

This is the Scope and application of Chapter D Environmental Claims from the ICC Advertising and Marketing Communications Code 2024

https://iccwbo.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2024/09/ICC_2024_MarketingCode_2024.pdf

Scope and application of Chapter D

This chapter sets out to provide globally accepted principles of marketing communications involving environmental claims. This chapter is principle-based with the goal of promoting truthful, non-deceptive environmental claims. Thus, it does not adopt or incorporate by reference any specific legal regime, standard or guideline. Since the area of environmental claims is a fast changing one where new laws and industry standards are being adopted and revised, marketers should take extra care to ensure compliance with applicable legal requirements when making environmental claims.

This chapter applies to all marketing communications containing environmental claims, i.e. any claim in which explicit or implicit reference is made to environmental or ecological aspects relating to the production, packaging, distribution, provision, use/consumption or disposal of anything being communicated within the scope and application of this Code. It thus focuses solely on environmental claims, including those made in the context of sustainability, circularity or other general claims, and does not address social or economic sustainability compliance claims. Claims expressing aspirations, goals or commitments to achieve certain environmental performance or objectives in the future are also covered.

Environmental claims made in any medium, including logos and private labels, package inserts, promotional and point-of-sales materials, and related literature as well as digital interactive media are covered by this chapter.

There are many different specific environmental claims and their use and importance to consumers may vary. As set out in the interpretation section of the Code, the meaning of a claim should be established on the basis of how it is likely to be perceived by a reasonable consumer in the overall context of the communication.

Further guidance on the use of selected environmental claims often appearing in marketing communications, is provided in the Framework. This addresses for example:

- the use of terms such as climate positive and sustainable particularly in relation to vague and aspirational claims
- specific terms such as carbon neutral, negative or positive, circular economy, recycling and renewable or recoverable energy
- detailed guidance regarding product lifecycle and the use of logos, labels, certificates, standards, and symbols

The general principles set out herein apply whether or not a claim is expressly addressed here or in the Framework.

Terms specific to environmental claims

The following definitions relate specifically to this chapter and should be read in conjunction with the general definitions contained in section III:

For the purpose of this chapter the term:

- “environmental aspect” or “environmental attribute” means an element of an organisation’s activities or products that have an impact on the environment

- “environmental claim” means any statement, symbol, sound, or graphic that indicates or implies an environmental aspect of a product, a component or ingredient of it, packaging or constituent of it, or an activity, facility or operation
- “environmental impact” means any change to the environment, whether adverse or beneficial, wholly, or partially resulting from an organisation’s activities or products
- “life cycle” means consecutive and interlinked stages of a product system, from raw material acquisition or generation of natural resources to final disposal
- “product” as defined in the general definitions of this Code includes any goods or services. “Product” normally includes the wrapping, container etc. in which the goods are delivered. However, in the environmental context it is often appropriate to refer separately to the packaging, which then means any material that is used to protect or contain a product during transportation, storage, marketing or use
- “qualification” means an explanatory statement that accurately and truthfully describes the limits of the claim
- “waste” refers to anything for which the generator or holder has no further use, and which is discarded or released into the environment.

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