

FAQ – Grüner Knopf (Green Button)

The German government formally launched its Grüner Knopf textile seal on September 9, 2019. This is the first state-monitored label identifying textile products that were made following social and ecologically sustainable guidelines. VAUDE was one of the first German companies to receive the new Grüner Knopf certification seal for a majority of its product range. Our own strict Green Shape criteria were recognized and provided a strong foundation for obtaining the certification. Currently, 90 percent of our Apparel Collection (Autumn/Winter 2019/20) and 75 percent of all VAUDE products including hardware have earned the Grüner Knopf label.

1. What is the Grüner Knopf?

The Grüner Knopf is the first state-monitored label identifying textile products that were made following social and ecologically sustainable guidelines. The German Federal Government created this state textile seal with the staunch advocacy of Gerd Müller, Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Products with the new seal must be manufactured in accordance with high environmental and social standards and in compliance with criteria laid out by the state. The Grüner Knopf combines standards for both products and for companies, which have to demonstrate due diligence. The Grüner Knopf logo is attached directly to the product to provide consumers with guidance when purchasing sustainable textiles.

During the introductory phase, the scheme will apply to the most important manufacturing stages, namely 'cut-make-trim' (production) and 'bleaching and dyeing' (wet processes). Over the next few years, it will continue to be developed and expanded to other production stages with the aim of protecting both people and the environment throughout the entire supply chain.

Global requirements for companies and the supply chain are determined by the state as the owner of the seal and these requirements are monitored by independently accredited certification bodies worldwide. The Grüner Knopf is registered as a warranty mark in accordance with 106a ff Markengesetz (MarkenG) and is monitored by the German Patent and Trademark Office.

More info: <https://www.gruener-knopf.de/>

VAUDE CSR News on the official launch:

<https://nachhaltigkeitsbericht.vaude.com/gri/news/VAUDE-erhaelt-das-neue-staatliche-Textilsiegel-Gruener-Knopf.php>

2. Is the Grüner Knopf recognized internationally?

Yes, even though the Grüner Knopf initiative originated in Germany, it is a global system with state supervision based on European and international systems. This means that companies in other countries can also use the Grüner Knopf.

3. Does VAUDE meet the Grüner Knopf's criteria for companies?

Yes. Key elements include our membership in the Fair Wear Foundation with a status of "Leader", our comprehensive Supplier Management System, VAUDE's goals and budget process which fully integrates sustainability goals, and comprehensive CSR reporting (in accordance with international reporting standards such as GRI and EMAS) which includes an annual materiality and risk analysis and the involvement of key stakeholders.

4. What types of products are eligible for the Grüner Knopf?

Please see the following: https://www.gruener-knopf.de/includes/data/Gruener_Knopf_Warenklassen.pdf

5. Which VAUDE products are eligible for the Grüner Knopf?

For VAUDE, the following product categories are relevant:

- 18 bags (backpacks, travel bags, bike bags)
- 20 sleeping bags, insulation pads
- 22 tents
- 25 apparel
- 24 hand towels

VAUDE Green Shape products from these categories always fulfill the Grüner Knopf criteria. Footwear is not eligible for the Grüner Knopf, which is why VAUDE footwear never bears the Grüner Knopf label even though many of these products meet our strict Green Shape criteria.

6. The VAUDE Green Shape criteria have been recognized for the Grüner Knopf. What does that mean in concrete terms?

In preparation for the Grüner Knopf audit, the VAUDE Green Shape Concept was closely examined for months by the BMZ (Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development), GIZ (German Corporation for International Cooperation GmbH) and DAKKS (the national accreditation body of the Federal Republic of Germany). As a result, Green Shape was recognized as a standard for the Grüner Knopf. This means that VAUDE Green Shape products do not have to go through a case-by-case assessment to earn the Grüner Knopf.

For VAUDE, this is a tremendous success and a valuable confirmation that we took the right path 10 years ago with the introduction of the Green Shape Concept and its strict criteria.

We've created a system with Green Shape that not only increases the environmentally-friendliness of our products and creates added value for our customers and the planet: it's a foundation based on attentive, partnership-based collaborations with our producers and their suppliers that we have developed over the years and includes the spheres of fair working conditions, chemical management and operational environmental protection such as energy efficiency, waste, water and waste water management. We support our suppliers in developing their own expertise and maintaining high environmental and social standards.

Find out more here: <https://nachhaltigkeitsbericht.vaude.com/gri/umwelt/lieferanten.php>

VAUDE needs to continue to formalize the Green Shape Concept so that by the end of the introductory phase, it fulfills all formal criteria of a recognized standard setting process.

7. Why don't all VAUDE Green Shape products bear the Grüner Knopf label?

Only those products listed in the Grüner Knopf product index are eligible for the seal. Footwear is not included so naturally, VAUDE footwear doesn't bear the Grüner Knopf, even though it does comply with Green Shape criteria.

The VAUDE Green Shape Concept has been recognized as a standard for the Grüner Knopf. However, VAUDE voluntarily refrains from labeling some VAUDE Green Shape products with the Grüner Knopf. Why?

Individual VAUDE Green Shape criteria and Grüner Knopf criteria are not completely identical. In order to neither compromise the credibility of Green Shape's recognition as a standard for the Grüner Knopf, nor to endanger the Grüner Knopf as a whole, we have voluntarily decided not to award the Grüner Knopf to those products concerned.

8. Development of the criteria for Green Shape products is ongoing. How will this influence eligibility for the Grüner Knopf?

We are working on "Green Shape 3.0" to introduce additional sustainability criteria throughout the product life cycle. This includes the VAUDE Repair Index, superior material efficiency, criteria for product recyclability and the VAUDE Green Material Goals, as well as stricter requirements for supplier certification and criteria that further enhance the credibility of Green Shape.

Green Shape 3.0, however, will first apply to the Summer Collection 2022. Our goal is to end voluntary exceptions to Green Shape products for the Grüner Knopf by that time.

The formal requirements that VAUDE must meet by the end of the Grüner Knopf introductory phase are also part of Green Shape 3.0 so that the status of Green Shape as a standard for the Grüner Knopf will continue to be recognized.

9. What requirements does VAUDE need to fulfill for the Grüner Knopf?

As a company, VAUDE must, of course, meet all of the Grüner Knopf's criteria for companies.

The VAUDE Green Shape Concept covers all criteria for products. To ensure that Green Shape continues to be recognized as a standard for the Grüner Knopf even after the introductory phase, VAUDE has received three requirements that must be met by mid 2021. All three

requirements relate purely to the organization of Green Shape's standard development, but not to environmental or social criteria:

- Formal involvement of relevant stakeholders, especially suppliers, in the Green Shape Concept
- Independence between the seal authority and seal user
- Accreditation of Green Shape as a standard by a relevant independent organization

All three requirements will be integrated into Green Shape 3.0 and are expected to be fulfilled with the launch of the Summer Collection 2022.

10. How long will Green Shape certification for products be valid with the Grüner Knopf?

Grüner Knopf certification will initially apply to the introductory phase that is valid until June 30, 2021.

11. How will VAUDE use the Grüner Knopf?

VAUDE products that are bought online at VAUDE.com have already been labeled with the Grüner Knopf. Hang tags or packaging for products in stores will not be available until Winter 20/21 due to the long lead time necessary.

We are providing a comprehensive marketing package for retailer communications at the POS. This can be accessed at our VAUDE dealer platform: <https://www.vaude-dealers.com/Markendarstellung/Grueener-Knopf/>

12. What is VAUDE's position on criticism of the Grüner Knopf?

There has been strong resistance throughout the five years between the founding of the Alliance for Sustainable Textiles and the introduction of the Grüner Knopf – both from civic organizations for whom the requirements are too lax and from textile brands and industrial associations for whom the criteria are too strict. Nevertheless, with the introduction of the Grüner Knopf, the German government has managed to set an important first milestone for higher environmental and social standards in the textile industry.

Criticism from civic organizations has been primarily due to the fact that the Grüner Knopf is not legally binding. Rather than a voluntary label, they are demanding a law that requires textile manufacturers to comply with due diligence obligations in their supply chains and strict minimum standards for environmental and social issues.

VAUDE supports this demand: legally binding regulation would affect all market participants and create fairer market conditions. While a voluntary seal might shine a light on the involvement of textile brands that are already investing in environmental protection and social standards, these companies must almost always absorb the associated costs themselves – an economic disadvantage compared to brands which, due to a lack of legal obligation, haven't begun to focus on the conditions in their supply chains.

Other criticisms of the Grüner Knopf include the fact that only some parts of the textile supply chain are monitored and that the Grüner Knopf criteria are not strict enough on some issues. We agree - the VAUDE Green Shape Standard is also more comprehensive and stricter in many areas.

However, the current Grüner Knopf criteria are just a first step and only valid until the end of the introductory phase on June 30, 2021. A gradual transition to stricter standards is built into the program and after the introductory phase, criteria that have been revised and are more rigorous will take effect.

We truly believe in the aphorism "Don't let perfect be the enemy of good". The Grüner Knopf is a significant first step toward providing consumers with a good and unprecedented level of orientation for fair and environmentally friendly shopping. This is a true milestone and should be recognized as such.

Additional information and enquiries:

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