

---

## ANNEX A: DETAILED AWARD CATEGORIES & SUBCATEGORIES

This document provides an in-depth guide to the categories and subcategories of the ECU Sustainability Awards 2025, including eligibility criteria, examples, and guidance to help applicants select the correct subcategory.

If you are unsure about which subcategory to choose for your project, this annex will help you determine the best fit. It provides detailed explanations, examples, and key questions to guide your decision-making process.

***If you already have clarity on which subcategory best fits your project, you do not need to read this annex!***

---

### RETAIL CATEGORY

**Definition:** This category applies to companies that sell goods and services directly to consumers through physical stores, digital platforms, or omnichannel models. It includes businesses of all sizes and sectors, from grocery and fashion to electronics and specialized retail, that integrate sustainability into their operations, supply chains, and customer engagement.

Eligible businesses include:

- Brick-and-Mortar Retailers operating physical stores.
- E-Commerce & Digital-First Retailers selling online or via marketplaces.
- Omnichannel Retailers combining in-store and digital experiences.

#### 1. Sustainable Leadership & Excellence

Recognizing retailers integrating sustainability into corporate governance, operations, and consumer engagement.

✓ Best for: Retailers with a long-term, company-wide sustainability vision.

✓ Key Question: Does your initiative fundamentally transform your business strategy and set a new sustainability standard for your industry?

Examples:

- ✓ Large-Scale Renewable Energy Commitment – A multinational retail chain commits to sourcing 100% renewable energy for all store operations by 2030.
- ✓ Sustainability-Driven Business Model Shift – A fashion retailer transitions to a fully circular business model.
- ✓ Employee-Led Sustainability Governance – A grocery chain integrates ESG goals into executive reviews and staff training.
- ✓ Retail Carbon Footprint Accountability – A department store chain implements a public carbon footprint tracker, providing real-time CO<sub>2</sub> data per transaction and customer-friendly sustainability recommendations.

## 2. Commercial Initiatives

For market-facing sustainability projects that shape consumer behavior and sustainable purchasing habits.

✓ Best for: Retailers launching eco-friendly product strategies, loyalty programs, or resale models.

✓ Key Question: Does your project involve direct consumer engagement?

Examples:

- ✓ Sustainable Loyalty Programs – A supermarket chain rewards customers for eco-friendly purchases.
- ✓ Circular Economy Initiatives – A global electronics retailer launches a trade-in and refurbishment program.
- ✓ Zero-Waste Shopping Experience – A beauty brand introduces refill stations for personal care products.
- ✓ Consumer Education on Sustainable Shopping – A major clothing retailer establishes an in-store "Sustainability Academy."

### 3. Operational Improvements

For internal sustainability transformations in store operations, logistics, or supply chain management.

✓ Best for: Retailers optimizing internal processes to reduce environmental impact.

✓ Key Question: Is your project behind-the-scenes sustainability rather than consumer-facing?

Examples:

- ✓ AI-Driven Energy Efficiency – Smart refrigeration systems reducing emissions by 20%.
- ✓ Carbon-Neutral Logistics – Retail fleet transitioning to electric vehicles and local reforestation.
- ✓ Supply Chain Transparency & Ethical Sourcing – Blockchain-based product tracking for fair labor compliance.
- ✓ Zero-Waste Distribution Centers – Redesigned warehouse operations to eliminate landfill waste.

---

### FMCG CATEGORY

Definition: This category applies to companies involved in the development, production, and/or commercialization of consumer goods with a focus on sustainability. It includes businesses across various industries supplying frequently purchased products to consumers.

Eligible businesses include:

- Manufacturers producing goods for daily consumer use.
- Brand Owners managing product development and commercialization.
- Entities responsible for market distribution ensuring product availability.

### 1. Sustainable Leadership & Excellence

Recognizing companies setting industry benchmarks through corporate sustainability strategies.

✓ Best for: Companies influencing industry-wide sustainability practices.

✓ Key Question: Is your initiative shaping the industry beyond your company?

Examples:

- ✓ Industry-Wide Plastic Reduction Commitment – A beverage company partners to develop biodegradable packaging.
- ✓ FMCG Supplier Engagement for Climate Goals – A food manufacturer implements emission reduction incentives.
- ✓ Sustainability Integration in Corporate Strategy – A cosmetics brand mandates sustainability impact reports for new products.
- ✓ Retail Partnership to Reduce Food Waste – A dairy brand introduces AI-powered dynamic pricing.

## 2. Commercial Initiatives

For consumer-facing product innovations, sustainable packaging, or marketing initiatives.

✓ Best for: FMCG companies launching sustainable product lines or awareness campaigns.

✓ Key Question: Is your project linked to a product or consumer action?

Examples:

- ✓ Sustainable Product Innovations – A beverage company introduces fully recyclable bottle caps.
- ✓ Marketing Campaigns for Consumer Awareness – A food company launches a campaign on sustainable eating.
- ✓ Circular Packaging Solutions – A personal care brand develops refillable packaging models.

✓ Behavioral Change Initiatives – An FMCG company implements a consumer education program focused on reducing household waste through digital engagement and interactive learning tools.

### 3. Operational Improvements

For sustainability initiatives focused on manufacturing processes, supply chains, or resource efficiency.

✓ Best for: FMCG companies reducing emissions, waste, or resource use.

✓ Key Question: Is your project internally focused on efficiency & sustainability?

Examples:

- ✓ Renewable Energy in Production – A manufacturer switches to 100% renewable energy for all production sites.
- ✓ Waste Reduction Programs – A company introduces zero-waste production lines.
- ✓ Sustainable Sourcing & Traceability – Implementing AI-driven supplier monitoring systems.
- ✓ Water & Energy Efficiency – A food manufacturer upgrades equipment to reduce water and energy use.

---

## SOLUTION PROVIDERS CATEGORY

Definition: This category applies to businesses that develop and provide solutions supporting Retailers and FMCG companies in achieving their sustainability goals. These solutions can enhance operations, supply chains, consumer engagement, or circular economy practices.

Eligible businesses include:

- Technology & Infrastructure Providers (e.g., logistics, energy efficiency, waste management, digital sustainability tools).
- Packaging & Material Innovators (e.g., sustainable alternatives for FMCG and retail packaging).

- Recycling & Circular Economy Enablers (e.g., waste reduction, resource recovery, closed-loop systems).
- Consulting & Service Partners (e.g., sustainability strategies, certifications, compliance frameworks).

## 1. Sustainable Leadership & Excellence

Recognizing Solution Providers that create industry-wide sustainability frameworks, scalable tools, or pioneering services that set new standards for Retail and FMCG companies.

✓ Best for: Companies developing industry-wide sustainability tools or services.

✓ Key Question: Does your initiative influence multiple businesses or industries?

Examples:

- ✓ Pioneering Sustainability Certifications – A firm develops a global sustainability rating system for FMCG.
- ✓ Industry-Wide Policy Advocacy – A company leads sustainability regulations in the supply chain.
- ✓ Game-Based Education on Sustainability – An interactive platform teaches businesses about sustainability compliance.
- ✓ Technology for Sustainable Retail Operations – A cloud-based solution optimizing energy use in retail.

## 2. Commercial Initiatives

For market-facing sustainability solutions that help Retail and FMCG companies engage consumers.

✓ Best for: Solution providers helping Retail and FMCG companies drive consumer sustainability.

✓ Key Question: Does your solution directly interact with customers or end-users?

Examples:

- ✓ AI-Powered Consumer Engagement Tools – A digital platform encouraging sustainable purchasing.
- ✓ Reverse Vending & Recycling Programs – Automated deposit systems for consumer recycling.
- ✓ Sustainable Packaging Solutions – A provider developing plant-based packaging for FMCG.
- ✓ Eco-Friendly Retail Technologies – Smart checkout solutions reducing paper and plastic waste.

### 3. Operational Improvements

For supply chain, logistics, and infrastructure innovations that improve sustainability in Retail and FMCG operations.

✓ Best for: Solution providers optimizing back-end processes for sustainability.

✓ Key Question: Does your project focus on business operations rather than direct consumer interaction?

Examples:

- ✓ Carbon-Neutral Supply Chain Solutions – AI-driven logistics optimization for emissions reduction.
- ✓ Waste-to-Value Technologies – Innovations that repurpose FMCG production waste.
- ✓ Energy Efficiency Software for Retailers – AI-driven demand forecasting reducing energy use.
- ✓ Blockchain-Based Ethical Sourcing – A major home goods retailer partners with suppliers to implement blockchain technology, ensuring full transparency in labor practices and material sustainability from source to store.

---

## Final Guidance: How to Select the Right Subcategory

Ask Yourself These Questions:

- Does your initiative primarily focus on company-wide governance and leadership? → Choose Sustainable Leadership & Excellence.
- Is your initiative directly engaging consumers in sustainability? → Choose Commercial Initiatives.
- Does your initiative improve behind-the-scenes processes like supply chain, logistics, or manufacturing? → Choose Operational Improvements.