

# Green Press Initiative Environmentally Responsible Publisher Certification

## Section 1: About the Green Press Initiative Publisher Certification

### Summary

The Green Press Initiative publisher certification identifies publishers that are taking a leadership role in reducing social and environmental impacts. This certification looks at a publisher's aggregate paper use over the course of a year and ensures that they have eliminated virtually all paper that is sourced from high conservation value forests. Additionally in order to become certified, a publisher must meet required benchmarks for using recycled fiber and paper that is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Publishers are also required to obtain a certain number of elective benchmark points which are awarded by demonstrating environmental achievements from a broad range of options including reducing greenhouse gas emissions, preventing books from being landfilled, reducing paper consumption, and minimizing the use of toxic compounds in manufacturing processes.

The certification is tiered with three levels: certified; silver certified; and gold certified, and the required benchmarks become more stringent as you move from certified to gold certified.



### On-Product Usage

Certified publishers may use the logo on websites, catalogs and any promotional materials or media. Certified publishers may also use the logo on books though it must be accompanied by language that clearly states that the certification verifies the overall environmental performance of the publisher and is not making specific claims about an individual book or product.

### History and Stakeholder Involvement

Green Press Initiative first presented the idea of an environmentally responsible publisher certification to the Book Industry Environmental Council (BIEC) in 2008 and helped lead the BIEC in developing a scorecard that could be used to evaluate a publisher's overall environmental performance. In 2010 the BIEC decided to discontinue work on the scorecard however that scorecard contributed significantly to the Green Press Initiative certification that has since been developed.

Green Press Initiative has been working on this certification for more than three years, and has incorporated feedback from key industry stakeholders as well as numerous environmental organizations that have expertise on paper and printing issues. The result is a certification that we believe is meaningful, credible, and achievable for publishers that place a strong emphasis on reducing environmental impacts.

## Section 2: Certification Requirements

To qualify for any level of certification publishers must comply with High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) requirements as well as the benchmarks identified below for each level of certification.



Certified Tier			
	Recycled Benchmark	FSC Benchmark	Elective Benchmarks
Option 1	At least 30% recycled (Minimum 25% pcr)	At least 20% FSC	At least one point must be obtained from the elective benchmarks listed below.
Option 2	At least 50% recycled (Minimum 45% pcr)	No Minimum FSC Requirement	At least one point must be obtained from the elective benchmarks listed below (cannot be from elective benchmark A).
Option 3	At least 25% recycled (Minimum 20% pcr)	At least 15% FSC	At least three points must be obtained from the elective benchmarks listed below.
Option 4	At least 20% recycled (Minimum 15% pcr)	At least 10% FSC	At least five points must be obtained from the elective benchmarks listed below.



Silver Certified Tier			
	Recycled Benchmark	FSC Benchmark	Elective Benchmarks
Option 1	At least 40% recycled (Minimum 35% pcr)	At least 25% FSC	At least one point must be obtained from the elective benchmarks listed below.
Option 2	At least 60% recycled (Minimum 55% pcr)	No Minimum FSC Requirement	At least one point must be obtained from the elective benchmarks listed below (cannot be from elective benchmark A).
Option 3	At least 35% recycled (Minimum 30% pcr)	At least 20% FSC	At least three points must be obtained from the elective benchmarks listed below.
Option 4	At least 30% recycled (Minimum 25% pcr)	At least 15% FSC	At least five points must be obtained from the elective benchmarks listed below.



Gold Certified Tier			
	Recycled Benchmark	FSC Benchmark	Elective Benchmarks
Option 1	At least 50% recycled (Minimum 45% pcr)	At least 30% FSC	At least one point must be obtained from the elective benchmarks listed below.
Option 2	At least 70% recycled (Minimum 65% pcr)	No Minimum FSC Requirement	At least one point must be obtained from the elective benchmarks listed below (cannot be from elective benchmark A).
Option 3	At least 45% recycled (Minimum 40% pcr)	At least 25% FSC	At least three points must be obtained from the elective benchmarks listed below.
Option 4	At least 40% recycled (Minimum 35% pcr)	At least 20% FSC	At least five points must be obtained from the elective benchmarks listed below.

## Section 3: Elective Benchmarks

### Elective Benchmark A: Additional Recycled Fiber (publisher may receive up to 2 points):

**+ 1 point:** Portion of recycled fiber (both pre and postconsumer) exceed the minimums listed below for the level of certification for which you are applying

- ▶ Certified- 40% recycled (minimum 35% pcr)
- ▶ Sliver Certified- 50% recycled (minimum 45% pcr)
- ▶ Gold Certified- 60% recycled (minimum 55% pcr)

**++ 2 points:** Portion of recycled fiber (both pre and postconsumer) exceed the minimums listed below for the level of certification for which you are applying.

- ▶ Certified- 50% recycled (minimum 35% pcr)
- ▶ Sliver Certified- 60% recycled (minimum 45% pcr)
- ▶ Gold Certified- 70% recycled (minimum 55% pcr)

### Elective Benchmark B: Additional FSC Certified Paper (publisher may receive up to 2 points):

**+ 1 point:** Portion of total paper used that is FSC certified exceeds the minimums listed below for the level of certification for which you are applying.

- ▶ Certified- 30%
- ▶ Sliver Certified- 35%
- ▶ Gold Certified- 40%

**++ 2 points:** Portion of total paper used that is FSC certified exceeds the minimums listed below for the level of certification for which you are applying.

- ▶ Certified- 40%
- ▶ Sliver Certified- 45%
- ▶ Gold Certified- 50%

### Elective Benchmark C: Reductions in Average Basis Weight (publisher may receive up to 2 points):

**+ 1 Point:** Publisher can provide documentation demonstrating that the average basis weight of paper used in publications has decreased by at least 15% compared to any year within the past five years.

**++ 2 Points:** Publisher can provide documentation demonstrating that the average basis weight of paper used in publications has decreased by at least 30% compared to any year within the past five years.

### Elective Benchmark D: Low Returns Rate (publisher may receive up to 2 points):

**+ 1 Point:** Publisher can provide documentation demonstrating that the return rate of physical books sold to retailers is below 20%.

**++ 2 Points:** Publisher can provide documentation demonstrating that the return rate of physical books sold to retailers is below 15%

**Elective Benchmark E: Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Publisher may receive up to 2 elective points from this benchmark by documenting any two of the options below. Publishers may not claim points for both option i and option vii)**

- i. **+ 1 Point:** A reduction in electricity consumption for office space owned/occupied by the company of least 20% within the past 5 years
- ii. **+ 1 Point:** A reduction in gas/oil consumption for office space owned/occupied by the company of least 20% within the past 5 years
- iii. **+ 1 Point:** At least 20% of electricity used for office space owned/occupied by the company is sourced from next generation renewable energy sources (i.e. wind, solar, or RECs derived from such sources)
- iv. **+ 1 Point:** Company has purchased credible carbon offsets that account for at least 25% of electricity or gas and oil used for office space owned/occupied by the company
- v. **+ 1 Point:** A reduction of at least 20% in either the total miles that books travel on average, or a 20% reduction in total fuel consumed for book distribution
- vi. **+ 1 Point:** Primary office building is LEED certified
- vii. **+ 1 Point:** At least 75% of all lighting in buildings owned/occupied by the company consist of the following:
  - ▶ T-8 (or lower) fluorescent lighting
  - ▶ Compact fluorescent light bulbs
  - ▶ LED Lights

**Elective Benchmark F: Responsible Paper Bleaching (publisher may receive up to 1 point):**

**+ 1 Point** Publisher can provide documentation that at least 50% of fiber used in book paper is either unbleached or bleached using Totally Chlorine Free (TCF), Processed Chlorine Free (PCF) or Enhanced Elemental Chlorine Free (EECF) processes.

**Elective Benchmark G: Use of Low VOC Inks (publisher may receive up to 1 point):**

**+ 1 Point:** Publisher can provide documentation demonstrating that at least 25% of book units printed are printed with inks containing a volatile organic compound (VOC) content of 5% or below.

**Elective Benchmark H: Use of Papers Manufactured with Next Generation Renewable Energy (publisher may receive up to 1 points):**

**+ 1 Point:** At least 20% of papers used in publications are produced using at least 75% next generation renewable energy sources.

**Elective Benchmark I: Keeping Books out of Landfills (publisher may receive up to 1 point):**

**+ 1 Point:** Publisher can provide documentation demonstrating that of books that are unsold and destroyed directly by the publisher, at least 75% are either, recycled, donated, or otherwise diverted from landfills or incineration. This elective is only available to publishers who are directly responsible for destroying at least 25% of the total units of books they produce that are eventually destroyed.

**Elective Benchmark J: Agricultural/Alternative Fiber (publisher may receive up to 1 point):**

**+ 1 Point:** At least 10% of fiber used in book papers is made of agricultural residue of alternative materials that has been demonstrated through an independent lifecycle analysis to reduce impacts compared to virgin tree fiber.

## **Elective Benchmark K: Innovative and Industry Leading Products, Processes or Initiatives (publisher may receive up to 1 point):**

**+ 1 Point:** Publisher uses a product or implements a process or initiative that goes beyond standard industry practices, and significantly reduces the environmental footprint of the company.

### **Section 4: Protection of HCVFs**

#### **HCVF Requirement-Required for any level of certification:**

In an effort to significantly reduce harm to High Conservation Value Forests (HCVFs) and impacts on indigenous communities, at the time of certification 100% of the virgin fiber used in book paper must be:

- A) FSC certified fiber, OR
- B) SFI, CSA, or PEFC certified paper that is also certified to meet the FSC controlled wood standard, or other fiber that is certified to the FSC controlled wood standard, OR
- C) Agricultural or alternative fiber that has, through an independent and comprehensive lifecycle analysis been demonstrated to reduce environmental impacts compared to making a similar paper from virgin tree fiber.

Additionally no fiber used in books can be derived from trees that were harvested illegally in their country of origin, or sourced from areas without effective social laws.

In the event that a publisher has gone through a good faith process to provide documentation and ensure that HCVF fiber is not in their product mix as defined in the fiber list above, but a credible report shows otherwise after the fact, the publisher will be allowed to pass this requirement provisionally provided the fiber-of-concern is phased out by the next certification. Additionally an allowance of up to 5% of paper used will be granted for cases where immediate changes or paper needs, or unique paper types make the use of paper meeting the FSC controlled wood standard impossible to ascertain. In the first year of certification an allowance of up to 15% may be granted and in such cases a provisional certification may be awarded. After the first year this allowance will be reduced to 5% and the publisher must ensure that 95% of fiber meets the requirements detailed above within 1 year of initial certification in order to renew their certification.

### **Section 5: Scope and timing**

Publishers will be evaluated based on books printed during the previous calendar year (January, 1 to December, 31). Certification is valid for one year and publishers must recertify annually if they wish to continue using the “Certified Environmentally Responsible Publisher” seal. Publishers may choose to include only the paper that makes up the main book block of the printed books, or they can include both the main book block and cover materials. Each publisher must however be consistent from year to year as to whether or not they include cover materials.

Publishers must have each paper supplier complete a spreadsheet which identifies all papers supplied during the previous calendar year as well as the total weight of each paper supplied and a variety of environmental specifications for each paper. This spreadsheet can be downloaded [here](#). For the purpose of this certification, the paper supplier is the entity from which the publisher purchased the paper.

### **Section 6: Documentation Requirements**

**Note:** Where a letter/document from a printer or supplier is required, the same letters or documents may be used to demonstrate compliance with multiple benchmarks as long as the information specified below is included for each benchmark.

#### **✓ Documentation required to demonstrate compliance with HCVF requirements:**

A publisher must submit a copy of the GPI Certification Supplier Spreadsheet from each paper supplier with the sections regarding recycled content, FSC certification, agricultural fiber and controlled wood completed where applicable.

#### **✓ Documentation required for recycled benchmarks and elective benchmark A: Additional recycled fiber:**

Recycled benchmarks and elective benchmark A can be verified by having each paper supplier complete the GPI Certification Supplier Spreadsheet sections regarding recycled content for each paper supplied.

✓ **Documentation required for FSC benchmarks and elective benchmark B: Additional FSC certified paper:**

FSC benchmarks and elective benchmark B can be verified by having each paper supplier complete the GPI Certification Supplier Spreadsheet sections regarding FSC certification for each paper supplied.

✓ **Documentation required for elective benchmark C: Reductions in average basis weight:**

Letters/documentation from printers or other suppliers indicating current average basis weight and averages for any year within the previous 5 years is preferred. If that is not available documentation from the publisher's internal tracking system will be accepted.

✓ **Documentation required for elective benchmark D: Low returns rate:**

Publisher must provide documents from internal tracking systems that demonstrate the return rate for the previous calendar year.

✓ **Documentation required for elective benchmark E: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions:**

The documentation requirements for the various options within this benchmark are listed below:

- i. **Reduction in electricity consumption for office space:** Copies of utility bills demonstrating the reduction in energy consumption will be required. Bills must show electricity consumption from all buildings that are involved in book publishing operations.
- ii. **Reductions in gas/oil consumption for office space:** Copies of utility bills demonstrating the reduction in oil/gas consumption will be required. Bills must show oil/gas consumption from all buildings that are involved in book publishing operations.
- iii. **Use of next generation renewable energy:** A receipt, invoice or letter from the renewable energy provider will be required. If generating energy onsite, a bill, invoice or letter from utility provider which displays the amount of energy purchased/sold to/from the grid will be required.
- iv. **Purchases of credible carbon offsets:** Copies of the receipts or certificates from the offset provider will be required.
- v. **Reduction in mileage/fuel consumption for book distribution:** Receipts and letter from distribution partners detailing more efficient distribution method will be required.
- vi. **LEED certification:** A copy of a certificate of letter from the USGBC will be required
- vii. **Efficient lighting:** Receipts from the purchase of lighting, or documentation from a 3rd party verification (either from an energy audit, or LEED certification) are preferred. In cases where this is not available, a signed statement from the publisher will be accepted.

✓ **Documentation required for elective benchmark F: Responsible paper bleaching:**

To receive an elective benchmark point for responsible paper bleaching, publishers should have all paper suppliers complete the section of the GPI Certification Supplier Spreadsheet regarding bleaching process for each paper supplied.

✓ **Documentation required for elective benchmark G: Use of low VOC inks:**

A letter or documentation from all printers, which states the number of total units that were printed and the number that were printed with inks that contain less than 5% volatile organic compounds (VOCs)

✓ **Documentation required for elective benchmark I: Keeping books out of landfills:**

Documentation such as receipts, invoices or letters from the companies/organizations that received the discarded books (either to shred and recycle or as a donation) will be required. Documentation must show either the number of units that were transferred to the receiving party or pounds/tons of books received.

✓ **Documentation required for elective benchmark J: Agricultural/alternative fiber:**

To receive credit for using alternative or agricultural fiber publishers should have their suppliers complete the GPI Certification Supplier Spreadsheet sections regarding the amount of agricultural or alternative fiber in each paper supplied. For papers that contain agricultural or alternative fiber a separate letter or document should be included that describes the type of agricultural or alternative fiber used and reference any studies or information regarding the environmental advantages of the material.

## Section 7: Definitions

**Agricultural and Alternative Fibers and Papers:** For the purpose of this certification, Agricultural and Alternative Fibers and Papers refers to materials used to make paper or paper alternatives which are not directly or indirectly sourced from trees. This may include agricultural residue, on purpose crops, or other materials. In order to receive a point for benchmark J, these alternative papers/fibers must undergo a credible, independent life-cycle analysis demonstrating a net environmental advantage associate with the alternative fiber/material compared to paper made from virgin tree fiber. This requirement is waived for fiber that is derived from agricultural waste from food crops.

**Carbon Offsets:** Also called carbon credits, are instrument in which individuals, corporations or organizations fund carbon reduction or sequestration projects to negate a certain quantity of the purchaser's own greenhouse gas emissions. Carbon offsets are measured in metric tons of carbon-dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e). To qualify for this certification all carbon offsets must be certified to the Gold Standard. For more information visit [www.cdmgoldstandard.org](http://www.cdmgoldstandard.org).

**Energy Efficient Lighting:** For the purposes of this certification, energy efficient lighting is defined as light emitting diodes (LEDs), T-8 or T-5 fluorescent lighting, or compact fluorescent bulbs.

**Postconsumer recycled:** The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines preconsumer recycled material as "Materials or finished products that have served their intended use and have been diverted or recovered from waste destined for disposal, having completed their lives as consumer items. Postconsumer materials are part of the broader category of recovered materials."

**Preconsumer recycled (PCR):** The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines preconsumer recycled material as "Materials generated in manufacturing and converting processes such as manufacturing scrap and trimmings and cuttings. Includes print overruns, overissue publications, and obsolete inventories."

**Qualifying Next Generation, Low Impact, Renewable Energy:** Energy that is derived from one of the following:

- 1) Solar Electric;
- 2) Wind;
- 3) Geothermal;
- 4) Methane recovered from landfills
- 5) Hydropower from new generation capacity on a non-impoundment or new generation capacity on an existing impoundment that meets one or more of the following conditions:
  - ▶ The hydropower facility is certified by the Low Impact Hydropower Institute;
  - ▶ For Canadian hydropower facilities only, the facility is EcoLogo certified; or
  - ▶ The hydropower facility consists of a turbine in a pipeline or a turbine in an irrigation canal.

**Renewable Energy Credits:** Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) are created when renewable energy sources (i.e wind or solar) begin generating electricity. The party producing the renewable energy may sell the RECs and the purchaser can claim the benefits of using an equivalent amount of renewable energy. 1 REC represents 1 megawatt hour (MWh) of renewable energy that is produced. To qualify for points for this certification, RECs must be certified by Green-e. and must be derived from one of the 5 energy sources identified previously as Next Generation, Low Impact, Renewable Energy.