

# **BLUE ANGEL**

## **The German Ecolabel**



## **Event catering and canteen services**

### **DE-UZ 229**

### **Basic Award Criteria**

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Federal Ministry  
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The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection is the owner of the label. It regularly provides information on the decisions taken by the Environmental Label Jury.



The German Environmental Agency with its specialist department for "Ecodesign, Eco-Labeling and Environmentally friendly Procurement" acts as office of the Environmental Label Jury and develops the technical criteria of the Basic Criteria for Award of the Blue Angel.



The Environmental Label Jury is the independent, decision-making body for the Blue Angel and includes representatives from environmental and consumer associations, trade unions, industry, the trade, crafts, local authorities, academia, the media, churches, young people and the German federal states.



The RAL gGmbH is the awarding body for the Environmental Label. It organises the process for developing the relevant award criteria in independent expert hearings – which involve all relevant interest groups.

If you require further information please contact:

RAL gGmbH

**RAL UMWELT**

Fränkische Straße 7

53229 Bonn

Tel: +49 (0) 228 / 6 88 95 - 190

E-Mail: [umweltzeichen@ral.de](mailto:umweltzeichen@ral.de)

[www.blauer-engel.de](http://www.blauer-engel.de)

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## Table of contents

1	Introduction.....	6
1.1	Preface .....	6
1.2	Background .....	6
1.2.1	Importance of the communal catering sector .....	6
1.2.2	Characteristics of the communal catering sector.....	6
1.3	Objectives of the Environmental Label .....	7
1.4	Definitions.....	9
2	Scope .....	12
3	Requirements .....	12
3.1	Requirements at the level of the ingredients and meals.....	14
3.1.1	Requirements for determining and restricting greenhouse gas emissions.....	14
3.1.1.1	Determining the greenhouse gas emissions per meal (canteen services and event catering) .....	14
3.1.1.2	Guidance values for the annual greenhouse gas emissions per meal (canteen services).....	15
3.1.2	Requirements for the quality of the catering services (canteen services) .....	15
3.1.3	Exclusive use of fish, fish products and seafood from managed stocks (canteen services) .....	16
3.1.4	Requirements for the use of animal products .....	17
3.1.4.1	Exclusively vegetarian or vegan event catering (event catering) .....	17
3.1.4.2	Restriction on the use of animal products in vegetarian catering dishes ("can" criterion – event catering) .....	17
3.1.4.3	Obligation to offer a vegetarian meal (canteen services).....	17
3.1.4.4	Obligation to offer a vegan meal (canteen services and event catering) .....	17
3.1.5	Requirement for a general restriction on the transport of live animals (canteen services) .....	18
3.1.6	Requirement for animal welfare-oriented husbandry when using products of animal origin (canteen services and event catering).....	19
3.1.7	Requirements for the use of organic produce (canteen services and event catering) .....	20
3.1.8	Requirements for the use of seasonal fruit and vegetables (canteen services and event catering) .....	20

3.1.9	Requirements for the use of tap water instead of mineral water (canteen services and event catering) .....	21
3.1.10	Requirement for the exclusion of goods transported by air (canteen services and event catering) .....	21
3.1.11	Requirements for the use of "fair" products .....	22
3.1.11.1	Use of fair trade products (canteen services and event catering) .....	22
3.1.11.2	Requirement for minimising social risks in the supply chain (canteen services and event catering).....	24
3.1.12	Restriction on the use of highly processed products in catering services (event catering) .....	24
3.1.13	Requirement for avoiding and reducing food waste (canteen services and event catering) .....	25
3.2	Requirements at the level of non-food materials.....	25
3.2.1	Requirements for the avoidance of disposable materials and the use of reusable packaging .....	25
3.2.1.1	Requirement for the use of reusable packaging when purchasing ingredients ("can" criterion – canteen services and event catering) .....	25
3.2.1.2	Requirements for the exclusion of disposable materials in kitchen processes and the serving of food (canteen services and event catering).....	26
3.2.1.3	Requirements for the use of reusable packaging for takeaway food and leftover food (canteen services) .....	26
3.2.2	Requirements for the use of environmentally friendly cleaning agents ("can" criterion – canteen services and event catering) .....	26
3.2.3	Requirements for the use of sustainable textiles ("can" criterion – canteen services and event catering) .....	27
3.2.4	Requirements for the use of environmentally friendly paper and paper products ("can" criterion – canteen services and event catering) .....	27
3.2.5	Environmentally friendly website ("can" criterion – canteen services and event catering) .....	28
3.3	Requirements at the level of the (operational) infrastructure (equipment/appliances, energy supply, consumables).....	28
3.3.1	Requirements for the use of electricity from renewable energies (canteen services and event catering) .....	28
3.3.2	Requirement for energy-efficient lighting.....	29
3.3.2.1	Use of 100 % LED bulbs (canteen services and event catering) .....	29
3.3.2.2	Installation of motion sensors (canteen services and event catering).....	29
3.3.3	Requirements for the applicant to use their own renewable energy ("can" criterion – canteen services and event catering) .....	29

3.3.4	Requirement for the use of energy-efficient and resource-efficient technical equipment/appliances and for the energy-efficient optimisation of the technology (canteen services and event catering).....	30
3.3.5	Requirements for the use of energy-efficient technical equipment/appliances (canteen services and event catering).....	30
3.3.6	Requirements for environmentally friendly logistics (canteen services and event catering) .....	31
3.3.7	Requirements for water consumption and water saving measures (canteen services and event catering) .....	32
3.4	Requirements in the areas of communication and personnel .....	32
3.4.1	Environmental training/qualification of the staff (canteen services and event catering) .....	32
3.4.2	Requirements for remuneration and the maintenance of employee rights .....	32
3.4.2.1	Collective pay agreements and appropriate pay (canteen services and event catering) .....	32
3.4.2.2	Co-determination (canteen services and event catering).....	33
3.4.2.3	Jobs subject to social security contributions (canteen services) .....	33
3.4.3	Visibility of the Blue Angel during the provision of the catering services (canteen services and event catering) .....	33
3.4.4	Further information on sustainability ("can" criterion – canteen services) .....	33
3.5	Outlook.....	34
4	Applicants and Parties Involved.....	35
5	Use of the Environmental Label .....	35
Appendix A	Cited legislations and standards, literature .....	36
Appendix B	Example list of highly processed (convenience) products (ingredient or components) used in event catering that have a high energy density and/or a high added sugar, salt and/or fat content, especially saturated fatty acids and/or food additives.....	38

**This document is a translation of a German original. In case of dispute, the original document should be taken as authoritative.**

# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Preface**

In cooperation with the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection, the German Environmental Agency and considering the results of the expert hearings conducted by RAL gGmbH, the Environmental Label Jury has set up these Basic Criteria for the Award of the Environmental Label. RAL gGmbH has been tasked with awarding the Environmental Label.

Upon application to RAL gGmbH and on the basis of a Contract on the Use of the Environmental Label to be concluded with RAL gGmbH, the permission to use the Environmental Label may be granted to all products, provided that they comply with the requirements as specified hereinafter.

The product must comply with all the legal requirements in the country in which it is to be marketed. The applicant shall declare that the product meets this requirement.

## **1.2 Background**

### **1.2.1 Importance of the communal catering sector**

The number of meals prepared and eaten in private households fell by more than three billion in the period from 2005 to 2015 (GfK 2015); at the same time, meals that were not prepared and eaten in private households (i.e. "away-from-home") increased continuously.

The constant growth in the away-from-home catering market up to 2019 showed that this trend had continued up to the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020. With 12.38 billion guests in 2019 (only 8.4 billion in 2020 due to the pandemic) (Deutscher Fachverlag GmbH 2021), this market has a considerable influence on the dietary habits of people in Germany (Pfefferle 2021) and thus also on their health. "Food and diet plays (...) an important role: The way in which we feed ourselves has a significant influence on our individual health, well-being and quality of life" (WBAE 2020, p. 1). At the same time, food and diet is an important area of policy for reducing the negative impact on the environment: Due to its wide ranging economic, environmental, social and cultural effects, the food sector is one of the most important areas of policy overall for promoting the transformation towards sustainability (Lukas et al. 2016). In particular, it makes a significant contribution to the greenhouse effect and is also associated with other serious environmental impact such as overfertilization and acidification of the soil and bodies of water or a loss of biodiversity.

### **1.2.2 Characteristics of the communal catering sector**

Companies operating within the communal catering sector provide a wide range of catering services and serve different types of guests. Communal catering is often subdivided in relevant literature into the areas of business, care and education catering. Business catering covers company restaurants and canteens, while care catering encompasses the catering provided to patients or residents of hospitals and care homes or facilities for people with disabilities. Education catering includes catering for pre-school children, school pupils, students or trainees in school kitchens and refectories or student cafeterias. (Göbel et al. 2017) However, the market has not yet been completely and systematically defined and subdivided into different segments. As the previously described segments serve very different types of guests, each with their own specific needs, and the catering services thus follow extremely diverse approaches, this results in a high

degree of heterogeneity and complexity that can be reduced by focussing on one single sector. Therefore, these Basic Award Criteria for event catering and canteen services are targeted at the largest segment of business catering, expanded to include university canteens and cafeterias. However, even the business catering segment itself is by no means homogeneous because company canteens serve employees from very different occupations and sectors. It is possible to include university canteens and cafeterias because they hardly differ in their organisation, range of food and beverages and target group from company canteens. Heterogeneity is not critical for many of the requirements formulated in these Basic Award Criteria. A standard case that covers most of the services found in the company catering sector – as is also defined by the German Nutrition Society (DGE) in its Quality Standard for Meals in Companies<sup>1</sup> (DGE 2022) – is only assumed for those requirements that are influenced by the isocaloric needs of the guests and thus the portion sizes.

Event catering can also be allocated to the communal catering sector in most cases (e.g. trade fairs, conferences). However, event catering has a completely different character to a permanent catering service, if only due to the fact that the catering provided by a canteen can have a significant impact on the diet of its guests, which means that different expectations with respect to the provision of a balanced diet over the long term can be placed on them in comparison to event catering. When formulating the requirements for each of the different criteria, it was necessary to weigh up the extent to which they were relevant for the two areas of event catering and canteen services.

Furthermore, there are some fundamental methodological challenges when awarding ecolabels to services. When focussing on a specific product, the use of environmental resources to deliver a defined function or a defined customer benefit can largely be defined based on stable product characteristics, which can be objectively verified in a product test. In contrast, it is inevitable that catering services offered by event catering and canteen services will vary by their very nature, both with respect to how the processes are carried out and also the results (in the form of individual dishes and other accompanying services).

When focussing on food and diet as an area of policy, it is also extremely important to take health aspects into account. It is difficult to image that the Blue Angel could be awarded to a service that was environmentally friendly but provided an unbalanced diet from a nutritional perspective. There are also some social aspects along the value added chain for the catering sector that must be considered.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Environmental Label**

Private and also commercial and government customers (i.e. the federal and state governments, local authorities and public agencies and corporations) do not only purchase products but also services. By certifying those services that place a lower burden on the environment and focus on sustainability criteria with the Blue Angel, it can provide important guidance to consumers and also professional purchasers. It is also important here to highlight the role that the Blue Angel plays as a believable and recognisable Type I environmental label because it helps consumers and purchasers identify sustainable products and services quickly and reliably and include them in their purchasing decisions.

The Blue Angel for event catering and canteen services gives companies the opportunity to highlight that their services are highly sustainable and, in particular, comply with high environ-

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<sup>1</sup> This standard focuses on the needs of adults under 65 years of age, averaged for men and women, for activity level PAL 1.4

mental standards; the aim is also to help these companies stand out as role models in the sector and as a result improve environmental standards at other companies.

The objective of the Blue Angel is to certify those catering services in the areas of event catering and canteen services that have a significantly lower environmental impact than comparable conventional services. The production and consumption of food have a particularly important environmental impact on climate protection by reducing greenhouse gas emissions along the entire value added chain, preserving natural resources and protecting biodiversity by avoiding changes to land use and overexploitation of fish stocks, as well as minimising the acidification and overfertilization of soil and bodies of water due to a lower input of phosphorous and nitrogen.

The criteria help to preserve biodiversity by requiring not only a lower use of fish but also the obligatory use of fish sourced from sustainable fisheries, as well as the use of organic produce. The restriction on the use of meat and other animal products helps to protect biodiversity and the climate, as well as to reduce overfertilization and acidification. Reducing food waste also decreases all of the negative environmental effects associated with the production, further processing and preparation of foodstuffs. One important environmental impact of food production is the associated emission of greenhouse gases. License holders are required to measure the greenhouse gas emissions associated with their meals using a carbon footprint software or a suitable calculator. This will allow operators of a canteen or caterers to control the impact that their meals have on the climate and take specific measures to reduce it. As a result, this Blue Angel will help to protect the climate. Other important requirements that will lead to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions are the use of seasonal ingredients, the exclusion of goods transported by air and the energy-efficient operation of infrastructure.

The greenhouse gas emissions calculators available on the market are mainly based on generic eco-balance databases. Despite the fact that very little primary data is used, these calculators enable kitchen managers to develop a good feel for how to make their meals more environmentally friendly. As well as requiring canteen services to measure the actual greenhouse gas emissions for their meals, the Basic Award Criteria introduce a reference value for the annual greenhouse gas emissions per meal, which will be made stricter over the years.

The environmental goals have been supplemented by social aspects across the entire value added chain in the requirement to use fair trade food and the criteria on the working conditions in companies. Health aspects are also crucially important for a sustainable diet and the services must therefore be based on the recommendations issued by the DGE.

The Blue Angel for event catering and canteen services has the following objectives:

- Protecting the climate by determining the greenhouse gas emissions
- Preserving natural resources, including biodiversity
- Fair trade food and requirements for working conditions
- Consideration of health aspects in the catering services



Therefore, following benefits for the environment and health are stated in the explanatory box:



## 1.4 Definitions

The two main terms from the title and for the scope of these Basic Award Criteria will be defined first, followed by other important terms in alphabetic order.

**Event catering:** All commercial catering services that deliver food and beverages to an agreed location on a particular occasion and, depending on the requirements, also provide additional non-food services.

**Canteen services:** All catering services provided by staff or student restaurants and canteens at companies, authorities, universities or other institutions, where those people authorised to use the canteens are provided with food and beverages on site in a defined dining area over a long period of time.

**Operators:** Operators are the companies, authorities or other institutions who operate a canteen as a facility for their employees and guests. The canteen can be operated by the operator's own personnel (i.e. self-managed) or by a service provider (leaseholder or contract caterer with a long-term business relationship) (i.e. managed by a third party).

**Managers:** The manager of the canteen is the company or organisation who actually delivers the catering service in the canteen.

**DGE:** The German Nutrition Society (DGE – Deutsche Gesellschaft für Ernährung e.V.) is a scientific society that is dedicated to research and education in the area of healthy nutrition and catering. It not only formulates general nutritional recommendations but has developed standards for certain sectors, such as for company catering.

**Disposable packaging:** Single-use packaging of food that is thrown away after use. According to the definition in Article 3 of the German Packaging Law (VerpackG), single-use packaging is any packaging that is not reusable packaging.

**Self-managed:** Self-managed means that the operator of a canteen also manages the canteen themselves.

**Managed by a third party:** In this context, managed by a third party means that the operator of a canteen transfers the management of the canteen to a third party – referred to below as the manager – as part of a long-term contractual relationship.

**Highly processed food<sup>2</sup>:** According to the definition issued by the DGE, highly processed food is "ready-to-eat food produced from a combination of food-based or synthetic ingredients. The ingredients are usually substances only found in industrial production such as hydrated oils, glucose fructose syrup, protein isolates and additives. The combination of ingredients can imitate the sensory characteristics of unprocessed or minimally processed foods."

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<sup>2</sup> See <https://dge.de/blog/2022/05/12/hochverarbeitete-lebensmittel/>

**Types of kitchen:** A differentiation is made between the following:

- A single kitchen (characteristic: no cooperation with other kitchens, no exchange of goods, no swapping of experiences),
- A central kitchen with relay kitchens (the central kitchen is responsible for the preparation of less sensitive dishes, such as soups, sauces, vegetables prepared with binding agents and baked goods, which can be transported to the relay kitchens without a (huge) loss in quality; sensitive dishes such as boiled potatoes, pasta, rice, briefly fried/cooked foods, green salads, etc. are prepared in the relay kitchen) and
- A central kitchen with distribution kitchens (completely centralised: all food is prepared and packaged in the central kitchen and transported to the distribution kitchens, where it is merely portioned out and served).

**Meal:** An amount of food that is filling for an average guest<sup>3</sup> and which provides them with sufficient micro- and macronutrients – based on the average isocaloric needs of an adult person, depending on their occupation. The composition of the meal is irrelevant, i.e. whether it is hot or cold and the number of courses or components that make up the meal.

Within the scope of these Basic Award Criteria, the term “meal” is used as a reference size for some of the material requirements. The following specifications apply in this case:

- For canteen services: the term “meal” should be understood as a midday meal or lunch offered by the relevant manager as a main meal (i.e. either including or excluding a starter or dessert).
- For event catering: a “meal” should be determined by taking the total amount of food delivered to the event and dividing it by the number of guests being served.

**Reusable packaging:** According to the definition in Article 3 of VerpackG, reusable packaging is packaging that is designed and intended to be used multiple times for the same purpose and whose actual return and reuse is facilitated by suitable logistics and also encouraged by an appropriate incentive system, usually a deposit.

**Seasonal:** Fruit and vegetables are seasonal if they are harvested and (after subsequent storage where relevant) sold in Germany or neighbouring regions in outdoor cultivation or protected cultivation (unheated greenhouses, film tunnel) during their peak harvesting period – according to the seasonal calendar issued by the German consumer advice centres<sup>4</sup>. If the licence holder can verify that a product not included in this seasonal calendar was produced in Germany or neighbouring regions without the use of heated greenhouses, this product can also be classified as seasonal.

**Food production systems:** Different methods that describe the time and place at which the food is produced and served for consumption:

- Cook & Chill: A process in which the food is immediately cooled down after cooking, stored in a refrigerator, transported to the place of consumption and reheated (regenerated) again immediately before consumption;

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<sup>3</sup> Based on the DGE Quality Standard for Meals in Companies, reference values derived for the D-A-CH region (Germany, Austria and Switzerland) for communal catering of the age group 19 to under 65 years old (arithmetic average for men and women), activity level (PAL) 1.4 and a recommendation of 513 kcal, see [https://www.jobundfit.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/medien/DGE-QST/DGE-Qualitaetsstandard\\_Betriebe.pdf](https://www.jobundfit.de/fileadmin/user_upload/medien/DGE-QST/DGE-Qualitaetsstandard_Betriebe.pdf), S. 32-33.

<sup>4</sup> The seasonal calendar from the German consumer advice centres ([https://www.verbraucherzentrale.de/sites/default/files/2021-12/1\\_saisonkalender\\_web-download\\_1-seite\\_5te-aufl\\_nov2021.pdf](https://www.verbraucherzentrale.de/sites/default/files/2021-12/1_saisonkalender_web-download_1-seite_5te-aufl_nov2021.pdf)) highlights the impact on the climate of different types of fruit and vegetables. All products listed in the calendar with a “low or medium impact on the climate” during a certain period of time are considered to be seasonal at this point in time even if they are stored goods.

- Cook & Freeze: A process in which the food is immediately frozen after cooking, stored in a freezer, transported to the place of consumption and reheated (regenerated) again immediately before consumption;
- Cook & Hold: A process in which the food is kept warm after cooking, transported to the place of consumption and then served;
- Cook & Serve: A process in which the food is prepared at the place of consumption and served either immediately after cooking or after being kept warm for a limited period of time.

**Greenhouse gases:** Gases that contribute to global warming: [carbon dioxide](#) (CO<sub>2</sub>), [methane](#) (CH<sub>4</sub>), [dinitrogen oxide](#) (laughing gas, N<sub>2</sub>O), partially halogenated [fluorohydrocarbons](#) (H-FKW/HFC), perfluorinated hydrocarbons (FKW/PFC), [sulphur hexafluoride](#) (SF<sub>6</sub>), nitrogen trifluoride (NF<sub>3</sub>); given in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents.

**Vegan meal:** A meal produced exclusively using vegan food. Food is considered vegan if it does not contain any products of animal origin and no

- ingredients (including additives, carriers, flavourings and enzymes) or
- processing aids or
- non-food admixtures, used in the same way and for the same purpose as processing aids,
- of animal origin in either a processed or unprocessed form were added or used during any of its production and processing stages.

Microorganisms (bacteria, yeast and fungi) are considered to be of non-animal origin and can also be advertised in the food as "vegan".<sup>5</sup>

**Vegetarian meal:** A meal produced exclusively using vegetarian food. Food is considered vegetarian if it fulfils the requirements for vegan food but the following products

- milk
- colostrum
- eggs from farmed birds
- honey
- beeswax
- propolis or wool fat/lanolin obtained from live sheep

or components of them or other products produced from them may be additionally added or used in its production.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Deutsche Lebensmittelbuch-Kommission: Leitsätze für vegane und vegetarische Lebensmittel mit Ähnlichkeit zu Lebensmitteln tierischen Ursprungs. Neufassung vom 04. Dezember 2018 (BANZ AT 20.12.2018 B1, GMBI 2018 S. 1174) Bezug auf Verbraucherschutzministerkonferenz (ohne Datum) (German Food Code Commission: Guidelines for vegan and vegetarian food similar to food of animal origin. New version from 4 December 2018 (BANZ AT 20/12/2018 B1, GMBI 2018 p. 1174) Reference to the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Consumer Protection (no date)). <https://www.bmel.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Ernaehrung/Lebensmittel-Kennzeichnung/LeitsaetzevegetarischeveganeLebensmittel.html>

<sup>6</sup> ebd.

## 2 Scope

This ecolabel is intended for the catering services "canteen services" and "event catering".

### a) Canteen services

For canteen services: the ecolabel is awarded to all of the catering services offered by the certified canteen.

The canteen service covers all catering services provided by staff or student restaurants and canteens at companies, authorities, universities or other institutions, where those people authorised to use the canteens are provided with food and beverages on site in a defined dining area over a long period of time.

Comparable catering services that are regularly provided to school pupils (e.g. in schools), children (e.g. in childcare facilities) or people requiring care (e.g. in hospitals or care facilities) are excluded from the scope of the Basic Award Criteria.

The ecolabel is awarded to the canteen service, no matter whether it is self-managed or managed by a third party. Canteens with all types of kitchens or food production systems are also covered by the scope of these Basic Award Criteria.

The scope of this ecolabel does not cover catering that is exclusively provided via vending machines.

### b) Event catering

For event catering: the ecolabel is only awarded to a specific catering service that is explicitly offered to customers as a catering service certified by the Blue Angel ecolabel and which is provided in accordance with the relevant requirements in Paragraph 3.

The scope of this ecolabel includes all catering services provided for the broad range of conceivable occasions or settings covered by event catering.

Compliance with all applicable laws and regulations for the certified catering service by the licence holder is a prerequisite for the award of and continued certification with the Blue Angel ecolabel.

In addition, it is recommended that licence holders establish an environmental management system (e.g. ISO 14001, EMAS) because this will allow the company to establish stable processes for monitoring and constantly improving their environmental performance and will make it easier to comply with the requirements stipulated in the following chapter in some cases and also to verify compliance with them.

## 3 Requirements

This environmental label may be awarded to the catering services covered by the scope described in Paragraph 2 if the licence holder complies with the requirements described in the sections below.

During the period of use of the ecolabel, the requirements in Paragraph 3 may be randomly checked as part of on-site inspections (also see Point 6 of the Contract on the Use of the Environmental Label<sup>7</sup>).

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.blauer-engel.de/de/zertifizierung/zertifizierung-ihrer-produkte/beantragung>

Note: In this version of the Basic Award Criteria, the title of the respective requirement will indicate whether it applies to canteen services, event catering or both forms of catering service.

Overall, there are 24 obligatory criteria for event catering and 29 for canteen services. There are also seven “can” criteria for both canteen services and event catering. Two of these “can” criteria must be fulfilled in each case.

**“Can” criteria for canteen services:**

- 3.2.1.1 Requirement for the use of reusable packaging when purchasing ingredients
- 3.2.2 Requirements for the use of environmentally friendly cleaning agents
- 3.2.3 Requirements for the use of sustainable textiles
- 3.2.4 Requirements for the use of environmentally friendly paper and paper products
- 3.2.5 Environmentally friendly website
- 3.3.3 Requirements for the applicant to use their own renewable energy
- 3.4.4 Further information on sustainability

**“Can” criteria for event catering:**

- 3.1.4.2 Restriction on the use of animal products in vegetarian catering dishes
- 3.2.1.1 Requirement for the use of reusable packaging when purchasing ingredients
- 3.2.2 Requirements for the use of environmentally friendly cleaning agents
- 3.2.3 Requirements for the use of sustainable textiles
- 3.2.4 Requirements for the use of environmentally friendly paper and paper products
- 3.2.5 Environmentally friendly website
- 3.3.3 Requirements for the applicant to use their own renewable energy

The applicant must independently check which of the “can” criteria he/she can achieve and are thus an option – especially with respect to the impact the implementation of these requirements will have.

A structure plan must be submitted as part of the application. It will act as the basis for professionally assessing whether the individual requirements for this ecolabel can be complied with and verified in practice. This structure plan will make it clear which rooms and processes lie within the responsibility of the applicant and which within the responsibility of a third party. This structure plan must be submitted to and agreed with RAL gGmbH.

In all of those areas in which the responsibility lies with the applicant, the following obligatory requirements must be complied with in full.

In those areas in which the responsibility lies with a third party, the applicant is obligated to expressly indicate their desire for the implementation of the requirements to the party responsible, this should be documented and verified where applicable. Before submitting an application, it is generally recommended that the operator seeks assistance with respect to the application and compliance with the requirements for the Blue Angel for canteen services.

### **3.1 Requirements at the level of the ingredients and meals**

#### **3.1.1 Requirements for determining and restricting greenhouse gas emissions**

Practical experience in determining the greenhouse gas emissions, in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents, caused by the different ingredients is an important factor in realising and further improving climate friendly catering services. The results of the calculations can be used to identify those ingredients in the recipes for various meals that are especially relevant for the climate and then develop alternative recipes or compositions of meals that are more climate friendly.

Corresponding experience must be based on the specific dishes offered by the respective company.

##### **3.1.1.1 Determining the greenhouse gas emissions per meal (canteen services and event catering)**

For canteen services: the greenhouse gas emissions, in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents, must be determined for all of the (lunchtime) meals offered in the menu plans for a defined reference period, irrespective of the number of menu lines and days on which catering is provided.

For event catering: the greenhouse gas emissions, in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents, must be determined for the different types of "meals<sup>8</sup>" that are provided to customers in combination with the Blue Angel ecolabel.

The CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents per meal must be calculated using one of the calculators approved by the German Environment Agency. An overview can be found on the Blue Angel website. Other calculators may be approved after examination by the German Environment Agency.

#### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1 and, at the time of the application, shall submit the results of the corresponding calculations of the CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents per meal, stating the date on which the calculations were carried out.*

*For canteen services: the values for all meals in an already completed four-week meal plan (across all menu lines) must be stated in annex 2. In the case of canteens that are just starting up, a planned monthly meal plan may be used instead.*

*Catering companies shall determine the values for at least ten different meals (catering services).*

*If requested by RAL gGmbH, the licence holder shall submit the latest CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent values at any time. For canteen services: this means the calculations for the greenhouse gas emissions from the recipes for all meals in the menu plan from the previous month. For catering services: this means the results of the calculations for the greenhouse gas emissions for the last ten meals sold in combination with the Blue Angel ecolabel. If requested by RAL gGmbH, the applicant shall submit the lists of ingredients for specific meals as examples.*

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<sup>8</sup> In the sense of the definition of this term in Paragraph 1.4

### 3.1.1.2 Guidance values for the annual greenhouse gas emissions per meal (canteen services)

The annual greenhouse gas emissions per meal should be based on the reference values for CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents per meal stated in Table 1 below. These values should not be exceeded in the long term.

Table 1: Reference values in g CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent / meal for different years

Year	Reference value (in g CO <sub>2</sub> equivalent / meal)
2023 & 2024	1,200
2025	900
From 2026	800

To determine the annual greenhouse gas emissions per meal, the total of the CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent values for all of the ingredients used in the reference period should be divided by the number of meals served (across all menu lines and days on which catering is provided).

If the annual greenhouse gas emissions per meal exceeds the relevant reference value by a significant amount, i.e. by more than 10 %, the licence holder must notify RAL gGmbH of the annual value and submit a concrete plan to reduce it (reduction plan). On the one hand, this reduction plan should include an analysis of the reason why the reference value was exceeded by a significant amount, and on the other hand, it should describe specific measures to ensure compliance with the respective reference value in the next year or the year after next at the latest.

#### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1 and shall subsequently submit the calculated value for the annual greenhouse gas emissions per meal in the previous year on an annual basis by 31 January of each year. If the respective reference value is exceeded by a "significant" amount, the applicant shall also submit a reduction plan by 31 March at the latest. This plan will be examined by RAL gGmbH. If the reduction plan is approved by RAL gGmbH after this inspection, the licence holder is obligated to implement the plan.*

### 3.1.2 Requirements for the quality of the catering services (canteen services)

For catering services: mixed food and all vegetarian menu lines offered as part of the catering service must comply with the "DGE-Leitfaden zur Zertifizierung"<sup>9</sup> (DGE Guidelines for Certification), specifically the requirements placed on lunchtime catering.

A maximum of one "mixed food" menu line – which also contains meat and fish – may be offered. The other menu lines must consist of completely vegetarian or vegan meals.

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<sup>9</sup> See <https://www.dge.de/fileadmin/public/doc/gv/zertifizierung/Betriebe-Leitfaden.pdf>.

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1 and verify compliance by submitting a corresponding DGE certificate.*

*For non-certified menu lines, the applicant shall submit verification in the form of a declaration of compliance (annex 3) with all of the requirements in Chapter 4 "Qualitätsbereich Lebensmittelauswahl Mittagsverpflegung"<sup>10</sup> (Selection of quality food for lunchtime catering) of the "DGE-Leitfaden zur Zertifizierung" (DGE Guidelines for Certification) (for vegetarian and, if provided, mixed food menu lines) where possible; the applicant shall also enclose a four-week meal plan including the associated recipes.*

#### **3.1.3 Exclusive use of fish, fish products and seafood from managed stocks (canteen services)**

Any fish, fish products and seafood used by the canteen service must be exclusively sourced from sustainable fisheries or responsible aquacultures.

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1 and verify compliance by submitting a certificate from one of the following certification systems:*

- *MSC label (Marine Stewardship Council)<sup>11</sup>*
- *ASC label (Aquaculture Stewardship Council)<sup>12</sup>*
- *EU organic logo<sup>13</sup>*

*An equivalent certification system whose scope and requirement standards are equivalent to one of the named certification systems will also be accepted. The equivalence of the certification system must be confirmed by an independent environmental verifier.*

*Alternatively, individual verifications in accordance with the criteria and verification requirements of one of the named certification systems may be presented if an equivalent level of protection can be achieved. The equivalence of the individual verifications must be confirmed by an independent environmental verifier.*

*When submitting the application, the applicant shall also submit delivery notes or other suitable documents for all of the fish, fish products and seafood used in an already completed four-week meal plan (across all menu lines) to verify that they were certified with one of the required certificates or a comparable certificate or the applicant shall submit alternative verifications.*

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<sup>10</sup> Depending on how many days the catering is provided, the applicant shall use the checklist for five or seven days of catering per week.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.msc.org/de>

<sup>12</sup> <https://de.asc-aqua.org/asc-siegel/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.bmel.de/DE/themen/landwirtschaft/oekologischer-landbau/bio-siegel.html>



### **3.1.4 Requirements for the use of animal products**

#### **3.1.4.1 Exclusively vegetarian or vegan event catering (event catering)**

The range of dishes offered by the event catering service may only be vegetarian or vegan.

#### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1 and verify his/her vegetarian or vegan meals by submitting menu cards or banquet brochures for the services offered with the ecolabel.*

#### **3.1.4.2 Restriction on the use of animal products in vegetarian catering dishes ("can" criterion – event catering)**

A maximum of 85 g of milk<sup>14</sup> and 4 g of egg may be added per meal<sup>15</sup> for vegetarian event catering.

#### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1. In addition, the applicant shall submit the recipes for at least ten different meals (catering service for the ecolabel) and provide additional information on the amounts of animal products used in each of the submitted recipes, split into milk equivalents and eggs.*

#### **3.1.4.3 Obligation to offer a vegetarian meal (canteen services)**

Canteen services must offer at least one vegetarian meal on every day catering is provided.

#### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1 and also verify the provision of a vegetarian meal by submitting four-week menu plans.*

#### **3.1.4.4 Obligation to offer a vegan meal<sup>16</sup> (canteen services and event catering)**

If the canteen service offers at least three menu lines, it must offer at least one vegan menu line. If the canteen service offers less than three menu lines, the range of dishes must always be designed so that customers can put together a vegan meal. This must be indicated in the guest communication.

For event catering: the range of dishes must always be designed so that customers can put together a vegan meal. This must be indicated in the guest communication.

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<sup>14</sup> Yoghurt/mixed milk products should be included in the calculation for milk at a factor of 1.4 and cheese and curd at a factor of 7.2, based on their average dry weight.

<sup>15</sup> Derived from Willet et al. 2019, p. 451, the values stated there for daily intake (250 g of whole milk equivalent, 13 g of egg, 5 g of animal fats) were divided by three and rounded.

<sup>16</sup> See the definition of the term meal under 1.4 Definitions.

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1.*

*For canteen services: the applicant shall also verify that a vegan menu line is offered or, if the number of menu lines is less than three, shall submit four-week menu plans in which the vegan dishes are marked.*

*For event catering: the applicant shall also submit the compositions of the dishes for at least ten different meals (catering service for the ecolabel) in which the vegan dishes are marked.*

### **3.1.5 Requirement for a general restriction on the transport of live animals (canteen services)**

The licence holder may only use meat and meat products produced from live animals that had been transported a maximum of four hours and a maximum of 200 km.

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1 and verify compliance by submitting a certificate from one of the following certification systems:*

- Biokreis<sup>17</sup>
- Bioland<sup>18</sup>
- Naturland<sup>19</sup>
- Biopark<sup>20</sup>
- Demeter<sup>21</sup>
- Neuland<sup>22</sup>

*An equivalent certification system whose scope and requirement standards are equivalent to one of the named certification systems will also be accepted. The equivalence of the certification system must be confirmed by an independent environmental verifier.*

*Alternatively, individual verifications in accordance with the criteria and verification requirements of one of the named certification systems may be presented if an equivalent level of requirements can be achieved. The equivalence of the individual verifications must be confirmed by an independent environmental verifier.*

*When submitting the application, the applicant shall also submit delivery notes or other suitable documents for the total meat used and all of the meat products used in an already completed four-week meal plan (across all menu lines) to verify that they were certified with one of the required labels.*

*Alternatively, the applicant shall submit other certificates or documentation from (pre-)suppliers for inspection by RAL gGmbH that verify compliance with the restriction on the transport of live animals.*

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.biokreis.de>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.bioland.de/verbraucher>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.naturland.de/de/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.biopark.de>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.demeter.de>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.neuland-fleisch.de/>

### 3.1.6 Requirement for animal welfare-oriented husbandry when using products of animal origin (canteen services and event catering)

If products of animal origin are used, the proportions of animal products (measured by monetary value) from animal welfare-oriented husbandry according to the animal welfare requirements in Regulation (EU) 2018/848 (Organic Production Regulation) stated in Table 2. must be observed. Certain product groups, particularly those from fishing and hunting activities, are not available with labels confirming animal welfare-oriented husbandry. These products can be left out of the calculations. Chicken eggs from production methods 0 and 1 are considered to be animal welfare-oriented husbandry.

Table 2: Obligatory proportion of animal products from animal welfare-oriented husbandry [%] in relation to the total amount of products of animal origin

Year	Reference value (in %)
2023 & 2024	60
2025	80
From 2026	90

#### Compliance verification

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1 and verify compliance by submitting a certificate from one of the following certification systems:*

- EU organic logo<sup>23</sup>
- A label listed under <https://www.oekolandbau.de/service/adressen/anbauverbaende/gelisteteten-Anbauverbände>

*An equivalent certification system (such as the Neuland label<sup>24</sup>), whose scope and requirement standards with respect to animal welfare-oriented husbandry are equivalent to one of the named certification systems will also be accepted. The equivalence of the certification system must be confirmed by an independent environmental verifier.*

*Alternatively, individual verifications in accordance with the criteria and verification requirements of one of the named certification systems may be presented if an equivalent level of protection can be achieved. The equivalence of the individual verifications must be confirmed by an independent environmental verifier.*

*Alongside the stated labels, chicken eggs must also have a stamp for production methods 0 and 1 to verify animal welfare-oriented husbandry.*

In addition, applicants who operate canteen services shall submit information on the monetary value of all of the products of animal origin used in an already completed four-week meal plan (across all menu lines) and state which of the required labels certifies each of these products. Delivery notes and/or invoices that verify this information should be enclosed.

For event catering: the same verifications must also be provided for the products of animal origin used in at least ten different meals (catering service for the ecolabel).

<sup>23</sup> [https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/farming/organic-farming/organic-logo\\_de](https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/farming/organic-farming/organic-logo_de)

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.neuland-fleisch.de/>

### **3.1.7 Requirements for the use of organic produce (canteen services and event catering)**

At least 60 % (measured by monetary value) of the products of non-animal origin must be sourced from controlled organic cultivation and comply with the requirements of Regulation (EU) 2018/848 (Organic Production Regulation).

#### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1 and verify compliance by submitting a certificate from one of the following certification systems:*

- German organic logo (Bio-Siegel)<sup>25</sup>
- EU organic logo<sup>26</sup>
- Bio-AHV-Logo in Gold<sup>27</sup>

*An equivalent certification system whose scope and requirement standards are equivalent to one of the named certification systems will also be accepted. The equivalence of the certification system must be confirmed by an independent environmental verifier.*

*Alternatively, individual verifications in accordance with the criteria and verification requirements of one of the named certification systems may be presented if an equivalent level of requirements can be achieved. The equivalence of the individual verifications must be confirmed by an independent environmental verifier.*

*In addition, applicants who operate canteen services shall submit information on the monetary value of all of the products of non-animal origin used in an already completed four-week meal plan (across all menu lines) and state which of the required labels certifies each of these products. Delivery notes and/or invoices that verify this information should be enclosed.*

*For event catering: the same verifications must also be provided for the products of non-animal origin used in at least ten different meals (catering service for the ecolabel).*

### **3.1.8 Requirements for the use of seasonal fruit and vegetables (canteen services and event catering)**

At least 60 % (measured by monetary value) of the fruit and vegetables used throughout all of the seasons must be sourced from seasonal<sup>28</sup> production.

#### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1.*

*In addition, applicants who operate canteen services shall submit information on the monetary value of all of the fruit and vegetables used in an already completed four-week product meal plan (across all menu lines) and document that these products fulfilled the requirements for a seasonal product at the time they were procured. Delivery notes and/or invoices that verify this information should be enclosed.*

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.oekolandbau.de/bio-siegel/>

<sup>26</sup> [https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/farming/organic-farming/organic-logo\\_de](https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/farming/organic-farming/organic-logo_de)

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.bmel.de/DE/themen/landwirtschaft/oekologischer-landbau/bio-ausser-haus-verpflegung.html>

<sup>28</sup> See definitions in Paragraph 1.4.

*For event catering: the same verifications must also be provided for the fruit and vegetables used in at least ten different meals (catering service for the ecolabel).*

*If requested by RAL gGmbH, the applicant shall submit the same verifications and documentation for the catering services offered in the other three seasons (four-week meal plan for catering services or ten different meals for event catering (catering service for the ecolabel)).*

### **3.1.9 Requirements for the use of tap water instead of mineral water (canteen services and event catering)**

The licence holders must only offer tap water to customers (e.g. in glass bottles or carafes; carbonated if desired). This means that the use of mineral water is not permitted.

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1 and submit photographic documentation of how the tap water is served.*

### **3.1.10 Requirement for the exclusion of goods transported by air (canteen services and event catering)**

The use of products that are transported by aircraft must be avoided.

In particular, the following products (which are very often transported by air) listed in Table 3 from the stated countries of origin may not generally be used.

Table 3: Overview of relevant products and their country or countries of origin

<b>Product</b>	<b>Country of origin (goods transported by air)</b>
<b>Fish and water species</b>	
Nile perch fillets	Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda
Sea fish fillets	Sri Lanka, Iceland, Maldives, South Africa
Cape hake and deep-water Cape hake	South Africa
Lobster (living)	Canada, USA
Redfish, ocean perch and haddock fillets	Iceland
Other sea fish	Australia, Brazil, India, Senegal
Other freshwater fish	Kenya, Uganda
Swordfish fillets	Chile, Sri Lanka
Scallops	USA
Other types of hake	Canada
<b>Meat products</b>	
Boneless beef	Argentina, USA
Horse, donkey or mule meat	Canada, Mexico, Argentina
Venison	South Africa, New Zealand
Lamb/mutton	New Zealand
<b>Types of vegetables</b>	
Beans	Egypt, Kenya, Dominican Republic, Thailand
Other vegetables (e.g. tropical vegetables, bamboo shoots, herbs)	Thailand, India, Kenya, Dominican Republic
Peas	Kenya, Egypt
Asparagus	Peru, Thailand, USA
Cucumbers and gherkins	Jordan, Egypt

<b>Product</b>	<b>Country of origin (goods transported by air)</b>
Fruits of the genus capsicum (e.g. hot chilis) and pimenta (e.g. Jamaica pepper)	Thailand, India, Kenya
Aubergines	Thailand, Ghana, India, Bangladesh
Lettuce	USA
Onions	Egypt, Turkey, Thailand
Leak and other alliaceous vegetables	Israel, South Africa
<b>Types of fruit</b>	
Guavas, mangos and mangosteen fruit	Pakistan, Brazil, Thailand, Dominican Republic
Papayas	Brazil, Thailand, Ghana, USA
Pineapple	Ghana, Uganda, South Africa, Togo
Tamarind, cashew apples, lychees, jackfruit, sapodillo plums, passion fruit, carambola and pitahaya	Vietnam, Columbia, Malaysia, Thailand, South Africa
Strawberries	Egypt, Morocco
Other fruit (e.g. tropical fruits)	Columbia, Thailand, Vietnam
Table grapes	Egypt
Cherries	Canada, Chile, USA
Figs	Brazil
Almonds without shells	USA

Source: Own presentation with data from the Consumer Advice Centre Hesse (2010)

The products from the relevant countries of origin listed in Table 3 may still be used if the licence holder can confirm by producing corresponding, verifiable documentation that the relevant product was not transported by air during their entire journey from the point of origin through to the place of use.

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1, i.e. avoiding the use of the products listed in the table from the relevant countries of origin.*

*If the exemption is utilised for specific product/country of origin combinations, the applicant shall submit the following for each product/country of origin combination:*

*i) a description of how the product was transported and*

*ii) clear documentation from the (pre-) suppliers that can be verified by RAL gGmbH.*

*However, the applicant shall inform RAL gGmbH in advance about any planned use of this exemption before using the corresponding product. The compliance verifications described above must be enclosed.*

#### **3.1.11 Requirements for the use of "fair" products**

##### **3.1.11.1 Use of fair trade products (canteen services and event catering)**

Only certified fair trade products may be used for products in the following groups:

- Rice
- Cocoa and products containing cocoa
- Coffee and products containing coffee
- Tea (in the sense of the tea plant *camellia sinensis*) and products made of tea
- Bananas

- Pineapple
- Orange juice
- Quinoa
- Nuts and other edible nuts such as peanuts or cashew kernels
- Spices (e.g. pepper, cinnamon, cloves, turmeric, curry, cardamom, nutmeg, ginger, vanilla)
- Palm oil

The products must have been verifiably cultivated, harvested and processed in their country of origin in accordance with the stated criteria for fair trade:

- Compliance with the ILO fundamental labour standards<sup>29</sup> in agricultural production (cultivation, harvesting)
- Payment of at least the "Fairtrade Minimum Price"<sup>30</sup> to the producer for the agricultural commodity or for a product in the next highest processing stage. If no "Fairtrade Minimum Price" has been defined, the licence holder must pay either a price 10 % above the normal market price<sup>31</sup> or a monetary bonus (of whatever amount) in addition to the normal market price.

This requirement does not apply if it can be verified that the respective product was produced in

- one of the countries of the European Economic Area or in Switzerland or the United Kingdom or one of the following countries that has a customs union with the above-mentioned countries:
- Canada
- USA
- Japan
- South Korea
- Taiwan
- Australia
- New Zealand
- Israel

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1.*

*If using the products stated above, applicants who operate canteen services shall also confirm with reference to an already completed four-week meal plan (across all menu lines) that each product either:*

*i) carries one of the following labels:*

- Fairtrade<sup>32</sup>
- GEPA<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Freedom of association and right to collective bargaining, elimination of forced labour, elimination of child labour, elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, occupational safety and health (see <https://www.ilo.org/berlin/arbeits-und-standards/kernarbeitsnormen/lang--de/index.htm>)

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.fairtrade.net/standard/minimum-price-info>

<sup>31</sup> The normal market price is the price on the free market (without fair standards) for comparable products.

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.fairtrade-deutschland.de>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.gepa.de/home.html>

- *El Puente*<sup>34</sup>
- *BanaFair*<sup>35</sup>
- *fair for life (IMO Institute)*<sup>36</sup>
- *Naturland Fair*<sup>37</sup>
- *Hand in Hand (Rapunzel)*<sup>38</sup>
- *or a comparable label*<sup>39</sup>.

*ii) or that the agricultural producer of the products has been certified according to the standard from the Fairtrade Labelling Organization (FLO), the standard from Naturland Fair or a comparable standard and that the producer was paid the "Fairtrade Minimum Price" or a monetary bonus for the product.*

*iii) is from a producing country in which no label is required.*

*Delivery notes and/or invoices that verify this information should be enclosed.*

*For event catering: the same verifications must also be provided for the products used in at least ten different meals (catering service for the ecolabel).*

### **3.1.11.2 Requirement for minimising social risks in the supply chain (canteen services and event catering)**

If the licence holder becomes aware that labour rights and human rights (e.g. with respect to the ILO fundamental labour standards<sup>40</sup>) are being violated<sup>41</sup> in the supply chains for the products used for the catering service, the licence holder is obligated to take action. The licence holder must instruct his/her (pre-)suppliers to resolve any issues identified and must stop using the respective product if these issues are not resolved within an appropriate period of time.

#### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1.*

### **3.1.12 Restriction on the use of highly processed products in catering services (event catering)**

A maximum of 10 % (measured by monetary value) of the ingredients used in the event catering may be highly processed products according to Appendix B.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> <https://www.el-puente.de/>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.banafair.de/>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.fairforlife.org/>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.naturland.de/de/naturland/wofuer-wir-stehen/fair.html>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.rapunzel.de/hand-in-hand.html>

<sup>39</sup> Comparable quality labels must include an independent audit according to ISO 17065 of compliance with the ILO fundamental labour standards in the cultivation and harvesting processes. Comparable certifications of the agricultural producers (without a quality label on the product) must include an independent audit according to ISO 17065 of compliance with the ILO fundamental labour standards in the cultivation and harvesting processes. The audit must also be submitted.

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/berlin/arbeits-und-standards/kernarbeitsnormen/lang--de/index.htm>

<sup>41</sup> Examples of violations of labour rights in the last few years include exploitative living and working conditions for impoverished migrants from Africa and Southeast Europe in the fruit and vegetable plantations controlled by the Mafia in Italy and serious violations of labour rights in German slaughterhouses.

<sup>42</sup> <https://dqe.de/blog/2022/05/12/hochverarbeitete-lebensmittel/>



### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1.*

*In addition, the applicant shall disclose the highly processed products according to Appendix B that were used in at least ten different meals (catering service for the ecolabel) and verify compliance with the requirement by showing the value of the highly processed products in relation to the total value of the added ingredients. Delivery notes and/or invoices that verify this information should be enclosed.*

#### **3.1.13 Requirement for avoiding and reducing food waste (canteen services and event catering)**

The applicant must continuously and systematically reduce food waste in accordance with the goals of the National Strategy to Reduce Food Waste<sup>43</sup> and must also fulfil the requirements in the "Declaration of participation by companies" (Beteiligungserklärung Für Unternehmen – Declaration to support the agreed targets for the reduction of food waste in away-from-home catering).<sup>44</sup>

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1 and verify compliance with the requirement by submitting either the "Declaration of participation by companies" (listing on the website) and the seal for participation in the reporting to the Competence Centre for Away-From-Home Catering (Kompetenzstelle Außer-Haus-Verpflegung)<sup>45</sup> or verifiable documents (reduction concept, catalogue of measures, documentation of the measurement and reduction of food waste) to confirm that he/she complies with all of the minimum requirements in the "Declaration of participation by companies".*

## **3.2 Requirements at the level of non-food materials**

### **3.2.1 Requirements for the avoidance of disposable materials and the use of reusable packaging**

#### **3.2.1.1 Requirement for the use of reusable packaging when purchasing ingredients ("can" criterion – canteen services and event catering)**

Purchased ingredients must be delivered in reusable packaging wherever possible. If reusable packaging is not offered for certain products, the applicant must ask the supplier to confirm whether and when they expect to start offering this service.

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<sup>43</sup> The BMEL and the signatory associations are working towards the common goal of achieving the indicative targets applicable throughout the European Union of reducing food waste by 30 % by 2025 and 50 % by 2030 compared to the reference year of 2015 in the away-from-home catering sector.

<sup>44</sup> See the requirements under [https://www.zugutfuerdietonne.de/fileadmin/zgfdt/sektorspezifische\\_Dialogforen/Ausser-Haus-Verpflegung/Beteiligungserklaerung\\_AHV\\_kurz.pdf](https://www.zugutfuerdietonne.de/fileadmin/zgfdt/sektorspezifische_Dialogforen/Ausser-Haus-Verpflegung/Beteiligungserklaerung_AHV_kurz.pdf) and the further explanations about the requirements at [https://www.zugutfuerdietonne.de/fileadmin/zgfdt/sektorspezifische\\_Dialogforen/Ausser-Haus-Verpflegung/Beteiligungserklaerung-Reduzierung-von-Lebensmittelabfaellen-in-der-Ausser-Haus-Verpflegung.pdf](https://www.zugutfuerdietonne.de/fileadmin/zgfdt/sektorspezifische_Dialogforen/Ausser-Haus-Verpflegung/Beteiligungserklaerung-Reduzierung-von-Lebensmittelabfaellen-in-der-Ausser-Haus-Verpflegung.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> See <http://www.kahv.de/>

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1.*

#### **3.2.1.2 Requirements for the exclusion of disposable materials in kitchen processes and the serving of food (canteen services and event catering)**

No disposable materials may be used in the kitchen processes. An exception is made for the products listed in Annex 1.

Only reusable crockery and drinking vessels may be used for serving the food and beverages. When serving the food, disposable materials are only permitted for communication purposes (e.g. menu cards, signs on the tables made out of paper).

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1.*

#### **3.2.1.3 Requirements for the use of reusable packaging for takeaway food and left-over food (canteen services)**

For canteen services: only reuseable packaging may be used for both the sale of takeaway food and beverages and also for leftover food that is taken away by the guests.

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1.*

#### **3.2.2 Requirements for the use of environmentally friendly cleaning agents ("can" criterion – canteen services and event catering)**

The environmentally friendly cleaning agents must be certified by an ISO 14024 Type I environmental label, e.g. the Blue Angel or EU Ecolabel<sup>46</sup>.

This applies to the following cleaning agents:

a) Hand dishwashing detergents, b) Dishwasher detergent, c) Laundry detergent, d) All-purpose cleaners, e) Sanitary cleaners, f) Glass cleaners, g) Hand washing detergent, including soap.

Cleaning agents must be used in accordance with the dosage recommendations issued by the relevant manufacturer, whereby dosage aids and the dosage recommendations must always be made easily accessible to employees on notices, stickers or similar.

Disinfectants may only be used where this is necessary to comply with statutory hygiene regulations.

If the licence holder subcontracts this work to a cleaning service, he/she must include the requirements stated here in the invitation to tender for awarding the contract.

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1.*

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<sup>46</sup> Please refer to the website of the Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN) (<https://globalecolabelling.net/>) for other ISO 14024 Type I environmental labels.

*In addition, the applicant shall submit an invoice or certificate of delivery for or about the purchase of environmentally friendly cleaning agents.*

### **3.2.3 Requirements for the use of sustainable textiles ("can" criterion – canteen services and event catering)**

The most recently purchased work clothing and other house and home textiles (e.g. tea towels, tablecloths) must be exclusively sustainable products.

If the work clothing and other house and home textiles are leased or rented from a service provider, the most recent leasing or rental contract must include sustainably produced textiles and house and home textiles.

Sustainable products are considered to be textiles that hold one of the following labels:

- bluesign system<sup>47</sup>
- Blue Angel for textiles<sup>48</sup>
- Cradle to Cradle Certified Products Program (Platinum Level)<sup>49</sup>
- EU Ecolabel for Textile Products<sup>50</sup>
- Fair Wear Foundation – FWF<sup>51</sup>
- Fairtrade Certified Cotton<sup>52</sup>
- Fairtrade International Textile Standard<sup>53</sup>
- Global Organic Textile Standard – GOTS<sup>54</sup>
- Global Recycled Standard – GRS<sup>55</sup>
- Nordic Swan Ecolabel – Textiles<sup>56</sup>
- Austrian Ecolabel for Textiles<sup>57</sup>.

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1.*

*In addition, the applicant shall submit an invoice for the most recently purchased sustainable textiles and house and home textiles. Alternatively, the applicant shall submit the most recent leasing/rental contract for the leasing or rental of sustainable textiles and house and home textiles.*

### **3.2.4 Requirements for the use of environmentally friendly paper and paper products ("can" criterion – canteen services and event catering)**

All paper products such as toilet paper, tissue paper, serviettes, tablecloths, office paper, printed matter and processed paper products (e.g. envelopes) must be certified by an ISO 14024 Type

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<sup>47</sup> <https://www.bluesign.com/en>

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.blauer-engel.de/uz154>

<sup>49</sup> <https://c2ccertified.org/get-certified>

<sup>50</sup> <https://eu-ecolabel.de/fuer-unternehmen/produktgruppen>

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.fairwear.org/ueber-die-fair-wear-foundation/was-ist-fwf/>

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.fairtrade-deutschland.de/produkte/baumwolle-und-textilien/hintergrund-fairtrade-baumwolle>

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.fairtrade.net/standard/textile>

<sup>54</sup> <https://global-standard.org/de>

<sup>55</sup> <https://certifications.controlunion.com/de/certification-programs/certification-programs/grs-global-recycle-standard>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.nordic-ecolabel.org/product-groups/group/?productGroupCode=039>

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.umweltzeichen.at/de/f%C3%BCr-interessierte/der-weq-zum-umweltzeichen/antragsinfos-textilien-uz-69-eco-016>

I environmental label, e.g. the Blue Angel or EU Ecolabel<sup>58</sup> or alternatively they must be made out of 100 % recycled paper.

If alternative reusable products can be used instead of the paper products – e.g. washable serviettes or tablecloths – the applicant must examine whether it is possible to switch over to these products.

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1. In addition, the applicant shall submit an invoice or certificate of delivery for or about the purchase of environmentally friendly paper and paper products.*

#### **3.2.5 Environmentally friendly website ("can" criterion – canteen services and event catering)**

The website must have a barrier-free design and be hosted by a provider that sources 100 % of its electricity from renewable sources.

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1 and name the operator of the platform that hosts the relevant website.*

#### **3.3 Requirements at the level of the (operational) infrastructure (equipment/appliances, energy supply, consumables)**

With respect to the specific type and design of the (operational) infrastructure, such as the rooms and equipment/appliances used to provide the catering services and the equipment used for heating and lighting purposes etc., there are many areas that do not lie under the full control of the licence holder both in canteen services and also event catering.<sup>59</sup>

##### **3.3.1 Requirements for the use of electricity from renewable energies (canteen services and event catering)**

The electricity used in all of the rooms used to provide the catering service must be sourced 100 % from renewable energies as defined in Directive 2018/2001/EU on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources. The amount of electricity consumed must correspond to the supplied proofs of origin for the purchased electricity.

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1 and submit the electricity labelling data as verification. This verification must be re-submitted for every year of the term of the contract on the use of the environmental label.*

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<sup>58</sup> Please refer to the website of the Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN) <https://globalecolabelling.net/> for other ISO 14024 Type I environmental labels.

<sup>59</sup> These areas may fall under the responsibility of the operator in the contractual relationship between the canteen operator and the manager, for example, or the event catering company may use the technology provided by the client or share infrastructure with other caterers (who do not offer services certified with the Blue Angel).

*If the applicant or licence holder is not able to decide which electricity tariff is used, the applicant must verify (e.g. with correspondence via email or letter) that he/she has requested information on the type of electricity tariff from the client and has clearly expressed a desire to use a green electricity tariff.*

### **3.3.2 Requirement for energy-efficient lighting**

#### **3.3.2.1 Use of 100 % LED bulbs (canteen services and event catering)**

All of the rooms used for the catering services (including the guest areas) must only be lighted using LED bulbs.

#### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1. In addition, the applicant shall submit photographic documentation in which the bulbs used for the lighting are clearly identifiable.*

*If the applicant is not able to decide which bulbs are used in the rooms, the applicant must verify (e.g. with correspondence via email or letter) that he/she has clearly expressed a desire for the use of efficient bulbs to the owner of the building.*

#### **3.3.2.2 Installation of motion sensors (canteen services and event catering)**

Motion sensors must be installed in all rooms used for the provision of the catering services that do not need to be permanently lit (e.g. storerooms).

#### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1. In addition, the applicant shall name the rooms that are only lighted when necessary with the aid of motion sensors.*

*If the applicant is not able to decide on the use of motion sensors in the rooms, the applicant must verify (e.g. with correspondence via email or letter) that he/she has clearly expressed a desire for the use of motion sensors to the owner of the building.*

### **3.3.3 Requirements for the applicant to use their own renewable energy ("can" criterion – canteen services and event catering)**

If the applicant is able to independently make changes to his/her premises, renewable energy systems designed to produce his/her own electricity or heating must be installed at the premises, e.g. photovoltaic modules that supply at least some of the consumed electricity and equipment (thermal solar system or heat pumps) that generate a significant portion of the heating energy (for heating and hot water purposes).

#### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall verify the use of his/her own regenerative energy by submitting documentation for the installed systems or data from the electricity meters.*

### **3.3.4 Requirement for the use of energy-efficient and resource-efficient technical equipment/appliances and for the energy-efficient optimisation of the technology (canteen services and event catering)**

Before submitting an application, the applicant should engage the services of a qualified energy consultant. The consultant should examine the energy efficiency of the equipment/appliances and also the anticipated amount of catering that will be produced. The results of this consultation process and the resulting recommendations should be documented. Alternatively, the applicant can verify that these steps have been taken by submitting a valid certificate for the environmental management or energy management system in accordance with EMAS, ISO 14001 or ISO 50001.

Applicants who have little or no influence on the technical equipment/appliances are exempt from this requirement. However, the applicant must at least identify the equipment/appliances with a high level of consumption and calculate their annual consumption data (energy and water consumption).

#### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1. In addition, the applicant shall name the energy consultant, their qualifications and the time period when the consultation process was carried out and shall also submit the documented results of the consultation, including any recommendations.*

*If the applicant has an environmental or energy management system, he/she shall submit the valid certificate according to the standards described above.*

*If the applicant or licence holder has no influence on the equipment/appliances used, they shall submit the consumption data and verify that they have expressed their desire to use efficient equipment/appliances to the owner (e.g. in the form of correspondence via email or letter).*

### **3.3.5 Requirements for the use of energy-efficient technical equipment/appliances (canteen services and event catering)**

The applicant must ensure that the technical equipment/appliances are used in an energy-efficient and resource-efficient way. The measures listed below must be implemented for this purpose:

- Creation and regular amendment of a usage concept for the energy-efficient use of kitchen equipment/appliances (e.g. equipment/appliances that do not preheat earlier than necessary and are used fully loaded where possible),
- Provision of training courses in the operation of energy-efficient equipment/appliances (explanation of the usage concept),
- Attaching clearly visible notices on light switches or equipment/appliances and/or hanging posters with information on how to save energy,
- Implementing needs-based energy saving measures such as:
  - ♦ Needs-based (automatic) reduction in the settings for heating systems (public holidays, weekends) in kitchens and guest rooms,
  - ♦ Needs-based (automatic) switching off of electricity supplies (reducing standby consumption) at the weekend or on company holidays, switching off equipment/appliances and power outlet strips (where sensible),

- ♦ Needs-based use of refrigeration and cooling systems (e.g. storing refrigerated goods in such a way that individual refrigerators can be switched off),
- Regular inspections of energy-related aspects such as:
  - ♦ The availability of user information and instructions (e.g. operating instructions, cleaning and maintenance plans),
  - ♦ Checking and adjusting the temperature settings for refrigerators and cooling equipment,
  - ♦ Optimisation of the work processes for equipment/appliances relevant to energy consumption.

Completed training courses, inspections and changes to the concept must be documented.

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1 and also state whether it is not sensible or practical to implement some of the listed measures in certain cases.*

*Documentation of the training courses, inspections and changes to the concept must be submitted to RAL gGmbH on request.*

### **3.3.6 Requirements for environmentally friendly logistics (canteen services and event catering)**

If the provision of the catering service regularly involves transport by the licence holder in their own or rented vehicles (e.g. for the delivery of food from a production kitchen, the delivery of catering goods, etc.), the licence holder must comply with the following requirements:

- The licence holder must maintain a list of all of the vehicles used, including information on the total kilometres covered per year for the certified catering service, the total amount of fuel or energy consumed and the emission classes of the individual vehicles and their type of drive.
- If the purchased or rented vehicles are new, they should be vehicles that have a drive system with reduced emissions. This includes vehicles with a
  - ♦ fully electric drive and
  - ♦ vehicles powered by CNG (preferably based on biogas).
- If it is not possible to purchase these types of vehicles, only those vehicles with the highest emission reduction standard/Euronorm are permitted as an alternative in each case.
- Electric vehicles must be charged with green electricity.

The efficiency of the logistical processes must be examined.

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirements in Annex 1.*

*When submitting an application, the applicant shall enclose the list of vehicles used and the additional information described above. If requested by RAL GmbH, the applicant shall answer additional follow-up questions.*

*If the applicant or licence holder is not able to decide which vehicles are used, the applicant must verify (e.g. with correspondence via email or letter) that he/she has clearly expressed a desire for the use of alternative vehicles to the owner.*

### **3.3.7 Requirements for water consumption and water saving measures (canteen services and event catering)**

The water consumption (measured in cubic metres per month) must be regularly documented in the kitchens and sculleries. Employees should be encouraged to conserve water by providing them with relevant instructions and information.

#### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirements in Annex 1.*

*Documentation of the monthly water consumption must be submitted to RAL gGmbH on request.*

### **3.4 Requirements in the areas of communication and personnel**

#### **3.4.1 Environmental training/qualification of the staff (canteen services and event catering)**

The licence holder must provide regular (i.e. at least once a year) environmental training/qualification measures for employees. This instruction/training must last at least four hours, be held during working hours and be made available to permanent staff and also – if relevant – external employees. The training courses can be held by both internal and external personnel. This training/instruction must cover practical hints and background information on the following themes:

- balancing greenhouse gas emissions from the catering services,
- sustainable catering,
- measurement, reduction and avoidance of waste,
- water saving measures,
- efficient use of technical equipment/appliances.

#### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1 and verify that the training courses have been carried out by submitting the dates of the training courses, lists of participants and training documents.*

#### **3.4.2 Requirements for remuneration and the maintenance of employee rights**

##### **3.4.2.1 Collective pay agreements and appropriate pay (canteen services and event catering)**

The employment relationship between the employer and employees must be based on a collective pay agreement, using the pay scales valid in the German state in which the company premises are located. Accordingly, all of the applicant's employees must receive appropriate remuneration, with the lowest level being the relevant pay scale in the collective pay agreement. If the applicant employs external personnel, he/she will ensure that they receive at least the relevant pay scale for their job as remuneration that is valid in the collective pay agreement in the German state in which the company premises are located.



### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1 and shall also verify that he/she pays employees appropriate remuneration by concluding a company contract based on the collective pay agreement or by confirming that he/she is a member of an employer's association tied to the collective wage agreement or by submitting the contracts for external personnel.*

#### **3.4.2.2 Co-determination (canteen services and event catering)**

The employee's right of co-determination must be guaranteed in full. Employee representation (works council) should have been established at the company's premises. If this is not the case, a concise and verifiable declaration on the matter must be submitted.

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1.*

*In addition, the applicant shall name the members of the works council. Alternatively, the applicant shall explain in a concise and verifiable way why a form of employee representation has not yet been formed.*

#### **3.4.2.3 Jobs subject to social security contributions (canteen services)**

For catering services: at least 80 % (based on the number of full-time equivalent jobs) of the staff must have permanent employment contracts subject to social security contributions.

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1 and also verify the proportion of jobs subject to social security contributions by submitting a corresponding employment plan.*

#### **3.4.3 Visibility of the Blue Angel during the provision of the catering services (canteen services and event catering)**

For canteen services: certification of the catering service with the Blue Angel ecolabel must be clearly communicated by depicting the ecolabel on e.g. the table cards or menus and in the areas where the food is served.

For event catering: the ecolabel must be depicted in the areas where the food is served by integrating it into the menus or in another form (e.g. appropriate displays on the tables).

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1 and also submit photographic documentation to verify compliance with the requirement.*

#### **3.4.4 Further information on sustainability ("can" criterion – canteen services)**

For canteen services: guests must be informed, where relevant in cooperation with the operator, about other sustainability aspects that are not related to the individual dish or food. This includes

e.g. recommendations and/or nudges for reducing food waste (e.g. selecting portion sizes, side dishes, menu components or the option of taking home leftover food).

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirement in Annex 1 and submit photographic documentation to verify compliance with the requirement.*

### **3.5 Outlook**

These Basic Award Criteria are valid for a period of four years. All of the criteria will be examined to check they are up to date as part of the next revision. The latest political policies such as the sustainability measures implemented by the German government or canteen guidelines at a federal level will naturally be taken into account to ensure that the Blue Angel for event catering and canteen services does not fall behind the policy objectives contained in these measures. However, a particular focus will be placed on the following aspects:

The maximum permissible average greenhouse gas emissions across all of the meals offered and the maximum permissible greenhouse gas emissions per meal will be examined and, if relevant, adjusted. This process will take into account the latest scientific, political and social discussions and also whether these maximum values can be implemented in practice.

The target values for the proportions of organic produce and products from animal welfare-oriented husbandry will also be examined to ensure they are up to date.

As part of a revision of these Basic Award Criteria, the definition of “highly processed products” will be comprehensively discussed and a target value of 10 % will be defined. A lot of work is currently being done in academic circles to produce a uniform definition. Both the definition of this term and the target value will be adapted to match the latest scientific knowledge.

The significance of social requirements in the production of products and also in the provision of services has grown in importance across a wide range of product groups. The “Requirement for minimising social risks in the supply chain” in these Basic Award Criteria was a first step to integrate social criteria more strongly into an ecolabel. Nevertheless, it will be necessary to examine whether it is possible to place even more focus on social aspects in the supply chain in a revised version. The criteria for fair trade products will also be examined to ensure that fairly produced products are still being promoted.

Certain environmental challenges were not addressed in this first edition of the Basic Award Criteria but will be discussed as part of any revision to examine whether appropriate criteria would be expedient. This applies, in particular, to areas where the planetary limits have already been exceeded or are in danger of being exceeded, such as in agricultural production. The following aspects were already discussed here in more detail – especially against the background of transferring them to reliably verifiable Basic Award Criteria: loss of biodiversity, use of nitrogen, use of phosphorous, use of freshwater and changes in land use. A conceivable revision would be to formulate average limits for all meals and a maximum limit per meal– similar to the criteria for determining the greenhouse gas emissions.

Finally, the scope will also be examined. The scope of the Basic Award Criteria currently excludes catering services that are regularly provided to school pupils (e.g. in schools), children (e.g. in childcare facilities) or people requiring care (e.g. in hospitals or nursing care facilities). Discussions will be held to determine how the criteria could be adapted to these groups so that they can also be covered by a Blue Angel ecolabel.

#### **4 Applicants and Parties Involved**

Licence holders are operators of a canteen or providers of catering services for event catering according to Paragraph 2.

Parties involved in the award process are:

- RAL gGmbH to award the Blue Angel Environmental Label,
- the federal state being home to the applicant's production site,
- Umweltbundesamt (German Environmental Agency) which after the signing of the contract receives all data and documents submitted in applications for the Blue Angel in order to be able to further develop the Basic Award Criteria.

#### **5 Use of the Environmental Label**

The use of the Environmental Label by the applicant is governed by a contract on the use of the Environmental Label concluded with RAL gGmbH.

Within the scope of such contract, the applicant undertakes to comply with the requirements under Paragraph 3 while using the Environmental Label.

Contracts on the Use of the Environmental Label are concluded to fix the terms for the certification of products under Paragraph 2. Such contracts shall run until December 31, 2027.

They shall be extended by periods of one year each, unless terminated in writing by March 31, 2027 or March 31 of the respective year of extension.

After the expiry of the contract, the Environmental Label may neither be used for labelling nor for advertising purposes. This regulation shall not affect products being still in the market.

The applicant shall be entitled to apply to RAL gGmbH for an extension of the right to use the ecolabel on the service entitled to the label if it is to be marketed under another brand/trade name and/or other marketing organisations.

The Contract on the Use of the Environmental Label shall specify:

- Applicant (operator of a canteen or provider of catering services)
- Brand/trade name, product description
- Distributor (label user), i.e. the above-mentioned marketing organisations.

## Appendix A Cited legislations and standards, literature

Arens-Azevêdo U.; Böltz M.; Schnur E.; Tecklenburg M. E. for the German Nutrition Society (DGE): Beurteilung ausgewählter Convenience-Produkte in der Gemeinschaftsverpflegung und Handlungsempfehlungen zur Optimierung (Evaluation of selected convenience products in communal catering and recommendations for action for optimising them). Bonn (2020), available online at: <https://www.dge.de/fileadmin/public/doc/gv/publikationen/Convenienceprodukte-GV.pdf>

Breidenassel, C.; Schäfer, A. C.; Micka, M.; Richter, M.; Linseisen, J.; Watzl, B. for the German Nutrition Society (DGE): The Planetary Health Diet in contrast to the food-based dietary guidelines of the German Nutrition Society (DGE). A DGE statement. Ernährungs Umschau 2022 (Nutrition Review 2022); 69(5): 56-72.

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Speck, M.; Rohn, H.; Engelmann, T.; Schweißinger, J.; Neundorff, D.; Teitscheid, P.; Langen, N.; Biege, K. (2017): Entwicklung von integrierten Methoden zur Messung und Bewertung von Speisenangeboten in den Dimensionen Ökologie, Soziales und Gesundheit. Arbeitspapier 2 des NAHGAST Projekts. (Development of integrated methods to measure and evaluate catering services in the environmental, social and health dimensions. Working Paper 2 of the NAHGAST Project). Available online at: <https://www.nahgast.de/publikationen/>

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## Appendix B Example list of highly processed (convenience) products (ingredient or components) used in event catering that have a high energy density and/or a high added sugar, salt and/or fat content, especially saturated fatty acids and/or food additives

Highly processed products should always be combined with minimally processed ones. The target values<sup>60</sup> are:

less than 24 g of fat per meal, of which less than 6.7 g of saturated fatty acids,

the salt content of each meal should be less than 2 g,

less than 10% of the calories in the meal should be from sugar, (avoid the use of products with added sugar, honey, agave nectar, etc. The sugar content of the fruit and vegetables is sufficient.)

The DGE recommends the limits below for the following products (see Table 4):

Table 4<sup>61</sup>: Recommended limits for sauces, dressings and desserts with respect to their calorific values and content of selected nutrients

Subgroup	Max. calories (kcal/100 ml or 100 g)	Max. total sugar (g/100 ml or 100 g)	Max. fat in (g/100 ml or 100 g)	Max. SFA* (g/100 ml or 100 g)	Max. Salt (g/100 ml or 100 g)
<b>Hot base sauces</b>	150	5	6.6	2.4	0.6
<b>Cold tomato sauces</b>	150	9.428	3.0	1.529	0.6
<b>Dressings:</b>					
<b>Based on oil/water</b>	150	5	-	2.4	0.631

\* SFA = saturated fatty acids

### [1] Hot base sauces (wet or dry products):

- Brown and white sauces (including the relevant derivations),
- Vegetable sauces with a focus on tomato sauce
- Béchamel sauce
- Hollandaise sauce

### [2] Salad dressings (wet and dry products) and dips

<sup>60</sup> Speck, M.; Rohn, H.; Engelmann, T.; Schweißinger, J.; Neundorf, D.; Teitscheid, P.; Langen, N.; Bienge, K. (2017): Entwicklung von integrierten Methoden zur Messung und Bewertung von Speisenangeboten in den Dimensionen Ökologie, Soziales und Gesundheit. Arbeitspapier 2 des NAHGAST Projekts. (Development of integrated methods to measure and evaluate catering services in the environmental, social and health dimensions. Working Paper 2 of the NAHGAST Project). Available online at: <https://www.nahgast.de/publikationen/>

<sup>61</sup> Arens-Azevêdo, U.; Böltz, M.; Schnur, E.; Tecklenburg, M.E. for the German Nutrition Society (DGE): Beurteilung ausgewählter Convenience-Produkte in der Gemeinschaftsverpflegung und Handlungsempfehlungen zur Optimierung (Evaluation of selected convenience products in communal catering and recommendations for action for optimising them). Bonn (2020). Available online at: <https://www.dge.de/fileadmin/public/doc/gv/publikationen/Convenienceprodukte-GV.pdf>

### **[3] Soups (wet and dry products)**

#### **[4] Meat substitutes:**

- Vegan schnitzel
- Vegan burgers
- Vegan sausages
- Vegan cordon bleu
- Vegan veggie burgers

#### **[5] Fried meals:**

- Fries
- Croquettes
- Sweet potato fries
- Churros
- Potato filled with cream cheese
- Camembert, breaded
- Hash browns
- Cheese nuggets
- Chicken nuggets

#### **[6] Casseroles:**

- Lasagne
- Potato gratin
- Ham and pasta bake

### **[7] Desserts (wet and dry products)**