



# Too good to be true?

## The do's and don'ts of green claims

Green claims, including those promising 'climate neutral', 'plastic neutral' or 'nature positive' products and companies, have gained significant prominence in the recent years. However, the **credibility of these claims raises doubts and poses the question: should we believe them?**

As the desire to combat global environmental crises grows, green claims become a commercial argument targeting the expanding market of eco-conscious consumers, who are constantly faced with claims of circular products and climate-friendly services. Unfortunately, **the absence of clear legislation in this area allows companies to use vague, often confusing language**, which can mislead consumers, eroding trust and delaying the implementation of genuinely environmentally impactful solutions.

### Environmental claim [noun]<sup>1</sup>



Any [voluntary] message or representation, [...], including text, pictorial, graphic or symbolic representation, in any form, including labels, brand names, company names or product names, in the context of a commercial communication, which states or implies that a product or trader has a positive or no impact on the environment or is less damaging to the environment than other products or traders, respectively, or has improved their impact over time.

<sup>1</sup> Definition proposed by the European Commission in its proposal for a Directive to Empower Consumers in the Green Transition

## How green are you?

### Communicating environmental information in a credible way

ECOS has been long calling for all claims to be **relevant, reliable and clear**. Our [2021 Ideal Claims Checklist](#) provides a benchmark and a set of recommendations for brands, policymakers and standardisers on how to offer product information, and avoid greenwashing.

### All environmental claims must be



## We can't offset our way out of trouble

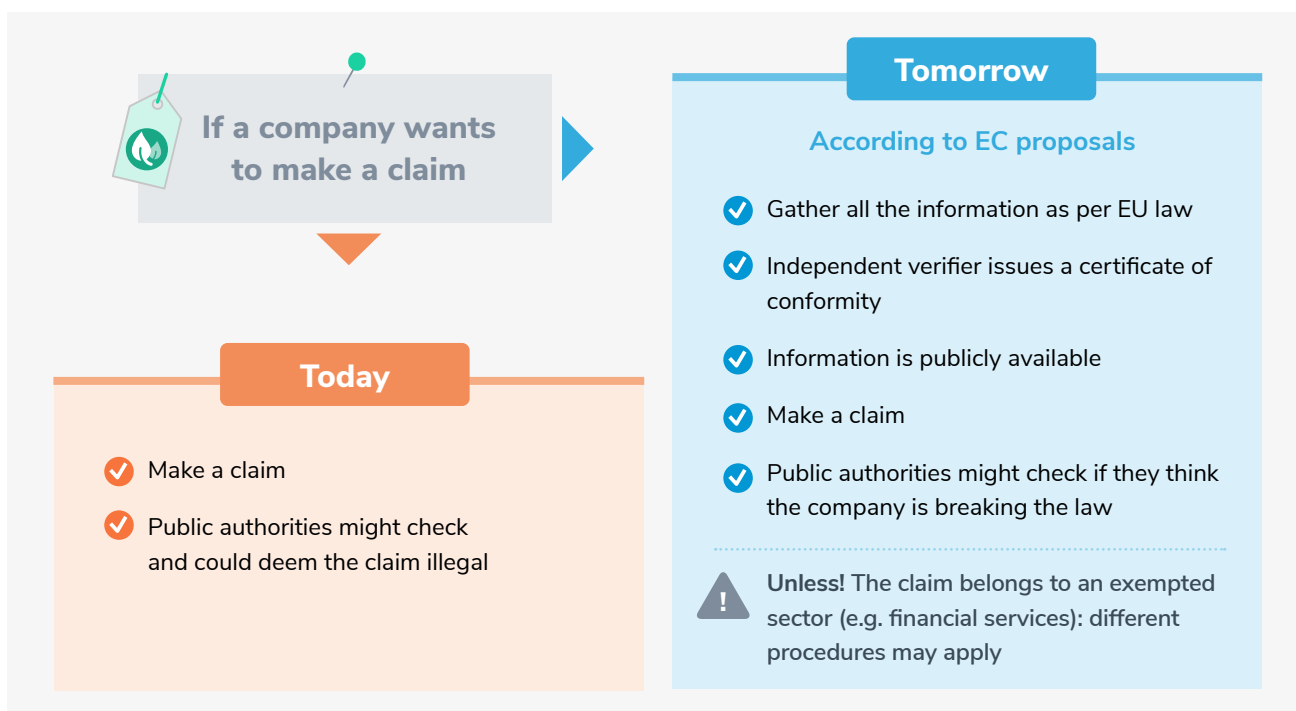
Carbon neutrality claims, in particular, warrant scrutiny. The concept of a climate-neutral company or product is fundamentally flawed. Such claims often rely on offsetting credits rather than actual progress made by businesses. **Misleading carbon neutrality claims create a false reassurance that consumption patterns need not change**, hindering the necessary structural shifts.



## The future of green claims?

The legislation proposed by the European Commission<sup>2</sup> offers a glimpse into the future of green claims. **If these proposals become law, making a claim will require extensive information, third-party verification, and ensuring public access to this data.**

But the currently proposed framework only partially addresses neutrality claims (on climate, plastics, biodiversity or anything else market actors will come up with), and does not expressly ban them.



## A more sustainable future is within reach

Companies wishing to boast about the environmental performance of products must do so by providing the consumer with full and frank information. Claims inflating the true environmental contribution of products and businesses, or hiding adverse impacts, should be banned – and companies held accountable.

Only this way will brands build consumer trust, enable fair comparison with competitors, and genuinely help protect the environment. **Ending greenwashing and ensuring the credibility of green claims are both key in our transition towards a truly sustainable future.**

<sup>2</sup> Proposal for a directive on Empowering Consumers in the Green Transition and [Proposal for a directive on Substantiating Green Claims](#)

Learn more



### Too good to be true?

A study of green claims on plastic products



### Greenwashing, certified?

How to ensure new laws and standards do not rubberstamp dubious climate neutrality claims

