

Certification Scheme for the Cradle to Cradle Certified® Products Program

Initial release: January 1, 2013
Revision published: January 14, 2026

Copyright

Copyright © 2017-2026 by Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute. All rights reserved.

No part of this publication is to be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, without prior written permission from the Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute.

Trademark

Cradle to Cradle Certified® is a registered trademark of the Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute.

Cradle to Cradle® and C2C® are registered trademarks of MBDC, LLC.

For more information about the Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute and the Cradle to Cradle Certified Products Program, visit www.c2ccertified.org.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Certification Scheme Revision Log 4

1 Introduction 5
- 1.1 Purpose 5
- 1.2 Scope 5

2 Normative References 5

3 Definitions and acronyms 6

4 Overview of Cradle to Cradle Certified 7

5 Roles Defined By Function 8
- 5.1 Certification Scheme Owner (Scheme Owner): Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute 8
- 5.2 Certification Body (CB): Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute 9
- 5.3 Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) 10

6 Responsibilities of the Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute – Certification Scheme Owner 10
- 6.1. Standards Steering Committee 10
- 6.2 Certified Products Registry 11

7 Responsibilities of the Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute – Certification Body 11
- 7.1 Qualifications and Management System 11
- 7.2 Oversight of Conformity Assessment Bodies (CAB) 12
- 7.3 Certification Process Administration 13
- 7.4 Certification Compliance 14
- 7.5 Records 14
- 7.6 Complaints and Appeals 14
- 7.7 Recertification and Certification Extension 14

8 Responsibilities of Conformity Assessment Bodies 15
- 8.1 Qualifications 15
- 8.2 Recognition 15
- 8.3 Restrictions 16
- 8.4 Assessment Process 17

Certification Scheme Revision Log

REVISION DATE	SECTION	TYPE OF CHANGE
January 2013	Initial Release	
March 2015	Non-controlled	Issued prior to implementation of document control system
January 21, 2016		Initial Controlled Version
June 30, 2017	2	Added ISO 19011
June 30, 2017	4.5.15	Added ISO 17065, ISO 19011
June 30, 2017	6.1.5 and 6.1.6	Added specific language in accordance with ISO 17065 4.5.6
June 30, 2017	6.3.3	Enhanced to include reference to ISO 17065 7.4.5 and explicitly delineate term of certification
June 30, 2017	6.4.1	Language added to provide details governing changes in certification
June 30, 2017	6.4.3	Reference to investigation added
November 12, 2025	All	Updated to align with best practice and C2CPII systems.
December 17, 2025	7.1.5, 7.1.6	Corrected to align with C2CPII systems.
January 14, 2026	5.1.2	Added new section.
January 14, 2026	7.1.3	Removed previous section 7.1.3.
January 14, 2026	7.1.5	Clarified personnel may mot have provided consultancy to the company applying for certification/ recertification or for the products submitted for certification in the last two years.
January 14, 2026	7.3.3	Replaced “may rely on assessment results” with “shall rely on assessment results”

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Certification Scheme is to create a functional and scalable framework designed to implement the Cradle to Cradle Certified® Products Program, which is administered by the Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute (C2CPII). Functional implementation of the Certification Scheme is intended to generate the global adoption of Cradle to Cradle® principles into practice.

The framework is designed to incentivize innovation, continual improvement, and independence of all involved parties, while advancing the goals of Cradle to Cradle thinking and development as enacted by C2CPII through the certification process.

1.2 Scope

This scheme defines the boundaries of activities by bodies engaged in the Cradle to Cradle Certified certification process. Activities not contained herein may be regarded as outside the scope of this scheme and not subject to its requirements.

2 Normative References

ISO 14020:2022, Environmental statements and programmes for products — Principles and general requirements

ISO 14024:2022- *Environmental labels and declarations — Type I environmental labelling — Principles and procedures*

ISO/IEC 17000-2020, *Conformity Assessment – vocabulary and general principles*

ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, *Conformity Assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems, Part 1: Requirements*

ISO/IEC 17025:2017, *General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories*

ISO/IEC 17065:2012, *Conformity Assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes, and services*.

Cradle to Cradle Certified standards (*Cradle to Cradle Certified Product Standard (Full Scope), Cradle to Cradle Certified Material Health Standard, and Cradle to Cradle Certified Circularity Standard*) and supporting assessment methodologies

3 Definitions and acronyms

Assessment Report: The document prepared by a CAB that demonstrates conformance with the standard and serves as the basis of C2CPII's certification decision.

Certification Body (CB): The Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute (C2CPII).

Certification Scheme Owner (Scheme Owner): The Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute (C2CPII).

Certified Products Registry: The definitive registry of Cradle to Cradle Certified products, maintained by the C2CPII.

Conformity Assessment Body (CAB): An entity authorized by the C2CPII to conduct assessments sufficient in scope and rigor to support a certification decision based on the Cradle to Cradle Certified standards, in accordance with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065.

Cradle to Cradle Certified Product Standard (the 'standard'): The standard that serves as the basis for all Cradle to Cradle Certified® product certifications.

C2CPII Certification Agreement: The legally binding and enforceable document that identifies each party's obligations and responsibilities, legal considerations such as length of term, indemnification and liability, and certification services and activities including the use of trademarks, logos, and intellectual property of C2CPII.

Standards Steering Committee (SSC): The independent body of stakeholders responsible for the revision of the Cradle to Cradle Certified standards in accordance with the SSC charter and policies and procedures of the C2CPII.

Reduction: The modification of a certification to reflect changes that require a product(s) be certified at a lower level or removed from the scope of a certificate.

Suspension: A temporary condition that exists when C2CPII has reason to believe a product(s) is not in compliance with certification requirements yet may be reinstated following investigation and remediation. A product is not certified while it is suspended.

Termination: Action taken by a client to end certification, either during the term of certification or at the end of the term of certification.

Withdrawal: A permanent condition brought about when C2CPII determines a product is not in compliance with certification requirements, and non-conformance is not remediated.

4 Overview of Cradle to Cradle Certified

The Cradle to Cradle Certified Products Program is a voluntary certification scheme following the principles of ISO 14020 and the requirements of ISO 14024 and ISO/IEC 17065. It is available and open to all potential applicants with a product that meets the program's eligibility requirements (see the Cradle to Cradle Certified standards for eligibility requirements).

The standard requirements are based on the Cradle to Cradle® design principles outlined in William McDonough and Michael Braungart's 2002 book, *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things* and provide criteria in five key categories. These requirement categories and their intended outcomes are listed below.

- Material Health – Chemicals and materials used in the product are selected to prioritize the protection of human health and the environment, generating a positive impact on the quality of materials available for future use and cycling.

- Product Circularity – Products are intentionally designed for their next use and are actively cycled in their intended cycling pathway(s).

- Clean Air & Climate Protection – Product manufacturing results in a positive impact on air quality, the renewable energy supply, and the balance of climate-changing greenhouse gases.

- Water & Soil Stewardship – Water and soil are treated as precious and shared resources. Watersheds and soil ecosystems are protected, and clean water and healthy soils are available to people and all other organisms.

- Social Fairness – Companies are committed to upholding human rights and applying fair and equitable business practices.

The standard requirements are based on sound scientific principles and address the life cycle stages of a product where environmental and social impacts may be expected to be of highest concern: during the manufacturing of a product, the product's use, and the intended and likely unintended end of use. The standard does not include requirements addressing a product's functional performance or use.

The procedures and requirements in the Cradle to Cradle Certified Products Program are not intended to be prepared, adopted, or applied with a view to create unnecessary obstacles in national or international trade.

5 Roles Defined By Function

5.1 Certification Scheme Owner (Scheme Owner): Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute

5.1.1 Maintain and revise the standard in conjunction with the C2CPII Standards Steering Committee (SSC). This includes conformity assessment methods/procedures, product sampling/test methods, and certification requirements.

5.1.2 Communicate new or revised requirements of the certification scheme to all affected clients and/or their CAB. C2CPII shall ensure implementation of the changes called for by the new or revised requirements.

5.1.3 Provide oversight and enforcement of the rules governing the use of C2CPII marks and intellectual property: (a) Require all certificate holders to execute and abide by the C2CPII Certification Agreement (b) Monitor proper use of C2CPII marks and intellectual property.

5.1.4 Train C2CPII personnel.

5.1.5 Develop and implement training programs for persons performing activities in the assessment and certification processes.

5.1.6 Ensure uniform application of the standard.

5.1.7 Manage and operate the C2CPII management system to ensure alignment of the Cradle to Cradle certification process with ISO 17065, ISO 17021-1, and other appropriate ISO requirements and standards.

5.1.8 Ensure impartiality, competency, and adequate resources for operating the scheme.

5.1.9 Interpret standard as necessary for clarification in the course of certification assessments and maintain a library of documents and information relating to the implementation of the standard.

5.1.10 Represent Cradle to Cradle certification principles and practice to stakeholders and the public.

5.1.11 Establish and maintain financial independence of the C2CPII.

5.1.12 Implement marketing and communications efforts to ensure international adoption of Cradle to Cradle product certification.

5.1.13 Maintain database registry of certified products and the use of the certificate and mark of conformity.

5.1.14 Develop and maintain requirements for records retention of certification documents.

5.1.15 Develop and maintain surveillance and complaints/appeals procedures.

5.2 Certification Body (CB): Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute

5.2.1 Operate and administer the Cradle to Cradle certification scheme in accordance with ISO 17065 and C2CPII policies and procedures.

5.2.2 Develop and implement requirements for conformity assessment activities including: Information to be provided by the client, statements of conformity, disclosure of Registry information, resources for operating the scheme, dealing with non-conformities, and procedures for granting, withdrawal or modifying certification.

5.2.3 Train CAB personnel.

5.2.4 Recognize CABs.

5.2.5 Ensure recognized CAB personnel practice quality consistency in conducting product assessments through continuing education and training.

5.2.6 Provide oversight of CAB activities.

5.2.7 Render Cradle to Cradle certification decisions.

5.2.8 Maintain surveillance of adherence to governing intellectual property rules and changes to the scope of certifications.

5.2.9 Establish and maintain independent third-party status.

5.3 Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs)

5.3.1 Achieve and maintain recognition from C2CPII to conduct conformity assessments (also known as "evaluations" in ISO terminology) of products applying for Cradle to Cradle certification.

5.3.2 Ensure staff and contractors meet education and training requirements established by C2CPII.

5.3.3 Provide guidance to clients on the requirements to achieve certification based on extensive knowledge of the Cradle to Cradle Certified standards and program documents.

5.3.4 Conduct product conformity assessments in accordance with Cradle to Cradle Certified standards, certification and assessment manuals, guidance, assessment methodologies, and applicable program policies and procedures.

5.3.5 Maintain current knowledge of the Cradle to Cradle Certified standards, certification and assessment manuals, guidance, assessment methodologies and all applicable program policies and procedures.

6 Responsibilities of the Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute – Certification Scheme Owner

6.1. Standards Steering Committee

6.1.1 C2CPII shall create and convene an independent Standards Steering Committee (SSC) to govern the maintenance and revision of the Cradle to Cradle Certified standards in accordance with the SSC charter, policies and procedures of the C2CPII.

6.1.2 The SSC charter shall

- Define the size, membership, and governance of the SSC
- Establish the roles and responsibilities of SSC members
- Define conditions for recusal, disqualification, and resignation or termination of SSC membership

6.2 Certified Products Registry

6.2.1 C2CPII maintains the definitive registry of Cradle to Cradle Certified products in accordance with the C2CPII policies and procedures for operation and maintenance of the Certified Products Registry.

6.2.2 The Certified Products Registry shall be kept current at all times. To ensure data accuracy by operating in accordance with the surveillance requirements of this certification scheme, all changes to certificates shall come from the CAB that performed the product assessment on which that certificate is based. Entities holding certificates for products may not submit data changes directly to C2CPII.

7 Responsibilities of the Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute – Certification Body

7.1 Qualifications and Management System

7.1.1 Management System: C2CPII shall develop and maintain a quality management system to implement the Cradle to Cradle certification process in accordance with ISO 17065.

7.1.2 C2CPII shall maintain independence and impartiality in accordance with the *Cradle to Cradle Certified Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Impartiality*.

7.1.3 C2CPII shall maintain controls to ensure its activities are not marketed or offered as linked with a CAB by implying certification would be simpler, easier, faster, or less expensive if a specified CAB were engaged for its services.

7.1.4 In accordance with ISO 17065 Clause 4.2.6, C2CPII shall

- Not be the designer, manufacturer, installer, distributor, or maintainer of the certified product
- Not offer or provide consultancy to its clients
- Not offer or provide management system consultancy or internal auditing to its clients where the certification scheme requires the evaluation of the client's management system

7.1.5 Personnel: Maintain staff or contractors within the management control and systems/procedures of the certification body having adequate education and credentials, as determined by C2CPII, to perform rigorous reviews of assessments against the standards and requirements. In accordance with ISO 17065 Clause 4.2.6, these individuals shall

- Not be the designer, manufacturer, installer, distributor, or maintainer of the certified product or product applying for certification
- Not have provided consultancy to the company applying for certification/ recertification or for the products submitted for certification in the last two years.
- Not offer or provide management system consultancy or internal auditing to its clients where the certification scheme requires the evaluation of the client's management system

7.1.6 C2CPII shall ensure its procedures shall be non-discriminatory and not used to impede or inhibit access by applicants.

7.1.7 C2CPII shall ensure its services are accessible to all parties whose activities fall within the scope of their operations.

7.1.8 C2CPII shall ensure it shall not make the certification process conditional due to client size, membership in any association, or number of certifications issued. C2CPII shall not place undue financial or other conditions upon a client. Exclusions to this clause may apply in cases where there is reason to believe an applicant is engaged in illegal activity, any practices antithetical to Cradle to Cradle principles, or any activity that negatively impacts the integrity or public image of C2CPII, the Cradle to Cradle Certified standards, or the Cradle to Cradle Certified Products Program.

7.2 Oversight of Conformity Assessment Bodies (CAB)

7.2.1 C2CPII shall establish uniform requirements for CABs to achieve and maintain authorization to conduct Cradle to Cradle Certified product conformance assessments. The *Recognition Requirements for Cradle to Cradle Certified® Conformity Assessment Bodies* contains full details of the recognition process.

7.2.2 Qualifications: C2CPII shall establish qualifications for CABs. These qualifications shall be revisited and modified to reflect the continual improvement of the standard and the quality systems of C2CPII.

7.2.3 Training: C2CPII shall develop materials and conduct sufficient training for CAB personnel. This training shall be conducted on a timeline and for fees determined by C2CPII. Ultimately, CABs shall be expected to undertake and manage Cradle to Cradle Certified training for personnel internally, with C2CPII oversight. The C2CPII shall retain sole authority for granting recognition of CABs.

7.2.4 Operational Oversight: C2CPII shall provide ongoing oversight of CAB activities. Guidance, performance audits, and review of assessment practices to ensure uniform application of the standard shall be part of this oversight. Additional forms of oversight shall be developed when deemed by C2CPII to be essential for maintaining the operational integrity of the Certification Scheme. Such additional oversight may be one-time, ongoing, or conducted as needed. Examples of such additional oversight might be required meetings of CABs to discuss certification issues, program updates, or standard interpretations, and general or specific meetings called to review the state of the Certification Scheme.

7.2.5 Certification Decision: C2CPII shall ensure certification decisions are made independently in accordance with the requirements of ISO 17065.

7.3 Certification Process Administration

7.3.1 Application: A prospective client shall complete the C2CPII Cradle to Cradle Certified application form.

7.3.2 Application Review: C2CPII shall review an application to determine if the product is eligible for certification and if C2CPII has appropriate staff and capacity to conduct an evaluation. If the conditions are met, C2CPII shall provide the C2CPII certification agreement, which defines the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved and governs C2CPII trademark, logo, and intellectual property usage.

7.3.3 Evaluation: A CAB shall conduct an assessment to collect and evaluate the required objective evidence/documentation for the product(s) being considered for certification and submit a completed Assessment Report to C2CPII. This evaluation shall conform to ISO 17065 Clause 7.4.5 and shall rely on assessment results obtained prior to the application for certification. The CAB shall make a certification level recommendation to C2CPII supported by the evaluation. All CAB evaluation activities shall be conducted in accordance with the *Assessment Manual for Cradle to Cradle Certified® Conformity Assessment Bodies*.

7.3.4 Review and Certification Decision: Appropriate designated C2CPII staff shall review the results of the CAB's evaluation and render a certification decision in accordance with C2CPII's internal certification operations work instructions and the *Assessment Manual for Cradle to Cradle Certified® Conformity Assessment Bodies*.

7.3.5 Certification Documentation: Formal certification documentation shall be issued only when the conditions for certification are fulfilled, including when a decision to grant or alter the scope of certification has been made, certification

requirements have been fulfilled, the certification agreement has been executed, and applicable C2CPII program fees have been paid. The certification shall be issued at the level supported by the CAB's evaluation and be effective for a term of three years (for Version 4.x).

7.3.6 Certified Products Registry: C2CPII shall establish and maintain a registry of certified products in accordance with C2CPII policies and procedures.

7.3.7 Surveillance: Throughout the term of certification, C2CPII shall conduct surveillance in accordance with the *Trademark Use and Surveillance Policy* by sampling a client's use of C2CPII trademarks, logos, and intellectual property to continue to meet the requirements of the Certification Agreement and the C2CPII *Trademark Use Requirements*.

7.4 Certification Compliance

C2CPII shall maintain the validity of product certifications in accordance with the *Cradle to Cradle Certified Certification Compliance Policy and Procedures*.

7.5 Records

Records shall be retained and confidentiality maintained in accordance with the C2CPII *Document and Record Control Policy and Procedures*.

7.6 Complaints and Appeals

a) C2CPII shall manage complaints and appeals in accordance with the *Cradle to Cradle Certified Procedure for Complaints* and *Cradle to Cradle Certified Procedures for Appeals*.

b) The Client shall be required to maintain records of complaints and appeals related to its compliance with the requirements of the Cradle to Cradle Certified Products Program. These records shall include appropriate action taken to resolve the complaint or appeal. These records shall be open to C2CPII for inspection.

7.7 Recertification and Certification Extension

7.7.1 At the conclusion of the certification period, the client may elect to recertify the product. Recertification entails a CAB submitting an updated Assessment Report

to C2CPII based on the applicable version of the standard, guidance documents and assessment methodologies, and interpretations.

7.7.2 C2CPII may grant an extension for a specific timeframe beyond the expiration date of a certification in accordance with the *Certification Extension Policy*.

8 Responsibilities of Conformity Assessment Bodies

8.1 Qualifications

8.1.1 Documentation: The CAB shall submit all documentation required by the C2CPII *Recognition Requirements for Cradle to Cradle Certified Conformity Assessment Bodies*.

8.1.2 Personnel: The CAB shall maintain staff or contractors with adequate education and credentials to perform rigorous product assessments based on the Cradle to Cradle Certified standards.

8.2 Recognition

8.2.1 CABs operating within the Certification Scheme shall achieve and maintain recognition in accordance with the requirements of the *Recognition Requirements for Cradle to Cradle Certified Conformity Assessment Bodies*.

8.2.2 C2CPII shall make available requirements for CABs in the form of training, continuing education, interpretive materials, and individuated direction. C2CPII may charge fees for some of these services and materials.

8.2.3 CAB Recognition Process

a) To be considered for recognition, a potential CAB shall submit an application to C2CPII during a C2CPII open call for new CABs or by direct invitation, at C2CPII's discretion.

b) The application is reviewed by C2CPII.

c) If the application indicates the applicant CAB meets the minimum requirements for documentation and personnel or can demonstrate a viable path forward to meet the requirements, the application may be approved at the sole discretion of C2CPII.

d) C2CPII shall create a plan, including appropriate fees, for the approved CAB applicant to efficiently achieve recognition.

8.2.4 Maintenance of recognition: To maintain recognition, a CAB shall follow the protocols and requirements delineated in the C2CPII *Recognition Requirements for Cradle to Cradle Certified® Conformity Assessment Bodies* and the *C2CPII CAB Agreement*.

8.2.5 Term of Recognition: CAB recognition shall be for a term determined by C2CPII.

8.2.6 CAB Provisional Recognition: At the discretion of C2CPII, C2CPII shall develop general and individuated plans for CABs to become authorized to conduct material health assessments. A CAB seeking authorization to conduct material health assessments cannot attain full recognition until it has conducted assessments and successfully demonstrated the required competence for conducting assessments to C2CPII. This condition shall require the CAB seeking recognition to conduct material health assessments to initially operate under provisional recognition status. Assessments conducted under provisional status shall be considered equivalent to those conducted by a fully recognized CAB, with the resulting certification recommendation being of equal value to that conducted by a fully recognized CAB.

8.3 Restrictions

8.3.1 CAB staff or contractors shall not perform any of the C2CPII CB functions on any project that they also engage in assessment activity. CAB staff and contractors may not perform work that entails direct involvement with the certification decision, or crosses the boundary delineated in ISO 17065 between CB and consultant roles in the certification process, in accordance with applicable ISO standards and the *Assessment Manual for Cradle to Cradle Certified Conformity Assessment Bodies*.

8.3.2 If qualified to do so under the requirements established by C2CPII, CAB staff and contractors may conduct CB work on projects where they are not performing any CAB or consulting functions. Individuals who have performed consulting work related to a specific product(s) shall not perform any CAB or CB function within a two-year period following the conclusion of all consulting work relating to that product(s).

8.3.3 Entities authorized to conduct CAB functions, and which also provide consulting services shall establish clear “firewalls” between the two that meet the requirements of C2CPII and are in accordance with ISO 17065.

8.3.4 CABs shall not imply its services guarantee certification.

8.4 Assessment Process

A summary of the assessment process is provided below. Full details are provided in the *Assessment Manual for Cradle to Cradle Certified Conformity Assessment Bodies*.

8.4.1 Initial Client Engagement: A CAB shall have a process in place that captures sufficient information to make a thorough and accurate proposal to a client seeking Cradle to Cradle product certification.

8.4.2 Proposal: The CAB shall provide a proposal sufficient in detail to give the client guidance regarding the product assessment and certification procedure, certification requirements, duration, and cost of the assessment.

8.4.3 Assessment: The CAB shall obtain the required data and documentation to conduct the assessment, assess it, and conduct the manufacturing facility site visit(s) in accordance with the relevant Cradle to Cradle Certified standard(s), certification manuals and guidance, assessment methodologies, and C2CPII policies and procedures.

8.4.4 Reporting: An Assessment Report containing sufficient detail to support a certification recommendation shall be created. The Assessment Report shall be in a C2CPII-approved format.

8.4.5 Review: The Assessment Report is internally peer reviewed by CAB staff, who may make corrections, additions, and clarifications to bolster the quality of the document and its conclusions. A final version of the Assessment Report is drafted.

8.4.6 Recommendation: Supported by the final draft of the Assessment Report and supporting required objective evidence/documentation, the CAB makes a certification recommendation to C2CPII. Only CAB staff which have successfully completed training provided by C2CPII may make a certification recommendation and sign off on the Assessment Report.

8.4.7 Certification Decision: Using the recommendation and other information in the Assessment Report and any additional required supporting documentation and data, C2CPII renders a certification decision and, if warranted, issues a certificate.

8.4.8 Recertification: At the conclusion of the certification period, the client may elect to recertify the product. Recertification entails a CAB submitting an updated

Assessment Report to C2CPII based on the applicable version of the standard, certification manual, guidance, and assessment methodologies, and interpretations.

8.4.9 Extension: If a client is making progress toward recertification, yet for acceptable reasons is unable to fully complete the assessment process, an extension of the certification for a specific period of time may be granted by C2CPII. Extensions shall be granted in accordance with the *Certification Extension Policy*. If granted, the CAB continues the assessment and ensures all conditions of the extension are met during the process.