



## **SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNICATIONS DIAGNOSTIC TOOL**

**How to self-assess the credibility of your  
sustainability communications**

**Presented by Ad Net Zero, in partnership with Meta**

**This diagnostic tool is based on an approach informed by Meta analysis and Accenture research, commissioned by Meta.**

**It is one element of the Meta Sustainability Advertising Playbook, first published in summer 2022. The writers of the playbook recommend the first stage of any sustainable communications campaign is to understand where your company is on the path to sustainability and to honestly assess where you are at.**

This is essential if you are to ensure you fully understand what you can and can't credibly claim in any sustainability advertising campaigns you might run.

With permission from Meta, we have reproduced the diagnostic tool in this short guide. We recommend anyone thinking about how their advertising campaigns can include sustainability messages to first complete this self-diagnostic tool and identify where they are as a business in terms of sustainability maturity.

This honest, open assessment, coupled with a clear understanding of the rules and regulations around making environmental claims in your advertising, can help ensure your campaigns take the right steps to avoid greenwashing or over-claiming just how 'green' your products and services might be.

FOR MORE ADVICE, PLEASE VISIT [ADNETZERO.COM](https://adnetzero.com)



Or check out Meta's Sustainability Advertising Playbook, which is freely available for anyone to read and use

[META'S SUSTAINABILITY ADVERTISING PLAYBOOK](#)





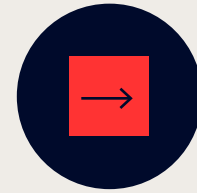
## SELF-ASSESS

# Identifying environmental sustainability maturity is critical to ensure authentic communication

The sustainability maturity diagnostic provides guidance on what can and shouldn't be claimed in sustainability ad campaigns. Specifically, it provides insights on:



**Current environmental sustainability maturity**



**Guidance on how to progress in environmental sustainability maturity**



**Maturity specific communication guidance**

Diagnostic results should be considered in the context of a brand's industry, to accommodate varying consumer perceptions of sustainability across areas



**REMEMBER**

Authentic communication requires a holistic lens and input from stakeholders across an organisation. Key stakeholders should be consulted to complete the sustainability maturity assessment, as well as the development and implementation of associated sustainability ad campaigns.



## SELF-ASSESS

# Brands are subject to different levels of scrutiny based on their industry

Consumer and regulator scrutiny varies, meaning brands must consider the sustainability nuances associated with their industry

### Questions to consider:



To what extent is your industry under intense scrutiny from **consumers** based on the scope of your environmental activity?

To what extent is your industry under intense scrutiny from **regulators** based on the scope of your environmental activity?

When embedding a sustainable message in ad campaigns, brands should consider the topics that matter most to consumers per industry.



01

Focus on the fundamental sustainability topics, integral to your industry

02

Innovate in new areas of opportunity to become an industry differentiator

Fundamental and differentiator sustainability topics differ according to industry<sup>1</sup>:



	Cosmetics	Automotive
Fundamental topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Over packaging</li><li>▶ Animal testing and cruelty</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Air pollution</li><li>▶ Carbon/ Greenhouse emissions</li></ul>
Differentiating topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Microplastic pollution</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Water Pollution</li></ul>

# Our self-assessment helps brands understand their environmental maturity

After understanding industry considerations, brands should consider their environmental sustainability maturity and to what extent environmental sustainability messaging plays a role in their communication strategy

To what extent do you agree that your organisation...(where 1 = completely disagree and 7 = completely agree)?

	Strongly disagree			Sometimes			Strongly agree
<b>01</b> Defines a vision for environmental sustainability focused on long-term value (10 years +) and positive outcomes for the environment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>02</b> Develops a sustainability strategy which is embedded across the business and has clear commitments, targets and objectives related to environmental sustainability.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>03</b> Identifies and prioritises environmental sustainability issues with key stakeholders and incentivises employees to deliver on company-wide environmental sustainability initiatives.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>04</b> Implements comprehensive sustainability KPI metrics to track environmental performance and publishes in annual report or sustainability report.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>05</b> Has advanced data management systems in place with controls and validation checks to test environmental sustainability data.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SELF-ASSESS

# The extent to which environmental sustainability messaging plays a role in your sustainability strategy should also be considered by brands

To what extent do you agree that your organisation...(where 1 = completely disagree and 7 = completely agree)?

	Strongly disagree			Sometimes			Strongly agree
<b>06</b> Fully aligns environmental sustainability reporting with recognised frameworks and standards. (e.g. Global Reporting Initiative, Sustainability Accounting Standards Board, UN Sustainable Development Goals, International Sustainability Standards Board, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>07</b> Understands consumer mindsets and frequently delivers environmental sustainability messaging as a core part of brand communications strategy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>08</b> Regularly tests the impact of environmental sustainability messaging across campaigns and feeds learnings into creative advertising strategy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>09</b> Is a trusted source of actionable insights on environmental sustainability, providing tailored messaging on individual campaigns, products or services.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>10</b> Ensures that its environmental sustainability claims are fully validated by an accredited third-party.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## SELF-ASSESS

# It is possible to classify brands into three groups of sustainability maturity

Brands can follow the steps below to find out what their score means:

01

Add scores from questions 1-10

02

Identify which maturity stage your score corresponds to

Organisations are at different stages in their sustainability journey. There are steps that organisations can take to accelerate their transformation and drive higher engagement with consumers, depending on their sustainability maturity. Click on the box specific to your maturity stage for guidance and tips.

**<24**

### Emerging

Has the intention to reduce consumption, operational costs and introduce environmentally sustainable practices.



**25-47**

### Operational

Has a targeted, systematic approach to identify and deliver on environmental sustainability goals.



**48-70**

### Leading

Has a detailed strategy in place to track a comprehensive set of environmental targets and refine strategy based on environmental, regulatory or industry shifts.



## SELF-ASSESS

# Identifying environmental sustainability maturity is

You are at an emerging stage of your environmental sustainability journey. Check out the guidance below to understand what this means for you and how to progress to the next stage!

## Key Considerations for Emerging Stage

- ✓ **Establish** a short to medium term **vision for environmental sustainability** within the organisation.
- ✓ **Develop a high-level strategy** based on key targets for environmental sustainability.
- ✓ **Engage key owners and advocates** for environmental sustainability across the business.
- ✓ **Establish KPIs** to track your performance against your environmental sustainability goals.
- ✓ **Identify the data you need to track** your prioritised environmental sustainability initiatives.

## Steps to Operational Maturity

- ▶ **Ensure stakeholders** across the organisation **are clear on environmental priorities.**
- ▶ **Run pilot initiatives and campaigns** as proof points for your environmental sustainability strategy. **Amplify the business impact** of pilot initiatives **through awareness campaigns.**
- ▶ **Develop backlog of pilot initiatives** to incentivise engagement and **create authentic stories.**
- ▶ **Communicate performance against KPIs** to demonstrate your sustainability journey to the market.
- ▶ **Run awareness campaigns with your audience** to demonstrate your commitment to becoming an environmentally sustainable organisation.



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# Operational Maturity

You are at an operational level of maturity. Check out the guidance below to understand what this means for you and how to progress to the next stage!

## Key Considerations for Operational Stage

- ✓ **Ensure that consumers are aware** of your organisation's environmental priorities and achievements **through awareness campaigns.**
- ✓ **Integrate environmental sustainability strategy** across business functions including marketing and communications.
- ✓ **Develop comprehensive roadmap based on environmental sustainability initiatives** to address priority issues including messaging.
- ✓ **Ensure that your audiences are aware** of how you are tracking against KPIs. **Identify further metrics to track** and build into your campaign and communications strategy.
- ✓ **Ensure that the data** you collect is used to **inform your organisation's messaging across campaigns.**

## Steps to Leading Maturity

- ▶ **Review your long-term goals** and ambitions and incorporate these into messaging across campaigns.
- ▶ **Identify and deliver on quick wins** to build momentum for your environmental sustainability advertising programme.
- ▶ Show consumers that you are **going above and beyond** what is necessary to report from a sustainability perspective.
- ▶ **Identify and implement** further controls and validations checks for your environmental sustainability data to reach the next stage of maturity.

## SELF-ASSESS

# Leading Maturity

You are at a leading level of maturity. Check out the guidance below to understand what this means for you and how you can continue to improve!

## Key Considerations for Leading Stage

- ✓ **Look across your organisation's value chain** and **work with your partners** to ensure they are focused on creating **long-term value** with **positive outcomes for the environment**, reporting on progress effectively and delivering key messages across ongoing campaigns.
- ✓ **Review priorities** with key stakeholders on an ongoing basis and refine environmental sustainability advertising programme as needed.
- ✓ **Track engagement** based on incentives and amplify impact through internal/external campaign. **Refine incentives** to increase reach of environmental sustainability initiatives.

## Tips for Continued Improvement

- ▶ **Monitor environmental targets** on an ongoing basis and refine strategy based on environmental, regulatory or industry shifts. **Embed any changes into your communication strategy.**
- ▶ **Work with communities and creators** to ensure your audiences are aware of your status as a leader.
- ▶ **Ensure you are incorporating all relevant data into your advertising campaigns** to achieve your programme intentions.



## GET IN TOUCH

For more information on what to do next,  
you can access the Meta Sustainability Playbook [here](#)

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