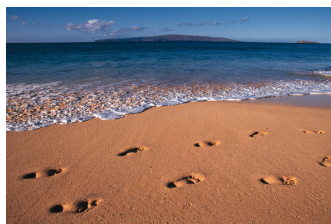


CARBON FOOTPRINTING FACTSHEET



The development of a carbon footprint – a full understanding of how your organisation contributes to climate change – is the first important step that must be taken before reducing or neutralising emissions.

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WHAT IS A CARBON FOOTPRINT?

A carbon footprint is “the total set of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions caused directly and indirectly by an individual, organisation, event or product” (Carbon Trust 2008). For example, the carbon footprint of flying from London to New York is 0.68 tonnes of CO₂e¹, and the carbon footprint of the UK in 2006 was 653 million tonnes of CO₂e.

Carbon footprints can be broken down into their component parts in order to show the relative importance of different emissions sources.

Carbon footprints are measured in tonnes of CO₂ equivalent or CO₂e (and less commonly in tonnes of carbon). The “equivalent” means that the footprint is made up of a number of different greenhouse gases, which have been converted into the equivalent quantity of CO₂ in order to show all emissions in a single number.

WHY CARRY OUT A CARBON FOOTPRINT?

Carbon footprints are useful for a number of purposes:

1. For publicly reporting greenhouse gas emissions.
2. For setting a target for reducing emissions (in order to set a reductions target it is necessary to know what current emissions are).
3. To identify which activities contribute the most to a footprint (in order to identify the important areas for reduction efforts).
4. In order to measure changes in emissions over time, and to monitor the effectiveness of reduction activities.
5. To offset emissions (in order to offset emissions it is necessary to know how many reductions credits to purchase).

DIFFERENT TYPES OF CARBON FOOTPRINT

As noted above, there are different types of carbon footprint, e.g. for organisations, individuals, products, services, and events. Different types of footprint have different methods and boundaries. Organisational assessments involve quantifying the direct and indirect emissions associated with an organisation. Direct emissions are those from the combustion of fossil fuels in equipment or vehicles owned by the organisation, and also escaped greenhouse gases from the organisation's facilities (e.g. refrigerant gas losses from air conditioning systems). Indirect emissions are all emissions which are the result of an organisation's activities, but which are emitted from facilities or vehicles owned by third parties (e.g. an organisation's electricity consumption indirectly causes emissions at the electricity generating plant, which is owned by a third party).

There is a convention in greenhouse gas reporting which categorises emissions into three scopes:

1. Scope one emissions are all direct emissions
2. Scope two emissions are all indirect emissions from electricity or other imported energy (e.g. district heating).
3. Scope three emissions are all other indirect emissions associated with the organisation's activities (e.g. business travel, commuting, deliveries in third party vehicles, waste disposal etc.).

Current world best practice for corporate or organisational greenhouse gas reporting is the World Business Council for Sustainable Development/World Resources Institute The GHG Protocol: A Corporate Reporting and Accounting Standard. A similar methodology is set out in ISO 14064.

Source: http://www.ecometrica.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Summary_Paper_-_What_is_a_Carbon_Footprint.pdf

ORGANISATIONS WHICH CAN HELP YOU TO CARBON FOOTPRINT YOUR NGO

Carbonaided

CarbonAided specialises in helping businesses, charities and other organisations to understand and reduce their impact on climate change.

http://www.carbonaided.com/business_charities/

Edinburgh Centre For Carbon Management

The Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Management is an internationally renowned analytical facility for carbon and related eco-metrics. It focuses on the analysis of greenhouse gas emissions from corporate activities, product supply chains and terrestrial ecosystems. Its analysis feeds into a wide range of policy, management, investment and project development decision making.

http://www.eccm.uk.com/httpdocs/expertise_services/managing_carbon/index.html

Co2balance

A web-based questionnaire with a business option

<http://www.co2balance.uk.com/carbon-business.php>

NIDOS MEMBERS WHO ARE WORKING ON CARBON FOOTPRINTING THEIR ORGANISATION

Organisation

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