



Certification scheme MPS Potting soil from sustainable natural sources

The certification scheme for MPS Potting soil from sustainable natural sources
is published by:
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www.my-mps.com

Date of publication: 1 April 2013

Revision: 0

Established by: MPS Council of Stakeholders, 30 November 2016,
validated by the MPS Board on 14 December 2016.

Valid from: 1 January 2017

Compulsory from: 1 May 2017

Version: 2

In case of doubt or ambiguity, the Dutch version of the certification scheme has precedence.

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Certification criteria for MPS Potting soil from sustainable natural sources

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0 General conditions

0.1 Terms and definitions

Term	Definition
Applicant	The company making a request to an approved CB for certification of MPS potting soil from sustainable natural sources.
Bio-plastic	Plastic made from natural products. This in fact concerns artificial bio-polymers. The compostability of bio-plastics complies with EN 13432.
Certificate	The document, issued by the CB, which communicates that there is justified trust that the product in question produced by the company described in the Certificate, complies with the requirements given in this certification scheme, on the basis of which the certificate has been awarded.
Certificate holder	Legal entity marketing the certified product.
CB	Certification Body.
Compostable	A material is compostable if it can be decomposed in a composting process, and thereby converted into compost. The decomposition process can either be achieved purely biologically by micro-organisms, though physical or chemical processes can also play a role (due to a higher temperature, mechanical shifting, acidity, ultraviolet radiation, oxygen, etc.). A compostable material must in fact have no negative effect on the composting process, nor on the quality of the compost produced in the end. This means that decomposition products must not be (eco-)toxic, and must be absorbed into the natural carbon cycle (in other words, they must not accumulate)
CoS	Council of Stakeholders.
Renewable raw materials	Also known as natural raw materials, these are raw materials which renew themselves within 100 years.
Initial audit	This is the initial audit prior to certification.
Virgin peat	Peat which has not been used for agricultural purposes before or during extraction.
MPS	Scheme owner.
Natura 2000 regions	Also known as the Natura 2000 network, comprising those areas appointed by the Birds Directive (EU directive 70/409/EEC) and registered under the Habitats Directive (EU directive 92/43/EEC). Both European directives are important instruments for safeguarding the European biodiversity.
Non-virgin peat	Peat which is reused after already having been used (in potting soil or other products) or which was used for agricultural purposes before extraction (e.g. "grassland peat").
Organic fertiliser	A fertiliser made from leftover plant material and/or animal products (faeces).
Organic matter	Organic matter is mainly derived from plants and to a small extent from animals and micro-organisms. In the soil, it is also referred to humus.
Hazardous materials	'Hazardous materials' is defined as crop protection agents, heavy metals and other chemicals and pathogens (i.e. Bacteria and fungi) or residues thereof.
Scope	The products of the given locations which have been ascertained by CB to meet the requirements.
Cultivation medium (potting soil)	Organic materials other than the soil in situ, in which plants are cultivated.
Sustainable extraction	The extraction of raw materials in such a manner that there is minimum burden on the environment. Both during extraction and afterwards. The choice of the extraction plots also plays a role here.

0.2 Area of application

- a) The certification scheme applies to organic growth medium, this being a product used as a cultivation medium for plants for the professional as well as the consumer market.
- b) The certificate holder is a producer of growth medium.

0.3 Purpose of the certification scheme

The purpose of the scheme is to arrive at optimally natural and sustainable potting soil, which is guaranteed to comply with the functional quality requirements.

The scheme stimulates sustainable extraction of the raw materials and production of the potting soil. This can be achieved, for example, by:

- stimulation of the use of renewable raw materials,
- stimulation of limitation of the risks for the environment (peat digging, sensible extraction of raw materials, leaching of fertilisers, the use of organic fertilisers),
- providing certification for potting soil which has a better “environmental performance”.

0.4 Finance

The applicant and the certificate holder must pay the costs of the certification test and the periodic checks to the implementing Certification Body (CB). The costs are invoiced directly by the CB in question, according to an agreement between the CB and the applicant or certificate holder, respectively.

0.5 Dispensation

- a) In extraordinary cases, the MPS Council of Interested Parties (CIP) can grant dispensation from one or more conditions or obligations in the event that the Council is of the opinion that compliance with those conditions and/or obligations cannot reasonably be required or when compliance with specific conditions can be demonstrated by other means.
- b) Conditions and regulations can be attached to this dispensation and to the certificate awarded (partly) on the grounds of this dispensation.
- c) The dispensation is laid down in writing and issued to the participant. The dispensation must be stored with the registration and must be available at the time of any audit, where relevant.

0.6 Liability

MPS cannot accept any liability whatsoever for any loss, of any form, incurred by applicants, certificate holders or third parties arising from or connected with the implementation of the certification scheme. The certificate holders indemnify MPS against any claims from third parties.

0.7 Certificate requirements

- a) All requirements of the certification scheme must be met.
- b) The application form must be completed (Appendix C).

0.8 Certification Bodies

- a) Monitoring of compliance with the conditions of this certification scheme is the responsibility of expert and experienced auditors (from MPS-ECAS, other CBs or individual auditors). Certification is carried out by MPS-ECAS alone.
- b) Qualified auditors must be deployed for the monitoring process.
 - They have HBO (Bachelor) level education and attitude. They also have know-how in the field of environmental research (environmental effects) proven by certificates or demonstrable working experience.
 - They have demonstrable knowledge of or experience with the agricultural sector.
 - They have at least two years' relevant working experience.
 - They have conducted at least 10 certification tests for product and/or system certification or at least one initial audit or two periodical checks for this scheme, as a trainee supervised by a qualified auditor of this scheme.
 - They have thorough knowledge of this certification scheme, which is kept up-to-date by participating in auditor meetings organised by CBs, and by conducting at least one initial audit or two periodical checks for this scheme each year.
 - Auditors must be able to identify themselves during their work, if requested to do so by the applicant/certificate holder.

0.9 Audits

- a) Audits for the purpose of this certification scheme take place at least annually.

- b) The audit comprises a company visit in order to assess whether the set requirements are met. In situations where national legislation is more stringent, the requirements of this national legislation must be met.
- c) The CB may determine that an extra periodical check is required, as a reaction to detect shortcomings or due to complaints regarding the certificate holder, for example.
- d) The audits are conducted according to an agreement reached between the CB and the certificate holder. The agreement is entered into for a period of three years.
- e) The combination of an audit for this certification scheme with an audit for another certification scheme is permissible.
- f) The check takes place by means of interviews with the management and/or employees of the applicant's company, as well as observations made at the company and monitoring of the accounts and administrative data. All documentation relevant to this scheme must be made available to the auditor.
- g) The CB will provide MPS with the following details within a week of the certificate being granted:
 - o the name of the company of the certificate holder and the trading name under which the company works and, if different, the name of the person actually representing the company.
 - o the complete address and location of the company of the certificate holder and all extra locations where company activities take place.
 - o the original date of registration as a certificate holder,
 - o the scope.

0.10 Use of the collective trademark

- a) MPS grants the non-exclusive use of the collective trademark of this scheme to suppliers of sustainable natural potting soil who have concluded a certification agreement with an approved CB and whose products and operations comply with at least the requirements laid down in the relevant CB's Product Certification Regulations, the prevailing version of this certification scheme and any new and/or amended rules and/or regulations that come into force after the date on which the agreement is concluded. The right to make use of the collective trademark of this scheme is restricted solely to certificate holders who have received certification on the basis of this certification scheme.
- b) The collective trademark provides the necessary assurances for the shared characteristics relating to the scope of this certification scheme.
- c) Certificate holders are entitled to use the trademark of this scheme in all forms of company presentation, as long as there is a clear link to the products which meet the requirements (it may be presented on the website, and in purchasing and sales documents, for example).
- d) The trademark may be applied to products, provided that it is explicitly linked to the company name, address and location of the company.
- e) When using the trademark, the certificate holder must always state his MPS registration number.
- f) The certificate holder may not use the trademark as an own trade name.
- g) The certificate holder may not transfer his right to use the trademark, or license it to any other person.
- h) MPS makes the digital design of the trademark available to the certificate holders.
- i) The trademark may be used in any colour required, though we have a preference for the corporate style colour of MPS. This is the colour in which the trademark is supplied.
- j) Upon cancellation of the agreements, the trademark, the certificate or any other document related to this certification scheme may not be used, in accordance with the user regulations and other rules.

0.11 Sanctions

- a) If the certificate holder fails to comply with the obligations arising from the certification scheme, the sanction regulations of the scheme owner and the CB shall take effect.
- b) If the certificate holder operates contrary to the certification scheme, his right to the use of the collective "MPS Potting soil from sustainable natural sources" trademark will be revoked.

0.12 Amendments

- a) When recommended to do so by the MPS CoS, the MPS Board is entitled to amend the certification scheme.
- b) Should the regulations, conditions, rules or instructions referred to in this certification scheme subsequently be amended, then the new versions thereof shall prevail.
- c) Amendments to certification requirements and relevant rules will be formulated by the MPS CoS and verified by the MPS Board, after which they become binding between parties. Certificate holders will be informed of the amendments. A realistic transition period will be allowed in order to give certificate holders the opportunity to make any adjustments required for implementation of the amended requirements. If the certificate holders cannot comply with the new requirements following the transition period, this may result in certification not being continued in accordance with the new requirements.

0.13 Publication

- a) A copy of the certification scheme can be downloaded from the website www.my-mps.com.
- b) The certification holder receives information about any amendments to the certification scheme during the registration period.
- c) The list of certificate holders is made public. The CoS determines the manner in which the data may be made available.
- d) MPS publishes the name and address data, registration numbers and Internet addresses of the certified companies on its website. The certificate holder must agree to this publication/provision/statement of data.
- e) If the certificate holder has introduced products to the market bearing the trademark of this scheme, which have subsequently been determined or for which there is suspicion that they deviate substantially from the norm, the certificate holder must take all possible measures to prevent risk for the environment, health and safety.
- f) MPS is entitled to process, analyse or use the information provided by the producer (or have this done by others) in order to establish general statistics, group statistics (= more than 10 individual company situations), etc. The MPS Board determines the method by which and the relevant purposes for which this data is published.

1. Requirements for Producers

Requirement	Interpretation
<p>1.1 The certificate holder must conduct an internal audit at least once every year in order to check the requirements of this certification scheme. Corrective measures must be implemented and documented, as must the audit itself.</p> <p>1.2 Presence of a complaints registration system.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p>1.3 The producer must have an environmental care system.</p>	<p>1.1 There must be proof that an internal audit is conducted at least once every year to check the criteria of this certification scheme, the results of which are documented and any corrective measures can be proven to have been implemented.</p> <p>1.2 All certificate holders are required to maintain a register of complaints/comments which they receive from other participants, traders, auctions, etc. regarding aspects of this certification scheme. This register must also include the corrective measures that were taken.</p> <p>1.3 There must be proof of an implemented and operational environmental care system (handbook, procedures, etc.) or an NEN-ISO 14001 environmental management system.</p>

2. Functional requirements

Requirement	Interpretation
<p>2.1 The cultivation medium must meet the quality according to an accredited or statutory quality system.</p> <p>2.2 The cultivation medium must meet the customer requirements.</p>	<p>2.1 It must meet the criteria of RHP, NF, RAL, Qualité de France or comparable quality criteria. The quality parameters of all raw materials must be demonstrable.</p> <p>2.2 Recorded in the purchase agreement</p>

3. Raw materials requirements

Requirement	Interpretation
<p>3.1 General</p> <p>3.1.1 The cultivation medium must contain at least 25% (of the cultivation medium volume) of renewable raw materials.</p>	<p>3.1.1 Renewable materials include tree bark, wood fibre, compost, coconut products and rice husks.</p>

<p>3.2 Peat (turf)</p> <p>3.2.1 Peat is dug in a justified manner in order that the environmental effect is limited.</p> <p>3.2.2 Peat must not be dug without a valid license.</p>	<p>3.2.1a Only at locations for which a landscape recovery plan has been formulated on the basis of an Environmental Effect Report (EER) according to the EU directive 85/337/EEC.</p> <p>3.2.1b Peat is not dug at locations allocated by the appropriate authorities as being protected natural areas, or as Natura 2000 areas in the EU or compound areas outside the EU which are covered by the UN 'Convention on Biological Diversity'. The exception is when a company already has a permit to dig peat in such an area. This must be demonstrable by means of statement by the supplier(s).</p> <p>3.2.2 The permit is present/demonstrable at the company.</p>
<p>3.3 Coco peat</p> <p>3.3.1 Buffering by means of non-natural sourced products is permitted, but not required.</p>	<p>Coco peat is a by-product of the coconut industry and is regarded to be a natural and sustainable (renewable) raw material.</p>
<p>3.4 Compost</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p>3.4.1 Compost must be available "local for local" whenever possible (max. 150 km).</p>	<p>Compost is regarded to be a natural and sustainable (renewable) raw material.</p>
<p>3.5 Tree bark</p> <p>3.5.1 The bark should preferably be derived from sustainably managed forests.</p>	<p>Bark is a by-product of the mechanical wood mill industry and is regarded to be a natural and sustainable (renewable) raw material.</p> <p>3.5.1 Demonstrable by means of a written statement from the supplier of the bark.</p>

<p>3.6 Lava</p> <p>3.6.1 Lava is extracted in a justified manner in order that the environmental effect is limited.</p>	<p>Lava is regarded to be a natural mineral.</p> <p>3.6.1 Lava is not extracted at locations which the applicable authorities have designated to be important for the community or Natura 2000 areas in the EU or comparable areas outside the EU, covered by the UN 'Convention on Biological Diversity'. Demonstrable by means of a written statement from the supplier of the lava.</p>
<p>3.7 Sand</p> <p>3.7.1 Sand is extracted in a justified manner in order that the environmental effect is limited.</p>	<p>Sand is regarded to be a natural mineral.</p> <p>3.7.1 Sand is not extracted at locations which the applicable authorities have designated to be important for the community or Natura 2000 areas in the EU or comparable areas outside the EU, covered by the UN 'Convention on Biological Diversity'. Demonstrable by means of a written statement from the supplier of the sand.</p>
<p>3.8 Clay</p> <p>3.8.1 Clay is extracted in a justified manner in order that the environmental effect is limited.</p>	<p>Clay is regarded to be a natural mineral.</p> <p>3.8.1 Clay is not extracted at locations which the applicable authorities have designated to be important for the community or Natura 2000 areas in the EU or comparable areas outside the EU, covered by the UN 'Convention on Biological Diversity'. Demonstrable by means of a written statement from the supplier of the clay.</p>
<p>3.9 Rice husks</p> <p>3.9.1 Rice hulls should be free of hazardous materials.</p> <p>3.9.2 Rice hulls should be free of (germinating) weed seed.</p>	<p>Rice husks are a by-product of the rice industry and are regarded to be a natural and sustainable (renewable) raw material.</p> <p>3.9.1 Demonstrable by means of an analysis report issued by an ISO 17025 accredited laboratory.</p> <p>3.9.2 Sterilization may prevent seeds from germinating.</p>

<p>3.10 Wood fibre</p> <p>3.10.1 Wood fibre should preferably be derived from sustainably managed forests.</p>	<p>3.10.1 Demonstrable by means of a written statement from the supplier of the wood fibre.</p>
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4. Additives

Requirement	Interpretation
<p>4.1 Organic fertilisers</p> <p>4.1.1 At least 75% of the total weight % of the fertilisers added to the potting soil, excluding lime fertilizers must be organic fertilisers.</p> <p>4.1.2 The organic fertilisers in question must contain at least 25% organic matter.</p>	
<p>4.2 Inorganic fertilisers</p> <p>4.2.1 Slowly working inorganic fertilisers should preferably be used.</p>	
<p>4.3 Additives</p> <p>4.3.1 At least 75% of the remaining additives must be naturally sourced.</p> <p>4.3.2 The use of bio-stimulating agents is permitted.</p> <p>4.3.3 Additives must be free from organisms which are damaging to the application (and must be clean in accordance with the phytosanitary standards)</p>	<p>4.3.2 If the agents used have an approval number, the statutory user instructions must be complied with.</p> <p>4.3.3 This can be demonstrated by presenting results from an analysis or a certificate issued by the producer.</p>

<p>4.4 Lime</p> <p>4.4.1 Lime is extracted in a justified manner in order that the environmental effect is limited.</p>	<p>4.4.1 Lime is not extracted at locations which the applicable authorities have designated to be important for the community or Natura 2000 areas in the EU or comparable areas outside the EU, covered by the UN 'Convention on Biological Diversity'. Demonstrable by means of a written statement from the supplier of the lime.</p>
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5. Packaging

Requirement	Interpretation
<p>5.1 PVC, cadmium or chlorinated material must not be used.</p> <p>5.2 The packaging (bags) of the project should preferably be bio plastics.</p> <p>5.3 Plastic used for packaging purposes is marked according to the ISO 11469 directive or the EU directive 97/129/EEC.</p>	<p>5.2 Demonstrable by means of a label or certificate (Dincertco, OK compost). Compostable according to EN13432.</p>

6. Product information and communication

Requirement	Interpretation
<p>If the product is communicated as being compliant with this certification scheme, the following information must be given along with the standard product information:</p> <p>6.1 Producer (name, address and telephone number).</p> <p>6.2 Physical composition (raw materials and/or additives > 5% dry matter or 5% of the volume).</p> <p>6.3 For use of the trademark, see 0.10.</p>	

Appendix A: Example of trademark



Appendix B: Sanction regulations

No.	Requirement	Deviation	Sanction
Requirements of certification scheme			
1	The requirements of the certification scheme must be met.	A deviation is detected.	Warning. The certificate will not be granted (following the certification audit) The participant must take demonstrable corrective measures within 28 days of receiving the results of the audit.
2	Corrective measures must have been demonstrably taken within the set period.	Corrective measures have not been demonstrably taken within the set period.	A warning and a two-week period is given in order to make the corrective measures demonstrable after all.
3	Corrective measures must have been demonstrably taken within the set period.	Corrective measures have not been taken within the set extra period.	The certificate will not be granted (following the certification audit) or will be revoked, in follow-up audits). The agreement is temporarily suspended until corrective measures have been demonstrably taken.
4	Amendments to the certification scheme must be implemented by the certificate holder.	Amendments have not been implemented by the certificate holder.	See sanction 2 and/or 3.
5	Corrective measures / implementation of the adaptation must be demonstrably shown within 6 months if the agreement has been temporarily revoked.	Corrective measures / implementation of the adaptation have not been demonstrably shown within 6 months.	The agreement is revoked.
Use of the MPS trademark			

	<p>The user regulations of the MPS trademark are met.</p>	<p>Violation of regulations.</p>	<p>Written warning, stating which measures must be taken in order to meet the regulations.</p> <p>Publication of the violation with MPS number of the producer in the newsletters and on the website.</p> <p>Payment of a penalty of maximum € 450 for each violation.</p> <p>Prohibition of the use of the trademark for an indefinite/certain period of time.</p>
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Appendix C: Application form for certification of "MPS Potting soil from sustainable natural sources"

(Minimum required information from applicant and candidate product, other information is for CI)

A. The applicant	
Company	
Full name	
Address	
Website	
Contact person	
Name	
Position	
Telephone	
Email	
B. The product	
Registered trade name(s) of the product or series of products.	
In the case of a series of products, the names (or internal reference numbers) of the products in the series.	
Name and address of the production location(s) of the product(s) if different from above.	
Rough estimation of the volume of product produced (in tons or m ³).	
Composition of raw materials (p.t.o.)	

C. Raw materials	
The following list gives the composition (raw materials > 5% volume) of the candidate product	
Raw material	Percentage (%) volume or weight (kg)
<input type="checkbox"/> Peat (virgin)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Peat (non-virgin)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Coco peat	
<input type="checkbox"/> Compost (green)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Compost (household)	
<input type="checkbox"/> (composted) Bark	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood fibre	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rice husks	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lava	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sand	
<input type="checkbox"/> Clay	
<input type="checkbox"/> Organic fertilisers	
<input type="checkbox"/> Chemical fertilisers	
<input type="checkbox"/> Additives (naturally sourced)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Additives (other)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other raw material, name;	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other raw material, name;	
Total (%)	
D. Signature	
I hereby declare that the above information is true:	
Signature:	
Name and position:	
Date:	
Company stamp:	

