DestinE Platform

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

DIGITAL RESPONSIBILITY

December 10th 2025



Destination Earth

Funded by the European Union

Implemented by ECMWF esa EUMETSAT

ESSENTIAL FOR RESPONSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION:



Be transparent & evidence-based

- Back every environmental claim with verifiable data
- Clearly state boundaries, assumptions, and methods

Stay consistent

- Align sustainability messages with company actions
- Avoid contradictions between marketing and reality

Educate & engage

- Help audiences understand real impact and trade-offs
- Encourage participation and responsible behaviours

Communicate progress, not perfection

- Share milestones and improvements honestly
- Admit limitations and areas for growth

Integrate sustainability into strategy

- Link communication to long-term business goals
- Make responsibility part of corporate culture

Communication training feedback:

Participant A:

★★★½

"The course was very interesting and laid the foundations for communicating the concepts of digital responsibility. However, given the critical nature of the topic, it would be valuable to have another discussion at a later stage, once the projects is more consolidated, to ensure compliance with regulations."

Participant B:

★★★★

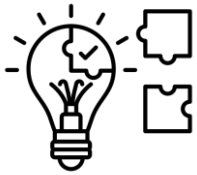
"Many thanks, very valuable information that we can put into practice"

Objective & expectations



GENERAL OBJECTIVE

Raise awareness on **environmental communication and associated impacts** (positive or negative, e.g. greenwashing) and share **practical, turnkey guidelines** for immediate application to DestinE.



WHAT YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO AFTER THIS TRAINING

- To assess if an environmental communication is adequately done or not
- To raise the awareness of your team on greenwashing risks
- To apply the proposed guidelines and checklist to your daily activities



YOUR EXPECTATIONS

- *What do you expect from this training? Are you comfortable with the objectives stated above?*



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Training session (1h30)

- **Definition and key concepts (10min)**
- Greenwashing or not? (10min)
- Importance of good communication & potential impacts (20min)
- How to mitigate the risk of greenwashing ? (30min)
- Essentials & checklist (10min)

Definition and key concepts

Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)

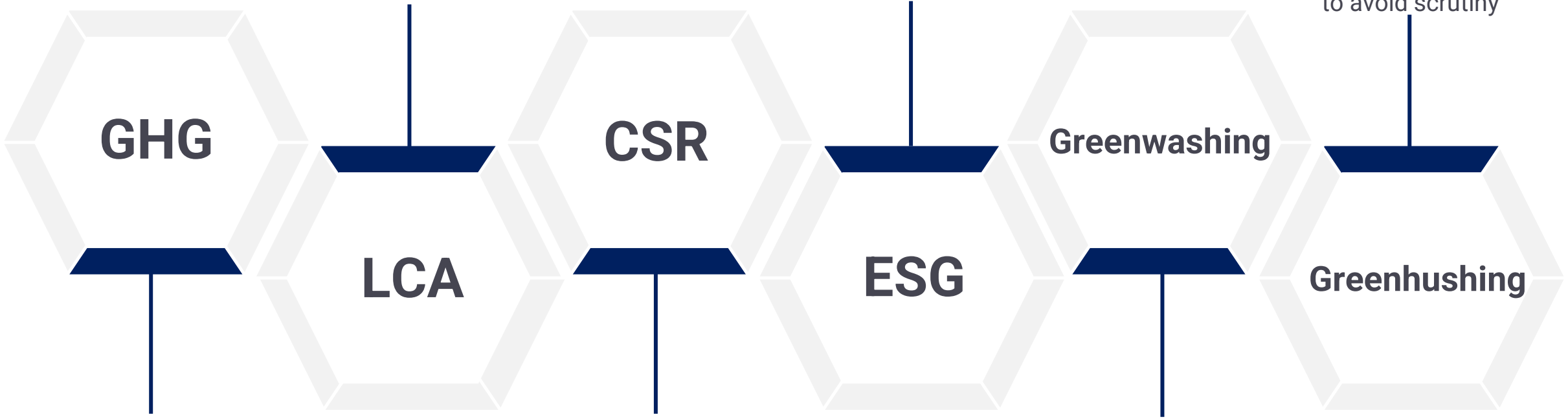
A method for evaluating the environmental impacts of a product/service throughout its entire life cycle

Environmental Social Governance (ESG)

Refers to the three key criteria used to evaluate a company's sustainability performance

Greenhushing

Deliberately downplaying, hiding, or not communicating a company's environmental actions or sustainability goals to avoid scrutiny



GHG & Carbon Footprint

Greenhouse Gases (GHG) are heat trapping gases in the atmosphere, and carbon footprint is the total amount of these gases emitted by an activity

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

A company's commitment to operate ethically and sustainably by considering its impact on society, the environment, and all stakeholders

Greenwashing

Practice for misleading stakeholders into believing that a company or product/service is more environmentally friendly than it actually is



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Greenwashing or not ? (1/5)



In June 2022, Lufthansa launched an advertising campaign in the United Kingdom featuring posters depicting an aircraft merging with the Earth or a tree, with the slogan 'Connecting the world. Protecting its future.' #MakeChangeFly'.

GREENWASHING

or

NO GREENWASHING



Greenwashing or not ? (1/5)



GREENWASHING

In March 2023, Lufthansa was accused of greenwashing by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), the agency responsible for regulating the advertising industry in the United Kingdom. The ASA considered that such advertisements for the airline **gave a misleading impression of the environmental impact of Lufthansa's activities**. The measures taken by Lufthansa were **not consistent with the impression given** by the advertisement.

Results: removal of the advertising campaign.



Greenwashing or not ? (2/5)



During a **Shell** marketing campaign this poster was displayed in Bristol with the **aim to raise awareness** in the **lower emissions energy products** and services the company is investing in.

GREENWASHING

or

NO GREENWASHING

Greenwashing or not ? (2/5)



GREENWASHING

The ASA ruled the poster was **misleading** because it gave the **impression** that **Shell** as a whole was **providing cleaner energy**. Additionally, the emphasis on '**ready**', implied that lower carbon energy products already comprised a significant proportion of the energy products Shell was selling in the UK.

Result: The advertisement was banned for misleading claim

Greenwashing or not ? (3/5)



How many brands can run an ad like this?

Patagonia launched an advertising campaign where the uses a '**reversed advertising**' strategy, asking people not to buy their jacket. The goal was to emphasize and raise awareness around the **mitigation hierarchy** and calling people to **reduce** their **consumption**, **repair** their items and **recycle** at last.

GREENWASHING

or

NO GREENWASHING

Greenwashing or not ? (3/5)



How many brands can run an ad like this?

COMMON THREADS INITIATIVE

REDUCE
WE make useful gear that lasts a long time
YOU don't buy what you don't need

REPAIR
WE help you repair your Patagonia gear
YOU pledge to fix what's broken

REUSE
WE help find a home for Patagonia gear you no longer need
YOU sell or pass it on*

RECYCLE
WE will take back your Patagonia gear that is worn out
YOU pledge to keep your stuff out of the landfill and incinerator

REIMAGINE
TOGETHER we reimagine a world where we take only what nature can replace

patagonia

NO GREENWASHING

The campaign was very well received by the public and **Patagonia's continuous engagement** in environmental topics has raised it as a **global benchmark** in the topic of **environmental communication**.

Result: Patagonia is globally famous for being an eco-friendly brand and is cited as an example for ethical marketing

Greenwashing or not ? (4/5)



For the launch of the Toyota Mirai, a **hydrogen** powered car equipped with a **small particle filter**, **Toyota** launched a marketing campaign emphasizing on the fact that the **car is cleaner than usual cars**, meaning that **driving it would avoid polluting**.

GREENWASHING

or

NO GREENWASHING



GREENWASHING

Toyota did not integrate the fact that to establish the **total carbon footprint** of the vehicle, the **emissions of hydrogen production** also need to be included. The production of hydrogen is still very reliant on **fossil energies** and therefore greatly polluting. It is therefore wrong to admit that driving the car would clean the air.

Result: Tarnished reputation and loss of credibility

Greenwashing or not ? (5/5)



In 2018 in the UK, following a successful trial, McDonalds decided to move to **paper straws**, **replacing plastic straws**. The move was **advertised as 'eco-friendly'** as it would allow a replacement of **1.8 million plastic straws daily**.

Greenwashing or not ? (5/5)



McDonald's introduced new paper straws following a UK government proposed bad

Consumers were unhappy, as the new straws dissolved before a drink could be finished

McDonalds decided to listen to the feedback and strengthened the paper straws

The new thickness of these straws made them difficult to process by waste solution providers

McDonald's had to ask workers to dispose them in the general waste, rather than in the recycle bins

GREENWASHING

or

NO GREENWASHING

Greenwashing or not ? (5/5)



NO GREENWASHING
but negative impact

51,000 people signed a petition to bring back the plastic straws following the scandal

McDonald's **reputation was tarnished** and people asked for the company to **rethink their recycling model**, saying the company should focus on how to **avoid waste creation** in the first place

An action that may be positive on an environmental dimension, can still generate a negative impact



Destination Earth

Training session (1h30)

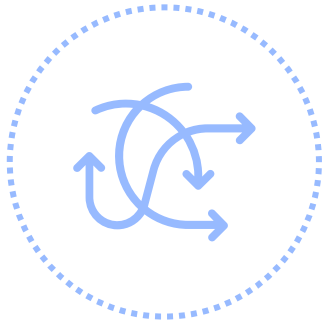
- Definition and key concepts (10min)
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- Essentials & checklist (10min)

Objectives of good environmental communication



CLARIFIES THE VALUE FOR USERS

Good communication **clarifies in the minds** of the public and consumers the **ecological value** of products and services, as well as the **seriousness and veracity** of **sustainable development initiatives**



PREVENTS CONFUSION AND MISINFORMATION

It **avoids creating doubt** and **confusion** in the user's mind about what is environmentally friendly and what is not, which helps **maintain credibility and avoids misleading claim**



SUPPORT ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION

Transparent, evidence-based communication contributes to a better understanding of the **link between product/service and environmental impact** and is helping to change user habits



PROJECTS REPUTATION & PUBLIC TRUST

Misleading communication (greenwashing) delays awareness and prevents genuinely committed companies from standing out. It **contributes to citizens' loss of trust** in corporate discourse



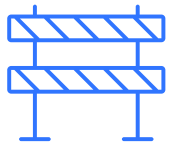
MAKES COM. MORE EFFECTIVE & ETHICAL

A **sincere** and **transparent approach increases efficiency** and aligns corporate messages with **real environmental action**

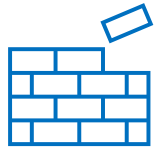
The consequences of greenwashing are significant for both businesses and users



Companies that seek to **present** themselves as **more environmentally friendly** can **generate distrust**



Recurrent greenwashing marks a **hurdle for new environmental communication**, as it needs to overcome a pre-existing wall of consumer doubt



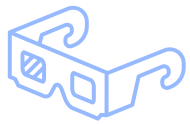
Rebuilding the **trust requires consistent transparency**, **verifiable actions**, and a **long-term commitment** to authentic sustainability, going far beyond mere marketing claims



The **dampening effect on demand** can further **disincentivize** companies from pursuing **authentic sustainability**

Potential impact – Consequences of greenwashing

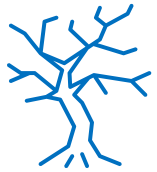
*The consequences of greenwashing are significant for both businesses and **users***



Users face **challenges in distinguishing** between genuinely **sustainable services/products** and those that simply **pretend to be** so



Deceptions breed cynicism and distrust, not only towards companies but towards environmental claims in general



Users, **misled by greenwashing**, may **inadvertently choose less sustainable options**, believing they are marking environmentally responsible choices



Greenwashing fractures the bond between businesses and users, **replacing potential loyalty with scepticism**

Potential impact – Environmental harm & Delayed progress

Perhaps the most critical consequence of greenwashing is its detrimental impact on actual environmental progress



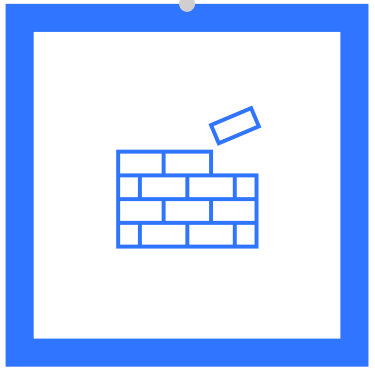
By creating a **false sense** of environmental responsibility, greenwashing can **mask environmental progress**

Companies that prioritise **marketing green claims** over substantive environmental improvements may be **less inclined** to **invest** in costly, but **essential measures** to **reduce** their **footprint**, which can lead to a **stagnation** of real environmental progress



Greenwashing can **divert attention** and **resources** away from genuine **environmental solutions**, as people are misled into believing that **superficial changes are sufficient**, thus diminishing pressure for more meaningful actions

Greenwashing **creates a façade** of environmental responsibility that **hides** and even **worsens** the **real environmental issues**



Potential impact – Regulatory scrutiny

*As awareness of **greenwashing grows**, so too does **regulatory scrutiny***

Regulatory scrutiny of greenwashing **is intensifying** as governments and consumer protection agencies **target deceptive environmental claims**





Companies using **misleading green claims** now **face legal risks** such as fines, lawsuits, and reputational damage

New **regulations demand verifiable data** and **transparency**, creating compliance and financial challenges for firms relying on unsubstantiated claims





Rising **consumer and activist litigation** further **increases the risks**, making genuine transparency and sustainability essential for companies

In 2024 the EU banned:

- Generic environmental claims on products without proof
- Claims that a product has a neutral or positive impact on the environment because the producer is offsetting emissions
- Sustainability labels that are not based on approved certification schemes established by public authorities

Communication impact – How users can take action

Better anticipate the risks of user impact on suspected greenwashing by understanding their chain of thoughts



Inform and spot misleading claims

Users will review labels, origins, and brand websites to verify genuine environmental credentials

Report deceptive advertising

When it is believed that there is greenwashing, users can fill official complaints at a legal organism

Active in environmental watchdog organisations

Users are active in, or back associations that make detailed investigations and take direct collective actions

Speak up and mobilise the network

Questionable green claims are widely shared around (e.g. through social media) to raise awareness and point out responsible entities



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Training session (1h30)

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- **How to mitigate the risk of greenwashing ? (30min)**
- **Essentials & checklist (10min)**

How to mitigate the risk of greenwashing? – General guidelines

Monitor regulation and proactively manage risk

Stay informed of regulatory changes (e.g., reporting, taxonomy requirements), and be prepared as the risk of legal/regulatory exposure is rising

Engage the entire value chain

Get all the Serco DestinE and suppliers ecosystem involved, so green claims are consistent and flawless, whatever the organisation which communicates.



Communicate transparently and factually

Use measurable metrics, disclose assumptions, and avoid silence (greenhushing) as well as misleading over-claims (greenwashing)

Strengthen governance and oversight

Set up clear governance, controls and accountability around sustainability claims (e.g., who approves, audits and publicly reports them)

Invest in internal capability & data quality

Ensure the DestinE team understands ESG terminology, has access to reliable data and avoid exaggerated or vague statements

How to mitigate the risk of greenwashing ? – Mitigation hierarchy

Mitigating the risk of greenwashing goes through following a strict hierarchy of actions



Avoid
An avoidance measure modifies a project in order to eliminate an identified negative impact that the project would have caused

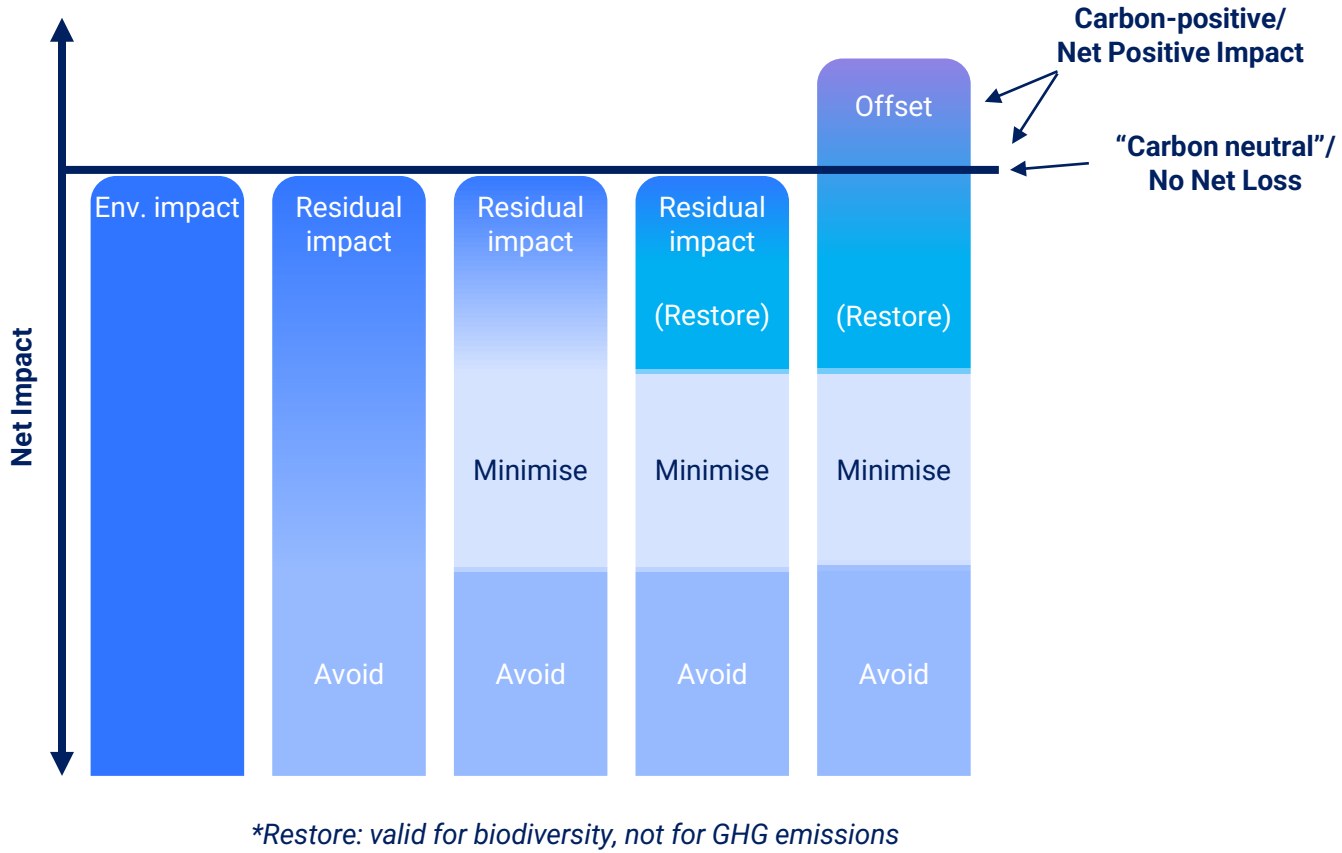
Minimise
A minimisation measure aims to reduce as much as possible the duration, intensity, and/or extent of the impacts of a project that cannot be completely avoided

Restore
A restoration measure seeks to repair, rehabilitate or restore ecosystems that have been damaged or destroyed as a direct or indirect results of a project, with the aim of returning them to their original or an improved state

Offset
An offset measure is intended to compensate the significant direct or indirect negative effects of the project that could not be avoided or sufficiently reduced

How to mitigate the risk of greenwashing ? – Mitigation hierarchy

*Achieving a **net positive impact** is only possible by following the **mitigation hierarchy***



**Restore: valid for biodiversity, not for GHG emissions*

*A project can **progress from causing environmental** (left) to achieving **net positive impact*** (right) by **sequentially applying** avoidance, minimisation, restoration, and **offsetting measures**.*

Note that "Carbon neutral**" is **only scientifically valid if considered at a global level** (IPCC). The preferred expression if that a project or an organisation "contributes to global carbon neutrality".*
***Carbon negative** is generally reserved for devices or ecosystems that extract CO2 from the atmosphere ("carbon sinks")*

Carbon Offsetting: *While carbon offset deals promise benefits, they pose significant risks*



Questionable effectiveness of offsetting

- Concerns about whether offsetting actually contributes to **real emissions** reductions or simply **delays necessary actions**
- Risk of **prioritizing offsetting** over genuine emissions reduction efforts
- Evidence shows community-managed land is often **better preserved than offset projects**[1]



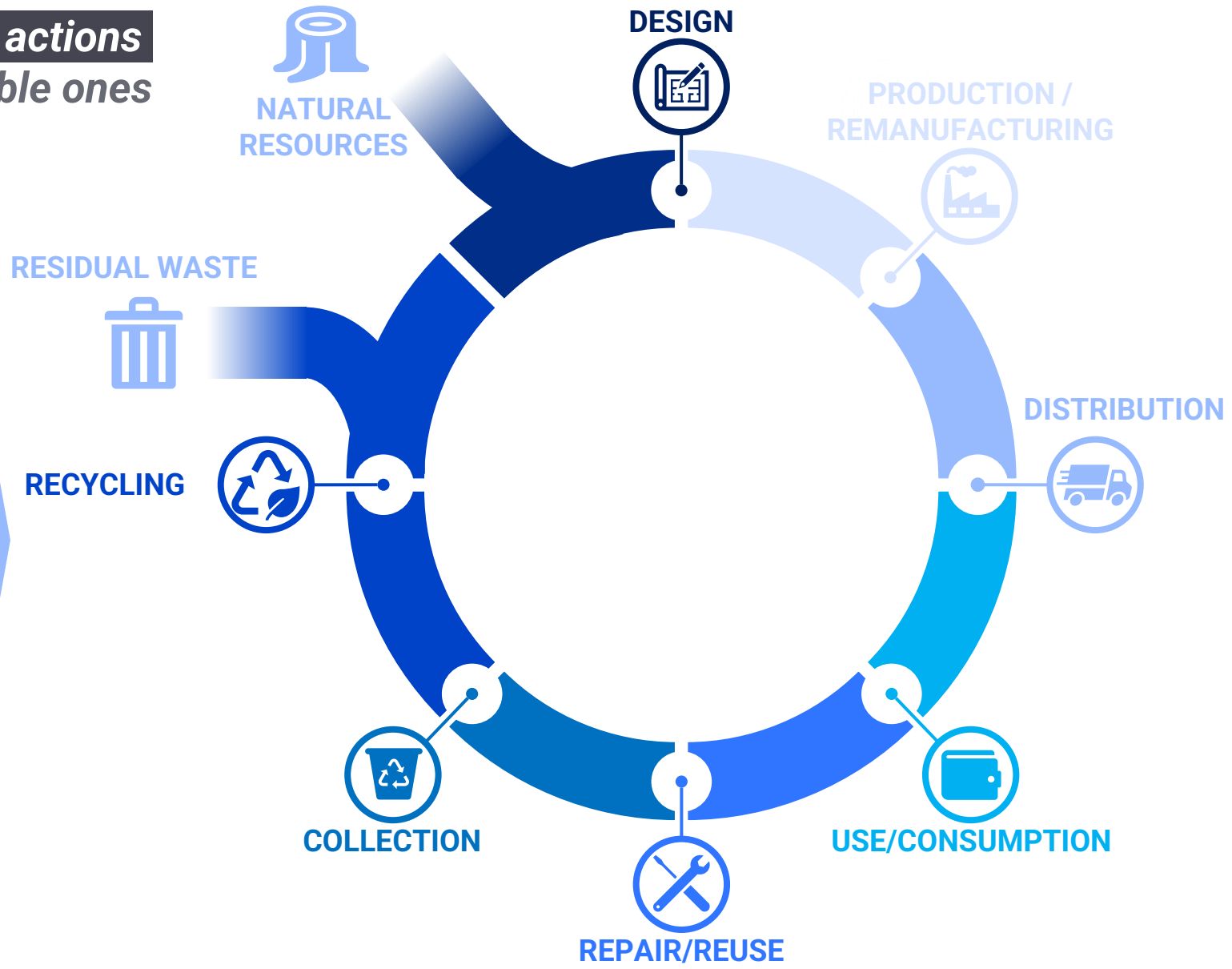
What must be ensured

- Robust **legal frameworks** respecting rights
- Transparent **benefit sharing** agreements
- Proper **due diligence** before deal approval

How to mitigate the risk of greenwashing ? – Life Cycle Assessment

*Ensure the **pertinence of mitigation actions** and do an **LCA** to cover all the possible ones*

- For robust ESG reporting, apply LCA thinking to analyse impacts across the full-life cycle of products/services
- ~80% of companies do not quantify their environmental impacts via LCA, and of the ~20% that do, nearly all quantify only a part of the value chain[1]
- Partial or missing LCA usage raises the risk of greenwashing, because claims of responsible activity become unsubstantiated without full-value-chain impact data



How to mitigate the risk of greenwashing ? – concrete guidelines

Communicate clearly and avoid misleading language

- Use quantitative metrics (e.g., reduced X% in emissions per unit of output
- Provide contextual data (e.g., baseline year, scope of measurement)

Adopt life-cycle thinking and robust impact quantification

- Sustainability reporting must be backed by reliable data sources and methodologies (e.g., Life Cycle Assessment (LCA))



Embed institutional governance and third-party verification

- Have an oversight of the reporting & communication by a sustainability committee, ensuring the data and methodology are reviewed

Ensure transparency about boundaries, assumptions and limitations

- Clearly state the boundary of reporting (geographical, operational, service-scope)
- Highlight the limitations of the analysis (data gaps, excluded phases) so that claims are not overstated

Align sustainability claims with measurable outcomes and avoid selective disclosure

- Link high-level sustainability goals, to concrete metrics (baseline, progress, intermediate milestones)

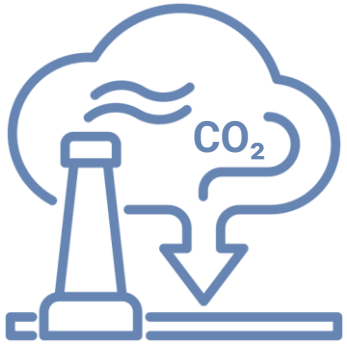
Integrate full value-chain impacts into reporting & communication

- Map the full value chain and quantify key environmental metrics for each major phase where feasible

How to mitigate the risk of greenwashing – Attention points

CARBON COMPENSATION

Carbon compensation must be discussed carefully because **it oftens serves as greenwashing**, allowing entities to **avoid real emission** reductions while relying on **unreliable, poorly regulated offset project**



CARBON NEUTRAL

A generic term that corresponds to a global balance between man-made emissions and man-made absorption capacity. According to the IPCC, it is **only scientifically valid of considered at a global level**, which implies that a product, service or organisation cannot be carbon neutral by itself, but can '**contribute to global carbon neutrality**', which is the preferred expression for communication on the subject

ipcc
INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON climate change

ECODESIGN CONSISTENCY

It is key to **ensure coherence between the actions** put in place on the platform and the **ecodesign guidelines** made available. A potential website footer to indicate a WIP message and a link to the actions and roadmap could be a good example



Serco should serve as an example when following the ecodesign guidelines on the platform



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- **Essentials & checklist (10min)**

Serco Business

EXAMPLE OF FICTITIOUS ROADMAP FOR 2026

Destination Earth



EXTERNAL EVENTS

Organise dedicated events and challenges (e.g. digital cleaning)

Communicate on DESP's commitment and actions (e.g. social media post, dedicated article on the website, …)



DESTINE'S EVENTS

Remind DESP's commitment and share information (e.g. stage presentation, posters, …)



WEBSITE

Share regular (e.g. quarterly) update on roadmap and actions' status

Publish material to testify your commitment

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.

- 21.03 **Digital Cleanup day**
- 17-30.09 **European Sustainable Development Week**
- 22.04 **Earth day**
- 05.06 **UN's World Environment Day**
- 14.10 **E-waste Day**
- 08.12 **World Climate Day**
- 14-22.11 **European week for Waste Reduction**
- DestinE **Users' Exchange**
- **Webinar** on Digital Responsibility (e.g. with pilot testimony)
- **Consortium/ecosystem meetings**
- **Community of Practice launch**
- **DESP Carbon footprint & associated tracking tool**
- **Ecodesign material**
- **"Ecodesigned website" label**

Essentials for responsible environmental communication



Be transparent & evidence-based

- Back every environmental claim with verifiable data
- Clearly state boundaries, assumptions, and methods

Stay consistent

- Align sustainability messages with company actions
- Avoid contradictions between marketing and reality

Educate & engage

- Help audiences understand real impact and trade-offs
- Encourage participation and responsible behaviours

Communicate progress, not perfection

- Share milestones and improvements honestly
- Admit limitations and areas for growth

Integrate sustainability into strategy

- Link communication to long-term business goals
- Make responsibility part of corporate culture

Checklist – 6 key points to check before publishing environmental content

- [ ] **Is it *clear*?**
  Free from vague or misleading terms
- [ ] **Is it *consistent*?**
  Aligned with the company's real actions and policies
- [ ] **Is it *complete*?**
  Reflects the full product/service life cycle
- [ ] **Is it *accurate*?**
  Supported by measurable data or certification
- [ ] **Is it *compliant*?**
  Meets current anti-greenwashing regulations
- [ ] **Is it *impactful*?**
  Promotes genuine environmental awareness and change



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ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

DIGITAL RESPONSIBILITY

For any inquires or support, feel free to reach out to us:

- Webinars request
- Access to learning material
- References to additional modules and resources.

We’ re here to help you continue your learning journey.

CONTACT US