

THE "DGNB FLEX" PROCEDURE

1. Preamble

This document defines the process for the certification of a project in line with the "DGNB Flex" rules. It has following objectives:

- DGNB Flex enables the drafting of a project-specific DGNB certification framework to optimise and evaluate projects where no fully-specified scheme is currently applicable.
- The time effort and costs associated with the DGNB Flex process should be target-oriented and appropriate.
- DGNB Auditors receive a pragmatic and reliable framework to advise their clients in early planning phases.

In addition to all certification relevant documentation, such as technical manuals (DGNB criteria sets), contracts and the certification manuals, this documents applies.

2. Scope of application of DGNB Flex

The DGNB Flex can be used to generate a requirement catalogue for the certification of projects for where no specific DGNB schemes is currently available (market versions and first-time application versions). The decision whether a project can be certified according to the DGNB Flex is taken solely by the DGNBGmbH.

Projects cannot be certified by applying the DGNB Flex if these are in conflict with the overall objectives of the DGNB system (for example, if the project is located in crisis or war regions, in protected areas, etc.) or due to ethical issues.

3. Basic approach to certification according to the DGNB Flex procedure

The procedure provides six key phases for the certification of a project according to the DGNB Flex.

Phase 1: Project-specific certification query (PCQ)

When no suitable DGNB scheme is available for a project, the DGNB Auditor, after consultation with the client, submits a project-specific certification query (PCQ). To this end, he outlines and justifies the choice of a suitable basic DGNB Scheme. A consultation or a web-meeting with the DGNB can provide the support required. The project is referenced with a PCQ number, which is used by the Auditor and the DGNB for further communication.

Phase 2: Registration of a project for certification according to the DGNB Flex

Following a positive response to the DGNB Flex application by the DGNB GmbH, the project can be registered by the Auditor. The corresponding PCQ number must be specified in the registration form.

Phase 3: Auditor's draft for a DGNB Flex application

After registration, the Auditor outlines a framework for the specific project. This proposal must stipulate one or more basic DGNB schemes and provide a rough sketch of the DGNB criteria to be applied and the indicators they include. By means of the guideline developed for DGNB Flex the structure for the certification can be drawn up quickly and at reasonable expense. If required the DGNB Office will offer a consultation or provide further support for developing the draft (for a fee). The draft referenced with the corresponding PCQ number is submitted to the DGNB by the DGNB Auditor.

Phase 4: Check of the draft

After submission, the proposal is checked and the Auditor is informed about alterations. Further questions can be discussed.

Phase 5: Provision of project-specific basis for certification and certification contract

On the basis of the preparatory work, the DGNB sets out a project-specific catalogue of requirements (certification framework). This comprises of an individual evaluation matrix with references to other existing documents (for example, criteria set for new buildings or criteria set for districts). The evaluation matrix also includes the project-specific weightings of the indicators (points allocation), as well as the criteria. New indicators are made available as separate appendices to the evaluation matrix. The project-specific catalogue of requirements represents the technical certification framework and has equivalent content quality as the published DGNB schemes.

With reference to the project-specific catalogue of requirements, the certification contract is issued by DGNB and sent to the client. Both parties must sign the certification contract as prerequisite for binding agreement of the project-specific catalogue of requirements.

The owner of the catalogue of requirements is the DGNB. This catalogue and/or parts of it can also be incorporated in the development of new first-time application or market version at a later date.

Phase 6: Certification

Once the certification contract has been signed by both parties, the DGNB audit is performed by a DGNB auditor. The certification process is then performed by the DGNB in compliance with all relevant and known rules. The award is an equivalent certificate. The Flex application can be recognised from the contract number (FLEX18-D-...). The specific scheme of the project is mentioned in the certificate (for example DGNB Sustainability Certificate for Computer Centres). The DGNB, in accordance with the client, is responsible for the assignment of individual nomenclature of a project scheme.

4. Basic principles of DGNB Flex

The DGNB Flex is based on specifications regarding the basic structure, the evaluation method and the certification contents. These specifications are used to set out a project-specific criteria set. This is based on and refers to existing documents and their revisions, as well as to an individually drafted evaluation matrix applied for certification.

The basic structure of the DGNB System with regard to the

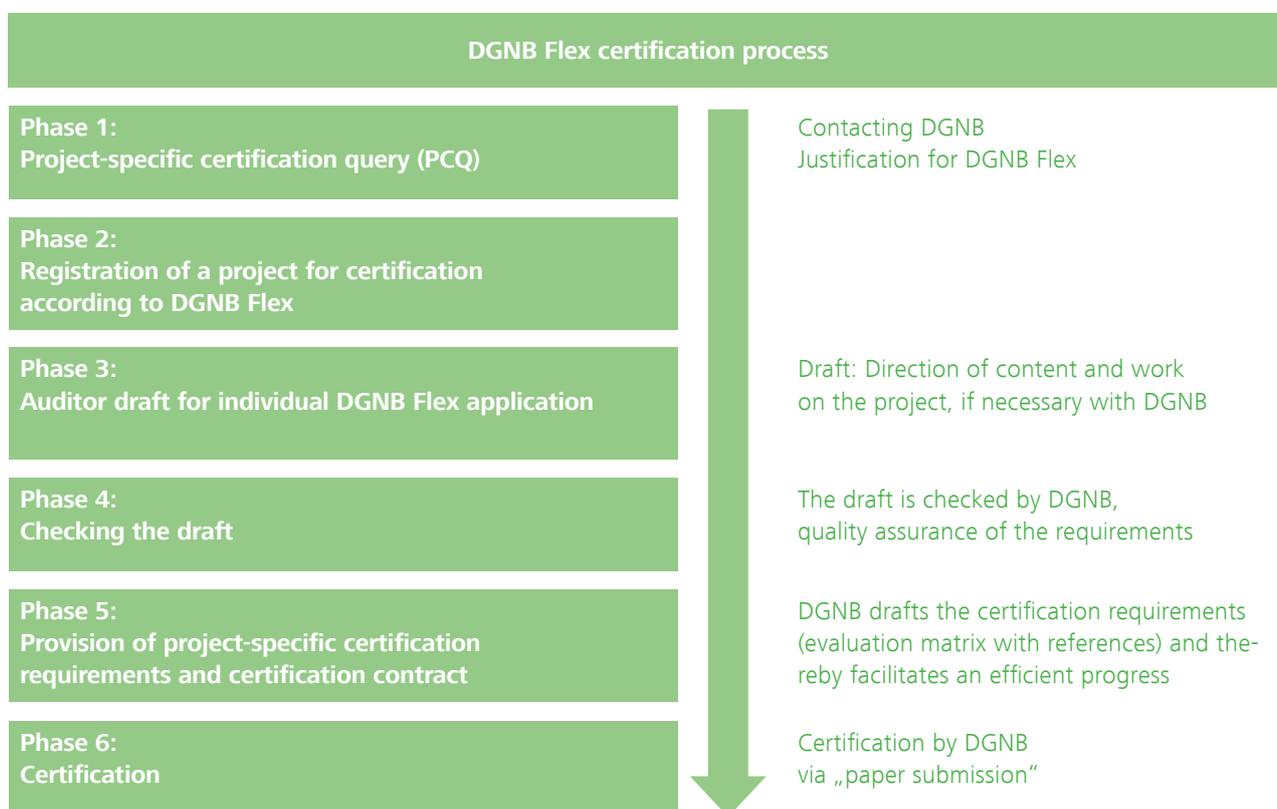


Figure 1: DGNB Flex certification process

qualities (evaluation areas) and their weighting with secondary requirements also applies to the DGNB Flex. The evaluation system of the DGNB Flex corresponds to a defined method for defining weighting factors of the criteria, as well as to the evaluation rule that the sum of the points of all indicators in the criteria does not exceed 100 and a maximum of 30 bonus points can be achieved. The certification contents of the DGNB Flex are all sustainability topics defined by the DGNB in the form of criteria. If a criterion (= sustainability topic) does not apply to a specific project, a detailed explanation for this exclusion must be provided by the DGNB Auditor.

5. Steps for drafting project-specific certification principles (DGNB Flex catalogue of requirements)

Four basic steps are required in order to draft a DGNB Flex catalogue of requirements to ensure comparable content-related quality with standard schemes.

Step 1: Specifying the basic system application

This step sets out the basic structure of the evaluation areas, their weighting among each other and definition of the secondary requirements.

- Case A: If a clear allocation to one of the following system applications is possible, these should be applied– including the corresponding weighting and secondary requirement:
 - Districts
 - Buildings
 - New Interiors
 - Buildings in use
 - Renovated and existing buildings
- Case B: If no clear allocation can be determined, a mixture of the aforementioned system applications can be used (hybrid approach). In this case, the basic structure is specified by a primary use/main system application that has to be defined.

Step 2: Specifying a primary use

In this step, a primary use ("basic scheme") has to be determined. This primary use defines the scope of criteria (certification contents). In addition to this, the weighting factors are stipulated in keeping with this primary use.

- Case A: A primary use can be defined. The scope of the criteria and the weighting factors are applied without the need for any revision. The process to be applied corresponds to the rules of mixed use.
- Case B: A primary use can be defined. The scope of the criteria and the weighting factors are project-specific determined according to an existing scheme.
- Case C: Several equivalent primary uses. The overall scope of criteria of the equivalent primary uses and the weighting factors are determined according to the selected existing schemes.

Step 3: Specifying the scope of criteria

The scope of criteria is investigated and developed on the basis of the primary use(s). When drafting a DGNB Flex catalogue of requirements, we differentiate between three types of criteria: Universal criteria, deletion criteria and scheme-adapted criteria. The universal criteria are set by DGNB for all system applications (see appendix).

- Universal criteria: These must always be applied and should only be adapted in well justified exceptional cases (for example ENV1.2, process criteria). The weighting factors should be selected on the basis of the basic usage profile or revised in line with the "Method for specifying weighting factors".
- Deletion of criteria: If the "Method for specifying weighting factors" does not properly apply or no method can be specified, a criterion can be deleted.
- Scheme-adapted criteria: Criteria that have been adapted or are to be adapted specifically to the individual scheme from the schemes scope defined in step 2. If several basic schemes are used, the weighting of adapted schemes should be specified according to the relevance of the certification object and to the "Method for specifying weighting factors".

Step 4: Specifying the scope of indicators

The scope of indicators to be applied should be specified in the criteria on the basis of the previous step. In the case of universal criteria, indicators should ideally not be modified at all or only slightly. The following order of priority should be observed for the indicator content during the process:

- a. Combination of existing indicators with new (revised) allocation of achievable points. The combination basis is the relevance of the topics addressed in the indicators for the object.

b. If a) does not apply, then a minor addition or a replacement of existing indicators with new methods is allowed.

c. If b) also does not apply, the deletion of indicators is allowed when they are negligible or new indicators can be developed for key topics which are not addressed in the scope currently available (criteria set of all schemes).

Results: Project-specific catalogue of requirements/ certification basis

The result of the four steps is a project-specific catalogue of requirements, which can be used as a certification basis for an individual project once it has been officially acknowledged by DGNB. This catalogue of requirements includes an evaluation matrix with comments. The four steps are set up by DGNB auditors, if necessary in consultation with the DGNB. The final decision regarding the content of the certification principles is taken exclusively by the DGNB.

When specifying the scope of criteria (step 3) and the scope of indicators (step 4) the aspect of relevance is decisive in certain cases. The relevance should be argued by the auditor, for example via areas, man hours, masses, resource consumption, effects or similar characteristics.

6. Quality assurance

Based on the steps performed when drafting the DGNB Flex catalogue of requirements, two rules are provided for inclusion of the DGNB certification scheme committee within the scope of quality assurance.

- Case A: If elements of existing schemes are almost exclusively being used for the project and no relevant new or revised indicators (step 4, processes b and c) are developed, the DGNB certification scheme committee has the right to inspect (the evaluation matrix and short project description), but is not informed separately. The decision regarding the actual content is taken exclusively by the DGNB office in this case. The weighting of the criteria/ indicators is also defined by the DGNB according to the "Method for defining the weighting factors" and on the basis of the relevance of the indicators.
- Case B: In the process of drafting the criteria requirements, criteria or indicator are deleted, indicators receive important additions or methods are replaced in indicators and proposals are agreed with experts of the certification scheme committee. Their recommendations are taken into account for the project. Prior to awarding the certificate, the certification scheme committee is informed.

Conclusion / development and effort

The project-specific catalogue of requirements is property of the DGNB. If several projects are to be certified according to the same DGNB Flex catalogue of requirements, it could lead to an independent new scheme. The usual quality assurance rules of market version development apply to the drafting of an independent new scheme.

A flat-rate surcharge can be applied to the certification fees for the increased processing efforts of the DGNB (checking auditor proposals, meetings, drafting a catalogue of requirements and evaluation matrix) based on the size and/or time effort associated (tbd). There are no plans to adapt tools within the scope of a DGNB Flex project. However, guidelines are provided by the DGNB as to how existing tools are to be used within the scope of the project.

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For more information, please visit:
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or by mail at system@dgnb.de

Appendix 1: : Criteria types for new buildings with labelling of the universal criteria

Criterion (abbreviation)	Criterion (name)	Criteria-type	Criteria type für DGNB Flex application
ENV1.1	Building life cycle assessment	LU	Universal method that is largely identical for all schemes. Benchmarks and calculation method revised for just a few schemes (reference period for logistics/production).
ENV1.2	Local environmental impact	LU	Largely universal method, the scope and calculation of which have been revised for various schemes
ENV1.3	Responsible resource extraction	U	Universal definitions for all schemes
ENV2.2	Potable water demand and waste water volume	U	Universal method, benchmarks have been revised for various schemes.
ENV2.3	Land use	U	Universal definitions for all schemes.
ENV2.4	Biodiversity at the site	U	Universal definitions for all schemes.
ECO1.1	Life cycle cost	LU	Universal method that is mostly identical for all uses (reference period varies). Specific benchmarks for all uses.
ECO2.1	Flexibility and adaptability	UO	Schemed-adapted criterion with very specific scope of indicators and topics to be evaluated. In the case of interdisciplinary indicators, the benchmarks are adapted specifically to the uses.
ECO2.2	Commercial viability	UO	Schemed-adapted criterion with very specific scope of indicators and topics to be evaluated. In the case of interdisciplinary indicators, the benchmarks are adapted specifically to the uses.
SOC1.1	Thermal comfort	UO	Schemed-adapted criterion with largely similar scope of indicators and topics to be evaluated. Contents are omitted in several uses or address a very different topic from other uses.
SOC1.2	Indoor air quality	LU	Universal method for measurement or declaration, usage-adapted for selected topics (ventilation rate).
SOC1.3	Acoustic comfort	UO	Schemed-adapted criterion, can only be applied to selected uses.
SOC1.4	Visueller Komfort	UO	Schemed-adapted criterion, can only be applied to selected uses.
SOC1.5	User control (max. 100 points)	UO	Schemed-adapted criterion, topics and methods individually adapted to various usage types, can only be applied for selected uses.
SOC1.6	Quality of indoor and outdoor spaces	LU	Predominantly universal criterion with a few scheme-specifics.
SOC1.7	Safety and security	LU	Predominantly universal criterion with a few scheme-specifics.
SOC2.1	Barrier-free design	UO	Schemed-adapted criterion with thematic differences.

LU = mostly universal; U = universal; UO = Scheme adapted

Criterion (abbreviation)	Criterion (name)	Criteria-type	Criteria type für DGNB Flex application
TEC1.2	Sound insulation	UO	Schemed-adapted criterion, can only be applied to selected uses.
TEC1.3	Quality of the building envelope	LU	Predominantly universal criterion with moderate scheme-specifics.
TEC1.4	Use and integration of building technology	U	Universal definitions for all uses
TEC1.5	Cleaning friendliness of the building	U	Universal definitions for all uses with very few scheme-specific revisions.
TEC1.6	Ease of recovery and recycling	U	Universal definitions for all uses
TEC1.7	Immissions control	U	Universal definitions for all uses
TEC3.1	Mobility infrastructure	U	Universal definitions for all uses
PRO1.1	Comprehensive project brief	U	Universal definitions for all uses
PRO1.4	Sustainability aspects in tender phase	U	Universal definitions for all uses
PRO1.5	Documentation for sustainable management	U	Universal definitions for all uses
PRO1.6	Procedure for urban and design planning	U	Universal definitions for all uses
PRO2.1	Construction site/construction process	U	Universal definitions for all uses
PRO2.2	Quality assurance of the construction	U	Universal definitions for all uses
PRO2.3	Systematic commissioning	U	Universal definitions for all uses
PRO2.4	User communication	U	Universal definitions for all uses
PRO2.5	FM-compliant planning	U	Universal definitions for all uses
SITE1.1	Local environment	U	Universal definitions for all uses
SITE1.2	Influence on the district	U	Universal definitions for all uses
SITE1.3	Transport access	U	Universal definitions for all uses
SITE1.4	Access to amenities	U	Universal definitions for all uses (with one exception in an indicator).

LU = mostly universal; U = universal; UO = Scheme adapted

Appendix 2: Criteria types for districts with labelling of the universal criteria

- to follow

Appendix 3: Criteria types for buildings in use with labelling of the universal criteria

- to follow

			Office	Education	Residential	Hotel	Business premises	Consumer markets	Shopping centre	Logistics	Production	
	ECO1.1 – Life cycle cost											
	1.1.1	Calculation of the life cycle costs for planning phase										
	1.1.2	Life cycle costs during planning phase										
	2.1.1	Full consideration of life cycle cost optimisation										
	2.1.2	Partial consideration of life cycle cost optimisation										
	Circular economy	2.2	CIRCULAR ECONOMY BONUS									
	3.1.1	Determination of building-related costs										
	3.1.2	Determination of building-related costs										
	3.1.3	Determination of building-related costs										
	3.1.4	Determination of building-related costs										
	3.1.5	Determination of building-related costs										
	3.1.6	Determination of building-related costs										
	3.1.7	Determination of building-related costs										
	3.1.8	Determination of building-related costs										
	ECO2.1 – Flexibility and adaptability											
	1.1	Efficient land use overground										
	1.2	Efficient land use underground										
2.1	Dimension in unfinished state											
3.	Building depth											
4.	Vertical infrastructure											
5.	Building depth											
6.	Structural design											
7.1.1	Ventilation/HVAC											
7.1.2	Cooling											
7.1.3	Heating											
7.1.4	Water and vertical WC connections											
7.1.5	Electrics											
7.1.6	Cooling: Refrigeration supply system											
7.1.7	Heating: Heating supply system											
7.1.8	Water: Water supply and waste water system											
7.1.9	Electrical engineering: Power supply system											
7.1.10	Ventilation/HVAC											
Circular economy	8.	CIRCULAR ECONOMY BONUS										
ECO2.2 – Commercial viability												
1.1	Entrance situation											
1.2	Routing and signposting											
2.1	Delivery zone											
2.2	Drop-off and pick-up areas											
2.3	Passenger car parking space capacity allocated to the building											
2.4	Bicycle parking spaces allocated to the building											
2.5	Public parking spaces near entrance											
2.6	Public parking spaces near delivery entrance											
2.7	Number of entrance gates											
2.8	Number of underground parking spaces											
3.	Market characteristics											
Innovation	Re 3.	INNOVATION AREA										
4.1	Degree of utilisation/occupancy rate											
Circular economy	4.2	CIRCULAR ECONOMY BONUS										

Appendix 2: Possible "Flex path" for individual project (schematic representation)