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COMMUNITY

The Responsible
Business Network
Northern Ireland

COP26

TEN STEPS IN TEN WEEKS

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TOOLKIT

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	2
JARGON BUSTER	2
STEP 1 – MEASURE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT	4
STEP 2 –ENGAGE SENIOR LEADERS	5
STEP 3 – DEFINE YOUR STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN	6
STEP 4 – SET YOUR TARGET	7
STEP 5 –ENGAGE SUPPLIERS AND CUSTOMERS	8
STEP 6 – CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PLANNING	9
STEP 7 – VALUE NATURE	9
STEP 8 – IDENTIFY HOW YOU WILL DEAL WITH EMISSIONS THAT CANNOT BE ELIMINATED	10
STEP 9 – REVIEW THE ACTIONS	10
STEP 10 – SHARE THE LEARNING	10
CASE STUDY EXAMPLES	11
REFERENCES	11

INTRODUCTION

To ensure a liveable future and limit the increase in global temperatures to 1.5°C, businesses must play their part and work to urgently reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This toolkit is designed for you to help your business prepare for COP26 – the UN Climate Change Conference – by providing an overview of the different steps required to get started on your climate journey.

JARGON BUSTER:

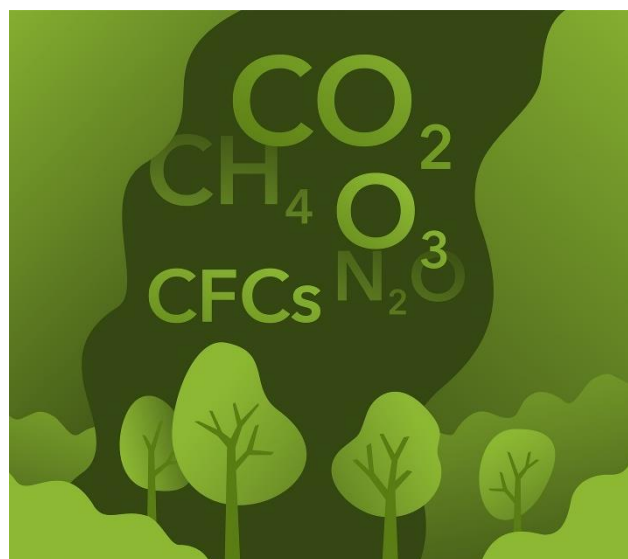
GREENHOUSE GASES: Greenhouse gases include water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, ozone and some artificial chemicals such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). Greenhouse gases do occur naturally and warm the earth ('the greenhouse effect'). The problem we now face is that human activities – particularly burning fossil fuels (coal, oil and natural gas), agriculture and land clearing – are increasing the concentrations of greenhouse gases. These are causing the earth's temperature to rise too much.

CARBON NEGATIVE: Removing more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere than is produced throughout a business's operations – creating a negative carbon footprint for the company.

CARBON NEUTRAL: Achieving net-zero emissions by offsetting or sequestration the equivalent carbon it produces through its operations.

CARBON ZERO: An operation that has eliminated carbon and does not release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. This can include some offsetting.

JUST TRANSITION: One of the biggest concerns about the climate journey is making sure that people and communities that stand to lose out get to benefit from the opportunities that the transition will bring, and that business helps to create jobs that help to regenerate communities and support the world's poorest people to improve their lives.



NET ZERO: A balance between production of manmade greenhouse gases from sources (such as burning fossil fuels, deforestation and refrigerant gases) and capture in 'sinks' (for example, forests, soil, the ocean, negative emission technologies (NETs).

SCOPE 1 – DIRECT EMISSIONS: This scope includes emissions from activities owned or controlled by your business, such as oil/gas for heating, fuel used in company-owned vehicles and refrigerant gas leaks.

SCOPE 2 – ENERGY INDIRECT EMISSIONS: This scope includes associated emissions from the electricity, heat, and steam your business purchases from your energy supplier. These indirect emissions are a consequence of your organisation's energy use but occur at sources you do not own or control. For many businesses, a large percentage of this will be your electricity.

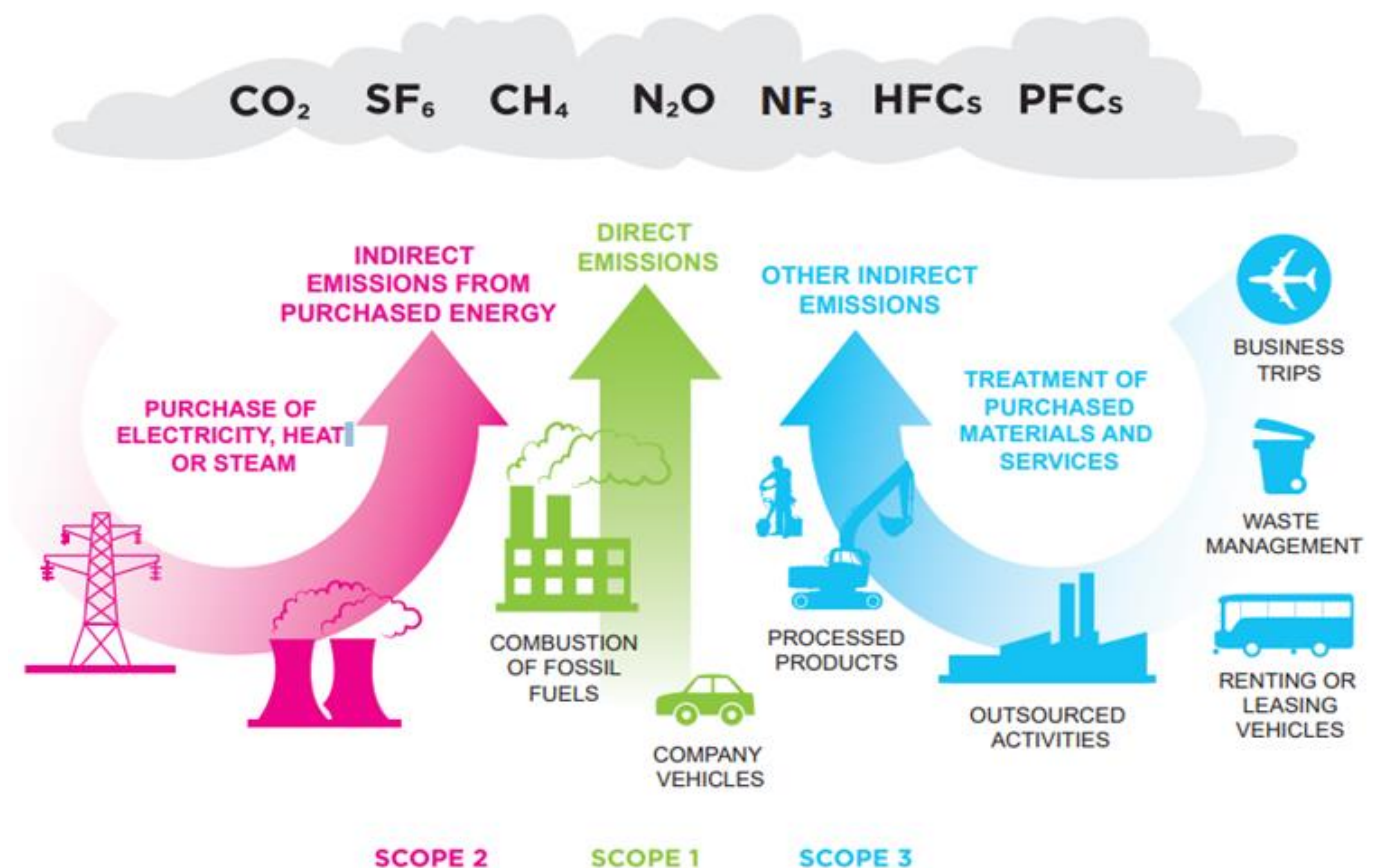
CLIMATE ACTION – 10 STEPS IN 10 WEEKS

According to the GHG Protocol, almost 40% of global greenhouse gas emissions are a result of energy generation, with a large percentage used by industrial and commercial entities.

SCOPE 3 – OTHER INDIRECT EMISSIONS:

These include indirect emissions resulting from the activities of your business. Scope 3 can be either upstream or downstream.

- **UPSTREAM:** Indirect emissions including purchased goods and services; waste generated in operations; business and commuting travel; transportation and distribution.
- **DOWNSTREAM:** As products and services are used and disposed of by customers including processing, use and end of life treatment of sold products.



STEP 1: MEASURE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

The first step is to calculate your organisation's carbon footprint

How to measure your business' carbon emissions

The [Greenhouse Gas Protocol](#), is an established methodology and provides standards for measuring, managing and reporting carbon emissions.

What do I need to measure?

The Greenhouse Gas Protocol guidance categorises emissions into three areas, known as scopes, to give you a complete picture of the carbon your organisation produces. Each scope has 'conversion factors' that calculate emissions produced per the amount of business activity. To comply with the GHG Protocol you must measure Scopes 1 and 2. Scope 3 is optional.

What information do I need?

Now you know what you're measuring, it's time to gather your data.

1. Set your organisational boundaries (optional)

Define those businesses and operations that constitute the company for the purpose of accounting and reporting GHG emissions, depending on equity share or control (this step only applies to organisations with a certain legal or organisational complexity, including wholly-owned operations, joint ventures, subsidiaries, etc.)

2. Set your operational boundaries

Look at your Scopes and identify and categorise direct and indirect emissions. If you are just getting started, it may be best to start with Scopes

1 and 2, then come back to indirect emissions (Scope 3) once you have an internal action plan.

3. Identify emission sources and collect data

You'll need to collect data for the past 12 months of fuel consumption and energy usage to get an average. Depending on your business, you might have seasonal changes in the energy you use that tracks to your peak trading periods, using heating/cooling or replacing equipment. You might want to align this with your financial year or use the calendar year. For gas and electricity, use kWh from your invoices; for vehicle fuel, try to get the amount of fuel from receipts. If this is not possible, you can use mileage and average fuel consumption to estimate the amount. It is worth taking time to be thorough with your data collection as it is at the heart of a good strategy. It may also be that you need to adjust collection processes to make it easier to harvest the data you need.

4. Apply emissions factors

GHG footprints are calculated in CO₂ equivalent. For example, one tonne of methane has the same global warming potential as 28 tonnes of CO₂, up to the refrigerant gas SF₆, which has a whopping 22,800 greater warming potential than CO₂. [BEIS collates these figures for the UK](#). It is important to note that the emissions factor for electricity from the national grid will fluctuate as the carbon intensity of power production changes. This means that even if you buy 'green electricity' you will not be able claim it as 100% carbon free.

5. Verify your findings

You may want to get a third party to check your assessment to give you reassurance that your calculations are accurate.

STEP 2: ENGAGE LEADERS & EMPLOYEES

Leaders

Create the business case to help leaders understand how your business will be impacted by climate change and the opportunities associated with early action. Tailor this for key decision makers for example, CEO, finance director, investors and shareholders, and procurement teams. Establish both the risks and opportunities of addressing (and not addressing) climate change.

Employees

Mobilising employee action is key to meeting your climate goals. Behavioural and culture change can enable rapid GHG reduction. Indeed, workplace behaviour change programmes can reduce energy costs by 10% on averageⁱ. Good engagement can enable employees to connect with the ambitions of the organisation and create a motivating environment. Higher levels of engagement also correlate with higher levels of innovationⁱⁱⁱ.

To engage your employees, we recommend to:

- **Involve them as early as possible:** This will ensure transparency and educate employees on GHG and the measures your business is taking to reduce carbon before investing in removals.
- **Launch a communications campaign:** Put efforts into a launch using relevant communication tools. Communicate your objective and why this is important to your business.
 - Start with your business's environmental journey so far, and past successes.
- Enlist senior leaders to communicate your ambitions, demonstrating commitment from the top and helping establish that everyone in the organisation has a role to play.
- Harness channels (intranet sites, training sessions, drop-in sessions, online forums, videos, and roadshows) to share consistent messages and celebrate progress.
- **Establish a strong governance structure** – This could include an executive steering group that meets regularly to drive action and reviews the pathway and plans, to progress against carbon reduction. Ensure employees at all levels can contribute. A two-way communication channel to feed into senior management will ensure employee ownership of activities and actions to drive rapid action towards your net-zero goals.
- **Support employees to reduce their own GHG footprint** – Incentivise low carbon choices through employee benefits including: cycle to work schemes, train subsidies, agile and flexible working practices, and ensuring that [your pension fund aligns](#) with your commitment to responsible business and low-carbon investments.
- Encourage employees to sign up to campaigns such as [Count Us In](#), a global initiative to inspire one billion people to take meaningful steps or actions to tackle the climate crisis. Every step is added to both a local and a global aggregator so that participants can see what's been achieved. Here are 16 actions:

FLY LESS	WALK AND CYCLE MORE	DRIVE ELECTRIC	EAT MORE PLANTS
CUT YOUR WASTE	SEASONAL AND LOCAL	SWITCH YOUR ENERGY	GET SOLAR
INSULATE YOUR HOME	DIAL IT DOWN	GREEN YOUR MONEY	REPAIR & RE-USE
CLOTHES THAT LAST	TALK TO FRIENDS	SPEAK UP AT WORK	TELL YOUR POLITICIANS

STEP 3: SET YOUR TARGET

Make a commitment to reduce or eliminate significant environmental impacts and ensure this commitment is aligned with a reputable external initiative such as [BITC's Climate Action Pledge](#).

By signing the Climate Action Pledge, and setting and striving to achieve ambitious GHG reduction targets, Northern Ireland organisations can demonstrate their commitment and willingness to collaborate to address this critical issue. [Download the Pledge document here](#).

By signing the Pledge, signatory organisations commit to reduce their absolute scope 1 and scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions by either 30% or 50% by 2030; and to work towards measuring and reporting their scope 3 GHG emissions. The chosen base year must be 2015 or thereafter.

Other frameworks exist, with which the Climate Action Pledge can align depending on the business type. The [Science Based Targets Initiative](#)^{iv}, the most recognised globally, enables companies to set targets in line with the Paris agreement, limiting global temperature increase to 1.5°C.

How you set your target will be unique to your business. At BITCNI, we encourage businesses to be ambitious and set inspiring targets to reduce their GHG emissions.

So, I don't need to include Scope 3?

The [Science Based Targets Initiative](#) recommends including Scope 3 emissions if they are more than 40% of your overall footprint. However, we understand that it can be complicated to measure, let alone reduce. For now, we invite the Climate Action Pledge signatories to only commit to start measuring and work towards reducing their Scope 3 emissions.

"IT IS A STATEMENT OF FACT, WE CANNOT BE ANY MORE CERTAIN; IT IS UNEQUIVOCAL AND INDISPUTABLE THAT HUMANS ARE WARMING THE PLANET."

[Prof Ed Hawkins, from the University of Reading, UK, one of the IPCC report's authors](#)

SIMPLE CLIMATE ACTIONS

- Switch to a Green Energy tariff – contact your supplier for more information.
- Install smart meters - Speak to your energy supplier directly to find out about having a smart meter installed
- Encourage active travel with employees [Content Index – About the Challenge – Active Travel Challenge \(getmeactive.org.uk\)](#)
- Minimise waste from your products and packaging. See <https://wrap.org.uk/> for more information.

STEP 4: DEFINE YOUR STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Now that you know your starting point and where you want to go, you need to define how to get there.

1. Brainstorm

Start by identifying the possible actions you can implement to reduce your emissions, from switching to a green energy provider to electrifying your fleet. Benchmarking against your competitors or leading organisations and surveying your stakeholders can also give ideas of innovative initiatives.

2. Conduct a materiality assessment

Classify the actions you have identified depending on their importance to your business continuity, and their importance to your stakeholders (clients, suppliers, legislator, investors, employees etc). This exercise will help to group the various actions into relevant workstreams and to prioritise the issues you need to address.

3. Prioritise and define a timeline

Now you know what you are going to do, you need to decide when. To prioritise your various workstreams and actions, assess their impact on your GHG emissions, if they are legal obligations,

and their difficulty to implement (required investment and resources). That way you can identify quick wins and longer-term projects, and sequence the projects in time, with interim targets where possible.

4. Assess responsibilities and KPIs

Allocating responsibility, setting KPIs along with SMART targets are key to success in any project. You could also explore how you can tie corporate objectives into individual objectives and performance measures. Finally, setting interim targets and objectives helps to sustain momentum and keep employees engaged. Make sure you have the adequate tools and processes to measure your progress.

"IF WE COMBINE FORCES NOW, WE CAN AVERT CLIMATE CATASTROPHE. BUT, AS TODAY'S REPORT MAKES CLEAR, THERE IS NO TIME FOR DELAY AND NO ROOM FOR EXCUSES. I COUNT ON GOVERNMENT LEADERS AND ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO ENSURE COP26 IS A SUCCESS."

UN Secretary General António Guterres, [IPCC Report](#)



STEP 5: ENGAGE SUPPLIERS AND CUSTOMERS

Supply Chain

Global supply chains are vast, complex, and interdependent. As clearly shown by the COVID-19 pandemic, disruptive events are no longer confined to specific geographies but have widespread consequences that can be felt across the globe. Businesses need to take a new approach to ensure that their supply chains are resilient to future disruption from whatever source.

Supply chain emissions are one of the biggest elements of Scope 3, typically four or five times a company's direct, Scope 1 and 2 emissions – up to 90% in certain sectors⁹.

To start decarbonising your supply chain we recommend that you:

- **Map your supply chains.** This enables you and your suppliers to deepen your understanding of activities and identify carbon hotspots. This step can drive transparency and create as full a picture as possible of your business's sphere of influence. Think through risks as well as opportunities, such as unlocking new innovations, cost savings and reputational benefits.
- **Incorporate your carbon strategy into procurement processes and functions.** By working with your procurement teams to decarbonise your supply base:
 - Ensure that there is a clear business case for your sustainable procurement strategy.
 - Incorporate the measurement process into already established procurement procedures (e.g. tender process, PQQs, supplier questionnaires).
 - Train and support your procurement teams so they are clear on the outcomes you are aiming to achieve.
 - Work with your procurement team to establish relationships with your key suppliers that you need to engage. Tap into existing networks and channels to speed up progress.
- **Engage with your suppliers as early as possible** to take them on the journey with you. This also creates a collaborative environment where suppliers have ownership of their activities and can share in success:
 - Work with your suppliers to ensure that they have targets to make year-on-year improvements to decarbonise. You may want to prioritise working with suppliers that are higher-risk or biggest spend.
 - Ensure that suppliers understand your action plan to reduce your GHG emissions and the milestones that they need to contribute to help you reach your target.
 - Establish long-term commercial alliances with suppliers to encourage the development of innovative low carbon products and processes.
 - Support suppliers to decarbonise. For certain suppliers you may want to explore further investment in the company to decarbonize. For example, supporting suppliers with a financial loan to improve energy efficiency measures or to invest in low-carbon technologies. Offer guidance and support to your suppliers to help them understand climate-related risk for their own business (eg supplier forums, workshops and training sessions) – this could lead to wider positive impact by taking this learning to other parts of their own supply chain. If your suppliers are based in NI, they could take part in [BITC Business Action on Climate](#) and sign the [Climate Action Pledge NI](#).

Customers

It is also essential to think about how you can engage and support your customers to purchase more energy efficient products and to use them more effectively. If you are a B2B company, you can also partner with your clients to contribute to their public commitment to reduce their Scope 3 emissions.

STEP 6: CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PLANNING

Our climate is changing and we need to prepare. Businesses will face many challenges as a result of climate change impacts. In Northern Ireland, this means we will experience business disruption caused by warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers. However, cold snaps, drier winters and wet summers will occur, therefore we need to be prepared for a much greater range of extremes. We are already experiencing increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, and these changes are projected to continue and intensify over the coming decades. The changes pose considerable challenges to the everyday working and asset management of organisations. It is important that all organisations understand the risks facing them from climate change and take steps to prepare. This is called 'climate change adaptation planning'.

Experts agree planning ahead rather than responding reactively will help to save you money in the long term, manage the risks and allow you to identify possible business opportunities to give you an edge over competitors.

Find out more about the potential threats and opportunities of climate change, and what action you can take to increase your resilience to climate change by exploring [Race to Resilience](#).

"WE WILL SEE EVEN MORE INTENSE AND MORE FREQUENT HEATWAVES, AND WE WILL ALSO SEE AN INCREASE IN HEAVY RAINFALL EVENTS ON A GLOBAL SCALE, AND ALSO INCREASES IN SOME TYPES OF DROUGHTS IN SOME REGIONS OF THE WORLD."

[Dr Friederike Otto](#), University of Oxford, UK, and one of the [IPCC report's](#) authors

STEP 7: VALUE NATURE

Nature underpins our economy, our society, our existence. It's important to have healthy ecosystems in terms of the role nature plays against climate crisis shocks e.g. forests, land management to manage flooding / fires.

Identify where your business impacts on ecosystems that support the environment and enable society to thrive in rural and urban contexts.

Understand the risk to the resources you depend on and take steps to improve the health of water, land, biodiversity and air quality.

In urban environments identify where green and blue infrastructure can be used to increase resilience and support sustainable communities and cities.

Consider implementing the [Business and Biodiversity Charter](#) to help systematically address your organisation's impact on Biodiversity. Business in the Community, in partnership with Ulster Wildlife, provides the Business and Biodiversity Charter – a framework for businesses to engage with biodiversity.

"THE REPORT CLEARLY SHOWS THAT WE ARE ALREADY LIVING THE CONSEQUENCES OF CLIMATE CHANGE EVERYWHERE. BUT WE WILL EXPERIENCE FURTHER AND CONCURRENT CHANGES THAT INCREASE WITH EVERY ADDITIONAL BEAT OF WARMING."

[Prof Carolina Vera](#), vice-chair of the working group that produced the [IPCC report](#)

STEP 8: IDENTIFY HOW YOU WILL DEAL WITH EMISSIONS THAT CANNOT BE ELIMINATED

Once you have a strategy in place to reduce your GHG emissions as much as possible, you can go one step further and address your remaining emissions. There are two main ways to take greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere: offsetting, and insetting.

Offsetting

One of the best ways to offset emissions is to invest in initiatives to repair and rebuild sinks that absorb GHGs. There are many options to choose from, for example: soil, peat and mangroves; protecting ancient forests; reforestation; and technologies such as carbon capture and storage (CCS).

Understanding your options and putting in place schemes now is vitally important, as time is of the essence. Restoring the health of nature is a critical component of tackling the climate emergency, making it a good investment for the future. It vital to

ensure that projects you invest in make permanent additional removals of GHG's from the atmosphere and create social value too.

Insetting

This involves directly investing in your value chain to cut emissions, which could be working with suppliers or installing technologies like CCS onsite. This could also contribute to reducing your Scope 3 GHG emissions.

You can consider investing in climate offsetting projects from organisations such as [Gold Standard](#), [South Pole](#) or [Go Climate](#). This [Carbon Offset Guide](#) helps companies and organisations to understand carbon offsets, while the [UK Government](#) has set out guidance (page 115) to help ensure the chosen initiative(s) meet high standards.

STEP 9: REVIEW YOUR ACTIONS

Review your Climate Actions and how you've implemented Step 1-8. Analyse any results – what worked well and what needs to be improved. Refine your Climate Action Plan based on key learnings. Ensure your Climate Strategy includes SMART objectives and targets for the short, medium and long-term, with processes in place to monitor and manage progress.

Measure and report targets and progress regularly and transparently with the same rigour you apply to

financial performance, to give investors and wider stakeholders confidence you are acting on the climate crisis.

"LOWERING GLOBAL WARMING REALLY MINIMISES THE LIKELIHOOD OF HITTING THESE TIPPING POINTS. WE ARE NOT DOOMED."

[Dr Friederike Otto, University of Oxford, UK, and one of the IPCC report's authors](#)

STEP 10: SHARE THE LEARNING

Now that you're on the road to becoming a climate leader, you could also use your company network and wider sphere of influence to support and accelerate climate action in society by engaging with other businesses in your network to join you in the Climate Action Pledge.

Share your success stories with Business in the Community. BITC encourages member organisations to make submissions for inclusion in the news section of the [BITC website](#) and the Good Business monthly news, events and opportunities update email, sent to all member contacts every month. [Share your news | Business in the Community \(bitcni.org.uk\)](#)

CASE STUDY EXAMPLES

Translink is taking urgent action to



tackle the climate crisis with an ambitious Climate Positive 2050 Strategy and a fleet decarbonisation strategy underway. With three zero emission buses already in service in Belfast and 100 more being procured (electric and hydrogen), Translink will soon have the fourth largest Zero Emission bus fleet across all UK regions. This step is the start of a zero-emission fleet operating in Belfast and Derry-Londonderry by 2030, and 50% reduction in greenhouse gases across the business. Translink also has plans to decarbonise the rail network with the aim to be net zero across the business by 2040.

Arup Arup has



committed to achieving net zero emissions across its entire operations by 2030, covering everything from the energy used in offices to goods and services purchased. To achieve this the firm has set a target to reduce its scope 1, 2 and 3 global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 30 per cent within the next five years from a 2018 baseline. An example of one of our actions is the creation of a carbon levy, whereby a levy of \$40USD per tonne is being applied to flights taken by employees in a bid to change behaviours across the firm. The proceeds will be used to establish an Arup Carbon Fund to find and invest in ways of reducing and removing carbon including supporting local community projects.

ENJOYED THIS CONTENT?

You might also like to:

- [find out more about our Business Action on Climate campaign](#)
- [learn more about our programmes and initiatives](#)
- [join us for one of our upcoming events](#)



Talk to one of our expert team **today** to learn how membership of Business in the Community can help you take your responsible business journey further, and drive lasting global change.

REFERENCES

ⁱ <https://www.carbonbrief.org/guest-post-a-new-way-to-assess-global-warming-potential-of-short-lived-pollutants>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/better-business-guide-to-energy-saving>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://engageforsuccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/file52215.pdf>

^{iv} <https://sciencebasedtargets.org/step-by-step-guide-2/>

^v https://sciencebasedtargets.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/SBT_Value_Chain_Report-1.pdf