

Sustainable Collection – Selection Criteria

Sustainable Collection is a curated selection of products submitted by exhibitors at Spielwarenmesse. Each product is reviewed and assessed by the experts at [Sustainable Toys Action Consulting \(STAC\)](#) according to clearly defined criteria. Only those products that meet these standards are included as part of the Sustainable Collection. This document provides information on the criteria and explains the requirements for inclusion.



1. Made from environmentally friendly materials:

Definition: Choosing low-impact materials is the most effective way to reduce environmental impact. These include natural, bio-based, or recycled materials, which should be sourced or produced sustainably. Independent certifications ensure compliance with recognised sustainability standards.

- **Natural materials** – These come directly from nature with minimal processing, such as wood, cork, cotton, wool, or natural rubber. They should be renewable, responsibly sourced, and free from harmful chemicals or treatments. The origin of the raw materials should be precisely traceable, and wherever possible, the supply chain should be certified according to sustainability criteria (forestry products: FSC/PEFC; agricultural raw materials: ISCC, RSB, RSPO, REDcert, Bonsucro; cotton: organic preferred; etc.).
- **Recycled materials** – Made from waste that is reprocessed into new raw materials, such as recycled plastics, metals, textiles, glass, or paper. Using recycled content helps conserve natural resources, reduces landfill waste, and lowers carbon emissions compared to virgin materials. To ensure quality and transparency, recycled materials should comply with recognised standards or certifications (e.g. GRS, ISCC), be free from harmful additives, and ideally contain more than 30% recycled content.
- **Bio-based materials** – Derived from renewable biological resources (plants, algae, fats, crops, etc.), such as bio-based plastics. These materials rely on renewable feedstocks, helping to reduce carbon emissions and dependence on finite resources. To ensure sustainability, bio-based materials should be responsibly sourced, free from deforestation, should not compete with food production, and be certified to recognised standards that ensure transparency (e.g. ISCC). The share of bio-based content should ideally be above 30%.

Best Practice: If a company offers a take-back scheme for recycling toys, it should be implemented at scale.



2. Designed to be resource-efficient and have a durable design:

Definition: Resource-efficient and durable toys are designed to minimise the use of materials and energy, maximise play value and longevity, and support circularity. Such toys are intended to be used for longer periods, easily reused, repaired, resold, and ultimately recycled, thereby reducing environmental impact throughout their lifecycle.

- **Use less material** – Toys are designed to be resource-efficient, reducing the demand for raw materials, energy use in manufacturing, and transport impacts.
- **Deliver more hours of play** – Built to last and engaging across different ages and play styles, these toys remain in use longer and reduce the need for frequent replacements.
- **Enable reuse** – Suitable to be passed on to siblings, friends, or community groups, extending the toy's lifespan and maximising its value.
- **Allow repair** - Constructed so that parts can be fixed or replaced, keeping toys in play and avoiding premature disposal. Spare parts and instructions should be available to customers to facilitate repair.
- **Be recyclable** – Designed for easy disassembly, with clear identification of each material and instructions for responsible disposal at the end of life, helping to reduce waste sent to landfill.

Best Practice: Providing clear repair instructions and making spare parts available can help extend the life of toys and support sustainable use.



3. Providing sustainability along the value chain:

Definition: Every stage of the product lifecycle—from manufacturing and packaging to transport and retail—should be designed to minimise environmental impact and uphold high social standards. Sustainable toys are manufactured, packaged, transported, and sold in ways that are both environmentally responsible and socially fair.

- **Manufacturing** – Utilises energy- and water-efficient processes, prioritises renewable energy sources, and avoids the use of harmful chemicals.
- **Packaging** – Kept to a minimum, designed to be recyclable or made from recycled materials to reduce waste.
- **Transport** – Logistics are optimised to reduce emissions, with a preference for local production and low-impact transport methods.
- **Social** – Ensures fair working conditions, respects human rights, and maintains safe labour practices throughout the supply chain

Best Practice: Highlight fair trade certifications or local production initiatives.



4. Encouraging sustainable behaviour:

Definition: Toys should be designed to inspire children and families to make environmentally conscious decisions and empower more sustainable choices in everyday life. By promoting positive behaviours and raising awareness, toys can have an impact that goes far beyond playtime.

- **Encourage behaviours** – Support and motivate actions such as reusing, repairing, and recycling, choosing low-impact materials, and valuing durability and resource efficiency.
- **Educational** – Introduce and explain topics like nature, conservation, and responsible consumption in a playful and engaging way, helping children develop lasting environmental awareness and habits.

Best Practice: Leveraging the power of play to foster environmental awareness can help children and families adopt sustainable behaviours that extend into their daily routines.