



Why should I measure my
event carbon footprint and
where do I start?

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Across the globe business and governments are transitioning to Net Zero.

At the intersection of industries, events support almost every sector and have a major part to play in finding actionable solutions to the climate crisis. To understand the true environmental impact of events and get to Net Zero, the first step is to measure your carbon emissions.

This document will guide you on getting started, and explain the definition of Net Zero and what it means for the events industry.



Where do I start?

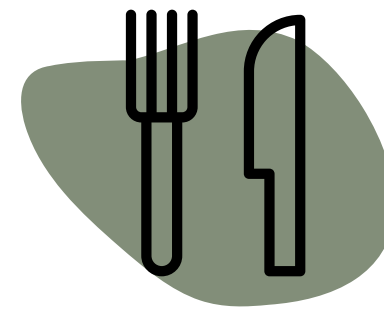
The best way to start is to set up a working group of sustainability champions within your organisation and pick one event to measure to begin with before looking to roll out measurement to other events.

Event emissions broadly fall into the opposite categories:



Energy

Capture emissions from venue energy and temporary power sources



Food & Drink

Calculate catering emission impacts for audience and staff, plus understand the food waste footprint



Travel

Assess the impact of event location on travel and accommodation for audience and staff



Graphics and build materials

Ascertain how different material choices impact carbon emissions and track the lifecycle of these elements



Event transport

Understand the production transport footprint from trucking to couriers and overseas freight



Waste and recycling

Profile waste and recycling volumes and how these are being managed

3

Steps to Success

1.

Use a carbon calculator such as TRACE, isla's carbon and waste measurement platform to understand what data you need to collect to measure your emissions.

TRACE has been designed to collect data that is readily available to event planners and suppliers.

Use the calculator to estimate your emissions at the beginning of the project. This will help you map out your key impact areas to focus on for reduction and more accurate measurement.

2.

Tell your suppliers that you are measuring your footprint at the beginning of the project and talk to them about the data you would like them to provide.

TRACE provides guides for suppliers to make this as easy as possible. Speaking to your suppliers at the beginning makes them much more likely to engage them in your sustainability journey. It also makes it easier to collect the data you need, and spot opportunities for reducing emissions whilst you still have the most control to make changes.

3.

At the end of the project you will be able to create a sustainability report that shows your event's carbon footprint.

You will understand your biggest emissions drivers and how to reduce them and what you need to measure across your events to have a solid idea of your overall emissions - your first step towards getting your 'baseline' emissions, something you need on your journey to Net Zero!

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What actually is Net Zero?

Everyone has heard of the term Net Zero.

Unless you've been living under a rock, you'll know how important Net Zero is to climate action, **but what does it actually mean for events?**

Context

Since the industrial revolution in the 1800s, human activity has caused increased carbon emissions that have a warming effect on the planet. There is an urgency to drastically reduce carbon emissions to limit warming to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels. This is the widely agreed threshold required to stave off the worst effects of global heating on the planet and its inhabitants.

Broadly speaking, there are two ways of reducing emissions in the atmosphere; to reduce activities that result in fossil fuels being burnt, and to remove carbon from the atmosphere through 'offsetting' or carbon removal.

Scientists coined the term 'net-zero' to define a state of no emissions being emitted into the atmosphere, through a combined effort of reducing them as much as is physically possible, then removing the rest from the atmosphere.

In 2018, The IPCC (Intergovernmental panel on climate change) made clear that in order to stay within a 1.5C global warming limit, we would need to cut our CO2 emissions in half by 2030 (compared to 2017 levels) and reach a state of Net Zero emissions by 2050.

Definition

To give an idea of how complex it is, the body in charge of coming up with a universally agreed definition (The Science Based Targets Initiative) initiated a 2 year process that consulted over 500 experts to come up with an answer.

The resulting corporate Net Zero standard document is 65 pages long but to keep it simple, the agreed definition is:

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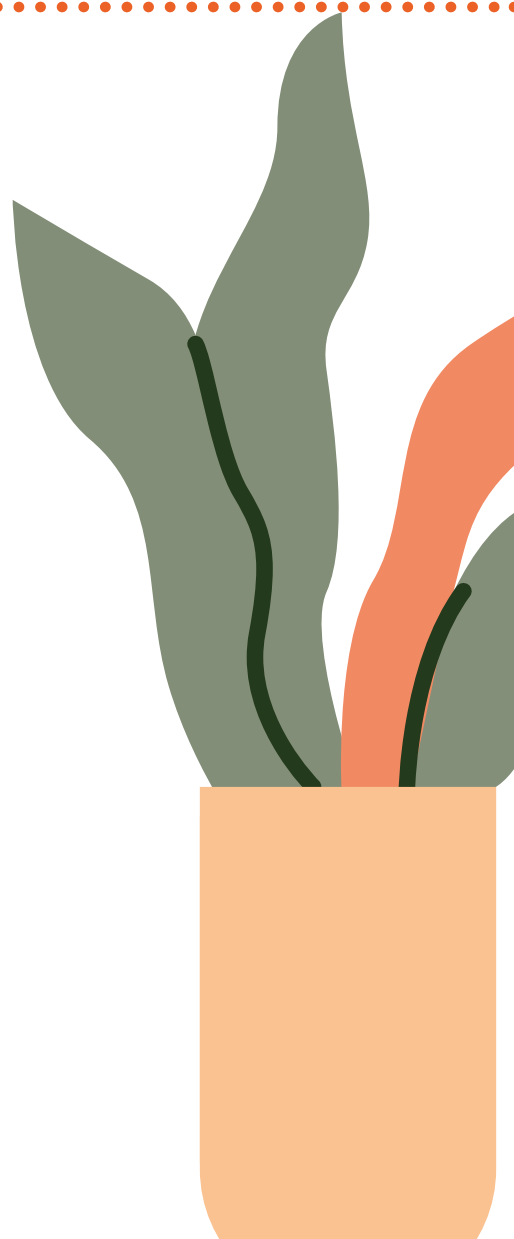
Reducing scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions to zero or to a residual level that is consistent with reaching Net Zero emissions at the global or sector level in eligible 1.5°C-aligned pathways.

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Most companies will reduce emissions by at least 90% through their long-term science based targets; some residual emissions may remain.

What this means is that to be Net Zeronet-zero, companies will reduce their emissions by 90% and 'offset' the rest.

As this requires significant infrastructure and technological change, companies are setting near term (2030) targets and longer term Net Zero targets (2040-2050).



Business operations vs events deliveries

To get to Net Zero, organisations need to measure their business operations as well as events deliveries.

The majority of the events industry is made up of small to medium sized businesses who don't have a lot of resources or in-house sustainability experts and it can be difficult knowing where to start.

The Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) acknowledges the complexity of Net Zero for small businesses and has a separate initiative for companies with under 500 people. Without going into too much detail, it doesn't require the company to set targets or report on scope 3 emissions.

With events businesses this is particularly problematic because a vast majority of their emissions will fall under the scope 3 category and should be the main focus of reduction.

For some context, an average office for a small business will emit approximately 10 tonnes of Carbon (CO₂e) carbon per year, which is less than two business

class flights from London to New York. This shows that although reducing business operations is incredibly important, a focus should be on event deliveries as you should always look to measure and reduce your largest impacts first.

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Start your journey today by signing up to a FREE webinar on TRACE, the definitive carbon measurement platform for sustainable events.

**www.traceyour.events
www.weareisla.co.uk**

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