QB60 Certification Reference System:

UNPLASTICISED VINYL-BASED EXTRUDED PRODUCTS FOR OUTDOOR USE

Identification No.: QB 60
Revision no.: 00
First applied: 01/07/2026

Who should you contact?
LABORATOIRE NATIONAL DE METROLOGIE ET D'ESSAIS (LNE)
Testing and Certification Directorate

Contact:
Tel. +33 (0)1 40 43 37 00
email: pole.certification@lne.fr

CONTENTS

Partie 1 Application 4
1.1 Scope 4
1.2 Certification monitoring 4
1.3 Applying for certification 6
1.4 QB mark: 6
1.5 Certified products 6
Partie 2 Certification programme 7
2.1 Additional standards and specifications 7
2.2 Quality management: audit reference system 8
Partie 3 Certification process 24
3.1 General information 24
3.2 Obtaining certification 25
3.2.1 Compiling the application file 26
3.2.2 Initial assessment process 28
3.3 Certified product surveillance process 35
3.3.1 Certified product surveillance process 36
3.3.2 Modifications and developments concerning the company structure or the certified product 43
3.3.3 Modification concerning sites covered by the certification 43
3.3.4 Modification of the accepted product 43
3.3.5 Modification of certified vinyl compounds 44
3.3.6 Temporary stoppage of production 45
3.3.7 Definitive stoppage of production or surrendering the right of use 45
3.3.8 Change in certification: addition of new products 45
Partie 4 Participating bodies 46
4.1 Licensed certifying body 46
4.2 Audit bodies 46
4.3 Test bodies 46
4.4 Mark Committee 47
4.4.1 Committee members 47
4.4.2 “Ageing” subcommittee 48
4.4.3 Sub-committee or working group 48
4.5 LNE Reading Committee 48
Partie 5 Glossary 49
Partie 6 Applicable fees – Invoicing terms 52
6.1 Applicable fees 52
6.1.1 Accommodation and travel expenses 52
6.1.2 Cancellation of an audit 52
6.2 Terms of payment 52
6.2.1 Collection of payment 52
6.2.2 Obtaining certification 53
6.2.3 Certified product surveillance 53
6.2.4 Additional verifications 53

This certification reference document was approved by the LNE Testing and Certification Director on 11/06/2026.

Hence the certification rules can be revised, in part or in whole, by LNE after consultation with the interested parties.

It cancels and replaces all previous versions.

This technical certification reference system must be used in conjunction with the applicable version of the QB60 technical document and the QB60 certification administrative management appendix as well as the rules for the use of the QB60 mark.

The above-mentioned documents may be revised, in part or in whole, by LNE and CSTB, after consultation with the interested parties.

LNE is responsible to CSTB for operations which are entrusted to it and are covered by a contract with CSTB. CSTB entrusts the management of the QB mark for unplasticised vinyl-based extruded products for outdoor use to LNE, the licensed certification body.

Reminder:
It is specified that all products or services must satisfy the regulations, independently of any certification application, concerning for example forgery, compliance and safety requirements, etc.

MODIFICATION HISTORY

Part modified	Modification made with respect to the previous version	Revision	First applied
Certification Reference System QB60 technical document QB certification administrative management appendix	Creation of the reference system under the QB60 mark	Rev. 0	1 July 2026

Partie 1
Application

1.1 Scope

This certification reference system concerns unplasticised vinyl-based extruded products for outdoor use: louver, garage door, sliding louver, roller shutter, leaf shutter, swimming pool protection (cover, shelter, barrier), French shutter, thermal bridge breaks (distance pieces), Venetian blind, wall coverings, cladding, intermediate areas (fences, garden furniture, planters) and other profiles intended for outdoor use, excluding window profiles (for example chicane, lower panel for French window, etc.).

These profiles are composed of virgin or reprocessed PVC-U material, or of virgin PVC-UE. These materials are opaque for all colours or translucent.

These profiles can be co-extruded. In this case, for the internal part, this concerns:

- virgin or reprocessed PVC-U or PVC-UE material (with or without resistance to UV) or
- recycled PVC-U material.

Translucent vinyl compounds for application as a swimming pool covering can be used only for roller shutters protected from the sun. They are used alone or in combination with an opaque compound for two-colour slats.

1.2 Certification monitoring

Certification is the third-party recognition of the conformity of the characteristics demonstrating the added value of unplasticised vinyl-based extruded products for outdoor use.

The properties certified under the QB application “unplasticised vinyl-based extruded products for outdoor use” are:

- Vicat softening temperature
- Appearance - colour
- Modulus of elasticity in flexure
- Shrinkage
- Impact strength
- Durability

These certified characteristics are assessed under the responsibility of LNE, with the following means for inspection:

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Acceptance</th><th colspan="2">Continuous monitoring</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">A production audit by a qualified technical auditor:

- Verification of the existence and effective implementation of the QMS and its compliance with quality standards
- Verification of the performance of inspections and production records: raw materials, finished products
- Verification of quality control management: metrology, packaging, storage, traceability, product marking, processing of non-conformities and customer complaints
- Supervision of certified characteristics carried out by the applicant/holder</td><td rowspan="4">Yes</td><td colspan="2">Yes</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"><u>Frequency of audits:</u></td></tr>
<tr><td>Producer</td><td>Extruder and formulator-extruder</td></tr>
<tr><td>1 audit every 3 years</td><td>2 annual audits (*)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Performance of tests by a laboratory recognised by the certifying body (independent and competent):

- Samples taken by the certifying body and carried out on the applicant/holder’s site</td><td rowspan="4">Yes</td><td colspan="2">Yes</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Frequency of tests:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Producer</td><td>Extruder and formulator-extruder</td></tr>
<tr><td>1 series of tests every 3 years</td><td>2 annual series of tests (*)</td></tr>
</table>

(*) This frequency may be reduced to one per year, according to the opinion of the Mark Committee, 2 years after admission if:

- The manufacturing site is certified to ISO 9001: 2015 for the manufacture of QB profiles of which the perimeter and the scope include the sites and activities concerned by the QB mark and currently valid,
- No non-compliance is found on physical and/or mechanical features (excluding material features in the case of a non-formulating extruder) at the plant and/or mark laboratory.

The applicant/holder is solely responsible for the compliance of its products; LNE inspections cannot replace the responsibilities of the applicant/holder.

1.3 Applying for certification

Any legal entity:

- manufacturing products within the scope defined above and which can comply with the technical requirements described in Part 2 of this document,
- distributing products within the scope defined above for which the manufacturer complies with the technical requirements described in Part 2 of this document,

may apply for the right to use the QB mark “Unplasticised vinyl-based products for outdoor use”.

A request of this kind is known in this document as an "application" and the person formulating it as the "applicant".

Before making the application, the applicant must be sure to meet, at the time of the application, the conditions defined in the certification reference system. The applicant/holder has the responsibility to ensure that the rules and regulations applicable to their product are adhered to correctly (e.g., CE marking).

They must undertake to comply with said conditions throughout the period of using the QB mark.

1.4 QB mark:

The QB mark is materialised by the QB monogram below:

CERTIFIED BY LNE

The marking conditions for products, packaging and technical and commercial documents are defined in § 2.2.3 below.

The graphics charter for the QB mark is available on request from LNE.

The purpose of the marking rules is to guide the holder in how to meet the regulations and the requirements of QB certification. The General Rules of the QB mark specify the conditions of use, validity and the penalties in the event of abusive use of the QB mark.

Without prejudice of the sanctions laid down in the General Rules of the QB mark, any incorrect announcement of the certified features and any fraudulent use of the QB logo expose the holder to lawsuits for fraud and/or misleading advertising.

1.5 Certified products

The list of certified products is available using the certificate search engine on the www.lne.fr website, under the section entitled "Certification", "Certificate search engine". Upon request, LNE can provide information regarding the validity of a given certificate.

Partie 2
Certification programme

Before making the application, the applicant must be sure to meet, at the time of the application, the conditions defined in these certification rules (certification reference system), regarding their product and the sites concerned.

They must undertake to comply with said conditions throughout the entire duration of the use of the QB mark.

Failure to comply with these rules, may lead to a halt or suspension of the examination of applicants' files. Notably, it is not possible in any circumstances to make reference to the QB mark before obtaining the right to use the QB mark, or to present forged products for certification.

2.1 Additional standards and specifications

For references mentioning an application date or an index, only the edition quoted applies. For references without an application date or index, the latest edition of the reference document applies (including any amendments).

2.1.1. APPLICABLE STANDARDS

- NF T 54-405-1:June 2017: Extruded or coextruded profiles in unplasticised (PVC-U) poly(vinyl chloride) for outdoor use - Test specifications and methods
- NF EN 13245-1:July 2010: Plastics - Profiles in unplasticised (PVC-U) poly(vinyl chloride) for building applications - Part 1: designation of light coloured profiles
- NF EN 13245-3:July 2010: Plastics - Profiles in unplasticised (PVC-U) poly(vinyl chloride) for building applications - Part 3: designation of PVC-UE profiles

Note: Types of PVC-U and PVC-UE profiles are defined in § 3 of the NF EN 13245-1 and EN 13245-3 standards (Type 1 [profile obtained by mono-extrusion (coloured in the mass)], Type 2 [profile obtained by co-extrusion], Type 3 [Type 1 or Type 2 film-coated profile] and Type 4 [Type 1 or Type 2 profile with a coat of paint]).

2.1.2. ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

In addition, products must meet the additional specifications defined in the QB60 technical document:

- Requirements concerning products,
- Programme of certification tests (acceptance, monitoring and modifications).

2.2 Quality management: audit reference system

2.2.1 QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS FOR PRODUCERS COMMERCIALISING VINYL COMPOUNDS

2.2.1.1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

For the products concerned in the brand application, the producer's quality management system must comply with the provisions of standard NF EN ISO 9001: 2015 - Quality management systems – Requirements, the only permitted exclusion relating to § 8.3 of the standard (design and development).

This conformity must be certified by an organisation that meets the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021.

2.2.1.2 SPECIFIC QUALITY REQUIREMENTS

2.2.1.2.1 Operational planning and control - ISO 9001 standard § 8.1

When planning production, the manufacturer must take into account points -a, - b, -c, -d and -e of § 8.1. of the standard.

2.2.1.2.2 Requirements for products and services - § 5.1.2 and 8.2 of ISO 9001

The technical specifications or general conditions established in the framework of the contract with the extruders must include the specifications, the test methods and any correlations with reference to these rules.

Certificates of analysis must be sent to the extruders for each delivery. As a minimum, they must include the results of the measurements of density, ash content (only for compositions with L* > 35), DHC and colorimetry concerning the composition delivered.

They must make it possible to define the batch's conformity with the certification rules (information about the specifications, test methods and possible correlations or reference to the general conditions).

The producer must release for the QB market only batches recognised as conforming to the specifications (see § 1.) for all applications for which the composition is approved for QB mark certification.

2.2.1.2.3 Type and extent of control of externally provided processes, products and services - § 8.4.2. of ISO 9001

The manufacturer must ensure the quality of the raw materials involved in the manufacture of the products (materials necessary for the manufacture of the vinyl compound) for which they hold the right to use the QB mark.

For example, clearly-defined and regular inspections upon receipt or certificate of conformity to suppliers' technical specifications or general conditions.

Tests carried out must be recorded, along with acceptance criteria, and any decisions taken in the case of non-conformance.

2.2.1.2.4 Identification and tractability - § 8.5.2 of standard ISO 9001

The manufacturer must provide instructions for the identification of the product.

Traceability is a requirement of the QB mark; therefore, the provisions defined in standard ISO 9001 regarding the unique identification of the product must be taken into account.

This identification must make it possible to ensure traceability and to find the past history of the product.

2.2.1.2.5 Preservation - ISO 9001 § 8.5.4.

Storage

The manufacturer must use the designated storage areas to prevent damage or deterioration of the product while it is awaiting use or delivery.

To detect any deterioration, the condition of the product in storage must be evaluated at appropriate and defined intervals.

2.2.1.2.6 Resources for monitoring and measurement - ISO 9001 § 7.1.5

Requirements a, b, c, d and e of the standard must be taken into account for the inspection and test equipment likely to have an influence on the tests carried out under the QB mark.

Inspection, measuring and testing equipment must be used to ensure that the measurement uncertainty is known and compatible with the required measurement capability.

2.2.1.2.7 Release of products - ISO 9001 § 8.6

When planning the manufacture of the product, the manufacturer must take account of points c and d of § 8.1. of the standard.

The inspection plan put in place must make it possible to ensure that the products comply with the specifications defined in § 1 of the technical document. It must at least include inspection of the properties of finished products with the defined and minimum frequencies noted in the following table:

<table>
<tr><td>Properties</td><td>Minimum frequency</td></tr>
<tr><td>Density</td><td rowspan="4">Once per batch and per composition</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ash content</td></tr>
<tr><td>DHC(1)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Colorimetry(1)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Vicat</td><td>Once a year per composition(2)</td></tr>
</table>

(1) Not applicable, for non-UV resistant virgin vinyl compounds intended for internal layers of profiles.

(2) For new compositions, this frequency is applied after validation of the declared initial value (by inspections of 10 batches produced).

With the exception of the Vicat, subcontracting of these inspections is not allowed.

This subcontracting is possible provided that it does not cause any disruption to the manufacturing process (due to the response time, for example).

The subcontracting terms and conditions must be formalised and recorded (definition of the subcontractor, test frequency, the turn-around times required, the written communication of results, the procedure to follow in case of non-compliance).

The results must be recorded for each corresponding batch.

The other tests (see §1.2.2 of the technical document) can be considered as reference tests.

The certificate of analysis of the material accompanying each batch, defined in § 5, must contain the following information:

- Commercial description of the product on the QB certificate
- Density
- Ash content (only for compositions with L* > 35)
- DHC
- Colorimetry

For non-UV resistant virgin vinyl compounds intended for the internal layers of profiles, and as a replacement for the aforementioned certificate of analysis, specifications must be established between the producer and the extruder, which must include the following information:

- Commercial description of the product on the QB certificate
- Density
- Ash content (only for compositions with L* > 35)[1]
- Vicat
- Flexural modulus of elasticity

2.2.1.2.8 Non-conformity and corrective action - § 10.2. of standard ISO 9001

The manufacturer must process a non-conforming QB product in one of the following ways:

- by carrying out actions which eliminate the non-conformity,
- by authorising its use, its release or its acceptance as a derogation; in this case, prior agreement of LNE must be obtained,
- by carrying out actions which prevent it from being used (e.g. scrapping of the product).

Records of any complaints made regarding certified products, and their remedy must be made and kept.

[1] Not applicable, for non-UV resistant virgin vinyl compounds intended for internal layers of profiles.

2.2.2 QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS FOR EXTRUDERS AND EXTRUDER FORMULATORS

This chapter lists the minimal quality management system requirements which the applicant/holder must meet in order to use the QB mark. This ensures that products which use the QB mark are continuously manufactured in accordance with the current certification rules.

Therefore, it must describe and ensure the updated status of a quality management system that effectively controls the production of certified products and manages the checks and testing carried out when the raw materials used in the manufacture of the finished product are received, during the manufacture of the finished product and on the finished product.

2.2.2.1 LEADERSHIP

2.2.2.1.1 Quality policy

The applicant/holder's management much establish a quality policy, its objectives and engagement. These must be updated, communicated, understood and used within the company.

2.2.2.1.2 Roles, responsibilities and authority within the company

2.2.2.1.2.1 Responsibilities and authority

The management must ensure that responsibilities and authority are allocated and communicated to every person involved:

- in the production stages with a direct effect on the product's quality,
- in testing,
- in the release of the conforming product,
- in the assessment and processing of non-compliant product material.

The management must ensure that responsibilities and authority are defined in such a way as to ensure that the requirements of the certification standard are implemented permanently.

2.2.2.1.2.2 Testing means and staff

The applicant/holder must:

- identify and implement measures to monitor the quality of the finished product, during the appropriate stages (upon receipt, during manufacture and on the finished product.),
- provide the necessary means for measurements and inspections,
- appoint competent individuals to verify that the product meets the specified requirements (see § 1 of the technical document).

2.2.2.2 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

2.2.2.2.1 Management review

At planned intervals, management should review the established quality management system in order to:

- comply with the requirements of these certification rules,
- ensure that it always remains appropriate and effective.

Documented information from these reviews should be kept and made available.

The monitoring of objectives related to the quality of the products and the efficacy of the actions implemented must be a part of each management review.

2.2.2.2.2 Internal audit

Internal quality audits must be carried out at planned intervals in order to establish whether the quality management system meets the requirements determined by the applicant/holder as well as those listed in the certification rules.

The applicant/holder must keep the results of these internal audits, and carry out any appropriate corrective action(s).

As a matter of principle, it is preferable for the auditor not to audit their own work.

2.2.2.3 DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

Quality management system documentation must be read, evaluated and approved before being disseminated by authorised persons. Quality management system documentation must be managed in such a way as to assure that only valid documents are available.

The holder/applicant must manage the documented information. To do this, they must carry out the following actions, when applicable:

a) approve documentation, with regards to their adequacy, before dissemination;
b) review and update documents if necessary;
c) ensure that any modifications and the validity period of the documents are identified;
d) ensure the availability of the documents wherever they are required;
e) ensure that the documents are legible and easily identifiable;
f) ensure that external documents are identified, and that their dissemination is managed;
g) prevent any unintentional use of expired documents and identify them appropriately if they are kept for any reason whatsoever.

2.2.2.4 PURCHASES

2.2.2.4.1 Purchase specifications

The holder/applicant must ensure that the purchased product conforms to the purchase specifications.

To do this, they must identify the requirements that they will place on the supplier, the checks to be carried out on supplied products, as well as any other steps necessary to ensure that the purchased products satisfy the purchase specifications. The type and extent of the control applied on the supplier and on the purchased product must depend on the incidence of the purchased product on the conformance of the final product.

Purchase documents must describe the purchased product, provide a reference and, where applicable, the applicable version of the purchase specifications.

The manufacturer must ensure the quality of the materials involved in the manufacture of products for which it holds the right to use the QB mark:

- raw materials necessary for the manufacture of the polyvinyl compounds (in the case of an extruder formulator),
- polyvinyl compounds (extruder buying it from a producer),
- reprocessed or recycled material.

For example: defined and regular inspections upon receipt or certification of conformity to suppliers' technical specifications or specifications.

For extruders buying the material from a producer, a certificate of analysis must accompany each batch delivered.

For extruders buying films for coating, an analysis certificate must be issued for each batch delivered, or a certificate of compliance with specifications which must as a minimum include: the thickness of the film, extension at point of failure, tensile strength, colour, brightness, stability at 100°C, and analysis of the covering sheet.

Tests carried out must be recorded, along with acceptance criteria, and any decisions taken in the case of non-conformance.

2.2.2.4.2 Subcontracting of QB manufacturing

Subcontracting operations are governed by the following principles:

- the holder who has requested the subcontracted job is responsible for the conformance of QB certified products, in accordance with the certification rules. In the case of non-conformance, the necessary checks must be carried out either at the manufacturer's site, or at that of the subcontractor, in keeping with the quality provisions adopted for the subcontracted work,
- the subcontracted operations must be agreed to in advance by LNE, and they must be clearly recorded as such both by the subcontracted manufacturer and by the subcontractor (in particular, the manufacturer's batch and identification numbers and any testing carried out),
- orders must state clearly which product is being ordered (reference, technical specifications, quantity, time periods, etc.). They must refer to the specifications made in the design brief and, where applicable, indicate the request for the certificate of analysis.

2.2.2.5 IDENTIFICATION AND TRACEABILITY

The applicant/holder must provide instructions on product identification by marking products in accordance with the requirements of § 2.2.3 below.

The QB mark requires traceability. Unique product identification must be managed at every stage of the manufacturing process, by defining the rules to follow and the appropriate means to carry this out.

Identification must enable the product and its history to be traced. It should be possible to trace the batches of raw materials used and the tests carried out upon their receipt, during the manufacturing process and on the final product.

The applicant/holder must also determine the state of the products and compare them with the monitoring and measurement requirements, throughout the entire production process (from the time of receipt, as far as the final product). They must keep any documentation required for traceability.

For the present QB mark, production batches are defined in § 5 of these certification rules for all manufacturers.

In the event of using extruders with multiple outlets, traceability must be ensured per outlet and it must be possible to differentiate each outlet.

2.2.2.6 PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

Production must be managed at every stage of the process.

This is the case from the start of manufacturing, until the final product is packaged.

To do this, the applicant/holder should:

- define the production methods associated with the types/product ranges,
- define the manufacturing parameters for each type/product range at each stage of production,
- arrange access to manufacturing instructions, product properties, inspection plans and associated monitoring equipment during production activities.

The manufacturing equipment must be kept in good condition.

2.2.2.7 TESTING

Responsibilities and authority must be given to people who carry out inspections and testing and when releasing conforming products.

2.2.2.7.1 Tests to carry out upon receipt

The applicant/holder must ensure that the products purchased are used only after they have been shown to conform to the purchase specifications.

For example, using defined and regular testing upon receipt, certificates of conformity for technical specifications given by the suppliers, or design briefs.

Tests carried out must be recorded, along with acceptance criteria, and any decisions taken in the case of non-conformance.

2.2.2.7.2 Tests carried out on products which are being manufactured and on finished products

The applicant/holder must implement the planned actions, at the appropriate stages, in order to check that the specified requirements are being satisfied.

Therefore, they must ensure that all the required inspections and tests, including those specified when the product is received, during manufacture or on the finished products (see table below), have been carried out on a defined regular basis and that the results obtained show that the product complies with the requirements.

The inspection plan put in place must make it possible to ensure that the products comply with the specifications defined in § 1 of the technical document. It must at least contain the tests described below.

The results of these tests must be recorded, along with the acceptance criteria and any decisions taken in the case of non-conformance.

The client must not be delivered the products before all planned tests have been carried out satisfactorily.

- **Extrusion of the profiles:**

The inspection plan put in place must make it possible to ensure that the products comply with the specifications defined in § 1 of the technical document. It must include at least the following characteristics according to the test methods described in §1 of the technical document:

During manufacture:

- appearance,
- linear weight,
- conformity of the dimensions to the profile inspection plans,
- for film-coated profiles: visual inspection of the quality of application and distribution of the adhesive, the position of the film and its quality of application and inspection of the pullout resistance at the end of the bar.

On finished products (according to the application):

- tensile properties (may be subcontracted),
- shrinkage,
- impact strength, (method NF T 54-405 may be used, the method in ISO 6603 being the reference method in case of problems),
- colour checking.

The other tests in §1 of the technical document can be considered as reference tests (qualification for the use of a new composition, new production equipment, new type, etc.).

The frequencies should be defined by the extruders and should, as a minimum, meet the following requirements when applicable to the type of profile being tested:

Properties	**Minimum frequency**
Appearance, linear density and dimensions	At the start and once per shift and per extruder
Tensile strength	Once a month, from one profile (for each monthly test, take a different reference sample for the profile/composition/extruder group)
Shrinkage	Once per campaign and at least once per week*
Impact	Once per campaign and at least once per week* And once/48 h for film-coated profiles
Colorimetry	Once per shift and per extruder
Light transmittance	Once per campaign and at least once per week*
Peeling resistance	Once per shift/film type/geometry of film-coated profiles
Performance after heating at 150°C/30 min or 70°C/24 h or RALGZ716 (120°C/30 min)	Once per 24 h/film type/geometry of film-coated profiles.

* calendar week

In the case of extrusions with multiple outlets, the impact, shrinkage and linear density tests should be carried out on the profiles from each outlet.

The results must be recorded for each corresponding batch.

- **Production of polyvinyl compounds:**

Extruders formulating their own polyvinyl compounds must provide verification of the identifying properties of the material in their inspection plan.

The frequencies must be defined by the formulator extruders and must meet the following requirements as a minimum:

Properties	Minimum frequency
Density	Once per month and per composition
Ash content(1)	
Thermal stability time (DHC) (1)	
Vicat softening temperature	Once per month and per composition (2)

(1) Not applicable, for non-UV resistant virgin vinyl compounds intended for internal layers of profiles.
(2) For new compositions, this frequency is applied after validation of the declared initial value (by inspections of 10 batches produced).

The results must be recorded for each corresponding batch.

2.2.2.7.3 Inspection and test records

Documents relating to testing must be drawn up and kept, in order to prove that the products conform to the requirements of this certification. They must be legible, easy to identify and accessible.

The applicant/holder must ensure that the documents relating to testing are identifiable, properly stored, protected and accessible. They must also ensure the amount of time that they will be kept for, and their subsequent elimination.

2.2.2.7.4 Subcontracted testing

For the extrusion of profiles: subcontracting of the tensile strength test is possible provided that it does not cause any disturbance in the manufacturing process (due to response time, for example).

For the production of vinyl-based compositions: Vicat tests may be subcontracted, as long as this does not affect the manufacturing process (e.g., due to the turnaround time.)

The subcontracting terms and conditions must be formalised and recorded (definition of the subcontractor, test frequency, the turn-around times required, the written communication of results, the procedure to follow in case of non-compliance).

In order to verify that the subcontracting laboratory conforms with the required regulations, LNE reserves the right to audit it.

2.2.2.8 MANAGEMENT OF TESTING AND MEASUREMENT EQUIPMENT

Principles of calibration

Calibration involves the comparison of the values given by a piece of measurement equipment or system, with known values given by a standard.

The standard's value must be traceable to the value given by a national standard, using un uninterrupted calibration chain, described by documents (traceability).

Calibration methods of measurement equipment or systems

There are two possibilities:

- The holder's laboratory has its own standards, which are compared with national standards at defined intervals. The holder calibrates their equipment themselves.
- The holder's laboratory sends their equipment to be calibrated by a service provider, which is accredited by COFRAC, or its equivalent, according to the applicant/holder's country of origin. If the service provider is not COFRAC accredited or equivalent, depending on the country of origin of the applicant/holder, it must in all cases have established standards that are regularly integrated with the national standards for the calibrations concerned.

The applicant/holder must have equipment to ensure that the results are valid.

Management of measurement equipment:

Measurement equipment must be:
- calibrated against standards linked to national or international standards (if these standards do not exist, the calibration reference used must be registered). They must be re-calibrated or checked at specified intervals or before their first use,
- identifiable, in order to allow the validity of the calibration to be checked.

The standard's uncertainty must be sufficiently small with regards to the uncertainty expected from the measuring equipment or system to be calibrated.

When a piece of equipment is found to be non-conforming, the applicant/holder must check the validity of previous results obtained. They must take appropriate action on the equipment and on any affected products. This information must be recorded. The records of the calibration and verification results must be kept.

These requirements apply to every laboratory, regardless of whether they carry out all or part of the internal measurement checks.

2.2.2.9 MANAGEMENT OF NON-COMPLIANT PRODUCTS

The applicant/holder must ensure that each product which does not conform to the specified requirements is identified and managed so that it does not get used or delivered unintentionally.

The applicant/holder must treat a non-conforming product marked with the QB mark in the following ways:
- by carrying out actions which eliminate the non-conformity,
- by allowing its use, release or acceptation by derogation: in this case, prior agreement must be obtained from the client and from LNE,
- by carrying out actions which prevent it from being used (e.g. scrapping of the product).

Responsibilities and authority must be given to people who carry out testing and those who take actions in order to remedy the product.

The applicant/holder must keep documentation which describes non-conformities along with their remedy.

2.2.2.10 CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

The applicant/holder defines the requirements and keeps proof of action carried out in order to:

a) review non-conformities (including client complaints),
b) Determine the cause(s) of non-conformities,
c) Evaluate the need to undertake actions so that non-conformities are not repeated,
d) Determine which actions are necessary, and put them into place,
e) Evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken,
f) Record the results of the actions put in place.

Records of any complaints made regarding certified products, and their remedy must be made and kept.

2.2.2.11 PRODUCT PRESERVATION

2.2.2.11.1 Storage

The applicant/holder must provide designated areas or premises for the storage of stock in order to avoid causing damage or deterioration to the product before it is used or delivered.

The condition of the stock must be assessed at defined and appropriate time intervals, in order to detect any deterioration.

2.2.2.11.2 Packaging

The holder/applicant must manage the wrapping, packing and marking of products as needed, in order to ensure that they conform to the specified requirements.

2.2.2.12 MANUFACTURING CONDITIONS

PVC profiles must be manufactured, for visible parts, with QB-approved and UV-resistant polyvinyl compounds, whether manufactured by the extruder formulator or supplied by a producer.

In the case of two-colour slats, the 2 compositions used must be approved for QB mark certification.

2.2.2.13 USE OF REPROCESSED OR RECYCLED MATERIAL

In accordance with the usage criteria defined in NF T 54-405:

- The use of reprocessed materials of internal origin is acceptable to the extent that it is verified that their use does not modify the mechanical properties of the profile.

- The use of reprocessed materials of external origin or recycled materials is permitted for inner layers and for non-visible outer layers in the case of co-extruded profiles (see §1.1) and mono-extrusion.

In the event of resorting to a subcontractor to convert profiles or scrap into reprocessed material, the extruder will use an operating procedure to describe how to manage traceability and the associated records.

In the case of reprocessed material of internal origin made from scrap collected from external workshops, a certificate of analysis must be provided along with the batch of material. This certificate of analysis must contain Vicat and density information as a minimum. The provisions put in place for this collection are to be specified in an internal operating procedure for the applicant.

2.2.3 MARKING REQUIREMENTS

Marking makes up an integral part of product certification.

As well as allowing for product identification and traceability, marking a product with the QB logo ensures that users will receive better protection. It also protects holders from abusive use of the product and from counterfeit goods.

Without prejudice of the sanctions laid down in the General Rules of the QB mark, any incorrect announcement of the certified features and any fraudulent use of the QB logo expose the holder to lawsuits for fraud and/or misleading advertising.

Reproducing or affixing LNE and CSTB logos is strictly prohibited without the prior agreement of these bodies.

The holder undertakes to respect the QB mark's graphic charter.

QB certified products have a different designation and identification to non-QB certified products. The holder must only use the QB logo to identify QB-certified products. They may only do this if there is no risk of confusion with other products, especially those which are not QB certified.

The holder is advised to submit all documentation making reference to the QB mark to the LNE before use.

REMINDER:

Article R 433-2 of the Consumer Code [Code de la Consommation] states that:

"When reference is made to certification in advertising, labelling or in the presentation of any product or service or in associated documents of any nature, the following information must always be brought to the consumer's or user's attention:

- The name or corporate name of the certifying body or the collective certification mark,
- The denomination of the certificate reference standard used,
- Methods to consult or obtain the certification reference standard."

2.2.3.1 Certified product marking

Each certified profile must permanently and visibly display the QB logo in line with the requirements of the graphic charter and in accordance with the specific standards and regulations in force.

On the product, in case of technical and/or material difficulties with the reproduction of the QB logo, in accordance with the graphic charter, the words "CERTIFIED BY LNE" and the title of the application "UNPLASTICISED VINYL-BASED EXTRUDED PRODUCTS FOR OUTDOOR USE" may be omitted. This logo is defined in §1.4 of these certification rules.

The QB logo displayed on the product must be accompanied by the following information:

⓪ the QB logo and 60 application number
① - a reference that identifies the holder of the QB mark and the production plant (serial number of the manufacturer assigned during the notification of certification by LNE)
② - the commercial designation of the profile as stated on the certificate and the code identifying the application, i.e.:

CS	=	closure slat		LS	=	louvered shutter	
GD	=	garage door		SLS	=	sliding louvered shutter	
RS	=	rolling shutter		PF	=	pool fence	
S	=	shutter	PC	=	pool cover		
FS	=	French shutters		RPT	=	thermal break	
VB	=	Venetian blind			WC	=	wall coverings
VAR	=	various					

If two applications are possible for the same profile, the 2 codes are affixed to the slat.

③ coding to ensure the traceability of the product (e.g., the manufacturing batch number (see definition in Part 5) and the date of manufacture (year: last 2 digits of the year of manufacture, and week no. and day no.), this coding must be formalised in the manufacturer's quality documents.
④ the material used (material code defined by LNE) and the type of material.
⑤ It is recommended that the above information be set out as follows.

XX - XXXX / XXXX - X - XX

Declared Vicat temperature value	Declared level for flexural modulus	Declared linear weight value	Declared shrinkage value	Declared impact value

The dimensions of this marking and the means used are left to the discretion of the manufacturer within the limits of legibility of the information provided.

This marking of profiles must be done on the extrusion line.

For film-coated or painted profiles, the marking must be legible after coating or painting.

When the profile manufacturer assembles the profiles themselves, a mark must be placed on the final slat as a minimum.

As a guide, this marking may be in the form of a line as per the diagram below.

QB 60	XXX	000-RS	XXXXX -	B-PVC-U	80/2600/850/3/10
⓪	①	②	③	④	⑤

As a derogation, when the use of the QB logo presents technical and/or material difficulties, it is authorised to mark on the certified profile in capital letters of the same height as the rest of the marking, the letters QB in straight text: QB.

The English version "certified by LNE" is available from LNE.

2.2.3.2 Markings on certified product packaging or on the accompanying documentation (where applicable)

The QB logo must be displayed on the unit packaging (set of profiles) or on the accompanying documentation for the product with the following information:

- the QB logo in line with the graphic charter, as defined above
- reference to the www.lne.fr website
- the name of the certifying body and its address
- the identification number of the holder and the production plant
- the commercial description featured on the product certificate
- the main properties certified:
  - Vicat softening temperature
  - Appearance - colour
  - Modulus of elasticity in flexure
  - Shrinkage
  - Impact strength (if feasible)
  - Durability

The presentation and formatting of this sheet is left up to the manufacturer.

As a guide, an example for a profile is given below:

CERTIFIED BY LNE

QB

PRODUITS EXTRUDES A BASE DE COMPOSITIONS VINYLIQUES NON PLASTIFIEES POUR USAGES EXTERIEURS

www.lne.fr

LNE

1 rue Gaston Boissier

75015 PARIS

• Holder identification:	• Product identification:
- Name - address:	- commercial reference:
- QB identification no.:	- batch no.:

COMPLIES WITH STANDARD NF T 54-405

MAIN PROPERTIES CERTIFIED

- Vicat softening temperature
- Appearance - colour
- Modulus of elasticity in flexure
- Shrinkage
- Impact strength
- Durability

2.2.3.3 Markings on documentation (technical and commercial documents, posters, advertisements, websites, etc.)

References to the QB mark in the documentation (order confirmations, invoices, delivery notes, advertising pamphlets, catalogues etc.) must be made in such a way as to make it impossible to confuse certified products with non-certified products.

Reproduction of the QB mark on documentation and advertising must be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the graphic charter (see illustrated marking in § 2.3.3.2).

It is recommended that the holder submit to LNE beforehand all commercial documents where the mark is mentioned, including during modification of these documents.

The holder must communicate, at the request of LNE, any document in which reference is made, directly or indirectly, to the QB mark.

2.2.4 APPLICANT'S/HOLDER'S COMMITMENTS

The applicant/holder commits in general to giving LNE the means to carry out the operations necessary for the correct progress of the evaluation and follow-up of their file and in particular to:

- comply at all times with the requirements defined by these certification rules, and to implement the necessary changes within the deadlines prescribed by LNE in the event of changes in the certification rules,
- communicate the information and working documents necessary for a proper evaluation procedure to representatives authorised by LNE;
- only communicate information that the applicant/holder knows is fair and sincere;
- appoint a responsible individual as an LNE interlocutor;
- designate recipients within the company that will receive LNE test and audit reports and inform LNE of changes to be made in case of a change of recipient within the company or email address;
- introduce the staff assigned to the various tasks to the authorised LNE representatives;
- instruct staff to work with authorised LNE representatives, and to agree to participate in any interviews;
- provide authorised LNE representatives with a way to access and move around the sites and work areas, including the subcontractors' sites, as the case may be;
- inform the authorised LNE representatives about the safety and hygiene provisions and instructions applicable to the sites and work areas and the staff there, and make any equipment necessary available to them for this purpose;
- pay LNE the sums due for the evaluation, in accordance with the financial conditions defined and accepted by the applicant/holder;
- Authorise the presence of an observer who is required to respect confidentiality. This observer can be imposed on LNE by the standards or agreements of which they are a signatory. Information regarding the presence of this observer is always communicated to the applicant/holder by LNE prior to the audit;
- take the necessary measures in the event of non-compliance, within the deadlines specified by LNE;

- return the duly completed non-compliance sheets to the lead auditor within 3 weeks of the last day of the audit;

- implement the necessary actions to enable the certificate to be issued within a maximum of 11 months after the initial audit. After this period, a new initial audit will have to take place before certification;

- send the samples taken under the conditions defined in § 3.2.1.2 to the mark's laboratory.

It is also the responsibility of the certificate holder to:

- affix the QB mark only on the products covered by the certificates issued by LNE and in accordance with the applicable requirements;

- reserve the product's commercial name only for the products covered by the certificates issued by LNE and in accordance with the applicable requirements;

- communicate to LNE beforehand any modification of the product or any information likely to affect conformity with the requirements of the present rules, the methods of evaluation being defined in Part 3;

- make available to LNE any data or information necessary to establish and maintain the certificate;

- keep a record of all claims of which the holder is aware of the conformity of the product(s) with the certification requirements and make these records available to LNE upon request, and
    - take any appropriate action with respect to these claims and imperfections in the products that affect their compliance with the requirements of the certification,
    - document the actions taken;

- in the event of suspension, reduction, withdrawal or refusal of renewal of the certificate, stop using any references to the certification of the products concerned and stop using all the means of communication that make reference to this;

- authorise follow-up evaluations during the period of validity of the certificate, on the basis of the frequency specified in Part 3 and any duly justified additional assessment;

- make statements about certification consistent with the content of the certificate;

- not use the certification issued by LNE in a manner that could damage LNE, nor make a declaration regarding the certification of its products that LNE may consider misleading or unauthorised;

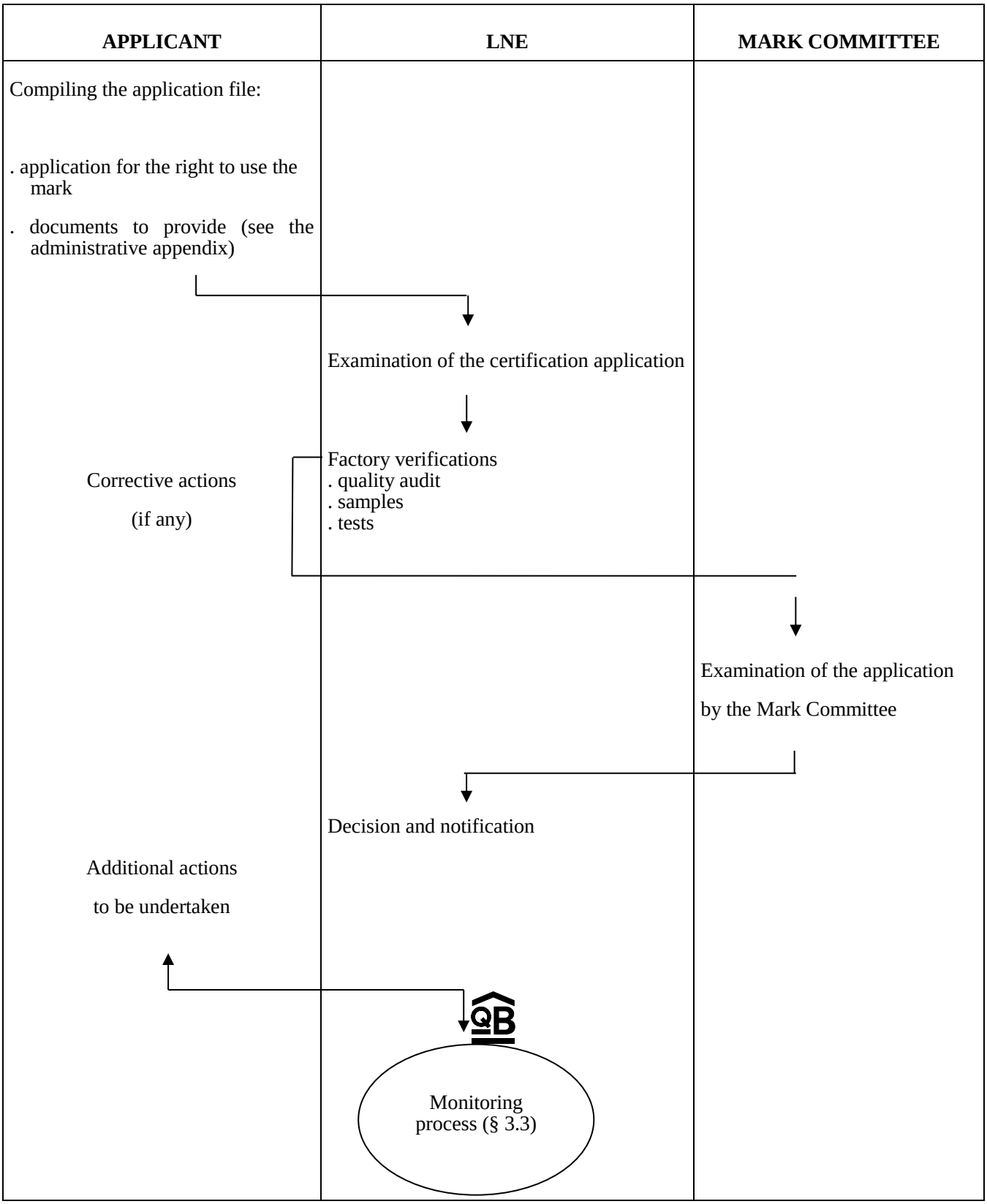
- reproduce the certificates in their entirety, including the appendices in case of supply to a third party.

Partie 3
Certification process

3.1 General information

Definition of the applicant and definitions of the different types of application (application for acceptance/complementary application for acceptance/application for extension/application to maintain rights) see Part 5

3.2 Obtaining certification



Before making the application, the applicant must be sure to meet, at the time of the application, the conditions defined in these certification rules (reference system), especially those in Part 2, regarding their product and sites in question.

They must undertake to comply with said conditions throughout the entire duration of the use of the QB mark.

Failure to comply with these rules, may lead to a halt or suspension of the examination of applicants' files. Notably, it is not possible in any circumstances to make reference to the QB mark before obtaining the right to use the QB mark, or to present forged products for certification.

3.2.1 Compiling the application file

Any company manufacturing one or more products covered by this application of the QB mark can request the right to use the mark. A request of this kind is known in this document as an "application" and the person formulating it as the "applicant".

3.2.1.1 Application for the right to use the mark

Any manufacturer wishing to present, in order to obtain QB certification, a product it manufactures must first read carefully the certification rules for the mark and declare that it accepts them.

The application is drawn up on the manufacturer's letterhead paper as shown in the template (Form no. 1a of the administrative appendix) and must be sent to LNE.

It must specify the products presented as part of the certification application.

a) Applications for the acceptance of compounds (for producers or formulator-extruders)

The application specifies the commercial reference of the compound(s) submitted for acceptance.

Where appropriate, this reference may be temporary and may be modified at the time the compound is marketed; LNE must, however be informed of this.

The applicant is required to submit, in support of their application, a file containing, for each factory that will manufacture products for which certification to the mark is sought, the documents or information specified in the administrative appendix.

The application can only be received if the inspections described in Part 2 of these regulations have been carried out beforehand for each vinyl compound concerned by the application.

All the documents must be written in French or English.
The application must be accompanied by the applicable fees for reviewing the application and the initial audit.

When the applicant is not from a country within the European Economic Area, they must submit their application together with a representative established in the European Economic Area who is duly accredited and responsible for all production likely to be QB-certified and marketed on French territory.

They are known as the "authorised agent".

Before using the QB mark, LNE must be informed about all modifications made to the range submitted for certification purposes. LNE will decide if extra testing needs to be carried out on those products.

The compound acceptance application may be combined with an application for acceptance or extension of acceptance of an extruder certification. In this case, the producer and the extruder each draw up an application.

b) For acceptance applications for PVC-U or PVC-UE profiles

Profiles covered by applications for certification must be extruded using a compound that bears the QB mark or a compound whose acceptance is requested jointly with that of the profiles.

The application specifies the references of the profiles submitted for acceptance, such that the ranges of profiles and reference profiles concerned can be identified (see Part 5):

- **Range of profiles (see Part 5):**

  This is how ranges are assembled in order to cover all the profiles applying for acceptance.

  Note: this division into ranges enables the samples required for testing to be identified on the basis that an extruder manufactures profiles whose linear weight falls between -20% and +50% of that of a given profile.

The application can only be received if the inspections described in Part 2 of these regulations have been carried out beforehand for each profile concerned by the application.

The applicant is required to submit, in support of their application, a file containing, for each factory that will manufacture products for which certification to the mark is sought, the documents or information specified in the administrative appendix.

All the documents must be written in French or English.
The application must be accompanied by the applicable fees for reviewing the application and the initial audit.

When the applicant is not from a country within the European Economic Area, they must submit their application together with a representative established in the European Economic Area who is duly accredited and responsible for all production likely to be QB-certified and marketed on French territory.

They are known as the "authorised agent".

Before using the QB mark, LNE must be informed about all modifications made to the range submitted for certification purposes. LNE will decide if extra testing needs to be carried out on those products.

3.2.1.2 Samples to be supplied

Situation of a producer:

The sample is constituted for each vinyl compound submitted for acceptance by:

- 30 x 1-metre sections of extruded profile, with the material of the producer or extruder authorised to use the mark, which must be sent to LNE. The shape and dimensions of this profile must be such as to enable the traction impact resistance test to be conducted, i.e.: either no internal divisions or divisions spaced at ≥ 25 mm. These profiles can be sent by the producer (for the purpose in particular of the durability tests) or taken during the initial audit. The profiles shall be accompanied by details enabling the batches of compound profiles to be identified (data sheet contained in appendix to this part of the regulations). They are sent by the producer at their own risk, to the independent laboratory in charge of conducting the tests.

- 1 kg of granules taken during the initial audit as well as 3x1 m of strips (from 1.5 to 2 mm thick.

Situation of an extruder and formulator-extruder:

The sample consists of 10 x 1 m of each reference RPT profile as defined in § 3.2.1.1.b and/or 30 x 1 m of each reference profile (other applications) as defined in § 3.2.1.1.b, as well as 100 g of granules of vinyl-based composition(s) from the same production batch.

If the application is made in conjunction with an application for admission of the compound used (the samples are common to the two applications) or if the profiles submitted for acceptance are extruded using a compound that has been authorised to carry the QB mark for over 5 years, but has not been used by extruders approved under the QB marking system; the shape and dimensions of the profiles must be such as to enable the traction impact resistance test to be conducted, i.e.: either no internal divisions or divisions spaced at ≥ 25 mm.

3.2.2 Initial assessment process

3.2.2.1 Examination of the certification application

The application and enclosed file sent to LNE are examined before factory verifications and tests are carried out.

Upon receiving the application, LNE checks that:

- all the requested documents are enclosed in the application file according to the administrative appendix,
- the elements in the file comply with the requirements of the certification rules.

LNE checks that it has all the means for responding to the application and may request additional information required for the admissibility of the file when this is incomplete.

Once the application is admissible, LNE organises the inspections, and informs the applicant about the organisation methods (auditor, duration of the audit, audited sites, laboratories, sampled products, etc.) and, if applicable, the due date for the additional items.

The checks carried out in connection with the QB mark are as follows:

- audits, which aim to cover all those involved in design, manufacturing, assembly, quality control, marking and packaging of products,
- product testing.

3.2.2.2 Audit: Situation of a compound certification application (PRODUCER)

The examination of the application consists of conducting an initial audit of the factory where the compounds submitted for acceptance are manufactured (and, where appropriate, an audit of the final product processing unit). It also includes, if applicable, an audit of the various sites participating and described in the certification application, on the basis of the same standard.

This audit is conducted according to the general principles defined in standard ISO 19011 for conducting a quality audit. In particular, the scope of the audit and details of the procedure are specified in an audit plan sent to the company before the audit.
This audit is conducted by auditors who are bound to professional secrecy.

This audit is conducted before marketing a composition for which an acceptance application is made.

The language of the audit is French or English. If this is not the case, it is the responsibility of the company being audited to provide an interpreter for the auditor. In this case, the duration of the audit may be increased (prior agreement with the company).

The QB auditor must have at their disposal all the resources necessary (documents, premises, installations, facilities) to perform their assignment, including competent people to carry it out.

The manufacturer must make available to the lead auditor all vinyl compounds covered by the certification application and needed for the sample.

The auditors:

- Conduct a quality audit with the purpose of verifying the existence and effective implementation of the quality management system set up and its conformity with the quality requirements in Part 2 of these regulations;
- Check that the verifications required in Part 2 have been carried out on each compound in order to verify the application of frequencies, operating procedures and criteria defined by QB certification rules and ensure that compliance testing on products covered by the certification application is conducted in their presence. It is preferable to carry out these tests on the compound sampled for tests in the mark laboratory.

  NOTE: test results obtained during the audit do not prejudge results obtained by the mark laboratory.

- If appropriate, examine the scope of the contract with the agent and/or with the different sites involved and described in the application for certification.
- Take the samples required for the initial tests (see § 3.2.1.2) from the producer's production line or warehouse.

  The samples taken are marked by the auditors with a distinctive sign used to authenticate them later, and must be accompanied by information enabling the samples taken to be identified. They are sent within 15 days by the manufacturer, and under their responsibility, to the independent laboratory (see Part 4 of these Certification Rules) tasked with carrying out the tests, accompanied by the sample sheet, unless the auditors decide to take charge of them.
- A control sample (weighing $\approx$ 10 kg) that has been clearly identified in the presence of the auditor must be retained by the producer for a minimum period of one year.
- Conduct tests of the compounds submitted for acceptance (sampled batches) in the presence of the producer in order to verify the conditions under which the tests are conducted.

With the company's agreement, the auditors can take a copy of any document they consider necessary.

The duration of the on-site audit is:

Applicant	Duration of on-site audit (in days)
Producer presenting up to 5 compounds	2
Producer presenting more than 5 compounds	2.5

The duration of the audit can be adapted to the sites to be audited (with prior consent of the applicant).

The audit manager prepares an audit report which they then hand over to the applicant at the end of the final meeting, drawing special attention to the efficiency of the quality system set up, the strong points, the compliant points to be improved upon, and a report of non-conformities with comments. It also includes the report of the tests carried out during the audit and the sampling sheet.

A non-conformity is classified as major when, on the basis of objective proof:

- there is a significant risk to the conformity of the product in relation to the specified requirements (these requirements are set out by the reference document, the company or its clients), or
- there is a significant risk in terms of the management system's ability to control product conformity for a specified requirement, or
- there is systematic or repeated non-compliance with a given requirement.

In all other cases, the non-conformity is classified as minor.

The applicant must respond to any notified non-conformity with a causal analysis, corrections and corrective actions. An action plan to address major or minor non-conformities is sent within three weeks following the end of the audit to the lead auditor for assessment.

In the case of a major non-conformity:

- Tangible proof guaranteeing the implementation of the correction to eliminate this non-conformity must be sent with the action plan.
- LNE must receive tangible proof guaranteeing the implementation of the corrective action associated with this non-conformity within the timeframes it has specified.

In the case of minor non-conformity, LNE must receive tangible proof that guarantees that the correction to eliminate this non-conformity is implemented along with the associated corrective action. Failing that, it will be checked at the latest during the next on-site audit, unless specified otherwise by LNE.

The complete report is sent by LNE by email to the correspondent(s) designated by the applicant, with a copy (where applicable) to the authorised agent.

3.2.2.3 Audit: Situation for PVC-U or PVC-UE profile acceptance applications (extruders and formulator extruders)

Examination of the application is preceded by an audit of the factory where the products presented for acceptance are manufactured. It also includes, where appropriate, an audit of the final transformation of the product or of the finishing (painting and film coating). This audit is conducted by auditors who are bound to professional secrecy.

This audit is conducted according to the general principles defined in standard ISO 19011 for conducting a quality audit. In particular, the scope of the audit and details of the procedure are specified in an audit plan sent to the company before the audit.

The manufacturer must make available to the lead auditor a model or all models of each range of products covered by the certification application needed for the sample.

The auditors:

- conduct a quality audit aimed at verifying the existence and implementation of a quality management system. They will also check the system's adherence to the quality requirements detailed in Part 2 of these rules.
- check that the verifications required in Part 2 have been carried out on each profile in order to verify the application of frequencies, operating procedures and criteria defined by QB certification rules and ensure that compliance testing on products covered by the certification application is conducted in their presence. It is preferable to carry out these tests on the profiles taken for tests in the mark laboratory.

  NOTE: test results obtained during the audit do not prejudge results obtained by the mark laboratory.

- take the samples required for the acceptance tests from a manufactured batch from the extruder/formulator-extruder's production line or warehouse. These samples must be validated according to the manufacturer's inspection plan.

- The samples taken are marked by the auditor with a distinctive sign which is used to authenticate them later, and must be accompanied by information identifying the batch of material used in their manufacture.
  Unless the auditor decides to take them, the samples are sent within 15 days by the manufacturer, and at their own risk, to the independent laboratory responsible for conducting the tests along with the sampling sheet.

- examine, if necessary, the application of the contract with the authorised agent and/or the various sites participating and described in the certification request. In the situation of the use of multiple outlets, compliance testing must be conducted on each outlet in the presence of the auditor. For tests conducted at the mark laboratory, sampling will be done on only one of the outlets.

With the company's agreement, the auditors can take a copy of any document they consider necessary.

The duration of the on-site audit is:

Applicant	Duration of on-site audit (in days)
Extruder	3
Formulator-extruder:	4

The duration of the audit can be adapted to the sites to be audited (with prior consent of the applicant).

The audit manager prepares an audit report which they then hand over to the applicant at the end of the final meeting, drawing special attention to the efficiency of the quality system set up, the strong points, the compliant points to be improved upon, and a report of non-conformities with comments. It also includes the report of tests carried out during the audit and the sampling sheet.

A non-conformity is classified as major when, on the basis of objective proof:

- there is a significant risk to the conformity of the product in relation to the specified requirements (these requirements are set out by the reference document, the company or its clients), or
- there is a significant risk in terms of the management system's ability to control product conformity for a specified requirement, or
- there is systematic or repeated non-compliance with a given requirement.

In all other cases, the non-conformity is classified as minor.

The applicant must respond to any notified non-conformity with a causal analysis, corrections and corrective actions. An action plan to address major or minor non-conformities is sent within three weeks following the end of the audit to the lead auditor for assessment.

In the case of a major non-conformity:

- Tangible proof guaranteeing the implementation of the correction to eliminate this non-conformity must be sent with the action plan.
- LNE must receive tangible proof guaranteeing the implementation of the corrective action associated with this non-conformity within the timeframes it has specified.

In the case of minor non-conformity, LNE must receive tangible proof that guarantees that the correction to eliminate this non-conformity is implemented along with the associated corrective action. Failing that, it will be checked at the latest during the next on-site audit, unless specified otherwise by LNE.

The complete report is sent by LNE by email to the correspondent(s) designated by the applicant, with a copy (where applicable) to the authorised agent.

3.2.2.4 Acceptance tests

The applicable tests are set out in the QB60 Technical Document, § 2.1.

3.2.2.5 Examination of the application by the Mark Committee

LNE conducts an assessment of the elements of the application and, if appropriate, conducts additional checks prior to presentation to the Mark Committee.

A summary of the audit observations and test results is presented, in anonymous form, to the Mark Committee.

The presentation of this report shall clearly show, where applicable, any points on which the products submitted for the inspections set up by the manufacturer do not strictly conform to the requirements of the standards or additional technical specifications or to the certification rules.

After examining the various documents in the file, the Mark Committee proposes to award or refuse certification.

Acceptance of the PVC-UE profile is declared on the basis of tests before ageing.

3.2.2.6 Decision and notification

On the basis of the results obtained during examination of the application and the recommendations of the Mark Committee, LNE notifies the applicant of one of the following decisions:

a) Certification approved
This decision may be accompanied by suspensive conditions which define the conditions to be met by the applicant before the certificate is awarded.

b) Certification refused

The certification decision must be made no later than one year after the initial audit.

By virtue of the certification decision notified by LNE, CSTB grants the right to use the QB mark.

When this right has been granted, the beneficiary is called the "holder". Maintaining this right is subject to the results of verifications.

The exercise of the right to use the QB mark is strictly limited to the products for which it was awarded, i.e. the duly defined products from the duly defined factories, and manufactured under the conditions set out in these Rules.

3.2.2.7 Appeal against a decision

The applicant may appeal against the decision taken in compliance with the General Rules of the QB mark. The appeal is filed by registered letter with acknowledgement of receipt within 15 working days.

LNE firstly proceeds with the re-examination of the file in view of the factors justifying this challenge. It notifies confirmation of the decision or the new decision to the applicant within 30 working days.

Should the applicant wish to maintain its challenge, an appeal may be made by the applicant or certification beneficiary against the decision of LNE.

Explanations for this appeal, which does not have a suspensive effect, must be given. It is lodged by sending a registered letter with acknowledgement of receipt within 15 working days.

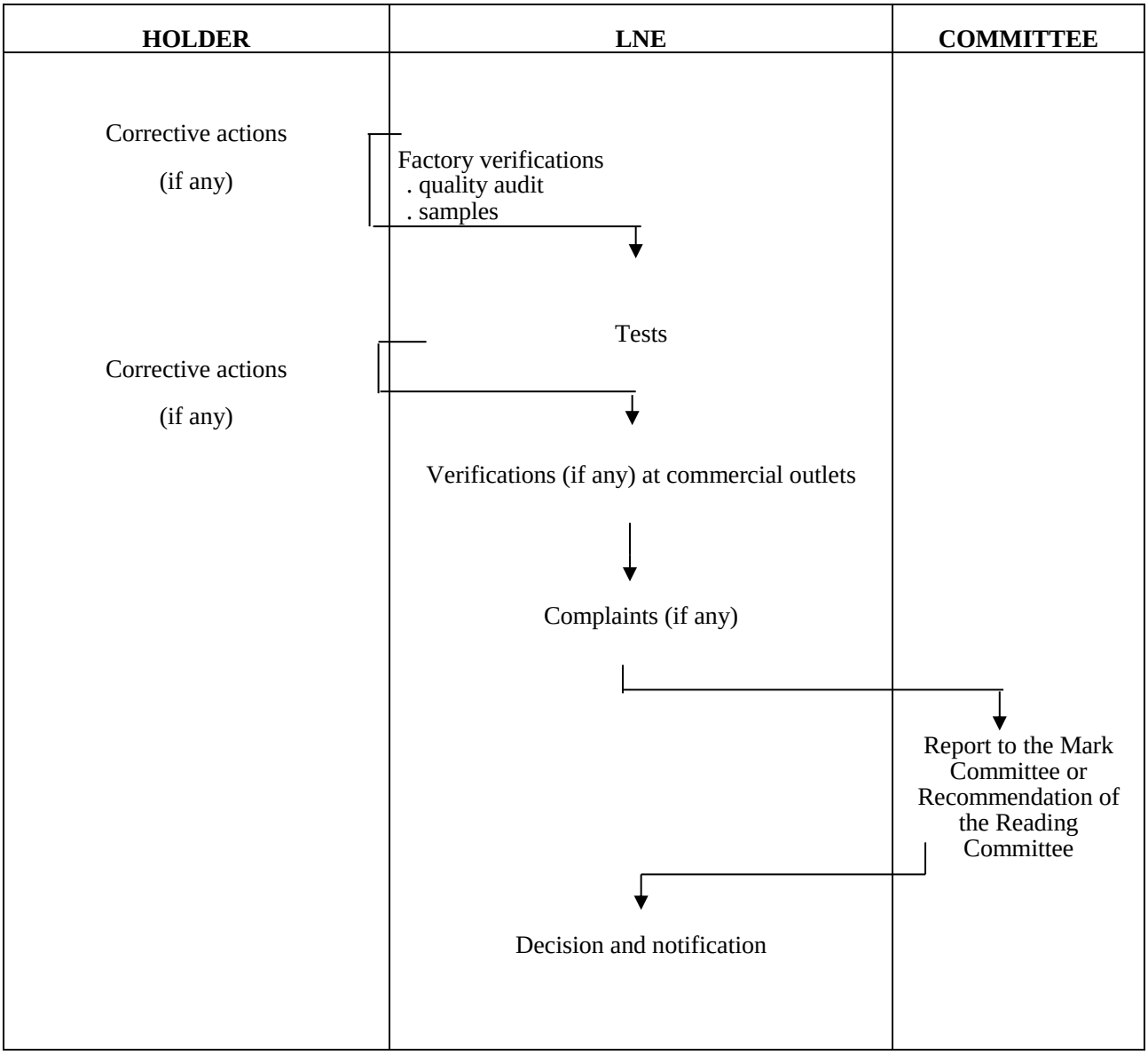
It is examined by LNE within 30 days of receipt and, if it concerns the certification decision or certification rules, gives rise to an examination by the Mark Committee. LNE informs the plaintiff, within this time limit, as to whether or not it maintains its decision.

If the appeal is maintained after processing and submission to the mark committee for their opinion, the appeal is presented to the LNE Certification and Impartiality Preservation Committee, which proposes its conclusions after examination.

This last appeal is subject to a lump-sum payment by the applicant.

The company will be informed of the final decision by LNE.

3.3 Certified product surveillance process



Throughout the duration of the certification, the holder must:

- comply with the defined requirements and marking arrangements described in Part 2 and systematically inform LNE of any change in the certified product's characteristics and/or changes to its organisation which are likely to affect the certification, and to comply with the defined requirements:
    - modifications concerning the holder
    - relocation of the production site
    - modification of the accepted product
    - temporary stoppage of production
    - definitive stoppage of production or surrendering the right of use.
- inform LNE of any request for change in the certification: new products

In addition, LNE reserves the right to carry out any checks it deems necessary following:

- a modification concerning the certified product or the quality organisation of the various intervening sites and described in the original certification application file.
- complaints, challenges, disputes of which it has been informed and relating to the use of the QB mark.

3.3.1 Certified product surveillance process

LNE organises the surveillance of certified products.

The first follow-up audit occurs no later than six months after the certification decision.

The purpose of this surveillance is to monitor compliance by the manufacturer with the requirements of these certification rules.

The surveillance methods depend on the decisions made as a result of previous inspections.

3.3.1.1 Situation of producers of vinyl compounds

The following provisions apply to producers; for formulator-extruders, the verifications are made as part of the profile verifications.

Audit:

An audit is conducted at least **every 3 years** at the main manufacturing site and the site responsible for final inspection of certified products with samples of accepted compounds. LNE defines, on a case-by-case basis, which sites are to be audited in addition and the associated frequency among different intervening sites and described in the original certification application.

Additional audits may be carried out by proposal of the Mark Committee or on the initiative of LNE, in particular for non-conformities related to material characteristics observed during extruder follow-up or related to production frequencies and use in during extruder follow-up (compounds not used within the framework of the QB60 mark).

The examinations carried out concern primarily any modifications made since the previous audit that affect manufacturing, inspection methods or organisation of the quality management system.

This quality audit is conducted according to the general principles defined in standard ISO 19011 for conducting a quality audit. In particular, the scope of the audit and details of the procedure are specified in an audit plan sent to the company before the audit.

The audit must include verification of the specific requirements of the QB mark (see Part 2).

During each audit, products are sampled for testing in the mark's laboratory (§1.2.1 e) of the technical document). The items to test consist of: (a) samples of about 1 kg drawn from each composition admitted to the QB mark and which have been validated in relation to the manufacturer's quality control plan, and (b) strips/profiles (1.5 to 2 mm thick) representing at least 500 g of each compound admitted to the QB mark and which have been validated in accordance with the manufacturer's control plan.
They must be accompanied by information allowing the manufacturing batch to be identified.

They are marked by the auditor with a distinctive sign used to authenticate them later and sent within 15 days by the manufacturer, and under their responsibility, to the independent laboratory charged with carrying out the tests, unless the auditors decide to take charge of them.

During the audit, the auditor has conformity tests carried out in their presence on accepted compounds, in order to verify the conditions under which inspections are carried out by the manufacturer. As a minimum, these are the tests of the control plan referred to in paragraph 2.2.2.7. These tests are carried out on the same batch as that sampled for tests in the mark laboratory.

NOTE: test results obtained during the audit do not prejudge results obtained by the mark laboratory.

With the manufacturer's agreement, the auditor can take a copy of any document they consider necessary.

The audit reports drawn up by the quality management system certifying body must be sent to the auditor or consulted on site.

The duration of the on-site audit is:

Holder	**Duration of on-site audit (in days)**
Producer having up to 5 accepted compounds	1.5
Producer having more than 5 accepted compounds	2

The duration of the audit can be adapted:

- according to the sites to be audited in accordance with the requirements (with prior consent of the holder),
- if a holder has several authorised agents,
- if several holders use the same subcontractor.

The audit leader prepares an audit report which they give to the holder at the end of the closing meeting, detailing in particular the effectiveness of the quality system set up, the strong points, the

points to be improved and a commented report of non-conformities. It also includes the report on tests carried out during the audit and the sampling sheet (see the administrative appendix).

A non-conformity is classified as major when, on the basis of objective proof:

- there is a significant risk to the conformity of the product in relation to the specified requirements (these requirements are set out by the reference system document, the company or its clients), or
- there is a significant risk in terms of the management system's ability to control product conformity for a specified requirement, or
- there is systematic or repeated non-compliance with a given requirement.

In all other cases, the non-conformity is classified as minor.

The holder must respond to any notified non-conformity with a causal analysis, corrections and corrective actions. An action plan to address major or minor non-conformities is sent within three weeks following the end of the audit to the lead auditor for assessment.

In the case of a major non-conformity:

- Tangible proof guaranteeing the implementation of the correction to eliminate this non-conformity must be sent with the action plan.
- LNE must receive tangible proof guaranteeing the implementation of the corrective action associated with this non-conformity within the timeframes it has specified.

In the case of minor non-conformity, LNE must receive tangible proof that guarantees that the correction to eliminate this non-conformity is implemented along with the associated corrective action. Failing that, it will be checked at the latest during the next on-site audit, unless specified otherwise by LNE.

The complete report is sent by LNE to the holder, with, if applicable, a copy to the authorised agent.

3.3.1.2 Situation of extruders and formulator extruders

At least two audits are conducted per year at the main profile production site and at the site in charge of final inspection of certified products.

LNE defines, on a case-by-case basis, which sites are to be audited in addition and the associated frequency among different intervening sites and described in the original certification application.

The examinations carried out concern primarily any modifications made since the previous audit that affect manufacturing, inspection methods or organisation of the quality management system.

This quality audit is conducted according to the general principles defined in standard ISO 19011 for conducting a quality audit. In particular, the scope of the audit and details of the procedure are specified in an audit plan sent to the company before the audit.

Checking the quality management system involves mandatory checking during each audit of the requirements specific to the QB mark (see Part 2).

During each audit, one or more samples of products are taken for tests at the mark laboratory in order to check the validity of the results obtained by the manufacturer, so that all the types of compounds (rigid, film-coated, painted, cellular expanded PVC) are sampled over one year.

The samples relate to 10 m of RPT profiles or 30 m of profiles for another selected application which have been validated in accordance with the manufacturer's control plan, as well as 100 g of the vinyl-based compound from the same production batch so that it is possible to alternate the ranges and the compounds.

Products bearing the QB mark must be made available during the inspection (together with batch numbers and/or dates of manufacture).

The samples taken must be accompanied by the information required to identify the compound and profile batches (manufacturing batch nos., date of manufacture, etc.).
They are marked by the auditor with a distinctive sign used to authenticate them later and sent within less than 15 days by the manufacturer, and under their responsibility, to the independent laboratory charged with carrying out the tests, unless the auditors decide to take charge of them.

During the audit, the auditor has conformity tests carried out in their presence on accepted profiles, in order to verify the conditions under which inspections are carried out by the manufacturer. As a minimum, these are the tests of the control plan referred to in paragraph 2.2.2.7. It is preferable to carry out these tests on the type sampled for tests in the mark laboratory.

In the situation of the use of multiple outlets, compliance testing must be conducted on each outlet in the presence of the auditor. For tests conducted at the mark laboratory, sampling will be done on only one of the outlets.

NOTE: test results obtained during the audit do not prejudge results obtained by the mark laboratory.

With the manufacturer's agreement, the auditor can take a copy of any document they consider necessary.

In the event of non-conformity with the specifications contained in the reference standards and/or the requirements of these regulations, the batches concerned must be identified and isolated until a decision is reached. If necessary, the manufacturer may decide to reject these batches.

The causes of such non-conformity must be identified and appropriate corrective action taken. LNE must be notified of these provisions.

However, this frequency can be reduced to one per year, in the 1st half of each year, according to the opinion of the Mark Committee, 2 years after admission if:

- The manufacturing site is certified to ISO 9001: 2015 for the manufacture of QB profiles of which the perimeter and the scope include the sites and activities concerned by the QB mark and currently valid,
- No non-compliance is found on physical and/or mechanical features (excluding material features in the case of a non-formulating extruder) at the plant and/or mark laboratory.

This frequency can be changed to 2 per year in the event of a non-conformity observed and after consultation with the Mark Committee, if applicable.

Additional audits may be carried out at the proposal of the Mark Committee or following LNE's initiative.

The audit reports drawn up by the quality management system certifying body must be sent to the auditor or consulted on site.

The duration of the on-site audit is:

Holder	Duration of on-site audit (in days)
Extruder	1.5
Formulator-extruder:	2

The duration of the audit can be adapted:

- according to the sites to be audited in accordance with the requirements (with prior consent of the holder),
- if a holder has several authorised agents,
- if several holders use the same subcontractor.

The audit leader prepares an audit report which they give to the holder at the end of the closing meeting, detailing in particular the effectiveness of the quality system set up, the strong points, the points to be improved and a commented report of non-conformities. It also includes the report on tests carried out during the audit and the sampling sheet (see the administrative appendix).

A non-conformity is classified as major when, on the basis of objective proof:

- there is a significant risk to the conformity of the product in relation to the specified requirements (these requirements are set out by the reference system document, the company or its clients), or
- there is a significant risk in terms of the management system's ability to control product conformity for a specified requirement, or
- there is systematic or repeated non-compliance with a given requirement.

In all other cases, the non-conformity is classified as minor.

The holder must respond to any notified non-conformity with a causal analysis, corrections and corrective actions. An action plan to address major or minor non-conformities is sent within three weeks following the end of the audit to the lead auditor for assessment.

In the case of a major non-conformity:

- Tangible proof guaranteeing the implementation of the correction to eliminate this non-conformity must be sent with the action plan.
- LNE must receive tangible proof guaranteeing the implementation of the corrective action associated with this non-conformity within the timeframes it has specified.

In the case of minor non-conformity, LNE must receive tangible proof that guarantees that the correction to eliminate this non-conformity is implemented along with the associated corrective action. Failing that, it will be checked at the latest during the next on-site audit, unless specified otherwise by LNE.

The complete report is sent by LNE to the holder, with, if applicable, a copy to the authorised agent.

3.3.1.3 Surveillance tests

The applicable tests are set out in the QB60 Technical Document, § 2.2.

3.3.1.4 Verifications in commercial business

In addition to the previous measures, LNE may request verifications to be carried out in the distribution circuit. The results are sent to the holder concerned.

3.3.1.5 Complaints

If there are user complaints, the inspections may include sampling or tests at the places where accepted products are marketed or used (in this case, the holder is invited to arrange for representation during the sampling and tests).

3.3.1.6 Reporting to the Mark Committee

A summary of all the inspections carried out is presented by LNE at least once a year to the Mark Committee.

The documents examined during each session of the Mark Committee must be presented in anonymous form.

Sanctions may be proposed by the Mark Committee, if necessary.

3.3.1.7 Decision and notification

On the basis of the inspection results and any proposals from the Mark Committee or recommendations from the LNE Reading Committee, LNE notifies the holder of one of the following decisions:

a) Maintenance of certification with a possible request for corrective action.
b) Maintenance of certification, with formal notification to stop any infringements observed, within a given time period, which may or may not be accompanied by increased inspections, tests and audits (which may be unannounced).
c) Suspension of the certification (suspension has a maximum duration of 6 months and is renewable once only. After this, withdrawal of the certification is pronounced.)
d) Withdrawal of certification.

For sanctions b), c) and d), the fees for additional verifications are charged to the holder, regardless of their results. The decisions are enforceable as from the date of notification.

If there is a serious breach of the Certification Rules, LNE may, as precautionary measure and after confirmation of the breach, make any of the decisions listed above. The decisions are reported to the Mark Committee.

Certificates are renewed by periods of 3 years.

When the decision comes before the expiry of the certificate, the renewed certificate has a duration greater than 3 years.

3.3.1.8 Appeal against a decision

The applicant may appeal against the decision taken in compliance with the General Rules of the QB mark. The appeal is filed by registered letter with acknowledgement of receipt within 15 working days.

LNE firstly proceeds with the re-examination of the file in view of the factors justifying this challenge. It notifies confirmation of the decision or the new decision to the applicant within 30 working days.

In the event that the holder perseveres with their dispute, the beneficiary of the certification may appeal against LNE's decision.

Explanations for this appeal, which does not have a suspensive effect, must be given. It is lodged by sending a registered letter with acknowledgement of receipt within 15 working days.

It is examined by LNE within 30 days of receipt and, if it concerns the certification decision or certification rules, gives rise to an examination by the Mark Committee. LNE informs the plaintiff, within this time limit, as to whether or not it maintains its decision.

If the appeal is maintained after processing and submission to the mark committee for their opinion, the appeal is presented to the LNE Certification and Impartiality Preservation Committee, which proposes its conclusions after examination.

This last appeal is subject to a lump-sum payment by the applicant.

The Company will be informed of the final decision by LNE.

3.3.2 Modifications and developments concerning the company structure or the certified product

3.3.2.1 Modification concerning the holder

In the case of merger, liquidation or acquisition of the holder's company, any right to use the Mark that it might exercise shall cease automatically (see the General Rules of the QB mark). The holder must inform LNE without delay of any decision likely to result at a later stage either in a modification of the company's legal status or a change in the company name.

Non-compliance with this obligation observed by LNE can lead to suspension or withdrawal of the right to use the QB mark. Following possible consultations with the Mark Committee, it is up to LNE to examine the terms of any new certification that may be requested.

In cases of a merger or consolidation involving only a change of company name with no modification made to the product, manufacturing process, material and human resources, quality organisation and methods of control, the QB certificate may be updated upon receipt of written notification of the new company name on the company's letterhead paper.

In the event of a change in an authorised agent, the application according to forms 1a-b-c-d or form 2 (see the administrative appendix) is to be sent to LNE. A complete examination is conducted by LNE. The examination procedure can be simplified in view of the conclusions of the last audit, or the last test results in the case where the product covered by the application is identical to the previous certified model. The notification of modification is sent to the holder without consulting the Mark Committee except if there is a special problem or the committee's opinion is necessary.

In the event an additional authorised agent is designated, the application according to forms 1a-b-c-d or form 2 (see the administrative appendix) is to be sent to LNE. A complete examination is conducted by LNE. The examination procedure can be simplified in view of the conclusions of the last audit, or the last test results in the case where the production and inspection conditions are unchanged with respect to the previously accepted model. The notification of modification is sent to the holder without consulting the Mark Committee except if there is a special problem or the committee's opinion is necessary.

3.3.3 Modification concerning sites covered by the certification

Before total or partial transfer of an activity described in the application file, the holder shall inform LNE in writing of any new arrangements envisaged. As of the date of transfer, no mention of the mark should be made until reception of LNE's decision.

LNE's decision comes after the audit of the new site and, where appropriate, presentation to the Mark Committee and / or LNE Reading Committee (maintained certification or investigation of a new application, with reduced or complete tests as appropriate).

3.3.4 Modification of the accepted product

QB-certified products shall conform to the technical file that was submitted with the application for acceptance, and shall take into account any observations made when the certification was granted.

Any modification (including modifications concerning the manufacturing and inspection means and the quality management system that could have a determining effect on production conformity) that the holder wishes to make to accepted products must also be communicated to LNE in writing. In addition, the holder shall notify the corresponding "distributor" certificates, if appropriate.

The modification will be heard as shown in the table below. It cannot be carried out until LNE has agreed. LNE must inform the holder of the method of investigation (acceptance, prior testing or referral to the Mark Committee) within 30 days.

The samples necessary to carry out testing will be sent by/under the responsibility of the holder to the mark laboratory tasked with carrying out the tests. They must be marked so that they can be identified at a later time and they must be accompanied by instructions to identify the batch numbers of the materials used in their manufacture (for profiles).

In the event of a new commercial reference of a model already admitted to the QB Mark (vinyl compound or profile), the maintenance application (see the administrative appendix) must be sent to LNE, which will examine the application and notify the extension of approval without consulting the Mark Committee.

If the product involved in the request for change has received approval to maintain the right to use the QB mark, the application shall include a new maintenance application, jointly signed by the holder and distributor.

3.3.5 Modification of certified vinyl compounds

Any change, whether or not resulting in a change to the compound identification characteristics set out in the technical file submitted with the application for acceptance, will require an extension to that acceptance. This application must be sent to LNE (see the administrative appendix - forms 1a and 1c) and may give rise to the performance of verification tests.

In particular:

For the modification of the colorimetric characteristics of a light colour:

- if the new nominal values of L*, a*, b*, are within the tolerance range of the initial composition (L* ± 1; a ± 0.5; b ± 0.8), the modification is considered to be a readjustment of the colorimetric characteristics and only a determination thereof will be carried out. Colorimetric measurements are to be carried out by the manufacturer on an identified area of a 1 m profile sample. This sample and the identification sheet (see the administrative appendix), must be filled in and given to LNE. The determination of new target values is checked by LNE.

- If the nominal values of L*, a* and b* are outside the tolerance range of the initial composition (L* ± 1; a ± 0.5; b ± 0.8), the decision is declared on the basis of the results of identification feature audits in (1) of Table 1 of the technical document and of an accelerated or natural ageing test according to this same table, without consulting the Committee if no particular problem is found. Colorimetric measurements are to be carried out by the manufacturer on an identified area of a 1 m profile sample. This sample and the identification sheet (see the administrative appendix), must be filled in and given to LNE. The determination of new target values is checked by LNE.

For any change in the chemical nature of the stabilisers, the application is considered to be a new vinyl compound.

3.3.6 Temporary stoppage of production

The holder shall keep LNE informed of any temporary stoppage of production of all the products admitted to the QB mark if it is less than 6 months longs.

Before expiry of the suspension, the manufacturer must notify LNE if manufacture is restarted. The sale of products is then subject to auditing and/or testing (as defined by LNE).

For compounds (producer and formulator-extruder):

In case of the non-production of QB compounds, certifications are maintained together with the reference of these compounds on lists of admitted products.

However, producers and extruders wishing to use the compound concerned must notify LNE when manufacture recommences.

Sales of this compound (and its use under the QB mark by an extruder) are subject to prior testing and an audit of the production site (where appropriate).

For extruders:

The holder must request a provisional suspension to the right of use of the mark (maximum length: 1 year) provided they no longer have any products bearing the QB mark in stock. After this period, the right of use is withdrawn.

Before expiry of the suspension, if production is restarted, the holder must notify LNE, which will carry out an audit before the products are marketed under the QB mark.

3.3.7 Definitive stoppage of production or surrendering the right of use

If the holder ceases production of an accepted product definitively or if it surrenders the right to use the Mark, it must inform LNE, indicating the time it considers necessary for depletion of the remaining stock of products bearing the mark. LNE lays down the conditions under which this stock can be depleted, after seeking the Mark Committee's opinion if necessary.

The certificate issued by LNE remains valid as long as it remains with the holder of QB-marked product stock, as surveillance checks on certified products are maintained.

3.3.8 Change in certification: addition of new products

The application for a new profile and/or a new material must take the form of an application for extension of the right to use the QB mark according to the requirements of § 2 of the technical document, and a site audit is not necessary.

Partie 4
Participating bodies

The bodies that participate in the procedure for approval of the right to use the QB mark and the surveillance of certified products are specified below.

4.1 Licensed certifying body

CSTB entrusts management of Mark application to LNE.

Under this authorisation, LNE is answerable to CSTB for all management operations entrusted to it.

All persons involved in the QB mark process are bound to professional secrecy. If necessary, on request from manufacturers, an agreement can be signed between LNE and the manufacturer.

4.2 Audit bodies

LNE entrusts audits to the following organisations:

LABORATOIRE NATIONAL DE METROLOGIE ET D'ESSAIS (LNE)
1, rue Gaston Boissier
75724 PARIS CEDEX 15
Tel. +33 (0)1 40 43 37 84

However, it may call upon the expertise of duly qualified external auditors according to LNE's procedures. This outsourcing of audits is formalised in the form of contracts (due to independence and confidentiality requirements).

The holder or applicant must facilitate the operations that agents in charge of audits are required to carry out in the context of their mission.

LNE must be informed of any challenge concerning the members of an audit team within 10 days from when the audit team receives the notification in order for it to be taken into account.

4.3 Test bodies

LNE entrusts the tests to the independent laboratories named below:

LABORATOIRE NATIONAL DE METROLOGIE ET D'ESSAIS (LNE)
Direction des Essais (Test Directorate)
29, avenue Roger Hennequin
78197 TRAPPES Cedex
Tel. +33 (0)1 30 69 10 00

SEVAR SARL - SEVN Bandol
75 rue Cuvier
BP 24
83150 BANDOL
Tel. +33 (0)4 94 29 79 80

4.4 Mark Committee

4.4.1 Committee members

A Mark Committee is formed. Individual members are informed by LNE and the composition of the Committee is approved by LNE.

The responsibilities of the Mark Committee are to:

- give an opinion on the certification rules and their updating,
- give an opinion on projects for communication or promotional activities relating to the Mark. A special budget, decided each year in discussion with the committee, is set aside for promotional actions,
- give an opinion on files presented for certification and in the event of an appeal against a decision.

The committee must give these opinions in compliance with principles of impartiality.

It can be consulted by LNE on any file within the context of its surveillance activities.

LNE calls the members of the committee together or informs them in writing at least once a year to present a summary of all the checks performed.

All committee members undertake to:

- contribute their expertise to the effective operation of the QB mark,
- maintain the confidentiality of all information of an individual nature that is provided, and will do so until they have been published by LNE,
- attend meetings regularly, and if necessary, regularly inform their deputy, and communicate all relevant documents,
- contribute to the development of the QB mark, i.e. promote products or services certified under the mark.

The members have a two-year mandate, renewable by tacit agreement.

In order to preserve the credibility and effectiveness of the Committee's work, LNE reserves the right to terminate a member's mandate in the following cases:

- non-compliance with the confidentiality agreement,
- repeated unjustified absences from Committee meetings,
- failure, in general, to comply with the above commitments.

The chairperson of the Mark Committee is appointed under the same conditions, after consulting the Mark Committee. The chairperson coordinates the committee and searches for consensus. The rule is alternation between boards. However, the chairperson’s mandate may be extended by one or more years if no candidate representing another board presents their candidature.

Members of the Mark Committee exercise their functions on a strictly individual basis. However, if a member is absent, a proxy is appointed by LNE.

LNE draws up the minutes of comments and proposals made during a committee meeting. These minutes are sent to all members of the Mark Committee.

If necessary, LNE invites CSTB to take part in committee meetings.

4.4.2 "Ageing" subcommittee

The "ageing" subcommittee is responsible for making measurements of products that have been exposed for one or two years (natural ageing). It reports on the results of its analyses to the Committee. A minimum of 5 validated experts are needed to validate the rating.

It schedules its meetings based on the reports from SEVAR SARL, at most one month after such reports.

The "ageing" subcommittee includes experts designated from the representatives of the vinyl compound producers, extruders, assemblers, LNE and other associated or subcontractor organisations or laboratories.

4.4.3 Sub-committee or working group

To manage certain non-recurrent tasks of a technical nature not requiring the members of the Mark Committee to meet, a sub-committee or working group can be created, its members being appointed in person and chosen from the members of the Mark Committee.

In the case of a working group, professionals or other persons may be called in from outside.

The missions of this sub-committee or working group are specified by the Mark Committee. Its powers are generally limited to preparing projects or proposals or supplying additional information on a given subject on behalf of the Mark Committee.

4.5 LNE Reading Committee

The Reading Committee is responsible for handing down an opinion on the certification decision and is composed of at least:

- one management representative (who cannot act as certification project manager and who has not participated in the audit),
- a certification project head independent of the file presented (who has not participated in the audit and is not in charge of the file),
- a certification project head in charge of presenting the file.

The committee is chaired by the LNE management representative.

The Reading Committee is responsible for:

- reviewing the audit and test reports and formulating an opinion and a recommendation on the decisions to be taken,
- where appropriate, considering in the first instance appeals against decisions of LNE and formulating an opinion on the follow-up,
- evaluating the quality of reports.

Partie 5
Glossary

Applicant/holder:
An Artificial Person that manages and/or is responsible for compliance with all of the requirements defined in these mark certification rules.
These requirements cover at least the following stages: design, manufacture, assembly, quality control, marking, packaging and market release, and specify the critical points at each stage.
If the applicant/holder is not established in the European Community, they should appoint an authorised agent.

Manufacturer:
The term "manufacturer" denotes vinyl compound producers, profile extruders and formulator-extruders. Wherever necessary, a distinction is made between the three categories.

Extruder:

Producer of profiles extruded from vinyl compounds.

Producer of vinyl compounds (or producer):

Companies that supply vinyl compounds to extruders

Formulator-extruder:

Extruder that prepares its own vinyl compounds.

Authorised agent:

An Artificial or Natural Person established in the European Economic Area (E.E.A.) who acts as representative of the applicant/holder outside the E.E.A. and has a written mandate from the latter meaning that they can act in its name in the QB mark certification process according to the provisions of the certification rules.

The authorised agent may also be the distributor or the importer of the certified products, in which case their different functions are clearly identified.

Distributor:

An Artificial Person distributing the applicant's/holder's or its authorised agent's products that does not act upon the product or its packaging. If the distributor markets QB products independently of the authorised agent, it takes responsibility for verifying conformity with the QB certification rules and the applicable standards.

The types of distributor may be as follows:
- distributors who distribute the product under the holder's trademark. In this case, no action is to be taken with regard to the QB mark.
- distributors who distribute the product with a change in trademark. The applicant/holder and the distributor must formulate a maintenance application to maintain the right to use.

If the distributor does not want to make an explicit reference to the manufacturing site, a certification application must be made by the distributor. In this case, the production plant is not mentioned on the certificate. Depending on the operations performed by the applicant/holder or distributor, the audited sites and the audit period within the framework of the initial certification or surveillance are defined case by case.

Batch:

Clearly-identified quantity of products manufactured consecutively or continuously under the same conditions using the same material in accordance with the same specification.

The product batch is defined and identified by the product manufacturer.

Campaign:

Period of continuous manufacture under the same conditions (profile, extruder, tooling, formulation) resulting in the production of one or more batches. Re-starts with changes in parameters within the limits of the tolerances defined for the manufacturing process do not constitute a new campaign.

Vinyl compound:

Material having a defined formulation, identification characteristics including the colour, a commercial/internal reference and a presentation (powder and/or granules).

Reprocessed material of internal origin (the extruder):

Identified material, of defined formulation, free of degradation and contamination, made from PVC-U profiles coming from pre-consumption, in accordance with this document, including poorly measured/unused products and offcuts, coming from an assembler, that are retransformed by the same extruder as the one that extruded it previously.

Note: profiles produced with a reprocessed material of internal origin of the same formulation have the same performance as those consisting of virgin material.

In the case of collection from an assembler (e.g., customers) or recourse to subcontracting for converting its profiles or offcuts into reprocessed material, the extruder shall describe in a procedure the means for controlling traceability and the associated records.

Reprocessed material of external origin (the extruder):

Material prepared using PVC-U profiles coming from pre-consumption, intended for a new extrusion by an extruder other than the one that extruded it previously.

Recycled material:

Material prepared using PVC-U profiles coming from post-consumption.

Range of profiles:

By vinyl compound, all profiles whose linear weight is between –20% and +50% of the weight of the reference profile.

Reference profiles:

Profiles defined by mutual agreement between the extruder and LNE (where possible, this should be the profile of which the extruder has the most experience)

Colour:

Light composition and profile colours are defined by the following colorimetric characteristics:

$$L^* \geq 82;\ -2{,}5 \leq a^* \leq +5;\ -5 \leq b^* \leq +15.$$

The colours, that have at least one of the colorimetric characteristics outside these tolerance ranges, are defined as a colour that is not light.

Film-coated profiles:

A film-coated profile is constituted of the following three parts:

- Film-coating film,
- Glue and primer pairing,
- Material (support) of the profile to be film coated.

Range of colours of the films for film coating:

Ranges of colours of the films for film coating are defined into 4 categories:

Category 1: White or light shade

Category 2: Wood or veined tone

Category 3: Anthracite grey or dark shade

Category 4: specific or metallised shade

Solar slat:

Shutter profile for swimming pool having an upper face (in contact with the air when the shutter is deployed) allowing all or a portion of the solar radiation (generally transparent or translucent), and a lower face (in contact with the water when the shutter is deployed) which fully absorbs the solar radiation that has passed through the upper face (opaque, of a dark colour or even black, with an absorption coefficient close to 1).

Application for acceptance:

Issued by an applicant that does not have the right to use the QB mark applicable to Unplasticised vinyl-based products for outdoor use.

It corresponds to a product (or range of products) issued from a design process and/or a specified production site and/or a specified marketing site, defined by a commercial mark and/or having a specific reference to the product presented and its technical characteristics.

Complementary application for acceptance/extension:

Issued by a holder, concerning a new or modified product on the same production site.

Maintenance application:

Issued by a holder, concerning a QB-certified product intended for marketing under another commercial mark and/or having a specific reference to the product with no modification of the certified characteristics.

Partie 6
Applicable fees – Invoicing terms

The pricing schedule for the current year is available free of charge on LNE's website (www.lne.fr) or on request from LNE.

6.1 Applicable fees

Fees for the services involved in obtaining certification and surveillance of certified products are indicated in a list of charges which may be revised annually. The list of charges for the current year is sent to all holders of the mark.

A special budget, decided each year in discussion with the committee, is set aside for promotional actions.

The fees are given in Euros, excluding tax. With regard to test fees, samples must be delivered to the mark laboratory carriage-free and customs-cleared if necessary.

6.1.1 Accommodation and travel expenses

Accommodation and travel expenses are met by the applicant or holder as defined in the schedule of rates.

6.1.2 Cancellation of an audit

Cancellation of an audit whose date has been fixed by agreement between LNE and the audited company is invoiced as follows:

- cancellation 15 days to 8 days before the scheduled date: 50% of the audit fee
- cancellation 7 to 3 days before the scheduled date: 75% of the audit fee
- cancellation 2 days before the scheduled date: 100% of the audit fee.

Travel expenses can be invoiced up to 100% if they are not reimbursable or subject to retention/penalties.

6.2 Terms of payment

6.2.1 Collection of payment

LABORATOIRE NATIONAL DE METROLOGIE ET D'ESSAIS, the licensed body, is empowered to collect all payments.

Invoices issued by LNE must be paid within 45 days.

The applicant or holder must settle these invoices under the terms set out: any failure on the part of the holder will prevent LNE from performing the inspection and operating responsibilities incumbent on it by virtue of these regulations.

If the first enforcement order, sent by registered letter with acknowledgement of receipt, does not result in payment of the total amount due within one month, LNE will be entitled to take precautionary measures regarding the certifications issued under the QB mark, for all the holder's accepted products.

6.2.2 Obtaining certification

The services correspond to examination of the files, the audits and tests, for each application.

The fee for examination of the file is paid as a single sum when the application is filed and covers file examination, presenting the file to the Committee and the contribution to the general management of the mark.

No fees relating to examination of the application can be refunded, regardless of the result of the examination.

6.2.3 Certified product surveillance

Invoicing covers the right to use the QB mark with fees passed on to CSTB for file monitoring, audits and tests.

In the event of approval during the year, invoiced amounts correspond to the services provided; file monitoring (technical investigation of the file) is invoiced pro rata.

After product certification, an annual fee for the right to use the QB mark is invoiced to the holder by LNE and passed on to CSTB.

This licence fee is intended to cover:

- the general functioning of the QB mark (monitoring of the bodies in the QB network, QB Mark Committee management);
- defence of the QB mark: filing and protecting the mark, legal advice, processing of unauthorised use of the QB mark, legal costs;
- contributions towards the general promotion of the QB mark.

The amount relative to file monitoring (technical examination of the file) remains due even if certification is withdrawn or suspended following a decision by LNE or at the holder's request.

As long as the holder holds stock of QB-marked products, inspections are maintained as well as the invoicing of related costs, as file monitoring (technical investigation of the case) is invoiced pro rata.

6.2.4 Additional verifications

Costs resulting from additional verifications resulting from a decision by LNE are payable by the applicant/holder, regardless of the results.