# TotalEnergies advertisement banned for misleading environmental claims



An advertisement by TotalEnergies has been prohibited in the UK after the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) ruled it misleading regarding the company's environmental impact. The complaint, initiated by the campaign group Adfree Cities, centred on a paid X post from May that emphasised the company's renewable wind energy projects but neglected to mention that its core operations largely revolve around fossil fuels.

In response to the findings, TotalEnergies stated that including more comprehensive information about its overall business practices within the ad was unfeasible due to the restrictions of the medium. The company noted, however, that its website clearly outlines its involvement in oil and gas activities.

The ASA found that the advertisement, which concentrated on one of TotalEnergies’ lower-carbon initiatives, misrepresented the company’s broader business activities. According to TotalEnergies’ Sustainability and Climate 2024 report, a staggering 90% of its sales in 2023 were derived from petroleum and gas products. Furthermore, the report indicated that the company was responsible for 1.5% of global oil production, having directed 68.3% of its capital expenditure towards fossil fuel ventures compared to just 31.7% for lower-carbon activities.

The ASA concluded that the advertisement was misleading as it failed to convey the magnitude of TotalEnergies' business model aligned with traditional energy sources in contrast to its commitments to lower-carbon energy.

In addition to this ruling against TotalEnergies, the ASA dismissed 76 complaints against a Shell advertisement that was also alleged to present a misleading impression of the company’s environmental impact. The contested Shell TV ad featured an engineer walking past electric vehicle charging points and an offshore gas rig, showing a family kitchen before overlaying text that outlined the proportion of Shell's investments in both fossil fuels and lower-carbon technologies. The ASA determined that the ad clarified which portion of Shell’s investments was actually directed towards oil and gas, thereby not misleading consumers regarding the company's environmental footprint.

The ASA’s decisions are part of its ongoing Climate Change and Environment project, which aims to closely monitor green claims made in advertising. However, Adfree Cities expressed dissatisfaction with the ASA's resolution regarding the Shell advert, labelling it an endorsement of "greenwash." Veronica Wignall, co-director at Adfree Cities, articulated her concerns, stating, “Any advert that portrays Shell as prioritising the environment in any way is categorically misleading while the oil major continues to expand its fossil fuel operations, directly undermining a clean energy transition.”

This ruling highlights the complex landscape of corporate advertising in the energy sector, particularly as companies navigate the increasing scrutiny of their environmental impacts.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)