



## Climate Responsibility Approach

# Taking measures to reduce emissions



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## Jump to section

Setting a team to coordinate emissions reductions internally

Implementing measures to reduce emissions today

Implementing longer-term emission reduction measures

Your organisation's top priority should be to reduce emissions as rapidly as possible, using all available levers to target major sources. This remains the most important step. Willingness to implement the steepest and most immediate emission reductions is a requirement for the Climate Responsibility Approach. Not only should your organisation implement short- and medium-term reduction measures using available technologies, but it should also develop a vision for a future zero emission business model at the organisational level.

## Setting a team to coordinate emissions reductions internally

**Appoint one or more employees to calculate emissions and to plan, drive, and track the implementation of reduction measures.** Implementing emission reduction measures, especially deeper reductions, will require agreement from different parties and coordination across the organisation. This team would also oversee reporting progress on emission reduction measures annually.

**Mainstream climate responsibility throughout the teams in your organisation.** The team in charge will also be responsible for connecting the organisation's overall climate responsibility strategy to daily behaviours and decisions ([See Step 5](#)).

## Implementing measures to reduce emissions today

**Your organisation should identify quick, easy and cost-saving emission reduction measures.** This means implementing measures that are the most technically and economically feasible and that will have a significant impact on reducing emissions today. Some measures are outlined below.

### Reducing emissions from building energy use

**Procuring electricity from high-integrity renewable electricity providers**

**Your organisation should select an ambitious renewable electricity provider.** High-integrity providers refer to utilities which install additional renewable capacities and directly invest their revenues in new renewable energy projects – as such expanding total renewable energy capacity. This rules out providers which keep investing in fossil fuels (i.e. oil and gas companies with electric supply activity). If available, choose a provider that matches its electricity hourly instead of annually.

In contrast, most suppliers acquire Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs), or “Guarantees of Origin” in the EU. While the purchase of RECs could in theory send a signal to investors that there is demand for renewable energy, there are strong indications that RECs do not generally contribute to the development of additional renewable energy installations in practice. Oversupply of certificates and associated low prices, along with implicit double counting, are key reasons for this problem. For example, in Europe there is an oversupply of RECs at low prices that mostly stems from decades-old hydropower installations in Scandinavia ([Data-Driven EnviroLab and NewClimate Institute, 2020](#)). This does not lead to additional renewable energy capacity or decarbonisation of the wider electricity grid.

**Implementing building energy saving measures**

**Switching to efficient equipment.** Your organisation should ensure all new equipment has energy saving features and it should look for the A energy rating, and it can upgrade existing PCs or switch to laptops, which consume less energy and have lower production emissions.

**Installing smart energy control systems.** Your organisation should check that system operating hours match the times when heating, ventilation and cooling are required. Like for lighting, smart energy control systems can also be used to automatically switch off the heating at the end of a typical workday.

**Implementing behavioural policies.** Your organisation should improve practices and awareness across the organisation. Some of the measures that can be streamlined are, for example, switching off all equipment when not in use or keeping heating temperatures under 21 °C in colder seasons, for buildings located in temperate climates.

→ Find out more about reducing office energy use in Carbon Trust's [guide to office-based companies](#), UK Business Climate Hub's [guide to commercial building and home energy use](#).

#### Reducing IT services and digital emissions

**Users can monitor their cloud storage usage and implement simple file management practices and delete large files that are no longer useful.** Employees should avoid sending large attachments over email and prioritise sending PDFs above other formats, or links to folders where files are stored if sharing information internally. Deleting or archiving large attachments after use also reduces the climate footprint of email.

→ Check if your organisation's website runs on renewable energy through the Green Web Foundation's [tool](#).

#### Installing LED lightbulbs

Installing LED lightbulbs is an easy measure for organisations to implement, and it can have a significant impact on building energy emissions. Switching to LED lightbulbs can reduce energy use by up to 75% and increases the lifetime of lightbulbs ([US Department of Energy, 2025](#)), depending on previous lighting systems. Organisations should also put in place smart energy control systems. Optimising user behaviour is a key lever to reduce demand for lighting. For example, organisations could establish guidelines or post notices encouraging staff to consider energy efficient practices. Organisations could also install smart lighting control to guide user behaviour and safeguard against user oversight.

## Reducing emissions from purchased goods and services

**Purchasing refurbished equipment and equipment with lower GHG emission**

**Your organisation should endeavour to extend the lifetime of its products and purchased goods by choosing to repair when possible.** When this is not possible, or not desirable due to inefficiency of products, your organisation can purchase refurbished company mobile phones, laptops and other electronic equipment. Your organisation can also choose devices that are easier to repair and supported with updates for as long as possible such as Fairphone or purchase second-hand furniture and other building equipment when this is feasible.

**Integrating climate impact into purchasing decisions**

Integrating climate impacts starts by purchasing equipment from manufacturers that publish GHG lifecycle assessments for specific models to ensure that this information can steer purchasing. Your organisation can also choose suppliers that align with recognised standards such as ISO 14001 for environmental management or ISO 20400 for sustainable procurement.

## Reducing emissions from business travel

**Creating a travel policy**

To cut transport-related emissions, your organisation can set up rules and guidance on how staff should be travelling and making decisions concerning transport modes with a travel policy.

**Your organisation can implement a train-first policy, incentivising employees to choose trains as the primary travel option and enable employees to work on trains.** Your organisation can also implement a time-based rule, e.g. any journey that takes six hours or less should be taken by train, and if the journey takes between 6-10h, one way should be taken by train.

**Priority should be given to the use of trains for long-distance trips as well when this is possible.** If factoring in the time it takes to travel to and from airports and the time spent in transit in an airport, the time difference between a short haul flight and a long-distance train journey can sometimes be negligible.

### Facilitating virtual meetings

**Your organisation can implement an internal policy to prioritise virtual meetings** and encourage this by providing and promoting high-quality, user-friendly virtual meeting solutions for employees.

**When flying is necessary, choosing the most efficient air travel options**

**When flying is truly necessary, your organisation should choose the most carbon-efficient routes by minimising stopovers and flying economy.** Use atmosfair's [Smart Travel Tool](#) to compare journeys based on their mode of transport, duration and greenhouse gas emissions.

If your organisation decides to use flights anyway, it can use atmosfair's [flight emission calculator](#) before choosing a trip to compare GHG emissions between different airlines and flight routes. For instance, taking the train and then flying to avoid a stop-over can reduce emissions significantly.

→ Find out more about how to reduce the impact of air travel with the 10 steps that the Gallery Climate Coalition proposes [here](#).

## Implementing longer-term emission reduction measures

**Your organisation should plan and engage with third parties to implement more structural changes to reach deeper emission reduction measures.** These depend on which emission sources are most significant and your organisation's influence over them. If your organisation cannot implement certain emission reduction measures due to systemic barriers, it can advocate for these changes locally or with other organisations.

## Reducing direct energy emissions

### Switching company vehicles to electric vehicles

If your organisation has a vehicle fleet, it should set a plan to transition from internal combustion engines to battery electric vehicles. This may also require switching to a building with battery charging infrastructure or installing battery charging infrastructures.

→ Find out more about companies transitioning their fleet to electric vehicles in the [EV100 Transition Barometer](#), by the Climate Group.

### Transitioning to renewable electricity in production processes

On-site renewable electricity generation with on-site storage offers the best guarantee to use renewable electricity without placing a significant burden on grid infrastructure.

Companies that have on-site installations, but no storage systems are very likely to continue to rely on the local grid. For instance, companies might need to inject surplus electricity into the grid or consume grid electricity when their demand is higher than their electricity generation. Therefore, the option of on-site generation with on-site storage is preferable and more likely to guarantee that companies use renewable electricity for their activities.

## Reducing emissions from building energy use

### Renovating your building's insulation

Your organisation can check if their building has insulated roofs and walls, and if the windows are double-glazed. You can carry out an energy audit to better understand how energy-efficient its building is and engage renovations if your organisation owns its building.

### Switching from gas boilers to heat pumps

Your organisation can install heat pumps if it owns its own building. Air source heat pumps transfer heat from air and are often more efficient than fossil gas boilers and run on electricity. Even if grid electricity is

not fully reliant on renewable energy, the overall footprint of using heat pumps tends to be lower and will also reduce over time as the grid continues to decarbonise.

### **Installing solar panels**

Your organisation may be able to set up solar energy installations on its buildings even if it is renting its space. This will require starting a conversation with shared building managers or owners and potentially coordinating with other building occupants. This may not be possible on all buildings, so organisations should seek advice on whether their building could be appropriate for solar panels, solar heating, solar hot water or ground-source/air-source heat pumps. They should also consider whether this could be done in partnership with other local buildings.

### **Relocating your office to a more efficient building or choose an efficient building**

If your organisation rents an office, it will probably not be possible to carry out major building works and would require a long-term negotiation with the building landlord. For this reason, increasing building energy efficiency may require your organisation to move to more efficient offices.

## **Implementing an air travel emissions budget**

To implement an air travel emissions budget, your organisation needs to start with setting up an emission reduction target from which it can establish a carbon budget for the whole year. From this budget, a maximum emissions budget from business travel is calculated.

Once your organisation has an idea of the targeted maximum emission level from business travel it wishes to achieve, it can start the process of allocating the budget to different teams. At the beginning of the year (or before the year starts), your organisation needs all the employees to fill out travel emission budgets. Similarly to writing up an estimated travel budget for a business trip, such emissions would be calculated beforehand. Each employee or team of employees is required to estimate how many flights/trains they will take across the year, and from that number, calculate their needed emissions travel budget.

This budget is then communicated to the climate responsibility team, sustainability manager or whoever oversees calculating and reducing emissions within the organisation. This person or team then compares

the budget demanded compared to past years, and the likelihood of the budget being used based on historical patterns. The budget is then handed out to different individuals and teams.

During the year, the use of the travel carbon budget is tracked. Midway through the year, the organisation should hold discussions to determine whether some teams require additional budget.

At the end of the year, representatives from each team discuss why they went over or under their travel carbon budget.

## Reducing emissions from investments

**For foundations and other organisations with substantial investments, emissions from investments will likely represent the largest source of emissions.** Financial institutions, including foundations, that invest in or facilitate high-emission assets bear responsibility for their proportionate share of financed emissions. Investment, lending, and underwriting activities generate, on average, over 700 times more emissions than their direct operational emissions ([CDP, 2021](#)). We therefore recommend that foundations develop a strategy covering the climate impact of their investments.

- Find out more about how foundations can position endowments for climate impact in NewClimate Institute's [Green mission & money](#) report.
- Find out more about how financial institutions more broadly can address emissions from investments by consulting the Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change's [Net Zero Investment Framework](#).

The Climate Contribution Hub is set up by NewClimate Institute with initial support from the Allianz Foundation. This website aims at providing step-by-step guidance to help businesses and civil society organisations (e.g. NGOs, foundations, trade-unions) measuring and reducing their greenhouse gas emissions and setting up a climate contribution to take responsibility for their ongoing emissions.

[www.climateresponsibility.org](http://www.climateresponsibility.org)

