

United Kingdom statement for thematic session on access to information:

Thank you Chair for the opportunity to speak on this important discussion on how best to promote effective access to information.

In particular, we will be focussing on how the United Kingdom ensures public access to product information and measures against greenwashing, as well as ensuring operations inform the public through the Green Claims Code.

The Green Claims Code, otherwise known as the Guidance on Making Environmental Claims on Goods and Services, was published by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) in September 2021, following a detailed development and consultation exercise.

The aims of the Guidance are:

- To ensure consumers have accurate information to inform decision-making
- To make sure businesses understand and comply with their existing obligations under consumer protection law when making environmental claims
- To give businesses the confidence to share their environmental impact with customers.

The Code is based around 6 principles:

- claims must be truthful and accurate
 - claims must be clear and unambiguous
 - claims must not omit or hide important relevant information
 - comparisons must be fair and meaningful
 - claims must consider the full life cycle of the product or service
 - claims must be substantiated.
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- The 6 principles set out in the code are accompanied by case studies and examples designed to help businesses understand both what good looks like and what might be considered greenwashing.
 - The Code is underpinned by existing UK consumer protection law, and any enforcement will take place through our consumer law powers.
 - At present, the Competition and Markets Authority is carrying out a compliance review in the fashion retail sector to determine whether fashion retailers in the UK are complying with consumer law. It plans to take enforcement action where it finds potential breaches of the rules.
 - The CMA also produced the [Green Claims Code for Shoppers](#), 5 tips to help consumers spot greenwash.
 - The Code is aligned with other guidance by international bodies and with other national consumer authorities around the world, for example:

- [The Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information](#) (produced by the One Planet Network, in collaboration with the UN Environment Programme)
 - [Guidelines on Sustainability Claims](#) produced by the Authority for Consumers and Markets in the Netherlands
 - [Environmental Claims Guidelines](#) produced by the New Zealand Commerce Commission.
- Recognising this alignment, and the need for a consistent approach across borders, the CMA has been leading a working group on misleading environmental claims in the International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network. Among other things, this working group has delivered:
- [A global web sweep](#) to identify trends in greenwashing online coordinated with a European Consumer Protection Cooperation Network Sweep on the same topic.
 - [Training to upskill enforcers](#), including recent webinars delivered collaboratively with the One Planet Network and UNEP.
 - A consumer awareness campaign (as part of [Fraud Prevention Month 2021](#)).

We thank you for listening to our statement.