

The Product Label Criteria Development and Revision Protocol

1. Introduction

The idea behind the VinylPlus® Product Label is that it should always follow the latest science around responsible sourcing and sustainable development, integrate the latest regulatory framework, embody the achievements and targets of the VinylPlus programme and serve the VinylPlus partner community as a learning scheme to showcase and constantly improve the sustainability performance. VinylPlus is therefore determined to lift the performance level in each revision and ask label applicants to reach a higher credit point score.

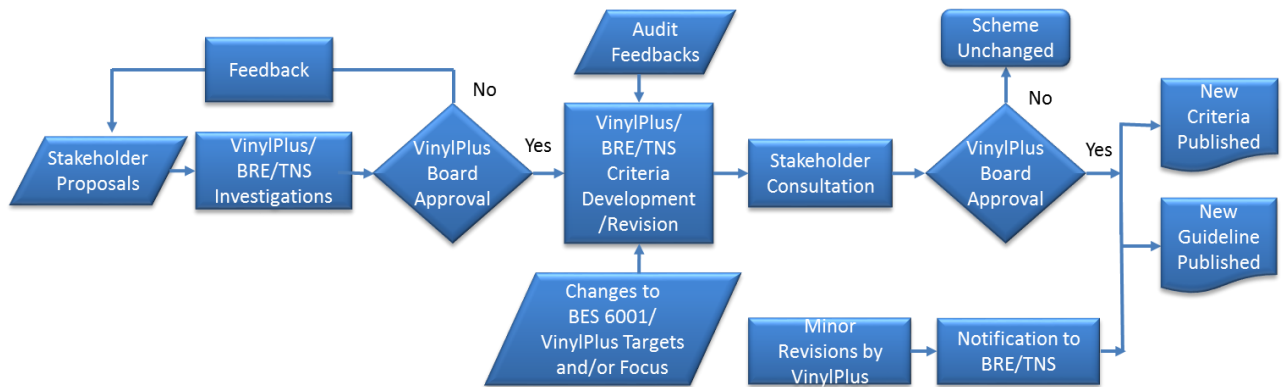
During the course of its evolution, the VinylPlus Product Label should also strive to use transparent procedures open to all stakeholders. Any relevant stakeholder (government body, consumer organisation, social partners, manufacturer association, NGO..) can make proposals to VinylPlus to develop new criteria, revise existing criteria or apply the scheme to other application sectors.

The Criteria Scheme, the Auditor Guidelines and any additional document of the scheme are therefore subject to regular updates and changes. Records of these changes are notified in a version control table at the end of each of the documents. The table includes the document version number, the date of the review, the description of the change and the person responsible. The last version of any document can be found on the [Product Label webpage](#).

While the Product Label scheme is owned by VinylPlus, the two development partners TNS and BRE will remain involved in any scheme modification or revision. They will reconfirm that each revision step meets their expectations so that the Product Label will keep being fully supported.

2. Criteria development and revision protocol

The below flowchart outlines the different steps of the criteria development and revision protocol



There are 2 different levels of updating and revising the Criteria Scheme.

Minor editorial revisions include small wording adjustments, minor corrections and additional explanations needed to facilitate the better use and clearer understanding of the documents. These editorial changes will not impact the results of the audit. They will be documented by VinylPlus at any time and the 2 development partners will be notified by copy. These editorial changes will be reported in the version control table, but will not change the document version number.

Criteria developments and revisions include any change to Sections 2 and 3 of the Criteria Scheme around Responsible Sourcing (BRE key scheme input), as well as any other major changes to the content of the Criteria Scheme and the certification process. Those changes will impact the results of the audits. They will be reported in the version control table and will trigger a change in the document version number.

A non-exhaustive list of development and revision triggers include

1/Proposals from stakeholders. With the support from BRE and TNS as necessary, the validity of the proposal is firstly investigated in terms of relevance to the background of the Product Label (responsible sourcing and sustainable development, challenges of the challenges of the VinylPlus programme). If valid, the proposal is submitted to the VinylPlus Board for approval.

2/Same recurrent feedback obtained in audits. Some requirements of the Criteria Scheme may appear irrelevant or unrealistic to complete during the audits. If recurrent observations are made, it will lead to a revision of the related criteria.

3/Changes to the BES 6001 scheme. The BRE's owned BES 6001 scheme is itself regularly updated. This scheme being an essential element of the VinylPlus Product Label scheme, these changes have to be accounted for in the Criteria Scheme.

4/Changes to the targets and/or focus of the VinylPlus programme. The VinylPlus programme is reviewed every decade; this evolution should be reflected in the Criteria Scheme.

For these changes, VinylPlus will use its best efforts to develop criteria development and revision proposals together with TNS and BRE. The proposals will then be discussed with other relevant stakeholders and submitted to the VinylPlus Board.

If approved, the development/revision proposal will become effective and integrated in the Criteria Scheme. Auditor guidelines will be provided to explain the background behind the new or revised criteria and how they need to be audited. Both documents will be published on the website. This publication will trigger the official launch of the revision. Label holders and applicants will be informed accordingly.

If not approved, the Criteria Scheme will be kept unmodified.

3. Automatic revision

On top of the scheme revisions triggered and managed as described in section 2., an automatic revision process will be organized at least every 5 years, or within 2 years of an update to the BES 6001 standard or a revision of the VinylPlus programme.

4. Transitional period management

A *new* Criteria Scheme with a new running number should be used for any audit accepted by the applicant *after* the date of its publication on the website. An audit is accepted by an applicant by signing the acceptance letter sent by the certification body.

If an applicant has signed the acceptance letter *before* the publication of the new Criteria Scheme, the *previous* Criteria Scheme should be used. The Product Label certificate based on the previous scheme remains valid for 2 years.

If the applicant has interest to be audited with the new Criteria Scheme, the applicant should be offered the opportunity to be audited using the new Criteria Scheme.

5. Information and training to the Certification Bodies

VinylPlus will inform by e-mail all the Accreditation Bodies, Certification Bodies, Label holders, Label applicants, TNS and BRE of the issuance of any document of the scheme with a new running number. The major changes that have been made in the new versions will be described.

VinylPlus with the support of BRE, will provide training on the VinylPlus certification scheme to any new Certification Body before this body applies for an accreditation at the competent National Accreditation Body, if this Body wants to be accredited for the VinylPlus certification scheme.

The training can take two forms:

- On-field training. The Body is invited to participate to an audit run by BRE at the facilities of a label applicant. BRE and the Body collect together the evidences and edit together the audit report, which is then verified by BRE.
- On-line training. BRE collects all the evidences needed for the audit report. BRE shares the raw informations with the Body, which prepare the audit report.

Following a recommendation made by BRE, VinylPlus will issue at the end of the training, a certificate confirming that the new Certification Body is able to run a valid independent audit.

Version Control

Version	Date	Description of change	Person responsible
1.0	August 2018	Initial version	S. Eingärtner/V.Stone
1.1	14/1/2019	-Division of the document in sections -Per Accredia's request: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a detailed procedure to manage the transition between 2 versions of the scheme (section 4) • Introduce a section with detailed procedures for informing all the stakeholders of changes and revisions and for training to-be-accredited bodies on existing and new criteria (section 5) 	V. Stone