Nordic Ecological Standard (NES) 1.0

20250526

Introduction

The Nordic public and private media industry reaches an audience of millions with their audiovisual productions. With this scope comes social responsibility for a sustainable production of these contents. Audiovisual film- and TV-productions that are eco-friendly and protect resources are an essential contribution towards reducing CO2 emissions and at the same time a process of technological transformation comprising both technical and artistic changes.

Therefore, the NES working group has agreed to present a common ecological standard for Nordic audiovisual productions. As part of a work process, the members of the working group (including film institutes, public and private broadcasters, film- and tv-producers associations etc.) have jointly agreed upon a Nordic Ecological Standard (NES). The standard (NES) is inspired by the German Ecological Standards launched at the Berlinale in February 2022.

The ecological standard is evaluated on an ongoing basis and adapted according to the availability on the market, the current state of science and technology as well as relevant developments concerning climate and environment. The members of the working group all agreed on aiming toward a steadily growing level of ambition. A governance board with representation of members from the Nordic Film and TV Industry and from national and Nordic funding institutions is to be implemented. The industry is to be involved through an advisory board.

Resilience, credibility, and transparency are the main pillars of the ecological standard and compliance is ensured through standardized verification.

The ecological standard is met by many production companies, broadcasters, and VoD services and are a basis for funding requirements in the framework of national and regional funding.

The ecological standard applies to all stages and types of audiovisual production from pre- to postproduction, generally irrespective of whether the production company is based in the Nordics or abroad. Production conditions allowing compliance with the standards for the production parts carried out abroad and meeting the standards are welcome. The ecological standards are divided into six fields of action. Most of the fields of action comprise requirements that both should and must be met. Those that must be met are mandatory. A minimum number of mandatory requirements must be met for the fulfilment of the ecological standard.

In justified exceptional cases where the mandatory requirements cannot be met, a maximum of five deviations from the 22 mandatory requirements are admissible. This regulation is intended to be evaluated yearly, and the number of possible deviations may be reduced.

Deviations from the respective mandatory requirement should be reduced to a minimum. In case a mandatory requirement is justifiably not relevant (for example the production does not include external accommodation (cf. requirement 4.a), the mandatory requirement is considered to be fulfilled. Unlike the mandatory requirements, the target requirements should not be considered a strict regulation but an appeal for an environmentally sustainable mode of production. Implementing the target requirements, just like implementing the mandatory requirements, produces an effective reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and is therefore desirable. Prospectively, target requirements are to become mandatory in the framework of the ecological standards' evaluation and further development.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1.a Responsibility statement of the management and line producer(s)

• Mandatory requirement (non-discardable)

Before the start of production, management and line production must jointly issue the following statement. "We confirm that the current regulations for the Nordic Ecological Standard (NES) have been acknowledged and that they will be observed appropriately during the production of the TV/film/series/AV project."

A template of this management and line producer(s) responsibility statement can be found on the website. The statement may also be issued in the production contract.

1.b Green consultant/green manager

• Mandatory requirement (non-discardable)

It is mandatory to employ an external Green Consultant or designate an existing staff member as a Green Consultant/manager or assign a person responsible for environmental sustainability in the production. Ideally, this individual will have completed multi-day training with up-to-date knowledge on sustainability issues in the audiovisual sector or have previous experience working with such issues on similar productions.

The Green Consultant will accompany the production from the planning stage to approval. Their role is to ensure compliance with the ecological standard and promote a resource-efficient, CO2-eq reduced mode of production.

The Green Consultant's responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, the following areas: personnel and material transport, energy use, accommodation and catering, as well as the employment and use of material.

Carbon footprinting

One of the key objectives of the ecological standard is to reduce CO2-eq emissions in the various stages of film production. Therefore, it is essential to systematically calculate the CO2 emissions in the planning stage of production.

1.c Preliminary CO2 calculation

• Mandatory requirement (non-discardable)

A preliminary CO2-eq calculation must be submitted no later than upon receipt of a LOC, production support, or green light. The calculation must be calculated using a CO2-eq calculator.

1.d Final CO2 calculation

• Mandatory requirement (non-discardable)

After the production is completed, a detailed calculation of the CO2-eq emissions must be submitted. The calculation must be calculated using a CO2-eq calculator.

1.e Final report

• Mandatory requirement (non-discardable)

After the production is completed, the production company must submit a final report based on a standardized template.

This report must detail the fulfilment of the mandatory requirements and provide the actual CO2-eq emissions of the production, calculated after its completion.

The forms are available on the website.

Personnel and material transport

Personnel and material transport are among the largest sources of CO2 emissions in a production. To reduce emissions from travel and transport, some effective strategies include:

- Choosing production sites and locations that are easily accessible by train or public transport, with suitable accommodation nearby
- Logistically optimizing transport through time- or space-based pooling
- Encouraging carpooling
- Employing local or smaller crews

The choice of transportation is also crucial. Flights generate significant greenhouse gas emissions and should be avoided whenever possible. Cars, small vans, minibuses, and trucks also contribute to high emissions. In contrast, bicycles and e-bikes are nearly CO2 neutral. Trains, on average, emit 90% less greenhouse gas than planes, making them one of the most environmentally friendly transport options.

Therefore, trains, public transport, bicycles, and e-bikes should be used whenever possible.

2. a Public transport for audience participation and extras

o Mandatory requirement

For studio productions with audience participation, audience members should be encouraged to use public transport or other sustainable transportation options, such as bicycles, whenever possible. This can be done e.g. by sending the audience a guide on how to reach a location easiest by public transport/bike. This requirement is also applicable for extras.

2.b No flights if trains take less than five hours

• Mandatory requirement

Domestic and international flights are not permitted if the corresponding train journey (or journey by bus/car/ferry) takes less than five hours. Private planes must not be used for the production, unless they are shown in the picture.

2.c Employment of low-emission vehicles

• Mandatory requirement

One in two cars (three in four cars in 2028 and all cars in 2030) owned or rented by the production (excluding those featured in the production) must be CO₂-reduced vehicles with low particulate matter and nitrogen oxide emissions.

These include:

- fully electric vehicles (preferably powered by green energy)
- CNG vehicles (ideally fueled by bio-CNG)
- hybrid vehicles (both classic hybrids and plug-in hybrids, with the latter preferably used in electric mode)

2.d Employment of low-emission minibuses, vans, and small trucks

• Mandatory requirement

One in three vehicles owned or rented by the production (excluding those featured in the production) must be CO₂-reduced vehicles with low particulate matter and nitrogen oxide emissions.

These include:

- fully electric vehicles (preferably powered by green energy)
- CNG vehicles (preferably using Bio-CNG)
- hybrid vehicles (both classic hybrids and plug-in hybrids, with the latter preferably used in electric mode)

Special vehicles with elaborate integrated technology are excluded from this regulation.

2.e Employment of low-emission trucks over 7.5 tons

Target requirement

One in four trucks exceeding 7.5 tons owned or rented by the production (excluding those featured in the production) must be CO_2 -reduced vehicles with low particulate matter and nitrogen oxide emission.

These include:

- fully electric vehicles (preferably powered by green energy)
- CNG vehicles (preferably using Bio-CNG)
- hybrid vehicles (both classic hybrids and plug-in hybrids, with the latter preferably used in electric mode)

Special vehicles with elaborate integrated technology are excluded from this regulation.

2.f Only EURO 6 diesel

Mandatory requirement

If diesel vehicles are employed, they must meet the diesel EURO 6 standard.

Special vehicles with elaborate integrated technology or specific elaborate fittings are excluded.

(All the production company's existing vehicles as well as the vehicles of the technical service providers are transitionally excluded from this mandatory requirement regarding vans and trucks. This temporary exemption will be discussed before the next revision of the standard, and until then, the exemption will remain in place.)

2.g Charging electrically driven vehicles with green energy

Target requirement

In countries where it is accessible, green energy should make up at least 30 % of the total quantity used to charge the electrically driven vehicles.

ENERGY USE

Switching to green energy *1 is one of the quickest and most effective ways to reduce CO2 emissions. Diesel generators, on the other hand, are significant contributors to greenhouse gases and particulate matter.

Therefore, electricity should be sourced from the grid whenever possible, rather than relying on generators.

Lighting, both in studios and on location, often demands substantial energy. By systematically optimizing energy use for lighting and adopting energy-efficient technologies, a large portion of previous energy consumption can be reduced.

*1 Green energy = renewable energy, fossil free energy and/or ecolabelled energy (for example Bra Miljöval/Good Environmental Choice).

3.a Green energy at all production sites

• Mandatory requirement

In countries where it is accessible, green energy must be used at all company sites of the production, (including post-production facilities) and all studios which are used for the production.

3.b Green energy for temporarily used sites

o Target requirement

In countries where it is accessible, green energy should be used at temporarily used sites (such as production offices or similar locations) whenever possible.

3.c Green energy at "on location" productions

Target requirement

In countries where it is accessible, green energy should be used whenever possible for 'on location' productions that are mains-operated.

3.d Green energy in postproduction

• Mandatory requirement

In countries where it is accessible, use of green energy is mandatory for post-production tasks.

3.e Conditions for the employment of generators

• Mandatory requirement

Generally, the entire production should operate using mains electricity. However, the use of generators is allowed in the following case:

• "On location" productions without technically suitable access to the grid within 100 meters.

3.f Time limit for diesel generators

o Target requirement

If the use of diesel generators is necessary (under the conditions of 3.e), they should not be used at the same filming location for more than three consecutive days. Any exceptional cases where they are used for longer than three days must be justified in the final report.

3.g Exhaust emission standard Stage V for diesel generators

Target requirement

If diesel generators are employed, they should preferably

- meet the exhaust emission Stage V standards
- be equipped with a particle filter
- not be fuelled with heating oil

If diesel generators cannot meet Stage V standards or higher standards, an efficient hybrid system should be used, or the generators should run on fuels derived from certified regenerative residues (commonly known as second-generation HVO fuels).

3. h Using a power grid management system

Target requirement

If several diesel generators are employed at one location it is recommended to use an energy-saving power grid management system.

3.i Efficient lighting technology in the studio and on location

Target requirement

Light sources with a high level of energy efficiency such as LED lights should be employed both for studio productions and for "on location" shooting. Light sources such as incandescent and halogen spotlights must be avoided up to 2KW.

Accommodation and catering

External accommodation contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions, with hotel stays generally causing higher emissions per person and night to accommodation in apartments or holiday homes.

Greenhouse gas emissions in hotels can be significantly reduced through appropriate environmental measures. Therefore, apartments/holiday homes or hotels with recognized environmental certifications should be booked whenever possible. It is also important that these accommodations are located near the production site.

In addition to accommodation, catering is another CO2-relevant factor during production. The current food production process causes considerable greenhouse gas emissions worldwide, particularly in the production of meat, as well as through international food transport and the use of artificial fertilizers and pesticides. By reducing the consumption of animal products and carefully selecting environmentally friendly, locally grown primary products the environmental impact of food consumption can be effectively minimized.

4.a Minimum of 50% of environmentally friendly accommodation

• Mandatory requirement

At least 50 % of the accommodation must be booked in apartments/holiday homes or hotels with recognized environmental measures, provided they are available within a 15-kilometer radius of the production site.

"Hotels with recognized environmental measures" are those that provide at least the following practices:

- green energy
- energy-saving measures regarding heating and climate control
- water-saving measures
- waste separation

4.b Locally produced food

• Target requirement

It is recommended that at least 50% of the food is either organic or produced in the country of the respective production site.

4.c Vegetarian catering

• Mandatory requirement

Catering options must be strictly vegetarian at least three times a week.

4.d Information on catering

Mandatory requirement

Prior to shooting, production must inform the crew regarding the environmentally oriented selection of food.

4.e No disposable tableware

• Mandatory requirement

Disposable tableware (plates, cutlery, cups, etc.) and disposable bottles must not be made available during the entire production.

4.f Demand-oriented meals

• Target requirement

Food waste should be avoided by preparing and serving meals based on demand, rather than pre-portioned meals.

Employment and use of material

The production and disposal of material used for stage and scenery construction as well as set design, often for single use, consume significant natural resources and generate harmful emissions.

To minimize the environmental impact of individual productions, materials should be reused across multiple productions whenever possible.

Additionally, prioritizing recycled materials and making environmentally conscious material selections are effective strategies for promoting a resource efficient circular economy.

5.a Multiple use of material for sets and decoration

• Target requirement

Sets, decorative elements, and materials should be reused whenever possible through storage, rental, leasing, or second-hand sourcing.

This approach supports a circular economy by minimizing waste and maximizing resource efficiency.

To achieve this, the use of newly acquired materials for set and scenery construction should be limited to less than 50% of the total materials used.

5.b No disposable batteries

• Mandatory requirement

Disposable batteries are prohibited through-out the entire production, including on set, in production offices, and in studios.

Rechargeable batteries must be employed instead and should be recyclable whenever possible.

Exception: mini batteries for in-ear devices.

5.c New wood must carry FSC or PEFC seals

• Mandatory requirement

If new wood and new wooden composites are used, they must originate from sustainable forest management and carry the FSC or PEFC seal.

5.d No materials with problematic substances or origins

Target requirement

Materials and substances that are harmful to the environment should not be used. Examples:

- formaldehyde
- PVC
- solvent-based paints
- polystyrene
- isocyanates
- brominated flame retardants

Any exceptions must be justified in the final report.

When it is possible, procurements should have the Nordic Swan Ecolabel.

5.e Separable connection between basic material

Target requirement

Different materials should be put together in a way they can be easily separated in the disposal process and thus recycled in a targeted manner.

Regarding reuse of costumes

Costumes should be reused whenever possible through storage, rental, leasing, or second-hand purchases. Whenever suitable and agreed upon, protagonists should be allowed to use their own clothes on camera. Fast fashion and discount clothing should be avoided. To minimize transport emissions, regional services should be used for costume and prop logistics whenever possible.

5.f Reuse of costumes

• Mandatory requirement

For all necessary costumes, costume designers must conduct a thorough assessment to determine whether items can be sourced second-hand or reused from the inventory before purchasing new ones.

5.g Avoiding disposable plastic

o Target requirement

Single-use plastic items should be avoided in all areas and replaced with environmentally friendly alternatives.

Makeup products used in production must be free from microplastics.

5.h Preferred use of recycled material

o Target requirement

The use of material with a percentage of more than 50 % recycled components should be preferential.

5.i 90 Percent recovered fiber in paper

• Mandatory requirement

Whenever paper is used it must be recycled paper with a proportion of at least 90 % of waste fibre. If not possible, the paper must have an eco-label such as the Nordic Swan Ecolabel. This applies to all consumables (copy paper, toilet paper, kitchen paper, envelopes, paper towels, etc.) except props, and in case of demonstrated technological need of 100 % colourfastness in the creative process.

5.j Waste separation requirement

• Mandatory requirement

Waste produced at all production sites (including on location), studios, and offices must be separated into at least the following categories:

- Paper
- Glass
- Plastic
- Metal
- Organic waste
- Wood

If regional disposal companies cannot provide these categories, compliance with alternative regulations according to the disposal companies is permitted. However, these alternative requirements must be verified.

5.k Separation of decoration prior to disposal

o Target requirement

Sets and decorations which are not re-used should be separated into their principal materials in the disposal process (see "5.a Multiple Use of Set and Decoration Material")

Biodiversity

6.a Biodiversity protection

• Mandatory requirement

If the filming location is within areas protected by national or EU law (such as nature reserves, Natura 2000 Areas, bird protection areas, etc.) or in sensitive ecosystems (such as bogs, glaciers, floodplains, etc.), a protective plan must be submitted. This plan should include the following measures, depending on the circumstances:

- Definition of necessary protective measures
- Implementation of measures, such as protection of the grass layer or tree roots, prevention of damage from buildings, structures, equipment, fire, chemicals, paints, feces, and marking or securing of paths
- For filming with animals, special measures must be taken to address foot damage, animal feces, scattered materials, and protection against browsing
- Ensuring that all involved parties are informed of the protective measures