



Co-funded by
the European Union



Fashion & Food synergy for sustainability. New courses and innovative digital tools in higher education F&F4sustainability

KA220-HED - Cooperation partnerships in higher education
Project number KA220-HED-1A225A8C

LM 6 – THE CHALLENGES OF GREENWASHING AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

CONTENT STRUCTURE OUTLINE

This document describes the structure of the first learning module (out of six) developed as part of the "Fashion & Food Synergy for Sustainability" project. It is meant as a tool for teachers that can be adapted to a specific audience.

It is the basis of the corresponding e-learning module published as self-directed course on EduOpen platform <https://learn.eduopen.org/>

All the mentioned additional materials in brackets to create your own course can be asked to 'Centro per lo studio della moda e della produzione culturale', writing to centro.modacult@unicatt.it

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STRUCTURE

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- 1.4. Glossary Readings
- 1.5. Multiple-Choice Test Unit 1
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2. UNIT 2 - SOCIAL GREENWASHING - CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY

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- 2.4. Multiple-Choice Test Unit 2
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5. UNIT 5 – CONCLUSION

- 5.1. Brief conclusion presentation.





CONTENT DETAILS & ORGANIZATION

WELCOME

Welcome to "The challenges of greenwashing and consumer protection" learning module.

This is 1 of the 6 Learning Modules developed as part of the "Fashion & Food Synergy for Sustainability" project, an avant-garde initiative in an interdisciplinary and international context funded under the Erasmus+ programme - Higher Education, and that explores the intersecting trends and demands within the fashion and food sectors, emphasizing the need for informed and skilled professionals dedicated to sustainable practices.

The Learning Module "The challenges of greenwashing and consumer protection" provides basic knowledge to address and understand the complexity of communicating sustainability for companies and the importance of protecting consumers from false and deceiving message in commerce of fashion and food items.

Click on the folder to access the Learning Module and its content.

This module is prepared to be delivered completely online.





0. INTRODUCTION

In the Unit 0, also known as the Introduction, of the "The challenges of greenwashing and consumer protection" learning module you'll be presented with:

- an overview of the "Fashion & Food Synergy for Sustainability" project.
- an in-depth look at the "The challenges of greenwashing and consumer protection" learning module, detailing its aims, structure, and assessment methods.

This foundational unit is designed to prepare you for the journey ahead, ensuring you understand the course objectives and how to navigate through the online content effectively.

0.1 The project "Fashion & Food synergy for sustainability"

The "Fashion & Food Synergy for Sustainability" project explores the intersecting trends and demands within the fashion and food sectors, emphasizing the need for informed and skilled professionals dedicated to sustainable practices.

Funded under the Erasmus+ programme – Higher Education, it aims to equip learners with the knowledge and tools necessary to navigate and contribute to these vital industries' sustainable futures.

To get into the spirit of the project, please watch this short video: [Fashion & Food_Intro.mov] More information on the project can be found at this link: <https://centridiricerca.unicatt.it/modacult-la-ricerca-fashionfood-for-sustainability?rdeLocaleAttr=en>

02. The Syllabus of the LM "The Challenges of greenwashing and consumer protection"

Introduction

In this Learning Module, learners will learn to what extent the phenomenon of greenwashing in the fashion and food industries is spreading. This type of false or unjustified communication is becoming a threat not only for the planet but also for producers, consumers and the future of business implied. Recognizing greenwashing in their multifaceted manifestations -social, economic and environmental- is an urgent requirement for communication professionals, to contribute to avoid it, to foster transparency and to achieve the true protection of consumers and of all those who participate in the supply chain of the fashion and food industries.

Objectives

This module aims on the one side to provide the LM6 participants with essential competences to understand messages surrounding sustainability in the two industries –fashion and food- and, on the other hand, to overcome the disinformation risk with better communication actions and a comprehensive overview of European regulations to protect consumers.

Learning outcomes

- B2 Students can undertake their studies with autonomy, employing a critical point of view. Students can also interpret relevant data within the fields of fashion and food, and they can critically assess and evaluate their points of convergence in relation to social, scientific, and ethical issues.
- S9 Students can promote responsible consumption using various communication tools, such as original cases, multimedia programs, and storytelling on inspiring local products and/or practices.





Evaluation:

The "Challenges of Greenwashing and consumer protection" learning module consists of 5 comprehensive units.

At the end of units 1 to 4, learners will complete a self-assessment test, earning up to 25 points per test. This evaluation method allows learners to monitor their progress and understanding throughout the module, fostering a thorough grasp of both challenges –Greenwashing and Consumer Protection- and solutions within the fashion and food sectors.

The cumulative score from these self-assessment tests will determine the final result of the course. The grading rubric is published here [Grades and descriptions LM#6.docx].

To successfully complete the "Challenge of Greenwashing and Consumer Protection" learning module, learners must:

- Complete 1-4 Unit Tests. Unit 5 (Conclusions) doesn't have a test.
- Achieve a grade of Satisfactory or above based on the total marks from all Unit Tests.

Badges and Certificate of Attendance

Learners meeting the criteria stated above will be awarded a digital badge indicating their final result in the learning module. Additionally, all learners will receive a certificate of attendance.

Badges and attendance certificates will be issued upon completion of the learning module and sent via email.





1. UNIT 1 – GREENWASHING IN FASHION AND FOOD INDUSTRIES: GENERAL OVERVIEW

- 1.1. Introduction to Unit 1
- 1.2. Lecture
- 1.3. Glossary Readings
- 1.4. Multiple-Choice Test Unit 1
- 1.5. Extra Resources

In this unit we will address a general overview of the challenges of Greenwashing in the fashion and food industries.

1.1. Introduction to Unit 1

For a first approach to Greenwashing, use the Presentation LM6_intro.pptx. You will find it in the folder.

1.2. Lecture (recorded)

Watch, in the first place, the recording of Prof. Burguera's lecture, from ISEM Fashion Business School (university of Navarra), on Greenwashing and the complexities of sustainability communication in the fashion and food industries: general overview (41 min). You will find it in the folder.

Secondly, watch the recording of Prof. Burguera's short lecture on Greenwashing (13 min).

1.3. Glossary Readings

[The Glossary of Sustainability](#) is a digital, open and participatory resource. Through key words, it describes the dimensions of sustainability in the fashion and food industries and brings together case studies, research practices, and exemplary European-level information sources that are freely accessible and useful for education and research. It is designed with the aim of strengthening and developing the understanding of sustainability as a concept, by interpreting terms and issues of growing importance for the fashion and food sectors. Accordingly, it aims to inform and advance action and debate on the most pressing challenges affecting the environment, available resources, respect for workers' rights etc.

Please read the following entries from the glossary:

- [Sustainability](#)
- [Storytelling for sustainability](#)
- [Greenwashing](#)
- [SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals](#)

1.4. Multiple-Choice Test Unit 1

After listening to the videos and reading the Glossary entries recommended for this unit, please complete the following multiple-choice test for self-assessment. The test consists of 10 questions, each worth 2 points, allowing you to earn up to 20 points.

Which of the following statements best define the concept of greenwashing?

- a. **The practice of making misleading, exaggerated or unsubstantiated claims about the environmental benefits of a brand or product**





- b. Greenwashing is where a firm spends time and money informing that their goods or services are environmentally friendly
 - c. Greenwashing is only real when there is a clear intention to mislead
 - d. A company greenwashes when it begins to engage in responsible business practices.
- II. What does broad greenwashing enclose?
- a. **It only includes sustainability issues**
 - b. It encompasses environmental and social problems
 - c. It includes social and economic problems
 - d. It includes communication and marketing questions
- III. Choose 3 of the 7 sins of Greenwashing
- a. Sin of fibbing, sin of worshipping false labels and false and sin of using fabric compositions.
 - b. Sin of irrelevance, sin of no proof and sin of absence of prices
 - c. Sin of vagueness, sin of no proof, sin of false packaging
 - d. **Sin of no-proof, sin of the lesser of two evils and sin of the Hidden Trade-off**
- IV. Which of the following actions are consequences of greenwashing?
- a. The natural resources tend to diminish
 - b. **The product sold generates a greater negative impact on sustainability**
 - c. Buyers learn to be more conscious
 - d. Consumers publish positive reviews
- V. To best communicate the sustainable characteristics of a food or fashion brand:
- a. Use only evocative pictures, like cows and flowers
 - b. Use a fabricated lie but in a different language
 - c. Enhance green features to educate consumers although you work for a dirty company
 - d. **Try to avoid terms with unclear meaning**

1.5. Extra Resources

[The UN and Sustainability](#) and [The UN 17 sustainable development goals](#) on the United Nations' website.

- What is the UN's definition of sustainability?
- How have words and terms changed from the earlier reports?

[The Wikipedia page on Sustainability.](#)

- Look at the Venn diagram in the section 'Dimensions': What are the 'three pillars of sustainability'?
- Read the following article: Ritch, E. L. (2015). Consumers interpreting sustainability: moving beyond food to fashion. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 43(12), 1162-1181. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJRDM-04-2014-0042>.





2. UNIT 2 – SOCIAL GREENWASHING - CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY

In this unit we will talk about the social greenwashing of the food and fashion industry.

- 2.1. Introduction to Unit 2
- 2.2. Lecture
- 2.3. Documentaries
- 2.4. Multiple-Choice Test Unit 1 or personal work
- 2.5. Extra Resources

2.1. Introduction to Unit 2

In this unit learners will understand the concept of social greenwashing and its relationship to corporate sustainability in the food and fashion industries.

In order to explore this topic, we offer:

- A fact sheet on corporate sustainability.
- A PPT presentation.

After working on both materials, you will be asked to complete an individual multiple-choice test to self-assess your understanding of the concepts discussed.

Visit the following section for further details and instructions.

2.2. Lecture

In this case, Prof. Marta Torregrosa, from the University of Navarre, will present the EU-level legislation on corporate sustainability due diligence to advance the green transition and to protect human rights in Europe and beyond. When companies take voluntary action, they focus on the first link in the supply chains, while human rights and environmental harm occurs more often further down in the value chain. What are the benefits of these new rules?

Students should read and watch the PPT on Social Sustainability.

The Presentation is accessible here [LM6_Unit2_Lecture_Social Sustainability.pptx]. Please take a moment to download it and review its contents attentively.

Students should read “Fact sheet on corporate sustainability”, which contains a concise explanation on the main concepts.



2.3 Documentaries

Students should watch Dior documentaries “The greek bar jacket” or “Fuerza, cuerpo, embrujo: The Making of a Dior Cruise collection”, or “Solomeo, Borgo dello Spirito Laborioso. Brunello Cucinelli” You can find them here:

- [The greek bar jacket](#)
- [Fuerza, cuerpo, embrujo: The Making of a Dior Cruise collection](#)
- [Solomeo, Borgo dello Spirito Laborioso. Brunello Cucinelli](#)

2.4. To evaluate this unit you find here a Unit test or allow the students to select and answer 1 of the 3 options presented in the lecture (slides number: 11, 23 and 28) for a personal work

I Social sustainability refers to:

- a. the well-being of people at all stages of the fashion value chain, from the production of raw materials to the consumption of products.**
- b. the production of raw materials.
- c. The well-being of workers in developing countries.
- d. The fair trade in the consumer final stage

II. Which of these goals belong to corporate sustainability?

- a. Human rights and global warming
- b. Animal wellbeing
- c. Use of repairable machines
- d. Transparency and accountability**

III. Some sustainable fashion brands are committed to:

- a. Using ancient materials obtained in villages and towns
- b. Supporting the local communities where they operate**
- c. To benefit communities establishing worker perks
- d. To cleaning the waste around the production points

IV. To be a social responsible company means:

- a. to join a certification system
- b. to annually give a 5% benefits to charity
- c. to be accountable for its social impact**
- d. to preserve social heritage of the area where company operates



V. The Directive on corporate sustainability due diligence seeks:

a) to address adverse human rights only inside Europe.

b) to ensuring safe and fair working conditions for workers at the beginning of the supply chain

c) a responsible corporate financial behaviour in finance and workers safety

d) an armonised legal framework in the EU, creating legal certainty

2.5. Extra Materials:

- [Corporate sustainability due diligence European](#) Web Page
- [BCG x Comité Colbert LUXURY OUTLOOK 2022](#) - Report
- Proposal of the directive on corporate sustainability and due diligence (2019)
- Question and answers about the proposal directive on corporate sustainability and due diligence (2019)
- [Everlane annual impact report](#)



3. UNIT 3 –EU MEASURES AROUND GREENWASHING

In this unit we will talk about the environmental greenwashing of the food and fashion industry.

- 3.1. Introduction to Unit 3
- 3.2. Personal reading
- 3.3. Video Clips
- 3.4. Evaluation
- 3.5. Extra Resources

3.1. Introduction to Unit 3

In this unit learners will understand the concept of environmental greenwashing and its relationship to sustainability communication in the food and fashion industries.

In order to explore this topic, we offer:

A short video on greenwashing

A video on EU measures to tackle greenwashing

A video on how EU Science can help fight greenwashing

A group of selected readings on European Commission Green Claims

After working on both materials, you will be asked to complete an individual multiple-choice test to self-assess your understanding of the concepts discussed or a different type of evaluation.

Visit the following section for further details and instructions.

3.2. Personal Reading

Once we know the main aspects of greenwashing, to follow this section I invite you to consider that the European Commission has approved common criteria against greenwashing and misleading environmental claims. It is a directive that tries to finish with green false claims (greenwashing).

With the application of the directive, consumers have more clarity, stronger reassurance that when something is sold as green, it actually is green, and also there will be better quality information to choose environment-friendly products and services (European Commission. Environmental claims in the EU. Inventory and reliability assessment. Final report).



- Read the Fact Sheet on European Green Claims
- Read the document: Consumer protection: enabling sustainable choices and ending greenwashing

[The Glossary of Sustainability](#), is a tool we have already encountered in Unit 1. It is a digital, open and participatory resource. Through key words, it describes the dimensions of sustainability in the fashion and food industries. Please follow the link provided and read the entries:

- [Consumerism and Sustainable Consumption](#)
- [Circular Economy](#)
- [Transparency](#)

3.3. Video Clips:

Watch the video [What is greenwashing?](#) from BBC News

Watch the video EU Measures to tackle greenwashing [Link](#)

Watch the video: Greenwashing: how can EU science help? [Link](#)

3.4 Evaluation

I. What are the main benefits of having common criteria about environmental claims?

- Inspections will be quicker
- everybody will buy the same products
- the number of independent certifications will grow
- There will be an improvement of labels' credibility**

II. One of the effects of against-greenwashing measures is:

- Consumers will have trustable labels**
- they will be convinced to consume less
- they will establish their own labels
- Consumers will not have the necessary information

III. Transparency in the fashion and food sector implies:

- To publish an annual report





- b. being strictly accountable, but only with your public
- c. that the action will be completely sustainable

d. To be confident about where the products are made

IV. Circular economy consists of:

- a. regenerating, repairing and reselling.
- b. Reusing and recycling
- c. Remanufacturing, repairing and reusing**
- d. saves, share and give away

V. The directive on empowering consumers for the green transition defines an environmental claim as:

- a. any mandatory message or representation
- b. any message that without being mandatory, states or implies that a product, product category, brand or trader has a positive or zero impact on the environment**
- c. any sentence signaling to be less damaging to the environment than other products or brands
- d. any ny environmental claim made in written form

3.5 Extra Materials:

Students should individually read the European commission [Green Claims home page](#)





4. Unit 4 - THE CONSUMER'S PROTECTION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

In this unit we will deep into the the new directive first explained in Unit 3, in the context of EU consumers' agenda (2020) and the circular economy action plan.

- 4.1. Introduction to Unit 4
- 4.2. Reading and video
- 4.3. Additional Reading
- 4.4. Unit test
- 4.5. Extra Resources

4.1. Introduction to unit 4

In this unit learners will understand the reach of Circular Economy. In order to explore this topic, we will explain the big tools approved by the European Commission: the Directive 2024/825: Empowering consumers for the green transition through better protection against unfair practices and through better information, and the package of measures designed to enhance consumer rights, combat deceptive marketing practices, promote sustainable product design, and create a "right to repair" framework.

4.2 Reading and video

On 30 March 2022, the Commission submitted a proposal for a directive on empowering consumers for the green transition. The proposal was one of the initiatives set out in the Commission's 2020 new consumer agenda and 2020 circular economy action plan and follows up the European Green Deal. It is part of a package of four proposals, together with the eco-design regulation and the directive proposals on green claims and the right to repair.

Once approved (February 28, 2024) the new Directive 2024/825 aims to improve consumer protection by encouraging more sustainable consumption patterns and avoiding misleading environmental claims (greenwashing).

This Directive will be complemented by the proposal for a Directive on Green Claims, which is still under negotiation. It aims at fighting against unfair commercial practices that prevent consumers from making the right choices for greener or more circular products and services. Practices like misleading 'greenwashing' or false claims about products that last less than expected are among the ones that this legal text aims to address.

- Students should read the teaching note uploaded in the folder
- Students should see the video: [Explaining the circular economy: Rethink progress](#)
- Read sustainable consumption EU page web [link](#) (*New Consumer Agenda: European Commission to empower consumers to become the driver of transition*)

4.3. Additional readings on the main contents

- [Circular Economy: Commission proposes new consumer rights and a ban on greenwashing](#)
- [Fact sheet Empowering Consumer](#) right for information on the durability and reparability of products.

Read the following entries in [Glossary of sustainability](#) on Fashion & Food

- Fair Trade





- Second-hand
- Vintage

4.5 Evaluation

I. Vintage is an attribute that defines an object worn or produced in the past

- a. at least twenty years before the present moment**
- b. and sold usually in flea markets or street markets
- c. that had an unknown origin
- d. that has an extra duration for the materials and fabrics

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II. Consumers can require information about durability:

- a. If products are valued under 1000 €
- b. If the guarantee of durability exceeds 2 years**
- c. Only in case of household appliances
- d. In cases related to health safety

III. Fair Trade movement began to expand:

- a. in Africa because of the Apartheid
- b. thanks to the Salvation Army and a tea company
- c. when unions started to defend workers' rights in Europe
- d. after World War II in the United States**

IV. Consumers will receive information on the product's reparability:

- a. from traders every time a purchase is produced**
- b. only from producers because they know the real composition
- c. on the internet, searching for repair manual
- d. clearly written in the packaging

V. Consumers' rights in relation with products purchases include:

- a. The minimum date of expiration
- b. To be informed about possible updates that will limit durability**
- c. The universal compatibility of 'third party' consumables or spare parts
- d. To be repaired during a 2-year period

4.6. Extra resources

Blas Riesgo, S., Codina, M., & Sádaba, T. (2022). Does Sustainability Matter to Fashion Consumers? Clustering Fashion Consumers and Their Purchasing Behavior in Spain. Fashion Practice, 1-28.



5. UNIT 5 – CONCLUSION

To conclude, students can read the presentation that summarizes the main contents of [this online course](#).

- [Closing lecture.pptx](#)

