



Association
of Sustainable
Business

Carbon Reduction Plan



Association
of Sustainable
Business

INDEX

1. Understanding Your Business's Greenhouse Gas Emissions
2. The Astounding Supply Journey
3. Reducing Your Emissions
4. Sustainable Purchases
5. **Carbon** Offsetting
6. Sharing your **Green** Credentials with Customers, Suppliers and Staff
7. Making **Green** Profitable



Association
of Sustainable
Business

Understanding Your Business's Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Today, many companies are seeking to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. When it comes to calculating these, you first need to understand the different sources they come from.

In business, one of the main ways companies' greenhouse gas emissions are measured is to look at them across three different 'scopes'.

Why are there three 'Scopes' of emissions?

In order to take action to reduce emissions, you first need to understand where they originate from within your business.

The three scopes categorise the different kinds of emissions your company creates in its own operations and in the wider chain of your suppliers and customers.

It's unclear why they are called 'scopes', rather than 'types' or 'sources', but the term comes directly from the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, which is the world's most widely used greenhouse gas accounting standard.

Definitions of scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions

In a nutshell, scopes 1 and 2 are those emissions that are created, owned and controlled by your business, whereas scope 3 emissions are a consequence of your business activities, that occur from sources not owned or controlled by you – buying goods for resale, for example.

Scope 1 emissions: Fuels you Burn

Scope 1 covers emissions from sources that your business owns or controls directly.

For SME's these include the gas you use to heat or cool premises and the fuel you may use in vehicles in the form of the petrol and diesel you buy. Basically, fuel you 'burn'.



Association
of Sustainable
Business

Most SME's have the source data needed to convert these direct purchases of gas, petrol and diesel into a value that can then be used to convert them into tonnes of Greenhouse Gases which have been emitted.

This data includes gas bills which show the energy used in KWH's and the litres of fuel used by, or cost thereof, for your business vehicles across a given financial year.

Scope 2 emissions: Energy you Buy

Scope 2 are indirect GHG emissions from the purchase of electricity used in your business for heating and cooling premises, and for using equipment; equipment being anything from heavy plant and machinery to small tools, to office computers, printers, fridges, kettles and microwave ovens etc. Essentially, the power you buy.

Your business has the electricity bills showing the KWH's used which allows this data to be converted into the amount of Greenhouse Gases released.

Scope 3 emissions: Everything Beyond what you Burn or Buy

Scope 3 emissions are far more complex and are indirectly associated with your business, but are not from your business itself, but rather those that you are indirectly linked to when you buy and sell to and from your customers and suppliers, over which you have no control.

These includes the goods and services you purchase and may resell, often including transportation by third parties to and from your place of business.

For many businesses, especially those that buy and sell goods, Scope 3 can be the largest GHG category and often accounts for 70% - 95% of your carbon footprint!

Suppliers: The emissions linked to everything you buy, consume or sell, each product having its own astounding journey and carbon footprint, before it reaches you.

Customers: The ongoing carbon footprint of the goods you sell are also out of your control, as you can't know how customers will use them / how often / how efficiently, or later if and how they will recycle them, or their impact on emissions in doing so.



Association
of Sustainable
Business

The Astounding Supply Journey

Everything you buy or consumed, has an astonishing journey through a highly complex supply chain, and has a carbon footprint of its own before reaching you.

Let's ask a simple question, regarding something most businesses use, then try to understand the complex supply chain and carbon footprint behind it.

Do you use paper in your business?

If so, unless recycled, your paper starts its journey as a mature tree having to be cut down, say in Africa, transported to a processing plant, before the refined product is driven to a port, crosses an ocean, transported to a paper manufacturer, processed into paper, packaged, and then transported to a retailer. This is all before you drive to the store to purchase it, or make your purchase online, having the paper transported yet again to your premises.

All stages have a carbon footprint Scope 3 aims to quantify, but as you're about to see, this is almost impossible to do in our opinion.

Let's dive deeper

Diving deeper, the logger had to travel to the forest in a vehicle with chainsaws or other cutting equipment. Both the vehicle and chain saw require fuel, but they also had to be produced themselves, raw materials mined for this purpose, heavy manufacturing took place to produce them, and vehicle and machine parts crossed vast distances for assembly. Factories had to be constructed, which used energy to produce the goods, and workers had to travel to the factory to work.

After being cut down, the timber then has to be transported to the processing plant, by heavy vehicle, all of which uses yet more fuel, and the emissions chain continues.

The plant that the timber arrives at had to be built with an equal depth emissions chain, and now releases greenhouse gases on a daily basis in its operation.

Once processed at the plant, another lorry transports the refined product to the port, using fuel, and again the lorry had to be manufactured with an accompanying emissions chain.



Association
of Sustainable
Business

The port is enormous and was constructed using a vast amount of resources (with a hugely complex supply chains to build it) and now releases emissions of its own as it operates 24/7, with workers also commuting to and from on a daily basis.

Our processed timber is then placed into a large shipping container which is loaded onto a cargo ship. The large metal shipping container had to be produced, having the same depth of emissions chain – mining, transport, manufacturing, factories, workers etc.

The huge cargo ship itself cost mammoth amounts of money, resources, mining extraction, manufacturing, using energy and producing emissions, with perhaps anywhere between 20,000 - 50,000 tonnes of processed steel to make it, depending on its size.

Then, to make the long journey by sea, nearly all cargo ships use diesel combustion engines to turn the propellers, plus diesel generators are powering the ships on-board lights, amenities and communications equipment.

Worst still, many vessels still burn heavy bunker fuel, a viscous, carbon-intensive petroleum product that's left over from the crude oil refining process. Highly polluting, it releases high levels of sulphur, nitrogen and particulate matter into the atmosphere as it navigates the ocean.

After a long, energy intensive journey, our cargo ship arrives at its port destination, which of course was also built with vast usage of resources, equipment and transportation, and now itself produces daily emissions.

Our container is lifted off the ship by heavy crane before being transported by another lorry to a factory where it will be made into paper. The crane, lorry and factory all took a similar emission chains to build, and all release their own daily emissions now as they operate.

Our paper is then manufactured, using energy, before being packaged up and packed into boxes, before transported by lorry, to a shop or warehouse, all of which have a complex supply and emissions chain.

Finally, we realised we require some office paper, so either travel to the local shop, or order some online, both of which use transport vehicles, unless we walk, with complex carbon footprints, while burning yet more fossil fuels to travel.



Association
of Sustainable
Business

So what on Earth was our scope 3 emissions?

So what was the scope 3 carbon footprint of our 500 sheets of paper, or the other products and services you buy and sell in running your business?

There are numerous online calculators on the internet that are a useful guide, but in almost all cases they aren't accurate enough in calculating your carbon footprint when you're looking to achieve Carbon Neutral, Climate Positive or Net Zero status, simply because of the complexities you've just seen.

To overcome these complexities, Greenhouse Gas Protocol Corporate Reporting and Accounting Standards have been developed, which allocate CO₂ conversions factors to all products and services, so a business's carbon footprint can be accurately measured.

Our expert Carbon Accountants can therefore establish your business carbon footprint using The Greenhouse Gas Protocol Corporate Reporting and Accounting Standards and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) annual UK Government Conversion Factors for Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reporting, which are the most widely used and globally recognised standards.

Sustainable Choices

We hope you now better visualise the unfathomable supply journey complexity for everything your business buys and sells, from your morning cup of coffee which may have started its journey in Brazil, to the products you sell, requiring a myriad of components from a vast array of worldwide origins.

The takeaway from this is that smaller microbusinesses and SME's with low carbon emissions shouldn't get hung up on scope 3, and instead concentrate their efforts on cutting scope 1 and 2 emissions wherever practical, whilst cutting waste and making more sustainable and efficient business purchasing choices when they arise, to help reduce scope 3.

Simple actions like going paperless, using recycled paper or products, and choosing environmentally conscious supplies of products and services can make a really big difference to the future carbon footprint of your business.



Association
of Sustainable
Business

Reducing Your Emissions

Now that you have a better understanding of your businesses CO2 emissions, let's look at simple ways to reduce them where practical.

Reduce your consumption

Your energy consumption, waste, water usage and travel all contribute to the carbon footprint of your business. Small changes can be taken to reduce them, which in turn reduces your costs and increases your profits.

Energy

With soaring energy costs, reducing your energy usage is both financially and environmentally beneficial. Consider the following:

- Switch off lights when natural light is sufficient and when you leave a room.
- Windows can be wasteful, especially in older buildings. Plug gaps or consider replacing them with double glazing.
- Minimise plug loads.
- Switch off appliances and equipment at the plug when not in use. A computer turned off uses at least 65% energy than one left on standby.
- Turn down the heating or air con by a couple of degrees if practical.
- Close doors to retain heat or cool.
- Use energy efficient light bulbs.
- Switch to green tariff energy with your supplier, which sees that some, or all of your electricity includes some purchased from renewable energy supplies such as wind and solar etc.
- Take the stairs instead of lifts when possible. It's great for your fitness and health too!
- Go digital to save money on paper and energy on printing.
- Don't boil more water than you need when making drinks and if you need to replace appliances such as kettles and fridges, consider buying energy saving ones.



Association
of Sustainable
Business

Travel

Business travel is essential, but reducing it can also be a fantastic opportunity for your business to cut its emissions and save money.

- Is working from home a practical option for your business or staff?
- Can you better plan journeys or change working hours and travel times, so you and your staff avoid busy peak times? Apart from reducing the stress of sitting in traffic, this saves time as well as on fuel costs and emissions.
- Avoid unnecessary journeys. They cost time, money and emissions.
- Shop for supplies locally or group deliveries if ordering online.
- If practical, consider walking or riding a bike to work if the distance is reasonable. This saves money, emissions, and has a great impact your wellbeing too.
- Is using public transport a viable alternative to driving?
- Consider carpooling opportunities within your business. Four people to one car is far more fuel efficient than everyone driving separately.
- Consider online meetings as an alternative to in person meetings.
- When replacing your vehicle(s) buy low emission and second-hand rather than new. Buying new means more vehicle production by manufactures.
- Hybrid and electric cars are very popular now, but the ecological cost of producing them (mining raw materials such as lithium for batteries etc) and the future infrastructure that will be needed to be rolled out to charge them, plus the drain on the national grid, does not make them carbon free.

Waste

Put simply, less waste within your business means a smaller carbon footprint, which in turn will cut costs and increase your profits. It also means less pressure on landfill space and a reduced impact on biodiversity.

The waste 'basics' are as follows:

- **Prevention** The best way of reducing waste is to stop it happening in the first place. Taking your business paperless is a great example of saving resources and money.



- Other examples would be replacing bottled water by buying a water filter, or by working with your suppliers to remove or reduce unnecessary packaging.
- **Reuse** The next step is to try and reuse the things you currently throw away. Perhaps you could print on two sides of paper, instead of one?
- **Recycle** The third step is to look at anything that is currently being thrown away that could instead be recycled. This could be anything from printer cartridges, to batteries, to old uniforms and workwear.
- **Recovery** Can any of your waste be used by others to generate a new product? An old computer for example could be brought back to life with a new hard drive for example, rather than scrapping and replacing it completely at higher cost.
- **Disposal** The final step is disposal. Some waste will always have to be thrown away, disposed of, or incinerated. Minimising this is key to cutting your carbon footprint when it comes to waste.

Water

For larger businesses (and sometimes SME's) reducing water consumption is very important. Reducing water usage will reduce your bills too.

- Don't leave taps running.
- Repair or replace leaky taps. A leaking tap can waste up to 20 litres of water per day.
- Consider replacing taps with spray taps, which reduces the volume of water leaving the tap without reducing the taps pressure or quality.
- Consider switching to dual-flush toilets, which can potentially save thousands of litres of water a year, and big financial savings.
- If your business has gardens to water, consider rain harvesting.

Food Sustainability

If your business is involved with the food industry, be it a café, restaurant, take-away, or shop etc. then interest in food sustainability is essential to reduce your carbon footprint.

Remember, there is a growing demand for sustainable and organic food, so big opportunities in this area that could help increase your sales and profits.



Association
of Sustainable
Business

Sustainable food is food which is safe and healthy, produced without hazardous chemicals or pesticides and non-essential antibiotics or growth enhancers. It means producing food in a way that helps protect the environment, makes efficient use of natural resources, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

- Buy locally produced food from nearby shops, local farmers, and farmers markets. This not only supports your local community and economy, but enhances the product you are selling, whilst also cutting down on emissions from 'food miles' (transportation). Eating a locally grown apple for example, is far better for the environment than eating one that's travelled vast distances from places like Africa.
- Purchase Fairtrade produce, ensuring farmers around the world are paid a fair price for their crops, whilst working in better conditions. While buying locally is better, your business is still acting in a more sustainable way when it opts for Fairtrade, compared to other alternatives.
- Buy free range meat and eggs, for health, environmental and ethical reasons.
- Use foods like fruit and vegetables that are in season. Seasonal foods haven't been artificially ripened and are less likely to have come from overseas.
- Look at ways of reducing food waste where possible.
- Reduce the amount of plastics and packaging you use when both buying and selling. Plastic is very energy intensive to produce and recycle.
- Grow your own herbs, fruit and vegetables. Customers love to see indoor herbs growing or an outdoor garden growing produce you sell.

Sustainable Purchasing

Every business spends money on goods and services. We saw the incredibly complex supply chain earlier when following the journey of our ream of printer paper, and these complexities exist within every buying decision you make, yet are out of your control.

What is within your control is what you buy, where you purchase it from, how efficiently you use it and who you do business with.

You can therefore reduce your carbon footprint and help the environment directly through your business purchasing decisions by choosing sustainable products where practical and affordable.



Association
of Sustainable
Business

Sustainable products generally:

- Use fewer natural resources including less packaging.
- Contain fewer chemicals, toxins and hazardous materials.
- Have a longer lifespan.
- Are reusable or recycled upon disposal.
- Generate less waste at the end of their lifespan.

Dealing with suppliers who are actively reducing or offsetting their carbon emissions, buying Fairtrade, buying 'green' products and services, purchasing locally, using green or clean energy, buying energy efficient products and generally dealing with likeminded businesses should also part of an SME's sustainable procurement mindset, and can be developed into a formal policy.

Buying recycled paper, used for stationery for example, can be a simple but beneficial shift most businesses can easily commit to.

Sustainable purchasing is not just about reducing the environmental effects of your purchasing decisions. It can also increase the loyalty of employees and customers alike, as society becomes increasingly environmentally conscious.

Combining the ways you can reduce your emissions with sustainable decision making and purchasing, can help an SME on average reduce their emission output by between 10%-20%.

Recommending your supplies or business customers join our Association is a simple way to help them start their own journey towards Net Zero.



Association
of Sustainable
Business

Carbon Offsetting

Carbon offsetting is like Crowd Funding for the Planet

You now have a better understanding of your businesses carbon emissions, may have started to calculate what those emissions are, have looked at ways you can reduce your emissions (whilst saving money) and have considered sustainable purchasing practices for the future.

The Next Steps

Scientists say that increased Greenhouse Gas emissions, measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, are the biggest cause of Global Warming on the Planet.

In the UK, businesses account for over 85% of our country's emissions, making corporate action vital in the fight against climate change.

After reducing your business emissions as much as practical, you are left with a balance of unavoidable emissions which can be offset with further tree planting, forest preservation and carbon offsetting, which funds projects that remove CO₂ from the atmosphere.

Our Association operates three powerful accreditation schemes, exclusive to our members, which have been specially designed to help the planet whilst **Making Green Profitable**.

CERTIFIED GREEN™

Superbly simple and uniquely creative in its design, our bespoke service is for members of all sizes who want us to make the products or services they sell become environmentally friendly by accrediting them **CERTIFIED GREEN™**

How it Works:

We match your business and marketing needs with our environmental projects of tree planting, fruit tree planting, forest preservation and / or internationally recognised carbon offsetting projects, to certify them **Green**.



Association
of Sustainable
Business

Products: From a car, to a meal, to double glazing installation, to a tin of paint to anything physical you sell, we can Certify them **Green** by linking them to our exciting environmental projects.

Example: We preserve a forest tree for every meal sold / we plant 40 trees for each car we sell or offset 1 tonne of Carbon Dioxide for every kitchen we fit.

Services: From an insurance policy, to a haircut, to a funeral plan, to a writing a will, to any service you provide, we can Certify them **Green**

Example: We plant a forest tree for every insurance policy or will we write.

Get imaginative with your marketing and we'll turn your ideas **Green** and help you boost sales.

We can also CERTIFIED GREEN™

- Your business generally
- Your premises – Pub / Restaurant / Hotel / Shop etc
- Your vehicle(s) / fleet
- Your events
- Your business travel

Talk to our team to see how we can **Supercharge** your sales and make your membership pay for itself many times over.

Carbon Neutral Accreditation

We offer the only simplified small business **Carbon** Neutral accreditation scheme in the UK, aimed directly at helping micro businesses and SME's with low CO2 emissions including small businesses with under 15-tonnes, to become certified carbon neutral.





Association
of Sustainable
Business

Carbon neutrality is achieved when a business offsets its unavoidable carbon footprint with international verified carbon credits. The basic process is we Calculate, Offset and Certify.

Our expert team calculate your business carbon footprint, measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, from your data for the previous financial year, across the different scopes 1,2 and 3, depending on the level you apply for, as below.

We then offset your **Carbon Footprint** with a basket of high quality, internationally audited and verified Carbon Credits in projects around the world to reverse your emissions.

We can certify SME's **Carbon Neutral** within days, not weeks, and typically at savings of £1,000 compare to 'for profit' companies. Certification allows you to display our labelling on your stationery, website, marketing material etc, to help you win more business.

We offer four levels of accreditation depending on your business size and emissions.

BRONZE

Open to: All owner-operated micro SME's with less than £150,000 turnover.

Accreditation with up to 15-tonne carbon offset £495
Per tonne offset thereafter £10

SILVER

Open to: All member SME's with up to 10 staff.

Accreditation with up to 25-tonne carbon offset £695
Per tonne offset thereafter £10

GOLD

Open to: All members with 11 – 50 staff.

Accreditation with up to 50-ton carbon offset £895
Per tonne offset thereafter £10



Association
of Sustainable
Business

PLATINUM

Open to: Members with over 50 staff.

Price based on tonnage volume and project basket £Enquire

Bronze and Silver covers all business scope 1 & 2 CO2 emissions (meaning all direct and indirect emissions from the use of purchased fuel for vehicles – petrol, diesel, electricity, and for gas and electricity for heating and cooling of premises.

Gold covers all scope 1 & 2 as above, plus part of scope 3.

Platinum: We can accredit larger business members, but they will have likely already undertaken an independent Carbon Audit or Carbon Footprint Assessment, have a robust carbon reduction plan in place and understand their full carbon footprint across scope 1,2 and 3.

In all cases you will need to have been trading for at least 12-months to have the baseline data for accreditation purposes. If you have not been trading for 12-months, please apply for **CERTIFIED GREEN™** accreditation instead.

Climate Positive Accreditation

Beyond **Carbon** Neutral is our highest accreditation, **Climate** Positive.

Open to: Larger members with strong carbon reduction plans in place.





Association
of Sustainable
Business

Climate Positive is achieved when a business takes strong steps to reduce its carbon footprint year on year, and then offsets more greenhouse gases than they emits, which is hugely beneficial to the planet and environmentally impactful!

With a robust carbon reduction plan in place, YOUR business can become certified '**Climate** Positive' when you offset at least 120% of your full carbon footprint across scopes 1, 2 and 3 with us.

Price based on tonnage volume and project basket £Enquire



Association
of Sustainable
Business

Sharing your Green Credentials with Customers, Suppliers and Staff

We strongly encourage all members to monetise their membership by displaying their **Green** credentials to generate more sales and profits, whilst highlighting the fight against climate change.

Recent surveys show making your business **Green** is not only good for the planet, but can benefit your business too.

9/10 customers want businesses to do more to protect the environment.

75% of customers expect businesses to support sustainability.

88% of customers won't buy if they consider a business irresponsible.

68% of customers are willing to pay more for sustainability.

On joining you received a certificate you can display in your premises confirming the trees you have planted and forests trees you have preserved, along with the CO2 offset we made your behalf when you joined us.

You can also use our name and logo on your stationery, business cards, quotes, website and marketing material, helping you WIN more business whilst saving the planet.



Let your customers, suppliers and staff know you take corporate responsibility and sustainability seriously.



Association
of Sustainable
Business

Making **Green** Profitable

To turn Britain **Green**, we know we have to make it profitable for the army of small businesses that make up the backbone of our vibrant and dynamic economy.

Membership and accreditation form an integral part of our drive to make **Green** profitable, by helping members **Supercharge** their sales and win more business.

In addition, we also offer referral and second income opportunities to members and their contacts.

Referrals

Make referring your contacts and clients to us part of your overall business strategy to help fight climate change and help us turn Business **Green**. In return we pay a 20% commission for everyone who signs up as a member with us.

Through their membership you are also helping to plant and preserve many more forest trees, whilst offsetting more CO2 emissions as well.

Self-employed opportunities

Want to make a real difference and help businesses in your area go **Green** as they fight climate change?

Do you, or someone you know, want to earn extra cash or to achieve financial freedom and flexibility? If you're sales oriented, driven, hard-working and want to be your own boss we want to hear from you.

Work your own hours, full or part time, earning uncapped commission as a Membership Advisor in your area and make a real difference to local businesses and the planet.

Email Kevin@AOSB.org for more information or call **0151 272 0315**: