



GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS

Consumer Rights and Safe Products and Services

A GETTING STARTED GUIDE

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ABOUT THIS SERIES

This guide is part of our series of Getting Started Guides that supports your company to develop an [embedded sustainability strategy](#). Each guide tackles a specific sustainability sub-issue and explores what your company needs to do to support the resilience of the environmental and social systems around you.

In each guide, we address relevant trends, system thresholds, key concepts, key actors, and key resources. We also offer guidance on how to address the impacts of decisions and activities in your operations and value chains as well as developing credible goals and outlining key corporate actions and internal targets that can help to provide clarity on the work ahead.

We recommend you read the first guide in the series, [Getting Started Guides: An Introduction](#), which explains our overall approach and the value of setting a clear strategy anchored in your company's most material issues. It also explains how you can leverage process-based interim targets to clearly outline and track the specific actions that your company needs to take to achieve its high-level goals.

A complete list of focus areas and sub-issues can be found in our guide [Scan: A Comprehensive List of Sustainability Issues for Companies](#).

This guidebook addresses **Consumer Rights and Safe Products and Services**, which is part of the broader sustainability issue of *Governance and Ethics*.

1

SETTING THE STAGE – CONSUMER PROTECTION

Consumer protection ensures that products and services are safe and reliable, promotes fairness in the marketplace, and safeguards consumers from unfair or fraudulent business practices. Consumers are offered protection through “[legislation, industry codes of practice, standards, enforcement agencies, and consumer groups](#)” and these organisations help to define the needs most important to consumers in business-consumer interactions.

Often, consumer protection is established and enforced by laws that aim to prevent broader business malpractice or target specific unfair practices that can mislead or harm consumers. While the specific legislated responsibilities for businesses vary based on the unique context of each country, the [United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection](#) offer an overarching approach for countries to follow. The general principles of the guidelines can also offer direction for companies by signaling the topics that your business should understand and address related to consumer protection. These include:

Topics highlighted by the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection



Source: [United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection](#)

Applying these guidelines helps define the key principles of consumer rights and the roles of governments, businesses, and other consumer rights organisations within consumer protection

as well as ensure a consistent approach and benchmark in a world where company operations and markets often span many countries and jurisdictions.

The key topics of concern for consumer protection vary between industries. For example, companies within the food industry will likely engage with concepts such as the right to access safe food and ensuring food safety, which can include industry specific practices such as [Good Agricultural Practices](#) (GAP), [Good Practices on Animal Feeding](#), [Good Manufacturing Practices](#) (GMPs), [Good Hygiene Practices](#) (GHPs) and [Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point](#) (HACCP) systems. Whereas, companies within the tech industry may be focused on the [impact of digital services on children and youth](#) or the [consumer right to repair electronic products](#).

This guide does not provide a comprehensive overview of the requirements for every industry; instead, it offers an overarching approach to guide your organisation as it delves into these topics. Each company will need to understand its unique operating context and local requirements to prioritise its own efforts where they are most relevant.

Based on the guidance for businesses from the [United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection](#), [Consumers International notes](#) that companies should:

- Operate fairly and honestly at all stages of the business-consumer relationship;
- Avoid practices that pose unnecessary risks or harm to consumers, particularly those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged;
- Provide accurate information about goods and services, terms and conditions, fees and costs to enable informed decisions;
- Assist consumers to develop the knowledge and skills to understand and access competent advice and assistance related to their consumer rights;
- Utilise effective measures to protect consumers privacy and personal data;
- Provide access to fair, effective, transparent and inexpensive dispute resolution schemes.

Note: Sustainability issues are generally systemic issues, because they are deeply interconnected and rooted in complex environmental, social, and economic systems. In these guides, a system threshold is defined as the point at which the resilience of an environmental, social, or economic system becomes compromised. This occurs when the total impacts imposed on the system exceed its capacity to assimilate those impacts.

SYSTEM THRESHOLD

Consumer rights are baseline protections for individuals in the global economy. Violating these rights or misleading consumers erodes consumer trust and jeopardises accountability and transparency. Companies cannot disregard consumer protections – they must ensure the health and safety of their products and services and align their practices with the rights of consumers, including by offering adequate return, exchange and warranty policies, supporting consumer right to repair, building inclusivity into product and service design, and ensuring all communications and advertising are credible and trustworthy.

KEY TOPICS ASSOCIATED WITH CONSUMER RIGHTS AND SAFE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES:

- Health and safety of products
- Responsible advertising
- Warranties
- Return and exchange
- Right to repair
- Inclusive design of products and services
- Protections from frauds and scams

2

KEY CONCEPTS

HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Unsafe products and services or unfair and fraudulent business practices can pose considerable risks to individuals including physical and/or psychological harm as well as economic hardship. Many governments also have specific product and service safety frameworks embedded into laws and regulations, providing guidance to businesses on respecting consumers' right to safe products and services. As such, businesses have a [responsibility](#) to adhere to standards and regulations regarding the products and services they provide.

The requirements for the health and safety of products and services will vary greatly by industry and region. [Product safety standards](#), as defined by SafetyCulture, are "regulations and guidelines established to ensure that products are safe for consumers and meet specific safety requirements before marketing. These standards specify materials, design, and product performance requirements to minimize risks such as injury, illness, or damage."

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) [Recommendation of the Council on Consumer Product Safety](#) highlights the responsibility of businesses to "[p]lace safe products on the market and consider and manage risks to the safety of such products throughout their lifetime, in particular at the design, manufacture, distribution, use and disposal stages." Furthermore, companies should "[i]mplement, without delay, appropriate corrective measures (including product withdrawals

and recalls), and take all the necessary steps to notify the relevant government bodies and consumers in instances where businesses should have known, or where they become aware, that the products they placed on the market are unsafe."

Aligning with international and national product safety standards not only protects customers, but also supports increased quality control and assurance throughout the manufacturing process. This offers various [benefits to businesses](#), including stronger brand reputation and reception, reduced legal risks, and increased global market access.

Health and safety standards for services will also vary greatly based on the industry and region. Consumer-facing health and safety standards can take various different forms – for example [service standards](#) in the EU "specify] requirements that should be fulfilled by a service to establish its fitness for purpose. The standard may provide definitions, indicators of service quality and their levels, or specify a time period for delivery, such as the standard on handling customer complaints." Other aspects can include requirements for ensuring a safe and hazard-free environment, processes for assessing risks, and addressing vulnerabilities in design.

There may be additional standards for specific industries. As the impacts of certain emerging technologies and services come to the forefront – for example, the impact of digital services on children and youth – governments are also introducing legislation that outlines actions for companies to reduce social impacts related to their services.

Beyond consumer-facing product and service health and safety, companies must also take a safe and sustainable approach to design that reduces risks to human and environmental health. [Safe and sustainable by design](#), as defined by the European Environment Agency, is “a pre-market design approach whereby the objectives of minimising the use of hazardous chemicals, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and fostering the reuse and recycling of materials in a circular economy are built into product [and service] design.” Safe and sustainable design goes hand in hand with product and service safety.

RIGHT TO REPAIR

Interlinked with safe and sustainable design is the consumer right to repair. In the linear economy, to control the lifespans of products and ultimately spur sales, consumer products are often made with planned obsolescence – [often defined as](#) “the practice of intentionally designing products to break or become aesthetically undesirable”. Techniques can vary by industry and include practices such as restricting the parts, tools, and information available to limit third-party repair efforts or designing products to wear down faster or have limited functionality over time as is often seen in common technology products such as batteries and phones.

These techniques make consumers unable to continue to use or repair the items they own, encouraging them to prematurely dispose of products and purchase new editions or replacements and contributing to excessive waste generation.

[The Repair Association](#), an advocacy organisation working to secure consumers ability to repair, defines right to repair as including eight principles:

- Access to diagnostic and repair tools
- Access to replacement parts at fair market prices
- Ability to bypass software locks that prevent repairs (as long as it doesn't infringe upon

proprietary software or intellectual property rights.)

- Access to the documentation (such as repair manuals or schematic diagrams) for repairs
- Protection against retaliatory measures for independent repairs
- Prevention of unfair or deceptive contracts that restrict repair
- Understanding for exemptions for certain product categories
- Enforcement mechanisms for consumers right to repair

Consumers need repair to be accessible and affordable. Companies need to ensure that they are designing their products for repair and making the process accessible at local scales. They also need to design their products to be sustainable and circular to reduce waste and enhance circularity – for more on product circularity, explore our [Product and Materials Stewardship: A Getting Started Guide](#).

Countries are increasingly solidifying consumer's right to repair in legislation. For example, the [European Union introduced new rules in 2024](#) to further reinforce company's obligation to repair, “ensuring that manufacturers provide timely and cost-effective repair services and inform consumers about their rights to repair.” Many other countries around the world also have [right to repair legislation](#) in place or have introduced national bills to ensure consumer rights.

ENSURING INCLUSIVE DESIGN

While the key elements of inclusive design will vary based on the product or service, its physical or digital nature, and other specificities, there are various overarching design philosophies and theories that help to guide inclusive design approaches.

[Universal design](#), as defined by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, is the “design and composition of an environment so that it can be

accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. An environment (or any building, product, or service in that environment) should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to use it.”

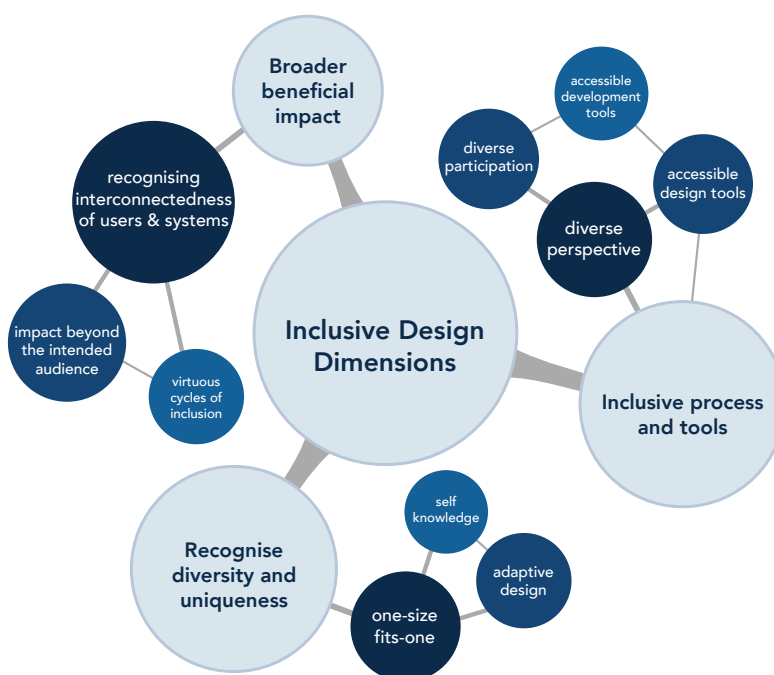
The [Centre for Excellence in Universal Design](#) outlines seven principles of universal design:

1. **Equitable use:** The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
2. **Flexibility in use:** The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
3. **Simple and intuitive use:** Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
4. **Perceptible information:** The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

5. **Tolerance for error:** The design minimises hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
6. **Low physical effort:** The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.
7. **Size and space for approach and use:** Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

[Inclusive design](#), as defined by the Inclusive Design Research Centre, is “design that considers the full range of human diversity with respect to ability, language, culture, gender, age and other forms of human difference.” While similar, inclusive design aims to foster a “one-size-fits-one individualized design approach to inclusion” rather than a one-size-fits-all approach that has become, in recent years, synonymous with universal design.

The three dimensions of inclusive design include:



Source: [Inclusive Design Research Centre](#)

These two approaches provide the underlining foundation to design inclusively. There may be additional product or service specific guidance for design created by other bodies that may help your company better understand context-specific approaches.

RESPONSIBLE ADVERTISING AND GREENWASHING

As companies act on environmental and social issues, misleading communications relating to the sustainability of products and services has increasingly become a key concern. Tactics such as greenwashing or socialwashing aim to deceive consumers about the environmental and social features of the product or progress on issues within the company's strategy.

[Greenwashing](#) is the deceptive marketing tactic of misleading consumers into believing a company, product, or policy is more environmentally friendly or sustainable than it actually is. It is also a technique used by certain companies to distract consumers from the fact that their business model and activities result in environmental harm and damage.

Social washing is a similar concept covering company messaging and action on social issues. It broadly refers to companies using advertising and messaging to appear more socially responsible or ethical and misleading consumers to believe companies are doing more to tackle social issues than they really are.

For example, greenwashing and social washing can include [tactics such as](#):

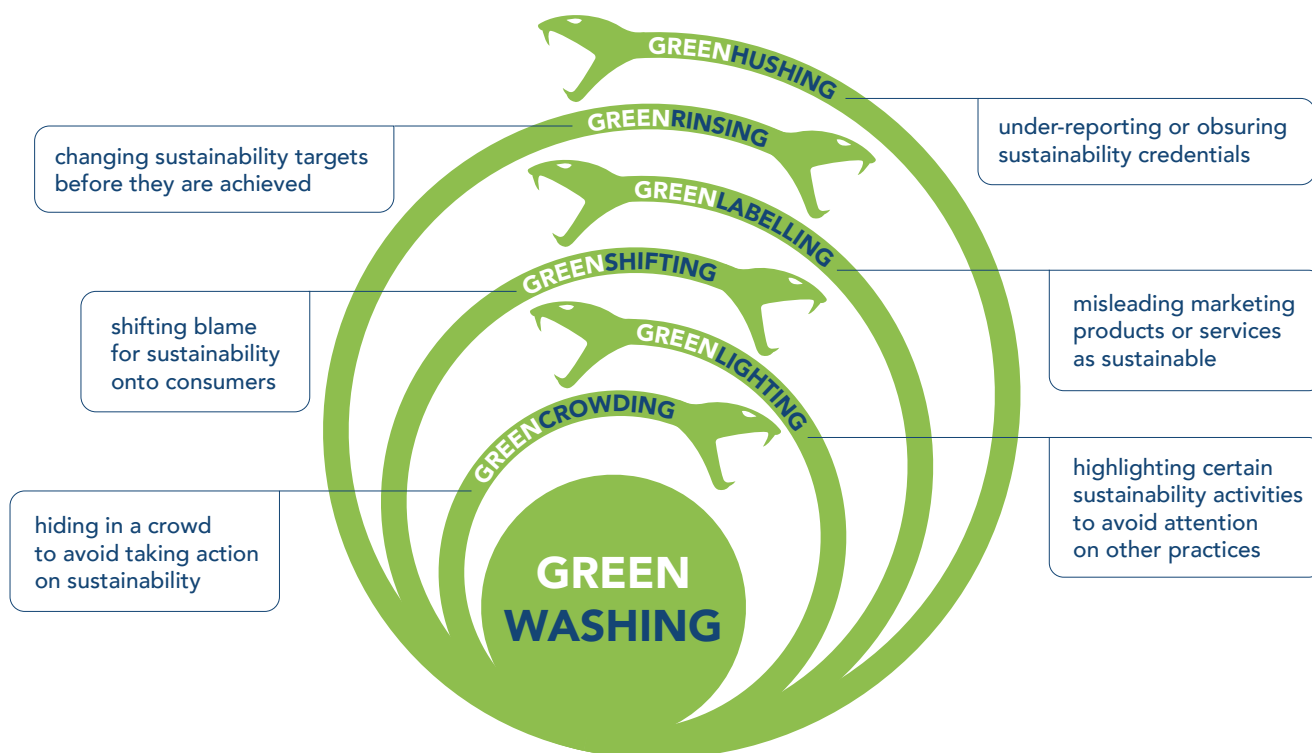
- Making commitments to tackle environmental or social issues, without credible accompanying plans or actions to achieve them.
- Using intentionally misleading labels and messaging that do not have standardised definitions, such as "green" or "ethical", to promote products.
- Misleading claims about the environmental or social impacts of products and/or services.

- Advocating for or supporting government climate or other policies that oppose a company's own environmental or social commitments.

Misleading claims can appear in public statements, ads, labels on products and other investor or public-facing documents, providing skewed or false information that makes the company, or its products, appear more sustainable than they actually are. They undermine credible efforts by other companies and [negatively impact](#) the transition to and realisation of a sustainable economy by creating uncertainty for crucial investments in environmentally or socially conscious products and services.

Such tactics are increasingly facing public and regulatory scrutiny, with many countries [beginning to introduce greenwashing legislation or reporting mandates](#) that aim to reduce misleading corporate advertising and claims on environmental issues. Many of these mandates are interlinked with protecting consumer rights and aligning with country-level ambitions towards a green and circular economy. Certain countries have introduced laws to directly tackle greenwashing – for example, the [European Union](#) has banned generic environmental claims and requires sustainability labels to be verified under approved certification or other schemes. Other countries have incorporated consumer protection against greenwashing under existing structures, such as the UK introducing a [Green Claims Code](#) framework under their Competition and Markets Authority to provide and clarify guidelines for companies.

The Planet Tracker highlights six different types of greenwashing in their report 'The Greenwashing Hydra'.



Source: [The Planet Tracker](#)

Other aspects of responsible advertising may vary by industry. Many center around prioritising transparency, avoiding misleading claims related to aspects of products and services, and can include considerations or regulations around advertising aimed at specific groups [such as children](#). [The International Chamber of Commerce's \(ICC\) Advertising and Marketing Communications Code](#) is the international go-to guide for responsible marketing and advertising.

PROTECTIONS FROM FRAUD AND SCAMS

Consumer fraud refers to any deceptive or misleading business practices that are used to gain an unfair advantage over consumers in the marketplace. It can take many forms, including false advertising, misrepresentation of products or services, counterfeit products, scams, or other intentionally deceptive practices. Consumer fraud is illegal and can result in significant financial penalties, as well as damage to a company's reputation and brand.

Consumer fraud has been a key focus area for regulatory scrutiny, especially with the rise of digital business practices that make consumers more susceptible to fraudulent activities. Countries are developing and implementing a range of preventative actions such as regulatory frameworks, voluntary corporate initiatives, and focused government departments to address fraud risks.

Increasingly, consumer-facing companies such as selling platforms are also beginning to anticipate fraud and challenge deceptive practices that may be occurring in relation to their business. Companies often take a three-pronged approach, beginning with stopping scams at the source by enhancing cybersecurity and implementing internal controls or technologies; educating consumers about how to avoid fraud and scams and being transparent about risks; and building partnerships to hold those undertaking fraudulent activities accountable. Companies are also providing comprehensive training to employees to support an understanding of unfair and deceptive business practices and how to tackle them.

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KEY PLAYERS

International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network (ICPEN) is composed of consumer protection authorities from over 70 countries, representing some 5 billion global citizen-consumers.

The United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection (UNGCP) provide international principles for effective consumer protection legislation, enforcement institutions, and redress systems. While built for governments, they provide insights into the international regulatory approach to consumer rights and protection that can support the work ahead for companies.

The most relevant organisations related to consumer protection will often depend on your organisation's location, industry context, and needs. You will likely need to engage with local and industry actors to understand the relevant key players to support your strategy.

4

COMMITTING TO TAKE ACTION – MID- AND LONG-TERM GOALS

Committing to take action on **Consumer Rights and Safe Products and Services** can include addressing many of the key topics listed above. The mid- and long-term commitments that your organisation elects to make should be based on your identified priorities, areas of greatest impact, and your capacity to undertake the work required. It is important to note that this section does not provide all possible mid-

and long-term goals related to this issue, but rather a sample of the goals that were most frequently adopted by companies in our research.

Common mid- and long-term goals and/or commitments on **Consumer Rights and Safe Products and Services** include variations of the following:

Long-term goal: Ensure our products and services do not violate consumer rights in the regions where we operate.

- We will align with consumer rights legislation for products and services where we operate.
- We will embed inclusive design into our products and services.
- We will work towards ensuring consumers' right to repair within our product offerings.
- We will ensure that our return, exchange, and warranty policies align with industry best practice.

Long-term goal: Ensure the health and safety of all products and/or services.

- We will meet or exceed all applicable legislative and regulatory requirements with respect to product and service safety.
- We will achieve third-party safety certification for our safety program [where available].

Long-term goal: Responsibly advertise our products and/or services.

- We will provide consumers, via appropriate communication channels, with timely, clear, accurate, and easily accessible safety information about products.
- We will comply with relevant local, national, and/or international marketing standards, laws, and regulations.
- We will align with industry self-regulatory best practices around responsible advertising.

Are you setting new goals or interested in benchmarking your goals against leading practice? To help advance progress in credible corporate sustainability goals, we maintain a public goals database containing leading sustainability goals and commitments set by large companies globally. Explore our [Sustainability Goals Database](#) for more mid- and long-term goals on Consumer Rights and Safe Products and Services.

5

HOW TO GET THERE – PROCESS-BASED INTERIM TARGETS

Note: The following proposed timelines are only for guidance and are based on the pace outlined by other companies. The timeframe for actions and work for each step needs to be embedded in your organisational context, which may require different time allocations.

PRODUCT AND SERVICE SAFETY

Understand product and service safety legislation and other guiding standards where you operate

Identify national or local laws and regulations that outline product and service safety requirements for your industry where you operate and sell your products. Also identify soft law instruments such

as international declarations, guiding principles, or standards set forth by international and/or local bodies to guide a deeper understanding of what key issues are currently being discussed and best practices in your industry. Aim to understand where you should phase out, revise, or identify new practices your company should adopt to enhance your current safety procedures.

Examples of process-based targets:

- By 20[XX], we will identify and understand the business requirements in product and service safety legislation in the regions where we operate.
- By 20[XX], we will identify soft law instruments such as international declarations, guiding principles, or standards set forth by international and/or local bodies to guide product and service safety practices in our industry.
- By 20[XX], we will benchmark our current safety system against international leading practice in our industry.

Conduct a hazard analysis and identify control points

Conduct a comprehensive hazard analysis and evaluate any potential impacts on quality and safety. Identify the key processes in your organisation that may be critical points for quality or safety checks.

Once hazards are identified, assess their possible impacts and prioritise control points where monitoring and interventions would have the greatest impacts. Use risk assessment tools, such as the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) System, IRIS (Integrated Risk Identification Solution) and/or HINT (Hygiene Intelligence Tool) as

relevant to your industry, to define vulnerabilities and identify key areas of improvement. It may be helpful to organise the work needed into categories aligned with the 5P's of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs): people, products, processes, procedures, and premises. Explore the 10 principles of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) [here](#) as they may help frame and guide further work.

Depending in your industry, there may already be specific guidance developed by international bodies beyond those mentioned here. Align with industry guidance and standards for hazard analysis and controls where available.

While the process above broadly covers the hazard analysis process, it will likely require different approaches for products and services. For services, identify hazards around the location and related

to the nature of the service – for example, ask how equipment is used with consumers and whether safety processes are adequate, and how your service may impact consumers' mental or physical health.

Examples of process-based targets:

- By 20[XX], we will conduct a hazard analysis and identify critical control points (HACCPs) for products.
- By 20[XX], we will conduct a hazard analysis and identify risks and appropriate controls for the services we offer.

Update and strengthen product safety plans to address in-house control points

Validate the effectiveness of current procedures, use the learnings from your analysis of your current product safety practices to develop or update Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and evolve them as needed. Establish and track product and/or service quality and safety performance goals and objectives for your organisation. Create processes to measure and record performance and outline where and how to take preventative and corrective actions when concerns are recorded.

Outline short, medium and long-term priorities that drive improvements in your end-to-end management of centralised safety and quality systems. For products, set up schedules for periodic routine inspections and audits at all manufacturing sites, including conducting self-assessments against updated internal quality and safety plans to ensure effective implementation and compliance.

Also clarify job-specific tasks, ensure employees receive relevant training related to their roles in product safety, and conduct evaluations to ensure that the responsibility associated with each role is understood.

CASE STUDY: [Coca-Cola](#), an American multinational company, defines its policies, standards, and requirements for managing product quality and safety in the Coca-Cola Operating Requirements (KORE). It outlines compliance with legal requirements and breaks down the responsibilities for product safety across the company. KORE also requires all manufacturing facilities to implement the internationally recognised standard for food safety, FSSC 22000, to ensure performance and support allocation of adequate resources.

Examples of process-based targets:

- By 20[XX], we will update our safety control plan to ensure it aligns with international leading practice.
- By 20[XX], we will [create/update] our Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
- By 20[XX], all manufacturing sites will conduct regular self-assessments to ensure compliance with updated safety plans and expectations.
- By 20[XX], we will establish and track quality and safety performance goals and objectives.

Strengthen your efforts in your supply chain

Outline expectations for suppliers and external manufacturers to set up standards that align with your safety procedures. Prior to partnering with suppliers, conduct an initial audit of supplier facilities to ensure they meet your quality expectations. Third-party auditing of supplier's safety practices, regular visits to sites, and spot check inspections of products from suppliers can also play an important part. Ensure raw materials and finished products undergo multiple quality evaluations, including practices such as specification checks, visual inspections, source verification, or other practices as relevant to your industry. Explore options to collaborate with

suppliers on safety training, sharing of best practices, identification of hazards, and greater transparency to allow for robust information availability.

CASE STUDY: [Mondelēz International](#), an American multinational food and beverage company, outlines expectations for suppliers and external manufacturers to adhere to the company's safety and quality standards. The company established a supplier approval program, conducting initial audits to ensure facilities meet key safety and quality expectations from the beginning of the relationship and processes to periodically audit suppliers to ensure continued compliance.

Examples of process-based targets:

- By 20[XX], we will develop [ingredient/component] quality and safety standards for our suppliers.
- By 20[XX], we will conduct an initial audit of supplier facilities to ensure they meet quality expectations.
- By 20[XX], we will set up a schedule for third-party audits, regular visits to sites, or spot check inspections for suppliers.
- By 20[XX], we will collaborate with suppliers to enhance safety procedures.

RESPONSIBLE MARKETING AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Understand consumer protection requirements in the regions where you operate

Identify national or local laws and regulations that outline consumer protection requirements where you operate and sell your products and/or services. This can include responsible marketing, including

legislation around greenwashing or restrictions on marketing to specific groups such as children, or guidance around inclusive design and consumer rights. Also identify soft law instruments such as international declarations, guiding principles, or standards set forth by international and/or local bodies to guide a deeper understanding of what key issues are currently being discussed and best practices for consumer protection in your industry.

Examples of process-based targets:

- By 20[XX], we will identify and understand the business requirements in consumer protection legislation in the regions where we operate.
- By 20[XX], we will identify soft law instruments such as international declarations, guiding principles, or standards set forth by international and/or local bodies to guide responsible advertising practices in our industry.
- By 20[XX], we will identify soft law instruments such as international declarations, guiding principles, or standards set forth by international and/or local bodies to guide inclusive design practices in our industry.
- By 20[XX], we will identify soft law instruments such as international declarations, guiding principles, or standards set forth by international and/or local bodies to guide our approach to consumer rights.

Analyse your current approach to consumer protection and prioritise areas for action

Benchmark your current practices to understand where your company has room to improve in its current marketing and offerings. Based on your

organisational context, your company may choose to prioritise a particular aspect of consumer protection that is particularly relevant to your industry – this can include ensuring consumers right to repair, responsible approaches to warranties, inclusive design in products and services, and more.

Examples of process-based targets:

- By 20[XX], we will analyse our current communications and marketing to identify opportunities to improve.
- By 20[XX], we will analyse our current offerings to identify opportunities further align with consumer protection expectations.
- By 20[XX], we will prioritise areas for action regarding consumer protection.

Develop a responsible marketing plan

Create a responsible marketing plan and/or principles that embed transparency and align with international or industry best practice. Expectations for each industry will vary greatly – for example, companies within the mining industry may choose to focus on credible communications of sustainability ambitions or actions whereas the those within the food industry may choose to prioritise communications on food safety, nutritional information, and healthy eating habits. Alongside this, develop tools and training to ensure marketing teams are equipped with the skills to align with your plans.

CASE STUDY: [Reckitt Benckiser](#), a British multinational consumer goods company, created a set of Responsible Marketing Principles to translate its approach to marketing across the company.

The principles include:

- Be truthful and clear in all our communications
- Be transparent about our products and marketing intentions
- Champion safety and safe use
- Protect consumer data and privacy
- Take extra care around marketing to children and teens
- Represent and portray diversity and inclusion
- Drive responsibility through partnerships
- Drive meaningful sustainable impact

These principles are embedded into the company's Responsible Marketing Policy, providing more detail and clear requirements for marketing communications. Employees are trained on the policy, and Reckitt has developed key performance indicators to measure and monitor compliance.

Examples of process-based targets:

- By 20[XX], we will develop a responsible marketing plan that addresses our approach to [greenwashing, inclusive marketing, etc].
- By 20[XX], we will develop and audit the accessibility of our communications, ensuring compliance to WCAG 2.2 [or other industry] standards.

Address your prioritised areas of consumer protection

Depending on which consumer issues your organisation has identified as a priority, develop appropriate plans to align your efforts with key standards and consumer expectations. As this can be a significantly wide-ranging practice based on the context of your organisation, you may wish to explore the documents provided in the resources section below for further, issue-specific guidance.

CASE STUDY: Recognising the impact of overconsumption in the garment industry, [Patagonia](#) – an outdoor clothing and gear company – began various events and projects to better support consumer right and access to repair. The company introduced Worn Wear events that allowed consumers to pick a used garment and repair it themselves or bring in an item with teams on site to fix and give it a new life. The company also operates the largest garment repair facility in North America, trains retail staff on simple repair tasks, and published free repair guides for their products.

CASE STUDY: [Fairphone](#), a Dutch electronics manufacturer, aimed to redefine the electronics industry by offering a phone that prioritises people and planet. Their phones are designed to be modular and easily repairable in comparison to other brands on the market, putting consumers' right to repair and tackling planned obsolescence at the forefront of their company purpose. The company also promises continued software support, guaranteeing five software version updates and 8-10 years of security updates.

CASE STUDY: Understanding the importance of scam prevention, [Amazon](#) – an American multinational technology company – has set up a plan to develop interventions and tools that detect fraudulent attempts and protect consumers. Teams of machine learning scientists, software developers, and investigators work to monitor, identify, and remove websites and phone numbers impersonating the company. Amazon also partners with anti-fraud organisations such as the Better Business Bureau and the Anti-Phishing Council, as well as cross-industry groups for joint enforcement actions.

CASE STUDY: Recognising that 1 in 3 children are increasingly impacted by the downsides of digital services such as cyber bullying and screen addiction, [Orange](#) – a French multinational telecommunications company – committed to create systems to protect and support parents and children. Orange created a policy on children's rights and child protection, highlighting a binding set of principles and behaviours to guide the actions of the company. These were operationalised through a framework of tools and services, including parental controls, integration of greater protective measures into additional services such as TV's and computers, and incentivised offers that aim to encourage healthy digital practices. Beyond embedding child protection into service offerings, Orange also organises digital workshops to help families learn how to use digital tools appropriately.

Examples of process-based targets:

- By 20[XX], we will develop an inclusive design plan for [X] products.
- By 20[XX], we will strengthen our approach to the right to repair in our products.
- By 20[XX], we will ensure our return, exchange, and warranty policies align with consumer protection standards.

RESOURCES

GUIDANCE

UNDERSTANDING PRODUCT AND SERVICE SAFETY

[A Guide to Product Safety Standards](#) can help you to build a better understanding of product safety standards from around the world. It explains the key benefits of adhering to these standards, as well as notable product safety standards and regulations from the United States, Australia, United Kingdom, European Union, and more.

[Recommendation of the Council on Consumer Product Safety](#) - adopted by the OECD Council in 2020 - outlines the key elements that should be at the core of consumer product safety frameworks at domestic and international levels. They promote a consistent approach to product safety rules across jurisdictions in order to increase certainty and efficiency for all stakeholders. The recommendation calls for the establishment of robust consumer product safety regulatory and policy frameworks that provide for a consumer right to safe products and rapid alerts when unsafe products are on the market or are the subject of a ban or a recall; are informed by sound evidence and data sources; and pay specific attention to vulnerable consumers.

[Designing safe and sustainable products requires a new approach for chemicals](#) from the European Environment Agency can help ensure that chemical products are produced in a way that maximises their contributions to society while avoiding harm to nature and peoples. To achieve this, it provides a four-step process for factoring sustainability dimensions into the design phase of chemical products.

UNDERSTANDING GREENWASHING

[Net Zero Transition Plans: Red Flag Indicators to Assess Inconsistencies and Greenwashing](#) by the World Wildlife Fund and others can help you assess the integrity and consistency of net-zero transition plans. It begins by defining greenwashing and how it relates to transition plan credibility, which is a prerequisite for effective capital allocation and climate risk management. It then proposes a framework for assessing transition plan credibility based on a study of 28 transition frameworks. The outcome of this study is a red flag indicator framework that can be used to assess the ambition, credibility, and feasibility of transition plans and prevent greenwashing.

[“Net Zero Greenwash”: The Gap Between Corporate Commitments and their Policy Engagement](#) by InfluenceMap can help you understand the risk of greenwashing in your climate commitments through misaligned policy engagement. The key findings highlight the prevalence of greenwashing through both companies’ own engagement and that of their industry associations. They show that more than half of companies with climate commitments have been unsupportive of climate policy in at least some cases, and that many companies are actively undermining their commitments by lobbying against climate action. A set of brief examples from ten companies further demonstrates this discrepancy. These insights will be most useful to sustainability, policy advocacy, and communications professionals.

[The Greenwashing Hydra](#) from Planet Tracker can help you understand and identify the nuances of greenwashing. It explains the problem of greenwashing, identifies six different types of greenwashing, and provides an overview of the global regulatory crackdown on greenwashing.

UNDERSTANDING RESPONSIBLE MARKETING

[The International Chamber of Commerce's \(ICC\) Advertising and Marketing Communications Code](#) is the international go-to guide for responsible marketing and advertising. It can help you to build consumer trust through marketing that is legal, decent, honest and truthful, and relevant. Used as a benchmark for almost fifty self-regulatory codes in countries around the world, it provides general provisions on advertising and marketing communications, as well as detailed chapters on sales promotion, sponsorship, environmental claims, and more.

[The Responsible Advertising and Children \(RAC\) Advertising Standards](#) were established to bring together brand owners, agencies, and the media at a global level to anticipate and understand societal and parental aspirations regarding responsible marketing communications and children. This short primer can help you to understand advertising self-regulation and the benefits it provides.

UNDERSTANDING INCLUSIVE DESIGN

[What is inclusive design?](#) from the Inclusive Design Research Centre can help you to better understand and define inclusive design, as well as differentiate it from universal design.

[The Inclusive Design Guide](#) by the Inclusive Design Research Centre can help you to advance the practice of inclusive design, including digital design, the design of services, the built environment, and physical products. The guide features a broad range of insights and provides a collection of practices, tools, and activities that describe specific ways in which inclusive design can be put into action.

[Microsoft Inclusive Design](#) provides a range of inclusive design guidance materials to help you practice new skills, develop new concepts, and prototype inclusive solutions. These guidebooks include inclusive 101 guidance; inclusive design for cognition; inclusive design for mental health; and more. Microsoft has also developed case studies, screens, worksheets, activity cards, and other resources for advancing inclusive design.

UNDERSTANDING THE RIGHT TO REPAIR

[Our Right to Repair](#) from Leyla Acaroglu can help you to understand why repair is a right, why our current linear economy - including both the actors within it and the design principles that underpin it - is structured to oppose the right to repair, and how this contributes to inequity. It highlights some of the tactics that companies use to prevent (or disincentivise) repairs and upgrades, and makes a compelling case for why repair should be mainstream and accessible. It also examines key trends and developments related to the Right to Repair Movement.

[Emerging Issues: The Right to Repair](#) by BSR provides a short overview of the current trends in the consumer right to repair. It highlights new legislative developments, key signals of change to showcase the importance of action, and what this shift means for sustainable business.

Explore more curated resources on [Consumer Rights and Safe Products and Services](#) on our website.

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