

A Guide to Sustainability Certifications for Cosmetics & Personal Care Products

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The Personal Care Products Council created this guide to educate members about the logos and certifications commonly found on cosmetics and personal care products.

This guide is provided solely for informational purposes, does not constitute legal or compliance advice, and should not be relied upon as such. It does not represent or imply an endorsement of any programs or organizations by PCPC.

What This Guide Is

- A practical reference to help PCPC member companies understand the landscape of sustainability certifications across product formulations and ingredient safety, supply chain and sourcing, packaging, and company-wide performance.
- A summary of public information, including what each program certifies, who it's intended for, general cost structures and timelines, and key requirements.
- A starting point for internal conversations about which certifications may align with a company's products, supply chain, or sustainability goals.

What This Guide Is Not

- Legal, regulatory, or compliance advice. Nothing in this guide should be interpreted as guidance on whether a particular certification satisfies any legal obligation or regulatory requirement.
- A comprehensive or exhaustive review of any certification program. Program requirements, costs, timelines, and availability are subject to change. Members should verify current details directly with the relevant certifying body.
- An endorsement of any certification program, third-party organization, or service provider referenced in this guide.

Personal Care Products Council Logo + Certifications Quick Reference Guide

Certification	What It Certifies	Scope	Key Requirements	Cost Structure	Timeline	Valid For	Intended For
Product Formulations + Ingredient Safety							
COSMOS (Global)	Product formulations as organic or natural	Products	Min. organic % thresholds; prohibited ingredients list; packaging criteria	Varies by certifier + scope	Several months	3 years	Brands targeting natural/organic retail, especially in Europe, where COSMOS is the dominant standard
EPA Safer Choice (U.S.)	Product formulations for human health + environmental safety	Products	Full ingredient disclosure; all ingredients screened against EPA list	\$2K-\$5K per product	6+ months	Annual review	Brands selling to institutional buyers or retailers with sustainability requirements
EWG Verified (U.S.)	Product formulations for ingredient safety + transparency	Products	“Green” score in Skin Deep; full ingredient disclosure incl. fragrance + nanomaterials	Scaled by size/volume	10-14 weeks	3 years	U.S. brands targeting health-conscious consumers and clean beauty retail
MADE SAFE (U.S.)	Products as free from 15,000+ harmful substances	Products	Full ingredient disclosure; supply chain vetting; product-specific certification	\$1K/product + licensing	Several months	Ongoing	Brands making “non-toxic” claims, especially in baby/wellness categories
NATRUE (Global)	Products as natural or organic cosmetics	Products	Two certification levels; 75% of brand’s products must be certified	€250/product (€200 if 100+ products)	Varies	2 years	Brands seeking international natural/organic recognition, particularly in European markets
USDA BioPreferred (U.S.)	Products containing a verified % of biobased ingredients	Products	Third-party testing of biobased content via ASTM D6866; minimum biobased content varies by product category (25% minimum for uncategorized products); USDA certification required to display label	Free; third-party testing costs	~90 days	5 years	Brands making biobased claims or selling to federal buyers
Supply Chain + Sourcing							
Fair Trade (Global)	Producers/manufacturing facilities for fair labor, wages + community investment	Ingredients/manufacturing facilities	Source from certified producers; pay Fair Trade Premium; label approval required	Volume-based fees + premium	3-6 months	Annual audit	Brands with agricultural supply chains in developing regions
Rainforest Alliance (Global)	Farm-level environmental + social practices	Ingredients	Source from certified farms; meet content thresholds; logo approval required	Volume-based royalty + audit	Varies	3 years	Brands communicating deforestation and biodiversity commitments
RSPO (Global)	Sustainable palm oil production + sourcing	Ingredients	RSPO membership required; choose supply chain model; third-party audit	Membership + audit fees	Varies	5 years	Brands facing retailer or regulatory pressure on deforestation commitments, particularly in EU markets
Packaging							
FSC (Global)	Responsible sourcing of paper + cardboard packaging	Packaging	Source from FSC-certified suppliers; Chain of Custody certification; labor standards	Varies by certifier + scope	1-3 months	5 years	Brands making packaging sustainability claims for retail buyers
Company-Wide Performance							
B Corp (Global)	Social + environmental performance across governance, workers, community + environment	Company	Mandatory requirements across 7 impact topics; must amend governing documents	From \$2,100/yr (revenue-tiered)	2-6 months	5 years	Mission-driven brands seeking a comprehensive sustainability credential
Leaping Bunny (Global)	Free from animal testing at all stages of product development	Company	Supplier monitoring system; signed declarations from all suppliers; open to audit	Free (logo license \$500-\$4,500)	Varies	Annual recommit	Brands that need rigorous, internationally recognized cruelty-free verification