

Step by step guide to reaching net zero

Description

Achieving net zero emissions means balancing the greenhouse gases your organisation puts into the atmosphere with the amount you take out. Itâ??s a significant goal, but with the right approach, itâ??s completely achievableâ??and it can offer major benefits for your business and the planet. This step-by-step guide will help you get started on the path to **net zero**, ensuring that your organisation contributes to meaningful climate action.

Figure 1 / Corporate decarbonisation journey

	Key questions	Key solutions
01 Baseline	What is the baseline? What are the hotspots?	Greenhouse Gas Inventory (Scopes 1,2,3) Develop and test strategic hypotheses Product carbon footprint
02 Vision	What are the ambitions? What are the priorities?	Science Based Target setting Climate risk assessment
03 Plan	What are the net zero levers? How to integrate climate and business strategies?	Decarbonisation roadmap Climate risk integration & management
04 Execute	How to streamline reporting? How to leverage emerging technologies? How to assess technical & financial feasability?	Custom tool building Decarbonisationplanning & stakeholder engagement
05 Engage	Development of net zero focused partnerships	Supplier engagement

1. Start by measuring your emissions

Goal: Understand where you are now.

Before you can reduce your emissions, itâ??s essential to understand where your organisation currently stands. You need to build an emissions baseline by measuring your current carbon footprint. This involves categorising the sources of your emissions into three distinct groups, or â??scopes,â?• as defined by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol.

Scope 1: Direct emissions
These are emissions that come directly from sources owned or controlled by your organisation. Examples include the fuel used in company vehicles, emissions from onsite heating or cooling systems, and any other direct combustion processes.

Scope 2: Indirect emissions from energy consumption
This category includes emissions from the energy you purchase, such as electricity, heat, or steam. These emissions occur at the point of generation, not at your facility, but they still result from your organisationâ??s energy consumption.

Scope 3: All other indirect emissions
Scope 3 emissions are the most complex and cover a wide range of activities. These include emissions from your supply chain, business travel, commuting, waste disposal, and even the use and disposal of products your company produces. These emissions are harder to measure but are crucial to understanding the full impact of your operations.

ð??? **Tip**: Make it a habit to track and publish your emissions data each year. Transparency not only helps you understand your impact but also builds trust with your stakeholders, from customers to investors.

2. Set clear, science-based targets

Goal: Define where you want to go.

Once youâ??ve measured your emissions, the next step is to set clear targets for reduction. Itâ??s important to align your goals with scientific evidence and international climate commitments. For example, the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** has set a target to limit global warming to 1.5Â°C above pre-industrial levels. This requires substantial cuts to greenhouse gas emissions over the next few decades.

Setting ambitious targets:

- **Deep cuts by 2030**: To stay on track with the 1.5Â°C target, companies should aim for significant emission reductions by 2030.
- **Net zero by 2050**: The ultimate goal is to reach net zero emissions by 2050. This means that any emissions produced must be offset by measures like carbon capture or reforestation.

Itâ??s essential to break these long-term goals into short-term milestones. This will help you track progress, make adjustments, and stay on target.

ð??? **Tip**: Setting ambitious targets demonstrates leadership and can make your business more attractive to sustainability-conscious investors and customers who value climate responsibility.

3. Build a realistic roadmap

Goal: Turn your vision into a practical plan.

Now that youâ??ve set your targets, itâ??s time to develop a roadmap to reach them. Your roadmap should clearly outline the actions required to reduce emissions across all scopes.

Start by listing the major changes your organisation needs to make. These might include:

- **Switching to renewable energy**: Transitioning to solar, wind, or other clean energy sources will significantly reduce your Scope 2 emissions.
- **Improving energy efficiency**: Identify opportunities to improve energy use in buildings, machinery, and vehicles. This could include upgrading lighting to LED, installing energy-efficient HVAC systems, or optimising production processes.
- **Reworking your supply chain**: Work with suppliers to ensure they are also committed to reducing their emissions. A greener supply chain can significantly lower your Scope 3 emissions.

Along with listing actions, itâ??s important to:

- **Budget for necessary investments**: Investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency technologies, and staff training will be required to make your plan a reality.
- **Assign roles and responsibilities**: Ensure that your plan is not just a document sitting on a shelf. Assign specific roles to team members so that tasks are executed.

ð??? **Tip**: Keep your roadmap practical and focus on high-impact actions first. For example, switching to renewable energy may have a quicker impact than overhauling your entire supply chain at once.

4. Start reducing emissions

Goal: Put your plan into action.

The real work begins once youâ??ve got a plan in place. This is where youâ??ll see the difference between goals and action.

- **Switch to renewables**: Start transitioning to renewable energy sources. This could involve signing contracts for green energy or installing solar panels on your buildings.
- **Improve efficiency**: Look for opportunities to increase energy efficiency. For example, upgrading insulation or implementing smart energy management systems can reduce waste in buildings.

- **Greener transportation**: If your business relies on transport, switching to electric vehicles or improving fuel efficiency will help cut emissions.
- **Collaborate with suppliers**: Encourage suppliers to reduce their own emissions by setting sustainability requirements and helping them implement greener practices.

ð??? **Tip**: Donâ??t wait for everything to be perfect before you start. Taking action, even on a small scale, will build momentum. Celebrate your successes, whether they are big or small, to keep your team motivated and engaged.

5. Engage your suppliers and share your progress

Goal: Bring others along with you.

Achieving net zero is not something you can do alone. Your businessâ??s emissions are connected to your supply chain and the broader value chain. Engaging with your suppliers and partners is crucial for achieving your goals.

- **Share updates**: Regularly communicate with your employees, customers, investors, and other stakeholders about your progress. Transparency not only builds trust but also shows your commitment to sustainability.
- **Encourage collaboration**: Work closely with suppliers and partners to ensure they are on board with your net-zero journey. This collaboration could involve helping suppliers access cleaner technologies or setting mutual sustainability goals.

ð??? **Tip**: Being open about your journey, including the challenges you face, demonstrates integrity and helps build a stronger brand reputation. Transparency about your progress can position you as a leader in sustainability, setting you apart from competitors.

How Nexio Projects, can support you

Reaching Net Zero emissions is a journey that requires commitment, teamwork, and planning. But you donâ??t have to do it alone.

Nexio Projects can help you by:

- Mapping your emissions and setting achievable targets
- Designing a clear, actionable roadmap for emissions reduction
- Measuring progress and reporting it with confidence
- Strengthening partnerships and collaborating with your supply chain

Together, Nexio Projects can help you lead in climate action, boost resilience, and position your business for long-term success. The road to net zero may seem complex, but the rewards are worth itâ??not just for your business but for your stakeholders and the planet as a whole.

Achieving Net Zero is within your reach, and every step you take brings you closer to making a real, positive impact on the climate.

Note: This article was written by Nexio Projects, an international sustainability consultancy that helps organisations achieve their sustainability and climate goals through ESG ratings support, Carbon emissions calculations, decarbonisation strategy, and expert non-financial reporting. To learn more about their services and impact, visit Nexio Projects.

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