



# Guidelines

European Biochar Certificate

for a sustainable production of biochar

Version 9.2E of 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020

Please cite as:

EBC (2012) 'European Biochar Certificate - Guidelines for a Sustainable Production of Biochar.' European Biochar Foundation (EBC), Arbaz, Switzerland. (<http://European-biochar.org>). Version 9.2E of 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020

## Impressum

These guidelines are effective as of 1 January 2012 and constitute the basis for biochar certification through the independent, governmental accredited inspection agency bio.inspecta AG / q.inspecta.

Hans Peter Schmidt\*, Ithaka Institute

Thomas Bucheli, Agroscope Reckenholz

Claudia Kammann, University of Geisenheim

Bruno Glaser, University of Halle

Samuel Abiven, University of Zurich

Jens Leifeld, Agroscope Reckenholz

Nikolas Hagemann, Ithaka Institute

\* Corresponding author: [schmidt@ithaka-institut.org](mailto:schmidt@ithaka-institut.org)

All rights reserved.

No reproduction, whether in whole or in part, permitted without the written permission of the Ithaka Institute for Carbon Strategies, Switzerland ([www.ithaka-institut.org](http://www.ithaka-institut.org))

Copyright: © 2012 Ithaka Institute

## Table of contents

- A. Summary of the EBC certificate to prepare the inspection
  - 1. Objective of the biochar guidelines
  - 2. Definition of biochar and the EBC application classes
  - 3. Biomass feedstock
  - 4. Definition of biochar batches and submission of samples for analysis
  - 5. Biochar sampling
  - 6. Biochar properties
  - 7. Pyrolysis technology
  - 8. Health and safety regulations
  - 9. EBC-Feed: Biochar for animal feeding
  - 10. Processing of EBC-certified biochar
  - 11. Labelling requirements, EBC-logos, sale
  - 12. Control, quality management and certification
  - 13. References

### APPENDIX

- 1. Analytical methods – basic package
- 2. Analytical methods for EBC-Feed
- 3. Additional analytical parameters
- 4. Representative sampling

## A. Summary of the EBC certificate to prepare the inspection

Companies that do not produce but process and trade certified biochar should consult Chapter 1o directly.

### 1. Inscription

- 1.1 Producers of biochar register on the EBC website (<https://www.european-biochar.org/en/registration>). The producer will then receive their login to the secured EBC website where they are requested to provide all necessary information about the company and the pyrolysis technology they use.
- 1.2 Following a first verification of the technical information and a personal phone contact with the producer through the EBC, the company information are transmitted to the accredited inspection and certification body: bio.inspecta AG (<https://www.bio-inspecta.ch/en/services.html>).
- 1.3 The producer will receive an offer and contract for the EBC certification from bio.inspecta AG.
- 1.4 Once the producer has signed the inspection contract, the Ithaka Institute will coordinate an appointment for the initial EBC audit with the biochar producing company.
- 1.5 During the initial audit, a company-specific quality assurance and sampling plan will be drawn up. This plan is laid down in an instruction manual that will be signed by both parties. In addition, instruction is given in regard to the EBC methodology, the EBC documents and the protocols to be kept and the procedure for the annual inspection by bio.inspecta AG.
- 1.6 The company to be certified appoints a quality manager who will be the direct contact person for the inspection body, bio.inspecta AG, who will handle the entire certification process.

### 2. Production batch

- 2.1 A production batch starts with its registration on the EBC website. The production batch receives a unique ID number and QR code.
- 2.2 A production batch lasts a maximum of 365 days including all possible interruptions in production.
- 2.3 Within the first 2 months after registration of a production batch, a representative sampling has to be carried out by an accredited sampler which is usually the same person as the controller sent by the inspection body bio.inspecta AG.
- 2.4 The pyrolysis temperature in °C shall not change by more than 20% during production. At a declared pyrolysis temperature of, for example, 600 °C, short-term fluctuations between 480 °C and 720 °C are thus permitted.

- 2.5 The composition of the biomass must not change by more than 20%. If, for example, a mixture of 50% grain husks and 50% landscape conservation wood is pyrolysed, the proportions may vary in the range 40% to 60% ( $\pm(50\% \times 20\%) = \pm 10\%$ ).
- 2.6 After a production batch has expired, a subsequent, new production batch must be registered on the EBC website.

### **3. Sampling and sending the sample for analysis**

- 3.1 The representative sample of a production batch is taken during the initial audit and thereafter during each annual inspection by an accredited sampler in accordance with the sampling plan contractually specified in the initial audit and sent to an EBC accredited laboratory.
- 3.2 The biochar producer selects an EBC accredited laboratory.
- 3.3 In accordance with the sampling and quality assurance plan specified in the contract, the production company shall ensure the sampling and sealed storage (usually daily) of the retained samples.

### **4. Usable biomass for the production of biochar**

- 4.1 All biomasses included in the EBC Positive list may be used individually or in combination as feedstock for the production of EBC biochar. For each class of application certain restrictions apply, which are set out in the EBC Positive List. For example, not all biomasses that may be used for EBC-Feed may be used for EBC-materials. Within a batch, the type of biomass may not be changed and the mixing ratios may not change by more than 20% (cf. 2.5).
- 4.2 Mineral additives according to the EBC Positive List may be added up to 10% of the mass. No mineral additives are permitted for EBC-Feed.

### **5. Specifications for pyrolysis technology**

- 5.1 The use of waste heat or the use of liquid and gaseous pyrolysis products must be ensured.
- 5.2 Nationally defined emission limit values must be complied with.

### **6. Properties of biochar**

- 6.1 The biochar for all application classes (Feed, AgroBio, Agro, Material) must be analysed at least according to the EBC Basic Analysis Package. For EBC-Feed the analyses of the EBC-Feed package are additionally required.
- 6.2 The following limit values must be observed:

EBC - Label		EBC-Feed	EBC-AgroBio	EBC-Agro	EBC-Material
EBC - Class		Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV
<b>Elemental analysis</b>	C-total, C <sub>org</sub> , H, N, O, S, ash				
	H/Corg	< 0,7	< 0,7	< 0,7	< 0,7
	O/Corg	< 0,4	< 0,4	< 0,4	< 0,4
<b>Physical parameters</b>	Water content, dry matter (DM), bulk density (TS), specific surface area (BET), pH, salt content				
<b>TGA</b>	Only once for the first production batch of a pyrolysis unit				
<b>Nutrients</b>	at least N, P, K, Mg, Ca				
<b>Heavy metals</b>	Pb	10 g t <sup>-1</sup> (88%DM)	45 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	150 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	250 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM
	Cd	0.8 g t <sup>-1</sup> (88% DM)	0.7 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	1,5 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	5 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM
	Cu	70 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	70 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	100 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	250 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM
	Ni	25 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	25 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	50 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	250 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM
	Hg	0.1 g t <sup>-1</sup> (88% DM)	0.4 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	1 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	1 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM
	Zn	200 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	200 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	400 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	750 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM
	Cr	70 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	70 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	90 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	250 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM
	As	2 g t <sup>-1</sup> (88% DM)	13 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	13 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	15 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM
<b>Organic contaminants</b>	16 EPA PAH	4±2 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	4±2 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	6.0+2.2 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	30g t <sup>-1</sup> DM
	Benzo[a]pyren	25 mg t <sup>-1</sup> (88% DM)			
	PCB, PCDD/F	See chapter 9	Once per pyrolysis unit for the first production batch. For PCB: 0.2 mg kg <sup>-1</sup> DM, for PCDD/F: 20 ng kg <sup>-1</sup> (I-TEQ OMS), respectively		

## 7. Health and safety

7.1 The workers must sign that they have been informed about possible dangers at the workplace and that they have the necessary protective clothing.

# 1. Objective of the guidelines and certification

For thousands of years, charcoal has been one of civilisation's basic materials. By far the most common use of charcoal was for cooking, for heating and for smouldering when producing metal tools. However, for centuries charcoal and biochar have also been used for conditioning soils, or as litter (bedding) materials, as medicine and also as a feed additive. Over the course of the last century most of this traditional knowledge has been lost yet is being rediscovered since 2010.

Thanks to wide-ranging multidisciplinary research and field trials, the understanding of the biological and physico-chemical processes involved in the production and use of biochar has made great progress. A significant increase in the agricultural use of biochar has already been recorded since 2015. From 2020 onwards, a further acceleration in both agricultural and industrial use of biochar is expected. Agricultural applications range from soil conditioners, composting additives and carriers for fertilisers to manure treatment and stable bedding, silage additives and feed additives. Industrial applications are particularly relevant to the construction, plastics, paper and textile industries.

Traditional kiln production of charcoal and biochar without the combustion of pyrolytic gases is unsatisfactory with regards to its carbon efficiency and its overall environmental footprint. Accordingly, those kilns are unsuitable for the production of larger amounts of biochar to be used in agriculture or industry. Modern pyrolysis plants as well as certain types of farmer-scale kilns such as flame curtain pyrolysis systems are now ready to produce biochar from a large variety of different feedstocks in an energy efficient way and without harming the environment. As both biochar properties and the environmental footprint of its production are largely dependent on the pyrolysis parameters and the type of feedstocks to be used, a secure control and assessment system for its production and analysis had to be introduced.

In issuing these guidelines the Ithaka Institute intends to introduce an assessment mechanism based on the latest research and practices. By requiring the use of this assessment system, the European Biochar Certificate (EBC) will enable and guarantee sustainable biochar production, processing and sale. It is introduced to provide customers with a reliable quality standard, while giving producers the opportunity to prove that their products meet well-defined and recognized quality standards. It further aims to provide a firm state-of-the-art knowledge transfer as a sound basis for future legislation (e.g. EU fertilizer regulations or carbon-sink regulations).

Biochar technology continues to develop very rapidly. Numerous research projects around the world are investigating the properties of biochar and their interaction with other substances, materials and the environment. Every year sees new manufacturers of pyrolysis equipment entering the market and the areas in which biochar and biochar products are used is growing rapidly. The European Biochar Certificate is closely aligned with this research and technical momentum and will accordingly be revised regularly to take into account the latest findings and developments. Thresholds and test methods will be adapted to reflect the latest findings and amended or updated as necessary.

The goal of these guidelines is to encourage and ensure the control of biochar production and quality based on well-researched, legally backed-up, economically viable and practically applicable processes. Users of biochar and biochar-based products will benefit from transparent and verifiable monitoring and quality assurance. It is our moral obligation as well as the duty of every biochar user's duty to make sure that a good idea is not be corrupted. The certificate was designed to serve this goal.

Currently, the European Biochar Certificate is a voluntary industry standard in Europe. In Switzerland, however, it is obligatory for all biochar sold for use in agriculture. Several other countries aligned their biochar related regulations with the EBC.

## 2. Definition of biochar and the EBC application classes

**Biochar is a porous, carbonaceous material that is produced by pyrolysis of plant biomasses and is applied in such a way that the contained carbon remains stored as a long-term C sink or replaces fossil carbon in industrial manufacturing. It is not made to be burnt for energy generation.**

Biochar is produced by biomass pyrolysis, a process whereby organic substances are broken down at temperatures ranging from 350°C to 1000 °C in a low-oxygen process. Although torrefaction, hydrothermal carbonisation and coke production are carbonisation processes, the end products cannot however be called biochar under the above definition. Biochars are therefore specific pyrolysis chars characterised by their additional environmentally sustainable production, quality and usage features. Gasification is understood as being part of the pyrolysis technology spectrum and can, if optimized for biochar production, be equally certified under the EBC.

Biochar is defined by its quality characteristics, by the raw materials used, its sustainable production and end use.

According to the present guidelines, biochars are divided into four different application classes, each with different threshold values and ecological requirements: EBC-Feed, EBC-AgroOrganic, EBC-Agro, EBC-Material.

Biochar with **EBC-feed** certification meets all requirements of the EU feed regulation and may be used as feed or feed additive in animal husbandry.

Biochars certified with **EBC-Agro** and **EBC-AgroOrganic** meet all requirements of the new, though as of 2020 not yet adopted, EU fertilizer regulations [1]. Several EU countries such as Austria, Sweden and Hungary have approved the use of biochar according to the requirements of EBC-Agro. Based on these national approvals, such biochars can be exported and used in all other EU countries. Several EU and EFTA countries apply their own restrictions for the agricultural use of biochar. Switzerland, for example, requires the certification according to EBC-AgroOrganic, however, they only allow woody biomass as a feedstock for pyrolysis. Germany requires a minimum carbon content of 80% for biochar. The EBC-AgroOrganic certificate meets all requirements of the EU Commission regulation on organic production [2].

The **EBC-Material** Certificate guarantees sustainably produced biochar, which can be used in industrial materials such as building materials, plastics, electronics, or textiles without risk to the environment and users.

In the coming years further specific EBC application classes will be added to the current standard. The respective specifications and limit values will further be adapted to align with the on-going development of relevant European legislation and scientific advances.

The pyrolysis of non-plant biomasses such as sewage sludge, livestock manure, certain biogas digestates or bones may also produce valuable raw materials that could be used in the interests of the bio-economy and climate protection. However, these raw materials have not yet been included in the EBC feedstock list and are therefore not subject of these guidelines.

If European biochar producers are interested in having e.g. pyrolyzed sewage sludge certified under the EBC, an official application for adding sewage sludge to the EBC feedstock list should be sent to the EBC. The EBC Scientific Committee would review the application in detail and could then introduce a separate EBC class for sewage sludge pyrolysates. The EBC is prepared to add national appendixes to align the general EBC certification with particular national laws.

The EBC standard also regulates the certification of and the trade with biochar-based products.

To obtain the EBC certificate, the criteria set out in the following chapters must be met with regard to the biomass used, the production technology, the properties of the biochar, occupational health and safety, and product labelling.

### 3. Biomass feedstock

- 3.1 Only plant biomasses may be used to produce biochar. The EBC positive list (Appendix 1) indicates which types of biomass are permissible for each application class.
- 3.2 The clean separation of non-organic substances such as metals, construction waste, electronic scrap, etc. must be guaranteed.
- 3.3 For the production of EBC-Feed, EBC-Agro, and EBC-AgroOrganic, the biomass used must not contain any paint residues, solvents or other potentially toxic impurities.
- 3.4 For the production of EBC-Feed, EBC-Agro, and EBC-AgroOrganic, contamination of the biomass by plastic and rubber waste must be effectively and safely reduced to below 1% (m/m). For the production of EBC-Material quality, plastic and rubber contents of up to 15% can be accepted, though these are subject to declaration and require the written approval of the Ithaka Institute. In the latter case, the Ithaka Institute may request additional analyses to ensure the safety of the product and its application.
- 3.5 When using primary agricultural products (e.g. Miscanthus or short rotation forestry), it must be guaranteed that these were grown in a sustainable manner and that the soil organic carbon was preserved.
- 3.6 Biochar may only be produced from forest wood if sustainable management of the corresponding forest can be proven by PEFC or FSC certificates or by comparable regional standards or laws.
- 3.7 Mineral additives such as rock flour and ashes, which may be used to control the quality of biochar, are subject to declaration and require written approval from the EBC if they are added in excess of 10%. If the addition exceeds 10%, the EBC may request additional quality controls with regard to organic and inorganic contaminants. For the production of EBC-Feed, no mineral additives are admitted.
- 3.8 Complete records of the processed biomasses and additives must be kept and archived for at least five years.

## 4. Definition of biochar batches and their registration

**A biochar production batch is defined as:**

- 4.1 Each production batch has to be registered on the EBC website. The EBC will allocate a unique ID number with corresponding QR code for the production batch. The ID number and the QR code ensure the traceability of the biomass feedstock, the conditions of production, and the quality of the biochar.
- 4.2 A production batch lasts a maximum of one calendar year including all possible interruptions in production.
- 4.3 Within the first two months after registration of a production batch a representative sampling has to be carried out by an accredited sampler.
- 4.4 The pyrolysis temperature in °C must not change by more than 20 % during production. With a declared pyrolysis temperature of, for example, 600 °C, short-term fluctuations between 480 °C and 720 °C are thus permitted. Documented production interruptions, both planned and unplanned, are permitted provided that the specified temperature range is maintained after resuming the production. Biochar from the plant start-up and shut-down process must be carefully separated and documented and may not be marketed as EBC-Feed or EBC-Agro but as EBC-Material. The precise handling of the biochar from the start-up and shut-down process is regulated in the instruction manual.
- 4.5 The blend of different types of biomass listed in the EBC positive list may not change by more than 20 percentage points. For example, if a mixture of 50% cereal husks and 50% landscape conservation wood is pyrolyzed, the proportions may vary in the range 40% to 60% [ $\pm(50\% \times 20\%) = \pm 10\%$ ].
- 4.6 Complete production records must be kept, providing detailed descriptions and dates of any production problems or stoppages. Furthermore, the daily taking of the retention sample must be recorded (see chapter 5.2 retention sample). A template of the production record is provided by the inspection body and can be downloaded from the EBC website.
- 4.7 The daily production quantities of biochar must be documented.
- 4.8 On the last production day of a batch, the date and time of the end of the biochar production batch and the total production quantity of the complete biochar batch have to be reported.
- 4.9 Production batches cannot be reported retroactively. The start of a production batch is at the earliest the date of registration on the EBC website.

As soon as either point 4.4 or point 4.5 are no longer fulfilled, a production batch is considered completed. A new production batch with the changed parameters must be registered on the EBC website and an appointment with the accredited sampler must be arranged. The annual inspection visit takes place once per calendar year, irrespective of the number of batches produced.

## 5. Biochar sampling

The accredited controlling inspector is entitled to take additional samples at any time and send them to the accredited laboratory or to the EBC.

### 5.1 Representative sample

From 1 January 2021, the biochar samples sent to the accredited laboratory for EBC analysis must be carried out by an accredited sampler. The sampling plan is drawn up during the initial audit by the IthaKa Institute, documented in an instruction manual and contractually agreed. The accredited sampler must follow the company-specific sampling plan.

The accredited controlling inspector is entitled to take additional samples at any time and send them to the accredited laboratory or to the Ithaka Institute.

Until 1st January 2021, the methods for the company's own preparation of representative samples continue to apply (see Annex 4)].

### 5.2 Sending of the representative biochar sample to the accredited laboratory

From 1 January 2021, the representative samples for analysis will be sealed by the accredited sampler and registered on the EBC website. The producer sends the sealed sample to the EBC-accredited laboratory selected by him.

- 5.2.1 The accredited laboratory shall send the results of the analysis to the biochar producing company and a copy to the accredited inspection body and the IthaKa Institute.
- 5.2.2 The Ithaka Institute has the right to use the results of analysis in anonymised form for statistical purposes.

Insofar as the representative analysis sample is still collected in-house until the end of 2020, the representative analysis sample must be sent to an EBC-accredited laboratory at the latest three days after registration of the production batch on the EBC website. Please proceed as follows:

- 5.2.3 The inscription of the analytical sample is made when registering a new batch on the EBC website.
- 5.2.4 Only those samples which have been registered via the EBC website and which have thus been allocated a unique ID number are considered EBC analysis samples.

### 5.3 Retention Sampling

In addition to the EBC analysis sample, the manufacturer is obliged to take regularly (in general every day) retention samples. The exact procedure will be determined during the initial audit. If no deviating protocol is determined during the initial audit, the following applies:

Daily, a fresh sample of one liter, either from the cross-flow or from the collected daily production has to be taken. The cross-flow sample can be taken both manually and automatically from the daily production [3].

The daily sampling time has to be entered in the production record. The daily samples must be collected for one month at a time in a sample container as a composite 30 liter sample. After one month the composite sample shall be sealed. The next 30 cross-flow samples shall be collected in a new sample container until this container is also sealed and stored.

**The monthly retention sample of at least 30 liter must be kept dry and protected for two years.**

The retained samples serve in particular to protect the producer who will thus be able to prove in the event of any complaints from authorities or customers that the relevant biochar was free of pollutants and that it was of the quality guaranteed by the EBC certificate.

In addition, the retention samples can be used to determine the shrinkage factor for the certification of the EBC-sink potential.

During the initial audit, company-specific regulations for the creation and storage of reserve samples can be defined.

## 6. Biochar properties

The aim of the EBC certificate is to guarantee compliance with all environmentally relevant thresholds and to declare those biochar properties which are relevant for the respective application class and that can be analyzed at reasonable cost.

There are numerous additional analytical possibilities to characterize and classify biochar even more comprehensively. However, many of these would go beyond reasonable cost limits. We do not seek to analyze, regulate and guarantee all that is possible attributes, but rather those that are necessary to ensure safety and sustainability.

The limit values mentioned in the following chapter are only valid in conjunction with the permissible test procedures and permissible analytical methods. These are detailed for the individual parameters in Appendices 1-3.

### 6.1 The biochar's organic carbon ( $C_{org}$ ) content must be declared.

The organic carbon content of biochar varies between about 35 % and 95 % of dry matter, depending on the biomass feedstock and the pyrolysis temperature. For example, the carbon content of pyrolyzed straw is usually between 40 and 50% and that of wood and nutshells between 70 and 90%.

In previous versions of the EBC certificate, a threshold of 50% organic carbon content was applied to biochar. All pyrolysis products below this limit were considered as pyrogenic carbonaceous materials (PCM). However, a large number of scientific papers published in recent years have shown that a carbon content of > 50% is not a sufficient criterion for such a distinction. In particular, biochar from crop residues such as straw and grain husks have proven to be well suited for various agricultural and industrial applications, even though the carbon content is usually below 50%. Since the use of crop residues and other secondary plant biomasses is desirable both for climate protection and for closing nutrient cycles, the former limit of 50% has been reconsidered.

PCM which cannot be regarded as biochar because of the non-plant nature of the biomass feedstock used for their production are no longer subject to the EBC guidelines.

### 6.2 The molar H/ $C_{org}$ ratio must be less than 0.7

The molar H/ $C_{org}$  ratio is an indicator of the degree of carbonisation and therefore of the biochar stability. The ratio is one of the most important characterising features of biochar and is indispensable for the determination of the C-sink value. Values fluctuate depending on the biomass and process used. Values exceeding 0.7 are an indication of non pyrolytic chars or pyrolysis deficiencies [4].

### **6.3 The molar O/Corg ratio must be less than 0.4**

In addition to the H/Corg ratio, the O/Corg ratio is also relevant for characterising biochar and differentiating it from other carbonisation products [4]. Compared to the H/Corg ratio, direct measuring of the O content is expensive and not standardized. Therefore the calculation of the O content from C, H, N, S and ash content is accepted.

The O/Corg ratio can sometimes exceed 0.4 due to post-pyrolytic treatment or by co-pyrolysis with oxidative or catalytically acting additives. In this case, the EBC would carry out a plausibility check and grant an appropriate exemption, provided that product quality and environmental protection are guaranteed.

### **6.4 Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) are determined by thermogravimetric analysis (TGA).**

During the pyrolysis process aromatic carbon, carbonates and a multitude of diverse volatile organic compounds are formed. The latter constitutes a large part of the pyrolysis gas that partially condensates on biochar surfaces and pores. These condensed pyrolysis gas compounds are substantial constituents of biochar materials [5,6], are essential for certain biochar functions and thus necessary for the characterisation of biochar.

However, a quantitative determination of VOCs cannot be carried out at reasonable cost though it is known in which temperature range and in which type of VOCs are to be expected.

For an independent estimation of the true pyrolysis temperature, which can deviate from the temperature measured at the reactor for various reasons, the weight loss of volatile compounds of biochar is determined by gradually increasing the temperature in the absence of air using the thermogravimetric analysis (TGA). The TGA diagram can thus be used to determine both the absolute VOC content and the maximum temperature to which the biochar was exposed during pyrolysis.

The total VOC content and its temperature-dependent degassing are thus mainly considered a criterion for the evaluation of the pyrolysis process. For this reason, it is considered sufficient that the TGA analysis need only be carried out in the first control year of a pyrolysis unit.

### **6.5 The biochar nutrient contents must be declared at least in regard to nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium and calcium.**

The nutrient contents of different biochars fluctuate broadly and can account for up to a third of the total weight. It should be noted that these nutrients may only partly be available to plants. They may take decades before entering the biological life cycle. The nutrient availability of the

phosphorus found in biochar is for instance only about 15% in the first year, that of nitrogen a mere 1%, while availability of potassium can reach 50% [7].

For the use in agriculture and animal husbandry nutrient information is legally required. For EBC-material, the nutrient contents are generally less relevant, but depending on the application, they may influence certain material properties, especially with higher contents of calcium, potassium and magnesium, which is why the declaration of the nutrient contents is also mandatory for the EBC-material application class.

### 6.6 The following thresholds for heavy metals must not be exceeded

For EBC-Agro, the following maximum values for heavy metal contents are based on the German Federal Soil Protection Ordinance (BBodSchV [8]); for EBC-AgroOrganic on the EU regulations for organic compost [2]; and for EBC-material on the Swiss Ordinance on Waste for the Production of Cement and Concrete (VVEA, Annex 1.4; [9]).

Additional parameters and methods apply to EBC Feed, which are described in Chapter 9.

Tab. 1: Thresholds for heavy metals according to the EBC application classes.

	EBC-Feed	EBC-AgroOrganic	EBC-Agro	EBC-Material
Pb	10 g t <sup>-1</sup> (88% DM)	45 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	150 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	250 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM
Cd	0.8 g t <sup>-1</sup> (88% DM)	0.7 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	1,5 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	5 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM
Cu	70 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	70 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	100 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	250 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM
Ni	25g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	25 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	50 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	250 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM
Hg	0.1 g t <sup>-1</sup> (88% DM)	0.4 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	1 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	1 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM
Zn	200 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	200 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	400 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	750 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM
Cr	70 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	70 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	90 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	250 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM
As	2 g t <sup>-1</sup> (88% DM)	13 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	13 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM	15 g t <sup>-1</sup> DM

Heavy metals are an essential component of all ecosystems. Even in natural soils that are hardly influenced by human activities, every plant absorbs more than 50 geogenic elements of the periodic table and amidst those there are all essential heavy metals. Heavy metals are only critical if their concentration is exceedingly high and they are bio-available, which is why the limit values listed in Table 1 have been defined for each type of application.

With the exception of a few heavy metals that are volatile or semi-volatile at the prevailing pyrolysis temperatures (e.g. mercury), the entire amount of heavy metals originally contained in the biomass is retained in the biochar. During pyrolysis the weight of the original biomass is reduced by more than 50% due to the loss of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen, but not heavy

metals leading to increased concentration, i.e. the heavy metal content in the biochar is higher than in the original biomass.

As long as the biomass was not grown on contaminated soils or has increased heavy metal contents due to plant treatments (e.g. copper spraying in viticulture) or due to contamination with wastes, the concentration effect from pyrolysis is not critical. Heavy metal contents beyond the limit values thus indicate above all the contamination of the biomass used and thus represent an additional control of the biomass quality. If the limit values for heavy metals for EBC material biochar are exceeded, the contaminated biochar thus contaminated must be disposed of as hazardous waste.

In industrial applications, including the use of biochar in plastics, concrete and other composites, the risk of heavy metals being leached into the environment or harming users of these industrial materials is generally quite low. For this reason, cautiously higher limit values for heavy metals have been set for EBC-Materials. We expect to set further application-specific EBC thresholds in the future. For example, different limit values will have to be set for the use of biochar in textiles as compared to its use in asphalt. However, at the present stage of industrial development accurate, use-specific limits cannot yet be determined meaningfully by the EBC. It is incumbent upon industrial manufacturers that seek to incorporate biochar into their products to comply with the respective limit values pertinent to their industry. In addition, all industrial producers and users are urged to carefully consider end of the life handling of their industrial materials in order to prevent pollutants from entering the environment.

#### **6.7 pH, bulk density, and water content must be declared.**

The pH value of biochar is an important criterion for the targeted use in substrates as well as for the fixation of nutrients in animal husbandry as well as in industrial products.

Bulk density (on dry matter base) and water content are necessary specifications for the trade with biochar as well as for the production of consistent substrate mixtures and materials requiring consistent carbon contents.

#### **6.8 The determination of the water holding capacity (WHC) is recommended**

Water holding capacity (WHC) provides guidance for mixing biochar with liquids, e.g. liquid fertilizer, digestate, storm water management. It is also a valuable indication of its effectiveness in increasing a soil's water holding capacity and for humidity buffering when e.g. applied to the root zone. WHC may also help to evaluate the moisture absorption and buffering capacity of construction and other biochar based materials. Analysis of the water holding capacity is not mandatory though recommended as an additional parameter.

### **6.9 Specific surface area must be declared, pore size distribution is recommended as additional parameter**

The specific surface area according to BET is an important characterization and comparison criterion for the physical structure of biochar. It should be noted, however, that no method provides absolute values for the specific surface area, but only relative values which allows for standardized comparisons. For a more precise evaluation of the pore properties, at least data on pore size distribution would be required. Due to the costs, the measurement of the pore size distribution is recommended as an additional parameter but not mandatory.

### **6.10 Thresholds for PAH contents (sum of the 16 priority pollutants of EPA) must not be exceeded**

The pyrolysis of organic materials causes polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) to be released [10]. Their amount depends primarily on the processing conditions and only negligibly on the biomass feedstock as long as the latter are selected from the EBC-positive list [11]. Modern pyrolysis technology allows for a significant reduction of the PAH pollution as compared to earlier, less controlled equipment. High PAH levels are an indication of unsatisfactory or unsuitable production conditions.

It should be noted, however, that biochar is able to bind PAHs very efficiently and is therefore often used to immobilise PAHs in contaminated soils [12]. The risk of PAH contamination, when using biochar in agriculture, is hence considered to be low, even if higher thresholds than for other organic substrates such as compost or anaerobic digestate would be taken into account. However, it has been shown by Hilber et al. 2019 [13] and others, that PAHs from biochar can, under certain circumstances, be released in organic systems such as a bovine rumen and thus impair the biological system. Therefore, applying the precautionary principle and in order to comply with existing regulations for other substrates and materials in agriculture and industry, the EBC limit values for PAHs for the various application classes are based on the following existing legal regulations for comparable materials.

According to both the Swiss Ordinance on Risk Reduction related to Chemical Products (ChemRRV [14]) and the EU Organic Farming Ordinance [2], a limit value of 4 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> DM applies to the 16 EPA-PAK, which is thus also the limit value for EBC-AgroOrganic.

In the draft of the new EU fertilizer ordinance, a limit value of 6 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> DM was set for the 16 EPA-PAK. From 2021, this limit value will apply to EBC-Agro. For the certification year 2020, the limit value for the former basic quality grade of 12 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> DM will be applied for EBC-Agro. In the absence of other legal regulations, this limit value for the former basic quality level was based on a value which, according to the state of knowledge at that time and at present, allowed to classify the risk to soil and users as extremely low.

For EBC-Feed, the PAH thresholds of EBC-AgroOrganic must be complied with. In addition, the requirements of the EU Feed Regulation apply as described and defined in Chapter 9.

A limit of 30 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> DM is introduced for EBC-Material. This limit value is mainly based on what can be regarded as harmless to employees handling these substances without special protective measures such as protective clothing, packaging, storage ventilation etc. For similar reasons, the same limit value applies to the German Landfill Ordinance, which allows residual substances with less than 30 mg 16 EPA PAHs per kg DM to be deposited on the surface without special protective measures [15].

With appropriate protective measures, biochar might also be used with even higher PAH contents, for example in asphalt or in civil engineering, which will be decided in due course and updated in the EBC guidelines for special materials when feasible. At present there is no reason to allow biochars with higher PAH contents for specific applications. Moreover, there are no major technical problems in adapting and adjusting pyrolysis plants in such a way that the limit value of 30 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> DM cannot be achieved.

It should be noted that due to the high adsorption capacity of biochar, most of the analytical methods used for example for soil analysis of PAHs are not suitable for biochar [12]. It is therefore strongly recommended to always use the service of EBC accredited laboratories to perform PAH analyses even outside the context of EBC certification.

The very low PAH thresholds only allow an analytical accuracy of 50% for EBC-Feed and EBC-AgroOrganic and of 40% for EBC-Agro. For this reason, the threshold value of 4 mg EPA PAH16 kg<sup>-1</sup> TM applied to an accuracy of  $\pm 2$  mg kg<sup>-1</sup> TM, and the threshold value of 6 mg EPA PAH 16 per kg DM to an accuracy of  $\pm 2.2$  mg kg<sup>-1</sup> TM. In general, it should be noted that with such a low analytical accuracy, it is not considered appropriate to set two limits so close together. Basically, PAH concentrations in this narrow range cannot be distinguished. Here the EBC follows the various EU regulations for organic and conventional agriculture and can only urge the EU authorities to harmonise these limit values.

### **6.11 Thresholds for PCB and PCDD/F must be observed**

In modern pyrolysis plants, only minimal quantities of PCBs, polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins and furans (PCDD/F) are produced [16]. Therefore, a one-off analysis per plant is considered sufficient. These pollutant contents depend mainly on the chlorine content of the pyrolyzed biomass. All biomasses authorised on the positive list have a low chlorine content and only very low contents of these organic pollutants must be expected for the resulting biochar. If the control bodies of the EBC consider the risk of chlorine contamination of the source biomass to be relevant, additional dioxin analyses may be required. The latter applies in particular to EBC material, where contamination with chlorine-containing plastic residues may occur. The limit values are based on the soil protection regulations in force in Germany and Switzerland [8,14].

No different limit values were introduced for EBC-Material, as there has been a lack of a reliable risk assessment for those materials to date.

The thresholds for PCB are  $0.2 \text{ mg kg}^{-1}$  (DM), and for PCDD/F they are  $20 \text{ ng kg}^{-1}$  (I-TEQ OMS), respectively.

## 7. Pyrolysis

### 7.1 Biomass pyrolysis must be operated in an energy efficient manner.

With the exception of the preheating of the pyrolysis reactor, the use of fossil fuels for heating the pyrolysis reactor is prohibited. The use of waste heat from other industrial processes, such as bio-digesters or cement production or the use of solar thermal energy is permitted. If the pyrolysis reactor is electrically heated, the use of renewable energy sources or the use of surplus electricity is recommended.

### 7.2 The pyrolysis gases produced during pyrolysis must be recovered or burned. They are not allowed to escape into the atmosphere.

A significant portion of the global charcoal and biochar production is still made using obsolete technology [17] where most of the original feedstock carbon is released as toxic emissions to the atmosphere. Although the material quality of biochar produced in such kilns may meet EBC requirements, the environmental impact of such production techniques is highly negative.

However, if pyrolysis gases are trapped and are cleanly burned or used as bio-oil for the chemical industry, the environmental impact is neutral and even improved compared to biomass burning or natural decomposition. The EBC certificate guarantees that only climate positive biochar production technology is used and does not release unburned pyrolysis gases to the atmosphere.

### 7.3 Syngas combustion must comply with national emission thresholds.

With emission thresholds and regulations differing from one country to the next, any further definition of emission thresholds for pyrolysis facilities would exceed the purpose and proportionality of these guidelines. Therefore manufacturers must provide a guarantee that their facilities comply with national emission regulations. An annual, government accredited emission measurement of the production plant is recommended.

For certification of the C sink potential of biochar, the pyrolysis unit must have an EBC type certificate (see Guidelines for the certification of the C-sink potential) or at least three independent, accredited emission measurements including the methane or hydrocarbon content in the waste gas stream.

### 7.4 The heat produced by the pyrolysis process must be used.

Approximately 35 to 60 % of the energy contained in the biomass feedstock is eventually contained in the pyrolysis gas. Part of the energy released during the combustion of these gases

is usually used to heat the biomass for pyrolysis. However, high amounts of waste heat remain. At least 70% of this waste heat must be used, e.g. for drying biomass, for district heating, for generating electricity or for similar sustainable purposes. For a transitional period of maximum 3 years after installation of the pyrolysis plant, an exemption for missing waste heat recovery can be applied for. In the meantime, a solution for efficient waste heat recovery must be developed. As described under 7.2, bio-oil and pyrolysis gases can also be stored and used for other energy or material purposes.

## 8. Work safety and health

8.1 Fire and dust protection regulations are to be complied with throughout the entire production, transportation and user chain.

8.2 All workers must be informed in writing about possible risks and dangers of and around the production facility and sign the document. In particular, this concerns the self-ignitability of char dust, respiratory protection, contact with bio-oil and tars and possible gas leakage.

8.3 During transportation and bulk transfers attention must be paid to the biochar being sufficiently moist to prevent dust generation or dust explosions.

8.4 Workers must be equipped with suitable protective clothing and breathing masks where necessary.

## 9. Biochar for use as a feed additive (EBC-Feed)

Biochar is a traditional feed additive that was often used to treat digestive problems of livestock. Since 2010, biochar is increasingly used as an additive to daily feed mixtures. The use of biochar (i.e. vegetal carbon) as a feed additive is authorized by the EU-Feed Regulation [18]. Directive 2002/32/EC of 7 May 2002 on undesirable substances in animal feed [18] and Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides in or on food and feed of plant and animal origin [19] provide different and additional limits for the use of biochar as feed compared to its use as a soil additive. The parameters to be controlled in addition to EBC-AgroOrganic are specified below for the EBC certification of biochar as animal feed.

The permissible test methods as well as the analytical methods for the individual parameters are detailed in Chapter 14.

### 9.1 Precondition for EBC-Feed grade certification

Biochar can only be certified under EBC-Feed when all conditions for EBC-AgroOrganic quality are met and the production was certified accordingly.

### 9.2 Biomass - only pure plant biomass feedstocks are permitted

When the EBC-Feed Certificate was introduced, only untreated trunk wood was approved as the source material for feed grade biochar production. In the meantime, however, a sufficient number of scientific studies have been published [20], which show that biochar produced from other plant source materials has had just as positive an effect on feed efficiency and animal health as wood based biochar. For this reason, all pure plant biomasses are now approved for the production of EBC-Feed charcoal according to the EBC feedstock list. This means that there is no need to set a limit for the carbon content. Mineral additives are not permitted.

### 9.3 Heavy metals

According to feed regulations, the content of heavy metals including arsenic, lead, cadmium and mercury must be stated. Their limits differ from those for EBC-AgroOrganic quality. The use of biochar as feed is based on the following thresholds to be calculated on 88% of the dry matter content: arsenic: 2 mg kg<sup>-1</sup>; lead: 10 mg kg<sup>-1</sup>; cadmium 1 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> and mercury: 0.1 mg kg<sup>-1</sup>.

### 9.4 Benzo[a]pyren < 25 µg/kg

In addition, the PAH-thresholds for EBC-AgroOrganic (4 mg PAH16 kg<sup>-1</sup>), biochar for animal feed is subject to the specific reference limit for carcinogenic PAHs of 25 µg kg<sup>-1</sup> benzo[a]pyrene (at 88% DM)

### **9.5 Dioxine, furane, dioxin-like PCB (WHO-PCB) und non-dioxin-like PCB (DIN-PCB).**

The EU feed regulations prescribe strict limits for polychlorinated dioxins, furans and PCBs, which are well below the limits of the soil protection ordinance. Therefore, (1) each batch of feed biochars must be analyzed for these substances, and (2) the accredited test method must have a lower detection limit. Consequently, special test methods and limit values for feed grade biochar apply here.

For PCDD / PCDF, a trigger value of 0.5 ng TE kg<sup>-1</sup> at 88% DM and a limit of 0.75 ng TE kg<sup>-1</sup> at 88% DM apply. For dl-PCB, a trigger value of 0.35 ng TE kg<sup>-1</sup> at 88% DM applies. For PCDD / PCDF + dl-PCB the threshold is 1.25 ng TE kg<sup>-1</sup> at 88% TS. For the sum of DIN PCB, a limit value of 10 µg TE kg<sup>-1</sup> at 88% DM applies.

### **9.6 Fluor < 150 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> (88% TS)**

Fluorine salts are usually volatile in pyrolysis conditions and will rarely occur in biochars in significant concentrations. Nevertheless, according to the feed ordinance, this analysis is required by default.

### **9.7 Dry matter, crude ash, ash insoluble in hydrochloric acid**

The specification of dry matter, crude ash content and HCl-insoluble ash are prescribed standard values of the EU feed regulations and must be stated on the product label. The content of the ashes must be determined by combustion at 550 ° C and given on an 88% dry matter basis.

### **9.8 Crude protein, crude fibre, crude fat**

The indication of crude protein, crude fiber and crude fat contents are prescribed standard values of the EU feed regulations. Crude protein, crude fiber and crude fat are completely decomposed in the course of complete pyrolysis and are therefore no longer present in biochar. A biochar is considered to be completely pyrolyzed if the H / Corg ratio is <0.7. If the H / Corg ratio according to EBC-AgroOrganic is less than 0.7, the analysis of crude protein, crude fiber and crude fat is not required and set by definition as 0 g kg<sup>-1</sup>. The information is mandatory and must be stated on the product label.



## 10. Certification of companies that process biochar and manufacture biochar based products

In agriculture and animal husbandry, biochar is rarely used in its pure form. More often it is part of a processed product such as a soil substrate, compost, fertilizer, bedding material, feed, or as an additive to AD or silage. In addition to the producers specialized in biochar manufacturing, a growing industry has developed, acquiring and processing biochar as a raw material for the production of biochar-based products.

In order to guarantee and properly label products made with EBC certified biochar, the entire supply chain including production, processing, packaging and labeling of the products needs to be inspected and certified.

Products containing biochar are only allowed to use the EBC logo and the inscription "Manufactured with EBC certified biochar" if the biochar processing company and their biochar-based products have also been certified according to the following guidelines.

### 10.1 Exclusive use of EBC certified biochar

The risks associated with the use of non-certified biochar in agriculture, livestock farming and in products ultimately destined for agricultural use, such as compost or biogas slurry, are considered to be very high, since in this case pollutants such as PAHs, dioxins and heavy metals may enter the human food chain and accumulate permanently in soils and the environment.

Therefore, products made with biochar can only become EBC certified if the processing company uses exclusively EBC certified biochar for their biochar-based products. The certified company may not use, store or trade any biochar for agronomic purposes that is not EBC certified. Non-EBC certified biochar may be used by means of a written EBC exemption permit for industrial purposes such as in building materials and plastics or as charcoal for barbecue, provided that the spatial separation of certified biochar and the user protection are ensured. Without EBC exemption, no non-EBC certified biochar may be used, stored and traded by the certified company.

### 10.2. Incoming goods inspection

All incoming biochar or biochar-based products must have the corresponding EBC certificate (EBC-Feed, EBC-AgroOrganic, EBC-Agro, EBC-Material) marked on the delivery documentation and labels. The incoming goods inspection must be documented. Unlabeled biochar and biochar-based products without an EBC exemption permit must not be processed.

### 10.3 Storage

Biochar and biochar-based products must be stored in such a way that no contamination can occur. Particular attention should be paid to gaseous pollutants (for example engine exhaust gases) as these can be absorbed by the biochar. Biochar processors must ensure that neither different EBC grades (EBC-Feed, EBC-AgroOrganic, EBC-Agro, EBC-Material) nor different batches from different or the same manufacturers are mixed without documentation. The quality and origin of stored biochar as well as a traceable identification number and product name must be marked clearly visible on the storage or packaging material.

### 10.4 Processing journal

Each processing step of biochar and biochar-based products must be documented in a processing journal. The quantity and quality of all processed biochar and the amount of biochar contained in the final products must be documented.

If the biochar or biochar-based products are merely repackaged or relabeled, the quantity and quality of the original and final products must still be listed in the processing journal.

The control of the flow of goods (balance between incoming biochar and biochar products, specific processing, and the outgoing biochar and biochar products) must be tracked and documented at all times.

## 11. Labeling and Advertising with EBC Certification

### 11.1 Trademark protection and compulsory information

#### 11.1.1 Registered trademarks

On 24 May 2019, the Foundation Ithaka Institute owns the following EU trade marks:

- (1) EU guarantee mark No 018071838 'EBC' (word mark) and
- (2) EU guarantee mark No 018071835 'Certified Biochar EBC European Biochar Certificate (EBC)' (figurative mark), reproduction:



(hereinafter referred to as 'EU trade marks').

Each of the EU trade marks are registered in respect to the following list:

- Class 01: Chemical substances, chemical materials and chemical preparations and natural elements, in particular biochar, activated carbon activated adsorbents, activated carbon filters for the purification of gases, and activated carbon filters for the purification of liquids; Growth and fertilizers and chemicals used in agriculture, forestry and horticulture, in particular fertilizers (in part) consisting of biochar (biochar); Putties, fillers and glues for industrial purposes, in particular coal for filters for removing organic contaminants from water; Filter materials [chemical, mineral, vegetable and other raw materials], in particular activated carbon.
- Class 04: Fuels, in particular of biochar (charcoal, charcoal).
- Class 05: Biochemical feed additives made from biochar.
- Class 19: Building materials and components, not of metal, (partially) consisting of biochar.
- Class 31: Foodstuffs and animal feed (in part) consisting of biochar (biochar); Litter and bedding materials for animals (partially) consisting of biochar (biochar).
- Class 40: Production of coal by biomass pyrolysis; Processing of biochar (biochar) as a raw material for the production of various products.

(hereinafter referred to as 'the goods and services claimed')

### 11.1.2 Right to use the EU trade mark

The Foundation Ithaka Institute grants:

- (1) Manufacturers of EBC certified biochar, as well as of products containing EBC certified biochar,
- (2) Processors and traders of EBC certified biochar and products containing EBC certified biochar and
- (3) Users of EBC certified biochar (e.g. farmers, operators of composting plants, operators of biogas plants) as well as of products containing EBC certified biochar (e.g. farmers, gardeners, animal keepers).

the right to use these EU trademarks for the aforementioned goods and services under the following conditions:

The EU guarantee trade mark No 018071838 "EBC" (word mark) may only be used alone or with the following additions

- (1) "Zertifikat" / "Certificate", oder "Zertifizierung" / "Certification" oder "zertifiziert" / "certified"
- (2) "Agro", "AgroOrganic", "Feed" or "Material"

The EU guarantee trade mark No 018071835 "Certified Biochar EBC European Biochar Certificate (EBC)" (figurative mark) may only be used as registered. Additions or modifications are not permitted.

### 11.1.3 Advertising with laboratory analysis according to EBC standard

If an analysis of the biochar has been carried out by an accredited laboratory (see list at <https://www.european-biochar.org/en/ct/10>) in accordance with the EBC standard, but no EBC certification was obtained, the lack of certification must be pointed out in a suitable form when advertising the analysis result. Misleading statements in this regard should be avoided in any case. Permissible are for example formulations like "laboratory analysis after EBC standard\*", footnote: "not certified".

### 11.1.4 Contractual penalty

If the user of the warranty marks culpably violates the statutes of these trademarks, he is liable to pay a fine of 500, - EUR to 10,000, - EUR to the Foundation Ithaka Institute. The amount of the fine to be paid shall be determined by the Foundation Ithaka Institute at its reasonable discretion and, in the event of dispute, reviewed by a court of law as to its appropriateness. Accordingly, the Foundation Ithaka Institute deprives the user of the right to use the warranty marks.

## 11.2 Mandatory information on biochar

The shipping label for unprocessed EBC biochar must indicate the following information about the biochar:

- The application class of the biochar (EBC-Feed, EBC-AgroOrganic, EBC-Agro, EBC-Material)
- Organic carbon content ( $C_{org}$ )
- H / C<sub>org</sub> – ratio
- Nutrient content (N, P, K, Ca, Mg)
- The highest temperature reached in the pyrolysis process
- pH
- Specific surface area
- Water content
- Bulk density based on dry mass

Furthermore, the QR code of the certified batch assigned by the EBC must be printed on the packaging and the delivery note. The analytical parameters of the biochar uploaded by the accredited laboratory can thus be accessed via this QR code.

## 11.3 Production date and QR code

In addition to the QR code of the biochar batch, the production date must be noted on each packaging unit. For large packaging or storing units whose contents are produced over several days, the production period must be marked.

## 11.4 Mandatory information about biochar containing products

The shipping label and the biochar product packaging label shall include the following information:

- The application class of the biochar (EBC-Feed, EBC-AgroOrganic, EBC-Agro, EBC-Material)
- Organic carbon content of the biochar used in the product
- Biochar content in dry matter contained in the packaging unit

If different EBC application classes are used in a product, the end product may only bear the EBC quality grade corresponding to the lowest certified biochar in the product. EBC-Material is the lowest, EBC-Agro and EBC-AgroOrganic the medium quality designations and EBC- Feed is the highest quality.

Only biochar certified with EBC feed certification may be used for feed.

If several EBC certified biochars are mixed in the product, a corresponding averaged carbon content based on the weight of the blended biochar portions must be reported.

Certified resellers of biochar or biochar products do not need to name and identify the original company or production site of the biochar.

## 12. Control, quality management and certification

### 12.1 Principles of certification

The inspection of the European biochar certificate is coordinated worldwide by the independent, state-accredited inspection body bio.inspecta AG / q.inspecta GmbH. The inspection is carried out on site at each production facility. It takes place once a year. Producers are obliged to keep their production records up to date in accordance with their respective EBC instruction manual (see 12.6).

If a biochar producer desires to become EBC certified, their entire biochar production site must be inspected and certified, regardless of whether only one batch, several or all batches qualify for one of the EBC certificates.

Biochar from non-EBC certified production batches may not be sold to agriculture or livestock farming.

Biochar processing companies may be exempted from the annual inspection visit to the production site if they can prove that they process less than 10 t of biochar per year. In such cases, compliance with the production and quality guidelines is evaluated by the government accredited inspection body by means of self-declaration and production protocols.

### 12.2 EBC-certified companies

For EBC certification, a distinction is made between three company types:

#### a) Biochar producer

Biochar producers operate pyrolysis plants and manufacture EBC-certified biochar from biomass. Additionally, they may grind, screen and/or package biochar.

If the biochar is further processed by other, non-pyrolytic process steps (e.g. by charging it with nutrients, mixing it into compost, fermentation, activation or blending with other products), an additional EBC certification as a processing company is required. Only biochar produced by the company itself may be stored on the premises, otherwise additional certification as a processing company or trader is required.

An initial audit by the Ithaka Institute and an annual inspection visit by the accredited inspection body are mandatory. The representative sampling must be carried out by an accredited sampler. The instruction manual for quality assurance issued by the Ithaka Institute must be present.

#### (b) Processing companies and traders

Processing companies purchase or produce EBC-certified biochar and use it to manufacture new, biochar-based products. Common processes are the blending of biochar with additives, activation by thermal processes (production of activated carbon), enhancement by biological

and/or chemical treatment or mechanical processing. Furthermore, the mixing of different EBC-certified production batches, which may also be purchased from different EBC-certified manufacturers, also falls under the category of processing.

The trade of unpackaged, loose goods (e.g. containers) or repackaging of purchased biochar is also subject to the inspection and certification obligation for biochar processing plants.

The initial audit is carried out by the accredited inspection body, which also determines the processing protocols and the protocols for documenting the flow of goods with the processing companies.

### **(c) Trader of packaged goods**

The mere trade by third parties of pre-packaged biochar and biochar-based products labelled by the certified manufacturer according to EBC regulations is not subject to any further inspection and certification obligation.

Therefore, if a non-certified company or person sells EBC-certified biochar or biochar-based products, both the certified manufacturer and the biochar batch must be clearly traceable. The certified manufacturer must therefore be named on the label and delivery note. Consequently, the label affixed by an EBC certified company must not be altered, pasted over or removed. If the original label is removed or covered over, the goods are no longer considered EBC certified. Additional labels, however, may be applied alongside the original labels.

If the original manufacturer is not named on the packaging or the delivery note and the goods are thus relabelled, the company placing the goods on the market must then be EBC certified, otherwise it may not label the goods as EBC certified.

The relabelling of closed packaging of certified biochar and biochar based products is subject to the certification obligation, which does not require an on-site audit, but is carried out by digital remote evaluation.

## **12.3 Registration for certification**

To register for certification, please contact the controlling body bio.inspect AG / q.inspecta GmbH. For producers of biochar, an initial audit by the Ithaca Institute is carried out before the first inspection by q.inspecta.

It is highly recommended that new biochar producers contact q.inspecta before commencing operations to ensure all required recording procedures are initiated and incorporated into the production processes.

bio.inspecta AG  
q.inspecta GmbH  
Ackerstrasse  
CH-5070 Frick  
+41 (0) 62 865 63 00

+41 (0) 62 865 63 01  
[admin@bio-inspecta.ch](mailto:admin@bio-inspecta.ch)

#### 12.4 Initial audit of biochar producers

The initial audit of biochar producers is carried out by the Ithaka Institute. The aim of the initial audit is to adapt the requirements of the EBC with regard to accredited sampling and quality assurance to the specific production facility and technology of the respective company. For this purpose, a specific EBC instruction manual is prepared for each production plant, which defines the method and frequency of accredited sampling, the type of retained samples, the determination of dry weights and the plant's own quality control.

During the initial audit, the training of the producer appointed on-site EBC quality manager and the preparation of all necessary documents for the control by the accredited inspection body also takes place.

The initial audit of biochar producers includes the following steps:

- 1) The company first completes the company description document provided by the inspection body, which already contains the most important technical details.
- 2) In a video conference between the company to be certified and the Ithaka Institute, the first open questions are clarified and the scope of the on-site visit clarified
- 3) On-site visit (usually one working day).
- 4) Follow-up of the documents by the Ithaka Institute
- 5) Final videoconference with release of the EBC instruction manual

Fundamental changes in operational procedures or personnel changes must be reported and may lead to a repetition of the initial audit and an adaptation of the EBC instruction manual. The accredited inspection body may also order a new initial audit due to operational changes that prevent the inspection visit from being carried out in a meaningful way.

Processors and traders of biochar are subject to an initial audit by the inspection body bio.inspecta AG, but do not need a separate initial audit by the Ithaca Institute.

#### 12.5 EBC instruction manual

The present EBC guidelines describe the basic requirements for EBC certification. For biochar producers, the EBC instruction manual based on these guidelines describes the exact implementation of these rules. This includes:

- Organization of the operating documentation,
- Procedure for the annual inspection visits
- Responsibilities of the EBC quality manager
- Requirements for occupational health and safety

- Flow charts for representative sampling
- Flow chart and documentation for taking and storing the retention samples
- Additional analyses of critical or strongly varying parameters (e.g. PAH, heavy metals, foreign contamination of biomasses, etc.).
- Determination of the dry matter content for each individual packaging unit, if the C-sink potential is to be determined for the individual batches

The EBC instruction manual is a contract between the EBC-certified company and the Ithaka Institute. Any change to the EBC instruction manual must be documented and signed by both parties. The instruction manual is treated confidentially by the inspection body and Ithaka Institute.

Processing companies and biochar traders do not receive a separate instruction manual.

## 12.6 EBC quality manager

The management of the certified company must appoint a quality manager who is familiar with the effects of the various production processes on the quality of the biochar. The quality manager must be authorised within the company to implement measures to ensure and control the quality of the biochar and to document them.

The quality manager is the contact person for the accredited inspection body (bio.inspecta) and the Ithaka Institute as EBC label holder. If there is a change of personnel in the position of quality manager, the inspection body and the Ithaka Institute must be informed immediately. The handover of the EBC instruction manual and the associated responsibility must be documented. If an orderly handover cannot be completed, a new initial audit must be carried out by the Ithaka Institute.

In the first year and later at least once per certification period, the quality manager is obliged to participate in external trainings of the EBC on the production, quality assurance and application of biochar. The training must be approved by the responsible management.

The quality manager has to ensure the proper documentation and evaluation of the operational processes that influence the quality of the biochar. The documentation must be continuously updated and should be regularly submitted to the management of the company. Information about detected defects must be immediately forwarded to the responsible employees and the defects must be corrected.

The quality manager is the contact person for his colleagues in case of disturbances in the production process. He may delegate individual control and documentation tasks to other employees. In this case, he must instruct the responsible employees and monitor the proper execution of the assigned tasks.

## 13. References

Deutsche Bundes-Bodenschutz- und Altlastenverordnung (BBodSchV), 1999, latest amendment 31.7.2009

1. Huygens, D.; Saveyn, H.; Tonini, D.; Eder, P.; Delgado Sancho, P. *Technical proposals for selected new fertilising materials under the Fertilising Products Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2019/1009)*; Brussels.
2. EU-Commission *Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2164 on organic production and labelling of organic products*; Brussels, 2019.
3. Gy, P. Sampling of discrete materials—a new introduction to the theory of sampling. *Chemom. Intell. Lab. Syst.* **2004**, *74*, 7–24.
4. Schimmelpfennig, S.; Glaser, B. One Step Forward toward Characterization: Some Important Material Properties to Distinguish Biochars. *J. Environ. Qual.* **2012**, *41*, 1001.
5. Yang, H.; Kudo, S.; Hazeyama, S.; Norinaga, K.; Mašek, O.; Hayashi, J. Detailed Analysis of Residual Volatiles in Chars from the Pyrolysis of Biomass and Lignite. *Energy & Fuels* **2013**, 130531120623003.
6. Spokas, K. A.; Novak, J. M.; Stewart, C. E.; Cantrell, K. B.; Uchimiya, M.; DuSaire, M. G.; Ro, K. S. Qualitative analysis of volatile organic compounds on biochar. *Chemosphere* **2011**, *85*, 869–882.
7. Camps-Arbestain, M.; Amonette, J. E.; Singh, B.; Wang, T.; Schmidt, H.-P. A biochar classification system and associated test methods. In *Biochar for environmental management*; Lehmann, J.; Joseph, S., Eds.; Routledge: London, 2015; pp. 165–194.
8. BBodSchV *Bundes-Bodenschutz- und Altlastenverordnung*; Deutsches Bundesamt für Umwelt: Berlin, 1999.
9. *Abfallverordnung-VVEA Verordnung über die Vermeidung und die Entsorgung von Abfällen*; Der Schweizerische Bundesrat: Bern, 2015.
10. Fagernäs, L.; Kuoppala, E.; Tiilikkala, K.; Oasmaa, A. Chemical Composition of Birch Wood Slow Pyrolysis Products. *Energy & Fuels* **2012**, *26*, 1275–1283.
11. Bucheli, T. D.; Hilber, I.; Schmidt, H. P. Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and polychlorinated aromatic compounds in biochar. In *Biochar for environmental management: Science and technology*; earthscan, London, U., Ed.; 2015.
12. Li, H.; Qu, R.; Li, C.; Guo, W.; Han, X.; He, F.; Ma, Y.; Xing, B. Bioresource Technology Selective removal of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons ( PAHs ) from soil washing effluents using biochars produced at different pyrolytic temperatures. *Bioresour. Technol.* **2014**, *163*, 193–198.
13. Hilber, I.; Arrigo, Y.; Zuber, M.; Bucheli, T. D. Desorption Resistance of Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons in Biochars Incubated in Cow Ruminant Liquid in Vitro and in Vivo. *Environ. Sci. Technol.* **2019**, *53*, 13695–13703.
14. ChemRRV *Verordnung zur Reduktion von Risiken beim Umgang mit bestimmten besonders gefährlichen Stoffen, Zubereitungen und Gegenständen*; Bern, 2020.

15. Justiz, B. *Verordnung über Deponien und Langzeitlager (Deponieverordnung- DepV)*; Bundesministerium für Justiz: Berlin, 2009.
16. Bucheli, T. D.; Hilber, I.; Schmidt, H.-P. Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and polychlorinated aromatic compounds in biochar. In *Biochar for Environmental Management*; Lehmann, J.; Joseph, S., Eds.; Routledge: London, 2015; pp. 595–624.
17. Brown, R.; Campo, B. del; Boateng, A. A.; Garcia-Perez, M.; Masek, O. Fundamentals of biochar production. In *Biochar for environmental management*; Lehmann, J.; Joseph, S., Eds.; Routledge: London, 2015; pp. 39–62.
18. Parliament, E. *COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) No 575/2011 of 16 June 2011*; Brussels, 2011.
19. Parliament, E. *Directive 2002/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 May 2002 on undesirable substances in animal feed - Council statement*; 2002; p. Official Journal L 140, 30/05/2002 P. 0010-0022.
20. Schmidt, H.-P.; Hagemann, N.; Draper, K.; Kammann, C. The use of biochar in animal feeding. *PeerJ* **2019**, *7*, e7373.
21. Bucheli, T. D.; Bachmann, H. J.; Blum, F.; Bürge, D.; Giger, R.; Hilber, I.; Keita, J.; Leifeld, J.; Schmidt, H.-P. On the heterogeneity of biochar and consequences for its representative sampling. *J. Anal. Appl. Pyrolysis* **2014**, 1–6.

## Annex 1

### Analytical Methods for EBC-biochar

#### Basic Package

##### **Sample preparation (DIN 51701-3):**

After homogenization, the sample is divided representatively into portions. This subsampling is done by quartering (quarter method) of the homogenized sample. Approximately 100 g of the original sample are used for the determination of the conductivity, the salt content and pH. A portion of the sample is dried at 40 ° C and is divided into some subsamples after drying and homogenization. Approximately 250 g of the 40 ° C dried and uncrushed sample is used to determine the true density and the BET surface of the material. Approximately 50 g of the 40 ° C dried sample is finely ground in a vibratory mill. After homogenization the fine material is subsampled for further analysis (i.e. PAH, TGA, ash, CHN, S, trace and major elements). Unless otherwise specified, the particle size of the analytical samples are specified by the respective methods and standards.

##### **Bulk density (analogue VDLUFA-Method A 13.2.1):**

To calculate bulk density a dried, water free sample of at least 300 ml is poured into a graduated cylinder and the mass is determined by weighting. The volume of the sample is read after 10 times compression by means of falling. The bulk density (on dry matter base) in kg / m<sup>3</sup> is calculated from the mass and the volume of the sample.

##### **Electrical conductivity (salt content) - Method of the BGK (Federal quality community compost), volume 1, method III. C2 – in analogy to DIN ISO 11265:**

Adding 20 g of the sample to 200 ml desalinated water and shaking it for 1 hour, followed by filtration of the solution. The conductivity is then measured using the filtrated water. The correction of temperature is automatically done in the measuring device. The electrical conductivity is given for a solution at 25°C. The salt content is calculated using the factor 52,8 [mg KCl/l]/[10<sup>-4</sup>/cm] and is given in mg KCl/l. This is based on the conductivity (14,12 \* 10<sup>-4</sup> S/cm) of a 0,01 molar KCl solution.

##### **pH-value DIN ISO 10390 (CaCl<sub>2</sub>):**

A minimum of 5 ml of the air-dried sample is placed in a glass vessel. Five times the volume (25 ml) of a 0.01 M CaCl<sub>2</sub> solution is added. The suspension is overhead rotated for 1 h. The suspension obtained is directly measured with a pH meter.

##### **Water content according to DIN 51718:**

Method A / two-step method (Reference method for coal)

### raw moisture

The sample (100 to 1000 g) is spread evenly in a drying bowl crucible, weighed with 0,1 g accuracy and dried in an oven at  $(40 \pm 2)^\circ\text{C}$  until the mass is constant. If necessary, the sample is divided and dried in more than one crucible.

Analysis: raw moisture (FG) in%

$$FG = \frac{m_E - m_R}{m_E} * 100$$

FG	=	raw moisture in %
$m_E$	=	mass of the sample before drying in g
$m_R$	=	mass of the sample after drying in g

### hygroscopic moisture

Hygroscopic moisture is the moisture held firmly within the pore structure of biochar. Measuring hygroscopic moisture will lead to an understanding of a particular biochar's ability to hold and release moisture.

A subsample of the air-dried and crushed (grain size  $< 1\text{ mm}$ ) sample is weighed immediately after the subsampling into a TGA crucible and is dried in a nitrogen atmosphere at  $(106 \pm 2)^\circ\text{C}$  to constant mass.

Evaluation: hygroscopic moisture (FH) in %

$$FH = \frac{m_E - m_R}{m_E} * 100$$

FH	=	hygroscopic moisture in %
$m_E$	=	mass of the sample before drying in g
$m_R$	=	mass of the sample after drying in g

### water content

Evaluation: water content (Wt) in %

$$W_t = FG + FH * \frac{100 - FG}{100}$$

$W_t$	=	water content in %
FG	=	raw moisture in %
FH	=	hygroscopic moisture in %

### Ash content (550 °C) analogue DIN 51719:

To determine the ash content in biochar two programs of the TGA (30 or 60 min) could be used. The weight determination of the crucible is carried out automatically. Enter the sample number for corresponding crucible position. Add 1,0 g of the sample to the ceramic crucible and spread the substance evenly in the crucible. Weighing is done automatically relative to the crucible position.

Runs the following heating program in the oven:

- heating with a rate of 5 K / min to  $106^\circ\text{C}$  under a nitrogen atmosphere to constant mass ( $\Delta m < 0,05\%$ ).
- temperature increase with 5 K / min to  $550^\circ\text{C}$  under oxygen atmosphere,
- hold this temperature for 30 or 60 min to constant mass ( $m < 0,05\%$ ).

The ash content is automatically determined and calculated for the sample used.

**Carbonate CO<sub>2</sub> analogue DIN 51726:**

1 g of pre-dried and ground sample is weighed to 0.2 mg and placed in the decomposition flask. The device consists of an absorption tower, which purges the air of carbon dioxide, the decomposition flask with an attachment to add the decomposition acid and three connected washing bottles. The carbon dioxide freed air is sucked through the system. After the system is purged and the washing bottles are filled with an absorbing solution of BaCl<sub>2</sub> and NaOH solution, 30 ml decomposition acid (hydrochloric acid with HgCl<sub>2</sub> as a catalyst and a wetting agent) are added to the decomposition flask. The content of the decomposition flask is boiled for about 10 minutes. The inert gas flow transports the carbon dioxide produced through the acidic solution in the first wash bottle in the other two wash bottles. In the second wash bottle, the carbon dioxide dissolves under consumption of base and is precipitated as barium carbonate. If something precipitates in the third wash bottle, the measurement must be repeated with a lower initial mass. The consumption of base in the second wash bottle is determined by a pH-titration using hydrochloric acid. The carbonate content of the sample is calculated from the base consumption and is calculated as CO<sub>2</sub>.

**CHN according to DIN 51732:**

A TruSpec CHN is used to measure carbon, hydrogen and nitrogen (CHN). The sample (80-100 mg of the pre-dried and crushed sample) is weighed directly (relative precision 0,1%) into a tin capsule. After that the capsule is closed and is placed in the machine for measurement. The TruSpec CHN determines CHN as a percentage of mass.

**Sulfur according to DIN 51724-3:**

The pre-dried and crushed sample is weighed in a ceramic crucible. With the aid of a catalyst layer of V<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> and at high temperatures (> 1300 ° C) the sulfur is oxidized in an oxygen stream. The resulting SO<sub>2</sub> is detected in an Infrared cell and is calculated with the sample mass as total sulfur content.

**Oxygen (calculation) according to DIN 51733:**

The oxygen content is a parameter derived from calculations. It is assumed that the biochar sample consists essentially of ash, carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, sulfur and oxygen. If one subtracts the ash, carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen and sulfur content in percent from 100 %, the result will be the oxygen content in percent.

**C<sub>org</sub>, H/C und O/C (calculation):**

Other quantities and ratios can be calculated from the determined data.

C<sub>org</sub> is derived from the total carbon content minus the inorganic carbon content (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the sample. The H content is analysed through CHN-analysis (see above).

**PAH analogue to DIN EN 15527: 2008-9 (extraction with Toluol); DIN EN 16181: 2019-08 with extraction method 2**

2,5 g of the pre-dried and crushed sample is weighed and palced into a extraction thimble and is extracted with 50 ml of toluene at reflux for two hours. The resulting extract is concentrated to 10 ml. An aliquot of the extract is transferred to an injection vial and the PAH are 43nalysed by gas chromatography.

Gas chromatograph: Network GC System 7890N and 5975C MSD and inertXL  
AS 7693 Fa: Agilent Techn

Capillary column: HP 5MS (30 mx 0.25 mm x 0.25 microns)

Temperature program: 90 ° C (0.5 min), 20 ° C / min to 250 ° C, 5 ° C / min to 275 ° C, 20 ° C / min  
to 320 ° C for 5 min

Transfer line: 280 ° C

MSD temperature: 150 ° C

Injection volume: 1 µl

Injector temperature: 250 ° C

Carrier gas: helium (1,5 ml / min)

**Trace metals after microwave-assisted digestion according to DIN 22022-2, DIN 22022-7, DIN EN ISO 17294-2 / DIN EN 1483:**

(Pb, Cd, Cu, Ni, Hg, Zn, Cr, B, Mn, As)

The pre-dried and crushed sample is weighed and palced into the reaction vessel of the microwave. 6 ml of nitric acid, 2,0 ml of hydrogen peroxide and 0,4 ml of hydrofluoric acid are added. The reaction vessel is sealed and is placed in the microwave.

Program flow of the microwave pressure digestion:

heating (room temperature to 190 ° C) in 15 min

holding time at 190 ° C for 20 minutes

free cooling

additional only for ICP-OES:

Program flow of the fluoride masking (Boric acid, adding 5 ml of saturated solution):

heating (room temperature to 160 ° C) in 8 minutes

holding time at 160 ° C for 7 minutes

free cooling

After complete cooling, the reaction vessels are opened and the digestion solution is transferred to in a 50 mL plastic volumetric flask and filled with deionized water.

The diluted solution is measured by ICP-MS (DIN EN ISO 17294-2).

To determine the levels of mercury DIN EN ISO 12846, DIN 22022-4; DIN EN ISO 17294-2, and DIN 22022-7 can be used.

**Main elements after melting digestion DIN 51729, DIN EN ISO 11885 / DIN EN ISO 17294-2: (P, Mg, Ca, K, Na, Fe, Si, S)**

The melting process is performed on the ashes of the biochar. 200 mg of the fine ash are weighed into a platinum crucible and thoroughly mixed with 2 g of lithium metaborate.

The platinum crucible is placed in a digestion oven. The digestion remains at least 15 minutes at 1050 ° C in the oven. The melt is dissolved in hydrochloric acid and filled to 500 ml.

The samples are measured with ICP-OES (DIN EN ISO 11885) or ICP-MS (DIN EN ISO 17294-2).

**Specific surface area following DIN ISO 9277 (BET) and DIN 66137 (density)**

The samples should be dried at 40°C and milled to a particle size < 3.15 mm. Nitrogen is used as the adsorption gas. Degassing temperature and time are set to 150°C and 2 hours.

The degassing has to be done under vacuum. The multipoint BET method should be applied.

## Annex 2

### Analytical Parameters for EBC-Feed

#### Trace metals As, Pb, Cd, Hg

##### DIN EN 15763:2010-04

0,1 g bis 1 g des getrockneten, gemahlene und homogenisierten Materials werden in einen Kunststoffbecher (PTFE, PFA) oder Quarzbecher für die Mikrowelle eingewogen. Nach Zugabe von 65%iger Salpetersäure im Verhältnis 1+5 (Einwaage+Säure) und nach Zugabe von 30%igem Wasserstoffperoxid im Verhältnis 1+2,5 bis 1+10 (Einwaage+Wasserstoffperoxid) wird bei der für das System maximal zulässigen Temperatur aufgeschlossen (in der Regel 190°C). Aufheizphase: 15 min; Haltezeit: 30 min. Nach dem Abkühlen wird quantitativ in ein Polypropylengefäß mit Volumenmarkierung überführt und mit 0,1 M Salpetersäure bis zur Marke aufgefüllt. Die Messung erfolgt mit ICP-MS oder ICP-OES. Beim Quecksilber werden Kaltdampf-AAS oder Atomfluoreszenzspektrometrie eingesetzt.

#### Benzo-A-Pyren for EBC-Feed

##### DIN EN 16181:2019-08 (extraction method 2)

Das Material wird zerkleinert (<1 mm) und bei maximal 35°C getrocknet. 10 g Probe werden mittels Soxhletextraktion 6 h mit Toluol unter Zugabe von geeigneten internen Standards extrahiert. Alternativ kann eine ASE Extraktion verwendet werden. Der Extrakt wird aufkonzentriert und entsprechend DIN ISO 13877 oder VDLUFA VII 3.3.3.2 mit Säulenchromatographie gereinigt. Die Messung und Quantifizierung des gereinigten Extraktes kann mit HPLC-FLD oder GC+Massenspektrometrie erfolgen. Geeignet sind MSD, MS/MS-, HRMS- oder TOF-Geräte.

#### PCB

##### DIN EN 16167, DIN EN 16215

The material is crushed into powder (<1 mm) and dried at a maximum of 35 ° C. Alternatively, it can be dried chemically or by freeze-drying. 5-10 g of sample are extracted by Soxhlet extraction with toluene for 6 h with the addition of suitable internal standards. Alternatively, an ASE extraction can be used. The extract is concentrated and purified according to VDLUFA VII 3.3.2.2 with silica gel column chromatography. The quantification of the purified extract is done with GC-MS or GC-ECD.

#### PCDD/PCDF/coplanare PCB

##### DIN EN 16190:2019-10, DIN EN 16215 Nr. 152/2009 (modified by Nr. 2017/771)

##### HRGC/HRMS method

The material is crushed into powder (<1 mm) and dried at a maximum of 35 ° C. Alternatively, freeze-drying can be used. After the addition of isotope-labeled standards, 2 g

of sample material are extracted with toluene in a Soxhlet for 20 h. Alternatively, special hot extractors such as the ASE can be used. After concentration, the extract is purified by multiple column chromatography and can be divided into different fractions. At this point it is also possible to obtain the DIN-PCB fraction. Finally, the components are measured with GC-HRMS.

### Fluor

**VDLUFA III 17.3.2, VDLUFA VII 2.2.2.1, DIN EN 16279:2012-09 (ion selective elektrode; according to VDLUFA VII 2.2.2.1), BAFU F-7 2017 (DIN 38405-4:1985-07)**

Das getrocknete und gemahlene Material wird verascht und mit Natriumhydroxid aufgeschlossen. Der erkaltete Aufschluss wird in Salzsäure unter Zugabe eines Komplexbildners (TISAB) gelöst. Anschließend wird ein pH-Wert von 5,5 eingestellt und der Fluoridgehalt mittels einer ionensensitiven Elektrode ermittelt.

### Carbon

**Permitted test methods:** DIN 51732

A TruSpec CHN (Manufacturer: Leco) is used.

The sample (80-100 mg of the pre-dried and crushed sample) is weighed directly (relative precision 0,1%) into a tin capsule. After that the capsule is closed and is put in the machine for measurement. The TruSpec CHN determines the carbon content, the hydrogen content and the nitrogen content in mass percent.

### Dry matter

**Permitted test methods: dry matter: DIN 51718; VDLUFA III 3.1;**

Mindestens 50 g der Probe werden entnommen und soweit erforderlich, unter Vermeidung von Feuchtigkeitsänderungen zerkleinert. 5 g Kohle werden auf 1 mg genau eingewogen und bei 103°C 4 h getrocknet. Nach dem Beladen des Ofens beginnt die Trocknungszeit erst nach genauem Erreichen der 103°C. Nach dem Abkühlen im Exsiccator wird auf 1 mg genau zurückgewogen.

### Crude ash

**Permitted test methods: analog to DIN 51719, VDLUFA III 8.1; HCl-insoluble ash: VDLUFA III 8.2**

Etwa 5 g Probe werden auf 1 mg genau in eine geglühte und tarierte Veraschungsschale eingewogen. Die Schale wird in einen Muffelofen gebracht und bei 550°C±5°C so lange belassen, bis keine Kohlepartikel mehr zu erkennen sind. Nach Abkühlung im Exsiccator wird auf 1 mg zurückgewogen. Bei schwierigen Proben erfolgt eine Ammoniumnitratbehandlung entsprechend Methode VDLUFA 8.1.

## Annex 3

### Additional Parameters

#### **Gross calorific value / net calorific value according to DIN 51900:**

To determine the calorific value a bomb calorimeter which fulfills the requirements of the stated standard is used. 0,3 to 0,8 g of pre-dried and ground sample is weighed into a combustion bag, capsule or crucible. The sample is mounted in the combustion bomb with an ignition wire and 10-20 ml of eluent in bottom part of the bomb. The bomb is placed into the calorimeter. The oxygen filling, the ignition and the measurement are done automatically. After combustion the bomb must be checked for signs of incomplete combustion. The gross calorific value is calculated using the calibration and measurement data. With further corrections, the net calorific value is calculated.

#### **Ash content (815 °C) DIN 51719:**

The ash content at 815 ° C is determined after determining the ash content at 550 ° C by rising the temperature from 550 ° C with 5 K / min to 815 ° C and holding until constant weight (mass difference  $\pm 0,05\%$ ) is reached.

#### **Volatile matter according to DIN 51720:**

1,0 g of the pre-dried and ground sample is placed into a crucible (with lid). The sample must form a uniformly thick layer on the bottom of the crucible. The crucible is placed in the oven preheated at  $900 \pm 5$  ° C. After 7 minutes ( $\pm 5$  sec), the crucible is removed from the oven and reweighed after cooling to room temperature. The volatile matter content is calculated from the mass loss of the sample.

#### **Water holding capacity (WHC) according to DIN EN ISO 14238, annex A**

Water-holding capacity. This can be measured using the method E DIN ISO 14238, appendix A. The test consists of soaking the 2mm fraction of the material in water for a period of 24 hours. After this, the material should be placed on a dry sand bed for 2 hours for removing free water. The saturated material should then be weighed and then dried at 40°C in a compartment dryer. After drying the material should be weighed again to estimate the water holding capacity.

#### **Thermogravimetric analysis (TGA):**

The TGA curve is determined, similar to how the ash content is measured, with the TGA. For this purpose, 1,0 g of pre-dried and ground sample is weighed in the TGA crucible. During the temperature rise from 30 ° C to 950 ° C with 10 K / min, the crucible is weighed at frequent intervals in the TGA furnace. The result is shown graphically.

#### **PCB**

VDLUFA VII 3.3.2.2 (DIN-PCB; hot extraction, GC-MS) DIN EN 16167:2019-06 (use extraction method 2 with Toluol and not with light petroleum), DIN 38414-20 and DIN EN 16215

The sample is crushed into powder (<1 mm) and dried at a maximum of 35 ° C. Alternatively, it can be dried chemically or by freeze-drying. 5-10 g of sample are extracted by Soxhlet extraction with toluene for 6 h with the addition of suitable internal standards. Alternatively, an ASE extraction can be used. The extract is concentrated and purified according to VDLUFA VII 3.3.2.2 with silica gel column chromatography. The quantification of the purified extract is done with GC-MS or GC-ECD.

**PCDD/PCDF/coplanare PCB****DIN EN 16190:2019-10, DIN EN 16215, (EG) Nr. 152/2009 (modified by Nr. 2017/771)****HRGC/HRMS method**

The sample is crushed into powder (<1 mm) and dried at a maximum of 35 ° C. Alternatively, freeze-drying can be used. After the addition of isotope-labeled standards, 2 g of sample material are extracted with toluene in a Soxhlet for 20 h. Alternatively, special hot extractors such as an ASE can be used. After concentration, the extract is purified by multiple column chromatography and can be divided into different fractions. At this point it is also possible to obtain the DIN-PCB fraction. Finally, the components are measured with GC-HRMS.

## Annex 4

### A4.1 Representative sampling

In order to obtain a biochar sample as representative as possible (in terms of accuracy and precision), a batch must be sampled within the first seven days of production according to the following exact methodology. An incremental cross-stream sampling guarantees the most representative sampling of the product.

#### **A. Pyrolysis systems with continuous production**

1. On three consecutive days, 8 samples of 3 liters each are taken at intervals of at least one hour directly at the discharge of the freshly produced material. This sampling can also be done by an appropriately adjusted automated cross-stream sampler.
2. The 24 subsamples are combined to form a composite sub-sample.
3. The taking of each of the 24 samples (= 3 x 8 daily samples) as well as the homogenisation and sample division must be documented with the exact sampling times in the sampling protocol delivered by the inspection body (bio.inspecta).

#### **B. Systems with non-continuous production processes**

1. The quantity of biochar from which a representative sample is to be taken from must be at least equal to the production volume of one day.
2. The biochar pile to be sampled must first be thoroughly mixed by moving it from one pile to another three times with a front loader or shovel.
3. At 24 different spots of the pile, samples of 3 liters each are taken.
4. The 24 subsamples are combined to form a composite sub-sample.
5. The sampling has to be documented in the sampling protocol delivered by the inspection body (bio.inspecta).

#### **C. Homogenizing and dividing of the sample**

The mixed sample of 24 x 3 liters = 72 liters can either be sent directly to the accredited laboratory where it shall be homogenized and divided into a representative analytical sample or the company proceeds as follows to produce a small representative analytical sample on its own.

1. If the particle size of the composite sub-sample is larger than 3 mm, it should be milled to < 3 mm, otherwise no representative sample division is possible.

2. The milled composite sub-sample is either divided by a mechanical sample divider to 2 to 2,5 l or homogenized according to the following instructions:
3. The milled composite sub-sample (total 72 liters) is poured onto a clean surface and then shoveled three times from one pile to another.
4. A sub-sample of 1,5 l is then taken at 15 spots in the mixed pile.
5. The 15 subsamples are again poured together.
6. The new 22,5 l subsample has then to be homogenized thoroughly by turning and piling it 3 times upside-down.
7. From the mixed pile of the 22,5 l subsample, 15 subsamples of 150 ml each shall now be taken at 15 different spots in the pile and united.

The samples to be sent to the accredited laboratory have to be labelled with the QR code generated on the EBC website.

The expected uncertainties in regard to accuracy and precision were described in detail by Bucheli et al. [21] and will be taken into account by the EBC when evaluating the results. The aim of the prescribed sampling method is to achieve a well characterized cross-sectional sample.