



WRITING YOUR ACTION PLAN



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You've measured your carbon footprint, so now it's time to develop your action plan and set your reduction targets to reach net zero.

Using our [action plan survey](#) and [your action plan first steps](#) resources, you can start to understand and prioritise your options for reducing your emissions.

When you have a better understanding of the actions you can take, we suggest the following to help you start writing your action plan:

- Bring together the key stakeholders within your business and senior leadership to establish:
 - **Ambition.** Together, think about a vision statement for your action plan, ambition and appetite for change. Do you want to be more ambitious than reaching net zero by 2040? What do you really want to tackle first? Review your [materiality assessment](#) - do you need to take a hard look at your products or services or how you do business? Do you want to offset on your journey to net zero?
 - **Budget.** You'll need a budget to action some changes and if you decide to offset your emissions on your journey to net zero. Although you'll make savings over time, you'll probably need to spend in the short term.



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- **Ownership.** There'll be lots to do and it's important that responsibility for all your actions doesn't just sit with one team member. Decide who'll lead on the different actions.
 - **Governance.** To make sure you meet your targets, this must be high on the agenda of your senior leadership team and board. We don't suggest introducing a separate reporting mechanism - instead, make it 'business as usual' and embed it into existing governance structures and a regular agenda item at meetings.
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- When writing your action plan, you should start with an ambitious plan to reduce your Scopes 1 and 2 emissions as quickly as possible. These are the emissions more within your control, so it'll be a quick win.
 - When you've made a net zero plan for your Scopes 1 and 2 emissions, you'll need to engage your employees, supply chain and customers to reduce your Scope 3 emissions. We know how hard it is to reduce your Scope 3 emissions, but it's where you'll be able to make the biggest impact. Consider organising a separate session on this with relevant teams and embed sustainability across your products and services. And make sure you tell your customers what you're trying to achieve - who knows, it might win you some new business!



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- When considering each action, set SMART targets - they should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely. On our [action plan example](#), we've suggested that for each action, you think through:
 - Timings
 - Owner
 - Cost
 - Estimated carbon reduction
- For each action consider if they're short, medium or long-term targets and make sure you have some short-term, 'quick win' actions. It's good to demonstrate reductions and progress to keep your stakeholders engaged and ambitious.
- You also need to factor in future increases in energy consumption and how you'll continue to make carbon emission reductions. So consider potential changes to your business, such as projected growth. Identify the key metrics to reflect your carbon emissions reduction targets, such as emissions per revenue generated or emissions per full-time employee equivalent. It's important that your action plan is integrated into your business planning and strategy.



- Consider setting a science-based target. Science-based targets show companies how much and how quickly they need to reduce their emissions to prevent the worst effects of climate change. Many businesses are now setting emissions reductions targets grounded in climate science through the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi). Targets are considered science-based if they're in line with what the latest climate science deems necessary to meet the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The SBTi defines and promotes best practice in science-based target setting, offers target setting guidance and independently assesses and approves companies' targets in line with its strict criteria. There's a cost for this, but it's reduced for businesses following the SME route.
- Think about whether you'll offset your carbon emissions or not, but it's important to remember that carbon offsetting alone isn't enough to tackle climate change. To be net zero, you must first minimise your emissions as much as possible. Offsetting is an immediate and measurable way to take responsibility for your emissions and to gain senior buy-in for making reductions happen quickly. Becoming carbon neutral certified can also be a great way to demonstrate your commitment to climate action, and it can win you business.



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