CERTIFICATION

QB - UPEC Certification Reference System:

Systems of laminate floor coverings

Identification No: QB 26
Revision No: 01
Date brought into application: 01/11/2016

The French version shall prevail.

CENTRE SCIENTIFIQUE ET TECHNIQUE DU BATIMENT – ORGANISME CERTIFICATEUR
84 avenue Jean Jaurès – Champs-sur-Marne – 77447 Marne-la-Vallée Cedex 2
Tel. (33) 01 64 68 82 82 – Fax (33) 01 64 68 89 94 – www.cstb.fr
MARNE-LA-VALLÉE / PARIS / GRENOBLE / NANTES / SOPHIA-ANTIPOLIS

Table of contents

This certification reference system was approved by the CSTB Technical Department on August 9th 2016.

It cancels and replaces all previous versions.

As a certifying body accredited by the COFRAC under the number 5-0010, accreditation range available at www.cofrac.fr, CSTB undertakes to draft certification reference systems that guarantee an appropriate level of requirements for the quality of the products, their suitability for use and their durability.

This certification reference system may therefore be revised, in whole or in part, by CSTB, after the interested parties have been consulted in accordance with the requirements in Standard NF X 50-067.

MODIFICATION HISTORY

Modified Part	Revision No.	Date brought into application	Modification made
Whole document	00	01/12/2014	Creation of the certification reference system: transition from homologation to certification
Whole document	01	01/11/2016	Terms of transition to QB mark

The specific committee set a final date for the actual replacement of the UPEC mark by the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification:

- for the marking on certified products, the packaging of the products and the products' accompanying documents: 31st December 2018,
- for the communication media or commercial documents: 31st December 2018.

The marking procedures during this transition period are defined in paragraph 2.5.

Part 1
Application

1.1 Scope

This certification reference system concerns to this date the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification for systems of laminate floor coverings.

The QB mark strives to inspect the safety characteristics for people and goods, the suitability for use and the durability of the products, as well as any complementary characteristics to enable them to stand out in the market.

1.2 Certification added value

Certification is recognition by a third party of the conformity of the characteristics demonstrating the added value of the product.

The QB mark associated with the UPEC classification is the exclusive property of CSTB whose registered office is at 84, avenue Jean-Jaurès, 77420 CHAMPS SUR MARNE, by virtue of the depository as simple classification mark made to INPI on its behalf.

It is a collective mark of certification on products and classification mark of premises for which the use is authorized within the defined conditions of the general requirements of the QB mark and by this certification reference system.

The QB certification associated with the UPEC classification is a use classification of the floor coverings regarding their performances. It indicates the proper use for each product in considered premises, with sufficient and reasonable durability.

The certified characteristics of the QB – UPEC application for systems of laminate floor coverings are the following:

- UPEC classification (wear, indentation, water resistance and resistance to chemical agents)
- Dimensions;
- Squareness, straightness, openings between elements, height difference between elements;
- Surface soundness;
- Abrasion resistance;
- Thickness swelling;
- Impact resistance;
- Locking strength;
- Effect of a furniture leg;
- Effect of a castor chair.

These certified characteristics are assessed under CSTB's responsibility, with the following inspection resources:

	Admission	Continued monitoring
Production audit carried out by a qualified technical auditor: - Verification that the production inspections and records have been carried out: raw materials, production, finished products, - Verification of the quality command provisions: calibration, conditioning, warehouse, traceability, marking on product or packaging, management of customer complaints and non-conforming products.	***Yes***	***Yes*** ***Frequency:*** ***1 audit every 2 years ****
Tests carried out by a laboratory recognised by the certifying body (independent and competent): - Samples taken by the certification body and from the production site of the certificate holder.	***Yes***	***Yes*** ***Frequency :*** ***1 annual test campaign*****

* The audit frequency may be increased to 1 annual audit whenever critical non-conformities are observed (depending on the relevance of corrective actions).
** During the year without audit the certificate holder shall send the products to the laboratory according to the sampling program of CSTB.

1.3 Applying for certification

Any legal entity:

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

may request the right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification for laminate floor coverings.

Such a request is referred to as "application", while the entity which makes it is known as the "applicant".

The applicant submits its application to the certification body. It is accompanied by all the useful information concerning the given products, the production conditions and quality control to ensure compliance of the products with this certification reference system.

An application form and the list of information to be supplied to support an application are appended to this certification reference system.

Specific case of production subcontracting by an applicant

The applicant may subcontract part of the manufacture of his products covered by this certification reference system.

If so, he undertakes to:

- Be responsible for the effectiveness of the production control system as a whole in accordance with this certification reference system;
- Be able to provide on the one hand the specifications that define the inspection operations that he imposes on his subcontractor in order to comply with the requirements in this certification system, on the other hand the evidence regarding the subcontractor's skills in complying with those requirements.

If the applicant does not respect all the previous points, he is exposed to the withdrawal or suspension of the application.

Part 2
The certification scheme

The certification scheme for the QB – UPEC application for laminate floor coverings contains this certification reference system which references:

- The QB mark General Rules which set the organisation and conditions for the use of the mark (see pages dedicated to UPEC);
- The technical and administrative appendix to the certification reference system;
- The standards and the complementary specifications.

This certification reference system is consonant with the framework of the certification of products and services other than alimentary, as provided for in the Consumer Code (articles R-433-1 to R 433-2 and L 433-3 to L 433-11). It specifies the conditions for applying the General Requirements of the QB mark to products defined in Part 1.

2.1 Regulations

The granting of the right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification can in no way substitute CSTB's responsibility for the legal responsibility on the company which holds the QB mark usage right associated with the UPEC classification.

As regards to the regulatory requirements covered by this certification reference system, the applicant/holder shall submit to the certification body during the certification audits the documentary evidence defined in the regulations and attesting to the compliance of his product with the regulatory requirements.

Note: If the documentary evidence is not handled or available on the site where the audit is being conducted, this evidence shall be submitted to the certification body, using any appropriate means before the certification body ends its assessment.

The applicant/holder is held responsible to the certification body for any inaccurate, deceptive and/or non-compliant documentary evidence with regard to the definition of documentary evidence as laid down in the regulations.

The certification body’s tasks do not lie in proving conformity of a product to the regulatory requirements listed in this document. Those tasks are strictly incumbent upon the bodies approved by the authorities in charge of applying each of the regulations concerned.

The regulations applicable for launching products on the French market and for which the applicant/holder shall submit to the certification body a document attesting to the conformity of his product to the regulations are listed below.

Regulations	Documentary evidence required
Regulation (EU) No 305/2011 of the European Parliament and Council of the 9th of March 2011. The products related to the standard EN 14041: 2005 moving in the European market are submitted to the CE marking regarding the Regulation (EU) No 305/2011 of the European Parliament and Council of the 9th of March 2011 laying down harmonized conditions for the marketing of construction products and repealing Council Directive 89/106/EEC.	DoP
Art. L. 221-10 from decree 2011-321: *Les produits de construction et d'ameublement ainsi que les revêtements muraux et de sol, les peintures et vernis […] sont soumis à une obligation d'étiquetage des polluants volatils à partir du 1er janvier 2012.*	Labelling

2.2 The standards and complementary specifications

The products concerned by this certification reference system shall comply with the applicable standard for the related level of use (or class).

EN 13329, *Laminate floor coverings – Elements with a surface layer based on aminoplastic thermosetting resins – Specifications, requirements and test methods*;

associated to one or several dissociated or acoustic underlays as defined in the book of technical instructions "Cahier des Prescriptions Techniques (CPT)" for laminate floor coverings in floating laying "*Systèmes de revêtements de sol stratifiés posés flottants*" ("*e-Cahier*" from CSTB, "*cahier 3642*" from September 2008).

A part of the requirements from the standard EN 13329 is described in **Table 1 of the technical and administrative appendix**.

In addition to the requirements of European class for the laminate floor covering, the products shall comply with the required UPEC classification regarding the complementary specifications laid down in **Table 2 of the technical and administrative appendix.**

Moreover complementary requirements are described:
- in **Table 3** for assembly systems without glue;
- in **Table 4** for products with bevel edges.

For the references that indicate a date of implementation or an index, only the version cited is applicable. For references that do not indicate a date of implementation or index, the most recent version of the reference document applies (including any amendments).

2.3 Modification declaration

This paragraph specifies the information that the holder of the right to use the QB mark must provide to CSTB and the procedures he must follow in the event of any modifications to:

- The certificate holder;
- The manufacturing unit;
- The quality organisation of the manufacturing unit;
- The product.

Failure to respect this obligation as observed by CSTB may lead to a suspension or withdrawal of the right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification.

In previously unforeseen cases, CSTB determines whether the modifications bring the certification into question and if it is necessary to carry out an additional control.

Depending upon the results of the examination, CSTB communicates the appropriate decision.

2.3.1 MODIFICATION CONCERNING THE HOLDER

The holder shall communicate in writing to CSTB any legal modification of his company or any modification in his company name.

In case of merging, liquidation or absorption of the holder, all rights to use the QB mark, to which he might benefit, automatically stop.

A new admission application may be submitted and its examination may be moderated depending upon the modifications made.

2.3.2 MODIFICATION CONCERNING THE MANUFACTURING UNIT

Any transfer (total or partial) of the manufacturing unit of a certified product to another production site entails an immediate halt in the QB marking associated with the UPEC classification by the holder on the products concerned.

The holder shall declare this transfer in writing to CSTB which will organise an audit of the new production unit and, as the case may be, have tests carried out.

The visit may be reduced or even cancelled when the new manufacturing unit is already familiar to CSTB.

The procedures of assessment and of renewal decision of the certification are the same as those for admission as described in Part 3 of this certification reference system.

2.3.3 MODIFICATION CONCERNING THE MANUFACTURING UNIT'S QUALITY ORGANISATION

The holder shall declare in writing to CSTB any modification relative to his quality organisation which might affect the conformity of the production to the requirements of this certification reference system.

In particular, they shall declare any modification in the certification of their quality management system. If the distribution is carried out by a third party, where appropriate, the holder shall undertake to immediately inform CSTB of any modification made to the distribution of his products, and in particular any halt in supply by the designated third party.

Any temporary halt in the internal quality assurance operation for a certified product entails an immediate halt in the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification of this product by the holder who must inform CSTB of this.

CSTB then communicates to the holder a decision to suspend the right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification for a specific duration following which, if the right of use cannot be re-established, this holder's right to use the QB marking associated with the UPEC classification will be withdrawn.

2.3.4 MODIFICATION CONCERNING THE CERTIFIED PRODUCT

Any modification to the certified product when compared with the application dossier likely to have an effect on the product's compliance with the requirements in the certification reference system shall be declared in writing to CSTB.

Depending on the modification declared, CSTB determines whether this is a certification extension application.

2.3.5 TEMPORARY OR DEFINITIVE HALT IN PRODUCTION

Any definitive or temporary halt in the manufacture of the certified product (or range or products) or any abandonment of a right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification shall be declared in writing to CSTB, specifying the time necessary to sell off the inventory of the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification labelled products. The suspension or withdrawal of the right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification is notified to the holder by CSTB. When the period indicated by the holder expires, the product is removed from the list of certified products.

Any temporary halt in the manufacture of the certified product (or range or products) must be the subject of a suspension of the right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification for a maximum period of 6 months, renewable only once if necessary. The total duration of the suspension of the right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification for these products must not exceed one year. The lifting of the suspension may only be announced following the assessments: audits and/or tests.

2.3.6 MODIFICATION CONCERNING THE DISTRIBUTION CIRCUIT

The holder shall commit himself to inform CSTB of any modification to the distribution of the certified products as soon as he becomes aware of such modification and, in particular, whenever he stops supplying a distributor who holds the right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification, which means that the right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification is no longer maintained.

The distributor, whose right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification has been maintained shall commit himself to inform CSTB of any modifications in his supplies that would result in the right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification no longer being maintained. The distributor's right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification can only be validated after a new examination in accordance with Part 3 of this certification reference system.

2.4 The quality management provisions: audit reference system

2.4.1 PURPOSE

Applicants/holders and their distributors holders of a maintenance of the right of use the mark are responsible for the right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification relative to the product in question.

Applicants/holders shall implement all the necessary ways and means to permanently guarantee the product's conformity with this certification reference system. In addition, they must ensure the command of their external service providers using all methods to assess all the component elements of a product or external service(s) for which they are the applicant or holder of the right to use the certification mark.

This paragraph sets the minimum provisions that the applicant/holder shall implement in terms of quality management to ensure that the products are manufactured respecting the certification reference system at all times.

The quality system depends in part on the establishment by the applicant/holder of a series of organisational systems enabling the conformity of the delivered products with standards and complementary specifications. These measures are described in paragraph 2.4.2 below.

2.4.2 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The applicant/holder shall have implemented the ways and means which he possesses, the existence and effectiveness of which have been assessed based on the requirements of Standard EN ISO 9001:

- EN ISO 9001 revision 2008 (applicable until 15 September 2018), and
- EN ISO 9001 revision 2015 (applicable from 15 September 2015).

If the manufacturing unit is not EN ISO 9001-certified, the applicant/holder must justify the introduction of a range of organisational provisions and a production control system to control conformity with the standards and complementary specifications for the delivered products that meet at least the requirements in this certification reference system.

The audits are carried out according to Table 1 as follows. This table indicates the specific requirements in Standard EN ISO 9001 which must be verified in the context of the certification.

Within the framework of an audit, all the necessary requirements identified on the shaded lines in Table 1 below, shall be audited. All the other applicable requirements pertaining to quality management shall be audited over a period of 3 years.

Possible reduction:

If the manufacturing unit has a certified quality management system that conforms to Standard EN ISO 9001, the audits may be "reduced". Only the requirements identified on a "shaded" line in Table 1 are to be audited.

This reduction is possible as long as:

- The ISO 9001 certificate includes within its scope and domain the sites and activities covered by the certification mark; and
- The ISO 9001 certificate is issued by a certification body accredited by the COFRAC or by a member of the EA (European cooperation for Accreditation) or by a member of the IAF (International Accreditation Forum) - see signatories on the COFRAC website www.cofrac.fr, and
- The last ISO 9001 audit report from the body is forwarded to CSTB prior to the body's audit, or examined during the body's audit.

Table1 (Applicable requirements)

§ ISO 9001: 2008	§ ISO 9001: 2015	REQUIREMENTS	MINIMUM EVIDENCE EXPECTED	APPLICABLE (NA = not applicable)
4. Context of the organization				
-	4.1.	Understanding the organization and its context	-	NA
-	4.2.	Understanding the needs and expectations of interested parties	-	NA
1	4.3.	Determining the scope of the quality management system	-	NA
4.1.	4.4.	Quality management system and its processes	-	NA
5. Leadership				
5.1.	5.1.	Leadership and commitment	-	NA
5.3.	5.2.	Policy	-	NA
5.5.1 / 5.5.2.	5.3.	Organizational roles, responsibilities and authorities	* Organization chart * Description of responsibilities and authorities (examples: organization chart, job sheets, etc.) * Person appointed to be responsible for organizing and efficiently implementing the production system	■ < A retenir pour les personnes chargées du contrôle ou ayant un impact direct sur les points critiques de la réalisation du produit > All the items except: * ISO 9001 V15 : §5.3 c,d
5.5.3.	7.4.	Communication		NA
6. Planning				
-	6.1.	Actions to address risks and opportunities	-	NA
5.4.	6.2.	Quality objectives and planning to achieve them	-	NA
-	6.3.	Planning of change *(SMQ)*		NA

§ ISO 9001: 2008	§ ISO 9001: 2015	REQUIREMENTS	MINIMUM EVIDENCE EXPECTED	APPLICABLE (NA = not applicable)
7. Support				
6.1.	7.1.1.	Resources – General	-	NA
6.3.	7.1.3.	Infrastructure	-	NA
6.4.	7.1.4.	Environment for the operation of processes	Evidence of the maintenance of the work environment. Examples: Storage of a product and its components to protect them from bad weather, adapted ambient conditions, etc.	■ < A retenir pour les processus liés à la réalisation des produits/services >
7.6.	7.1.5.	Monitoring and measuring resources	* List of the inspection, measuring and test equipment used on the product/service production site and/or in the laboratory, * Identification of the equipment used to determine their validity, * Planning for the verification or calibration of the equipment having an impact on the validity of the results (in particular the equipment used to perform tests on certified characteristics), * Evidence of the verification and/or calibration operations (ex: equipment data sheet, verification or calibration report, etc.), * Evidence of connection to national or international standards (where possible), * Validation of software used to monitor and measure the specified requirements, where appropriate.	■ < A retenir pour les processus liés à la réalisation des produits/services >
-	7.1.6.	Organizational knowledge	-	NA
6.2.	7.2.	Competence	* Compliance with test methods and inspection provisions. * Actions planned to acquire the necessary competence (training, tutoring, etc.), where appropriate.	■ < A retenir pour les personnes chargées du contrôle ou ayant un impact direct sur les points critiques de la réalisation du produit >
6.2.2.d	7.3.	Awareness	-	NA

§ ISO 9001: 2008	§ ISO 9001: 2015	REQUIREMENTS	MINIMUM EVIDENCE EXPECTED	APPLICABLE (NA = not applicable)
4.2.	7.5.	Documented information	* List of the internal and external documented information. Examples: Procedures, operating methods, test methods, inspection instructions, quality records * Evidence of control of internal and external documents Example: Availability of the applicable version of the test method, the reference system, the inspection provisions, etc.	■ < A retenir pour les processus liés à la réalisation des produits/services > All the items except: * ISO 9001 v08 : § 4.2.1., 4.2.2 *Note: Quality manuals are no longer required*.
8. Operation				
7.1.	8.1.	Operational planning and control	-	NA *Note: Operational control:* *Same as § ISO 9001 v08 7.5.1. / 7.5.2. and § ISO 9001 v14 : 8.5.1.*
7.2.	8.2.2.	Requirements for products and services	-	NA
7.3.	8.3.	Design and development of products and services	-	NA
7.4.	8.4.	Control of externally provided processes, products and services	* List of the service providers * Contract / order defining the requirements of the applicant / holder of the certification * Evidence of the verification of raw materials, components ***(1)***, services purchased * Evidence of the verification of subcontracting conditions: transport, handling, tests ***(2)***, etc.	■ < A retenir pour les matières premières, les composants achetés et pour les prestations externes ayant une incidence sur la qualité du produit/service > <u>External providers:</u> * supplier of raw materials, components, services integrated into the product/service * subcontractor of external services (ex: tests, handling, transport, etc.) *<u>(*) Specific case of applicants/holders subcontracting part of their production</u>* *CSTB audits the subcontractors (as provided for in the certification reference system)* All the items except: * ISO 9001 v08 : § 7.4.1. * ISO 9001 v15 : § 8.4.1.

§ ISO 9001 : 2008	§ ISO 9001 : 2015	REQUIREMENTS	MINIMUM EVIDENCE EXPECTED	APPLICABLE (NA = not applicable)
7.5.1 / 7.5.2.	8.5.1.	Control of production and service provision	* Information defining the characteristics of products and services. Example: product plan / description of the service, etc. * Information defining the activities to be carried out and the results to be obtained. Examples: operating method(s), working instruction(s), test method(s), certification reference system (expected performance) * Monitoring and measurement activities Examples: Monitoring plan, inspection procedures and instruction(s), test method(s), etc. * Conservation of documented information proving the conformity of products/services with the acceptance criteria *(Same as § 8.2.4. ISO 9001 v08 and § 8.6.ISO 9001 v14)*	■
7.5.3.	8.5.2.	Identification and traceability	* Identification / Marking of the product in accordance with the requirements in the Certification reference system *Marking of commercial documents in compliance with this certification reference system.	■ < A retenir dans tous les cas pour l'identification (et pour la traçabilité si pertinent) >
7.5.4.	8.5.3.	Property belonging to customers or external providers	-	NA
7.5.5.	8.5.4.	Preservation	Verifying that the product is preserved throughout the production line (identification, handling, storage, packaging, transport, etc.)	■
-	8.5.5.	Post-delivery activities	-	NA
-	8.5.6.	Control of changes *(in production / service provision)*	* Evidence of the control pertaining to the modifications in the manufacturing process / service provision, in particular the impact of modifications on the product's performance ***(3)***: - reviewing the modifications, - person permitting modifications and all the necessary related actions.	■

§ ISO 9001: 2008	§ ISO 9001: 2015	REQUIREMENTS	MINIMUM EVIDENCE EXPECTED	APPLICABLE (NA = not applicable)
8.2.4.	8.6.	Release of products and services	* Provisions for the control of products; records of the results of inspections and the conformity with the acceptance criteria ***(4)*** * Name of the persons responsible for releasing the finished products / services	■
8.3.	8.7.	Control of nonconforming outputs	* Provisions for processing non-conformities, including customer complaints, and implementation of those provisions ***(5)*** * No dispensation granted as regards the performance of a certified characteristic	■
9. Performance evaluation				
8.2.3.	9.1.	Monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation	-	NA
8.2.2.	9.2.	Internal audit	-	NA
5.6.	9.3.	Management review	Management review report	< NA > or < A >: Collecting the Specific Committee's opinion
10. Improvement				
8.5.	10.1.	General		NA
8.5.2.	10.2.	Nonconformity and corrective action	* Implementation of corrective actions to deal with non-conformities pertaining to a certified product, including customer complaints ***(6)*** * Effectiveness of the actions taken.	■
8.5.3.	10.3.	Continual improvement	-	NA

The applicant/holder shall possess the necessary ways and means for the controls and tests defined by the standards, reference documents and complementary specifications mentioned in Paragraph 2.2 of this reference system. The applicant/holder undertakes to carry out a reliable and regular control of its production:

- Control of the product components,
- Inspection during production,
- Verifications and tests carried out on finished products.

(1) Control of the product components

Applicants/holders are required to carry out a control of all components used in the manufacture of their certified products upon reception, and in all cases prior to use.

The "reception" internal control specified by the applicant/holder shall cover:

- the control methods for products upon reception that assess conformities and/or regularities in relation to the expected characteristics,
- including, as applicable, collection rules for product samples.

This control covers all control actions carried out by the supplier. For example: compliance sheet issued after a systematic control prior to delivery, which the applicant/holder requires the supplier to perform, supplier certified according to Standard EN ISO 9001 for relevant products or certified supplies, etc.

(2) Subcontracting tests

Applicants/holders may subcontract the tests to an external laboratory, on the condition that a contract or an order is put in place. Subcontracting is only possible if the following conditions are met:

- Subcontracting the tests does not result in a disruption to the production process (due to wait time for results, for example);
- The conditions for subcontracting tests are formalised in the contract or order and must define the applicable test method, the testing frequency, the requested wait times for results, the notification of results in writing, the procedure in the case of non-compliant results and the type of equipment used;

The subcontractors' laboratory where the test is carried out must be accredited according to Standard EN ISO/CEI 17025, otherwise the party requesting the test (holder of the certification mark) must ensure that the equipment used is compliant (calibration, test configuration, etc.) and the staff carrying out the test have the necessary skills.

(3) Approach to the assessment of the complementary requirement in Standard ISO 9001 version 2015 compared to Standard ISO 9001 version 2008

Within the framework of the Product Certification audit, the only complementary requirement referred to concerns the requirements of § 8.5.6 in Table 1: "Control of changes *(in production / service provision)*".

If the applicant/holder does not comply with this requirement, the auditor shall notify as follows:

- Suggested improvement (if the fact occurred prior to 15/09/18)
- A deviation (if the fact is subsequent to 15/09/18).

(4) Inspection during production and on finished products

During production

Control during production shall be put in place by the applicant/holder. This applies to the product in its intermediate states at the main production stages, as well as compliance with the setting instructions for the production tools (production machines, equipment).

Control instructions shall be formalized and made available to the operators. The results of the controls are recorded at each control. If the results of the controls indicate that the product does not meet the requirements of this Certification reference system, the necessary corrective actions must be implemented immediately.

On finished products

Applicants/holders are required to verify the characteristics of the finished products before delivery and are responsible for putting this control in place. The controls and tests of finished products manufactured by the applicant/holder are carried out according to the standards and additional specifications mentioned in this certification reference system.

The various controlled characteristics are measured using the operating procedures specified in the reference standards mentioned in **Table 5 of the technical and administrative appendix**.

The controls of finished products are carried out by the applicants/holders themselves in their own manufacturing plant.

Applicants/holders shall take random samples at the end of the production line and carry out the controls and tests on these samples.

The method for collecting the samples required for testing must be clearly specified in the applicant's/holder's quality plan and must not be left to the sole discretion of the operator.

The controls shall be carried out by the applicant/holder according to **paragraph 1.1.3 of the technical and administrative appendix**.

Applicants/holders shall record the results of the previous controls. If the results of the standard controls are inconclusive, the controls must be reinforced and the causes of the malfunction must be identified so that corrections can be made by carrying out, if necessary, production controls.

(5) Provisions for processing non-conformities

They include in particular:

- An analysis for identifying the cause of the anomaly,
- An analysis to determine the impact of the anomaly on production since the previous control,
- Management ensuring that the implementation of the corrective actions is effective,
- In the unlikely event that non-compliant products are delivered to a customer, the latter shall be notified immediately so that appropriate measures can be taken.

(6) Customer complaints

The customer complaint record is audited; to do this, holders shall keep:

- A record of all complaints and actions relative to the products covered by this certification reference system;
- A record of the corrective measures adopted, in particular when complaints have revealed a manufacturing anomaly.

The holder shall be able to show the auditor extracts from these records relating to complaints that involve products covered by this certification reference system.

2.5 Marking – General provisions

Marking is an integral part of the certification of a product.

Beyond the identification of a certified product and its traceability, the marking of a product with the QB logo associated with the UPEC classification ensures better protection for users and enables the users to be defended against abusive usage and counterfeits.

Under no circumstances is it possible to make reference to the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification before the right to use this mark is obtained or to present counterfeit products for certification.

The reproduction and attachment of CSTB logo are authorized in the strictly application of the design guidelines of the QB mark and related to the right of use of a valid certificate or with the prior agreement of CSTB.

In addition, the statement of the main certified characteristics is intended to make the technical characteristics to which the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification relates transparent for consumers and users. It therefore adds value to the certification and its content.

The purpose of the marking rules below is to guide the holder in complying with the regulation requirements and the certification requirements. The General Rules of the QB mark specify the guidelines for use (see dedicated pages for UPEC), the guidelines for validity and the procedures for penalties for wrongful usage of the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification.

Without prejudice to the penalties set down in the General Rules of the QB mark, any erroneous communication of the certified characteristics and any fraudulent use of the QB logo associated with the UPEC classification exposes the holder to legal action for, in particular, deceptive marketing practices.

2.5.1 THE QB LOGO ASSOCIATED WITH THE UPEC CLASSIFICATION

The QB logo associated with the UPEC classification logo shall ensure the identification of each certified product.

The holder undertakes to respect the QB mark's graphic charter. The QB - UPEC logo and its graphic charter are available from the application administrator.

The QB logo associated with the UPEC classification certified product must have a distinct designation and identification from non-certified products.

The holder shall not use the QB – UPEC logo except to single out certified products without there being any risk of confusion whatsoever with other products, especially non-certified products.

To avoid any confusion between certified products and non-certified products, the applicant/holder will ensure that they do not use trade names that are identical or similar.

It is recommended that the holder remit to CSTB in advance all the documents upon which the certification mark appears.

If the product cannot be marked for technical reasons, CSTB must be contacted to determine a common marking rule.

2.5.2 TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR MARKING

This paragraph describes both the terms for affixing QB - UPEC logo and the marking of the certified characteristics.

The requirements of article R 433-2 of the Consumer Code stipulate that marking must comply with the provisions outlined in the following paragraphs, and whenever possible, include the following information:

Systèmes de revëtements de sol stratifiés

http://evaluation.cstb.fr

Caractéristique certifiée1:

Caractéristique certifiée 2 :

Caractéristique certifiée 3 :

It is recommended that consumers be informed about the primary reasons for and advantages of using a certified product. The certified characteristics must appear on at least one of the materials (product, packaging or communication media).

2.5.2.1 Marking of the certified products

All certified products, manufactured after the date indicated on the approval of the right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC (via an admission or extension procedure) and which comply with the requirements of this certification reference system, must be marked at a minimum with the mark logo (unless not possible for technical reasons).

During the transition period the certified products can be marked with:

1 the QB logo associated with the UPEC classification,

2 or with the UPEC logo.

After the end of the transition period only the QB logo associated with the UPEC classification will be authorised on certified products.

The marking must be permanently present, legible and indelible on the products. Depending on the nature of the products, marking can be carried out on the packaging only.

NB: If there is a code for identifying the product, the code must be given to CSTB.

2.5.2.2 Marking on the packaging of the certified product or on the product's accompanying document (if applicable)

All packaging for certified products and accompanying documents shall include all the marking components defined in the standard EN 13329 paragraph 5.1 and the following elements as well:

- logo,
- application name,
- website,

Systèmes de revëtements de sol stratifiés

http://evaluation.cstb.fr

- certificate number,
- UPEC classification,
- and if possible certified characteristics.

During the transition period, the packaging for certified products or accompanying documents can be marked with:

1 the QB logo associated with the UPEC classification,

2 or with the UPEC logo.

At the end of the transition period, only the marking of the QB logo associated with the UPEC classification will be authorised on the packaging or the accompanying documents of certified products.

Note: If the product is already marked, marking on the packaging of certified products must be recommended, given that this is one of the ways to promote the mark.

2.5.2.3 Marking on the communication media and documentation (Technical or commercial documents, posters, advertising, websites, etc.)

The generic use of the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification through its reproduction in the holders' correspondence is forbidden, unless the holder has the right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification for all of its products.

References to the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification in communication material or documentation must be made in a way that does not allow for any confusion between certified products and other products.

These references must include all the following marking elements:

- logo,
- application name,
- website,

Systèmes de revëtements de sol stratifiés

http://evaluation.cstb.fr

- certificate holder identification,
- commercial name of the system,
- certificate number,
- UPEC classification,
- and certified characteristics.

During the transition period documentation can make reference to:

1 the QB logo associated with the UPEC classification,

2 or to UPEC logo.

At the end of the transition period, only the QB logo associated with the UPEC classification will be authorised on communication media and documentation.

For the French market, this information must be provided in French (Law no. 94-665 of 4 August 1994 relative to the use of the French language). If necessary, the information can also be given in one or more other languages.

For the proper interpretation of this paragraph, the holder should be advised to submit to CSTB in advance all communication material and documentation where the certification mark is expected to be used.

2.6 Conditions for terminating marking or for removing the mark in case of suspension, withdrawal and abandonment

If any product is accidentally not in conformity, the product and its packaging shall not be marked with the QB – UPEC logo or the logo must be crossed out or concealed to prevent any risk of confusion.

Part 3
Certification Process

3.1 General remarks

– Definition of the applicant (see Part 5);

– Definitions of the various types of application (application for admission / application for additional admission / application for extension / application for maintenance):

- An application for admission is made by an applicant not having the right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification for "Systems of laminate floor coverings" application.
  It is related to a product (or a range of products) coming from a specific design process and/or manufacturing unit;

- An application for extension is made by a holder and applies to a new product / a modified product on the same manufacturing site;

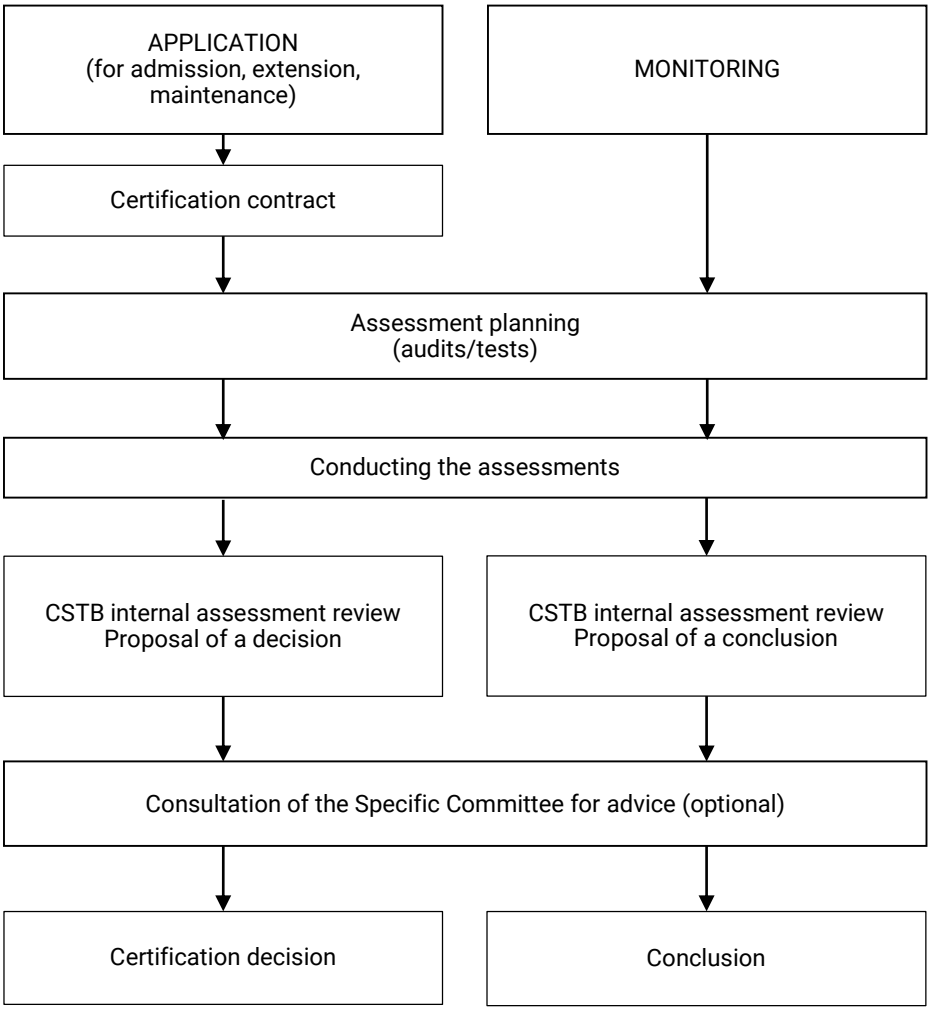
- An application for maintenance of the right of use is made by a holder and applies to a QB-UPEC-certified product intended to be sold under another trademark and/or with a specific reference to the product without any modification to the certified characteristics;

- A new application for admission for a product (or a range of products) following the withdrawal of the right to use the QB mark as a result of a sanction in the event of deceptive marketing practices in application of Articles L 121-2 to L 121-5 of the Consumer Code.

In the case of an admission/extension or maintenance application, the applicant shall not communicate about the registering number of the application. It is however possible to check applications in progress on the website http://webapp.cstb.fr/upec/stratifies/

In the case of an admission/extension application based on a technical assessment application ("avis technique") the applicant shall not communicate about the registering number of the certification application. Furthermore it is not possible to check the application in progress online.

3.2 Certification application handling process



The conditions for obtaining a certification and the certification follow-up procedure are described in Parts 3 and 4 of the Appendix to this certification reference system.

3.3 Audits

3.3.1 ADMISSION AUDITS

The purpose of audits is to make sure that the measures defined and implemented by the applicant in the manufacturing unit meet the requirements in Part 2 of this certification reference system and its technical and administrative appendix.

This entails checking, before admission, the existence and effectiveness of the measures taken in the quality field as well as the product quality assurance operations by the applicant. These are the admission audits conducted by the auditor.

If the applicant subcontracts part of its production, CSTB reserves the right to carry out an audit on the premises of the subcontractor(s) based on this certification reference system.

All the ways and means (premises, installations, equipment) enabling the auditor to carry out the mission incumbent upon him, shall be placed at his disposal free of charge, along with persons qualified to implement them.

In the event of any dangerous situation in relation to the certification body's safety requirements, the auditor reserves the right to withdraw.

An audit report is prepared and remitted to the applicant.

3.3.1.1 Case of an initial admission application

The duration of an audit is normally 1 day per manufacturing unit.

The audit duration may be adapted according to the risk: level of development of the quality system, organisation of the company (process, laboratory, etc.).

3.3.2 FOLLOW-UP AUDITS

The follow-up audits are intended to check, following admission, that the provisions defined are still being maintained.

All of the provisions described in Paragraph 3.3.1 apply.

Inspection operations

The auditor carries out at least the following audits, taking account of the information collected during the previous audit, the results of the last checks and any remarks made by the Specific Committee:

- Verification that the corrective measures announced following any observations made during the previous audit are actually applied;
- Verification that the holder is respecting the quality requirements defined in the certification reference system;
- Verification of the self-inspection records since the last audit, statistically for at least one certified product and for the products which are sampled for mark laboratory tests;
- Verification of the commercial documents;
- Verification of the changes in the characteristics of the certified products.

An audit report is prepared and remitted to the holder.

The duration of an audit is normally 1 day per manufacturing unit.

The audit duration may be adapted according to the risk: level of development of the quality system, organisation of the company (process, laboratory, etc.).

Normal monitoring:

The normal frequency is 1 audit every two years per manufacturing unit which benefits from the right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification.

Heightened monitoring:
In the event of breach of the requirements in this certification reference system, or if the Specific Committee makes a reasoned request, a heightened monitoring procedure can be initiated for a given period. This monitoring can be adjusted up to double the normal frequency of audits, with or without heightened monitoring of the applicant and sampling for test purposes in the manufacturing unit and/or in the distribution network.

3.4 Sampling

The auditor has samples taken as required from the stock and from the manufacturing unit for testing.

For the year without audit, the manufacturer shall send the products required by CSTB to the laboratory of the mark for testing.

The samples taken are marked with a distinctive symbol by the auditor and are sent by and under the responsibility of the applicant to the laboratory of the mark responsible for carrying out the tests within the deadline set during sampling, unless the auditor decides to take charge of them.

An information sheet recording the samplings carried out is prepared on site and handed over to the applicant/holder.

A copy of this information sheet will be given to the laboratory in charge of the tests.

It is accepted that if these samples cannot be taken, the holder will send the sample(s) requested by CSTB to the mark's laboratory, within the time required. If the holder does not send the sample(s) to the mark's laboratory within the time required by CSTB, penalties may be applied to him (sanction, suspension).

Sampling in the admission / extension context:

The auditor has the necessary samples taken in the warehouse and in the plant for testing:

- number of boxes equivalent to a minimum of 35 planks (or minimum 12m²) in one color,
- number of boxes equivalent to a minimum of 7 planks (or minimum 2m²) in a second color.

The sampling rules are described in **paragraph 1.1.4 of the technical and administrative appendix** to the certification reference system.

Sampling in the follow-up context:

30% of the certified products will be sampled in order to test all certified systems within a period of three years.

The auditor has the necessary samples taken in the plant or at a retailer warehouse for testing:

- number of boxes equivalent to a minimum of 30 planks (or minimum 9m²) in one color,
- number of boxes equivalent to a minimum of 7 planks (or minimum 2m²) in a second color.

The sampled products are necessarily delivered in full boxes and with the original packaging.

If necessary the auditor will buy at a retailer's place the systems necessary to perform the tests.

The sampling rules are described in **paragraph 1.1.5 of the technical and administrative appendix to the certification reference system.**

Specific case of the modification of the system by adding a new underlay:

The request will be registered as an extension application.

The following complementary tests will be performed by CSTB, laboratory of the mark:

- Impact resistance of a big ball (described in **paragraph 2.4 of the appendix** to the certification reference system),
- Effect of a castor chair (described in **paragraph 2.2 of the appendix** to the certification reference system).

Specific case of the modification of the assembly system:

The request will be registered as an extension request.

The following complementary tests will be performed by CSTB, laboratory of the mark:

- Locking strength (described in **paragraph 2.1 of the appendix** to the certification reference system),
- Effect of a castor chair (described in **paragraph 2.2 of the appendix** to the certification reference system),
- Climatic chamber (*).

(*) Assessment done by CSTB on tests results performed at FCBA and sent by the certificate holder to the CSTB.

3.5 Tests

In the case of a deviation in the length measurement at the CSTB laboratory, this deviation can be lifted by compliant internal results from the manufacturer (if the manufacturer's testing equipment is sufficiently accurate).

3.5.1 ADMISSION / EXTENSION TESTS

The tests are carried out in accordance with the standards and complementary specifications set out in Part 1 of the technical and administrative appendix of this certification reference system **(Table 6)**.

A test report is prepared and remitted to the applicant.

The tests are carried out under the responsibility of the mark's laboratory.

In the case where some non-compliant results are detected, a check test will be performed in the laboratory of the mark on a new batch of the certified product.

If the test results still do not comply, a second check test will be performed on a new batch.

The delivery of new batches after 6 months (from the sending of the test report) or non-compliant results of the second check test will lead to a new full test program of the product.

3.5.2 TESTS ON CERTIFIED PRODUCT (FOLLOW-UP)

The tests are carried out in accordance with the standards and complementary specifications set out in Part 1 of the technical and administrative appendix of this certification reference system **(Table 7)**.

The tests are divided up into two types:

- Tests that can be performed in the company during the auditor's inspection,

Indeed when the applicant has an equipment that is appropriate to perform tests under the conditions required by the standard (or the reference test method) and with a calibrated apparatus, the applicant can ask to perform the test in its own laboratory under the supervision of a qualified auditor.

The tests concerning the characterization of the planks (EN 13329 annex A and B) can be performed in the manufacturer's plant in the presence of the auditor.

- Tests performed in the laboratory of the mark.

The related test reports are prepared and remitted to the applicant by CSTB. If the results do not comply with the standard and/or the requirements of the certification reference system and its appendix, the certificate holder shall provide CSTB with explanations, corrective actions and delay of implementation.

If the certificate holder is the retailer, a copy of the test report will be sent by CSTB to the manufacturer.

In the case where some non-compliant results are detected, a counter-test will be performed in the laboratory of the mark on a new batch of the certified product. **A deviation in swelling will automatically lead to the suspension or withdrawal of the product; a counter-test will not be performed on this requirement.**

The delivery of new batches after 6 months (from the sending of the test report) or non-compliant results of the counter-test will lead to a suspension of the right to use the product.

Part 4
The stakeholders

The organisations involved in the procedure for granting the right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC certification and in monitoring the certified products are specified below.

4.1 The certifying body

The QB mark associated with the UPEC classification is the property of CSTB, which is a certifying body. CSTB specifies the governance rules and the operating conditions applicable to the marks. Furthermore, it takes responsibility for the application of the rules and the decisions taken in this context.

Centre Scientifique et Technique du Bâtiment (CSTB)
Direction DEIS
Division REEM
84, avenue Jean Jaurès
Champs sur Marne
F-77447 Marne La Vallée Cedex 2
☎ : 01 64 68 85 44

http://evaluation.cstb.fr/

4.2 Audits bodies

The audit functions for the manufacturing unit and, as the case may be, on the utilisation premises, are carried out by the following body, designated the audit body:

Centre Scientifique et Technique du Bâtiment (CSTB)
Direction DEIS
Division REEM
84, avenue Jean Jaurès
Champs sur Marne
F-77447 Marne La Vallée Cedex 2
☎ : 01 64 68 85 44

http://evaluation.cstb.fr/

The auditors have the inspection right on the premises of any applicant or holder within the framework of their missions.

4.3 Tests bodies

Whenever the quality assurance operations carried out within the framework of the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification usage include tests on products, such tests are carried out at CSTB's request by the following laboratory, referred to as the laboratory of the mark:

Centre Scientifique et Technique du Bâtiment (CSTB)
Direction DEIS
Division REEM
84, avenue Jean Jaurès
Champs sur Marne
F-77447 Marne La Vallée Cedex 2
☎ : 01 64 68 85 44

http://evaluation.cstb.fr/

The tests of determination of dimensional variations and stability after exposure to dry and humid conditions as described in ISO 24339 are performed by the following laboratory:

FCBA
10 Rue Galilée
77420 Champs-sur-Marne
☎ : 01 72 84 97 84

This test is covered by the accreditation Cofrac n°1-0201 of the FCBA laboratory in Bordeaux.

4.4 Specific Committee

An impartial consultative authority is established called the Specific Committee, the Secretariat of which is provided by CSTB.

The Specific Committee is requested to give its opinion on the following:

- The initial draft certification reference system or the draft revised version, as specified in the Consumer Code,
- The preparation of advertising and promotional activities that fall within its competence,
- The selection of bodies participating in the certification process, and the examination and implementation of recognition agreements.

It can be consulted about any other question pertaining to the application concerned, and in particular about any interpretation of the certification rules with a view to taking decisions regarding dossiers in accordance with the certification reference system and at CSTB's request.

The composition of the Specific Committee is set to respect representation between the different parties concerned, which does not lead to any of them dominating and which guarantees their relevance.

Its composition is as follows:

- A President chosen from the members of the colleges defined below;
- A Vice President: one representative of CSTB;
- Manufacturers College (Holders): from 3 to 6 representatives;
- Users / Specifiers College: from 3 to 6 representatives;
- Technical Bodies and Administrations College: from 3 to 6 representatives.

The representatives of audit bodies and mark laboratories participate as of right in the meetings of the Specific Committee.

The Specific Committee issues decision notifications and its members shall be precluded from receiving any remuneration for the functions entrusted to them.

The time span for the appointment of the members is 3 years. This appointment is renewable by tacit agreement. The Specific Committee's President can change every year.

The members of the Specific Committee formally commit themselves to keep confidential all information, particularly of individual character, which is communicated to them.

Part 5
Glossary

Agreement of the right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification:	Authorisation granted by CSTB to an applicant to affix the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification on the product for which the application has been made.
Admission:	Application by which an applicant requests for the first time the right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification for a product; he declares that he knows this certification rules and undertakes to respect it.
Audit:	See Standard NF EN ISO 9001.
Warning:	Non-suspensive penalty notified by CSTB. The product is still marked, but the holder must correct the deviations observed within a defined time period. When a warning is accompanied by an increase in the number of inspections, the actions must be launched within a defined time period. The warning may only be renewed once.
Applicant / Holder:	Public body which controls and/or is responsible for respecting all the requirements defined in the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification certification rules. These requirements cover at least the following steps: design, manufacture, assembly, quality control, marking, packing and market release and specify the critical points in the different steps. Any person who modifies the container and/or content of the product (for example, packets or loose cement distribution) becomes an applicant and may not be considered as a retailer. Therefore, this person must make a usage right admission application.

Distributor: Person who distributes the applicant/holder's products and who does not modify the conformity of the product to the requirements of the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification.

The types of distributors may be the following:

- distributors who distribute the product under the holder's trade name. In that case, no action is to be taken as part of the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification.
- distributors who distribute the product after changing the trade name. The applicant/holder shall make an application for maintenance of right of use.

If the distributor does not wish to have explicit reference to the manufacturer, then an application for admission to the QB mark shall be made by the distributor. In that case, the manufacturing plant is not mentioned on the certificate.

Depending on the various operations carried out by the applicant/holder or the distributor, the sites audited and the audit duration within the framework of initial certification or monitoring are to be defined case by case.

Extension: Application by which a holder requests the extension of his right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification for a certified product whose characteristics have been modified.

Delegate: Public body or individual based in the EEA who represents the applicant/holder outside the EEA and has a written mandate from them signifying that they may act on their behalf and specifying under which context (missions and associated responsibilities and financial aspects, complaints, contact for the certifying body, among others) in the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification certification process according to the provisions in the certification rules.

The delegate may be the retailer or importer; their different functions are clearly identified.

The delegate concept is vital once the applicants are outside the EEA. Depending on the markets, the retailer concept may not be relevant.

Maintenance: Application by which a holder requests the maintenance of his right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification for a product intended to be marketed by a distributor under a different mark and/or trade reference, but without modifying the certified characteristics.

Observation: Remark aiming to draw a holder's attention to a minor non-conformity so as to avoid any propensity that might end up with a warning.

Product: Element resulting from a process or manufacturing process coming from a specific manufacturing unit, defined by a trademark, a specific trade reference and technical characteristics.

Certification Scheme:	Specific certification system for well-defined products to which the same specified requirements, and specific rules and procedures apply.
Admissibility:	Study of a dossier which enables the application to be examined. The admissibility relates to the administrative and technical parts of the dossier.
Renewal:	Application by which the holder requests the renewal of his right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification before the validity of its QB - UPEC certificate.
Certification rules:	Technical document which defines the characteristics that a product, a service or a combination of products and services shall have, and the methods for inspecting the conformity with these characteristics, as well as the methods for communicating on the certification (including the content of the information).
Withdrawal of the usage right:	Decision communicated by CSTB to cancel the right to use the NF mark. A withdrawal can be pronounced as a sanction or in case of abandonment of the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification usage right by the holder.
Subcontracting:	Company which carries out some of the production steps for the certified products, under the control of the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification holder.
Suspension:	Decision notified by CSTB which temporarily and for a set period of time cancels the authorisation to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification. The suspension may be issued as a sanction or in the event that the right to use the mark is temporarily renounced by the holder. Suspension is accompanied by the prohibition on affixing the mark to future production. It shall be for a maximum 6-month period, renewable once, following which a withdrawal of the right to use the QB mark associated with the UPEC classification shall be announced if no action has been launched by the holder. The sanction notifications which affect the usage right (suspension/withdrawal) are signed by CSTB Management.
Batch	Continuous production of the same product with the same color on the same production line.
Product	Laminate floor covering with commercial name for which total thickness, panel substrate, surface layer without design, backer, underlay (if the case), assembly system, edges geometry, surface state and size are defined.
Design/Color	Pattern associated to a color (for example: white oak, two planks)
Surface state	It is defined by relief and brightness on the upper face (for example: matt rustic wood)
Underlay	Layer fixed under the backer for which nature, density and thickness are defined
Edges geometry (in length and in width)	Straight edges, beveled, grooves, etc.