



HOLCIM

Sector: Construction



Region: Costa Rica

The cement activity was born in Costa Rica in 1962 through the creation of Industria Nacional de Cemento S.A. Years later it changes its name to Holcim Costa Rica. The company produces four types of cement: Fuerte, Multibase, Industrial and Mampostero. Holcim's claim is the logo of the Cemento Fuerte sustainability program which appears on its presentation of 42.5 kg bags. Cemento Fuerte is a third-party verified cement sustainability programme to strengthen the cement supply chain while transforming the lives of customers. The company contributes to sustainable development through the implementation of programs and projects with an impact on education, health, environment, infrastructure, and entrepreneurship, promoting organizational strengthening and the achievement of strategic alliances. Holcim evaluates its Carbon Footprint with two companies: INTECO (Instituto de Normas Técnicas de Costa Rica) and Carbon Trust. Carbon Trust verifies PAS 2050 and INTECO validates the process. Holcim has an expert team on research and development that gives specific recommendations for the efficiency of the enterprise.

Mindset

Life Cycle Thinking: environmental impacts are analyzed from the extraction of raw materials to the bagging of the product (cradle to door). They have a self-declaration based on Sub-PCR-H building cements and limes (EN 16908). Holcim is committed to hold itself to ensure lasting, positive change. As well, Holcim has realized an hydric footprint analysis and a LCA of its process (verification is pending). Holcim evaluates its Carbon Footprint with two companies: INTECO (Instituto de Normas Técnicas de Costa Rica) and Carbon Trust. Carbon Trust verifies PAS 2050 and INTECO validates the process. Holcim has an expert team on research and development that gives specific recommendations for the efficiency of the enterprise

Hotspots Analysis Approach: Holcim always starts with a needs assessment to build the most relevant interventions in the construction products industry. The claim was based on a comprehensive product hotspots analysis, this approach is considered at the industry and community levels.

Mainstreaming sustainability: Holcim's strategy is to create value by integrating economic, environmental, and social aspects. It operates on four strategic lines: establishing policies and environmental management systems, evaluating, and reducing the impacts of its activities, using resources rationally (emphasis on alternative fuels and additions to cement) and improving relations with internal and external stakeholders. Its objective is to place Cemento Fuerte in the national market, a product recognized for its traceability and high environmental and social performance, adding value and innovation to the construction and development of the country.

Principle 1: Reliability



The environmental declaration states that the environmental goals of Holcim are beyond minimal regulations. Company makes efforts to use alternative energy supply sources, works on greenhouse gas effects reduction, among others. To verify impacts on industry and the community and measure progress towards the goal of sourcing all cement as sustainably ones, consistent evaluation is needed. For the carbon footprint of Cemento Fuerte, Holcim works with two independent third party verifier: INTECO and Carbon Trust.

Carbon Trust verifies the compliance with PAS 2050 normative, and INTECO is which validates it. Experts and the research and development team are involved and provide evidence to generate industry-specific recommendations, which improve the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of the project interventions.

The message and the logo conveyed on the cement follows and reflects the evidence the company has on what has been developed on the ground. Third party verifiers confirm such evidence.

Principle 2: Relevance

The claim highlights elements that make a difference to the overall sustainability performance of the Cemento Fuerte and it goes beyond the minimum legal requirements established for mandatory compliance. The hotspots at up-stream phase include the use of alternative raw material in cement production to reduce the use of virgin raw material, at production phase include the use of alternative fuels with the aim to reduce the greenhouse gases emission. The claim indicates that Cemento Fuerte has lower atmospheric emissions.

The claim is based on a voluntary initiative that exceeds regulatory requirements of the production countries and the consumption countries.



Principle 3: Clarity

The Cemento Fuerte's label has a clear claim of low greenhouse gas emissions. Additional information could be consulted in their technical sheet. There is also a voluntary initiative that goes beyond minimal regulations, so Holcim CR does protect the environment. There is environmental technical information on the web page.



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The connection between the claim and the product is clear and additional details are available online to support a better understanding of the claim. Consumers can access detailed information in progress reports, executive summaries, infographics and fact sheets available online.

Principle 4: Transparency

An ECO logo was recently included on the package of the Cemento Fuerte, as well as web page link, so consumers verifies information. Construction users can see the Eco logo to obtain basic information, meanwhile engineers or architects always can visit the web page for environmental technical additional information. Additional information is available on the website which is written in plain and non-technical language. It is also possible to access progress reports and information on the development of the claim.

Consumers can trace the information behind the claim, and how it was generated and verified. It is clear how, and by whom, the sustainability claim was developed; and who provided the evidence behind the claim, and how.



Principle 5: Accessibility

The brand of the cement logo is placed front of pack with appropriate size and the use of colorful fonts. The cement that is sold in bulk has a technical sheet with enough information. There is an ECO logo placed in the front of the package for CO_{2q} reduction emission.

The information is available on-package, website and social media.



Principle 6: Three Dimensions of Sustainability



Environmental: Through the "Apuntados al ambiente" program, collection centers have been opened in nearby communities, and in 2019, with the program, 103.6 tons of solid waste were collected. In addition, Holcim invests in research and development to rationally use resources, with special attention to the development of alternative fuels and materials for the cement production. Geocycle is the brand of Holcim used to pick up alternative fuel from industries all around the country. Additionally, the company has made a Carbon Footprint analysis, as it was explained previously.

Social: Through its Sustainability Module for Educational Centers, thematic areas are addressed such as: quality education, climate action and sustainable cities and communities. In 2019, the "Nutrición y movimiento" program began with which it seeks to train girls, boys and as "Health Promoters". Holcim ensures the safety and well-being of communities through community safety fairs. In 2019, \$ 30,000 was invested in infrastructure projects.

Economic: Through programs like ENRED project, in 2019 US \$ 56,000 was invested in two community projects, through which 51 people, 47 women entrepreneurs, as well as family members, flower growers, associates and communities benefited.

Principle 7: Behaviour Change and Long-Term Impact



Holcim has identified that child labor, deforestation (mountains are restored after extraction use) and climate change, gender equality and sustainable livelihoods for industry and the community (Aguacaliente, county where facilities are located) are topics that also matter to conscious consumers. Holcim works on these.

The topics which matter to consumers are referenced in the product packaging. Holcim could improve its action towards this principle by asking consumers to be actively involved on reforestation campaigns among others.

Principle 8: Multi-Channel and Innovative Approach



Holcim talks through the brands to individual consumers. Brands such as Cemento Fuerte has started to communicate to their consumers and further action is already planned through the ECO logo. Consumers have the possibility of interacting through social networks, commercial technical advisers, telephones, mail, among others. This is one of the pioneer companies at Costa Rican level that have shown special interest on an environmental certificated national label. In the meantime, the company creates its own ECO logo so customers will use it for certification purposes.

The on-pack claim is the first stage of consumer communications. Different additional communication channels are used to communicate the results and progress made by the program such as websites, social media, newsletters, and videos.

Principle 9: Collaboration



The communication channels are carried out through the marketing area. Holcim has opportunities for improvement in involving relevant stakeholders (partners) in the collection of evidence and the development of its product.

The program creates partnerships with governments, non-governmental organizations, supply chain partners and communities to further support local communities. Holcim participates in technical Committees such as Environmental Labeling, in the Carbon Neutrality standard of Costa Rica to contribute to the country's Decarbonization Plan. Holcim welcomes other stakeholders to participate and thereby improve the overall public acceptance of the claim by consumers.

Principle 10: Comparability



This principle states that product comparisons should be used only where it really helps the consumer to make sustainable choices. In this claim, HOLCIM opted for not addressing this aspect.