

Clean Creatives South Africa is a campaign of Fossil Free South Africa (NPO 149-064)

Address: Stoep Startup, 3 Tiverton Road, Plumstead 7800, Cape Town, South Africa

Web: www.fossilfreesa.org.za/cleancreatives | Email: stephen@fossilfreesa.org.za

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cape Town, October 4 – 41 Advertising and PR agencies working with fossil fuel companies in South Africa listed in new “SA F-list” report from Clean Creatives

LINK: [DOWNLOAD THE SA F-LIST 2023](#)

The local chapter of the international movement encouraging the advertising and PR industries to cut ties with fossil fuels, Clean Creatives, has today released a report titled “The SA F-list 2023: Fuelling A Perfect Storm” which lists 41 advertising and PR agencies working with fossil fuel companies in South Africa.

The report lists 52 contracts with fossil fuel companies based on publicly available information. Fossil fuel companies mentioned in the report include oil majors like BP, Shell and TotalEnergies, as well as petrochemicals giant, Sasol, and coal producers like Thungela and Exxaro.

The SA F-list shows that “there is still a major disconnect between our climate goals and actions,” says report author and Clean Creatives SA director, Stephen Horn. “While we still depend on fossil fuels, there is no case to be made for promoting them. It only slows down our urgently needed transition to clean energy.”

Intended as a transparency tool for the advertising industry, the report helps brands identify agencies which are helping fossil fuel companies undermine their own sustainability commitments. It’s also useful for climate conscious creatives to make informed decisions about where to work.

The report highlights increasing legal and regulatory risks around greenwashing – the practice where a company uses advertising and public messaging to appear more climate friendly and environmentally sustainable than it really is. For example, earlier this year, the UK advertising regulator banned a sustainability campaign by Shell for being “likely to mislead.”

As carbon emissions continue to rise, 2023 has broken temperature records and seen a vast number of extreme weather events across the world, from unprecedented wildfires to flooding, which killed more than 6,000 people in Libya.

Closer to home, a recent devastating storm in the Western Cape caused flooding, loss of life and more than R1.4 billion worth of damages to agriculture and infrastructure. Climate models predict these kinds of events will become more frequent and severe unless drastic cuts to greenhouse gas emissions are made this decade.

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The International Energy Agency has recently reiterated that no new fossil fuel development is possible to limit warming to 1.5 degrees. This development is also not necessary to meet global energy demand.

The report also features a number of case studies about the negative impacts of fossil fuel advertising.

A case study about TotalEnergies reveals extensive greenwashing by association with SANParks and the South African rugby captain, Siya Kolisi. Edelman Africa, Publicis Sport and Odd by Dsgn (The Odd Number) are listed as agencies working with TotalEnergies.

The oil major is currently building the world's longest heated crude oil pipeline in East Africa (EACOP), and just this week was [granted permission](#) by Environment Minister Barbara Creecy to drill for more oil and gas off South Africa's west coast.

Zaki Mamdoo, coordinator at the #StopEACOP Campaign said:

“TotalEnergies' greenwashing campaign is a smokescreen designed to divert attention from the harm they cause, especially toward African communities who bear the brunt of their destructive practices. The advertising and PR companies commissioned by TotalEnergies are accessories to this catastrophe as they perpetuate the narrative of a 'clean' company, even as it continues to exploit and harm vulnerable communities across Africa. While climate activists, like those working on the StopEACOP Campaign, can find themselves being overshadowed and drowned out by the money and influence of advertising and PR campaigns working for TotalEnergies - the hard hitting realities of climate collapse simply cannot be swept under the rug any longer.”

The report follows the release of the global Clean Creatives F-list report listing 294 agencies globally working for fossil fuels last month (available at cleancreatives.org/f-list).

As Loeries Creative Week gets underway in Cape Town, South Africa, Clean Creatives SA has launched [a petition](#) demanding the awards show ban entries for creative work undertaken for fossil fuel companies. Despite the immense health and climate risks of fossil fuels, the report shows how advertising campaigns for the industry continue to win awards.

In a positive development, earlier this year, leading South African resource for the advertising industry, IDIDTHAT.co, [announced](#) it would no longer award its “Best in Craft” award to fossil fuel work.

In a sign of growing momentum for the Clean Creatives movement, nearly 800 agencies and close to 2,000 individuals around the world have taken the Clean Creatives pledge declining future contracts with fossil fuel companies. 35 agencies made the commitment in South Africa, and more than 140 individual creatives.

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On Human Rights Day, 22 leading civil society and environmental organisations asked South Africa’s advertising and PR industry to stop working with fossil fuel companies in an [open letter](#).

“South African creatives are among the best in the world, and we shouldn’t be “creating for those who destroy” as one of the student entries to our recent [Creative Cleanup challenge](#) put it,” Horn said. “With agencies in town for a well-deserved celebration of their hard work at the Loeries, this is undoubtedly not the recognition they’re looking for. And the best way to avoid it going forward is to sign the Clean Creatives pledge.”

/ENDS

Links:

- [Download the SA F-list 2023 Full Report](#)
- [Loeries Fossil Ad Ban Petition](#)
- [Clean Creatives SA Website & Pledge](#)

About Clean Creatives South Africa:

Clean Creatives SA, inspired by and in partnership with Clean Creatives in the US, is bringing together SA advertising and PR agencies, their employees, and industry clients, to address the industry’s work with the fossil fuels that are the principal cause of climate breakdown. The local chapter of the movement is a campaign of Fossil Free South Africa.

For further media enquiries or interview requests please contact:

Stephen Horn, Clean Creatives SA country director

Email: stephen@fossilfreesa.org.za

Cell/WhatsApp: +27 (072) 621-0457

