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## **Sensory analysis — Guidance on substantiation for sensory and consumer product claims**

*Analyse sensorielle — Recommandations pour la justification  
d'allégations relatives à des produits par des études sensorielles et/ou  
des études consommateurs*



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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 34, *Food products*, Subcommittee SC 12, *Sensory analysis*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

This document provides a framework to be considered when planning studies designed to support a sensory claim to consumers. The document specifies the principles to be followed, defines the key terms, provides a classification scheme with examples, and also provides case studies for different types of claims.

Product claims are designed to inform the audience of potential buyers or the general population of users about the product characteristics, differentiate the product from its competitors, and influence the buying decision.

Sensory claims in this document refer to the information and messages provided on a pack or label, in printed sales literature, or on television or digital media to communicate to the target users, or potential target users, information about the product's sensory attributes or the user's response to the experiences of using/consuming the product.

In general, countries have guidelines that provide information about claims substantiation testing (for a list of sources, see the Bibliography), or regulatory, legal or media-based requirements that govern advertising messages about products.

Given that the rapid development of new products has resulted in a crowded marketplace in some countries, from a company's standpoint there is more need for sensory claims to differentiate between products. At the same time, however, governments and regulatory bodies also look to protect consumers from misleading claims. Therefore, researchers are more frequently asked to design, conduct and interpret results of sensory claims studies.

This document is intended to guide those researchers to support sensory claims on a scientific basis. Using this guidance will allow sensory professionals to conduct research in a manner that provides competent and reliable evidence to support a claim.

Competent and reliable evidence provides proof that test design, data collection and data analyses are done using sound scientific principles and implemented in a technically competent manner. What constitutes competent and reliable evidence is established by the scientific community but will be debated by the legal community. Establishing that a test result can serve as competent and reliable evidence to support a claim can be done by:

- a) qualified persons knowledgeable in the practice of science-based sensory and consumer testing;
- b) those persons agreeing that best practices were followed.

In addition, good sensory practice means that the test data are analysed using sound statistical procedures. Product researchers designing such tests should be aware of, and follow, best practices in the sensory and consumer testing community.



# Sensory analysis — Guidance on substantiation for sensory and consumer product claims

## 1 Scope

This document gives guidelines for substantiating sensory claims on food and non-food products and their packaging for advertising consumer-packaged goods.

This document differentiates sensory claims from other types of claims. It provides classification and examples of the different types of sensory claims. It highlights special issues associated with testing to substantiate sensory claims. It includes case studies and references.

This document does not apply to:

- specific or detailed requirements for different test methods that are used to support sensory claims;
- factual claims regarding a product's country of origin, ingredients, processing and nutritional components;
- factual claims regarding the technical features of the product;
- claims regarding a product's health, medical or therapeutic benefits, physiological effects, structure or function benefits when consumed or applied to the human body;
- claims based on instrumental assessments of the attributes or performance of a product (i.e. instrumental assessments; in this case, test methods are used in which no human participant evaluates the product and/or no human participant provides a response to a product);
- claims about services (e.g. a house cleaning service, airline services, automobile services);
- claims about large/slow moving consumer goods (autos, refrigerators, stoves, etc.).

## 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 5492, *Sensory analysis — Vocabulary*

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 5492 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>