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## 'Guidelines in Practice'

### Training the Trainers Toolkit

#### Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is aimed at partners of the United Nations Environment Programme and the One Planet network Consumer Information Programme that wish to deliver workshops and/or trainings on the [Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information](#) (hereafter the Guidelines).

#### What is this toolkit for?

This toolkit provides information and practical guidance on preparing the workshops around the Guidelines. It will help organizers/facilitators/moderators plan, deliver and evaluate their own trainings.

#### How to use this Toolkit

The toolkit is intended to be a flexible resource. You can use sections of the toolkit to support existing projects or activities that you currently deliver, or plan specific sections depending on local needs. In addition to this toolkit, we also offer the following materials to support the activities around the Guidelines:

- Presentation material (annotated PPT, with guidance and background information to support your presentation)
- Online self-assessment tool (*available [here](#)*)
- Report '[Ready to Drive the Market: Experiences from Road Testing the Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information](#)'
- [Case studies](#) of the application of the Guidelines
- Filled template for hypothetical products from the agriculture, chemical, textile and tourism sectors for group discussion

Please contact us at [ciscp@un.org](mailto:ciscp@un.org) to request the above-mentioned materials.

The content of this Toolkit is broken down into eight units:

1. [Planning the Training](#)
2. [Workshop Aim and Learning Outcomes](#)
3. [The 10 Principles](#)
4. [Effective Group Work](#)
5. [The Group Exercise](#)
6. [How to Evaluate](#)
7. [Moving Forward](#)
8. [Annex](#)



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## PLANNING THE TRAINING

How you plan and deliver workshop will certainly depend on the context, the participants and the time available. However, we advise you to allocate time as follows:

- Timings for presentations – should be short and focused but responsive to questions and interactive with the audience
- Timings of group work – should match with the needs of the group whilst ensuring learning outcomes are met by the end of the workshop

You should take into account that the Guidelines' focus is on the information provided to consumers. They are written for providers of product sustainability information from the private sector, marketing and advertising professionals, labelling organizations, governments, business and industry organizations, and civil society.

Below you will find information on the context behind the development of the Guidelines:

In a time when global human consumption exceeds the planet's annual production capacity, it is urgent to promote the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies. Sustainable goods and services are a growing business opportunity and significant good efforts are already underway in this area. Yet, a key challenge is the lack of international guidance and agreement on how to convey reliable sustainability product information to consumers.

This importance of providing reliable information has been internationally recognized by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) through target 12.8 and is also the focus of one of the programmes of the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (known as the One Planet Network). Claims, labels, campaigns and other product sustainability information tools can help consumers to make informed decisions on what they buy and consume, and how they use and dispose of it.

To strengthen good practices and build international understanding and consensus in this field, UN Environment and the International Trade Centre (ITC) launched in 2017 the [Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information](#). After two years of research and collaboration, with inputs from over 125 organizations, the Guidelines aim to benefit both the consumer and the producer by outlining how companies can provide quality information to empower sustainable consumption decisions, and also serving as a reference for governments, standard and labelling bodies and NGOs. They build on existing efforts in this area, including national marketing claims guidance and regional initiatives such as the European Product Environmental Footprint. The Guidelines received international high-level consideration when they were noted in the Environment and Health Resolution of the third UN Environment Assembly, and are a key output of the One Planet's [Consumer Information Programme](#).

Rather than being just a publication, we want the Guidelines to serve as a practical tool on how to communicate products' sustainability performance. With this in mind, we started what we called the 'road testing': a practical application of the Guidelines. 28 organizations from across the world and more than 10 industry sectors participated. Each of them self-assessed one of



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their product sustainability claims through an online tool. This allowed us to collect feedback and real-life case studies from small, medium and multinational organizations. The objectives were to have the Guidelines applied in the field by the end-user and establish a community of practice on product sustainability information. The focus was on offering insights into the practical application of the Guidelines' ten principles to real-life sustainability claims. Based on the Guidelines, the road testers self-assessed the way they communicate with consumers and acknowledged they gained practical insights on how they could improve their communications, i.e. how to avoid green washing and information overload. The exercise involved comparing the content and provenance of the claim with the steps and guidance prescribed in the Guidelines, through an online questionnaire.

Against this background, the Consumer Information Programme continues to offer a workshop series to raise awareness and build capacity on the Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information. During the workshops, participants are guided through the 10 high-level principles of the Guidelines and discuss a hypothetical advertising to consider its positive and negative elements against the Guidelines. Participants are sensitized on what to look out for when providing such information (as a company), when receiving and validating it (as a consumer or civil society), or when setting institutional or policy frameworks around the issue (as a government or standard/ labelling body).

## WORKSHOP AIM AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

### Workshop aim

It is also important to clearly state the workshop aim, which would be along the lines of 'bringing together a range of professionals/experts to explore best ways to communicate product sustainability information by using the Guidelines' principles.'

Besides, the aim could be also to continue the dialogue and learning beyond the workshop, by welcoming the participants into the One Planet Network and its community of practice around consumer information.

### Workshop learning outcomes

By the end of the workshop the participants should be able to:

- Benefit from support to improve the way they communicate and to collaboratively carry on with their journey towards sustainability leadership
- Learn and get insights on how to apply the 10 principles for product sustainability claims
- Network with peers and exchanged experiences

## THE 10 PRINCIPLES

The Principles set minimum requirements to avoid greenwashing and to improve continuously over time and inspire sustainability leadership. Therefore, there are two sets of 5 principles in the Guidelines for users to follow – fundamental ones (must follow) and aspirational ones (should meet over time). As expected, evidence was found in the road testing exercise that the



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fundamental principles are indeed more feasible to apply than the aspirational principles. In the Guidelines publication, under each principle, there are guiding questions and examples to help users understand and apply the principles' requirements.

### The Fundamental Principles

The Guidelines request their users to comply with five fundamental principles, which seek to build and reinforce each other.

- Principle 1: Reliability
- Principle 2: Relevance
- Principle 3: Clarity
- Principle 4: Transparency
- Principle 5: Accessibility

### The Aspirational Principles

The following aspirational principles are not compulsory to implement by the users of the Guidelines, but organizations should ultimately aspire to do so. They are for information providers to go beyond the fundamental principles and to continuously improve the ways in which they communicate to consumers.

- Principle 6: Three Dimensions of Sustainability (*Social, Economic, Environmental*)
- Principle 7: Behaviour Change and Longer Term Impacts
- Principle 8: Multi-channel and Innovative Approach
- Principle 9: Collaboration
- Principle 10: Comparability

## **EFFECTIVE GROUP WORK**

It is crucial to emphasise to the group the importance of group dynamics and group forming particularly when a group is coming together for the first time. It is therefore important to spend time on this to enable the group to begin to get to know each other and share why people are attending and what experiences they bring with them.

- Icebreaker
- Reason for attending
- Experiences of facilitating learning
- Ways of working
- Review of aims and learning outcomes

The **'Ways of Working'** should be stated since the beginning, so that participants feel comfortable to participate actively, such as the following principles:

- Openness, Honesty, Transparency
- Be mindful of others and respect opinions Active listening and participation
- One speaking at a time



## THE GROUP EXERCISE


In this section, participants will be divided in groups and will discuss the hypothetical claim to consider its positive and negative elements. You should adapt the methodology that we propose here depending on the number of participants and display of seats.

Games that foster competition can also work well. For instance, you can propose a game where participants have to match words with icons that you print beforehand (each icon representing one of the principles). There should be restricted time and a winner in the end.

Points to be covered in the discussion of the groups:


- What are the main sustainability area(s) covered by this claim?
- How do you see the application of each one of the Guidelines principles, based on the information you have in the label?

In case you are interested, we can provide you with a filled template for hypothetical products from the agriculture, chemical, textile and tourism sectors. However, you are welcome to use your own examples or even the case studies available [here](#). Please contact us at [ciscp@un.org](mailto:ciscp@un.org) to request the templates.




**Additional case study information:**

- The producer has not assessed, nor addressed social impacts (such as child labour or fair wages to farmers)
- The label Non-GMO is third party verified
- The label Green Product is a label that the producer developed without involving other stakeholders (self-claim) and is not third party verified. The methodology used is based on a recognized methodology by a local university.
- The producer does not assess how the chocolate is transported from factory to retailer/ end consumer




- The label 100% Organic is third party verified
- The producer has not assessed, nor addressed social impacts (such as child labour or fair wages to farmers)
- The label 'Green Product' is a label that the producer developed without involving other stakeholders (self-claim) and is not third party verified. The methodology used is based on a recognized methodology by a local university
- The producer does not assess how the t-shirt is transported from factory to retailer/ end consumer
- The producer does not assess water consumption



**GREEN BOTTLE**  
HEALTH PLASTIC  
Made in China

- Green bottle BPA free, recycle cap
- No 7 bad plastics and resins
- Impact resistant
- Chlorine free and durable
- Hard water safe and odour!



**ECO-SHAMPOING**  
Bon pour vous, bon pour l'environnement  
Fabriqué au Maroc

Naturel  
coupez l'eau le temps de vous savonner

Avec du sucre de canne

30ml 1oz  
Ingrédients bio

**Informations supplémentaires sur l'étude de cas:**

- La bouteille est en plastique. Elle peut être recyclée mais l'hôtel ne la recycle pas.
- L'étiquette « naturel » n'est pas vérifiée par un tiers. L'entreprise a étudié les ingrédients et vérifié qu'ils ne sont pas nuisible pour la santé de l'utilisateur. La méthodologie sur laquelle l'entreprise a basée son évaluation est reconnue et recommandée par une université nationale.
- Le producteur n'a pas évalué / traité d'autres impacts (tels que les émissions de GES durant la production et le transport).
- L'étiquette « 100% organic » est une certification internationale vérifiée par un tiers. Elle concerne la certification du sucre de canne. Au total, le shampooing contient 3% de sucre de canne.



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## HOW TO EVALUATE

*'Evaluation is the collection, analysis and interpretation of information about any aspect of a programme of education or training, as part of a recognised process, judging its effectiveness, its efficiency and any other outcomes'. Thorpe (1988)*

Why do we evaluate?

- To identify if aims and learning outcomes have been achieved
- To determine the value of the learning session
- To determine what worked well and what could be improved
- Feedback received and insights from the workshops also help to identify consumer information issues and can eventually feed into region- or sector-specific supplements to the global Guidelines.

We recommend that you use a questionnaire for the participants to evaluate the workshop and provide useful feedback to you. In addition to handing out a form, evaluation can also be interactive, e.g. you ask questions about their happiness about the day and make them stand on a line with one end being very happy and the other end not happy.

In addition to the participants' feedback, you should kindly use the debriefing template provided in Annex 1 to structure your feedback to us. We are interested in collecting this feedback since this helps us improve the structure and the objectives of all the activities organised around the Guidelines.

## MOVING FORWARD

We are glad to have partners that support us in promoting cutting-edge discussions, capacity building and knowledge and skills acquisitions across the world on the transformation towards sustainable consumption and production patterns. These workshops are intended to help move the Guidelines forward as a practical tool that contributes to the implementation of SDG 12 in an effective way, while at the same time offering an opportunity for organizations to assess and improve the way they are communicating with consumers about sustainability. More specifically, such activities aim to encourage organizations to align their product sustainability communications with the Guidelines and have the ambition to create an international community of good practice to push, promote and modernize the discipline.

Thank you for being part of this effort! Should you have any question or need clarification, please e-mail us at [ciscp@un.org](mailto:ciscp@un.org).



## Annex 1 - Debriefing Template

### Workshop 'Communicating Product Sustainability'

*Whether things went really well or there was room for some improvements in the Workshop, you likely learned from the experience. The objective of this debriefing template is to capture lessons learned to ensure improved results over time. Your feedback will be an invaluable resource to have at hand the next time we conduct a similar project.*

*Thank you very much for your collaboration and partnership!*

**Date:**

**Location:**

- I. Did you meet the original Workshop objectives<sup>1</sup>?**
- II. What went really well?**
- III. What didn't go so well?** *(Think of speakers/moderators performance, attendee engagement, presentation materials, etc.)*
- IV. Overall, what should we do differently in the future?**
- V. Please share the main feedback you collected on the Guidelines** *(E.g. examples or principles in the Guidelines that were not so clear or generate much debate; specificities of your country/sector that were discussed; points that need further work or more attention; related initiatives you learned of during the workshop that we should look at; also any testimonies from participants on the Guidelines or the workshop, etc.)*
- VI. Are there any immediate next steps we should take** *(E.g. follow up with local partners, contact a specific participant, send additional material, etc.)?*
- VII. Attendees list and any other contact persons related to the outcomes of the Workshop**
- VIII. Please include here (or in attachments) photos from the Workshop**

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<sup>1</sup> The objectives of the workshop are for participants to 1) learn about the 10 high-level principles of the Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information; 2) analyse and improve the way sustainability is communicated to consumers; and 3) discuss a hypothetical advertising to consider its positive and negative elements against the Guidelines. Thereby, participants will be sensitized on what to look out for when providing such information (as a company), when receiving and validating it (as a consumer or civil society), or when setting institutional or policy frameworks around the issue (as a government or standard/ labelling body).