# SSCT Methodology

## The Sustainability Standards Comparison Tool (SSCT) has evolved — where are the differences to before?

The methodology of the Sustainability Standards Comparison Tool (SSCT) for the evaluation of sustainability standards (e.g. on www.siegelklarheit.de) has become more user-friendly. The methodology was developed around 2014 in a multi-stakeholder process by the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). In 2021 the complex presentation based on weights and scores gave way to a simple star rating. Nevertheless, the depth of detail and the level of ambition remained the same. The aim of a leaner assessment methodology was to be more comprehensible for the public as well as standard organisations and to simplify the updating of *Siegelklarheit*. The revision of the methodology only changed the derivation of the evaluation, the final result corresponded to the previous evaluation for *Siegelklarheit*, as the level of ambition is defined through the criteria to be fulfilled, not the methodology.

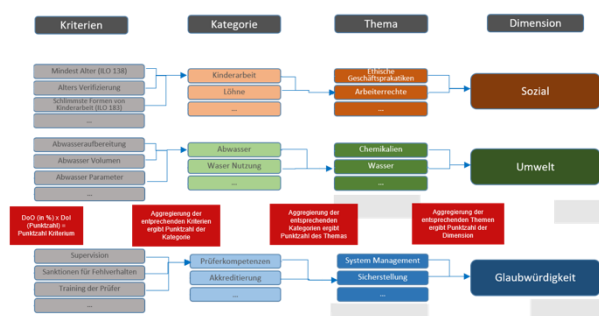### How the SSCT has worked so far

First, a standard was examined for the so-called minimum requirements in each of the dimensions of credibility, environmental friendliness and social responsibility. The minimum requirements covered topics of particular relevance in the respective dimensions. These topics were partly specific to the different product groups presented on *Siegelklarheit* in order to take into account the respective challenges to sustainable production. If the minimum requirements in the area of credibility and one of the other two areas were met, a detailed check was carried out using the extended grid of requirements.

An algorithmic rating system consisting of points and weightings was used.



The score for each requirement was calculated by multiplying the achieved Degree of Obligation by the achieved Degree of Intensity.

In addition, each requirement was assigned to a thematic category and weighted within this category. The multiplication of the criteria scores and weightings resulted in the score of the category. This scheme continued up to the superordinate dimension (credibility, environmental friendliness, social responsibility). At the end, each dimension was given a score, which was decisive for the evaluation ('good choice' or 'very good choice').



If 70 points or more were achieved in the area of credibility and one other area, the label was presented as a 'very good choice' on the consumer platform Siegelklarheit. If the minimum criteria in the dimension of credibility and one other dimension were met, it was considered a 'good choice'.

If it was below this threshold, it was listed under 'other label' in the so-called 'grey category' for information purposes only and without evaluation.

## How the SSCT works now

In 2021 the SSCT was developed further. Essential core elements such as the minimum requirements and the extended grid of requirements, which together form the overall grid, were retained. The parameters of the Degree of Intensity and the Degree of Obligation also remained. What was removed was the algorithmic evaluation system, i.e. the points and weightings that aggregated across the different levels and thus, arrived at an overall score. This calculation was replaced by an absolute approach. A requirement is therefore only considered to be 'fulfilled' or 'not fulfilled'. The requirement levels are no longer divided into a partial fulfilment of the criterion, but into a 'basic' and an' advanced' fulfilment. In this way, the differentiation and depth of information between the labels can be guaranteed and a qualitative evaluation can still be conducted.

The assessment approach is strongly oriented towards the original methodology. The decisive factor for an extended assessment is the fulfilment of the minimum requirements in the dimension of credibility, as well as in one other dimension. Requirements that are fulfilled count as one point. If it is a requirement with a Degree of Intensity (basic/advanced), two points can be achieved: The basic fulfilment is awarded one point, but if a standard also fulfils the advanced requirement, two points are included in the calculation.

the respective dimension is calculated. Up to three stars per dimension are awarded for the evaluation.



**1 STAR:** MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS ARE FULFILLED 50%

**2 STARS:** MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS ARE FULFILLED 100%

**3 STARS:** MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS ARE FULFILLED 100% + AT LEAST 60% OF THE POSSIBLE TOTAL SCORE

The logic behind 'good choice' and 'very good choice' remains identical: If a label achieves two stars (i.e. fulfils the minimum requirements) in the dimension of credibility and another dimension, it is listed as a 'good choice'. If it exceeds the threshold of 60% of the total score and thus receives three stars in the dimension of credibility and one other area, the label is presented as a 'very good choice'. If a standard does not meet the minimum requirements at least in the dimension of credibility and one other dimension, it is not rated.