



## **Environmental Labelling and Claims**

Consumer representatives have been involved in attempts to improve the integrity of environmental labelling for about three decades. CIAI is currently represented on committees that are developing international standards intended to assist and encourage industry to be more accurate and transparent in the claims they make relating to the environmental impact of their products.

Canada was the first country to have a national standard for the use of "self declared" environmental claims. These are claims that a company makes without the benefit of a third party certification system. This Canadian standard formed the basis for the development of an International Standard for these claims developed under ISO - the International Standards Organization. ([International Organization for Standardization \(link is external\)](#) (ISO)).

The International Standard for Self Declared Environmental Claims (ISO 14021) has been adapted by the Competition Bureau in Canada and now forms the basis for their [Technical Guidance to Industry and Advertisers](#) on making such claims.

This document covers general requirements to be met when making claims such as:

- the need to be accurate and not misleading,
- having verifiable data to support the claim,
- not to exaggerate, and
- not to confuse whether the claim applies to the product or the packaging, etc.

It provides guidance on how to make a comparative claim, on use of the Möbius loop, where additional explanatory statement may be needed and on separating claims from information symbols - such as the plastic resin identification coding system.

In addition to the general information on how to make claims, the Standard provides specifics on what is required, and what is not allowed, when making

claims using the following terms:

- Compostable
- Degradable
- Designed for disassembly
- Extended life product
- Recovered energy
- Recyclable
- Recycled content
- Reduced energy consumption
- Reduced resource use
- Reduced water consumption
- Reusable and refillable
- Waste reduction

The annexes to the document provide a simplified list of standardized principles that are to be applied to all environmental claims drawn from ISO 14020 and some examples of standardized tests that can be used to support the various claims identified within the document.

Although these claims do not require certification by a third party organization, they do have to be verifiable. This means that, if their accuracy is challenged, they need to be able to provide accurate and verified supporting documentation for the claims they are making.

ISO also has developed standard for Ecologo Programmes and for the development and use of Environmental Product Data Sheets (EPDs). They are currently developing a standard for Communication of Footprints to be used in conjunction with the standards already completed for the quantification of Carbon Footprints and Water Footprints. CIAI has represented the consumer sector in the development of all of these standards.

Watch this site for additional information on these other ISO standards.