

## What is the Green Claims Directive?

The Green Claims Directive is a European Union initiative aimed at combating greenwashing and ensuring that environmental claims made by businesses are clear, accurate, and verifiable. It sets out rules for how companies can communicate their sustainability efforts to consumers.

## Why do we need the Green Claims Directive?

Greenwashing, or misleading environmental claims, undermines trust and genuine sustainability efforts. The Green Claims Directive addresses this by promoting transparency and accountability in corporate sustainability practices.



Source: European Commission – Energy, Climate, Environment

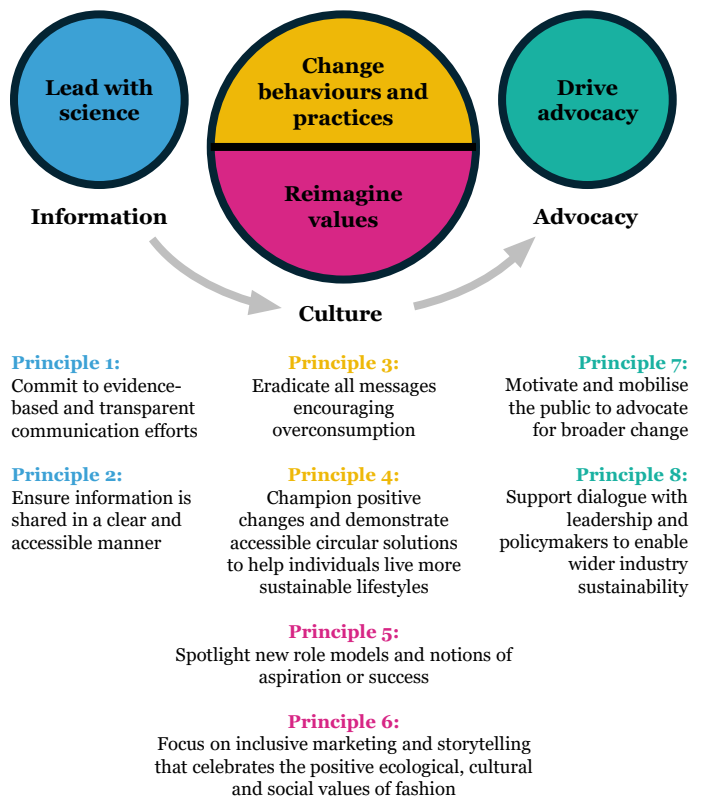
## Six Types of Greenwashing

Greenlighting	Greenhushing	Greenrinsing	Greenshifting	Greencrowding	Greenlabelling
Highlighting a minor sustainable effort to distract from larger environmentally damaging practices.	Deliberately underreporting or hiding sustainability actions to avoid scrutiny or backlash.	Regularly changing or resetting ESG targets to avoid accountability before achieving them.	Shifting the blame for environmental impact onto consumers rather than addressing corporate actions.	Hiding poor practices by aligning with groups or industry-wide initiatives, avoiding individual accountability.	Using misleading or false environmental labels to give the appearance of sustainability without substantiation.

## Key Requirements of the GCD

- Accuracy and Evidence:**
  - All environmental claims must be based on scientific evidence and verifiable data.
  - Claims must be specific and avoid vague terms like "eco-friendly" or "green" without context.
- Transparency:**
  - Businesses must disclose the methodology used to substantiate their claims.
  - Any trade-offs (e.g., a product being recyclable but energy-intensive to produce) must be clearly communicated.
- Comparability:**
  - Claims must allow consumers to compare products or services fairly.
  - Avoid misleading comparisons unless they are based on equivalent data and criteria.
- Third-Party Verification:**
  - Environmental claims must be independently verified by accredited third parties.
  - Certifications and labels must be credible and recognized.
- Avoiding Misleading Practices:**
  - Prohibits claims that exaggerate environmental benefits or omit significant negative impacts.
  - Bans the use of unsubstantiated "green" logos or symbols.

## A Blueprint for Authentic Sustainability Communication: The United Nations Sustainable Fashion Communication Playbook



## Cheat sheet: The principles for sustainable fashion communication

Foundation Level: Information	<p><b>Lead with science:</b> Ensure relevant information is clearly and transparently shared, providing an evidence-base that is verifiable and comparable while adhering to relevant regulatory policies.</p> <p><i>Case study:</i> Nanushka, Connected Products <i>Case study:</i> Allbirds, Carbon Footprint Calculator</p>	<p><b>Principle 1:</b> Commit to evidence-based and transparent communication efforts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use third-party certifications or independent evidence to verify claims.</li><li>• Publish methodologies and sources for public or expert review.</li><li>• Clearly state the limits of claims and avoid hiding negative impacts.</li><li>• Highlight key sustainability impacts across environmental and social issues.</li><li>• Align communication with long-term sustainability goals and progress updates.</li></ul>
		<p><b>Principle 2:</b> Ensure information is shared in a clear and accessible manner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide sustainability information in simple, easy-to-understand language.</li><li>• Use communication channels familiar to your target audience.</li><li>• Organize information clearly, with links to detailed resources for deeper insights.</li><li>• Regularly update and share sustainability claims and strategies.</li></ul>
Build Level: Culture	<p><b>Change behaviours and practices:</b> Show how consumers can enjoy fashion while living within the limitations of the planet and respecting human rights and dignity. Encourage lower impact options and circular solutions that normalise more sustainable behaviours</p> <p><i>Case study:</i> Levi Strauss &amp; Co., Buy Better, Wear Longer <i>Case study:</i> Selfridges, Project Earth</p>	<p><b>Principle 3:</b> Eradicate all messages encouraging overconsumption</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emphasize product durability and longevity in marketing materials over disposable or one-off buys.</li><li>• Avoid promotions that encourage excessive or unnecessary purchases.</li><li>• Inspire sustainable lifestyles by explaining the benefits of sustainable products.</li><li>• Explain the “why” and the benefits of sustainable products and services.</li><li>• Ensure pricing reflects the true environmental and social costs of products.</li></ul>
		<p><b>Principle 4:</b> Champion positive changes and demonstrate accessible circular solutions to help individuals live more sustainable lifestyles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clearly signpost sustainable products in stores and online.</li><li>• Promote circular options like rentals, repairs, and resale platforms.</li><li>• Provide clear guidance on product care and responsible disposal.</li><li>• Share end-of-life options for products to encourage recycling or reuse.</li></ul>
	<p><b>Reimagine values:</b> Actively seek to separate the belief that consumption and ownership lead to happiness and success. Paint a picture of how positive new values can look when considering wellbeing, equity and community.</p> <p><i>Case study:</i> Reformation, Getting Stuff Done <i>Case study:</i> LilaBare, Urithi <i>Case study:</i> SukkhaCitta, #MadeRight</p>	<p><b>Principle 5:</b> Spotlight new role models and notions of aspiration or success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote new values of success, such as sustainability and wellbeing.</li><li>• Partner with influencers to showcase sustainable practices and products.</li><li>• Ensure the beliefs and values of the ambassador are aligned with your message</li><li>• Embed sustainability teams in all communication activities.</li></ul>
Leadership Level: Advocacy		<p><b>Principle 6:</b> Focus on inclusive marketing and storytelling that celebrates the positive ecological, cultural and social values of fashion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Highlight the ecological, cultural, and social values of fashion in campaigns.</li><li>• Showcase diverse voices and communities across the value chain.</li><li>• Ensure representation and inclusivity in all marketing efforts.</li><li>• Adapt messages to reflect cultural and social contexts.</li></ul>
	<p><b>Drive advocacy:</b> Use your platform and influence to empower consumers in their role as citizens. Educate internally and externally on the level of change required, supporting dialogue with policymakers on a just transition towards a sustainable and circular global value chain.</p> <p><i>Case study:</i> Vogue China, VOGUE MetaOcean <i>Case study:</i> Patagonia, Patagonia Action Works <i>Case study:</i> Remake, PayUp</p>	<p><b>Principle 7:</b> Motivate and mobilise the public to advocate for broader change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Empower consumers to take action through clear calls to action.</li><li>• Create feedback channels and integrate consumer insights into strategies.</li><li>• Share sustainability knowledge internally and externally to build awareness.</li><li>• Engage with advocates, activities, affected stakeholders and communities</li><li>• Support broader causes without greenwashing or purpose-washing.</li></ul>
		<p><b>Principle 8:</b> Support dialogue with leadership and policymakers to enable wider industry sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hold leaders accountable by questioning decisions and scrutinizing challenges.</li><li>• Collaborate with policymakers to drive industry-wide sustainability changes.</li><li>• Actively participate in multi-stakeholder initiatives to amplify impact.</li></ul>