



SUSTAINABILITY GLOSSARY

SUSTAINABILITY 101

If you're slightly baffled by all the terminology that gets used in the world of sustainability, you're definitely not alone.

Getting clear on what becoming carbon neutral involves or understanding exactly what a carbon offset is may seem daunting but we're going back to basics. This glossary will help you get clear on all those tricky terms and how they might apply to your business.

GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION
<u>B Corporation</u>	B Corps use business as a force for good, balancing purpose and profit. Their company's entire social & environmental performance is assessed against a range of criteria before they receive certification.
Biodegradable	A biodegradable material will breakdown into smaller pieces in a landfill. The exact time taken can vary a lot and could be up to 1,000 years.
Carbon Dioxide Equivalent	CO2e is a way of expressing your carbon footprint (made up of a variety of greenhouse gases) as a common unit. To calculate, you multiply the weight of a greenhouse gas (normally in tonnes) by its GWP or global warming potential.
Carbon Negative	A business can be carbon negative by removing more carbon from the atmosphere than they have generated, normally through a combination of reducing their emissions & offsetting the remainder.
Carbon Neutral	A business can be carbon neutral by balancing out their carbon emissions, i.e. removing as much carbon from the atmosphere as they generate.
Carbon Offset	Businesses (or individuals) can compensate for the carbon emissions they produce by purchasing a carbon credit which is the equivalent of one tonne of CO2. There are 2 types of carbon credits: Voluntary Emissions Reduction (VERs) and Certified Emissions Reduction (CERs), which are regulated by a third-party certifying body. Carbon credits can contribute to projects like tree planting, forest conservation & community projects. The cost of a carbon credit can vary greatly as can the type of projects.



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Climate Positive	Climate Positive means the same as carbon negative!
<u>Circular Economy</u>	A circular economy works to design out waste & pollution, keep materials and products in use and regenerate natural systems.
Compostable	Compostable materials have been certified to break down into non-toxic components that will not harm the environment. Be aware that certain conditions like high temperatures may be required, meaning they are not home compostable.
Cradle to Cradle	Cradle-to-cradle is a business or design strategy that works to keep materials & products in play by reusing & repurposing waste.
Cradle to Grave	The cradle-to-grave concept is designed to consider the environmental impact of a product or service throughout its life from production to disposal.
CSR	I like the Financial Time's definition of CSR or Corporate Social Responsibility: 'a business approach that contributes to sustainable development by delivering economic, social and environmental benefits for all stakeholders'.



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<u>FSC</u>	FSC or Forest Stewardship Council is a certification to show that any wood or wood products (like paper) have been made from FSC certified forests or post-consumer waste. There are 3 types of labels: 100%, FSC Mix or FSC Recycled.
GHGs	GHGs or greenhouse gases are gases that trap heat in the atmosphere. Common types include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases. Each gas has a Global Warming Potential (GWP) which reflects how long it remains in the atmosphere on average and how strongly it absorbs energy. Gases with a higher GWP absorb more energy and contribute more to warming the Earth.
Greenwash	Using the Cambridge Dictionary definition: "to make people believe that your company is doing more to protect the environment than it really is"
<u>ISO 14001</u>	This is an internationally recognised certification that assesses how businesses manage their environmental impact through an EMS or Environmental Management System.
Renewable Energy	Also called green energy, renewable energy comes from renewable sources such as solar or wind and is evidenced through RECs or Renewable Energy Certificates.



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<u>SDGs</u>	The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 goals set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all".
Triple bottom line	A triple bottom line business strategy focuses not just on profits, but also social and environmental concerns.
Waste-to-energy	Waste-to-energy or energy-from-waste is an alternative to landfill where non-recyclable waste is burned or incinerated to create energy in the form of heat, fuels & electricity.

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