

CSE Certified Sustainable Economics

briefly explained



CSE is the world's most demanding holistic sustainability certification for companies. The standard requires compliance with high absolute criteria in the areas of ecology, social affairs AND economy, which are audited by a third, independent and accredited certification body. With the certification, audited companies acquire the right to use the CSE seal and to label their products with it. The seal serves as a condensed marketing tool to easily communicate complicated and diverse issues.

Minimum requirements are, in addition to a management system according to ISO 14001, defined specifications for the implementation of sustainability (natural products, use of organic and fair raw materials, green electricity, etc.) and the achievement of concrete individual sustainability targets.

CSE thus not only works externally but also internally and thus supports strategically sustainable corporate management.



CSE-Certification

A wide variety of attestations for sustainability services as "certification" are currently circulating on the market. CSE is based on the high requirements of the EU Organic Regulation and ISO standards. This means in a nutshell:

1. There is a publicly accessible catalogue of criteria: The CSE standard with absolute criteria.
2. Compliance with the criteria is checked by a third, independent certification body accredited according to ISO 17065.
3. The certificate entitles the holder to use the CSE seal. Non-compliance with criteria has consequences up to the withdrawal of the certificate and seal.
4. The criteria are checked in annual on-site



Note: CSE is a wonderful way to do condensed marketing and simplify many complicated issues in a seal and / or certificate. Of course, the introduction or maintenance of a management system is an inward-acting, meaningful requirement. However, CSE does not take away the design of the business model and may be of limited assistance in designing the brand identity.

Certification versus report

When attempting to map the complexity of sustainability in companies, many companies resort to sustainability reporting and use various structures for this (e.g. GRI, DNK, common good balance sheet). In our opinion, collecting the data and facts without a process for improvement and the costly printing of the reports are no gain for sustainability. In addition, reports and balance sheets are only a form of presentation and not proof of compliance with defined requirements.

CSE deliberately takes a different path. The certificate allows companies to demonstrate their sustainability performance through a one-page document.

The chart on the right clearly shows that certification (as we see it) of the presentation options represents the supreme discipline.

| | Minimum Requirements | All S.-Dimensions (Ecology, Economy, Society) | Label for communication at PoS | Point scale for Communication |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| CSE Certification | YES | YES | YES | NO |
| Reporting Tools (GWÖ, GRI, DNK) | NO | YES | NO | YES |

Presentation of sustainability performance

Degree of requirement

Certification of compliance with criteria and repeat audits

Review of self-produced reports and balance sheets by third parties

Creating balance sheets

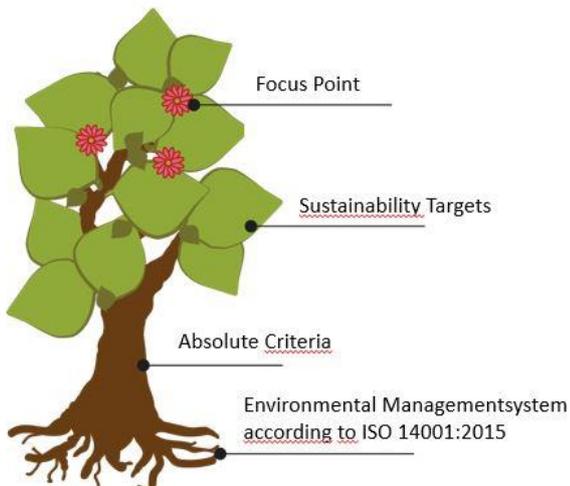
Self-produced sustainability report with guideline

Self-produced sustainability report without guideline

Joining a sustainable organisation like association, union etc.

high

low



Extract from the knockout criteria:

- Sustainable business model
- Sustainability management according to ISO 14001
- During production: At least 75% of the mass produced corresponds to an ecological standard (Öko-VO, cert. Natural cosmetics, cert. detergents etc.).
- For service providers: the service provides added value for sustainability
- 100% green electricity
- Maximum possible use of ecological and fair raw materials
- Compliance with human rights in the supply chain
- Fair remuneration
- Fair working conditions
- Profit repatriation in sustainability
- Ethical finance

Construction of CSE

We like to present the elements of the CSE standard as a tree. The introduction or maintenance of a management system according to ISO 14001 (roots) forms the basis for further absolute criteria. Thus a strategic orientation of the company towards sustainability is firmly anchored.

The K.O. criteria (tree trunk) contain minimum requirements that make CSE the most demanding sustainability seal on the market. Some striking knockout criteria are listed in the box.

These make it clear that the standard is particularly suitable for companies in the organic sector (manufacturers, retailers, points of sale) and for pioneers in other areas such as service providers, financial institutions, trades, etc.

CSE also stipulates that each company must define at least 3 sustainability targets (leaves) and achieve them within 3 to 5 years.

As optional criteria, CSE also offers a separate labelling of sustainability focal points (blossoms) such as "climate-neutral company".

Costs and Expenses

The costs of the CSE certification are divided into 3 items:

- Costs by the certification body (according to expenditure)
- Costs to the standard provider for the use of the CSE mark and the data collection tool for certification (according to the number of full-time employees equivalents with decreasing contribution with increasing equivalent: per equivalent 150 €, from 20th equivalent 100 €, etc.)
- Transaction costs of your company (depending on criteria already fulfilled and documentation requirements)

Of course, larger companies have a higher expenditure than smaller ones. The more CSE criteria your company already meets, the lower the effort. If your company has an environmental management system, the focus is on providing the documents. If this is not available, the preparation for a CSE certification will be greater.

The data collection tool supports you in providing the necessary documentation and can also help you to set up an environmental management system according to ISO 14001:2015.

If you need further advice, please do not hesitate to contact us. We will be happy to help you prepare for CSE certification.

Why you should choose CSE

- CSE sets you apart from the mainstream sustainability and the inflationary understanding of sustainability.
- CSE is particularly suitable for companies in the organic sector and sustainability pioneers from other sectors.
- CSE can guarantee you the status of a sustainability pioneer.
- CSE is a credible and professional certification (accredited, independent certification body).
- With the certificate, CSE presents your tested sustainability performance concisely and compactly.
- CSE strengthens your own potential to improve your sustainability performance.
- The CSE seal facilitates brand communication by bundling complex issues.

GfaW – Partner for corporate sustainability and
ecological product standards