

How to measure your carbon footprint

A **carbon footprint** is a measure of the total greenhouse gases emitted directly and indirectly by your business over one year, measured in tonnes of CO2 equivalent (tCO2e)*.

*A carbon dioxide equivalent, or CO2 equivalent, is a metric measure used to compare the emissions from various greenhouse gases.



Gathering and reviewing your data will help you:

- understand your impacts and where to focus attention
- identify opportunities to reduce emissions and save money
- establish a baseline, set targets and track progress
- with communications, engagement and awareness-raising.

Activity data x carbon emission factor = greenhouse gas emissions

*Carbon emissions factor – a numerical value that represents the amount of greenhouse gases emitted as a result of a specific activity. Current emission factors are freely available [via the Government's website](#).

Step by step

1. Set your boundary

If you're measuring your carbon emissions for the first time, beginning with scope 1 and 2 emissions is a good start. **See below for an explanation on scopes.**



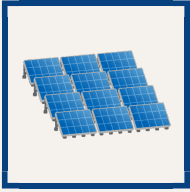
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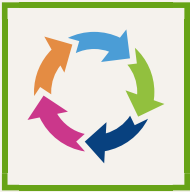
Scope 1

Emissions from sources you control or own, such as boilers or your fleet. Reducing scope 1 can be relatively straightforward, e.g. optimising your energy use and taking up renewable solutions.



Scope 2

Emissions from the energy you purchase, such as electricity and heating. You can reduce these by implementing energy efficiency measures and buying renewable energy.



Scope 3

Emissions from up and down your value chain – everything from business travel to the end of life treatment of your products. These are often harder to measure and reduce as it involves working collaboratively with your suppliers, employees and customers.

2. Collate your data

Choose a reporting period – this should be a 12 month period (it can be useful to align this with your financial year but you can choose any 12 month period). Track the data in a spreadsheet, separating these out into the different scopes.



- Analyse your gas and electricity usage via your smart meter readings or your utility bills. [Low Carbon Hub](#) can provide you with an energy assessment and a bespoke report, outlining improvements your organisation can make.
- For fleet data (measured in litres of fuel), the fuel and mileage should be recorded via telematics or fuel cards/fuel receipts.
- If you rent your property, you may need to work with your landlord to obtain the data you need.



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3. Calculate your emissions

There are numerous free carbon calculator tools you can use to calculate your emissions. [SME Climate Hub](#) allows you to measure your full carbon footprint, as well as identify actions you can take to drive sustainability.



4. Establish a baseline and set goals

Your carbon footprint will form a baseline from which to measure your success in cutting carbon emissions and reducing costs. The insights you have gained from reviewing your data will help shape your carbon reduction strategy.



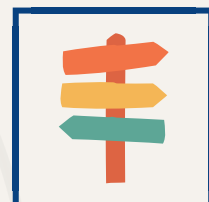
5. Share your progress

Make sure you communicate your progress to your stakeholders! This is a great opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to net zero. Check out our [‘Telling the story’ guide](#) for tips.



Step by step

- The [Greenhouse Gas Protocol](#) breaks down business activity into different scopes.
- The Carbon Trust has a [guide to carbon footprinting](#) for businesses.
- Green Economy has a business guide to [setting science-based climate targets](#) and why this is important.



Don't forget – check out our other net zero guides [via our website](#).



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