



## **+Vantage Vinyl Verification Standard**

**Version: 3.1**  
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**Vinyl Sustainability Council**  
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Suite 825  
Washington, DC 20006  
**Chair:** Eric Cotterman

## Statement from the VSC Executive Director



Vinyl is an essential component of a more sustainable society today and in the future. With 10 billion people expected to live on the planet by 2050 and the underlying need to do more with less in light of depleting natural resources, vinyl is the material of choice for the many market segments served by the industry.

The Vinyl Sustainability Council (VSC) was formed to further advance the efforts of the vinyl industry as it addresses sustainability and related issues in North America. Members of the VSC work together to develop and implement advanced practices and innovation leading to a path of continuous improvement, while promoting these achievements to key stakeholders.

These efforts converge and support +Vantage Vinyl, the industry's branded performance initiative. +Vantage Vinyl was created as a voluntary effort to advance the industry's sustainability performance in the most relevant potential improvement areas. The Guiding Principles promoted by the Vinyl Sustainability Council via the +Vantage Vinyl initiative include values such as integrity, open communication, passion for a more sustainable future, competence, commitment to scientific principles and sustainable materials management. +Vantage Vinyl verified companies are part of a growing ecosystem of like-minded organizations working together to advance sustainability in the industry. Each Company is demonstrating, through its leadership, the economic and environmental value of sustainable business operations.

We welcome your interest and verification to the +Vantage Vinyl standard and we are looking forward to working together to advance the industry's contribution to sustainable development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay Thomas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jay Thomas Executive  
Director  
Vinyl Sustainability Council

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## 1. Background

The Vinyl Sustainability Council (VSC) organizes and coordinates sustainability efforts to solve many issues facing the growing global population. Doing more with less is an essential part of a sustainable development path. Seeking to facilitate these efforts throughout the entire vinyl industry, VSC created +Vantage Vinyl™ in June 2018. +Vantage Vinyl is a voluntary standard that verifies the sustainability performance of companies in conformance with program Guiding Principles that are in alignment with the most relevant potential improvement areas. Potential improvement areas are identified using a materiality assessment. The materiality assessment and standard are updated every 5 years.

Participating companies may use the +Vantage Vinyl tagline “For a Sustainable Future”, and the trademark for marketing, communication, sustainability reporting, and business differentiation purposes. Participation in the +Vantage Vinyl program demonstrates an organization’s commitment to a sustainable future.

While +Vantage Vinyl is a corporate level initiative, performance and relevant documentation from individual facilities under the corporation can contribute to the fulfillment of the Guiding Principles. This process is outlined in Figure 2. GreenCircle Certified, LLC conducts verification via information submitted from the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles Conformance Survey, completed by each member. Re-verification to +Vantage Vinyl is required every three years with yearly submission of data for annual maintenance. Documentation requirements are integrated into the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles Conformance Survey.

Our Guiding Principles include adhering to antitrust laws and VSC antitrust guidelines.

## 2. Focus

+Vantage Vinyl’s Guiding Principles set the direction and parameters for what companies strive to achieve over time and are organized within five pillars that serve as the guideposts for companies on their journey of continuous improvement. The five pillars of sustainability are Environmental Stewardship, Social Diligence, Economic Soundness, Collaboration, and Open Communications. The Guiding Principles support improved industry performance across the three material impact categories of resource efficiency, emissions, and people & community.

Companies attempting for +Vantage Vinyl verification are measured for conformance to the Guiding Principles and informed of their relative performance against their peers. The aggregate conformance of all +Vantage Vinyl verified companies is reported on an annual basis. In this way, the vinyl industry can measure and report on its progress in improving on the most important areas of sustainability performance.

## 3. GreenCircle Certified

GreenCircle Certified, LLC (GreenCircle) is a third-party company that specializes in the certification and verification of sustainability claims made by companies across many industries. GreenCircle has been selected by VSC to conduct the verification for companies interested in participating in the +Vantage Vinyl program. Applicants will submit all verification documents directly to GreenCircle for review, and GreenCircle will then conduct an analysis of the documents and their support of the applicant’s conformance to the Guiding Principles. Following the completion of the verification process, GreenCircle will communicate with VSC and the participating member regarding the outcome of the verification. It will be the responsibility of VSC to issue the +Vantage Vinyl mark usage guidelines to any successful applicant.

## 4. General Verification Standard

### 4.1. Eligibility Determination

Companies seeking verification to +Vantage Vinyl and use of the mark, must meet the eligibility requirements of this section, the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles Conformance Survey discussed in Section 4.3, and participate in the verification process outlined in Section 4.4. Currently, only companies with manufacturing (or a majority of their

operations) in the United States or Canada are eligible to participate in +Vantage Vinyl. VSC may at any time revoke a company's right to use the +Vantage Vinyl mark should VSC determine, in its sole discretion, that the mark is not being used according to the mark usage guidelines. +Vantage Vinyl applicants must meet the following requirements:

1. Be a part of the United States or Canadian vinyl value chain. The applicant company can be a foreign entity but must have part of their operation in the United States or Canada. Specifically, the applicant must have a facility located in the United States or Canada performing activities in one of the categories listed below. Documentation of eligibility includes the physical address of the facility, EIN number, tax ID, or other form of documentation that demonstrates the organization has operations in the United States or Canada.

Eligible operating categories include:

- Chlorine & Vinyl Chloride Monomer (VCM) producers
- Resin suppliers
- Raw material/additive suppliers
- Material compounders
- Formulators
- Converters
- End-product manufacturers
- Recyclers
- Distributors

2. Be a VSC Primary Stakeholder member in good standing. As part of the verification process, GreenCircle will contact VSC to obtain written confirmation that the candidate is a VSC member in good standing. This confirmation will become part of the verification documentation.

3. Sign the +Vantage Vinyl Participation Agreement with VSC (see Appendix).

4. Designate an employee with sustainability responsibilities to represent the company and be a primary contact for +Vantage Vinyl. This is not required to be the same person that represents the company in other VSC activities. GreenCircle will verify that a company representative has sustainability responsibilities by conducting an interview with the employee and collecting at least one of the following for documentation: information on the employee's title and responsibilities, including the percent of time spent on sustainability activities; a copy of a job description; or an organization chart.

5. Measure conformance to the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles (see Guiding Principles). The Guiding Principles set the direction and parameters of +Vantage Vinyl as goals to be achieved over time. Every three years, applicant companies will complete the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles Conformance Survey to ensure conformance with the Guiding Principles. Verification of such conformance will be completed based on documentation review as described in the Guiding Principles section below. Interim years require an annual maintenance survey. Applicants may reverify on a more frequent basis if desired to reflect improvements to company conformance with the Guiding Principles. The fee assessment and schedule are published annually prior to the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles Conformance Survey.

#### 4.2. Verification Overview

The +Vantage Vinyl program will measure and report on company and industry conformance with the Guiding Principles and progress in the five pillars on an annual basis.

+Vantage Vinyl is a corporate initiative that allows individual facilities to contribute to a company or brand's verification of its sustainability activities. If a company has multiple manufacturing operations in the same facility or facilities, only the processes relating to the manufacturing or processing of vinyl will be applicable to the +Vantage Vinyl initiative. The goal

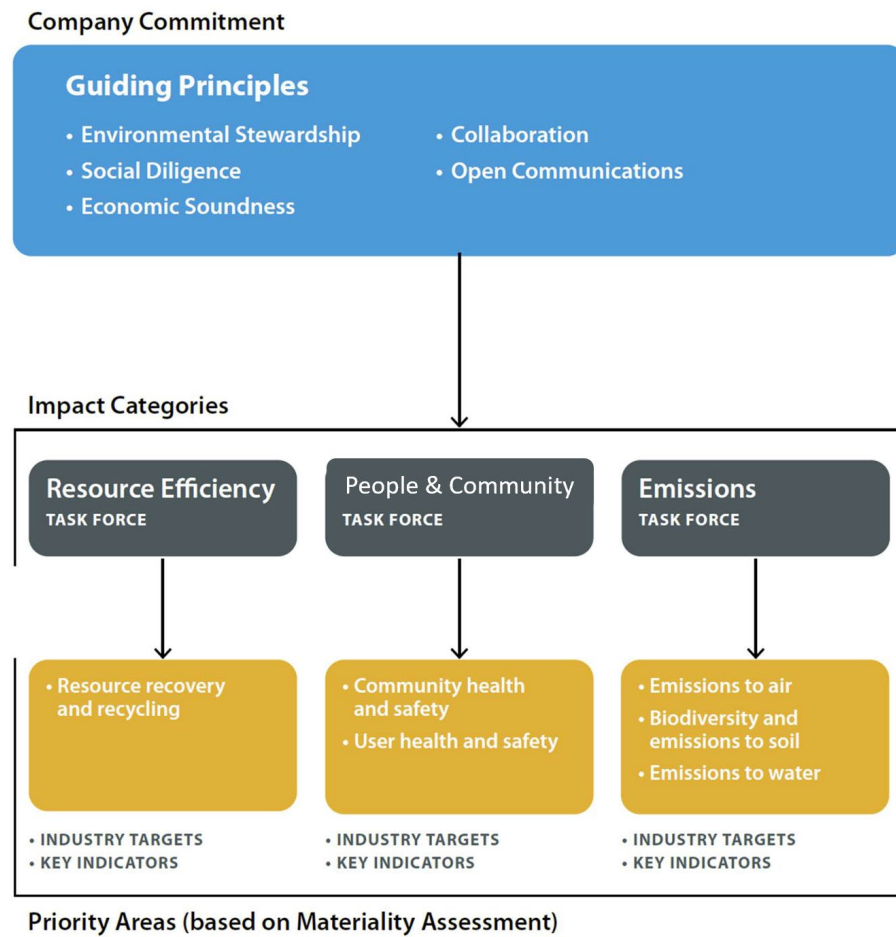
of +Vantage Vinyl is to recognize VSC members of the vinyl value chain for their commitment and leadership within the industry for satisfying environmental and sustainability goals, and voluntarily going beyond regulatory compliance to continuously improve the performance of the vinyl industry.

GreenCircle will work with all applicants to review current company activities to determine how they relate to the five pillars:

- Environmental Stewardship
- Social Diligence
- Economic Soundness
- Collaboration
- Open Communications

The following flow chart provides an overview of the general verification standard.

### Program Architecture for Continuous Improvement



### 4.3. Complete Survey

To be eligible for verification, applicants must complete and return the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles Conformance Survey to GreenCircle within the designated time frame determined by the VSC. Upon completion of the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles Conformance Survey, GreenCircle will contact the applicant for further information, conduct a detailed audit, and report their findings. If +Vantage Vinyl verification is not desired, the primary member must “opt out” in writing to VSC.

Verification is on a one-brand basis. Companies with multiple brands may pursue one of the multi-brand verification options listed below.

Multi-brand verification:

- Companies with multiple brands, but same operations, will be charged a logo usage fee and a +Vantage Vinyl Verification Certificate fee determined by VSC and GreenCircle.
- Companies with multiple brands but different operations will require a separate +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles Conformance Survey.

### 4.4. Verification Process

The scope of the verification process will include review of:

- Applicant information:
  - Information pertaining to the applicant, including physical address, facility locations, specific information relating to the Guiding Principle to be verified, and more.
  - General information about the applicant as a legal entity (i.e., whether the applicant is part of a larger parent organization, whether the applicant sells their product to another company for private labeling, etc.).
- Technical documentation to be collected by GreenCircle:
  - Confirmation as to whether the applicant has a management system in place to ensure that appropriate steps will be taken based on data, process changes, etc.
  - Confirmation of the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles Conformance Survey responses:
    - Specific documentation requirements (see Guiding Principles); and
    - Participation and cooperation to any additional data requests or document reviews with GreenCircle.
- Verification Documentation:
  - +Vantage Vinyl™ Participation Agreement
  - Graphic Usage & Style Guidelines for Participants in +Vantage Vinyl™ (Graphic Usage Guidelines); and
  - Confidentiality agreements, as requested.

### 4.5. Verification Activities

The verification process will be carried out as agreed by all parties and as outlined in this document. The verification process will confirm the information provided and will verify conformance with the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles utilizing the examples of acceptable documentation. Other forms of documentation may be submitted pending approval from GreenCircle if the documentation clearly demonstrates conformance to the targeted Guiding Principle.

GreenCircle will conduct verification of each applicant’s +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles Conformance Survey and documentation, taking into consideration whether the documents refer to corporate wide operations or for the business, the relevant U.S./Canadian operations, and the existing programs or initiatives related to sustainability, compliance or conformance, and operations.

During the Guiding Principles verification process, GreenCircle will conduct a review call to gain an understanding of

the applicant's operations and activities related to sustainability. If there are any questions regarding what documentation may be submitted, applicants should contact GreenCircle. During the verification process, GreenCircle will review documentation from the five pillars to determine conformance with the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles.

Verification is achieved through response to all mandatory questions and 50% conformance to the Guiding Principles. It should be noted that not all Guiding Principles are applicable to all segments of the supply chain. In addition, levels of achievement will be awarded for operating above the minimum requirements and demonstrating additional initiatives or continuous improvement in the Guiding Principles. An applicant may elect to provide documentation of an advanced practice or an innovative practice for a Guiding Principle in which the applicant can demonstrate sustainability practices above the minimum verification requirements. Examples of advanced practices and innovative practices are provided in Section 5. The levels of achievement will be an additional recognition on the +Vantage Vinyl Verification Certificate based on the following criteria:

- Verified – Greater than 50% conformance to all applicable Guiding Principles.
- Silver – Greater than 80% conformance to all applicable Guiding Principles and at least one advanced practice.
- Gold – 100% conformance to all applicable Guiding Principles, two advanced practices, and at least one innovative practice.

Figure 2 is a sample flow diagram showing the steps in the verification process.



#### 4.6. Existing Sustainability Programs



It is the goal of +Vantage Vinyl to promote sustainability throughout all areas of the vinyl industry. It is understood that some applicants might already be participating in other sustainability initiatives or programs and would like to determine how their current initiatives can apply to the +Vantage Vinyl program.

+Vantage Vinyl recognizes many other sustainability standards and associations. If a +Vantage Vinyl applicant believes they can obtain credit for Guiding Principles from participating in another sustainability initiative, it should be discussed with GreenCircle during the verification process.

#### **4.7. Data Requirements**

All data provided to GreenCircle must be current for the most recent calendar year, unless otherwise indicated in the Guiding Principle or approved by VSC. It will be the sole responsibility of the applicant pursuing verification to collect and deliver all required information to GreenCircle, unless otherwise agreed upon.

#### **4.8. Data Protection and Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is of the utmost importance. Any data or documentation submitted directly to GreenCircle shall remain confidential and will not be shared with VSC or any other outside entities without the written approval of the applicant. Applicants may elect to enter a non-disclosure agreement with GreenCircle for additional documentation of the confidentiality throughout and after the process.

GreenCircle has system protections in place to protect data, including standardized practices to safeguard sensitive data and ensure all tools are functioning efficiently and correctly.

Any statistical data obtained from GreenCircle and used by VSC will be anonymized and reported at an aggregated level.

#### **4.9. Timeline**

The +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles Conformance Survey will be released to all members in April. It is requested that members complete the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles Conformance Survey within four weeks, except for submittal of greenhouse gas (GHG) data for additives and resin applicants, which is due by July 15<sup>th</sup>. The GreenCircle review for verification will then be completed within four weeks. A tentative schedule will be agreed upon by the applicant and GreenCircle for document submission and review. All documentation must be submitted to GreenCircle in a timely manner.

GHG data for the additives and resin applicants will be required to be submitted by July 15<sup>th</sup>, due to government reporting, in order to be included in the VSC Sustainability Report. If a company completed the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles Conformance Survey and received verification, but fails to submit the GHG data, the verification will be revoked.

Verification certificates will be dated June 1<sup>st</sup> of the year the applicant completed the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles Conformance Survey and be valid for three years.

We do not grant verification outside of this timeline. Only if an applicant was a new member to the VSC, they might be granted an exception. Verification must be completed on the above timeline in order to be included in the VSC's Annual Progress Report and be included in the press release announcement about +Vantage Vinyl verification.

#### **4.10. Non-Conformance**

During the verification process, conformance is evaluated in detail per the +Vantage Vinyl Verification Guiding Principles, example documentation, and conformance metrics. GreenCircle will review all documentation and evidence provided by the applicant. Based on that review, GreenCircle will make an evaluation of conformance and determine if an applicant is "conformant" or "nonconformant." GreenCircle's Quality Control team will verify the conformance during the review process and confirm the verification results. Evaluation is based on conformance to applicable Guiding Principles for each attribute, where appropriate.

During the verification process, if GreenCircle determines that an applicant does not conform to the standards utilized by GreenCircle to complete the specified verification, the company will be notified. GreenCircle will provide a conformance summary to the applicant and conduct a conference call to discuss the non-conformities GreenCircle observed. The applicant will have up to four weeks to address the non-conformities and respond to GreenCircle for evaluation and final review of conformance. This process enables the applicant to address these non-conformities to obtain the +Vantage Vinyl verification mark.

#### 4.11. Verification Result Notification

The applicant and VSC will be notified of the verification results following GreenCircle's final review and receive the following deliverables:

- Summary of conformance to the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles;
- Verification certificate; and
- Graphic Usage Guidelines.

Upon successful completion of the verification process, VSC will produce appropriate media releases to notify industry members and the public.

If an applicant does not adequately address all mandatory questions or does not meet the 50% conformance to the Guiding Principles threshold for verification, GreenCircle will provide a summary of conformance to enable the applicant to identify areas for improvement and address these internally and reapply and resubmit and for the next verification cycle.

#### 4.12. Appeal

An applicant may appeal the verification results to GreenCircle within 14 business days from the date of receipt of the summary of conformance. A copy of the appeal request should be provided to the VSC for their information. The appeal to GreenCircle should include:

- The name and address of the appealing applicant;
- The applicant's reasoning as to why GreenCircle's evaluation of their conformance or non-conformance with the Guiding Principles should be revised.

Appeal requests will be acknowledged promptly and reviewed as expeditiously as possible by GreenCircle. If additional review of new data and documentation is required by GreenCircle, and was not previously provided or was provided outside of the non-conformance review period described in Section 4.10, additional fees may apply.

#### 4.13. Suspension or Termination

GreenCircle reserves the right to suspend a +Vantage Vinyl verification if a participating company is found to have provided incorrect, false or misleading information related to the conformance to the Guiding Principles. GreenCircle will immediately issue a suspension and document the issue or inconsistency that has been observed and provide the company the opportunity to respond. During this timeframe, the company must discontinue the use of the GreenCircle mark in any and all marketing materials. GreenCircle will notify VSC of the suspension so that VSC can confirm that the participating company has suspended the use of the +Vantage Vinyl trademark and tagline in any and all marketing materials, communication, and sustainability reporting. If corrective actions have been implemented, the suspension will be lifted and continued mark usage will be granted. If corrective actions by the company have not been taken within 90 days, then the company's verification and Participation Agreement will be terminated, and they will be unable to use the mark. The terminated company will be eligible to enter into a new Participation Agreement and complete a full +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles Conformance Survey during a future verification cycle in which documentation will be collected to confirm the corrective actions and all survey responses for conformance to the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles. *Additional verification costs will be incurred by the company.*

#### 4.14. Mark Usage

VSC will provide a copy of the Graphic Usage Guidelines upon confirmation of verification. Verified +Vantage Vinyl participants may use the +Vantage Vinyl name and other marks as set out in the +Vantage Vinyl™ Participation Agreement and Graphic Usage Guidelines. Please review these documents for more detailed information on VSC's grant to Vantage Vinyl™ participants of a royalty-free, non-exclusive, non-transferable license to use the marks. The +Vantage Vinyl mark is registered in the United States.

Failure to use the +Vantage Vinyl™ name and other marks in accordance with the Participation Agreement and Graphic Usage Guidelines will result in immediate revocation of a company's rights to use the name and marks and may result in a temporary suspension of its participation in +Vantage Vinyl™ .

GreenCircle marks are only authorized for use by the company or brand outlined in the certificate. Brands not explicitly verified by GreenCircle, such as subsidiaries and parent companies, are not permitted to use the GreenCircle mark.

### 5. Annual Maintenance

All +Vantage Vinyl verifications will be valid for three years. In addition to the initial verification, participants must undergo an annual maintenance check by the first and second anniversary of the initial verification, June 1st. The maintenance is a streamlined process that ensures no major changes have occurred to the company processes that deviate and invalidate the original verified conformance to the Guiding Principles. As part of the maintenance process, participants will complete a maintenance survey that collects annual data for production, energy usage, and GHG emissions. The maintenance survey includes written confirmation that conformance to the mandatory requirements have not changed. Participants willing to maintain their verification beyond the third year will undergo the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles Conformance Survey the 4<sup>th</sup> year.

+Vantage Vinyl verification is premised on the assumption that no participant company processes will undergo any changes that invalidate the responses submitted with their initial application or that would require the issuance of a new verification certificate (major changes). Participants are required to notify GreenCircle of any major changes that occur.

### 6. Guiding Principles

VSC has established Guiding Principles, under each of the five pillars, that all +Vantage Vinyl applicants must follow in order to participate in the initiative. Every applicant must be able to show how they are instituting the Guiding Principle categories (Environmental Stewardship, Social Diligence, Economic Soundness, Collaboration, and Open Communications) within their organization. The Guiding Principles set the direction and parameters of +Vantage Vinyl as goals to be achieved over time within the scope of the +Vantage Vinyl Standard. It is anticipated that some companies will have sustainability programs in place that will meet some of the Guiding Principles, while other companies may be beginning to develop a sustainability program. The Guiding Principles can be used by VSC members as a framework to enhance their existing sustainability programs. For companies just beginning their sustainability journey, the Guiding Principles can be used as a roadmap for the development of a comprehensive sustainability program.

To demonstrate that the Guiding Principle categories are being instituted, companies must provide documentation to verify commitment to the Guiding Principles and a signature from a company officer with the authority to review and approve the submission. The acceptable documentation examples should be used as a reference for possible forms of documentation to support the claim and are not the sole documentation that will be accepted.

#### 6.1. Navigating the Guiding Principles

Each Guiding Principle is listed below in the tables in Section 6.2 through Section 6.6. Each Guiding Principle has the following details:

- The “**Applicable to**” section includes parts of the vinyl value chain that the Guiding Principle may be

relevant to. It is recognized that not every Guiding Principle is relevant for each part of the vinyl value chain so only the parts listed will be scored.

- The “**Examples of Acceptable Documentation**” section within each table provides examples of documentation that might be utilized throughout the verification process.
- The “**Mandatory Requirements**” section within each table indicates if this Guiding Principle is required for verification.
- The “**Examples of Advanced Practices**” section within each table indicates examples of advanced practices that might be submitted for the Silver level of achievement.
- The “**Examples of Innovative Practice**” section within each table indicates examples of innovation that might be submitted for the Gold level of achievement.

Some Guiding Principles are not applicable to specific parts of the vinyl value chain. Where those Guiding Principles are relevant, the applicability is mentioned. Even so, a participating company may have a unique position where the Guiding Principle is still not relevant for their business. Should this occur, the applicant is to select the “Not Applicable” option on the survey and provide a description during the verification process as to why the Guiding Principle is not applicable.

Certain documentation can be used to fulfill more than one Guiding Principle. Actual documentation requirements are tailored to each applicant and will be discussed in detail and agreed upon by the applicant and GreenCircle prior to the commencement of the verification process.

Additional documentation can be submitted to demonstrate operations above the minimum requirements which may include additional initiatives or continuous improvement in the Guiding Principles to be evaluated as levels of achievement.

## 6.2. Environmental Stewardship

### *Fulfillment of the Environmental Stewardship Guiding Principles*

Proof of conformance with other applicable sustainability standards and certifications may be used to fulfill the environmental stewardship Guiding Principles' conformance to the +Vantage Vinyl standard. Examples of these standards and certifications include GreenCircle's Certified Environmental Facts Certification, GreenCircle's Sustainable Manufacturing Practices Certification, NSF 332 Resilient Flooring Certification, NSF 342 Sustainability Assessment for Wallcovering Products, NSF 347 Sustainability Assessment for Single Ply Roofing Membranes, NSF 140 Sustainability Assessment for Carpet, NSF Electrical Conduit Certification, and Cradle to Cradle Certification.

Environmental Management System (EMS) is a powerful tool to monitor conformance with environmental regulations and standards, minimize legal and operational risks, and reduce negative environmental impacts throughout the supply chain. The development and implementation of environmental management systems throughout the vinyl industry will promote the industry's contribution to sustainable development. The most widely used standard for EMS is ISO 14001. Another important certification is RC 14001, which combines Responsible Care and ISO 14001 into a single process. Both ISO 14001 and RC 14001 require renewal every three years.

Guiding Principle	Mandatory	Value Chain Applicability						
		Resin	Additive	Compounder / Formulator	Converter	End Product Mfg	Recycler	Raw Materials Distributor
Reduce releases to the environment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Use land and other natural resources prudently to protect biodiversity and ecosystems	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Implement water reuse and conservation practices to reduce the depletion of water resources and thereby support the availability of clean water	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Support third-party water and sanitation conservation and development programs		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Demonstrate a commitment to improving the energy and greenhouse gas emission profile of PVC products		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Minimize waste	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reuse, recycling and recovery in accordance with sustainable materials management principles throughout the vinyl value chain.		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Responsibly recycle products that contain RoHS metals and/or other regulated additives.				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Employ responsible sourcing practices that encourage supplier reductions in environmental impacts and minimal use of natural resources with positive lifecycle implications		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes

### 6.2.1. Guiding Principle: Reduce Releases to the Environment.

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Reduce emissions to water, air, and soil.

#### Acceptable Documentation to Fulfill Mandatory Requirement:

Provide Scope 1 and Scope 2 GHG emissions benchmarked per unit of production without showing emissions increases over the three-year cycle, with year one constituting the baseline. If there are GHG emissions that are not documented in a published report, benchmarked to production, then the emissions data and production data must include a description of the methodology documented in the template provided. Acceptable documentation includes:

- Scope 1 and Scope 2 GHG emissions data for the previous year, benchmarked to production;
- Published report of GHG emissions, benchmarked to production; and
- To account for variations in company growth, growing companies may submit plans to reduce emissions below the baseline year over time with defined goals or the baseline may be modified to reflect current operations upon agreement with GreenCircle and the Verification Committee.

If one does not own operations but contracts manufacturing operations to other facilities, please provide the contract manufacturer's Scope 1 and 2 emissions as related to the relevant branded products within your portfolio.

This documentation should be focused on the vinyl sector of the business only.

#### Examples of Advanced Practices:

Develop an action plan on how the company will reduce Scope 1 and Scope 2 GHG emissions to the environment over time with defined goals and target dates.

#### Examples of Innovative Practice:

- Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.
- Showing continued reductions or elimination of releases to the environment.

### 6.2.2. Guiding Principle: Use Land and Other Natural Resources Prudently to Protect Biodiversity and Ecosystems.

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** To prevent releases of the product to the environment.

#### Acceptable Documentation to Fulfill Mandatory Requirement:

Provide documentation to show policies regarding limiting releases, control systems, action plans for spills or storm water impacts, and/or policy to minimize pollutants. Acceptable documentation includes:

- Membership in Operation Clean Sweep and achievement of all program requirements.

This documentation should be focused on the United States operations of the business only.

#### Examples of Advanced Practices:

Provide an action plan on how the company will reduce releases to the environment over time with measurable goals.

- When multiple releases are tracked, demonstrate that emissions in at least one category were reduced;
- Provide records of any wildlife habitat, land preservation, or wetlands protected on company property; and
- Provide an action plan or documentation, including goals and target dates, to protect or restore land and natural resources (sustainability report, etc.).

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

- Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.

**6.2.3. Guiding Principle: Implement Water Reuse and Conservation Practices to Reduce the Depletion of Water Resources and Thereby Support the Availability of Clean Water.**

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Water conservation.

**Acceptable Documentation to Fulfill Mandatory Requirement:**

Show on a per unit of production basis that water consumption has remained the same or decreased in a three-year cycle, with year one constituting the baseline.

If one does not own operations but contracts manufacturing operations to other facilities, the information is to be requested from the subcontractor and provided before the completion of the three-year verification cycle.

This documentation should be focused on the vinyl sector of the business only.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

- Develop an action plan detailing a pathway to reducing water use within facilities with measurable goals; and
- Documentation showing continued efforts to implement water conservation technology (research reports, water reuse equipment trial reports, etc.).

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

Achieve progress towards water reductions and set measurable goals.

**6.2.4. Guiding Principle: Support Third-Party Water and Sanitation Conservation and Development Programs.**

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Enable the availability of clean water and sanitation.

**Acceptable Documentation:** This Guiding Principle is not mandatory. Provide the below to fulfill the minimum requirement.

- Documentation showing contributions (financial and in-kind) with a material impact on operations and funding security for third-party providers of outreach services in support of clean water and sanitation programs.
- Stakeholder outreach and promotion plans to create awareness of program development opportunities to suppliers, industry members, and the public that encourages additional contribution.

This documentation may include any initiatives by the corporation.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.

**6.2.5. Guiding Principle: Demonstrate a Commitment to Improving the Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emission Profile of PVC Products.**

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Reduce end-product embodied carbon.

**Acceptable Documentation:** This Guiding Principle is not mandatory. Provide the below to fulfill the minimum requirement. Documentation demonstrating assessment of the energy and GHG emissions profile of PVC products, such as life cycle assessment (or environmental product declarations) of a minimum one product.

This documentation should be focused on the vinyl sector of the business only.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

Develop an action plan to show initiative towards future reductions.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

Provide evidence of reductions in the greenhouse gas or embodied energy profile of PVC products, with a minimum scope of cradle-to-gate, but end products may have a cradle-to-grave scope. This can include an evaluation of comparable life cycle assessments between product generations.

### 6.2.6. Guiding Principle: Reduce Waste at the Facility.

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Reduce managed volumes that are landfilled. Reduce carbon footprint through recycled products.

**Pathway 1: Divert Materials from Landfill**

**Acceptable Documentation to Fulfill Mandatory Requirement:**

Provide documentation that some waste streams are diverted from landfill. Acceptable documentation includes:

- Data on the facility's recycling, reuse, and composting activities;
- Evidence of collaboration on sortation and recovery, logistics;
- Records documenting total recycled content purchased and incorporated into products;
- Records documenting total reprocessed scrap that is sold externally or re-incorporated back into the product; and
- Participation in a VSC pilot program for recycling.

**Pathway 2: Reduce Overall Waste Generation**

**Acceptable Documentation to Fulfill Mandatory Requirement:**

Provide documentation of waste reduction from a facility. Acceptable documentation includes:

- Documentation showing continued efforts to implement waste reduction in facility operations (goals or documentation of source reduction activities, zero waste to landfill, research reports, equipment trial reports, etc.);
- Data on waste reduction and facility recycling, reuse, and composting activities
- Records showing how the manufacturing process has eliminated waste at the source or reduced scrap rates at the facility.

If one does not own operations but contracts manufacturing operations to other facilities, the information is to be requested from the subcontractor and provided before the completion of the three-year verification cycle.

This documentation should be focused on the vinyl sector of the business only.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

- Third-party certification for diversion from landfill activities;



- Third-party certification for waste minimization;
- Collaboration on research for advanced recycling (mechanical, chemical, thermal) for vinyl markets that are at low recycling levels for both pre- and post-consumer uses;
- Divert 80% or more of materials in the waste stream from landfill
- Reduce overall waste volumes generated (benchmarked to production) by 50% at facilities over a three-year period.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

- Achieve Zero Waste to Landfill certification
- Reduce overall waste volumes generated (benchmarked to production) by 80% at facilities over a three-year period.

**6.2.7. Guiding Principle: Reuse, Recycling and Recovery in Accordance with Sustainable Materials Management Principles.**

**Applicable to:** compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, recyclers, raw materials distributor, and resin manufacturers.

**Objective:** Reduced carbon footprint through recycled products or reuse and recovery practices during production.

**Acceptable Documentation:**

This Guiding Principle is not mandatory. Provide the below to fulfill the minimum requirement.

- Documentation demonstrating reuse, recycling, and recovery efforts and coordination with suppliers and material management organizations, which can include take-back and recycling programs for end-of-life products or materials; and
- Implement a take-back program in either a product or market segment or with one retailer or distributor.

This documentation should be focused on the vinyl sector of the business only.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

- Having a policy or program in place that addresses sustainable materials management principles;
- Third-party certificates for recycled content incorporated into products;
- Communicate benefits of recycled content or reuse and recovery efforts, success stories, challenges addressed, perspectives for growth on proper management of materials in the vinyl industry; and
- Establish an action plan for improvement regarding sustainable materials management activities.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

- Coordinate a take-back program for your products at the end of the customer's use; and
- Incorporate recycled content into a portfolio of products.

**6.2.8. Guiding Principle: Responsibly Recycle Products that Contain RoHS Metals or Other Regulated Additives.**

**Applicable to:** compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Safe use and conversion of post-consumer recycled materials into the company's own products.

**Acceptable Documentation:**

This Guiding Principle is not mandatory. Provide the below to fulfill the minimum requirement.

- Demonstration that products using RoHS metals and/or other regulated additives are used at low concentrations or do not result in end-user exposure when incorporated as recycled content into a second+ generation product; and
- Attestation from company official that recycled products do not contain regulated additives.

This documentation should be focused on the vinyl sector of the business only.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

Testing records of recycled products.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.

**6.2.9. Guiding Principle: Employ Responsible Sourcing Practices that Encourage Supplier Reductions in Environmental Impacts and Minimal Use of Natural Resources with Positive Lifecycle Implications.**

**Applicable to:** compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and resin manufacturers.

**Objective:** Documented sourcing procurement policy.

**Acceptable Documentation:**

This Guiding Principle is not mandatory. Provide the below to fulfill the minimum requirement.

- A sustainable purchasing policy or code of conduct for suppliers;
- Sustainability report or corporate social responsibility report containing a sustainable purchasing policy;
- Operation plans to model sourcing practices after attributes of ISO 20400; and
- Operation plans to procure resources locally or within a reasonable distance, when applicable, to reduce emissions from transportation.

This documentation may include any initiatives by the corporation.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

- Report of Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) for current sourcing practices and operations, if available;
- Achieve ISO 20400 certification for Sustainable Procurement; and
- Third-party assessment, such as EcoVadis.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

- Selecting (or de-selecting) primary suppliers based on reduced environmental impacts or supplier's initiatives with environmental impacts.

### 6.3. Social Diligence

#### *Fulfillment of the Social Diligence Guiding Principles*

Many of the Guiding Principles within the Social Diligence pillar involve internal policies set and followed by individual applicants. Corporate sustainability reports, Environmental and Social Governance reports, or other public disclosures with policies may be provided as acceptable means of documentation. Going above and beyond with conducting third-party audits, obtaining certifications, or conducting other studies are additional sources that may achieve advanced practices or innovative practice thresholds within these Guiding Principles.

Guiding Principle	Mandatory	Value Chain Applicability						
		Resin	Additive	Compounder / Formulator	Converter	End Product Mfg	Recycler	Raw Materials Distributor
Provide open disclosure of additives in PVC products.				Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Manufacture safe and user-friendly products and consider potential effects throughout the product life cycle.		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Use of environmental and safety management systems and operational advanced practices that minimize risk to employees.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Avoid the use of lead, hexavalent chromium, and cadmium as added ingredients in vinyl components.	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Avoid the use of VCM that relies on mercury as a catalyst or reactant in any part of the process.		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Safely employ additives based on current data and scientific assessment methodologies.				Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Provide ready and easy-to-understand access to relevant information about the company's compensation, benefits, recognition and incentive opportunities that meet the changing needs of employees.		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Commit to recruiting, developing, and promoting a diverse workforce while respecting the fundamental values and dignity of all individuals.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Subscribe to corporate governance policies that are opposed to discrimination, child labor, bribery and	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

corruption, human trafficking, and forced labor.								
Contribute to charitable outreach in the communities in which we operate.		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sustainability Portfolio Analysis		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

### 6.3.1. Guiding Principle: Provide Open Disclosure of Additives in PVC Products.

**Applicable to:** compounders, converters, formulators, raw materials distributor, and end-product manufacturers.

**Objective:** Disclose information on additives used in PVC products to stakeholders upon request.

#### Acceptable Documentation:

This Guiding Principle is not mandatory. Provide the below to fulfill the minimum requirement.

- Agree to disclose to stakeholders upon request a list of the non-confidential additives used in the PVC products they supply by providing general information on additives used including a list of all substances intentionally added (Note: Disclosure of exact amounts of each additive used is not required as this is proprietary, commercially sensitive information);
- Readily available information sheet declaring the additives used;
- Product/Material Composition Declaration Sheets;
- Material Specification Sheets;
- Material Safety Data Sheets;
- Technical Data Sheets;
- Toxicity Testing Results;
- Time to Toxicity
- Total Dissolved Solids.

This documentation should be focused on the vinyl sector of the business only.

#### Examples of Advanced Practices:

- Published and publicly available Safety Data Sheets;
- Material Ingredient Reports such as Health Product Declarations, manufacturer’s inventories, etc.
- Published and publicly available Material Declaration Sheets disclosing additives.

#### Examples of Innovative Practice:

- Leverage the VSC scoreWISE™ tool for disclosure of additives
- Third-party verified Health Product Declarations.

### 6.3.2. Guiding Principle: Manufacture Safe and User-Friendly Products and Consider Potential Effects Throughout the Product Life Cycle.

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Transparent policy for safer product manufacturing.

#### Acceptable Documentation:

This Guiding Principle is not mandatory. Provide the below to fulfill the minimum requirement.

Evidence that the product does not carry a GHS hazard classification, which can include:

- Documentation demonstrating compliance with applicable standards, such as NSF, ASTM, ISO 10377 (Consumer product safety), FDA or other equivalent standards for use of application; and
- Disclosure of material ingredients or hazards through product specification sheets, safety data sheets, or material ingredient reports.

This documentation should be focused on the vinyl sector of the business.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

- Complete a life cycle assessment (LCA).

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

- Optimize a product's impacts by reductions measured in a comparable LCA or documented improvements such as new and previous versions of material safety or ingredient reports.

**6.3.3. Guiding Principle: Use of Environmental and Safety Management Systems and Operational Advanced Practices that Minimize Risk to Employees.**

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Documented evidence of implementing best manufacturing practices.

**Acceptable Documentation to fulfill Mandatory Requirement:**

Must use an environmental and safety management system at each facility. Documentation of Environmental Health and Safety system, policies, and procedures includes:

- Proof of compliance with OSHA's regulations and standards, such as OSHA Voluntary Protection Program.

This documentation should be focused on the vinyl sector of the business.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

- Third-party audit reports regarding occupational health and safety and/or ISO 45001 or ISO 14001 (which addresses safety management)
- Adherence to VSC's Product Safety Guiding Principles or ACC's Responsible Care® program.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

- Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.

**6.3.4. Guiding Principle: Avoid the Use of Lead, Hexavalent Chromium, and Cadmium as Added Ingredients in Vinyl Components.**

**Applicable to:** additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, raw materials distributor, and end-product manufacturers.

**Objective:** Avoid substances of concern in PVC products.

**Acceptable Documentation to fulfill Mandatory Requirement:**

A statement must be made by the company that these ingredients are avoided unless required for essential product safety or performance requirements. Vinyl resin is sourced from suppliers that have no measurable amounts of lead, hexavalent chromium, or cadmium in their product. Acceptable documentation includes:

- Documentation showing reference of relevant standards and risk assessment methodologies when informing suppliers, consumers, and industry members of hazardous substances in the company's operations;
- Documentation showing that lead, hexavalent chromium, and cadmium are required in the manufacturing process for product safety or performance requirements, if applicable; and

- Bill of materials or other documentation that provides evidence that these materials are not utilized in vinyl materials or products.

This documentation should be focused on the vinyl sector of the business.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

- Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

- Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.

**6.3.5. Guiding Principle: Avoid the Use of VCM that Relies on Mercury as a Catalyst or Reactant in Any Part of the Process.**

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, raw materials distributor, and end-product manufacturers.

**Objective:** Avoid substances of concern in PVC products.

**Acceptable Documentation:**

This Guiding Principle is not mandatory. Provide the below to fulfill the minimum requirement.

- Resin Producers:
  - Attestation from a company official that mercury is not utilized in vinyl materials or products;
  - Documentation showing that mercury is required in the manufacturing process for product safety or performance requirements, if applicable; and
  - Bill of materials or other documentation that provides evidence that mercury is not utilized in vinyl materials or products.
- Compounders, Converters, Formulators, End-Product Manufacturers:
  - Attestation from a company official that vinyl resin is sourced from suppliers that have no measurable amounts of mercury in their product
  - The date when sourcing of resin from resin producers not using the mercury cell process was or will be instituted, if possible.

This documentation should be focused on the vinyl sector of the business.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

Internal Policies on the prohibition of mercury as a catalyst in mercury.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.

**6.3.6. Guiding Principle: Safely Employ Additives Based on Current Data and Scientific Assessment Methodologies.**

**Applicable to:** compounders, converters, formulators, raw materials distributor, and end-product manufacturers.

**Objective:** Safe manufacture and use of PVC products.

**Acceptable Documentation:**

This Guiding Principle is not mandatory. Provide the below to fulfill the minimum requirement.

- Internal procedures on the review of additives in new product development;
- Proof of compliance with relevant product standards, such as NSF, ASTM, and/or ISO standards; and
- Safe use determination, exposure, or hazard assessments from suppliers.

This documentation should be focused on the vinyl sector of the business.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

- Action plan to conduct testing of current product portfolio; and
- Compliance of a few products; must also provide overview of testing and certification of products within entire portfolio.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

- Compliance of the vinyl product portfolio that leverage studies to safely employ additives.

**6.3.7. Guiding Principle: Provide Ready and Easy-to-Understand Access to Relevant Information About the Company's Compensation, Benefits, Recognition, and Incentive Opportunities that Help Meet the Changing Needs of Employees.**

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Transparent communications with employees regarding employment and benefits.

**Acceptable Documentation:**

This Guiding Principle is not mandatory. Provide the below to fulfill the minimum requirement.

- HR and employment policies;
- Company code of conduct;
- Sample job descriptions and benefit packages or public statements on typical compensation levels.

This documentation should be focused on the United States operations of the business only.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

- Established internal policies regarding compensation, benefits, recognition, and incentive opportunities.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

- Complete a third-party audit regarding compensation, benefits, recognition, and incentive opportunities.

**6.3.8. Guiding Principle: Commit to Recruiting, Developing, and Promoting a Diverse Workforce While Respecting the Fundamental Values and Dignity of All Individuals.**

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Equal employment opportunity practices.

**Acceptable Documentation to Fulfill Mandatory Requirement:**

Respondents must commit to providing ongoing data regarding statistics and submitted every three-years during the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles Conformance Survey cycle:

- Total number of full-time staff;
- Number of women as full-time staff;
- Number of women in leadership positions (director and above);
- Number of BIPOC as full-time staff
- Number of BIPOC in leadership positions (director and above).

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, People of Color.

This required data may be provided either at an organization-wide level or at a business-unit level.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

- Documentation of governance and recruitment policies (i.e., employee handbook, publicly facing statement, or EEO policies). These documents may be provided at the company level
- Setting internal policies and goals around the promotion and development of a diverse workforce.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

- Meeting goals from internal policies; and
- Achieving a third-party audit confirming values and dignity of all individuals are met.

**6.3.9. Guiding Principle: *Subscribe to Corporate Governance Policies That Are Opposed to Discrimination, Child Labor, Bribery and Corruption, Human Trafficking, and Forced Labor.***

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Avoid discrimination and exploitation of any population segment.

**Acceptable Documentation to Fulfill Mandatory Requirement:**

**Part One:**

Attestation of commitment to the Guiding Principles set forth by VSC under the Social Diligence pillar with the goal of avoiding discrimination and exploitation of any population segment with the company. Documentation of governance policies relating to discrimination, child labor, bribery and corruption, human trafficking, and forced labor (i.e., employee handbook, corporate code of conduct or ethics policy, or a publicly facing statement).

**Part Two:**

**Attestation of commitment** to the Guiding Principles set forth by VSC under the Social Diligence pillar with the goal of avoiding discrimination and exploitation of any population segment within the supply chain.

Applicants must comply with local, state, and federal regulations regarding sourcing of materials or products from regional areas prone to discrimination, child labor, bribery and corruption, human trafficking, or forced labor.

This required data may be provided either at an organization-wide level or at a business-unit level.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

- Internal policies on supply chain sourcing.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

- Conduct supply chain mapping or audits of your supply chain to confirm primary materials.

**6.3.10. Guiding Principle: *Contribute to Charitable Outreach in the Communities in Which We Operate.***

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Participation with charities in the community.

**Acceptable Documentation:**

This Guiding Principle is not mandatory. Provide the below to fulfill the minimum requirement.

- Community outreach plan or philanthropic activities regarding education and other community service activities; and
- Documentation of financial contributions, material donations, volunteer hours or technical assistance to community organizations (receipts of payments, letter of commitment, press release etc.).

This documentation should include any initiatives in the United States or Canada, at either an organization-wide level or at a



business-unit level.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.

**6.3.11. Guiding Principle: Sustainability Portfolio Analysis**

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Safely manufacture and use PVC products.

**Acceptable Documentation:**

This Guiding Principle is not mandatory. Provide the below to fulfill the minimum requirement.

- Use and submission of the VSC scoreWISE™ tool; and
- Provide evidence of an internal tool, equivalent to VSC scoreWISE tool, used for a multiple attribute sustainability analysis.

This documentation should be focused on the vinyl sector of the business.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

- VSC scoreWISE case study participation.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.

## 6.4. Economic Soundness

### *Fulfillment of the Economic Soundness Guiding Principles*

Of the four Economic Soundness Guiding Principles, two can be achieved through setting corporate policies regarding sustainability with business strategy and stakeholder relationships. Two of the Guiding Principles have mandatory aspects in that regulations must be met with internal policies.

Guiding Principle	Mandatory	Value Chain Applicability						
		Resin	Additive	Compounder / Formulator	Converter	End Product Mfg	Recycler	Raw Materials Distributor
Treat suppliers, customers, and business partners fairly and ethically through honest and mutually beneficial dealings.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Promote open and fair competition throughout industry and in dealing with other business entities, regulators, and government officials. This includes compliance with competition and antitrust laws.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Establish sustainability as a criterion in identifying research and development and innovation projects		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Establish resource conservation and material efficiency when setting business strategy objectives and goals		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

#### **6.4.1. Guiding Principle: Treat Suppliers, Customers, and Business Partners Fairly and Ethically Through Honest and Mutually Beneficial Dealings.**

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Transparent and ethical business practices.

#### **Acceptable Documentation to fulfill Mandatory Requirement:**

Must provide a policy regarding fair and ethical business dealings in the value chain. This includes a company's annual financial reports, corporate social governance, sustainability reports, and more. Acceptable documentation includes:

- The company's core values and standards statement;
- The company's policy statements and code of conduct regarding business dealings.

This required data can be provided either at a Corporate-wide level or at a business-unit level.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

- Third-party audits of set policies.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

- Third-party audits of supply chain.

**6.4.2. Guiding Principle: Promote Open and Fair Competition Throughout Industry and in Dealing with Other Business Entities, Regulators, and Government Officials. This Includes Compliance with Competition and Antitrust Laws.**

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Promote open and fair competition.

**Acceptable Documentation to Fulfill Mandatory Requirement:**

Applicants must comply with competition and antitrust laws. Provide the company's compliance program that is tailored to the company's particular areas of risk, regularly reviewed and updated, endorsed by senior management, and consistently enforced, which includes:

- Company's policy statements and code of conduct regarding business dealings; and
- Reports of regular antitrust compliance audits.

This required data can be provided either at a corporate-wide level or at a business-unit level.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

- Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

- Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.

**6.4.3. Guiding Principle: Establish Sustainability as a Criterion in Identifying Research and Development and Innovation Projects.**

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Include sustainability as a criterion when evaluating R&D projects or capital projects.

**Acceptable Documentation:**

This Guiding Principle is not mandatory. Provide the below to fulfill the minimum requirement.

- Information on new product development or innovative process, such as Stage-Gate<sup>®</sup>, that integrates sustainable product innovation, design for the environment, etc.;
- Documented sources of project funding or affiliations; and
- Operational procedures and checklists regarding identification and funding allocation for R&D projects or capital projects.

This documentation should be focused on the vinyl sector of the business.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

- Integration of sustainable product innovation or design for the environment aspects into the standard new product development or Stage-Gate<sup>®</sup> process;
- Third-party assessment, such as EcoVadis; and

- Use of VSC's scoreWISE Tool.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

- Examples of portfolio improvements through sustainable product innovation.

**6.4.4. Guiding Principle: Establish Resource Conservation and Material Efficiency When Setting Business Strategy Objectives and Goals.**

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Integrate resource conservation and efficiency in business planning.

**Acceptable Documentation:**

This Guiding Principle is not mandatory. Provide the below to fulfill the minimum requirement.

- Sustainability reports and other relevant documents listing long-term goals, with specific targets and deadlines, and how they represent resource conservation and material efficiency;
- Statement from officers or senior management on sustainability on internal annual planning that drives behavior towards resource efficiency in their goal setting;
- Proof of third-party sustainability certification for the company's operations; and
- Proof from ISO 14001 that includes Targets/Objectives section.

This documentation should be focused on the vinyl sector of the business.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

- Provide examples and evidence of business decisions based upon resource conservation and efficiency themes.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

- Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.

## 6.5. Collaboration

### *Fulfillment of the Collaboration Guiding Principles*

There are two Collaboration Guiding Principles; one is internally focused on working within the industry and the other is focused on external stakeholders.

Guiding Principle	Mandatory	Value Chain Applicability						
		Resin	Additive	Compounder / Formulator	Converter	End Product Mfg	Recycler	Raw Materials Distributor
Work within the industry to find solutions, create pilot programs, identify opportunities, and implement them for sustainability-driven advances and innovation.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Engage external stakeholders in development of company sustainability programs		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

#### **6.5.1. Guiding Principle: Work Within the Industry to Find Solutions, Create Pilot Programs, Identify Opportunities, and Implement Them for Sustainability-Driven Advances and Innovation.**

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Industry Collaboration.

**Acceptable Documentation to Fulfill Mandatory Requirement:**

Must attend at least one all-member meeting per year.

This documentation should be focused on the vinyl sector of the business.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

Participate in a VSC-specified pilot program (and/or fund the VI recycling initiatives/pilots).

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

- Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.

#### **6.5.2. Guiding Principle: Engage External Stakeholders in Development of Company Sustainability Programs.**

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Consider external stakeholder input in company sustainability programs.

**Acceptable Documentation:**

This Guiding Principle is not mandatory. Provide the below to fulfill the minimum requirement.

- Provide evidence of external participation in Community Advisory Panels, Chamber of Commerce activities, or other

- Trade Associations (other than the Vinyl Institute or VSC); and
- Provide evidence of external participation with company-led presentations or open forum discussions related to sustainability.

This documentation should be focused on the vinyl sector of the business.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

- Evidence of stakeholder input into sustainability development.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

- Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.

## 6.6. Open Communication

### *Fulfillment of the Open Communication Guiding Principles*

There are three Open Communication Guiding Principles, two can be achieved through external communication of applicant's sustainability initiatives, and in particular the +Vantage Vinyl program efforts. Completion of the annual Guiding Principles survey is mandatory and must be completed in order to qualify for +Vantage Vinyl verification.

Guiding Principle	Mandatory	Value Chain Applicability						
		Resin	Additive	Compounder / Formulator	Converter	End Product Mfg	Recycler	Raw Materials Distributor
Promote the benefits of the +Vantage Vinyl program		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Provide company operational performance metrics in annual survey for use in industry reporting.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Communicate company sustainability initiatives		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

#### **6.6.1. Guiding Principle: Promote Industry and Company Vinyl Sustainability Work.**

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Promote the advancement of the vinyl sustainability programming.

#### **Acceptable Documentation:**

This Guiding Principle is not mandatory. Provide the below to fulfill the minimum requirement.

- Presentations and reports prepared by the company communicating the benefits of +Vantage Vinyl verification; and
- Support or contribute with relevant information to the VSC sustainability reports to highlight the initiative developments, accomplishments, and progress towards the goals and targets established through the initiative.

This documentation should be focused on the vinyl sector of the business.

#### **Examples of Advanced Practices:**

Promote the +Vantage Vinyl program by using the Mark in signatures, sales trainings, sustainability reports, and more.

#### **Examples of Innovative Practice:**

Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.

#### **6.6.2. Guiding Principle: Provide Company Operational Performance Metrics in Annual Maintenance Survey for Use in Industry Reporting.**

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

If companies cannot provide vinyl-specific operational performance metrics, they can be provided as a percentage of overall United States operations, subject to acceptance by GreenCircle and the Verification Committee.

**Objective:** Data to measure progress against goals.

**Acceptable Documentation to fulfill Mandatory Requirement:**

For each facility in the vinyl value chain, must provide annually, energy or carbon data, water, waste data, and a complete survey. Data will be requested via facility for a complete calendar year (along with production) or via already benchmarked data based on a complete calendar year to production. All data submitted will be kept proprietary and confidential.

This documentation should be focused on the vinyl sector of the business.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

Complete the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principle Conformance Survey or Annual Maintenance Survey on time.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.

**6.6.3. Guiding Principle: Communicate Company Sustainability Initiatives.**

**Applicable to:** resin manufacturers, additive manufacturers, compounders, converters, formulators, end-product manufacturers, raw materials distributor, and recyclers.

**Objective:** Sustainability initiative transparency.

**Acceptable Documentation:**

This Guiding Principle is not mandatory. Provide the below to fulfill the minimum requirement.

- Published company sustainability reports; and
- Sustainability statements on websites or company literature that include focus areas and company initiatives in sustainability, as long as it was published within the last three years.

This documentation should be focused on the vinyl sector of the business.

**Examples of Advanced Practices:**

Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.

**Examples of Innovative Practice:**

Success may be determined in the third-party verification process through the decisions of the Verification Committee.



## 7. Revising or Amending the Standard

This section outlines the three types of process for revising the +Vantage Vinyl Verification Standard or Guiding Principles:

**Five-Year Standard Review Cycle:** Complete review of the full Standard and all Guiding Principles every five-years. The VSC's Verification Committee will form a Subcommittee that will seek public input on the Standard, review past completed annual verification survey results, and reference additional materiality assessments and potential industry roadmaps. The Subcommittee will submit its recommended revisions for review by the Verification Committee. The Verification Committee, in turn, submits the review package and any proposed revisions to the Leadership Team for its approval. The five-year Standard review period will begin one year before the scheduled revision date. The new revision of the Standard will be utilized in the following calendar year's conformance survey, against the data and documentation of the issuance year for any applicants undergoing first time verification or full reverification.

**Significant Change to Guiding Principles or Standard:** A significant change to a Guiding Principle is one that results in a change of the intent of a Guiding Principle. A Significant Change to the Standard is one that results in the deletion, additions, or reorganization of a substantial nature that is not a minor change to the Standard. The Verification Committee will focus on the condition that occurred and the need for a revision to the Standard or a Guiding Principle. The Verification Committee will seek public comment only on the proposed revision which is eligible for review and comment before the Leadership Team approves of any changes. This consensus-based process will also be utilized if conditions occur in which member interest drives VSC to revise or add to the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles, which serve as the goals of the +Vantage Vinyl program, in accordance with consensus-principles set out in Section 7.7. It is expected that the Guiding Principles will evolve over time as companies continue to develop and improve their sustainability programs and practices.

**Minor Change to Guiding Principle or Standard:** These changes involve either error corrections, non-substantive reorganization, or clarifications that do not change the substance of a Guiding Principle or Standard. As such, public comments or feedback will not be sought. Rather, the Verification Committee will make recommendations to the Leadership Team for its approval.

### 7.1. Verification Committee

The Standard and Guiding Principles will be evaluated, at a minimum every five years, by a Verification Committee comprised of industry experts and other stakeholders. The work of the Verification Committee will be overseen and managed by a Committee Chair appointed by the VSC Leadership Team.

Membership on the Verification Committee will be determined by the need to have a balance in voting membership between all segments of the supply chain and equitable distribution across a broad number of companies.

Any stakeholder, as defined below, may request to receive informational communications about the initiatives of the Verification Committee and notification of the public review period by submitting an email to: [info@vantagevinyl.com](mailto:info@vantagevinyl.com).

The VSC shall ensure that qualification and participation records are maintained for each Verification Committee member, including experience, training, qualifications, employer, and meeting attendance. The Verification Committee will follow the process outlined in the next sections when revising the Standard or the Guiding Principles. The VSC shall ensure that records of public review, comments, Verification Committee votes, and all related activity and decisions made by the Verification Committee are prepared and maintained.

The Verification Committee shall consist of two types of memberships:

**Voting Members** are encouraged to attend as many meetings as possible and are responsible for voting on revisions to the Standard or Guiding Principles and commenting on the draft Standard or Guiding Principles. Voting

members are VSC Primary Stakeholder members in good standing.

**Informational Members** receive Verification Committee communications, may attend Committee meetings, and may submit comments on the draft Standard or Guiding Principles. Informational Members have no vote.

The Verification Committee will ensure that the Standard document and all other written procedures related to the verification process are up to date at all times.

The Verification Committee may create or assign a Subcommittee for the five-year standard review. Members of any such Subcommittee will be identified from subject matter experts or those stakeholders that have a material interest in the topic covered in the document where input has been requested. A VSC staff liaison will serve on the Subcommittee.

### 7.2. Public Input

The Verification Committee will provide an opportunity for public input for the five-year standard revision cycle. The Verification Committee will advise on the inputs received, acknowledging receipt of the inputs and how the inputs may be reviewed. The Verification Committee may assign the review of inputs to a Subcommittee if the topic covered is relevant to the stakeholders or subject matter experts within the Subcommittee.

At the initiation of the Committee Chair, a notification will be sent to VSC's stakeholders asking for public input to the Standard document. Public input will be accepted for a minimum of thirty (30) days. The Verification Committee will announce the date when the 30-day comment period ends, and input is due.

Public input on the Standard is not guaranteed a response beyond initial acknowledgement, but the Verification Committee, or designated Subcommittee, may respond if deemed appropriate. The response may be in the form of an answer to a question provided as input or may be an explanation of actions or inactions related to the input. If a response is provided to an input, the public is not provided with an option to object or appeal.

The Verification Committee will also seek public input on any significant change to the Standard or Guiding Principles. A significant change to a Guiding Principle or Standard is one that results in a change of the intent of a Guiding Principle or the addition of a new Guiding Principle. The Verification Committee will seek public comment only on the proposed revision which is eligible for review and comment in the consensus-based process before the Leadership Team approves of any changes.

### 7.3. Study

For the five-year standard review, the Subcommittee assigned by the Verification Committee will review the results of the public input, the most recently completed annual verification surveys, and feedback provided by the members, and will assess the need for revisions to the Standard, the Guiding Principles, or conformance metrics. If the Subcommittee identifies the need for a significant change, the Subcommittee will draft proposed revisions to the Standard to be reviewed by the Verification Committee and the VSC Leadership Team. A significant change to a Guiding Principle is one that results in a change of the intent of a Guiding Principle or the addition of a new Guiding Principle.

The Guiding Principles, within the Standard, serve as the direction and parameters of +Vantage Vinyl as goals to be achieved over time.

Each Guiding Principle should include examples of documentation that may be submitted for the purpose of obtaining verification in accordance with Section 4 above. These examples should address submittals that demonstrate conformance with both minimum as well as additional requirements for tiered metrics.

The Verification Committee will review the results of the yearly surveys and assess the need for revisions to the Guiding Principles or conformance metrics. If the Verification Committee identifies the need for a minor or significant change, the Committee will draft proposed revisions to be reviewed by the VSC Leadership Team and

proceed as necessary in the appropriate consensus process track.

#### 7.4. Stakeholders

For the purposes of the Standard or Guiding Principles review process, stakeholders include but are not limited to entities with a direct and material interest in the vinyl industry, vinyl supply chain, and vinyl products including representatives from industry and related business trade associations, individual raw material, additive, and finished product suppliers, users and distributors, as well as end use product retailers.

#### 7.5. Public Review

The Verification Committee will provide timely and adequate notification of a Standard or Guiding Principles revision or development activity. There will be open and meaningful opportunity for public review and comment by all interested stakeholders. The Verification Committee will review and consider feedback from all stakeholders.

Parties that are directly and materially interested in and have been or will be affected by revisions to the Standard or Guiding Principles may submit a public comment to the Verification Committee. A public review comment should include:

- Name and address of requesting party;
- Statement of material interest in a Standard or Guiding Principle revision;
- Statement of impact by proposed revisions to the Standard or Guiding Principles;
- Description as to why the Verification Committee should consider its decision; and
- Suggested alternative to the proposed revisions.

The notice will set out the Verification Committee's rationale for its proposed revision to the Standard or Guiding Principles, identify the stakeholders likely to be directly affected by the revision, and announce the date of which this 30-day comment period ends and comments are due.

#### 7.6. Consideration

Following the close of the public review period, the Verification Committee will consider all written comments as it evaluates recommendations for changes to the Standard or Guiding Principles. The VSC will ensure that a record of all comments are retained as well as the Verification Committee's responses.

#### 7.7. Consensus

VSC endeavors to operate as a consensus decision-making organization. Consensus is established when there is substantial agreement among those involved in the decision-making process. Consensus does not require unanimity or imply that a single member company or a small group of member companies have veto power over any decision or project. Consensus decision-making procedures provide an opportunity for dialogue, so members can discuss the projected benefits and costs of a proposal and use the discussion to refine collective decision-making. In striving for consensus, members shall make a concerted effort to promote the best interests of the industry, even if a decision is not optimal for an individual member company.

Resolutions and other decisions of the Verification Committee shall be reached by consensus whenever possible. A consensus from the Verification Committee must be achieved to revise the Standard or a Guiding Principle or create a new Guiding Principle. These revisions will be approved by the Leadership Team by consensus before being published.

#### 7.8. Appeal

Appeals after the consensus decision on the revisions are not permitted.

#### 7.9. Publish

The Verification Committee will provide the new Standard and conformance metrics to the VSC Leadership Team for final publication. The VSC Leadership Team will ensure that the new Standard and conformance metrics are

disseminated and included in the scoring of the next annual survey for the +Vantage Vinyl program.

Members will be verified to the current Standard at the time of the first verification or next full verification cycle. The annual data submissions will be reviewed against the Standard in which the full verification conformance was achieved.

## 8. Appendix — Definitions

**Documentation:** Official information or evidence provided in writing in support of different verification steps. Relevant documentation may include, but is not limited to, reports, certifications, compliance testing results, and company statements.<sup>1</sup>

**Environmental Management System (EMS):** A framework that helps an organization achieve its environmental goals through consistent review, evaluation, and improvement of its environmental performance.<sup>2</sup>

**Foreign Entity:** Any branch, partnership, group or sub-group, association, estate, trust, corporation or division of a corporation, or organization organized under the laws of a foreign state if either its principal place of business is outside the United States, or its equity securities are primarily traded on one or more foreign exchanges.<sup>3</sup>

**Life Cycle Assessment (LCA):** A tool to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of a product, material, process, or activity throughout the full life cycle of the assessed subject, from materials acquisition to manufacturing, use, and final disposition.<sup>4</sup>

**Materiality Assessment:** The process of identifying an organization's most important issues, which involves contacting internal and external stakeholders to request their input. Materiality assessments can and should inform both reporting and strategy.<sup>5</sup>

**Scope 1 Emissions:** Direct greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that occur from sources that are controlled or owned by an organization (e.g. – emissions from combustion from on-site fuels).<sup>6</sup>

**Scope 2 Emissions:** Indirect greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with the purchase of electricity, steam, heat, or cooling. These emissions physically occur at the facility where they are generated and are reported in an organization's inventory because they are the result of the organization's energy use.<sup>6</sup>

**Scope 3 Emissions:** Indirect greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions an organization is responsible for from the goods and services purchased and sold. The majority of corporate emissions are from Scope 3 sources and include products and materials consumed, customer behaviors with products sold, transportation, commuting, and more.<sup>7</sup>

**Third-Party Verifier:** A qualified, independent, outside organization employed by a company to review and confirm information provided in order to ensure transparency, accuracy, and objectivity.<sup>8</sup>

**United States Vinyl Value Chain:** The system of organizations and operations involved in moving a vinyl product from suppliers to consumers in the United States (such as raw material providers, distributors, etc.). A foreign entity can be included in the United States vinyl value chain if part of their operation chain is within the United States.<sup>9</sup>

**Verification:** The rigorous process of evaluating information to ensure the validity of claims for different aspects of products and operations.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup><https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/documentation>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.epa.gov/ems/learn-about-environmental-management-systems>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/31/800.212#>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice/design-environment-life-cycle-assessments>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.greenbiz.com/article/how-make-your-materiality-assessment-worth-effort>

<sup>6</sup>[https://www.epa.gov/climateleadership/scope-1-and-scope-2-inventory-guidance#:~:text=Scope%201%20emissions%20are%20direct,boilers%2C%20furnaces%2C%20vehicles\).](https://www.epa.gov/climateleadership/scope-1-and-scope-2-inventory-guidance#:~:text=Scope%201%20emissions%20are%20direct,boilers%2C%20furnaces%2C%20vehicles).)

<sup>7</sup><https://ghgprotocol.org/standards/scope-3-standard>

<sup>8</sup><http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/third-party-verification-TPV.html>

<sup>9</sup><https://www.investopedia.com/terms/v/valuechain.asp>

<sup>10</sup><https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/verification>

## 9. Appendix — Reference Documents

**American National Standards Institute Essential Requirements 2022**

**ISO 17065** – Product Certification Bodies Accreditation Standard

**ISO 14025** – Environmental Labels and Declarations – Type III Environmental Declarations – Guiding Principles and Procedures

**ISO 26000** – Guidance on Social Responsibility

## 10. Appendix — Standard Revision Log

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Pilot	2020	2020 Verification (Pilot)
2.1	December 2021	2021 Verification
3.0	March 2023	2022 Verification
3.1	March 2024	2023 Verification

## 11. Appendix — Participation Agreement Form

This is a sample of the document must be signed and submitted before GreenCircle is able to review your survey responses and means of verification documentation. No verification certificate will be administered unless this has been received by VSC.

### +Vantage Vinyl™ Participation Agreement

This is an Agreement between the Vinyl Institute, Inc, (“VI”) on behalf of its self-funded council, the Vinyl Sustainability Council (“VSC”), and the Business Entity identified in the signature block to this Agreement (“Business Entity”) that is effective on the date in the signature block (“Effective Date”).

The VSC manages the +Vantage Vinyl™ initiative to advance the US vinyl industry’s contribution to sustainable development. The Business Entity desires to participate in +Vantage Vinyl and license the +Vantage Vinyl service mark(s) displayed in the Graphic Guidelines (“Marks”). VSC desires to grant the Business Entity a license to use the Marks and materials under certain terms.

Besides this Agreement, the foundational documents establishing the +Vantage Vinyl initiative (“Initiative”) consist of: (1) the +Vantage Vinyl Verification Standard, including the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles, and (2) the +Vantage Vinyl Graphic Guidelines. These documents may be updated and revised as the Initiative evolves.

The Guiding Principles set +Vantage Vinyl’s direction and parameters in the areas of environmental stewardship, social diligence, economic soundness, collaboration, and open communication within the scope of the Initiative. Business Entity’s progress towards the Guiding Principles will be assessed and verified by GreenCircle Certified, LLC, an independent third party verification service, retained by VI to conduct +Vantage Vinyl verification on behalf of VSC. All +Vantage Vinyl verifications will be valid for three years, subject to annual maintenance checks as set out in the +Vantage Vinyl Verification Standard.

In consideration of the foregoing and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are acknowledged, the parties agree:

- 1. Business Entity.** For the purposes of this Agreement, “Business Entity” is the company, joint venture, subsidiary, division, or operational unit identified in the signature block of this Agreement with vinyl-related business operations in the United States or Canada. Larger companies have diverse operations that may be outside the scope of the Initiative, outside the United States and Canada, or that decline to participate. When eligible, entire companies are welcome to participate, but business or operating units within a company can elect to participate without extending obligations to the company’s other operations.
- 2. Applicant Criteria.** By participating in the Initiative, Business Entity represents that it:
  - i. maintains VSC Primary Stakeholder membership,
  - ii. operates in the United States or Canada, and
  - iii. is a resin supplier, raw material/additive supplier, material compounder, converter/formulator, end-product manufacturer, recycler, or distributor as those terms are defined in the VSC Operating Guidelines.
- 3. Business Entity Commitments.** Business Entity agrees to:
  - i. designate an employee with sustainability responsibilities as the +Vantage Vinyl Primary Point of Contact;



- ii. submit to GreenCircle Certified, LLC all information and documentation required to support verification in accordance with the +Vantage Vinyl Verification Standard; and
- iii. adhere to the +Vantage Vinyl Graphic Guidelines.

**4. Verified Performance.**

- i. The Business Entity will complete the +Vantage Vinyl Guiding Principles Conformance survey and submit any other information or documentation requested by GreenCircle Certified.
- ii. In the first year of this Agreement, GreenCircle will conduct a full verification of Business Entity's progress towards the goals set out in the Guiding Principle.
- iii. In the second and third years of this Agreement, GreenCircle will conduct an abbreviated annual maintenance check based on data collected in accordance with paragraph 4.i.
- iv. GreenCircle will notify both Business Entity and VSC of the outcome of the full verification and annual maintenance.

**5. Confidentiality.** All data and documentation submitted directly to GreenCircle shall remain confidential and will not be shared with VSC or any other outside entities without the written approval of Business Entity. Business Entity may elect to enter into a non-disclosure or other agreement with GreenCircle for additional confidentiality protection. In such instance, neither VSC nor VI will be parties to any agreement between GreenCircle and Business Entity, and neither VI nor VSC shall be responsible for the actions or omissions of either party. Business Entity agrees that that GreenCircle may disclose to VSC or VI any non-identifying, aggregated and statistical data that may be derived from the annual surveys and other information for purposes of statistical reporting industry- or Initiative-wide.

**6. Trademark License.** VI grants to Business Entity, during the Term, a royalty-free, non-exclusive, non-transferable, revocable license to use the Marks to indicate Business Entity's participation in the Initiative.

- i. Business Entity acknowledges that +Vantage Vinyl is a valuable asset that must be properly used and protected.
- ii. Business Entity shall only use the Marks in accordance with the Graphic Guidelines, a separate document that may be revised occasionally.
- iii. Business Entity agrees that VI is the sole and exclusive owner of the Marks, notwithstanding the rights granted. Business Entity will not assert any rights in, or challenge VI's ownership of the Marks.
- iv. VSC reserves the right to reasonably inspect and approve the reproduction and use of the Marks and the manner in which the Marks are reproduced or displayed. Upon request, Business Entity shall provide VSC with sample copies of all materials bearing the Marks, and Business Entity shall abide by the decision of VSC regarding approval of the use of the Marks. VI reserves the right, at any time, to revoke Business Entity's right to use the Marks when VSC determines, in its sole discretion, that the Marks are not being used under this Agreement.
- v. Business Entity will not construe, claim, or imply that its participation in +Vantage Vinyl constitutes approval, acceptance, or endorsement of anything other than Business Entity's commitment to the Initiative. Business Entity acknowledges that its participation constitutes no endorsement of the Business Entity's products, services, or industrial facilities by VSC, VI, or other participating companies.
- VI. VI PROVIDES THE MARKS WITHOUT ANY WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING (WITHOUT LIMITATION) WARRANTIES OF ACCURACY, COMPLETENESS, RELIABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE OR USE, OR NON-INFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL VI BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY DAMAGES WHATSOEVER, WHETHER DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, OR SPECIAL, IN CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH BUSINESS ENTITY'S USE OF THE MARKS.

**7. Term and Termination.** Each +Vantage Vinyl verification cycle consists of one full verification year and two maintenance years. The initial term of this Agreement will commence on the Effective Date and the Agreement will terminate at the end of Business Entity's current cycle indicated below (the "Termination Date"), unless earlier terminated as set forth below or renewed upon mutual written agreement of the parties.

- Termination Date is three (3) years from the Effective Date (one full verification year and two maintenance years)
- Termination Date is two (2) years from the Effective Date (two maintenance years)
- Termination Date is one (1) year from the Effective Date (one maintenance year)

Notwithstanding the Termination Date:

- i. Business Entity may terminate this Agreement at any time upon at least thirty (30) days prior Notice to VSC but must fulfill any financial commitments the Business Entity has made, except that Business Entity will in no event be liable for any financial commitments unrelated to Business Entity's use of VI's marks or its obligations under this Agreement.
- ii. VI on behalf of VSC may terminate this Agreement at any time upon prior Notice to Business Entity if it determines that Business Entity is no longer eligible to participate in the Initiative, that Business Entity violated the terms of this Agreement, or that Business Entity failed to comply with the Initiative's policies and practices.
  - 1. VSC will assess any deficiencies on a case by case basis and may, in its discretion, waive any requirements and allow Business Entity to continue its participation through alternative contributions.
  - 2. If, despite reasonable, good faith efforts, Business Entity fails to fulfill any requirements, VI on behalf of VSC may permit Business Entity to continue its participation in the Initiative for the following calendar year but Business Entity must discontinue all use of the Marks.
- iii. VI may terminate this Agreement upon at least 30 days prior Notice to Business Entity if VSC decides, in its sole discretion, to discontinue the Initiative.
- iv. Upon termination of this Agreement, all licenses and rights granted will terminate, and Business Entity must cease all use of the Marks in every form, manner and media. Paragraphs 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 shall survive termination of this Agreement.

**8. Dispute Resolution.** VI on behalf of VSC and Business Entity will use good faith as a general principle for resolving conflicts under the Initiative. Both VI and Business Entity will endeavor to resolve all matters informally to preserve maximum public confidence in +Vantage Vinyl. If informal channels do not produce a mutually agreeable resolution to a matter in dispute, either party to this Agreement shall notify the other in writing on the nature of the dispute, the specific corrective action sought, and their intent to terminate the Agreement upon 30 days prior Notice, either as a whole or in part, unless specific corrective actions sought are undertaken.

**9. Indemnification.** Business Entity will indemnify, hold harmless, and, if VI elects, defend VSC, VI, and their directors, officers, members, and employees from and against any and all third party claims, liabilities, judgments, demands, actions, damages, costs and expenses (including, without limitation, attorney's fees) arising out of or relating to any breach by Business Entity of its obligations under this Agreement, with the exception of any claim arising out of or relating to Business Entity's authorized use of the Marks.

**10. Notices.** All notices and other communications (“Notices”) required or pertaining to this Agreement shall be in writing and addressed to a party at its address in the signature block below, or to such other address as either party may elect by giving notice to the other party as directed in this section, provided, however, that communications regarding participation and implementation activities will be with the individual designated pursuant to Paragraph 3.i as the +Vantage Vinyl Primary Point of Contact responsible for sustainability activities of the participating Business Entity. All Notices shall be sent via nationally-recognized overnight courier with courier fees prepaid, and a courtesy copy may be sent via e-mail. Notices shall be deemed received two (2) business days following deposit.

**11. Governing Law.** This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the District of Columbia, without regard to conflicts of law principles. Any claim, controversy, or dispute arising out of this Agreement shall be heard in courts within the District of Columbia.

**12. Entire Agreement.** This Agreement, including any exhibits, constitutes the entire agreement of the parties regarding the subject, and supersedes any other agreements or understandings between the parties, whether oral or written.

- i. The Agreement may only be amended by mutual written agreement of the parties. Business Entity shall not assign or sublicense this Agreement or any of its rights or obligations under this Agreement to any third party without VI’s prior express consent.
- ii. A party’s waiver or failure to enforce any terms or conditions of this Agreement or a waiver of any breach shall not be construed as a continuing waiver of the same or other provisions.
- iii. If any term or condition of this Agreement is held illegal, unenforceable, or otherwise invalid by government promulgation or court decree, such holdings shall not affect the other provisions, which can be given effect without the invalid provision; provided that the parties shall promptly negotiate in good faith to amend the Agreement as necessary.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, an authorized representative of each party has executed this Agreement. This Agreement may be executed in counterparts.

**Vinyl Institute (on behalf of Vinyl Sustainability Council)**

**Business Entity:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Name]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Business Name]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Signature]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Signature]

1747 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Suite 825  
Washington, DC 20006

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address:

Effective Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_