



NATRUE

Sector: Household and Personal Care

Region: Based in Belgium, operates globally

[The International Natural and Organic Cosmetics Association - NATRUE](#) has a mission to promote the production and use of natural and organic cosmetics worldwide. NATRUE certification is available both for raw materials and finished products. A product can be certified with NATRUE's label only if all its ingredients are natural, derived natural or nature-identical substances.

» NATRUE has established a 13 product-category system with specific formulation requirements for the natural, derived natural and organic content of products based upon their function and certification as natural or organic.

Mindset

Life Cycle Thinking: The certification scheme focuses on the sourcing and the manufacturing stages. The classification of the ingredients among the 3 categories (natural, derived natural or nature-identical substances) is based upon their origin and manufacture. For the end of product's life, NATRUE requirements for packaging are to keep it to a minimum and wherever possible use recyclable packaging materials. Halogenated plastics are not allowed. NATRUE is currently evaluating how to include more strict criteria for packaging materials (to be more recyclable and / or bio based).

Hotspots Analysis: As a single-issue certification scheme, NATRUE does not aim to assess all relevant impacts of the products it certifies and has therefore not undertaken a hotspots analysis. NATRUE focuses on monitoring and enforcing the use of natural ingredients in the products, and most recently has also began to include criteria for packaging material and sustainable sourcing of raw materials (e.g. Palm Oil).

Mainstreaming sustainability: NATRUE demands a high level of commitment from producers and does not allow them to certify only certain products, which would be misleading to consumers as they could think that the whole line of products is certified. At least 75% of all the individual products in a delimited series (identified either by the brand or the sub-brand) must be compliant with NATRUE's Standard in order to use the label. NATRUE's 75% rule is strongly committed to provide a high benchmark for producers to keep greenwashing off the shelves.

Principle 1: Reliability

NATRUE works with a network of independent certification bodies worldwide with the aim of ensuring a greater level of transparency to the scheme. The NATRUE Approved Certifiers are subject to an accreditation process by the International Organic Accreditation Service – IOAS that ensures that each and every NATRUE certified product complies with NATRUE's Standard.



NATRUE defines its Label Criteria in the Standard document through an independent Scientific Committee, comprising a 50:50 balance of NATRUE members and external experts. The assessment by the NATRUE approved certifiers is completely based on the NATRUE criteria that the products and raw materials must be complied with. Natrue approved certifiers check the relevant documentation and perform audits on site. IOAS inspects NATRUE's Approved Certifiers at least once every 4 years to make sure that they are still competent to keep performing NATRUE's certification activities.



Principle 2: Relevance



The subject of the claim on naturalness or organic character of products is based on chemical characteristics of the ingredients and their production. In order to certify a finished product to the requirements of the NATRUE criteria, any ingredient within it must be classified by one of three possibilities: natural, nature-identical or derived natural substance. Equally, the production processes for any given substance classification must be carried out as permitted in NATRUE's standard.

The certification scheme provides information on the materials used in production, an aspect that is relevant to the sustainability profile of the product. There is no official legal definition in the European Union on natural and organic cosmetic products. Consequently, private standards like NATRUE exist to provide a definition as an added value for consumers. Additional aspects that could be introduced in the criteria are the packaging materials and environmentally sustainable and socially responsible sourcing. NATRUE recognizes that at present there are no definitive methods for measuring sustainability and thus it is difficult to introduce such criteria that can be verifiable by the certifiers.

Principle 3: Clarity



The logo illustrates a leaf and head profile together with the standard name and web address, which consumers can access to find the definitions of permitted ingredients and processes. To ensure the label is clearly recognisable and delivers a consistent message, NATRUE requests that the logo is never altered and it has to be reproduced using the approved master artworks provided.

The information provided to the consumer (visual and text-based) is explicit and additional details are available online to support a better understanding of the claim. The main challenge is the fact that there is no official definition of natural and organic ingredients and cosmetic products so consumers have to understand the criteria used by NATRUE. As there is no official definition, meanings of words 'natural' and 'organic' are sometimes interchanged by consumers and cannot be differentiated from other standards using the same words.

Our definition of "natural"



1. **NON-GMO NATURAL SUBSTANCES** are unmodified and may be obtained only by physical processes or fermentation.
2. **NON-GMO DERIVED NATURAL SUBSTANCES** are the result of allowed chemical reaction processes on natural ingredients. Derived natural substances must be 100% natural - no mineral oils, petrochemicals, synthetic fragrances or artificial preservatives are permitted.
3. **NATURE-IDENTICAL SUBSTANCES** are reproduced in the laboratory but they can be found in nature (allowed pigments, minerals or preservatives only when strictly necessary in order to ensure consumer safety or ingredients' purity).

NATRUE includes its own definition of 'natural' on its website.

Principle 4: Transparency



Information related to the criteria and definitions used by NATRUE can be found [online](#), as well as the [required steps and costs](#) to obtain the NATRUE label are published. A list of NATRUE's approved certifiers is available [online](#).

NATRUE's certification process is explained step-by-step in two certification [guides](#) available on the website. The exact information used to evaluate certain raw materials or products during the certification process are not shared publicly due to commercial reasons, but the underlying information can be made available to a competent body if requested.

Principle 5: Accessibility



The NATRUE label is clearly visible on the packaging of NATRUE certified cosmetic products. The organization also uses Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to share further information and relevant news regarding NATRUE and the natural and organic cosmetic sector.

It is mandatory for each NATRUE Approved Certifier to carefully consider the provisions of the NATRUE Label Usage Agreement and the NATRUE standard during the certification process. The information regarding the NATRUE standard is easily accessible, and an [online database](#) that gathers all products that have been certified is available on the website.



Principle 6: Three Dimensions of Sustainability



Environmental: Natural cosmetics are often claimed to be more sustainable as they do not use fossil-fuel-based petrochemicals, and they tend to cause less impact in water and air quality when discarded. However, some additional indicators such as the carbon footprint of producing natural alternatives and packaging materials are needed.

Social: The use of only natural, non-genetically modified substances is recognized to be better for consumers' health.

NATRUE does not claim overall sustainability of a product since it is a certification focusing on a specific issue: the use of natural and organic ingredients. Addressing the relevant aspects of sustainability in all three dimensions (environmental, social and economic) is a challenging task, especially for a certification that focuses on a single issue such as the sourcing of ingredients. In such cases, a combination of complementary certification schemes should be taken into consideration.

Principle 7: Behaviour Change and Longer Term Impact



Through different communication channels, NATRUE encourages certified companies and consumers to take positive action and choose products that have more natural and organic ingredients.

Individual consumers are addressed mainly through the [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages. Facebook posts are used to share relevant articles and to communicate about conferences where NATRUE is present. Also, a [video](#) was launched with the objective of explaining the label to consumers.

NATRUE @NATRUE · May 15
 Know yourself 🧐 + know your product 🏭 = Make yourself proud! 🙌. Dr. Mark Smith, @NATRUE's Director General, co-presented today with WALA Heilmittel GmbH the workshop "A Guided Tour Through the Label-Jungle" 🌿 at @SNICosmetics 2019.
 #cosmetics #natural #sustainability

An example of a post on Twitter, where NATRUE shares its strategy behind the label.

Principle 8: Multi-Channel and Innovative Approach



Social media ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#)) are used to promote the NATRUE certification. Also, NATRUE has a specific communications team answering consumers' questions via telephone calls or e-mails. Consumers can also contact the NATRUE team via the website.

NATRUE is looking at increasing its presence on social media, especially targeting individual consumers. Moving forward, the content created for individual consumers could use a variety of different approaches, including posts that are humorous and personal.



One planet
inform with care



Principle 9: Collaboration



The NATRUE Standard is developed through an independent [Scientific Committee](#), which is a professional international advisory body formed by expert representatives from the cosmetic sector. For impartiality, the independent body is formed by an equal balanced number of internal (NATRUE members) and external experts (independent of NATRUE from the conventional or natural and organic sector).

NATRUE partners with the International Organic Accreditation Service – IOAS and is a member of the European Commission's Cosmetics Working Group, where all emerging and evolving regulations affecting cosmetics are addressed. The certification scheme recognizes the importance of collaborating further with other standards relevant for the sector to agree on common approaches and definitions. NATRUE is a member of the European Standardization Organization (CEN), a member of the ISO TC 217/ WG 4, a multi-stakeholder cosmetics group at the International Standardization Organization (ISO), and also a member of IFOAM International and IFOAM-EU (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements), the European umbrella organisation for organic food and farming. In addition, NATRUE runs two internal working groups that are composed of representatives of certified companies: the Public Affairs Regulatory and Scientific Working Group and the Communication Working Group.

Principle 10: Comparability



This principle states that product comparisons should be used only where it really helps the consumer to make sustainable choices. In this claim, NATRUE opted for not addressing this aspect.