

LeafMark™ Certification

Workforce Green Skills Certification

Scheme Rules & Standards



FSG Certification Limited
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Certification scope: independently verified sustainability education and green-skills development across an organisation's workforce.

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About LeafMark

LeafMark is a workforce green-skills certification scheme. It recognises organisations that can demonstrate, through objective evidence and independent third-party evaluation, that defined proportions of their workforce have completed sustainability education and green-skills learning meeting the published LeafMark requirements.

LeafMark does not certify that an organisation, product or service is environmentally sustainable, carbon neutral, net zero or otherwise environmentally superior. It certifies only conformity with the published workforce sustainability education and green-skills requirements within the certified scope and validity period.

FSG Certification Limited is the scheme owner and certification body. Independent monitoring and evaluation is undertaken by Agent4Change, a legally separate third-party organisation. A separate competent Reviewer/Decision Maker reviews the audit output and makes the certification decision. FSG Certification issues the certificate and authorises use of the applicable LeafMark following a positive decision.

1. Purpose of the Scheme

The purpose of LeafMark is to recognise measurable organisational investment in sustainability education and green-skills capability. The scheme focuses on people: the reach, level, recency and evidence of qualifying learning across the workforce.

The certification is designed to distinguish verified green-skills development from broader claims about an organisation's overall sustainability performance.

2. Scheme Owner, Governance and Independence

FSG Certification Limited owns and governs LeafMark, maintains the scheme requirements, reviews applications and scope, maintains certification records, arranges independent certification review and decision, issues certificates and marks, and manages surveillance, complaints, appeals, suspension, withdrawal and recertification.

Agent4Change undertakes independent third-party monitoring and evaluation of conformity with the LeafMark requirements. Agent4Change is legally separate from FSG Certification Limited and Fifty Shades Greener Limited.

Fifty Shades Greener Limited is a separate training and education provider. Purchase or completion of Fifty Shades Greener training is not a condition of LeafMark certification and provides no preferential treatment in evaluation or certification decision-making.

3. Open, Fair and Training-Provider-Neutral Access

LeafMark is open on transparent, fair and non-discriminatory terms to organisations willing and able to comply with the published scheme requirements.

- Applicants may use qualifying sustainability training from Fifty Shades Greener Limited or any other training provider.
- External training is assessed against the same published curriculum, assessment and evidence requirements.
- No applicant receives preferential treatment because it has purchased training, consultancy or other services from Fifty Shades Greener Limited or an associated organisation.
- Certification decisions are based solely on objective evidence of conformity with the applicable LeafMark requirements.
- Fees may vary proportionately according to organisation size as published in this document.

4. Certification Scope and Workforce Boundary

Certification applies to the legal entity, workforce and organisational scope identified on the certificate. The applicant must define the workforce population used to calculate LeafMark percentages.

- Workforce includes full-time and part-time employees.
- Once-off vendors are excluded.
- Seasonal staff employed for less than four months over the relevant year are excluded.
- Fixed-term contractors who are not employees are excluded.
- The headcount snapshot is taken using the month immediately preceding certification, supported by appropriate HR records, rosters or payroll information.
- Training completions must relate to unique individuals; the same learner must not be double-counted within a level.
- Qualifying training must have been completed within the 12 months preceding the certification assessment unless the controlled scheme requirements expressly state otherwise.

5. LeafMark Levels and Thresholds

The following are the minimum certification thresholds.

Level	Level 1 requirement	Level 2 requirement	Level 3 requirement
1 Leaf – Awareness	At least 20% of workforce in past 12 months	Not required	Not required
2 Leaves – Application	At least 20% of workforce in past 12 months	At least 2% of workforce	Not required
3 Leaves – Leadership	At least 50% of workforce in past 12 months	At least 2% of workforce	At least 1 employee

6. Green Skills Level 1 – Awareness

Goal: build baseline sustainability literacy so employees understand relevant impacts and everyday behaviours.

Minimum curriculum:

- Climate and environmental basics, including relevant topics such as emissions, resource use, biodiversity, pollution, energy, water, waste, purchasing, food and travel/transport.
- At least three relevant sustainability topics must be included.

Training design:

- Recommended minimum total learning time: 2 hours. This may be delivered through micro-learning.
- Learning must be sufficiently structured to demonstrate that the required content has been completed.

Minimum evidence outcome:

- Named learner completion record and completion date.

7. Green Skills Level 2 – Application

Goal: develop people who can implement and improve sustainability practices in operations.

Minimum competencies:

- Measurement and monitoring in at least two areas, such as energy, water, waste, purchasing or logistics.
- Operational controls, such as relevant procedures for waste segregation, chemical use, linen/laundry, kitchen waste or maintenance.
- Improvement planning: setting a goal, defining actions, owners, timelines and KPIs.
- Engagement and communication, such as toolbox talks, staff engagement methods or behavioural nudges.

Training design:

- Recommended learning time: at least 6–8 hours or equivalent.
- Assessment must include a practical component, such as a mini-project, workplace audit/walk-through with corrective actions, or a case study requiring calculations or decisions.
- The practical output must be verified by an appropriate supervisor, trainer or assessor.

Minimum evidence outcome:

- Completion certificate or equivalent learner record; assessment record; and a copy or controlled record of the practical output.

8. Green Skills Level 3 – Leadership

Goal: ensure at least one person has developed the capability to lead sustainability strategy, governance and continuous improvement.

Minimum competencies:

- Strategy and governance, including materiality/prioritisation, stakeholder needs, policy and governance structures.
- Operational carbon literacy, including at least Scopes 1 and 2, an introduction to Scope 3, data quality and reduction planning.
- Systems thinking and change management, including embedding sustainability into culture, training plans and role responsibilities.
- Risk, assurance and claims integrity, including evidence trails, greenwashing risk and audit readiness.

- Advanced project delivery, including multi-department planning, budgeting basics, procurement influence and reporting.

Training design:

- Recommended learning time: at least 20 hours or an equivalent formal qualification module.
- Assessment must include a capstone based on a real organisational plan, plus either an exam/graded assignment or a portfolio reviewed by a suitably qualified assessor.

Minimum evidence outcome:

- Certificate or transcript; graded capstone/portfolio or equivalent controlled assessment evidence; and evidence of the learner's relevant role assignment where required.

9. External Training Programme Evidence

Training from external providers is eligible where it meets the same published LeafMark requirements. To demonstrate equivalence, the applicant must provide both learner evidence and programme evidence.

A. Learner evidence

- Learner name matching the applicant's workforce record.
- Course title and provider name.
- Completion date.
- Hours, credits or estimated learning time.
- Assessment evidence where required by the applicable level, such as result, verified badge or assessor sign-off.

Acceptable formats may include certificates and transcripts, verifiable digital badges, provider letters with roster and assessment confirmation, or LMS exports showing learner identity, completion and assessment information.

B. Programme evidence

- Syllabus or learning outcomes.
- Agenda or module list.
- Assessment method and pass criteria.
- Delivery mode and duration.
- Trainer/assessor qualification, short biography or credential sufficient to demonstrate appropriate competence.

FSG Certification and Agent4Change shall apply these requirements consistently regardless of the training provider. FSG-branded training is not presumed to qualify merely because it is provided by Fifty Shades Greener Limited; it must meet the same controlled LeafMark requirements.

10. Application and Certification Process

1. Application and scope review: FSG Certification confirms eligibility, certification scope, workforce boundary, applicable level and known impartiality risks.
2. Evidence submission: the applicant submits workforce/headcount evidence, learner completion records and applicable programme/assessment evidence.
3. Independent evaluation: Agent4Change assigns a suitably competent and conflict-checked auditor to evaluate conformity with the published LeafMark requirements.
4. Clarification: the auditor may request further evidence or clarification where evidence is incomplete, inconsistent or insufficient.
5. Audit report: the auditor records findings and a recommendation. The auditor does not make the final certification decision.
6. Independent review and decision: a competent Reviewer/Decision Maker who has not participated in the audit reviews the audit output and decides whether certification is granted, refused, or whether further evidence/corrective action is required.
7. Certification issuance: following a positive decision, FSG Certification issues the applicable LeafMark certificate and authorises use of the corresponding mark.

11. Audit Methodology and Evidence

LeafMark audits are normally documentary/remote because the principal requirements relate to workforce numbers, training content, completion and assessment evidence. The auditor must obtain sufficient, relevant, current and verifiable objective evidence to support each finding.

- Evidence may be sampled where appropriate, with the sampling approach recorded.
- Additional evidence may be requested to verify workforce numbers, learner identity, completion, curriculum, assessment or practical outputs.
- A site visit or additional verification may be required where documentary evidence is insufficient, inconsistencies or integrity concerns arise, or the certification scope cannot otherwise be objectively verified.
- False, manipulated or materially misleading evidence may result in refusal, suspension or withdrawal.

12. Certification Decision and Separation of Functions

Audit and certification decision-making are separate functions. Agent4Change auditors evaluate conformity and report findings. They must not make or communicate the final certification decision.

The Reviewer/Decision Maker must be competent, must not have participated in the audit being reviewed, and must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest. No person involved in selling or delivering training or consultancy to the applicant may influence the certification decision.

13. Validity, Annual Revalidation and Surveillance

LeafMark certification is valid for 12 months unless a different period is expressly stated on the certificate. Continued use of the LeafMark requires annual revalidation because the certification thresholds rely on current workforce and training-completion information.

Annual revalidation requires updated headcount and qualifying training evidence and may include independent re-evaluation, sampling, clarification or additional verification. FSG Certification may also conduct surveillance during the validity period where material changes, complaints, mark misuse or other certification risks arise.

14. Non-Conformity, Suspension, Withdrawal and Reduction

FSG Certification may refuse, suspend, withdraw or reduce LeafMark certification where an organisation:

- does not meet the applicable threshold or evidence requirements;
- fails to resolve required corrective action within the specified timeframe;
- provides false or misleading evidence;
- refuses required independent verification or surveillance;
- misuses the LeafMark or makes claims beyond the certified scope;
- undergoes a material workforce or organisational change affecting conformity;
- seriously breaches the certification terms; or
- requests voluntary withdrawal.

Where certification is suspended, withdrawn or reduced, the organisation must cease or amend use of the affected LeafMark and related certification claims as directed by FSG Certification.

15. Complaints and Appeals

FSG Certification maintains documented procedures for complaints and appeals. Complaints may concern certification activities, auditor conduct, certified organisations, mark use, impartiality or other matters affecting scheme integrity.

An applicant or certified organisation may appeal a certification decision. Appeals are considered by a person or panel independent of the original audit, review and decision. No person involved in the original audit or decision may decide the appeal.

16. LeafMark Use and Claims Rules

The LeafMark may be used only by the certified organisation, within the certified scope and validity period, and only at the level formally awarded.

- 1 Leaf, 2 Leaves or 3 Leaves must not be represented as certification of the organisation's overall environmental or sustainability performance.
- The mark must not imply that a product or service is environmentally preferable, carbon neutral, net zero or otherwise environmentally superior unless such a separate claim is independently substantiated.
- Certified organisations may accurately state that they have achieved the applicable LeafMark level for workforce sustainability education and green-skills development.
- The mark must not be altered or used for sites, legal entities or organisational scopes not covered by the certificate.
- The mark must not be used after expiry, suspension or withdrawal.
- Certified organisations remain responsible for ensuring all related commercial communications and environmental or sustainability claims comply with applicable consumer-protection law.

Recommended plain-language claim: “Our organisation has achieved [One/Two/Three] Leaf LeafMark certification for meeting independently verified workforce sustainability education and green-skills requirements.”

17. Stakeholder Consultation and Scheme Review

LeafMark requirements are developed and reviewed by FSG Certification in consultation with relevant experts and stakeholders. Consultation should include appropriate representation from employers, learning and development/HR, sustainability and green-skills expertise, education/training, independent audit/conformity assessment, and other relevant perspectives.

Material feedback and FSG Certification's response shall be documented. Material changes to the scheme requirements are subject to controlled review, approval, publication and appropriate transition arrangements.

18. Fees

Business descriptor	Number of employees	Annual LeafMark fee
Micro business	1–9	€450 + VAT
Small business	10–19	€750 + VAT
Medium business	20–59	€1,650 + VAT
Large business	60–119	€2,350 + VAT
Enterprise	120–249	€3,500 + VAT
Macro business	250+	€6,000 + VAT

The published fee covers the standard certification process. Where an additional physical site visit is required, the current additional fee is €500 plus applicable travel expenses. Any exceptional additional verification costs will be communicated and agreed in advance.

Audit fees and auditor remuneration must not be contingent on certification being granted or on the LeafMark level achieved.

19. Confidentiality, Records and Data Protection

Certification information is treated as confidential and shared only with authorised persons where necessary for application review, independent evaluation, certification review and decision, surveillance, complaints/appeals or other legitimate certification activities.

FSG Certification and its independent monitoring provider maintain appropriate confidentiality, records-management and data-protection controls. Because LeafMark uses workforce and learner information, only the minimum personal data necessary to verify conformity should be collected and retained.

20. Regulatory and Quality Framework

LeafMark is designed to operate as a third-party certification scheme for a sustainability label, with publicly available requirements, fair and non-discriminatory access, stakeholder consultation, procedures for non-compliance and suspension/withdrawal, and independent third-party monitoring.

FSG Certification's certification processes are designed and operated in alignment with the principles and applicable requirements of ISO/IEC 17065. FSG Certification does not claim accreditation to ISO/IEC 17065 unless and until such accreditation is formally obtained.

Important Scope Statement

LeafMark certifies workforce sustainability education and green-skills development. It does not certify the overall sustainability, environmental performance or ESG performance of the organisation. Any broader environmental or sustainability claim must be separately supported by appropriate evidence.