

LIFE Textiles® and the Green Star Office Interiors Rating Tool

1. How do fabrics contribute points in the Green Star Office Interiors rating tool?

ECO PREFERRED CONTENT

As a component of furniture, fabrics can potentially contribute points in the Materials Category - Eco Preferred Content

However, fabrics, due to being relatively light in weight, will only contribute points towards the Green Stars – Eco Preferred Content Criteria in limited and particular circumstances, an example is given in C below.

The GBCA's definition of Eco Preferred Content was revised in February 2006 to the percentage (by mass) of the furniture item that is third-party certified. For example, the percentage of the overall weight of a furniture item that is certified organic or certified by a third party recognised by the GBCA.

The Eco Preferred Content of the furniture item is calculated on a mass basis:

If < 5% are third-party certified	0 points
If 5 – 20% are third-party certified	6 points
If over 20% are third-party certified	10 points

- A. Third-party certified fabrics will not contribute points on their own (ie. if no other component of the furniture item is third-party certified). This is because fabrics constitute less than 5% of the overall weight of a furniture item.
- B. Third-party certified fabrics will not contribute additional points if the maximum points (10 pts) have already been achieved. As an example, the weight breakdown of a workstation and a chair are represented below.

In the workstation example, the percentage by mass of Aluminium Extrusion is 23.6%, which is over 20%. If the Extruded Aluminium is third-party certified, this would earn 10 points. If the fabric is certified organic or GECA certified, no additional points would be awarded.

WORKSTATION – Example		
Component / Material	Weight	Percentage (%) by mass
Aluminium Extrusion	29.86 kg	23.6 %
Aluminium	7.85 kg	6.2 %
Steel	13.85 kg	11 %
Timber	5.79 kg	4.6 %
MDF	66 kg	52.2%
Epoxy	0.6 kg	0.4%
Fabric	2.59 kg	2.0%
TOTAL	126.54 kg	100%

TASK CHAIR – Example		
Component / Material	Weight	Percentage (%) by mass
Plastic	1.25 kg	7.2 %
Glass reinforced nylon	2.27 kg	13 %
Steel	11.18 kg	64.2 %
Foam	1.11 kg	6.4 %
Plywood	1.36 kg	7.8 %
Fabric	0.25 kg	1.4 %
TOTAL	17.42 kg	100%

- C. Third-party certified fabrics can only contribute points if the percentage by mass of other third-party certified components is just under 5% or just under 20%.

For example, in the workstation example represented above, if the timber (4.6% of the overall weight) is third-party certified, using a certified organic or GECA certified fabric (2% of the overall weight) will result in 6.6% of the workstation regarded as Eco Preferred, attracting 6 points.

NB. LIFE Textiles® - PLANET (certified organic) can contribute points in this instance.

Claims that third-party certified fabrics can attract points on their own are misleading.

However, in the limited and particular circumstances (as outlined in Example C) that fabrics can contribute points in the Eco Preferred Content, and all other criteria (for e.g. Durability, Product Stewardship etc) being equal, **this will have little effect on the overall points achieved.** This is due to the rounding up or down of points.

Green Star - Office Interiors v1.1
Tenancy Fitout:

Mat-1 Workstations Calculator
Total Number of Workstations within the Fitout: units

Points Awarded for this Credit:

Materials Output Sheet
Back to Materials Credits

	Type of Workstation	Name of Workstation Supplier	Brief Description of Workstation	Number of Workstations (Units)	Resource Utilization			Management				Resability		Product Score (%)	
					Eco Preferred Content	Durability	EMS?	EMS ISO 14001 Certified?	Waste Minimization	Energy	Emissions	Materials Minimization	Product Stewardship		Modular
1	Fixed			100	≈5% and <20%	≈10yrs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	93
2															

As fabrics will rarely contribute to Green Star points we recommend that designers / clients select the best sustainable textiles available such as LIFE Textiles®.



All LIFE Textiles® can be specified for Green Star projects

INDOOR ENVIRONMENT QUALITY

Two points are awarded where all furniture items in a fitout are low-VOC. All LIFE Textiles® products are certified as low-VOC and can contribute to a furniture item achieving a low-VOC rating. A test report is available upon request.

Furthermore, LIFE Textiles® has the ability to absorb volatile organic compounds and can improve indoor air quality.



All LIFE Textiles® are certified as low-VOC, meeting the Green Star emission requirements

2. Is a fabric certified through Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) a good environmental option?

Not necessarily. The GECA Textile Standard certifies both natural and synthetic textiles; therefore it is possible for vinyl (PVC), virgin polyester, acrylic, nylon and blended fabrics (such as a Wool / Nylon blend) to achieve third-party certification with GECA. These fabrics should not be regarded as Eco Preferred as they are manufactured from oil, a finite and non-renewable resource and contain numerous hazardous substances such as antimony, arsenic, formaldehyde, chromium, cobalt, VOCs etc. Furthermore, synthetic contract fabrics are not accepted for recycling in Australia.

The GECA Textile Standard® only addresses a single environmental issue, chemical inputs, without addressing resource use, energy and water usage and recycling.

Additionally, the GECA label is a single mark where products either pass or fail. The lack of a graded system inhibits innovation, as a benchmark product such as LIFE Textiles® that performs considerably better than competing products gains no advantage, as LIFE Textiles® will carry exactly the same endorsement as a more damaging product, such as vinyl, 100% virgin polyester fabric or blended fabrics.

LIFE Textiles® are of a higher standard than the GECA Textile Standard, the benefits of LIFE Textiles® are outlined in Q4 below.



All LIFE Textiles® can be used for GECA certified furniture

3. What action is INSTYLE taking regarding third-party certification for textiles?

INSTYLE is actively involved in the development of a Sustainable Textile Standard with the American Association for Contract Textiles (ACT).

The Sustainable Textile Standard is a collaborative effort between ACT members, GreenBlue - a non-profit organisation dedicated to the advancement of 'cradle-to-cradle' Design Principles, and NSF International - a Standards Development body.

INSTYLE's Environment Manager Tracy Mak has played a key role in the development of the standard. She was asked to chair two working groups - researching international textile standards and fibre sourcing.

The Sustainable Textile Standard has the potential to become a benchmark standard internationally because it is robust and comprehensive, addressing the entire textile life cycle including 1. Raw materials 2. Safety of Chemicals 3. Energy 4. Water 5. Recyclability and 6. Social Responsibility.

The final standard will hopefully become a blueprint for an Australian industry standard. INSTYLE will seek third-party certification with the Sustainable Textile Standard for all LIFE Textiles® products when it is finalised early 2008.

4. Why is LIFE Textiles® the benchmark sustainable textile collection on the market?

LIFE (Low Impact For the Environment) Textiles® is a benchmark sustainable textile collection that has been specifically designed to have minimal impact over its entire life cycle. Composed of eco wool™ and certified organic wool, a sustainable rapidly-renewable fibre, LIFE Textiles® are produced to strict environmental criteria outlined in the LIFE Textiles® Specification.

This specification was developed by INSTYLE in collaboration with The Woolmark Company of Australia and builds on best available technologies recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency (US) and the European Union Eco Label.

LIFE Textiles® are produced locally and will benefit indoor air quality as wool has the ability to absorb volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and not re-emit.

LIFE Textiles® are reusable and recyclable through INSTYLE's REVIVE™ program, a reuse / recycling program designed to give wool-rich textiles a second life, or will biodegrade in the right conditions.

LIFE Textiles® have been assessed and third-party verified through Ecospecifier. The LIFE Textiles® listings are available on www.ecospecifier.org.



INSTYLE is proud to be selected as a finalist for the prestigious Banksia Environmental Awards for 2006 and 2007 in the Sustainability Category, "awarded for outstanding achievements in minimising the environmental footprint of a company".

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