the sustainability certification programme for furniture

level is the multi-attribute sustainability standard and third-party certification programme for the furniture industry.

It has been created to deliver an open and holistic means of evaluating and communicating the environmental and social impacts of furniture products in the built environment.

Taking into account a company’s social actions, energy usage, material selection, human and ecosystem health, and numerous other impacts, level addresses how a product is sustainable from multiple perspectives.

level is the first certification that covers all relevant aspects of sustainability. Moreover, the squared mark with the dynamic wave is tailored to the European market. Thus, it creates real transparency.
In order to achieve a level certification, a manufacturer must contract with an authorized, independent, third-party certification body. That certification body then uses the FEMB Sustainability Standard to conduct the audit function, measure all required information, verify compliance and certify the specific product with the level conformance mark.

Manufacturers that evaluate their products against the sustainability standard without the third party auditing process will not be able to use the level conformance mark and are not considered “level certified”.

Consult the level website www.levelcertified.eu for a current list of authorized third-party certification bodies.
In the level certification process, not only the Product, but the Facility or Facilities that produced it, and the organisation itself are all scored according to sustainability criteria in the four impact areas of Materials, Energy & Atmosphere, Human & Ecosystem Health, and Social Responsibility.

In order to be level certified, products must meet certain minimum requirements (prerequisites) in each impact area, before going on to earn additional credits necessary to achieve certification at a given conformance level. It requires serious effort by manufacturers to measure their manufacturing process inputs and outputs, incorporate new material formulations, create design protocols, and formalize corporate actions around social responsibility.

The level conformance mark is an easily identifiable but hard-earned symbol of a company’s commitment to sustainability.

Product
The product is examined for its component materials, its longevity, its recyclability, and a variety of other factors that affect its impact on the natural environment.

Facility
The operational impacts associated with the facility that makes the product are measured against relevant criteria across the four impact areas.

Organisation
The corporate values and procedures of the organization behind a product are evaluated to determine leadership in sustainable practices.
Section addresses material and natural resource considerations such as the product design process, impact of materials; their efficient use; recycled content, water and waste management, and product life cycle impacts.

- Wood and wood-based materials
- Plastic parts
- Surface coatings
- Adhesives and glues
- Textiles, leather and upholstery materials
- Flame retardants and Phthalates
- Packaging materials
- Life cycle assessment
- Efficient use of materials
- Recycled content
- Extended product responsibility
- Product performance
- Water and solid waste management

Section addresses energy and atmospheric considerations such as establishing an energy policy, energy and greenhouse gas audits, reducing energy impacts, renewable energy use and generation, product embodied energy, and greenhouse gas reporting.

- Energy policy
- Building energy performance baseline
- Building energy performance rating
- Building rating system certification
- Energy management system
- Embodied energy
- Finished product energy consumption
- Transportation
- On-site and off-site renewable energy
- Greenhouse gases

Section addresses the human and natural ecosystem health impacts of the chemical constituents used in furniture products, the production processes, and the operations and maintenance of facilities.

- Demonstration of compliance
- Key chemical, risk and EMS policy
- EMAS, ISO 14001 or equivalent
- Chemical management plan (CMP) – Facility
- Effects of product, process and maintenance chemicals
- Reduction / elimination of chemicals of concern
- Low-emitting furniture

Section addresses management practices designed to avoid, detect or respond to threats to employee and community health and safety. Credits focus on inclusiveness, good corporate citizenship, community engagement, and instilling these practices into the supply chain.

- Employee health and safety management
- Labour and human rights
- Social responsibility policy
- External health and safety management standard
- Inclusiveness programs
- Community outreach
- Social responsibility reporting
- Encourage social responsibility in the supply chain
Sustainability score

Level has three conformance thresholds within the standard. Products can be awarded a level 1, level 2, or level 3 conformance mark based on the combined score achieved in their sustainability evaluation. Scoring is based on the degree to which the product, the manufacturer, and its producing facilities meet sustainability requirements in the four areas of Materials, Energy & Atmosphere, Human & Ecosystem Health, and Social Responsibility.

Each element has one or more prerequisites that are required as the minimum performance against the standard. Beyond the prerequisites, there is a minimum number of credits from any of the four major elements required to demonstrate conformance to the sustainability standard, e.g. to reach level 1 at least 32 points must be approached.

The table on page 11 shows how the points available are allocated. The first column shows the quantity of prerequisites. The green column shows the maximum points available which are split down into Product, Facility and Organisation.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Prerequisites</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Materials</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Energy &amp; Atmosphere</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Human &amp; Ecosystem Health</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Social Responsibility</strong></td>
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<table>
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<th><strong>Facility</strong></th>
<th><strong>Organisation</strong></th>
<th><strong>Totals</strong></th>
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