

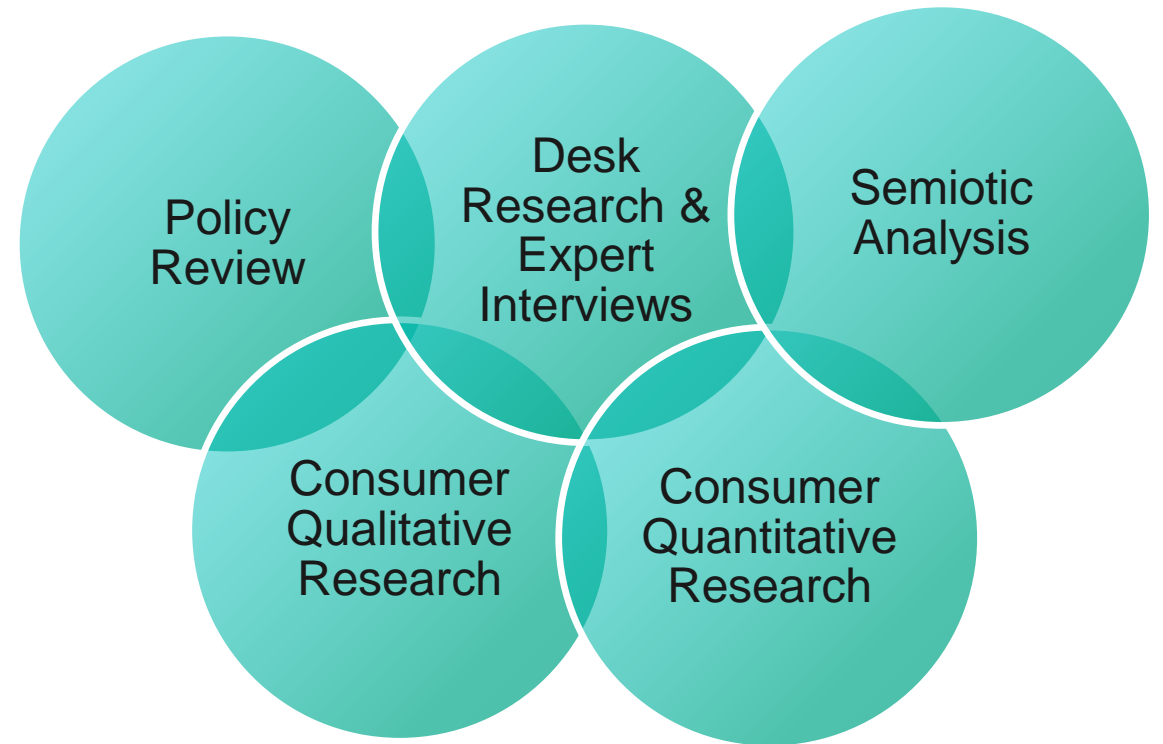
# The Consumer & Carbon

## *‘Cutting through the Carbon Jargon’*

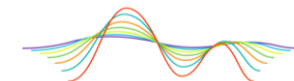


# Objectives & Methodology

- Core Objective: Bring clarity to the consumer view of the current and future path of Carbon messaging
- Multi-lens project encompassing:
  - In-depth policy & regulatory review
  - Desk discovery of 20+ published pieces of research
  - In-depth interviews with four industry experts
  - Semiotic analysis of the brand (comms/ packaging) landscape in key markets covering 100+ companies / brands and websites.
  - 84 qualitative ethnographic diary studies & 12 consumer focus groups across Ireland, UK & Germany
  - N=3,000 consumer quantitative study conducted across the same markets
- Focusing on Ireland, UK and Germany but also with a view to other relevant EU/Global markets
- Led by Empathy and Futavista with expert input from Sustainability Works and Practical Semiotics



empathy



futavista

Brand Progress Through Strategic Imagination



Practical  
Semiotics

SustainabilityWorks.

## Section A: Carbon Insights

#1 The Carbon Landscape – labelling & communications

#2 So, Where's the Consumer on Carbon?

#3 The Blame Game... who's responsible?

#4 Consumer Cry for Help!

#5 On the Horizon

## Section B: The Implications

5 Key Implications for Brands & Business

## Section C: Comms Principles

6 Core Communication Principles



\*\* All statistics, quotes and insights called out have been generated from this study & refer to Irish, UK & German market studies unless specifically stated \*\*

# Section A: Carbon Insights



# #1: The Carbon landscape - labelling & communications

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# Carbon Claims / Comms & Carbon Label / Marks

This project will explore the world of both Carbon Labels and Carbon Communications

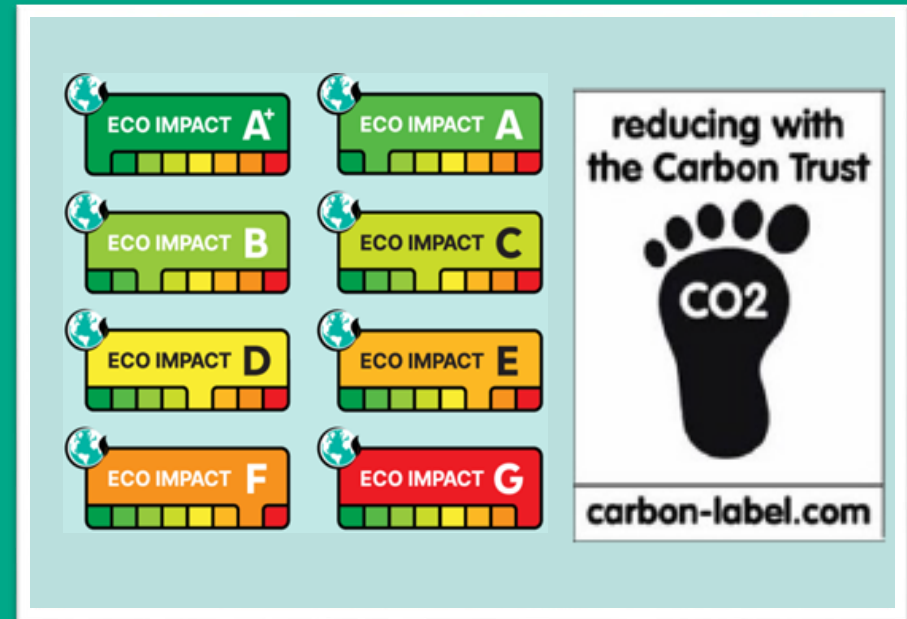
## Environmental / Carbon Communications & Claims

Claims made on pack or communications around a brand / organisations positive environmental actions



## Environmental / Carbon Labels & Marks (certifications)

Labels (on pack) that state (i) membership of an environmental / carbon reduction scheme (ii) a specific score vs. that scheme



# Two Drivers of Carbon Claims & Labels

Impacting both Labels and Communications



## 1. The Race to Net Zero

Regulators, NGO's and Corporates are increasingly engaging with the Net Zero challenge

This creates a domino effect that facilitates participating in evidence based projects / schemes & then communication that support these activities ...labels & claims

## 2. Environmental Claims Race

As consumers, customers & stakeholders becomes more engaged with sustainability there is benefit /requirement to make claims around a brands / organisations Carbon or broader environmental actions / footprint

In some cases these are unsubstantiated & misleading i.e. greenwashing

RACE TO ZERO

FINANCIAL TIMES

Half of green claims used to sell products in EU are misleading, Brussels finds

European Commission is preparing to introduce rules to prevent greenwashing

# Despite increased activity around Net Zero ... it's been a slow start on Carbon labels

While there has been a growth in claims / commitments – at a corporate level – around Net Zero ambitions.

Overall there is a low presence of carbon messages by brands globally (with Europe doing better).

In terms of label ordering Carbon sits amongst other 'Environmentally friendly' claims (inc. pesticides), which sits under 'Ethical claims' which would include Organic or other sustainability based claims : **Definition from Passport reports.**

The “carbon neutral/ reduced carbon” claim is seen on fewer than **0.1%** of global SKUs.

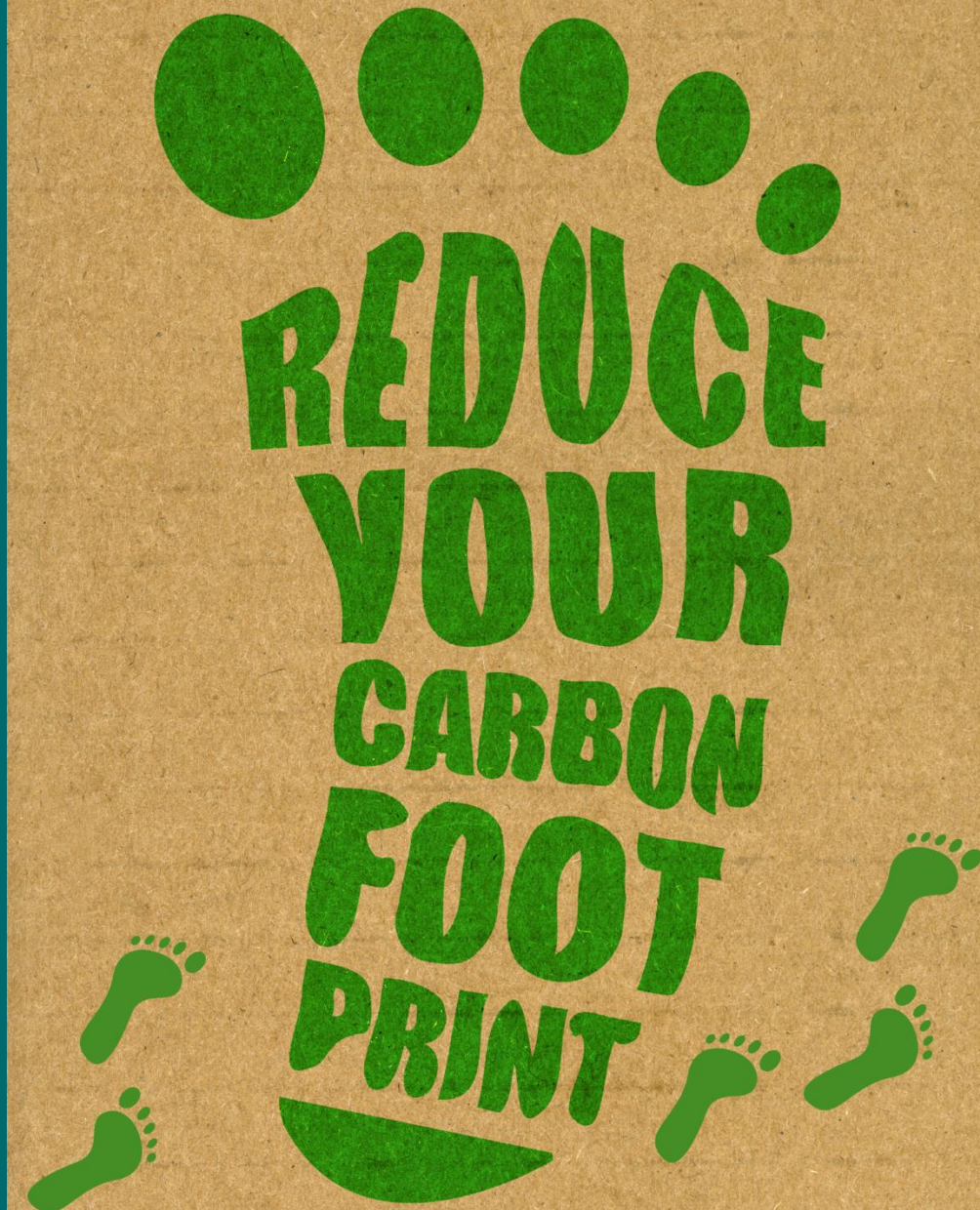
PASSPORT: SUSTAINABLE LABELS AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT OF FOOD  
DEC 2021





## ...but picking up pace

- However, we saw **75%** more claims from Apr '20 to Sept '21 (Source Euromonitor Sustainability Survey)
- Big business / brands are now however entering the playing field
- Nestle, Unilever, GM & Danone now have at least the same, and usually more, share of a digital shelf in ethical claims than total (Source Euromonitor 'Where to Play how to Win' report)
- For different reasons:
  - *Preparing for carbon regulation & taxes*
  - *Positioning for consumers*
  - *Communicating against corporate targets e.g. Net Zero*



Source: Canva

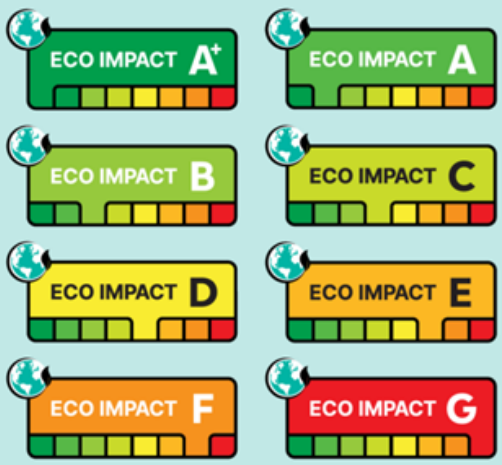
[www.reallygreatsite.com](http://www.reallygreatsite.com)

# Number of independent Marks ... often competing

There are a wide variety of often competing industry marks in the marketplace – ranging from singular CO2 focus through to multi-issue ‘blends’.

Driven or convened by independent organisations, by industry / retailer groups or by some governments.

## More Common Euro/UK Marks



# Different markets have different approaches / speeds

France & Denmark are taking the lead (ahead of the EU) while Germany appears to be waiting for EU guidance

## Europe



### Ireland

Ireland's National Standards Authority of Ireland (Carbon Footprint Labelling) Bill 2021 to be debated November 2022 – **Debate has not yet taken place as of Jan 2023**



### France

2021 Climate Law establishes standards for environmental & social labelling of certain goods & services sold on French market.



### Germany

Federal government critical of introduction of mandatory climate labelling. Supportive of path EU is taking under F2F strategy.



### Denmark

Voluntary carbon labelling; prototype to be put forward end of 2022. **No update as of Jan 2022.**

## UK



### UK

No policy framework. UK Gov Food Strategy White Paper: seeks to create a more transparent food system. Industry is leading the way

## Other Int'l



### Japan

2009 carbon footprint labelling scheme: government-approved calculation and labelling system.



### USA

No federal or state regulatory agency has set standards. FTC issues Green Guides to avoid deceptive environmental claims.

# Behind the scenes data integrity & granularity is a key challenge ...

- Currently there is an unease amongst experts and industry practitioners around the integrity of the data
  - Too many averages / typical values
  - Varying 'sources' or providers of source data
  - Even definitions can be problematic

//

*The challenge we've got at the moment, is that does the availability of data drive the labelling? Or does what customers want, drive the data that we collect so that we can create labels that are helpful?*

**Carbon Label Exerts**



# EcoScore vs Foundation Earth



Method follows the lifecycle analysis by Agribalyse (score/100)



Farming



Processing



Packaging



Transport

Additional bonus /malus points where LCA lacks ( from -15 to +20)



Certification  
(organic, fairtrade)



Country  
of origin



Recyclability of  
packaging



Endangered  
species



Method follows the life cycle analysis by Oxford University & Mondara. The score weights 49% carbon, 17% water usage, 17% water pollution, 17% biodiversity



Farming



Processing



Packaging



Transport

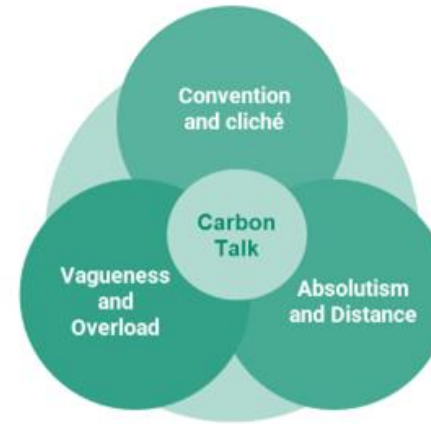
**For this Semiotic Analysis  
Case Study Section Please  
contact  
thethinkinghouse@bordbia.ie**

# Current Comms causing Confusion

Overall the communications (on & off pack) are not helping consumers as they are confusing, cliched & vague (there are some 'good' examples)

This is also an area of opportunity for communications to cut through & solve this communications breakdown!  
(see Section C)

## Summary of obstacles



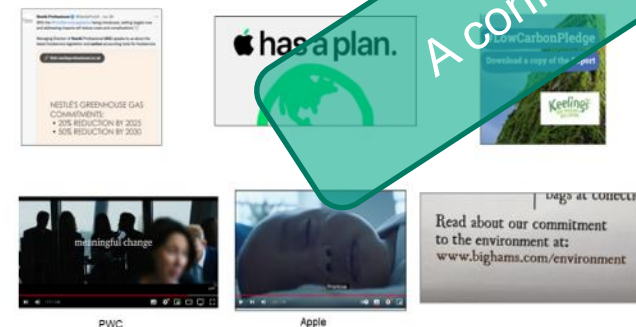
Our **Semiotic Analysis** showed that while there were some positives, overall the carbon communications / packaging currently in the market are creating obstacles for consumers

## A forest of symbols



## Information overload

## Pledges and commitments can feel abstract and vague



## Certification overload



# #1: The Carbon landscape - labelling & communications

**For this Semiotic Analysis  
Case Study Section Please  
contact  
[thethinkinghouse@bordbia.ie](mailto:thethinkinghouse@bordbia.ie)**

## Key Take-Aways

1. Against a nascent but accelerating category ...currently the 'comms' is not where it needs to be ... there is a window of opportunity for brands / business to cut through on Carbon labelling
2. Critical to understand the relevant 'Marks' and how different markets are engaging
3. Getting ahead of the game on data robustness and transparency will create tomorrow's winners





## #2: So, Where's the Consumer on Carbon?

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# Carbon is not top of mind for consumers

From a consumer awareness and top of mind perspective, Carbon is lower than other sustainability topics (like food waste) and lower than other categories. In day-to-day life it is not always a conscious choice – especially when in ‘Auto Shopper’ mode.

They don't perceive there to be much around carbon 'out there'.



“There is very little information about carbon impact.” – German Female 18-35

Carbon

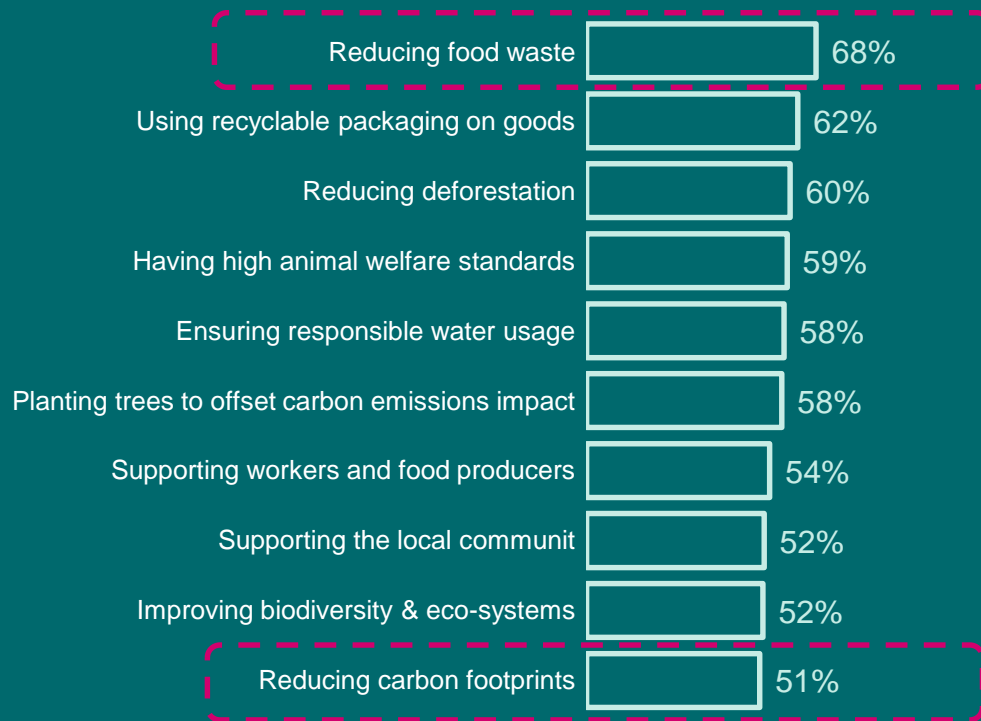
“Honestly, I have to say when I go shopping, it usually has to go fast because I don't think about every product I pick up, whether it's particularly good or bad for the environment.”



“I'll be honest it's [Carbon] probably not what I look out for so i don't really notice much/any.” UK Male 30-45

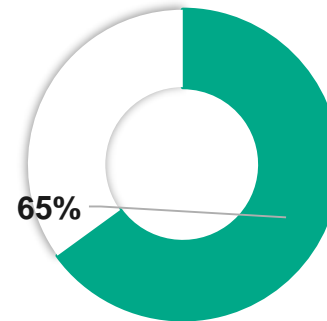
# It is less important & less clearly understood than other topics

## % 8-10 Personally Important



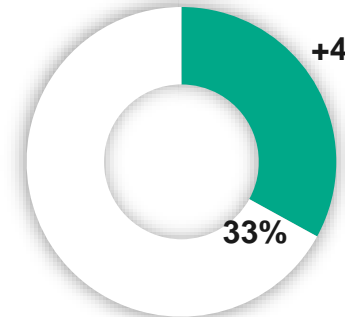
Significant gap in the proportion who have a very clear understanding of what each is

### Food Waste



Have a clear understanding of what this is

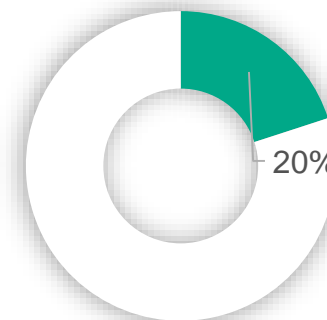
### Carbon Footprint



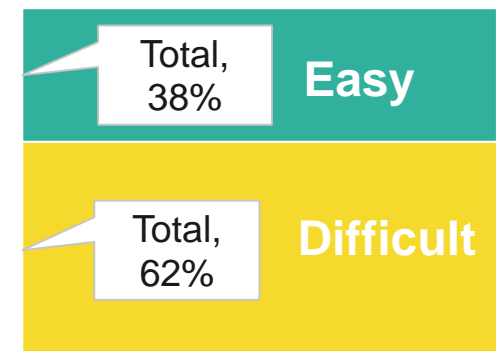
 +4% in Ireland

Males claim to be more aware than females (37% vs. 31%)

The incidence of measuring one's own carbon footprint is low....



with almost two thirds who did so rating the process of measuring difficult



**Consumers  
are also  
confused by  
what they are  
currently  
being  
presented  
with**

**55%**

It's hard to know what the **carbon scores** on packaging means and how they are calculated

**53%**

There are too many **different messages relating to carbon footprint and carbon emissions**

And they are not sure where they need to be in relation to their carbon footprint

52%

Agree

*"I have no idea what my carbon footprint should be"*



-8% in Germany



+7% in The UK

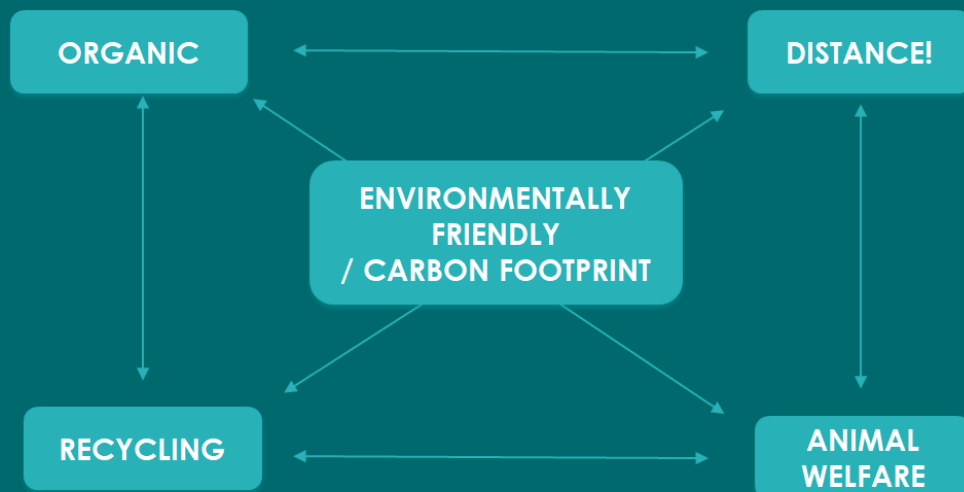
+7% for those aged 65+

# Carbon is seen as part of sustainability, but lack of understanding means the use of 'proxies'

## OVERVIEW

Carbon is seen as a component part of being more environmentally friendly, and is perceived as an output from our own, community and organisation activities. So often other sustainability factors impact consumers perspective on Carbon also.

## THEMES & SUB-THEMES



# Consumer Case Study: The Carbon Interconnection

1. *Sustainability / Environmental / Carbon positive* are used interchangeably or as meaning the same thing
2. Other sustainability logos/initiatives (RSPCA & Recycling) are perceived as positive carbon / sustainability indicators
3. Localness means low carbon footprint

*(1) Eggs are a staple of my diet and these from Aldi I would consider environmentally carbon friendly.*

*(2) There are also a number of other logos such as RSPCA assured, British Lion Quality and the 100% recyclable logo which all in turn are positive carbon and sustainable communications.*

*(3) A large portion of the box is the British flag and so is very noticeable they are local produce with lower carbon footprints.*

Male 35-50, Young Family



In terms of behaviour – 56% have made some effort to reduce their footprint (vs. 78% for minimising food waste)

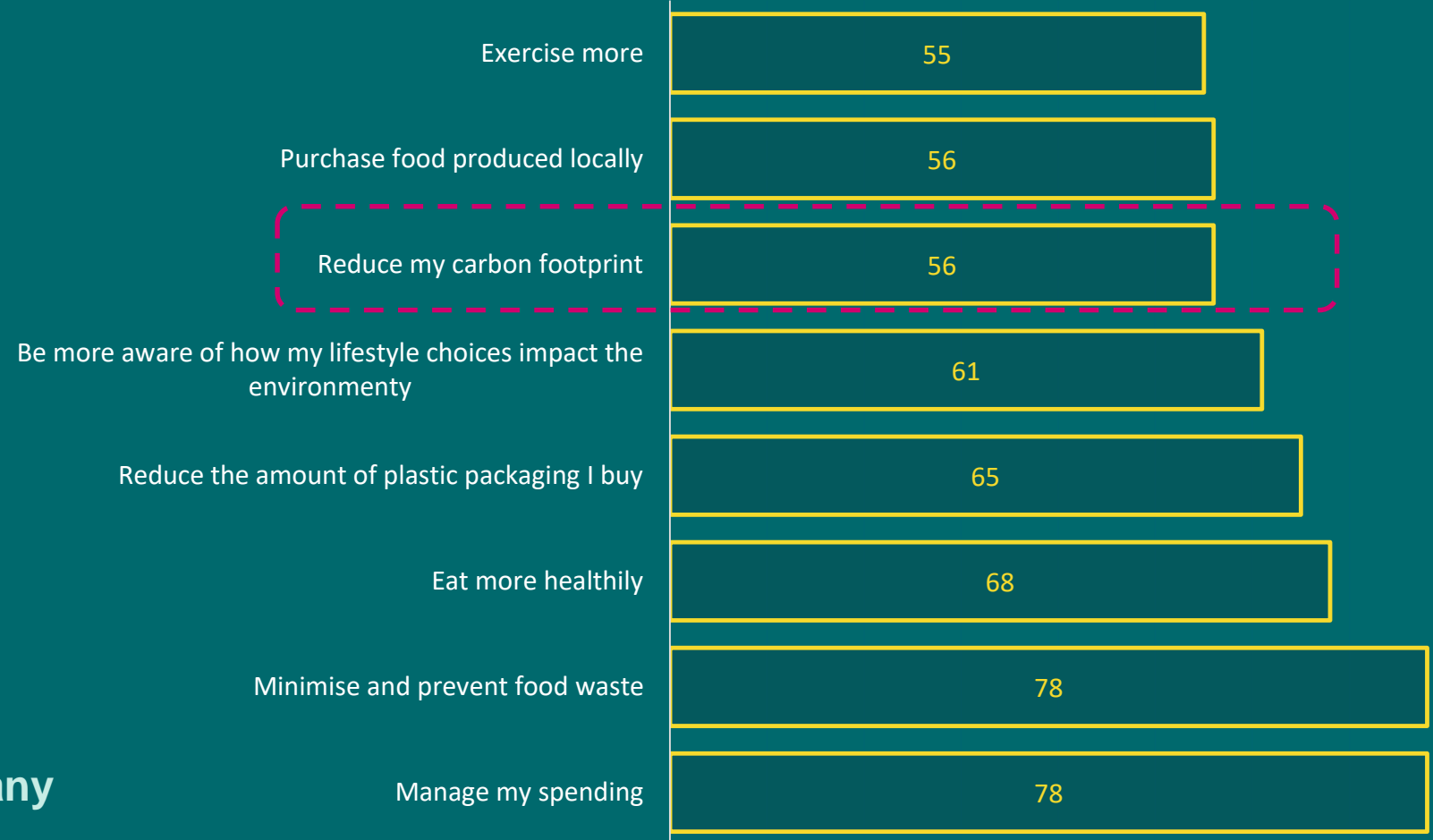


+5% in Ireland



-9% in Germany

### % Big Effort/Some Effort

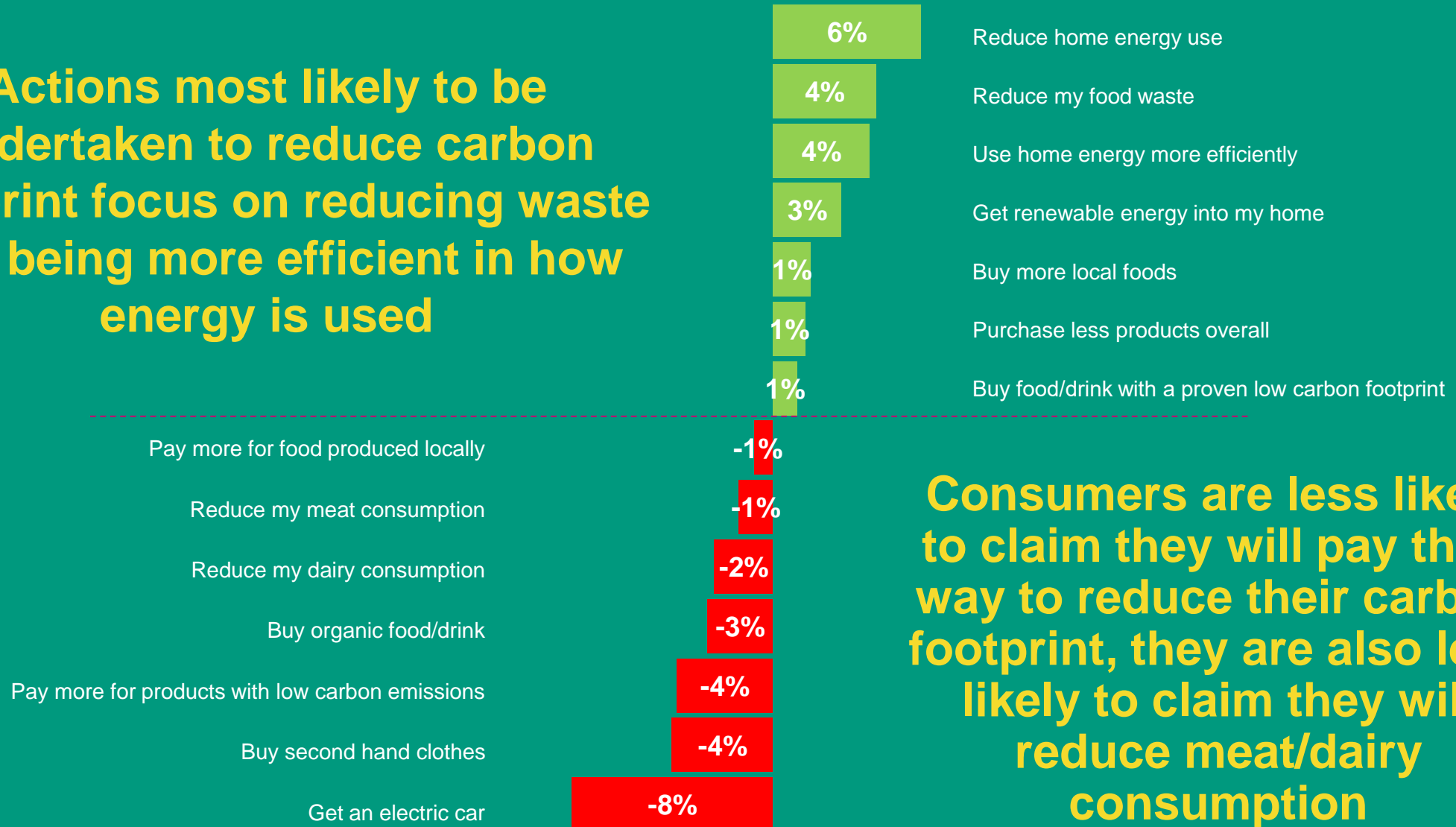




# NET LIKELY BEHAVIOUR

(Action **Most Likely** to Undertake minus Action **Least Likely** to Undertake)

**Actions most likely to be undertaken to reduce carbon footprint focus on reducing waste and being more efficient in how energy is used**



**Consumers are less likely to claim they will pay their way to reduce their carbon footprint, they are also less likely to claim they will reduce meat/dairy consumption**

## #2: So, Where's the Consumer on Carbon?



### Key Take-Aways

1. Overall Carbon is still in its growth phase as a topic – with some engagement / effort by consumers
2. There is a huge job to be done in terms of educating consumers around carbon, where it sits in the eco system, and the “interconnectedness” between other topics
3. Consumers will only start to understand importance as they start to understand impact

# #3: The Blame Game ... who's responsible?

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# Consumers group Responsibility into Us vs. Them

## 'US MINDSET'



- My personal actions
- Our actions as a Society

Impact of our individual actions and choices have on the environment



*The impact my choices now will have on future generations (Older Family)*



*How our everyday actions affect the environment (Young Pre Family)*

Vs

## 'THEM MINDSET'



- Large Manufacturers / Producers
- Government & Regulators

Impact of production and/or distribution of products and services



*The impact of production of food/materials etc. have on the environment (Young Family)*



*The distance a product travels to get to consumer, and method of production (Older Family)*

Slightly more weighting placed on 'them'

## Where the Greatest Responsibility Lies

18%

Us as a Society / Community



15%

Me as an Individual

21%

Government / Policy Makers

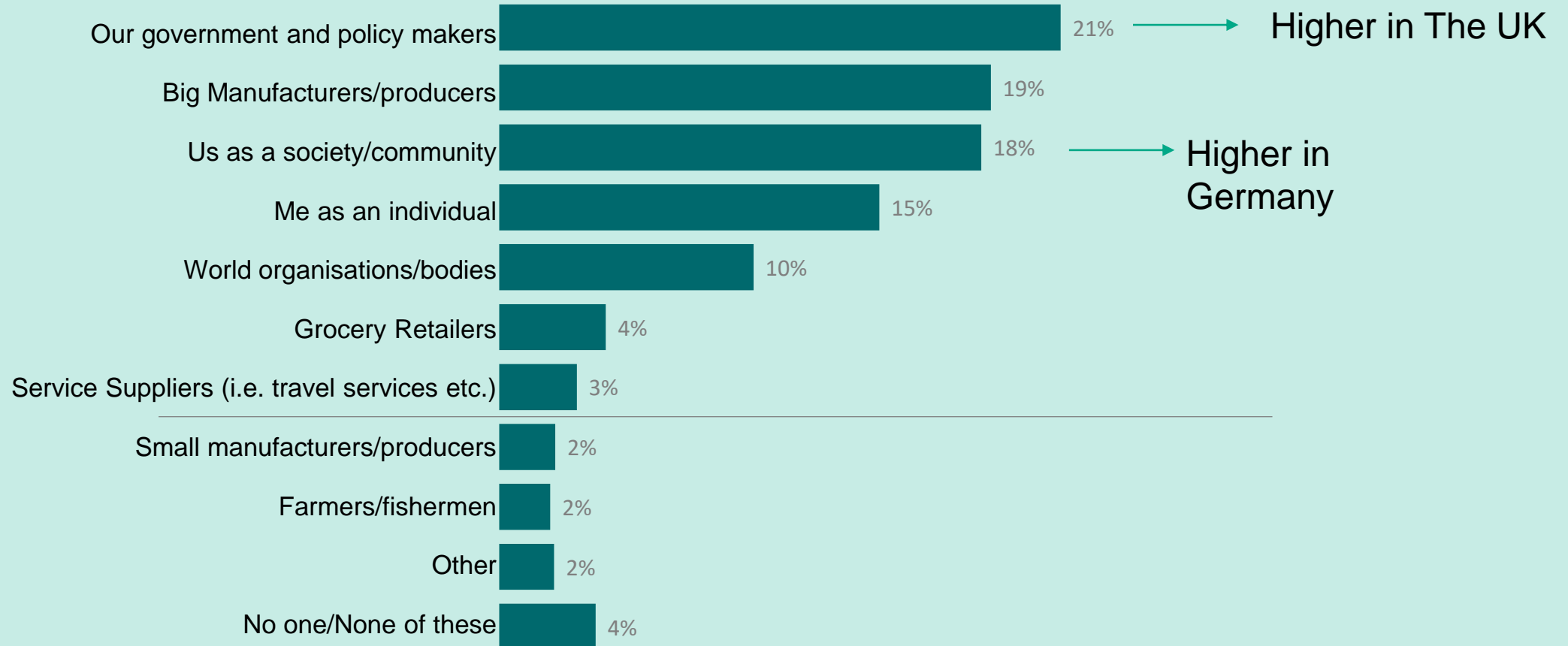


19%

Big Manufacturers / Producers

# Overall, greatest responsibility lies with governments /policy makers, big manufacturers and us as a society

Where the GREATEST responsibility for reducing carbon footprint lies overall



(base: All Adults aged 18+ n=3,000)

# Consumers Distrust of Claims

Leading on from a general sense of consumer confusion, there is a clear trust and clarity gap when it comes to the claims companies (in particular big companies) are making

## Skeptical & Unclear about Carbon claims

66%

Would like food companies to **be more transparent** in relation to their carbon footprint

54%

**Don't trust the claims** big companies make when it comes to their carbon footprint



+7% in The UK



# They have particular (intuitive) opinions that drive degree of responsibility & expectations they place on different actors

## Low Impact Assume 'good'



Plant based



In Season Fruit & Veg



Small brands / operators



Environmental purpose



National sustainability ethos

CATEGORY

SCALE

PURPOSE

REGION

## High Impact Expect More



Aviation / Fashion



Beef/ Palm Oil



Large Brands & multinationals



'Commercial' brands & businesses

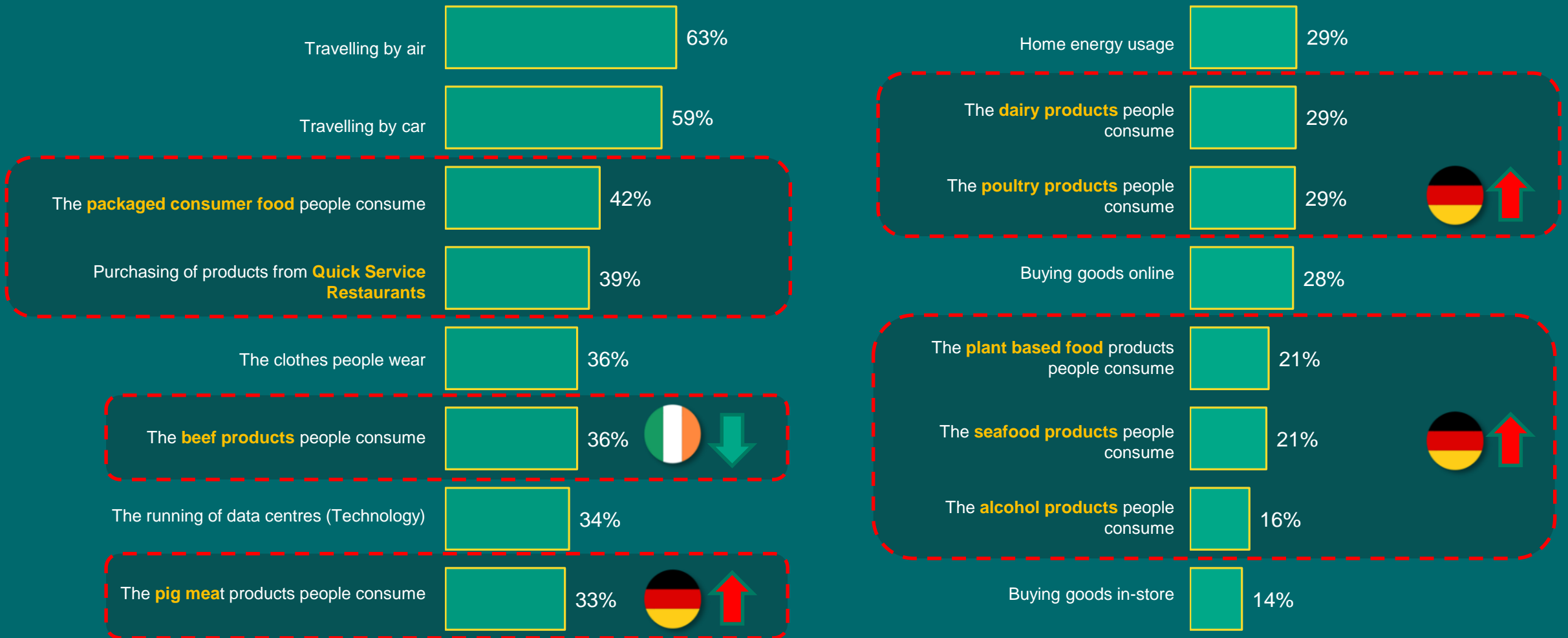


Less known / recognised countries for sustainability



# Packaged consumer food ranks highest of the different food types as a contributor to carbon emissions

High Impact - is a significant contributor to carbon emissions (8-10)



# #3: The Blame Game

## ... who's responsible?



## Key Take-Aways

1. Consumers see responsibility falling between 'US' and 'THEM'
2. They have an intuitive sense of what products / categories / brands are more or less 'to blame' ... understanding where your brand / business sits is key
3. They are often confused & distrusting of communications / claims (or the absence of them) ... leading to the growth in greenwashing accusations
4. Greenwashing is also now firmly in the crosshairs for regulators ...  
*Caveat Subscriptor* (seller beware!)

# #4: A Cry for Help!



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# Consumers face day-to-day barriers ...

## CONVENIENCE

It is not convenient to make good carbon decisions currently for consumers, hence they tend to default to solutions that are non carbon friendly.

Immediate solutions need to fit with current habits rather than force new ones.

## CONFUSION

Significantly more clarity and guidance is needed. Certification and measurement can be a simple guide to trigger consumers that a product is carbon neutral, but paramount to not solely rely on certification/ measurement especially as there is no one over-arching certification – so a range of factors will be needed to reduce confusion.

## EXPENSIVENESS

Making Low-Carbon choices a cost saving initiative will escalate its importance, but can also be a way to position and tier some brands and products – especially during the current cost of living crisis.

Source: Consumer Qual / Ethnography

# 51% of consumers agree they need help to know how to reduce their carbon footprint. In their own words...

*Sign grabbed my attention but I am unsure what 360g CO2 is! And is that not worse than long life juice if that has less CO2 in it? Female 30-45*



*All of these symbols communicating different things and with different meanings. It's extremely confusing to consumers. - 18-35 Female*



*That [CO2 per KG] could be the carbon produced for Concorde for all I know! Male 40-55*



# Not surprisingly ... financial, measurement & understanding are the three clear 'asks' consumers want help on

## Highest impacting Nudges

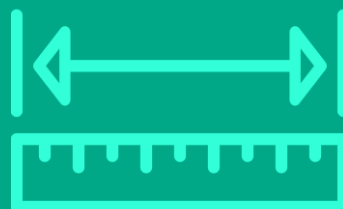


33%

Less Expensive

27%

Financial Reward



31%

Easier to Measure



31%

Easier to Understand



Both elements higher in the UK

# Significant differences in motivations across lifestages...

## REWARD

45 - 54 years old

55 - 64 years old

- Being rewarded financially to reduce my carbon footprint to a specific level
- Being shown how reducing my carbon footprint directly impacts the environment
- If it was less expensive to make more sustainable/environmentally friendly choices

## DEMONSTRATE

35 - 44 years old

- Being shown how not reducing my carbon footprint would impact me or my family
- Being shown how reducing my carbon footprint directly impacts me or my family
- Being shown how not reducing my carbon footprint would impact the environment

## PEER VISIBILITY

25 - 34 years old

- If my friends/family could see my carbon footprint score
- If I could demonstrate to my friends ,family and children of my improvement environmental standing
- If my neighbours could see my carbon footprint score

## ACTIONS OF OTHERS

18 - 24 years old

- If my children were putting me under pressure to actively reduce the household carbon footprint
- If my neighbours were actively reducing their carbon footprint
- If my friends/family were actively reducing their carbon footprint

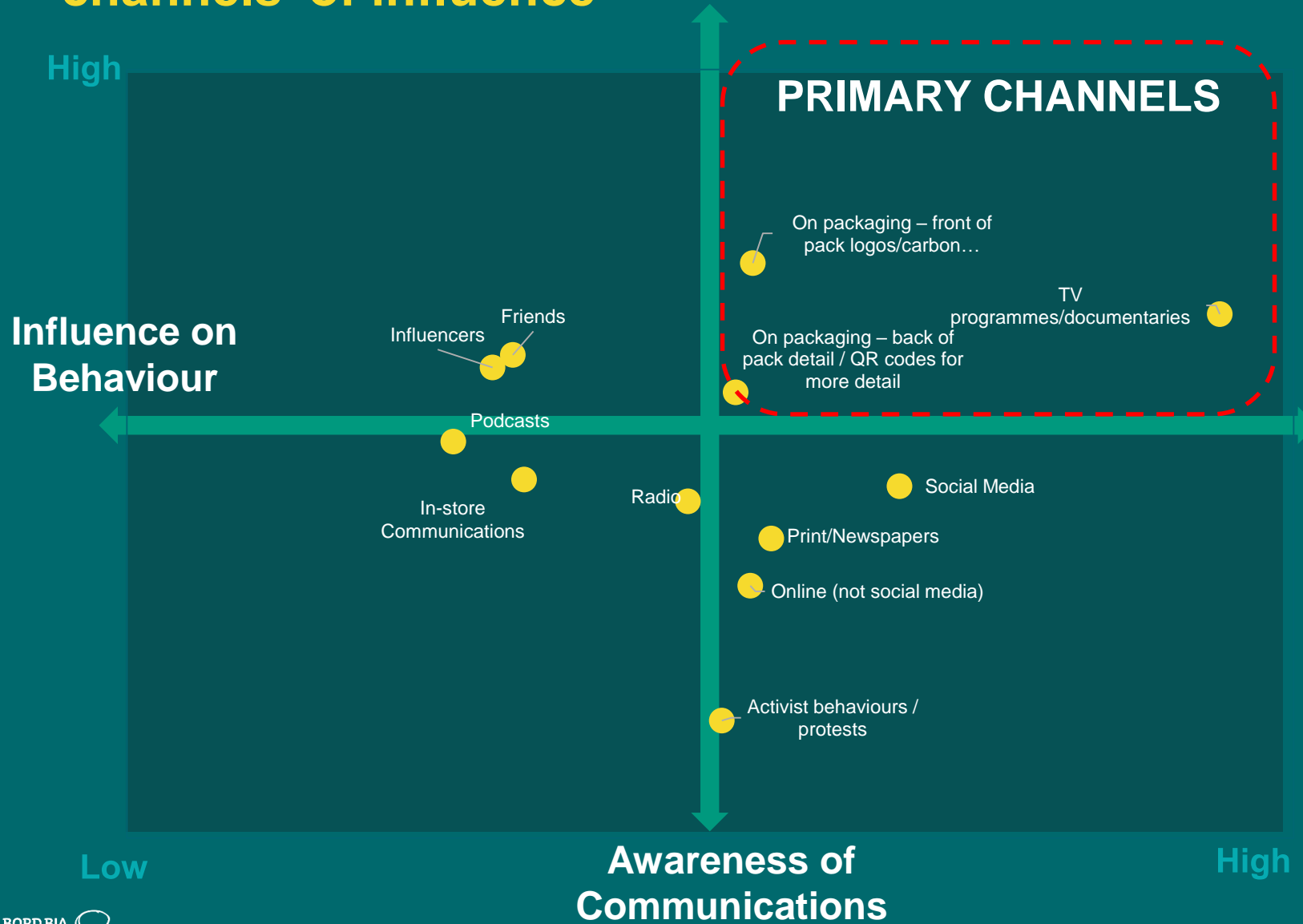
## EASE/EDUCATION

65+ years old

- If it was easy to understand how to do it
- If it was easier to measure how to do it
- If there was a trusted global, European or national method/certification process
- If it was clearly symbolled along with other sustainability aspects - (e.g. animal welfare, recycling etc.)

Being taxed if my carbon footprint was above a specific level

# Media / Documentaries, Packaging & Social influence are the strongest 'channels' of influence



*“ What has mainly influenced me to make more sustainable choices is watching documentaries/movies such as “before the flood”, “cowspiracy” and “the true cost”*

*I find this logo impactful when I see it on a product as it reminds me of the damage that plastic does to the planet and aquatic life*





# There is spontaneous & prompted support of a simpler, common approach



We need a **global recognised standard measure** displayed on all products/services to truly impact carbon emissions, as opposed to lots of different measures

We need a **European recognised standard measure** displayed on all products/services to truly impact carbon emissions

*I think all the symbols we see on packs need to combine into one!*



The need for a Global & European recognised standard higher in Ireland than Germany

# #4: A Cry for Help!



## Key Take-Aways

1. Consumers face a myriad of barriers when they attempt to be more eco/carbon friendly
2. With a strong consensus around the need for a common label / standard
3. They appear to be open to nudges & supports around financial, comprehension & convenience  
...bands can leverage this to engage
4. Channels that work hardest to engage include documentaries, packaging & peer influence

# #5: On the Horizon



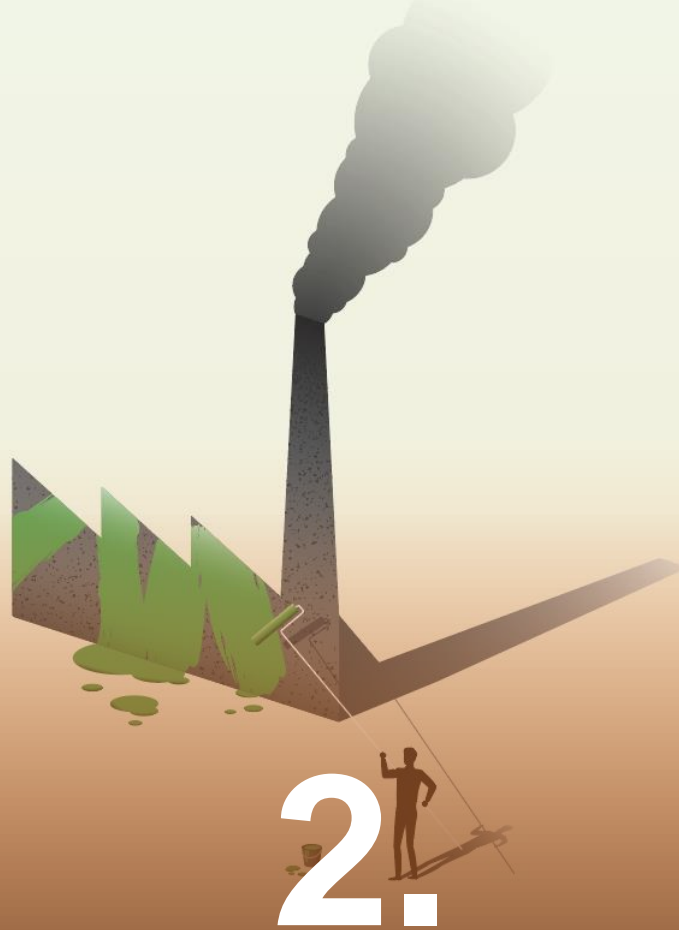
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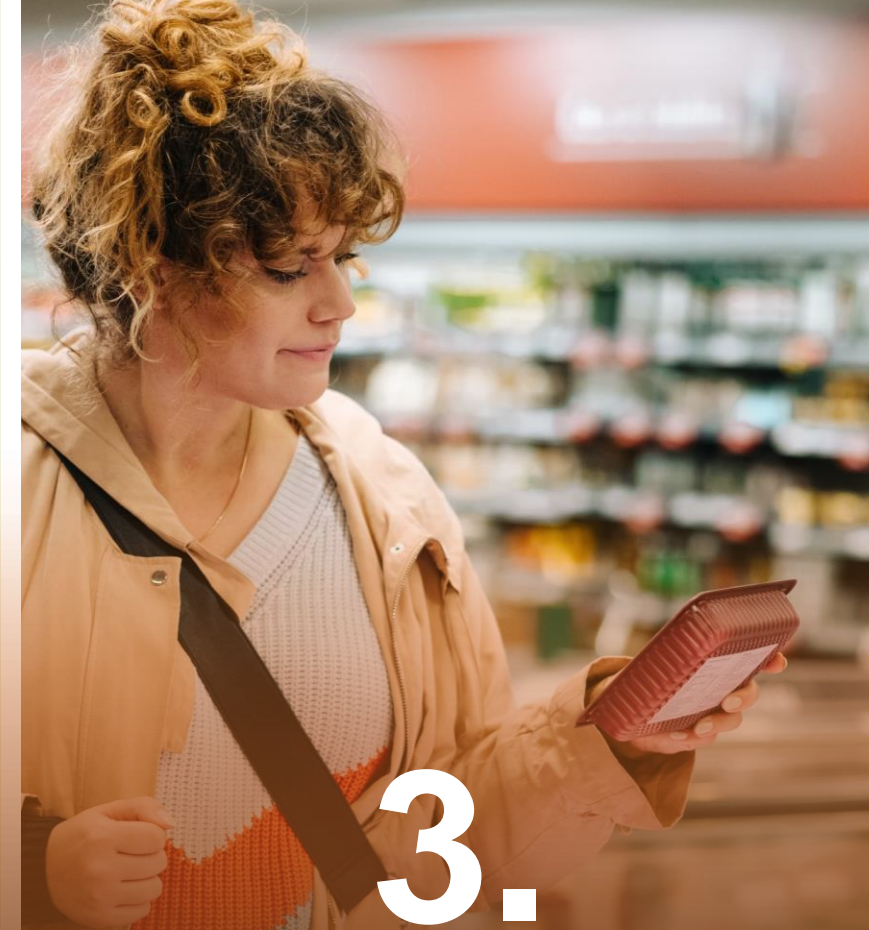
1.

Label Regulation &  
Consolidation



2.

Greenwashing & Navigating  
the claims minefield



3.

Knowledgeable but  
unpredictable consumers

## 3 Key Emerging areas to consider

In a dynamic category we look to what is emerging and changing in the mid-term

# 1

## LABEL REGULATION AND CONSOLIDATION

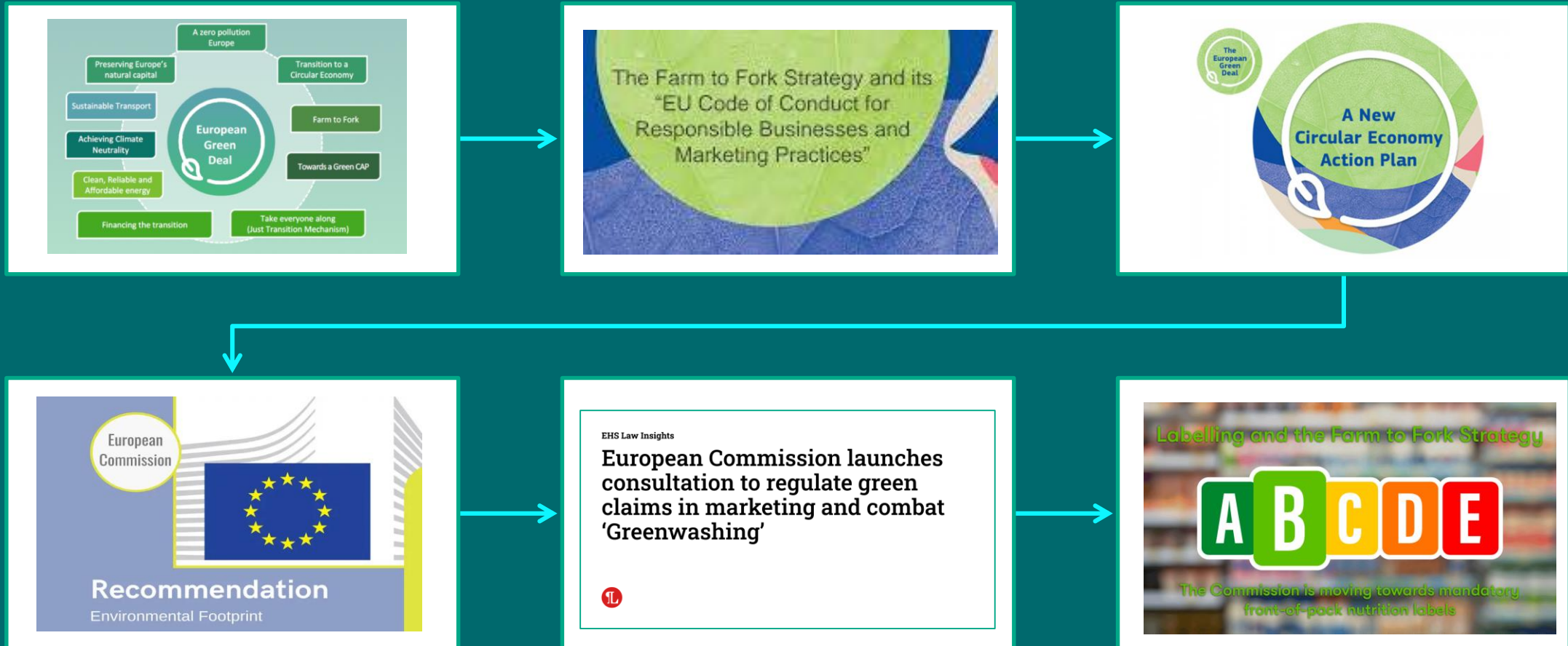
### **Industry collaboration & consolidation efforts**

Especially in markets where regulators aren't acting we are seeing several industry led / supported collaborations to create standards & common labels ... and beyond that the different groupings are attempting to consolidate

# 1.

## LABEL REGULATION AND CONSOLIDATION

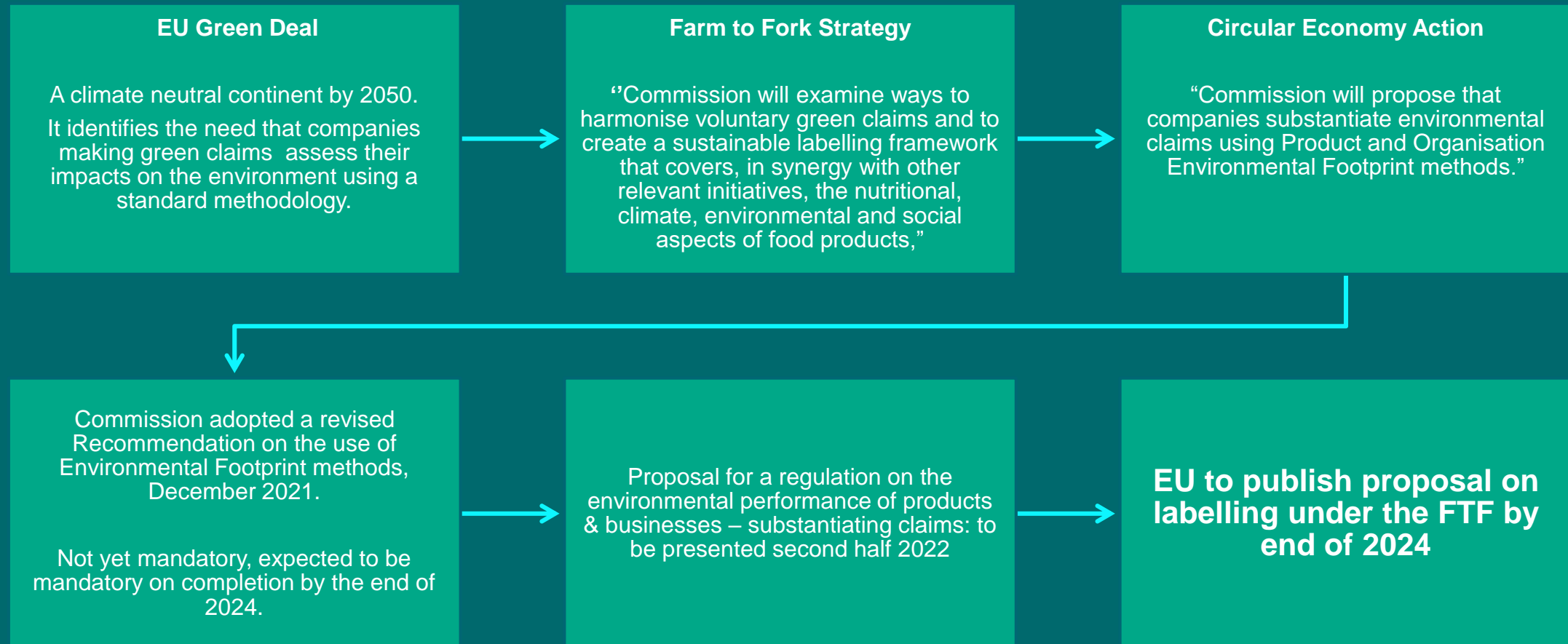
**By end of 2024 the EU will set out its proposal for a common label ... this will be the critical 'act'**



# 1

## LABEL REGULATION AND CONSOLIDATION

**By end of 2024 the EU will set out its proposal for a common label ... this will be the critical 'act'**



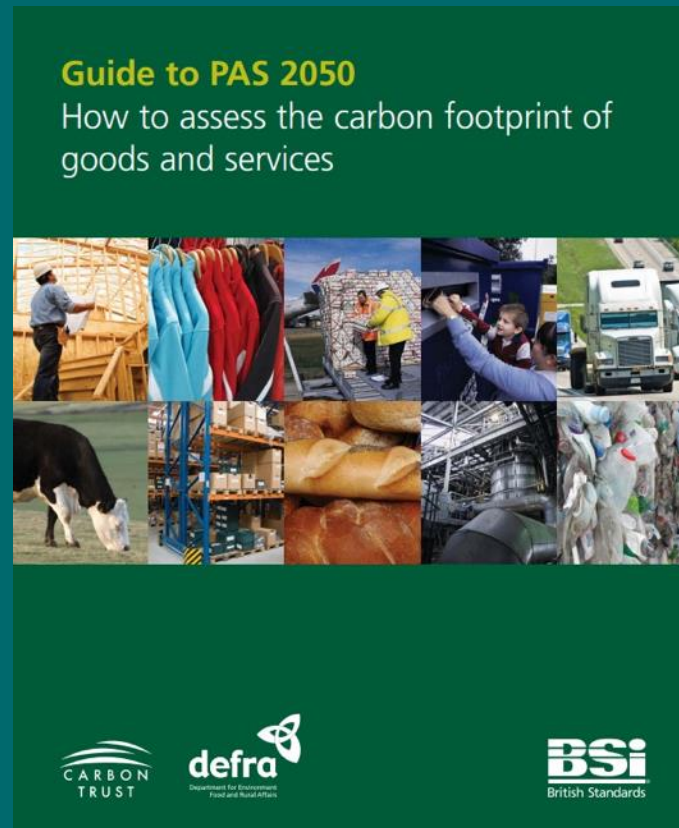
**NB: the EU seem to be leaning towards the Eco Score which is a multi factor sustainable score i.e. beyond just Carbon**

# 1.

## LABEL REGULATION AND CONSOLIDATION

### Linked to this is a drive to create data robustness and consistency

- Key actors moving towards solving the data challenge
  - WRAP/IDG have launched their scope 3 protocols
  - EU likely to follow the GHG / Protocol / PAS 2050





## 2. BRANDS GETTING SMARTER AT NAVIGATING

From both a regulatory, media and consumer perspective the scrutiny around claims and the accusation of greenwashing (or a version thereof) will ratchet up.



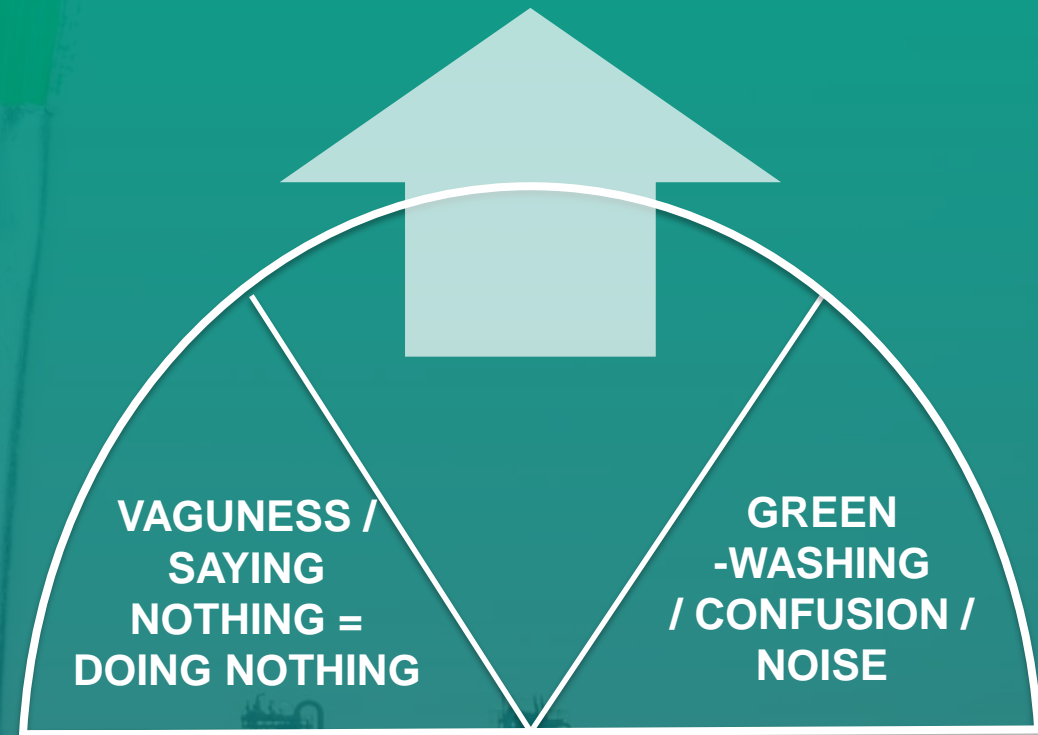
Source: Planet Tracker Report – ‘The Greenwashing Hydra’

## 2. BRANDS GETTING SMARTER AT NAVIGATING

### Optimising Carbon related Communication

Ultimately there is a fine line between being perceived as doing nothing or vague and being confusing or greenwashing when it comes to Carbon Communications.

Brands will (& will need) to get better at navigating these extremes



## 2. BRANDS GETTING SMARTER AT NAVIGATING

Brands will also understand the interconnectedness and nuances around linked topics ... in particular watch out for soil, biodiversity & regenerative agriculture and their role in Carbon

The infographic features the Harmony Charter logo at the top left, which is a green circle with a leaf and the text 'HARMONY CHARTER'. Below it is the Mondelez International logo. The main content is titled 'ON THE FARM' and includes two columns of text. The left column, under the 'Cocoa Life' logo, states that farmers learn to avoid deforestation and plant native shade trees. The right column, under the 'Harmony Charter' logo, states that farmers use precision technology to optimize water use and limit fertilizer and pesticide use. A central illustration shows a farm scene with palm trees, workers, and wheat stalks. Text above the illustration says 'All cocoa will ultimately be sustainably-sourced' and '75% Western European biscuits made with Harmony wheat'. A note at the bottom left says '\*by 2020 vs. 2013 baseline' and a slogan at the bottom right says 'the call for well-being )))'.

**ON THE FARM**

Working with farmers to implement best practices and support smallholder livelihoods

**Cocoa Life** farmers learn to avoid deforestation and plant native shade trees making farms more resilient to climate change

**Harmony** farmers use precision technology to optimize water use and limit fertilizer and pesticide use

**All cocoa** will ultimately be sustainably-sourced

**75%** Western European biscuits made with **Harmony** wheat

\*by 2020 vs. 2013 baseline

the call for well-being )))

### Brands link soil health and biodiversity claims with their carbon footprint

Mondelez recently announced its ambition to expand its sustainable wheat sourcing initiative (Harmony) to cover 100% of its biscuit brands in the EU by 2022 (from 60% in 2017).

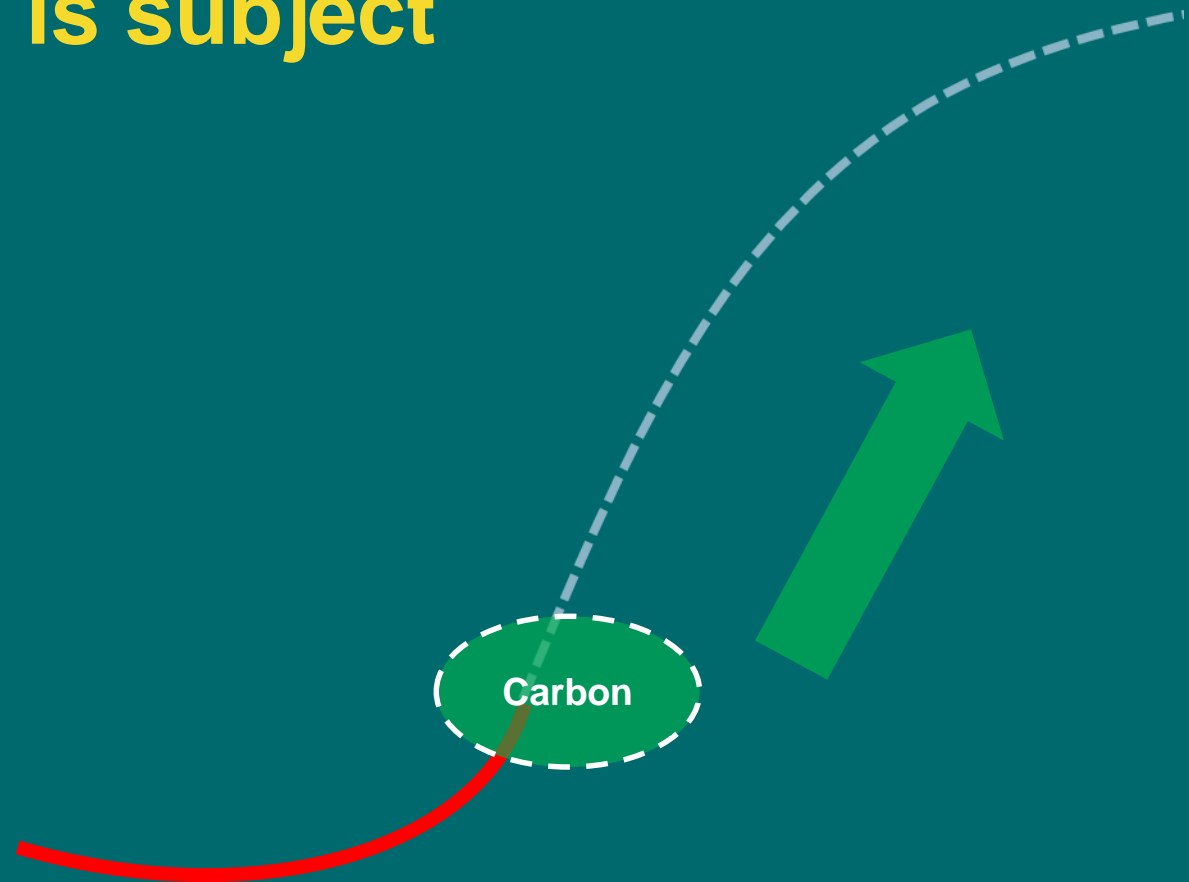
As part of its Harmony charter, the brand uses its commitment to soil health and biodiversity to circle back to its strategy to reduce its carbon footprint.

# 3 KNOWLEDGEABLE BUT UNPREDICTABLE CONSUMERS

## Consumer Awareness is subject to rapid change

### Key Drivers

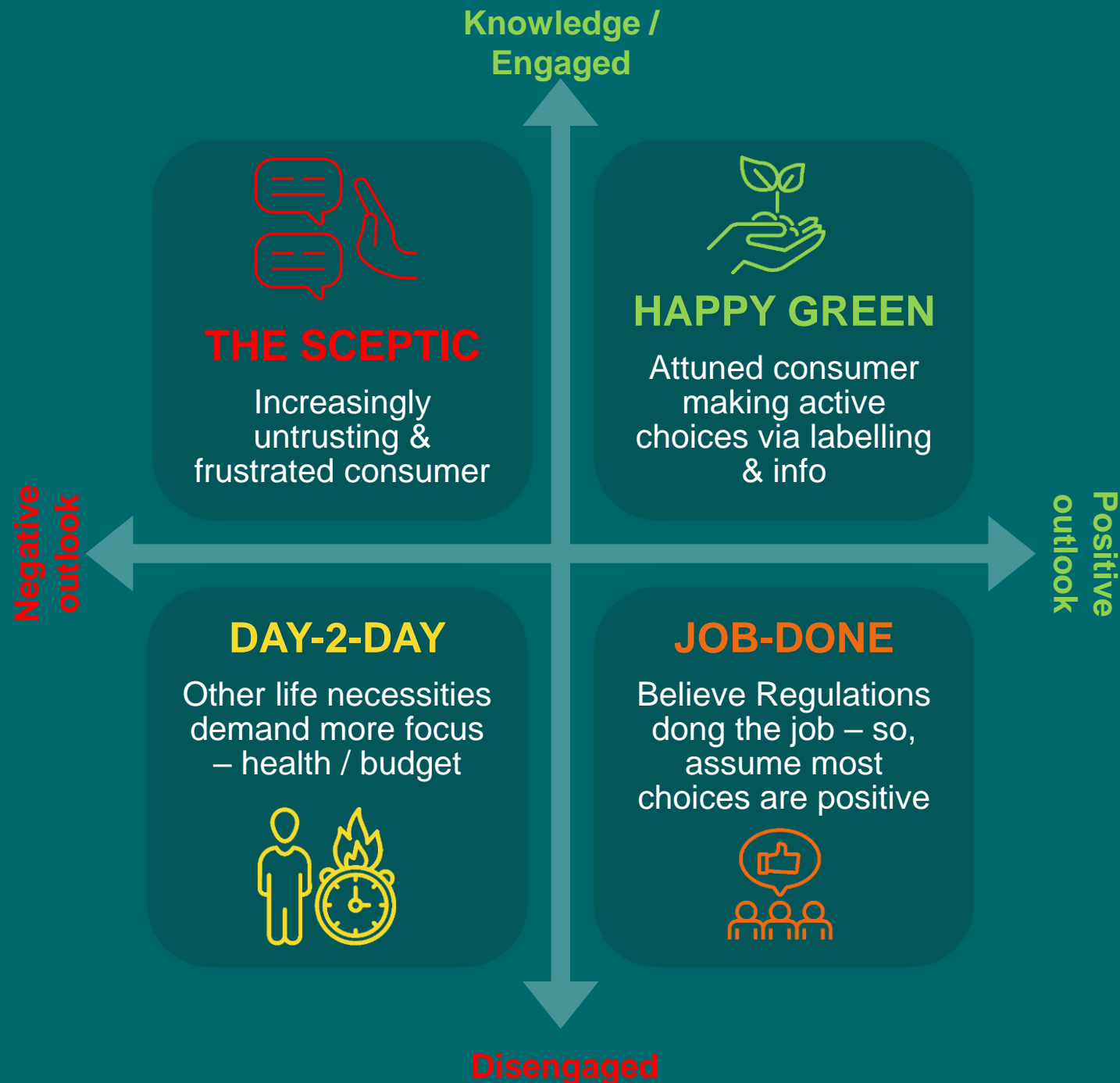
- External Impacts / Accelerators
  - Documentaries
  - Climate Events
- General Presence / Knowledge
  - Increased Media / brands
  - New labelling regulations



# 3 KNOWLEDGEABLE BUT UNPREDICTABLE CONSUMERS

## ... creating a fragmented consumer landscape?

We will need to monitor closely the shifts and emergence of new segments – considering how we engage with them



# #5 On the Horizon

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a light blue V-neck sweater, is pushing a bright orange plastic shopping cart through a supermarket aisle. The cart is filled with various items, including a pineapple, green leafy vegetables, and other produce. She is looking down at her hands, which are near the cart's handle. The background is a blurred supermarket aisle with shelves of products and overhead lights.

## Key Take-Aways

1. Plan for consolidation around key marks & in particular the EU's response (end 2024)
2. Getting 'data' ready is critical regardless of which final 'Mark' the EU consolidates around ...robust, comparative & transparent are the watch words
3. Track how rapidly a more aware / knowledgeable consumer (or one presented with clear label info) may change their perception of a category / brand

# Section B:

# 5 Key Implications



# 5 Key Recommendations / Opportunities

1.

STRATEGIC  
STANCE



Decide on your overall engagement and stance both for today & for tomorrow

2.

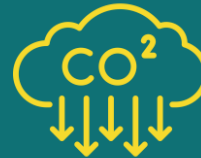
PERCEPTION VS.  
REALITY FLIP



Self-auditing potential 'flips' as mandatory labelling (like nutrition) or consumer knowledge comes into play

3.

DE-CARBONISE &  
DATA'FY



Businesses who fail to strip out carbon will be riskier propositions. Having robust, accessible data will also be required

4.

UNDERSTAND  
NUANCES



There are different needs & nuances depending on the market, customer & consumer you are dealing with

5.

COMMS  
PRINCIPLES



Follow specific guidelines to help guide & navigate both on & off pack (see section C)



# 1. Irish Food companies can take one of four Stances

Given how fast moving the comms & regulatory environment is companies should select a 'response stance' and organise their business accordingly



## Regulatory Tick Box

Following the minimum level of regulatory requirements.  
Minimal Comms



## Cautious Follower

Cautiously including additional communication / packaging around Carbon



## Rapid Reactor

Move quickly around up & coming regulatory changes and engage in more immediate Carbon comms



## Future Primer

Well prepared for regulatory / data requirements and are building a market leading position

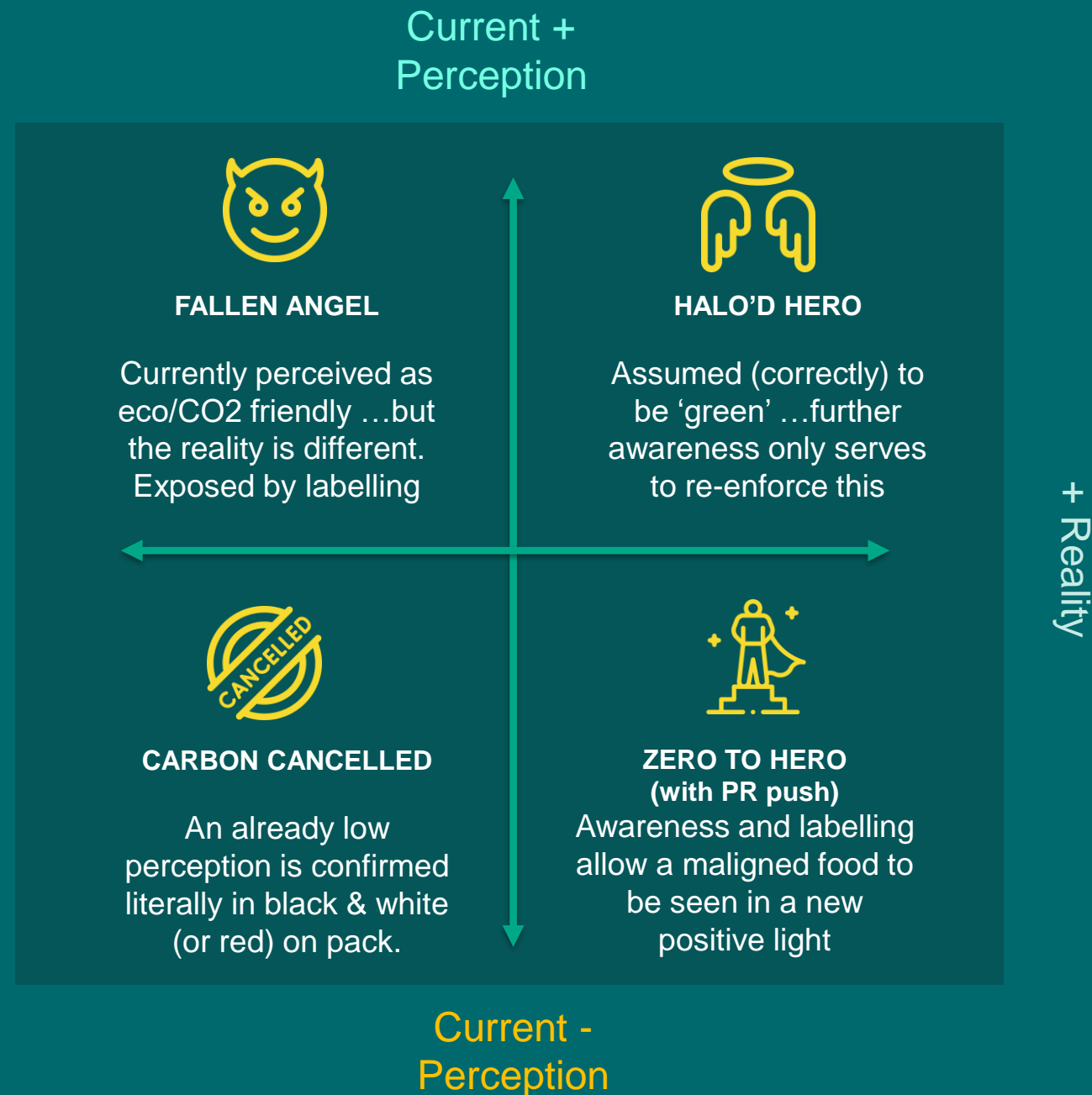
*Please see the recent Bord Bia:Havas presentation outlining a comms approach to sustainability*

# 2. Audit for Perception: Reality Flip

At the advent of Nutrition labelling several brands / categories were subject to 'flips' ... those previously perceived as unhealthy ended up with positive scores & vice versa.

It would benefit brands/ business to understand NOW where they sit

- Reality



# 3 **De-coarbonise & Data'fy your business**

Although self evident it is in arguable that businesses that wish to thrive in the future will need to:

- 1) **De-carbonise** their own business and their supply chain. Failure to do so will lead to repeated 'rejection' from suppliers and consumers
- 2) **Data'fy** to attain marks or simply comply with customers requirements businesses will need robust & transparent data on Carbon

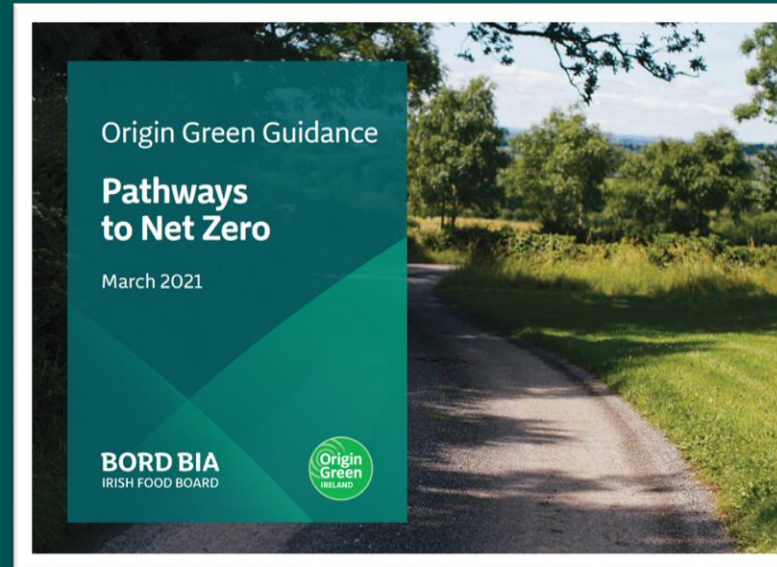
# 3. Origin Green Emissions & SBTi Supports



All companies with a turnover >€50m are required to set emission targets



Developed emissions guidance document and a 5-part webinar series to inform companies on how to set SBTi targets.



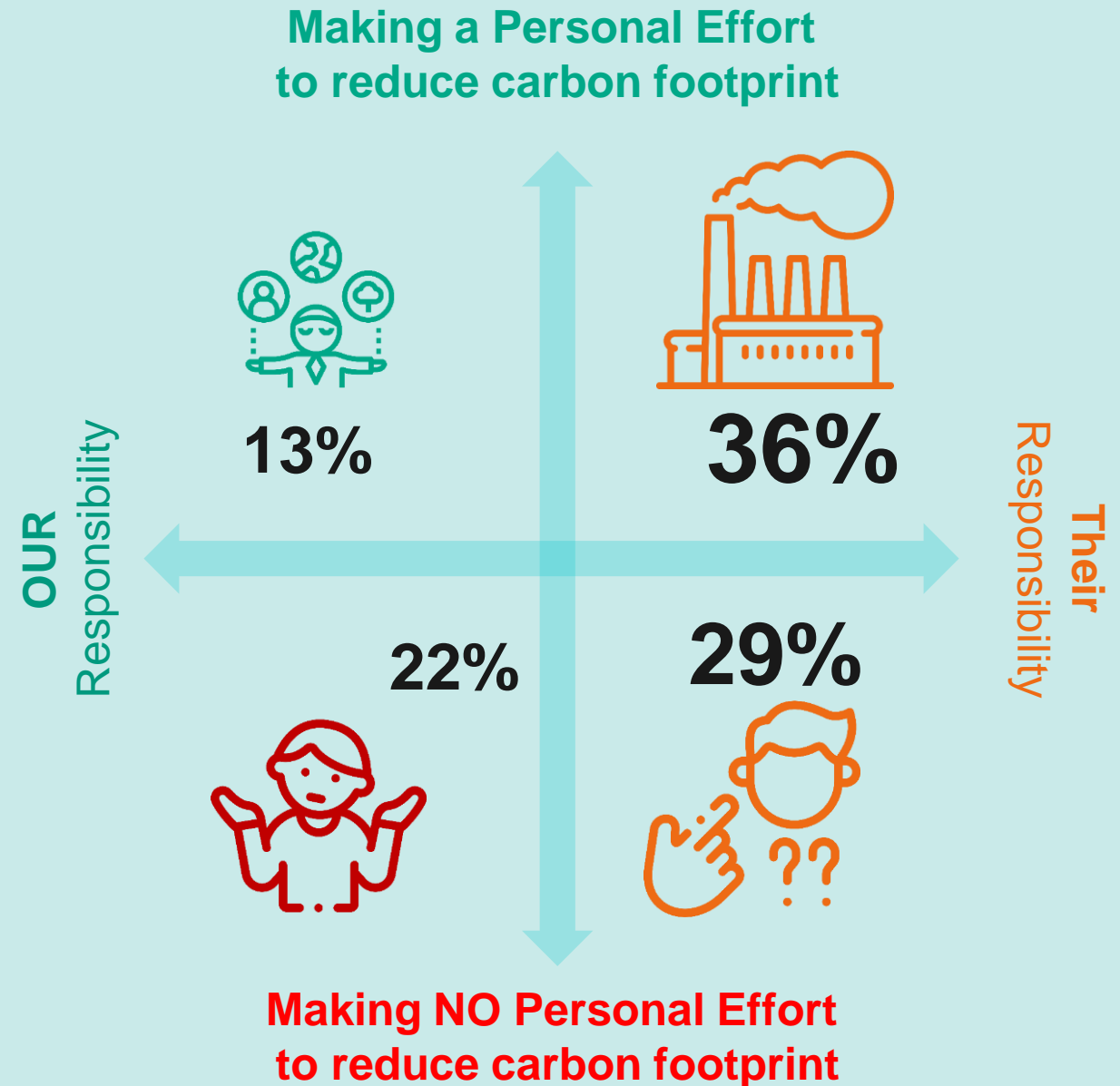
To learn more and to view the webinar series please visit:  
<https://www.origingreen.ie/members-area/science-based-targets>

# 4. Understand market Nuances

This applies at market level but critically with regard to consumers ...

For example different consumers will think differently about who is responsibility and whether to make some 'effort' themselves

- While a greater weight towards "Them" in the "Us vs. Them" blame game, the biggest segment emerging is the one which feels this is the case but which also is taking personal responsibility to reduce their carbon footprint
- Younger demographics are more likely to land down on the "Them" side
- Smallest segment overall is the group who are making a personal effort and who feel it is our responsibility



# 5. Insight led Carbon Communications Strategy



## ‘The 6 Cs’

This study identifies 6 core principles for brands to utilise to help cut through the noise and navigate to an effective form of carbon communication.

See Section C for full details

# The 6 Principles for Navigating & Optimising Carbon Communication

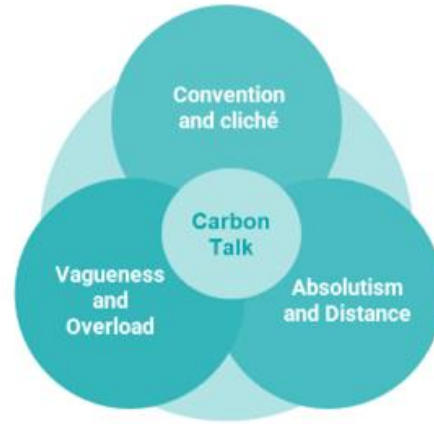


# Current Comms Causing Confusion

Overall communications, both on & off pack, are not helping consumers as they are often confusing, cliched or vague.

This is an opportunity for communications to cut through & provide more clarity and re-assurance for consumers.

## Summary of obstacles



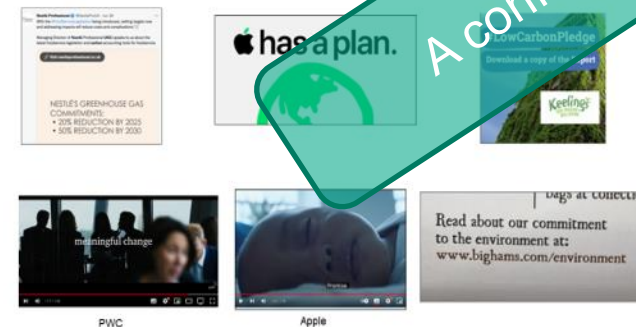
Our **Semiotic Analysis** showed that while there were some positives, overall the carbon communications / packaging currently in the market are creating confusion for many consumers.

## A forest of symbols



## Information overload

## Pledges and commitments can feel abstract and unhelpful



## Certification overload

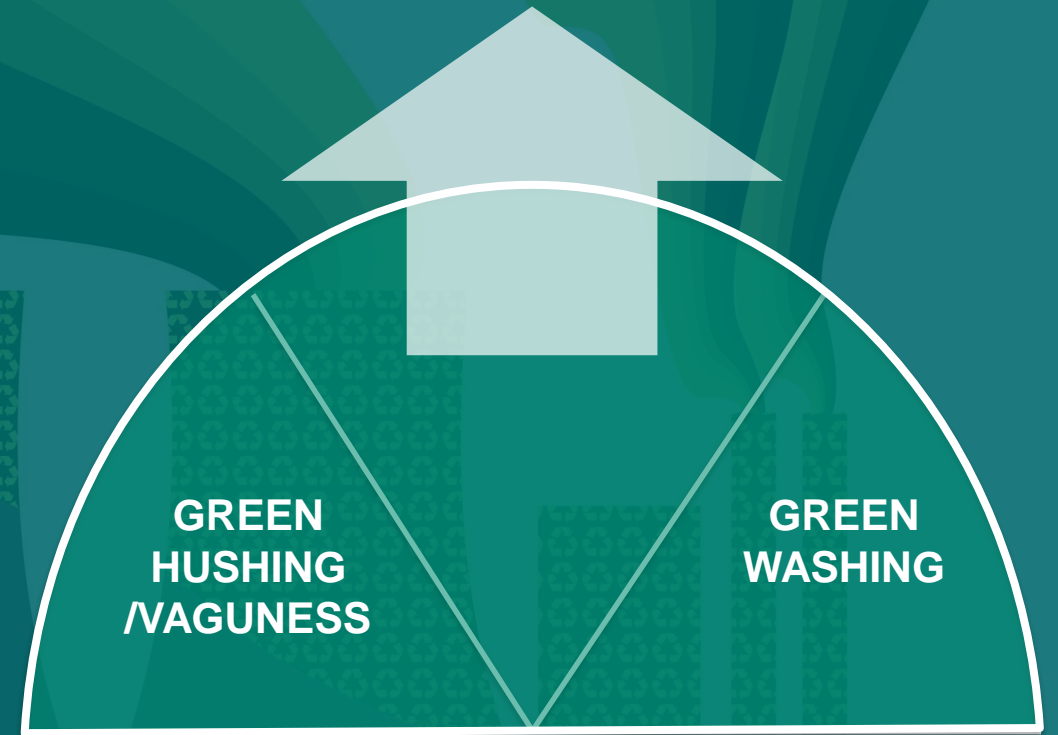




# CARBON COMMS PRINCIPLES

Ultimately there is a fine line between being perceived as doing nothing (green hushing/vagueness), or being perceived as greenwashing when it comes to Carbon Communications.

## Optimising Carbon related Communication

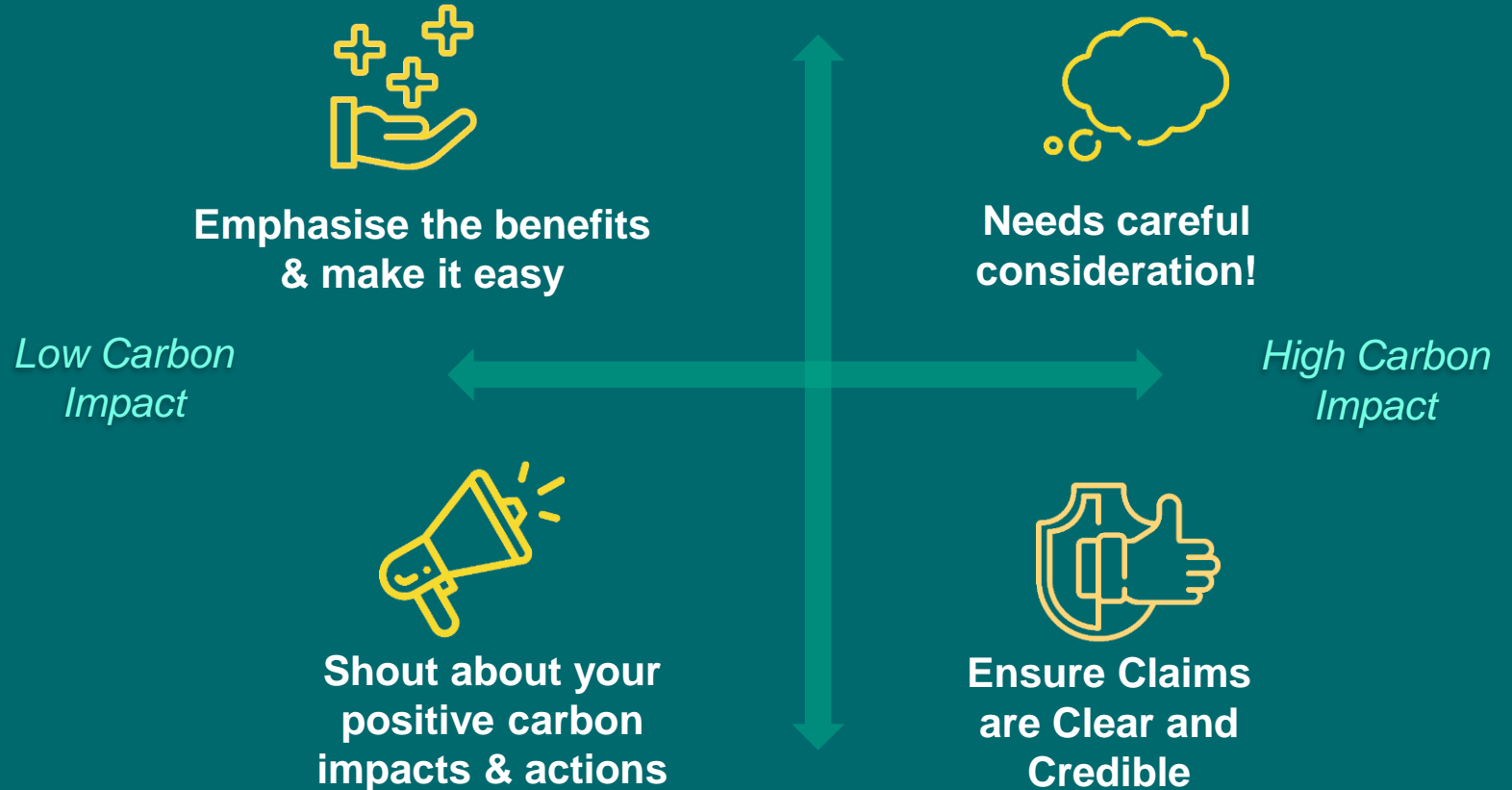


# CARBON COMMS PRINCIPLES

When talking about Carbon the challenge is different depending on if you are perceived as a low carbon impact (i.e. plant based product etc.), or a high carbon impact brand (i.e. fast fashion brand etc.), and if you are communicating actions your brand is taking (i.e. new more carbon friendly packaging), or asking consumers to change their behaviours (i.e. consumers to choose more expensive low carbon impact option).

## Considering the Context

*Asking Consumers to change their behaviours*



*Communicating Brand Actions*

## ‘The 6 Cs’

This study identifies 6 core principles for brands to utilise to help cut through the noise and navigate to an effective form of carbon communication.

## ‘The 6 Cs’

1

Credible Proof Points

2

Clear Transparent Detail

3

Comparative Certification

4

Candid story that fits Brand

5

Capitalise on Halo Effect

6

Consistent Message

**For the 6C's Case Study  
Section Please contact  
[thethinkinghouse@bordbia.ie](mailto:thethinkinghouse@bordbia.ie)**

# CARBON COMMS PRINCIPLES

## '6 Cs'

1

**Credible Proof Points**

Ensure carbon related communications are credible and have easily relatable proof points.

2

**Clear Transparent Detail**

Provide easy transparent access to more details and facts to those who want it.

3

**Comparative Certification**

Ensure any carbon related certification clearly stands out and is easily comparative.

4

**Candid story that fits Brand**

Where possible creatively knit credible carbon actions into the brand story when appropriate.

5

**Capitalise on Halo Effect**

When developing a brand's sustainability communication, consider the 'Halo Effect' it can have on carbon and other sustainability factors.

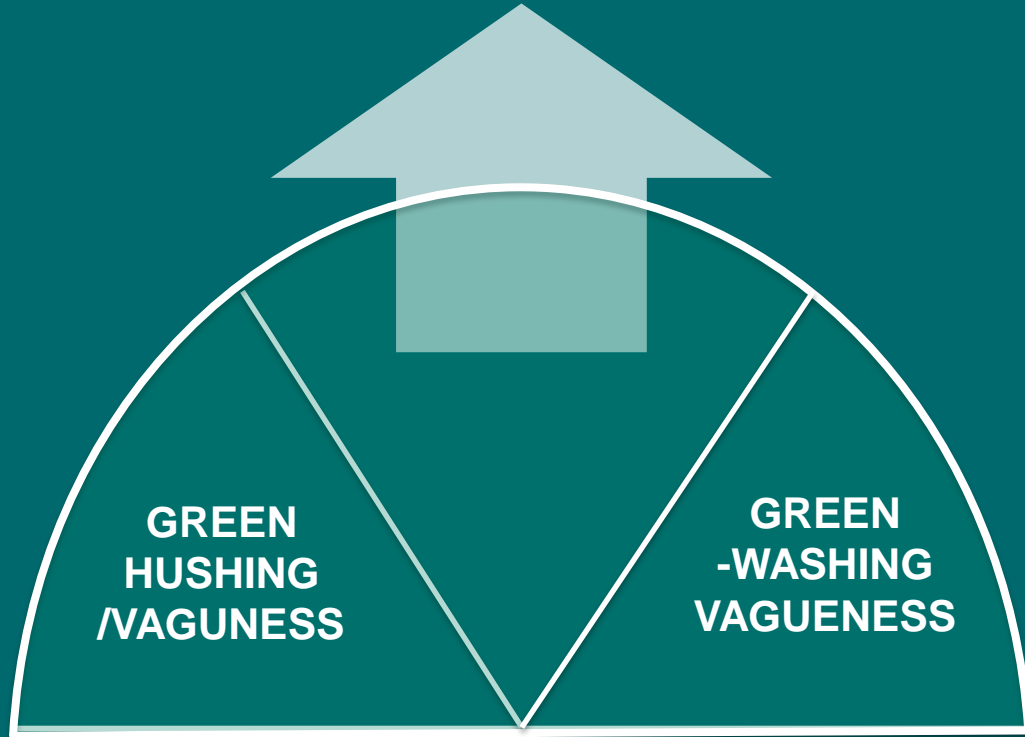
6

**Consistent Message**

Consistently develop message thorough design, imagery, tone and other relevant touch points, and ensure to minimise any contradictions to the core intended carbon message.

# Carbon Comms Principles

Optimising  
Carbon related  
Communication



## ‘The 6 Cs’

1

Credible Proof  
Points

2

Clear Transparent  
Detail

3

Comparative  
Certification

4

Candid story  
that fits Brand

5

Capitalise on  
Halo Effect

6

Consistent  
Message

## Section A: Carbon Insights

- #1 The Carbon Landscape – labelling & communications
- #2 So, Where's the Consumer on Carbon?
- #3 The Blame Game... who's responsible?
- #4 Consumer Cry for Help!
- #5 On the Horizon

## Section B: 5 Key Implications

- #1 Strategic Stance
- #2 Perception vs. Reality Flip
- #3 De-Carbonise & Data'fy
- #4 Understand Nuances
- #5 Communication Principles

## Section C: 6 Core Communication Principles

- #1 Credible Proof Points
- #2 Clear Transparent Detail
- #3 Comparative Certification
- #4 Candid story that fits Brand
- #5 Capitalise on Halo Effect
- #6 Consistent Message

# Thank You



BORD BIA   
**Thinking  
House**

