash incidence and severity when worn by babies. A publication of these findings is currently under preparation.</p> <p>Petrolatum has a long history of safe use in pharmaceuticals and cosmetics. Petrolatum is not absorbed through intact or injured skin and is neither sensitizing nor irritating. Large amounts are essentially nontoxic even when ingested in liquid laxative preparations. Clinical experience</p>		<p>COMMENT REJECTED</p> <p>The possibility to allow the use of lotions has been considered, but it is not proposed in this second proposal due to the feedback from the EUEB members and the current practice under other ISO type I ecolabelling schemes (Nordic Swan and Blue Angel), that set a full exclusion of lotions. Stakeholders are invited to send a derogation request specifically for petrolatum-based lotions, if deemed necessary.</p>

has confirmed that petrolatum is safe in the OTC dosage range, commonly found under the name of Vaseline® on several EU markets. Petrolatum is used as a skin protectant and it is the primary treatment by paediatric dermatologists for many skin conditions.	
Specific restrictions on inks and dyes for TiO2 and menstrual cups We would like to make the following comments of this criterion: - We are not in favor of a derogation for the use of titanium dioxide in dyes because of the potential health risks associated with this substance and the lack of data on the essential or necessary nature of its use in hygiene products.	COMMENT REJECTED TiO2 has been reclassified as Carc. 2 only in powder form, and only via inhalation route. TiO2 does not occur as powder in a final AHP, and given the wide use of TiO2 as white pigment, a derogation was granted in criterion 5.1
There are no alternatives for TiO2 used as a pigment	COMMENT ACCEPTED TiO2 as white pigment was derogated in criterion 7.1
We recommend verifying the relevance of thresholds on inks and dyes for menstrual cups, and to consider the exclusion of these substances specifically for menstrual cups.	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED
One French stakeholder would like to raise attention on the use of dyes in the adhesive strip of the product and recommends requiring proof that there is no migration on skin/mucous membranes during actual use.	COMMENTS PARTIALLY ACCEPTED A new requirement was introduced for inks and dyes that the colorant used must have been approved as a food contact additive
Sub-criterion 6.3(d): Inks and dyes Minor There is a derogation on the prohibition of dying for materials that are not directly in contact with the skin and that have a specific function. It would be good to add some conditions to this derogation e.g. only if the dyes do not migrate	
We would like to understand if printed backsheet will be accepted as this is not clear from the exemption list.	COMMENTS CLARIFIED
Sub-criterion 6.3(d) Inks and dyes Will a printed backsheet be accepted? This is not clear from the exemption list.	Yes, backsheet may be dyed if it is to achieve a clear function
Sub-criterion 6.3(d): Inks and dyes Minor Why is there a derogation on the prohibition of dying for tampon strings? The vaginal mucosa is well vascularized, fragile, and super absorbant => potential great exposure	COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED The derogation is already present in current criteria in force, and it is in line with current practice in the Nordic Swan and Blue Angel labels. It has now been added that the colorant used must have been approved as a food contact additive
Sub-criterion 6.3(e) Plastic materials (b) Additives used in plastics in concentration above 0,10 % weight by weight shall not be classified with any of the below listed hazard statements, in accordance with the classification rules in Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council (1): - acutely toxic, categories 1 and 2 (H300, H310, H330, H304), Hazard class not relevant for diapers as a product. Classified as "May be fatal if swallowed and enters airways" / Aspiration hazard / Category 1	COMMENT REJECTED The list of hazard classes to be restricted is the same for all EU Ecolabel products. Stakeholders are invited to send a derogation request for specific substances, if deemed necessary.
Sub-criterion 6.3(e): Further restrictions applying to plastic material Minor Maybe other heavy metals are also relevant e.g. Ni?	COMMENT REJECTED A specific restriction for Nickel in plastic materials is not present in other ecolabels (Nordic Swan and Blue Angel), nor in other programmes checked (the EDANA Stewardship Programme for example). Without the indication of what the threshold should be, a restriction cannot be added.
TR version 1.0 (September 2021) - Section "6.3(f) Further restrictions applying to adhesives" We would like to know why this criterion is intended only for intentionally added substances and not for the whole product. We recommend the following analytical method developed by the French General Directorate for Competition, Consumer Affairs and Fraud Control (DGCCRF), to deepen the testing and verification methods for restrictions applying to adhesives: - The document "France - Analytical method - Comment n°5" in attachment.	COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED The document provided seems very relevant, although it is in French and cannot be fully understood. However it seems that it provides relevant test methods and related LoD and LoQ for different substances, not directly related to adhesives. This document was taken into account for sub-criterion 5.3.a, and will be probably added to the User Manual.

<p>We also recommend the following studies on menstrual products and baby diapers by French stakeholder ANSES to work on the threshold of the criterion, as they provide insight on skin sensitizers in textiles (including single-use baby diapers):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Menstrual hygiene products (link to the conclusion and report) - Baby diapers: a study at French level (link to the conclusion and report) and a restriction proposal at EU level within the framework of REACH. 	
<p>Technical report, p. 62, Section 6.3f Ambiguous phrasing It is stated that: "Colophony resins: Adhesives shall not contain more than 0.01% (weight by weight) colophony resin. Modified colophony derivatives that are not classified as sensitizers, e.g. rosin esters, are allowed;"</p> <p>What is to be referred to here, is to the substance Colophony. Not multiple substances as could be implied by resin or resins. It is proposed that the word resins and resin after "Colophony resins..." and "...colophony resin..." is removed. As the word resin or resins causes confusion. Secondly, removal of the word resin and resins brings the document in line with the wording in the RAL/Blue Angel documents. Proposed wording: Colophony: Adhesives shall not contain more than 0.01% (weight by weight) colophony. Modified colophony derivatives that are not classified as sensitizers, e.g. rosin esters, are allowed</p> <p>It is good see that Modified colophony derivatives that are not classified as sensitizers, e.g. rosin esters, are allowed: is included in the text. This will bring the JRC document in line with Nordic Swan.</p>	COMMENT ACCEPTED
<p>Technical report, p. 69-70 Section 5.7.3.7 6.3(g) – Superabsorbent polymers (SAPs) We would like to state the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assessment against the limits for monomer and soluble extracts are averages from repeated measures over a certain period rather than single measures. • Residual monomer of acrylic acid / Na-polyacrylate (CAS 79-10-7, 7446-81-3), <1000ppm, method: NWSP 210 • From technical point of view, we would appreciate to keep current criteria (1000ppm at maximum) for residual acrylic acid. 	
<p>Technical report, p. 69-70, Section 5.7.3.7 6.3(g) – Superabsorbent polymers (SAPs) AS highlighted in the „Points for discussion“ p73, : Acrylic Acid has in the past been evaluated by the EU Commission under Regulation 793/93/EEC and a risk assessment report has been published in 2002 (1). This EU risk assessment report covers (amongst other sources), the dermal exposure from residual AA monomer in SAP used in absorbent hygiene products and is based on data provided by the German Industrieverband für Körperpflege und Waschmittel (IKW) and EDANA. On top of this, the Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHP) Committee of EDANA has done an exposure-based risk assessment (EBRA), led by P&G, that reflects Baby exposure to AA under in-use conditions (2). Experimental measurements conducted by Evonik Stockhausen (December 2006) have also lead to the generation of exposure data reflecting several use conditions from realistic exposure to worst case scenarios. It should be noted that the exposure assessment contains several conservatisms and is based on AA only, while it is expected that under realistic conditions of use, the equilibrium AA/sodium acrylate is mainly on the acrylate side and that the toxicological property of importance (irritancy/corrosion) is lower for sodium acrylate than for AA. This exposure-based risk assessment (EBRA) concludes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From systemic and local dermal toxicological endpoints, residual AA in SAP does not present any risk to consumers • A residual monomer content of 1000 mg/kg in absorbent hygiene products is safe 	COMMENTS ACKNOWLEDGED
<p>In the definitions part it is said that release paper is considered as additional packaging. However, I understand that requirement 6.3(h) is planned to cover also release papers. This is quite confusing. There is an own requirement for packaging (8) and if release paper is considered as packaging, it should only fulfil the requirement on packaging.</p>	COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED The text of the criterion has been changed
<p>- Section "6.3(h) Silicone"</p> <p>Relevance of the criterion for menstrual cups</p> <p>We would like to propose differentiated thresholds for menstrual cups and absorbent hygiene products and keep the 100 ppm threshold for menstrual cups. One French stakeholder was indeed surprised by the increase of the threshold from 100 ppm to 800 ppm proposed in the technical report and would like to warn about the application of this criterion to menstrual cups, for which this new threshold may not be appropriate. However, we agree with the new threshold proposed (800 ppm) for the other products of the scope (absorbent hygiene products).</p>	COMMENT ACCEPTED The criterion for menstrual cups differs from the one for AHP.
<p>it is proposed to increase the limit of the cyclosiloxanes D4 and D5 to 800 ppm Major The report proposes that limits for D4, D5 and D6 are to be referenced to the silicone mixture. Given the level of these materials (as claimed by silicone suppliers) in the silicone raw materials forming part of the silicone mixture it will not be attainable to achieve this realistically, especially if the suggested limit of 800 ppm</p>	COMMENT ACCEPTED

<p>refers to the sum of D4, D5 and D6 content. A review of setting a limit is required and a separate subgroup to discuss this matter is already put together. A limit and exact reference (such as that this limit applies to the silicone mixture) should also be harmonised accross other requirements stated under the Blue Angel and Nordic Swan recommendations. Different limits in each of these recommendations creates the issue that a supplier of a release liner may only be able to claim conformance to one or more recommendations but will have to state that his product will ne meet the criteria for other specific recommenations. This may hinder business if requirements need to be met following all or some of these recommendations. A leading Europe-wide recommendation applicable for business in all member states and beyond will be very beneficial. If the limit for each cyclosiloxane is set at 800 ppm separately the aim to reduce the content of these materials may be realistically achievable. This should be the recommendation for a new Ecolabel criteria. As already stated in the draft report (quote: It shall be noted that almost all cyclics are being removed in a final distillation step done by the silicone suppliers. As a matter of fact, a small content of residual cyclics remain in the silicone raw materials for technical/chemical reasons, which cannot be reduced further without disproportional technical effort) realistically it is not possible to reduced cylics amounts further without disproportional technical effort. Efforts that would be required are significantly prolonged distillation times, increased vacuum during distillation (is this technically possible?) and perhaps other measures. This would results in reduced production capabilities and cause significant price increases that will need to be passed on to the final consumer.</p>	<p>It was clarified in the criterion text that the limit of 800 ppm is for each of the cyclosiloxanes, separately.</p>
<p>Concerning criterion 6.3h to me the words of the proposal are not clear, if each chemical D4, D5 and D6 can be present up to 800 ppm or if the sum of D4 + D5 + D6 has to be less than 800 ppm.</p>	
<p>6.3 (h) silicone</p> <p>Technical Report, page 63 "with information on the method used to manufacture the silicone": what does this exactly mean? what is here the "method"?</p>	<p>COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED</p> <p>The wording in the assessment and verification was changed to process, as it is the information on the process used to manufacture the silicone (and the step(s) used to minimise the presence of the cyclosiloxanes) that must be sent to the competent body.</p>
<p>Technical report, p. 63 section 5.7.3. Assessment and Verification The SDS shall specify the residual monomers contained in the product and the quantities thereof. The following is stated: "The SDS shall specify the residual monomers contained in the product and the quantities thereof."</p> <p>The specification of concentration limits is regulated in CLP. Residual monomers below 0,1% have not to be specified in the SDS. Without appropriate disclosure agreements, providing this data could infringe on confidentiality.</p>	<p>COMMENT CLARIFIED</p> <p>As the limit for residual monomers is 1000 ppm, SDSs may be able to provide the information needed. In other cases, the applicant can proof compliance with the requirement by performing laboratory tests</p>
<p>Please write the assessment and verification part right under each subcriterion. It is very difficult to find the right verification needed as it written now.</p>	<p>COMMENT REJECTED</p> <p>In the interest of keeping the test short, and given the similarities in terms of assessment and verification of the different requirements, it is proposed to keep the A&V merged. Please note that it will be explained separately in the User Manual</p>
<p>TR: 50 Criterion 6.5 We are in favour of the increase</p>	
<p>It is very confusing to have this ban in this subcriterion. It should have its own subcriterion.</p>	<p>COMMENTS IMPOSSIBLE TO TRACK</p>

CRITERION 7: Material efficiency in the manufacturing (please note this is now criterion 6)

No comments were received for this criterion.

CRITERION 8: Packaging

Comments received in AHWG1/written form	JRC Dir. B response
<p>Technical report version 1.0 (September 2021)</p> <p>- Section "8: Packaging"</p> <p>- Page 74-79</p> <p>Information to be displayed on packaging</p> <p>We generally support the new proposed criteria and would like to add the following comments on information to be displayed:</p> <p>- We are in favor of labeling the composition of products on their primary packaging. We would like to raise attention on the commitments made in this regard by companies in the French baby diaper market (see press releases of 23 January 2019 and 8 February 2019 following the publication of the notice of French stakeholder ANSES on the safety of baby diapers and September 6th, 2019 report, as well as the results of the subsequent investigations by the French General Directorate for Competition, Consumer Affairs and Fraud Control (DGCCRF) of 2019/early 2020 and late 2020), it would be coherent to require the display of the composition of all products within the scope of the EU Ecolabel on their primary packaging.</p>	<p>COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED</p> <p>In the TR1 it was proposed to remove the requirement of displaying the information of the product on the primary packaging while in TR2, it is proposed to maintain the content of criterion 1, requiring the applicant to submit information about the total weight of each product and of each component within the product. However, it is proposed to move it to the general assessment and verification text.</p>
<p>We recommend adding an obligation to mention the risk of Toxic shock syndrome (TSS) on the packaging of internal intimate protection products, as is already done for tampons but not for menstrual cups where it depends on the manufacturers.</p>	<p>COMMENTS ACKNOWLEDGED</p> <p>These comments will be taken into account in the criteria for menstrual cups.</p>
<p>Menstrual cups are usually delivered in a factory sealed bag to ensure there is no contact with the primary packaging. We would like to ask if this secondary packaging (heat-sealed plastic) also needs to be marked, and if so what type of information it should contain.</p>	
<p>Technical report version 1.0 (September 2021)</p> <p>- Section "8: Packaging"</p> <p>- Page 74-79</p> <p>Migration of substances from packaging to the product</p> <p>We would like to raise attention on the risk of migration from dyes, adhesive, inks or other substances used in the packaging to the product itself, which would then come in contact with skin and mucous membranes – this point could be clarified in criterion 8.</p>	<p>COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED</p>
<p>Technical report version 1.0 (September 2021)</p> <p>- Section "8: Packaging"</p> <p>- Page 74-79</p> <p>Use of biobased or recycled materials in packaging</p> <p>A stakeholder would like to raise concerns on adding a requirement on the use of recycled fibers in the packaging (mainly primary packaging, mostly made of plastic), as it seems difficult to do so under conditions that are appropriate to the specificities of these products and of this market, due to the importance of traceability and safety requirements of products for instance.</p>	<p>COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED</p>
<p>Additionally, we fully disagree with the addition of a requirement on a content of biobased material in the primary/secondary/additional packaging, as it is not proven that a biobased plastic is environmentally better than plastic from fossil sources, thus creating a risk of greenwashing.</p>	<p>COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED</p>
<p>Technical report, p. ff. 74, Section 5.9 Criterion 8 Packaging The following is stated: "The primary packaging must contain information on the packaging and product composition specifying the weight of the packaging and product and of each component as requested in criterion 1."</p> <p>However, the newly proposed criterion 1: product description does not require the information on weight of product to be displayed in the packaging. The sentence must be adapted to the new requirements.</p>	<p>COMMENT ACCEPTED</p> <p>Yes, in TR1 it was proposed to remove the requirement of displaying the information of the product on the primary packaging while in TR2, it is proposed to maintain the content of criterion 1, requiring the applicant to submit information about</p>

Such detailed information should not be printed on the packaging, but should be available online.	the total weight of each product and of each component within the product. However, it is proposed to move it to the general assessment and verification text.
<p>Technical report, p. ff. 74, Section 5.9 Criterion 8 Packaging "Additional packaging":</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We suggest "additional packaging" needs to be defined We suggest to stick with the marking requirements of the Single Use Plastics Directive (EU 2019/904), specified to be added to the primary and secondary packaging, not to any additional packaging In case additional packaging refers to the release paper or film, this may pose an issue as silicone paper/film is currently not recyclable In all EU Member States, except for France, the wrapper is an integral part of the product. Wrappers are part of the product usage experience and used for disposal. Absence of wrappers would lead to compensating behavior, e.g. use of toilet paper for disposal, which has been shown to be more negative than reuse the wrapper. 	COMMENT ACCEPTED This has been addressed in criterion 8.
<p>Technical report, p. ff. 74, Section 5.9 Criterion 8 Packaging The presence of recycled materials and the definition of a minimum level should never compromise with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the processability of the material, the purity of the packaging, the performance and robustness of the packaging as it is designed for the current supply reality, <p>For these reasons, a % should not be mandated but rather a motivation to integrate recycled materials</p> <p>Supporting information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Packaging purity: We operate in a category with stringent quality and hygiene requirements as disposable diapers are designed for prolonged and direct contact with baby skin. Recycled materials may contain some impurities linked (i) to its origins (household PCR may have contained all kinds of materials from foods to chemicals) and (ii) to the recycling process. There is a risk of contamination of AHP product by impurities from packaging as some contaminants migrate. The highest the % of recycled material is, the highest the presence of impurity might be. Good quality materials exist today but in limited quantities to supply the market. Therefore, mandating recycled materials of good quality may lead to few products able to apply. Secondary packaging: recycled materials need to be combined with virgin to ensure robustness of the packaging (eg: transportation, protection of AHP, etc.). 100% of recycled materials will not be achievable. 	COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED This has been addressed in criterion 8.
<p>Technical report, p. ff. 74, Section 5.9 Criterion 8 Packaging Packaging criteria should be opened to renewable and mass balance allocated materials being paper / plastic as a solution to decrease fossils-based materials consumption (see LCA p. 11).</p> <p>The criterion (p. 74) should be rewritten as follows: "Primary packaging, secondary, and additional packaging shall include x % of recycled, renewable or mass balance allocated content in their composition, and it must be recyclable.</p>	COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED This has been addressed in criterion 8.
<p>Technical report, p. ff. 74, Section 5.9 Criterion 8 Packaging The following is stated: "Primary packaging, secondary, and additional packaging shall include x % of recycled content in their composition, and it must be recyclable."</p> <p>It seems better to separate the requirement for recycled content from the requirement for recyclability to avoid confusion.</p> <p>The degree of recyclability should be defined. Without a clear classification, this requirement on recyclability may be impossible to implement. Recyclability depends on the availability of technologies in the market.</p>	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED This has been addressed in criterion 8.
<p>Technical report, p. ff. 74, Section 5.9 Criterion 8 Packaging The following is stated: "The primary packaging must contain information on the packaging and product composition specifying the weight of the packaging and product and of each component as requested in criterion 1." It must be noted that there is always a limited space on packaging to provide both branding information as well as other necessary information.</p>	COMMENT ACCEPTED This has been addressed in criterion 8. Yes, in TR1 it was proposed to remove the requirement of displaying the information of the product on the primary

<p><i>It should be avoided to print detailed product information on the packaging that could be subject to changes. It should rather be demanded to have the information available on website since the information as such is not a problem to disclose. To change the design of printing on pack can instead be a significant problem.</i></p>	<p>packaging while in TR2, it is proposed to maintain the content of criterion 1, requiring the applicant to submit information about the total weight of each product and of each component within the product. However, it is proposed to move it to the general assessment and verification text.</p>
<p><i>Technical report, p. ff. 74, Section 5.9 Criterion 8 Packaging The presence of recycled materials and the definition of a minimum level should never compromise with</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Processability of the packaging</i> <i>• the purity of the packaging,</i> <i>• the performance and robustness of the packaging</i> <i>• material supply</i> <p><i>For these reasons, a stepwise approach to increase the content of recycled materials from lower levels will motivate the integration of such materials</i></p> <p><i>Supporting information:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Packaging purity: We operate in a category with stringent quality and hygiene requirements. Recycled materials may contain some impurities linked to its origins and to the recycling process. As some contaminants migrate there is a risk of contamination of AHP product.</i> <i>• Secondary packaging: recycled materials need to be combined with virgin to ensure robustness of the packaging (eg: transportation, protection of AHP, etc.). 100% of recycled materials will not be achievable, but a combination of recycled content and certified wood fiber source, up to the producer's discretion, is a good way to have packaging with a good environmental profile.</i> 	<p>COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED This has been addressed in criterion 8.</p>
<p><i>Technical report, p. ff. 74, Section 5.9 Criterion 8 Packaging Packaging criteria should be opened to renewable and mass-balanced materials as a solution to decrease virgin fossils-based materials consumption (see LCA p. 11).</i></p>	<p>COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED</p>
<p><i>Technical report, p. ff. 74, Section 5.9 Criterion 8 Packaging</i></p> <p><i>The criterion (p. 74) should be rewritten as follows: "Primary packaging, secondary, and additional packaging shall include x % of recycled, renewable or mass balanced content in their composition, and it must be designed for recycling."</i></p> <p><i>Recyclability is not always the case since infrastructure is not present in all markets, but "designed for recyclability" is possible to require.</i></p>	<p>COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED This has been addressed in criterion 8.</p>
<p><i>Technical report, p. ff. 74, Section 5.9 Criterion 8 Packaging Assessment method for recyclability should be specified. The recyclability can only be considered as a technical property since the recyclability as such also demands the presence of an infrastructure for recycling of materials.</i></p>	<p>COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED</p>
<p><i>TR: 74 Criterion 8 this info on the primary packaging does not serve the consumer</i></p>	<p>COMMENT ACCEPTED</p>
<p><i>8 we suggest taking out the part of controlling the mandatory labelling on products. This is not the task of the CB. We welcome a mandatory percentage of recycled content plastic. The percentage of 30 is reached in several Nordic Swan licenses, but a higher percentage could be considered.</i></p>	<p>COMMENT ACCEPTED</p>
<p><i>"Primary packaging, secondary, and additional packaging shall include x % of recycled content in their composition, and it must be recyclable."</i></p> <p><i>We welcome the inclusion of a recyclability criteria for EU Ecolabel for Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHPs).</i></p> <p><i>We suggest complementing these criteria with precise Design for Recycling criteria for these types of plastic packaging, to provide for a harmonised definition of recyclability for such products.</i></p> <p><i>Rationale: Design for Recycling criteria will allow for a uniform interpretation of the term "recyclable" as regards AHPs plastic packaging. For reference, RecyClass Guidelines provide for criteria that enhance the recyclability of packaging:</i></p> <p><i>https://recyclclass.eu/recyclclass/design-for-recycling-guidelines/</i></p> <p><i>Specifically for PE flexible films: https://recyclclass.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Guideline-PE-films-coloured-06.2021.pdf</i></p>	<p>COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED</p>

<p>Recyclability verification</p> <p>Given the inclusion of a recyclability criteria, rules on the assessment of such recyclability should be added for AHPs plastic packaging.</p> <p>Rationale: a clear verification process through a third-party will be essential to create a level playing field between stakeholders.</p> <p>RecyClass has developed a packaging recyclability certification which certifies plastics packaging through accredited and independent Certification Bodies auditing the RecyClass tool analysis results. This system can be used as a model in the case of the EU Ecolabel AHPs group.</p> <p>For more information: https://recyclclass.eu/recyclclass/recyclability-product-certification/</p>	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED
<p>Recycled content measurement</p> <p>"Primary packaging, secondary, and additional packaging shall include x % of recycled content in their composition, and it must be recyclable."</p> <p>We welcome the inclusion of recycled content as a criterion for EU Ecolabel for AHPs.</p> <p>We believe that a criterion on the measurement of recycled content should be included. This will ensure an accurate and harmonised evaluation of recycled content in AHPs plastic packaging.</p> <p>Rationale: recycled content measurement is essential to demonstrate that the criteria is fulfilled.</p> <p>In this regard, RecyClass has developed a Certification Audit Scheme to evaluate and calculate the recycled content used in plastics products. It assesses the traceability of recycled plastics material throughout the value chain and verifies the origin of the pre- and post-consumer material in product claims, to ensure they are accurate.</p> <p>For more information: https://recyclclass.eu/recycled-content/</p>	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED
<p>Packaging recyclability threshold</p> <p>Table 5. Primary packaging comparison between labels</p> <p>We suggest following the example of the Blue Angel label concerning recyclability threshold for plastic packaging, meaning that the recyclability of the plastic packaging must be at least 95%.</p> <p>Rationale: this threshold follows the recyclability criteria of RecyClass, which ensure a full compatibility with current recycling streams.</p>	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED
<p>PACKAGING</p> <p>p. 74 The primary packaging of feminine care products such as sanitary towels or pads and tampons must comply with the marking requirements according to the Article 7 of Directive (EU) 2019/904 of the EU Parliament and the Council of 5 June 2019 on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment whose harmonised marking specifications must follow the rules laid down by Annex I of the Commission Implementing Regulation, of 17 December 2020 (Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/2151 of 17 December 2020 laying down rules on harmonised marking specifications on single-use plastic products listed in Part D of the Annex to Directive (EU) 2019/904 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment).</p> <p>The additional packaging must include the marking specifications also in the case of sanitary towels or pads. All mentions of mandatory requirements are superfluous. Must be removed from the criterion.</p>	COMMENT ACCEPTED
<p>TR 1.0</p> <p>Criterion 8</p> <p>PACKAGING</p> <p>p. 74 Primary packaging, secondary, and additional packaging shall include x % of recycled content in their composition, and it must be recyclable. If we consider plastic recycled content:</p> <p>According to our current state of knowledge, the requirement for % of recycled content in the packaging should not be added, at least for primary packaging:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the traceability of recycled plastic material is deemed not to be sufficiently reliable - the availability of reliable material in line of market expectations, is not sufficient - 'food contact' requirement is not an option: the requirement is excessive, not adapted to the sanitary products; moreover the risk is to divert the available volumes from their target markets (food). 	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED
<p>TR 1.0</p> <p>Criterion 8</p> <p>PACKAGING</p>	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED

<p>p. 74 Primary packaging, secondary, and additional packaging shall include x % of recycled content in their composition, and it must be recyclable. Assessment and verification How should be defined the "recyclability" of the packaging material? following which standard(s)?</p>	
<p>The communication on the packaging should be mentioned in this criterion. A picture of cotton or a marketing mention of cotton must be forbidden if the product is not composed by at least 80% of cotton. The consumer may be misled and may think that the product is composed by 100% cotton.</p>	COMMENT ACCEPTED
<p>Technical report v1.0 -Proposed Criterion 8: packaging -p73, " Primary packaging, secondary, and additional packaging shall include x % of recycled content in their composition, and it must be recyclable. " Comment on packaging criterion</p> <p>We suggest a rewriting of the criterion as "Primary packaging, secondary, and additional packaging shall include x % of recycled or renewable content in their composition, and it must be recyclable</p> <p>The introduction of recycled materials into the packaging in replacement of virgin fossil is going into the right direction. EU Ecolabel should encourage the transition to <u>good quality recycled</u> materials that does not compromise with the purity of the packaging, without mandating a specific %. By default, packaging independent of recycled content must comply with REACH.</p> <p>Clear guidelines on the supporting document to prove the presence of recycled content should be added in the criteria. The presence of recycled materials in a plastic packaging can be demonstrated by the standard ISO EN 14021 for instance.</p> <p>Packaging criteria should be opened to <u>renewable materials</u> as interesting alternative to reduce packaging dependency to finite resources and to help lowering impact on some environmental indicators' vs fossil virgin plastic:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Paper bag for primary pack has been introduced few months ago (early 2021) in the AHP category.</u> This new packaging offers an interesting environmental benefit on some indicator's vs plastic. Indeed, paper has a lower impact in terms of (i) climate change, (ii) dependency to fossil resources and (iii) recyclability profile as paper recycling stream is widely available across Europe and accessible to most of the consumers. It delivers on circular economy. 2. <u>Bio sourced plastic are providing interesting solution to decrease dependency to finite resources</u> and to provide better environmental profile when it comes to climate indicator vs conventional plastic. This has been confirmed by the <i>UN Environment Program „Single-use plastic bags and their alternatives – Recommendation from LCAs“</i>. For inspiration, some external tests exist to confirm presence of bio sourced materials such as TUV „contain Bioplastic“ certification. <p>Lastly, the recyclable criteria should be applicable based on technical test and should not be associated to a % that would not be meaningful for consumers to act on it. Indeed, consumers are looking to know if a packaging in its totality IS or IS NOT recyclable. Having a partially recyclable packaging will make it difficult to interpret and may drive confusion on how it should be disposed.</p>	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED
<p>Tr 1.0, p. 80 @ Should product and packaging composition be shown on the primary packaging? Yes, we think that is an important fact for some consumers.</p>	<p>COMMENT REJECTED</p> <p>In TR1 it was proposed to remove the requirement of displaying the information of the product on the primary packaging while in TR2, it is proposed to maintain the content of criterion 1, requiring the applicant to submit information about the total weight of each product and of each component within the</p>

	product. However, it is proposed to move it to the general assessment and verification text.
Tr 1.0, p. 80 @ Which % of recycled plastic/cardboard should be set in the primary/secondary/additional packaging? We suggest to have 80% (weight %) for packaging made from plastic (recycled plastic) or paper (recycled paper). For transport packaging it should be used re-usable packaging.	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED
Tr 1.0, p. 80 @ Should there be a requirement on content of bio-material in the primary/secondary/additional packaging, similar to Nordic Swan and Blue Angel? Yes, we support this from the point of harmonization.	COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED
The primary packaging of feminine care products such as sanitary towels or pads and tampons must comply with the marking requirements according to the Article 7 of Directive (EU) 2019/904 of the EU Parliament and the Council of 5 June 2019 on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment[48] whose harmonised marking specifications must follow the rules laid down by Annex I of the Commission Implementing Regulation, of 17 December 2020 (Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/2151 of 17 December 2020 laying down rules on harmonised marking specifications on single-use plastic products listed in Part D of the Annex to Directive (EU) 2019/904 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment)[49]. Major As this is legislation all female care products should fulfill this criterion, so it shouldn't be mentioned in the EU Ecolabel criteria	COMMENT ACCEPTED
Primary packaging, secondary, and additional packaging shall include x % of recycled content in their composition, and it must be recyclable. Major We are in favor of adding a requirement of a certain % of recycled content. As the EU Ecolabel has to play a role in the circular economy it is probably better to ask only for % of recycled content in order to encourage the use of secondary materials and not and not primary materials even if they are of renewable origin	COMMENT ACCEPTED
The primary packaging must contain information on the packaging and product composition specifying the weight of the packaging and product and of each component as requested in criterion 1. Major There is no need to have as detailed information on the packaging as the information submitted to the CB. It should be enough to declare the different type and shares of the plastic and other materials (but not on the component level).	COMMENT ACCEPTED
The applicant shall provide a sample of the primary packaging by submitting either a sample itself or a primary packaging photo (where information requested appears clearly). Major "This should be rephrased to be as in the next criterion ""The applicant shall provide a high resolution image of the primary packaging (where information regarding xxxx appear clearly).""	COMMENT ACCEPTED Addressed in criterion 8.

CRITERION 9: Guidance on the packaging and product disposal (new criterion title: Guidance on the disposal of the product and of the packaging)

Comments received in AHWG1/written form	JRC Dir. B response
<p>Technical report, p. 80, Section 5.10 Guidance on product disposal The following is stated: "... that the primary packaging and additional packaging should be disposed of within the recyclable waste."</p> <p>In the rationale it is explained that "more precise indications are not possible at this stage given the variation in product used as well as in waste management systems across MSs." The packaging of absorbent hygiene products is generally designed for several Member State markets. Not all MSs offer recyclable waste solutions for packaging. Therefore, an indication that the packaging should be disposed of in the recyclable waste is likely to mislead and confuse consumers in those Member States.</p> <p>Technical report, p. ff. 90, Section 5.10 Criterion 9 Product disposal The suggested criteria that it should be visualized on pack that the primary and additional packaging should be disposed of within the recyclable waste should be avoided. The recyclability of these components cannot be guaranteed on all markets, depending on infrastructure status, and hence a printed information can be invalid and cause unnecessary confusion.</p>	<p>COMMENTS ACCEPTED Please refer to new proposal for criterion 9 (section 5.11).</p>
<p>TR: 80 Criterion 9 Disposal information should be put on the primary packaging</p>	<p>COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED</p>
<p>TR 1.0 Criterion 9 GUIDANCE ON THE PACKAGING AND PRODUCT DISPOSAL p. 80 The primary packaging must contain information on the guidance of the primary packaging, the additional packaging and the product disposal. The following information shall be written or indicated through visual symbols on the primary packaging: — that the primary packaging, the additional packaging and the hygiene used product must not be flushed into toilets, and —that the hygiene used products should be disposed of within the household waste. — that the primary packaging and additional packaging should be disposed of within the recyclable waste. Wording confusion: both disposal and sorting instructions are mixed. - The product must not be flushed in the toilets (therefore a picto) Additional disposal instructions for primary & additional packaging are linked to national requirements.</p> <p>Verification should be made for disposal household waste: are the requirements fully compatible with national Extended Product Responsibility (EPR) – in all European countries?</p>	<p>COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED Please refer to new proposal for criterion 9 (section 5.11). EPR is out of the scope of the EU Ecolabel regulation.</p>
<p>The information about the product disposal must be clearly visible for the consumer. We propose that this information must be next to the product composition.</p>	<p>COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED Please refer to new proposal for criterion 9 (section 5.11).</p>
<p>Technical report v1.0 -Proposed CRITERION 9: Guidance on the product disposal - p 80 " - that the primary packaging and additional packaging should be disposed of within the recyclable waste. " Comment on packaging/ labelling criterion Background provided by JRC: Finally, a third sentence is proposed to indicate that the primary packaging (which is normally made out of cardboard or plastic) should be disposed of within the recyclable waste. More precise indications are not possible at this stage given the variation in product used as well as in waste management systems across MSs.</p> <p>We would consider the instruction for disposal "in recyclable waste" as misleading in member states without respective recycling schemes and thus vote for this labelling instruction to be VOLUNTARY.</p>	<p>COMMENT ACCEPTED Please refer to new proposal for criterion 9 (section 5.11).</p>

CRITERION 10: Fitness for use and quality of the product

Comments received in AHWG1/written form	JRC Dir. B response
<p>Technical report version 1.0 (September 2021)</p> <p>- Section "10: Fitness for use and quality of the product"</p> <p>- Page 83-88</p> <p>Addition of testing requirements</p> <p>We generally support the proposed evolutions. However, we wish to make the following comments:</p> <p>- We recommend the addition of requirements for biocompatibility testing (especially for menstrual cups) and for the content of aerobic microorganisms in tampons.</p>	<p>COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED</p> <p>Biocompatibility testing will be included in criterion on fitness for use for reusable menstrual cups.</p> <p>Further investigation concerning the content of aerobic microorganisms in tampons is included in the rationale for the proposal of the criterion text. Find the new proposed criterion text in section 5.12 of TR2.</p>
<p>Technical report v1.0</p> <p>Proposed CRITERION 10</p> <p>Fitness for use and quality of the product</p> <p>"The addition of a requirement for tampons on aerobic microorganism content in EU Ecolabelled tampons should therefore be discussed."</p> <p>pg 87</p> <p>Comment on tampon test criterion under discussion:</p> <p>"Specification on aerobic microorganism content in tampons"</p> <p>As there is no standard or recommended test method and the fact is accepted that "The low water activity value of these products and their raw materials will therefore mitigate the risk of microbial growth and survival. In addition, manufacturers' adherence to Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), use of high quality materials and the highly-automated manufacturing process under which these products are produced minimise the possibility of microbial contamination during production. They also comply with any local regulatory requirements where relevant when evaluating the potential presence of any microbial growth in feminine care products and their raw materials",</p> <p>We recommend to not further proceed the discussion of the addition of such a requirement to the criterion for tampons.</p>	<p>COMMENT ACCEPTED</p> <p>Further investigation concerning the content of aerobic microorganisms in tampons is included in the rationale for the proposal of the criterion text. Find the new proposed criterion text in section 5.12 of TR2.</p>
<p>We do not agree with the proposition to increase the recommended number of testers from 30 to 100 and would like to point out that this would increase costs and delays for manufacturers, without giving any additional guarantee or benefit for consumers.</p>	<p>COMMENT ACCEPTED</p> <p>Find the new proposed criterion text in section 5.12 of TR2.</p>
<p>Pag 8- ou cinq à dix ans Major "Les fabricants doivent prouver la stabilité du produit pendant toute la durée d'utilisation pour la coupe menstruelle.</p> <p>L'allégation 5 ou 10 ans doit être prouvée par une étude stabilité au stockage et à l'utilisation comme les dispositifs médicaux invasifs selon le règlement européen 2017/ 745 ou autre réglementation internationale: FDA, Santé Canada..."</p>	<p>COMMENT ACCEPTED</p> <p>Included in the criterion on fitness for use for reusable menstrual cups.</p>
<p>TR 1.0</p> <p>Criterion 10</p> <p>FITNESS FOR USE AND QUALITY OF THE PRODUCT</p> <p>Assessment & verification</p> <p>Additional guidelines for user tests.</p> <p>p. 85 The recommended number of testers shall be at least 100 (for products that are not specifically designed for one gender).</p> <p>There is no rationale supporting the move from 30 to 100 tests.</p> <p>This increase will result in unnecessary extra costs and unacceptable delays, forcing companies to outsource/externalise routine tests.</p> <p>There is no benefit for this increase, moreover statistically irrelevant.</p> <p>Please refer to Nordic Ecolabel criterion Q39 – Performance, which seems to be efficient and sufficient.</p>	<p>COMMENT ACCEPTED</p> <p>Find the new proposed criterion text in section 5.12 of TR2.</p>

CRITERION 11: Corporate Social Responsibility with regard to Labour Aspects (previously Social aspects)

Comments received in AHWG1/written form	JRC Dir. B response
<p>Technical report, p. ff. 90, Section 5.12 Criterion 11 Social aspects By default requesting 3rd party auditing of the manufacturing site is not the best measure. It is also not in line with the OECD guidelines laid out in their due diligence guidance for responsible business conduct. We are more in favor of a risk based approach, and not taking only the manufacturing site of final product into consideration, but also the producer of input material.</p> <p>When the company owns and manage the sites producing the final products, there is a total operations control, transparency and access to all kinds of information.</p>	<p>COMMENT REJECTED</p> <p>Please, refer to the proposed criterion text in section 5.13 of TR2.</p>
<p>Technical report, p. ff. 90, Section 5.12 Criterion 11 Social aspects From suggested criteria: <i>"The third-party site audit shall be carried out by private auditors qualified to assess the compliance of the AHP industry supply chain with social standards or codes of conduct or, in countries where the ILO Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No 81) has been ratified and ILO supervision indicates that the national labour inspection system is effective⁵⁴ and where the scope of the inspection systems covers the areas listed above, by labour inspector(s) appointed by a national authority."</i></p> <p>Suggestion that also ISO certifications should be accepted - such as ISO 45001, the older 18001 or OHSAS.</p>	<p>COMMENT REJECTED</p> <p>All the cited certifications refer to Health and Safety in the work place. Please, refer to the proposed criterion text in section 5.13 of TR2.</p>
<p>Technical report, p. ff. 91, Section 5.12 Criterion 11 Social aspects From: Rationale behind the proposed 'assessment and verification': <i>"Applicant provides SMETA - Sedex members ethical trade audit or Code of conduct (public declaration), also from his suppliers. Not much costs or burden with fulfilling the criterion. Production site visit of applicant during assessment process."</i> Comment: <i>Not clear - can the applicant either present a SMETA audit report or a Code of Conduct document? As a Sedex member with all sites registered in Sedex, information can be shared through this channel. If a company is an EcoVadis member the EcoVadis assessment of the company can also be shared.</i></p>	<p>COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED</p> <p>SMETA (Sedex's social auditing methodology) could be used to fulfil this criterion. However this would have to be evaluated by the correspondent CB when application is submitted. EcoVadis is provider of business sustainability ratings which may not be appropriate to fulfil this criterion. Please, refer to the proposed criterion text in section 5.13 of TR2.</p>
<p>TR 1.0 Criterion 11 SOCIAL ASPECTS CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY WITH REGARD TO LABOUR ASPECTS Assessment & verification p. 91</p> <p><i>The third-party site audit shall be carried out by private auditors qualified to assess the compliance of the AHP industry supply chain with social standards or codes of conduct or, in countries where the ILO Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No 81) has been ratified and ILO supervision indicates that the national labour inspection system is effective⁵⁴ and where the scope of the inspection systems covers the areas listed above, by labour inspector(s) appointed by a national authority.</i></p> <p>Question raised by manufacturers: Would the "Label Engagé RSE, AFAQ 26000" be considered as compliant? https://certification.afnor.org/en/sustainable-development-csr/corporate-social-responsibility-commitment-label</p>	<p>COMMENT ACCEPTED</p> <p>If the cited label is a Corporate Social Responsibility Commitment Label it could. However this would have to be evaluated by the correspondent CB when application is submitted. Please, refer to the proposed criterion text in section 5.13 of TR2.</p>

<p>Tr 1.0, p. 90</p> <p><i>The final assembly production site of diapers is mostly in Europe. Therefore, it does not make sense to include social criteria. Normally, all suggested social criteria should be regulated by national law of the European countries. From our perspective, it is not goal-oriented for European companies.</i></p> <p><i>What are the final production sites of other products for example menstrual cups? Maybe for these (other) product groups it makes sense to address social criteria?</i></p>	<p>COMMENT PARTIALLY ACCEPTED</p> <p>Please, refer to the proposed criterion text in section 5.13 of TR2.</p>
<p>Tr 1.0, p. 92</p> <p><i>@ Should the criterion verification refer to the final Absorbent Hygiene Product assembly (manufacturing site)? For the product group diapers it does not make sense to refer to the final assembly site because these companies are mostly located in Europe.</i></p>	<p>COMMENT REJECTED</p>
<p>Tr 1.0, p. 92</p> <p><i>@ Should the criterion welcome a non-exhaustive list of acceptable proofs (Sustainability reports, Corporate policies, ISO-certificates) as well?</i></p> <p><i>No. the acceptable proofs should be reliable. From our perspective a sustainable report or corporate policy is not an acceptable proof. Certificates, audits etc. are reliable proofs.</i></p>	<p>COMMENT ACCEPTED</p>
<p>Pag 91- or the cup the menstrual cup, it is necessary to add to the points of discussion to validate the quality of the product:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Add stability tests of the menstrual cup to storage and use over the total shelf life of the product - Add the validation of cleaning and disinfection of the menstrual cup. - Add chemical characterization tests according to ISO 10993-13 standards: ISO 10993-17 and ISO 10993-18 - Add microbiological tests for the development of <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> in the menstrual cup to determine the time of use and prevent toxic shock syndrome 	<p>COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED</p> <p>This comment will be taken into account in the criteria for Reusable Menstrual Cups</p>
<p><i>Is this requirement relevant at all in this product group? Perhaps it could be rephrased to saying "In case of suspicion of deviation from ILO principles a third-party site audit shall be carried out..." in other cases it should be enough with</i></p> <p><i>Sustainability reports, Corporate policies, ISO-certificates and so on</i></p>	<p>COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED</p>
<p><i>The audit process shall include consultation with external stakeholders in local areas around sites, including trade unions, community organisations, NGOs and labour experts. The applicant shall publish the aggregated results and key findings from the audit online in order to provide evidence of their supplier's performance to interested consumers. Major This is too complex and strict requirement. We are working only with European AHP factories where most of the criterion content is regulated by the law.</i></p>	<p>COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED</p>
<p><i>Should the criterion verification refer to the final Absorbent Hygiene Product assembly (manufacturing site)? Major Yes, it is enough</i></p>	<p>COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED</p>

CRITERION 12: Information appearing on the EU Ecolabel

No comments were received for this criterion.