

Beginners guide

Toolkit





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Introduction to carbon footprinting

The need to act on climate change has never been more pressing. We know that climate change will have far reaching impacts on business, society and natural ecosystems – from rising temperatures to resource shortage and biodiversity loss.

The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report has demonstrated the urgent need for carbon emission reductions across all sectors if humanity is to achieve the targets of the Paris Agreement. Many countries, including the UK, have made legal pledges to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. But to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, half of those emissions cuts must come by 2030.

The price of freely emitting carbon is rising, both monetarily and socially. Businesses are major contributors to global emissions, but are also the drivers of innovation that can help cut carbon footprints. This means that business has a big role to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

As consumers, clients, supply chains and talent all grow increasingly aware of the impact of climate change, carbon footprinting and reduction will help elevate a business' brand and marketability.



Action on the *CLIMATE* crisis and sustainability generally have never been more *CRITICAL*. Organisations can lead the way to a brighter future; one that balances our economic, environmental, and social impacts. Businesses that do this can create total value, improve agility and enable our transition to zero carbon and a regenerative economy.



Steve Malkin

Founder and CEO Planet Mark

Dr. Rima Trofimovaite

Head of Certification,
Planet Mark

Why calculate your carbon footprint?

In a decade of climate action, businesses are increasingly expected to know and understand their impact on the planet. Large organisations are required to publicly disclose emissions data for regulatory schemes such as Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR), the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), Climate Change Agreements (CCAs), ESOS, EPCs, and industry-specific targets.

For SMEs, carbon footprinting may be a new and daunting practice. However, the benefits of quantifying and reducing an organisations carbon footprint have never been greater.

Calculating a carbon footprint is a cornerstone of any successful sustainability policy and is the first step to continued reduction in emissions.

Knowledge of carbon emissions is essential to understanding the environmental consequences of business operations and being able to prioritise efforts to cut carbon most effectively. A carbon footprint is also one of the most widely recognised symbols of sustainable progress, easily communicated and understood across every industry.



There is also an ever-growing business case for reporting on carbon emissions:

Attract and retain talent

Nearly 40% of millennials have chosen a particular job because of their employers stance on sustainability.

Gain competitive advantage

Studies show that 66% of consumers would spend more for a product if it came from a sustainable brand.

Increase cost savings

A well thought out sustainability strategy can reduce operating costs by as much as 60%.

Add brand value

By 2025, 75% of the UK workforce will be millennials, who care deeply about contributing to society and the environment.



The business benefits, explained

As climate change climbs news agendas across the world, businesses can also benefit from demonstrating their carbon footprint measurement and reductions.

Ethical consumption has hit record highs in recent years, with over half of people permanently changing their habits to promote ethical consumption after Covid-19. Focusing on carbon footprinting is an effective way to demonstrate to your customers and supply chain that tangible environmental action is taking place.

Carbon footprinting also has benefits for the internal relationships of your business. Emissions measurement and reduction is a great way to create a culture of employee engagement and bring everyone in your business on your sustainability journey.



In a survey of 2,000 UK office workers in 2020, 72% of respondents said they were concerned about environmental ethics, and 65% said that they were more likely to work for a company with strong environmental policies.

Evidence suggests businesses with strong employee engagement are shown to provide post higher profits, have reduced absenteeism and better customer service. An empowered and engaged team is also more likely to provide better data and insights into cutting emissions.



What is a carbon footprint?

The first step to reducing your carbon footprint is to be able to measure it. A carbon footprint is the total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions caused directly, or indirectly, by an individual, business or organisation, item or event.

This is typically expressed as a carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent. The CO₂ equivalent (CO₂e) factors in the following six GHG emissions:

- Carbon dioxide (CO₂)

- Methane (CH₄)

- Nitrous oxide (N₂O)

- Per fluorocarbons (PFCs)

- Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)

- Sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆)



When measuring a carbon footprint with Planet Mark, these GHG emissions are compiled into one easily measured and tracked Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e). This makes the footprint easier to measure, reduce, and communicate.

Planet Mark categories of carbon measurement



Building



Water



Travel



Procurement



Waste



Emissions Scopes

The most widely accepted approach is to categorise emissions releasing activities into three groups known as Scopes.

Scopes help separate emissions into different action areas for a business to create a manageable approach to emissions reduction.

Once you know which Scopes your activity falls under, you need to collect data on the activities.

This will include electricity use and fuel from bills, invoices and receipts, vehicle mileage, and supplier information. Information should be collected for a 12-month period to allow for annual variations.

Scope 1 | Direct GHG emissions from owned or leased assets. This will include fuel burned on-site, gas, fleet (petrol and diesel) and emissions from manufacturing processes.

Scope 2 | Indirect GHG emissions. This will include emissions from purchased electricity and heat to power business premises.

Scope 3 | All other Indirect GHG Emissions from non-owned or controlled sources. This can include supply chain emissions, such as products linked to deforestation, or business travel and emissions associated with waste disposal.



Setting the foundations for net zero.

Whether you're a corporate giant or a sole trader, the first stage of your net zero journey should involve calculating your current emissions. Our Zero Carbon Solutions will demystify the subject of net zero carbon emissions and will support your business to reach it.



How to COLLECT your data

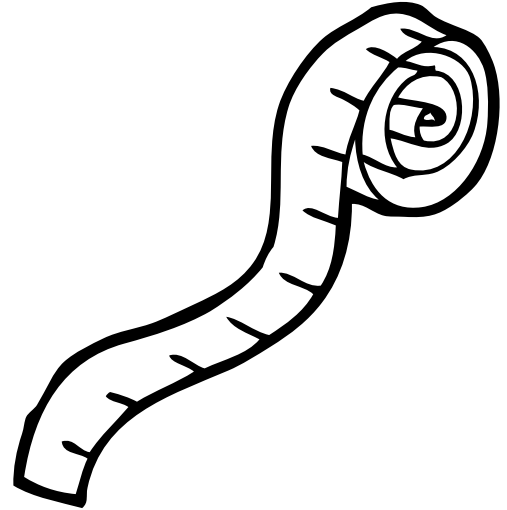
Making sure your business collects data in the right way is critical to the success of your sustainability policy.

While methodologies should be kept up to date with current best practices, a solid foundation of measurement principles will help create consistency and accuracy in all carbon footprinting activities.

You will first need to identify which parts of your organisation you need to collect data on. This will depend on whether you own the organisation in its entirety, how many sites you operate from, and defining the boundaries of your operations. For Scope 2 and 3 emissions, this will also require supply chain engagement to collect the data. The boundaries of a modern business can become complex, but it is important to choose realistic and practical boundaries that will allow for the collection of reliable and complete data. Once you've established which parts of your organisation you need to collect data on, you then need to work out which activities you engage in are responsible for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Data is central to successful footprinting. For office-based emissions, smart metering and sub-metering will provide granular data on resource use that can help drive sustainable change in your electricity, gas and water use.

For other types of emissions, such as business and freight travel, home working emissions, or waste disposal, gathering data through employee surveys, supplier purchases, or mileage data should start as soon as possible.

It is recommended that 12 months of data should be collected before establishing a carbon footprint, as this accommodates for seasonal changes in business activity. This is a general principle, and extraneous factors, such as an office relocation, may dramatically change resource use in a given time period – this should also be factored into present and project carbon emissions.



How Planet Mark supports *DATA* collection



Planet Mark recommends reporting your carbon footprint as a gross figure in tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions equivalent (CO₂e).

Alongside the data, it is important to be transparent by providing written explanations to explain how you've calculated your figures and provide context for the data for your stakeholders.

At Planet Mark, we make sure to measure your carbon footprint data in absolute and per employee terms. This helps businesses measure their footprint and reductions in relative terms compared to their annual growth

Once data has been collected for the defined period, it is time to share the results. Many of the soft benefits in carbon footprinting are through open communication, so sharing results to increase the transparency of a business' carbon reduction efforts will help engage stakeholders and customers.

There are a number of ways to report your carbon footprint in the public domain. Some companies do so as part of their annual report. Others choose to share results through a separate corporate responsibility or sustainability report.

Raw data can also be shared on a company's website or directly to stakeholders. It is good practice to have your emissions data externally verified in order to provide stakeholder confidence in the accuracy and completeness of your reporting. At Planet Mark, external verification is combined with a suite of tools and expert advice to help reinforce data validity and provide tips for future carbon footprint reductions.

Importance of setting a science based reduction target

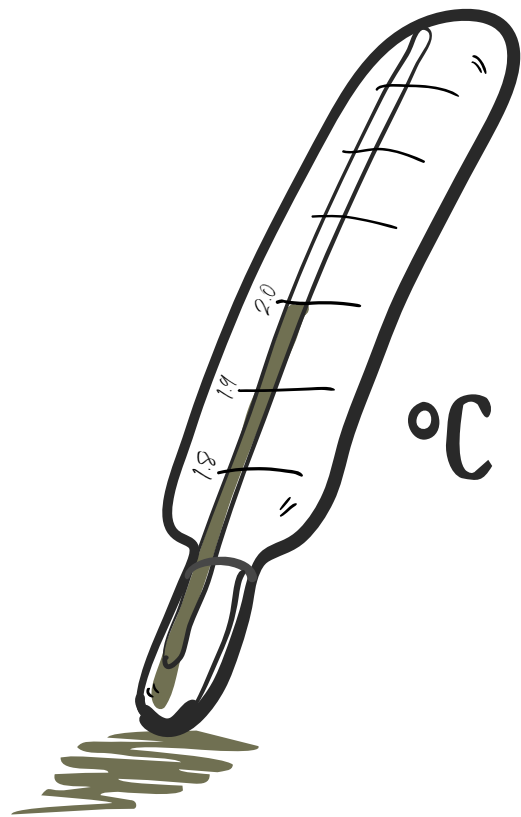
Science-based targets provide companies with a clearly-defined path to reduce emissions in line with the Paris Agreement goals.

The Paris Agreement, a binding agreement adopted by 196 Parties at COP 21 in Paris, brings all nations into a common cause - limiting global warming to well-below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C.

While many businesses have the tools and willpower to make carbon reduction commitments, and take action on those commitments, many of these targets are not connected to climate science. Science-based targets are a way for business to demonstrate leadership in their industry, stay at the forefront of social responsibility and demonstrate to your stakeholders that your business is serious about climate action.

Want to find out more?

Click [here](#) to visit the Planet Mark glossary.



Planet Mark three-step process:

At Planet Mark, we specialise in carbon footprinting, stakeholder engagement, communications and strategy.

Our sustainability certification is awarded to businesses, buildings and projects that are demonstrating a commitment to improve their carbon footprint year on year. Our specialist Certification Team provides independent, impartial advice and will support you with your measuring and reporting.

Sustainability is a complex issue but Planet Mark wants to support businesses and organisations in understanding their own impact on the environment and how they can minimise it. Our certification involves a robust three-step process that will help businesses to accelerate their actions, excite their employees and amplify their voice.

First, we measure your carbon and social data with rigour so you can report your progress with confidence and authenticity. We can also measure your contributions to society by putting a financial value on the impact of your social activities.

Second, we help engage staff to unlock their passion and drive change. At Planet Mark, we believe collective action drives the most change, so we equip members with the tools to bring all of your business' stakeholders on your sustainability journey.

Finally, we give businesses the tools to communicate progress and build a trusted brand. Through the internationally recognised symbol of Planet Mark, a business becomes transparent about their sustainable commitments and progress.

1. Measure



We measure your carbon and social data with rigour so you can report your progress with confidence and authenticity.

2. Engage



Employees are the key to achieving your sustainability goals. We help you engage your staff to unlock their passion and drive change.

3. Communicate



We give you the tools to communicate your progress and offer reciprocal promotion through our own channels.



Action on the climate crisis and sustainability generally have never been more critical. Organisations can lead the way to a brighter future; one that balances our economic, environmental, and social impacts. Businesses that do this can create total value, improve agility and enable our transition to zero carbon and a regenerative economy. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. How is your organisation taking action and contributing?

By working with Planet Mark, you will be taking direct action and delivering positive impacts to address the most pressing global challenges of our time. You will also be unlocking immediate and far-reaching business benefits by increasing profitability and brand value.

Our certification generates outstanding results. It has helped over 800 businesses across the world to measure their impact, engage their stakeholders and communicate their results. We hope you will join our movement for change in this crucial Decade of Action.

CEO Statement

Steve Malkin
 Founder and CEO
 Planet Mark

Latest member results.



Average annual carbon reduction*.

Out of the members all that achieved an absolute reduction.



Average annual carbon reduction per employee*.

Out of the members that achieved a per employee reduction.



Success rate for members achieving renewal.

Your first steps to CHANGE

**Join our movement for
change in this crucial
Decade of Action**

0203 751 8108
info@planetmark.com
@theplanetmark

