

# Carbon Footprint Calculation and Trend Tracking

## *Benefits*

- Enables your company to report on greenhouse gas emission performance
- Enables you to set targets to reduce emissions and then measure the reductions
- Cost savings through managing resources and implementing good environmental practice

## *Overview of the intervention*

A carbon footprint is a measure of the impact your activities have on the environment and in particular on climate change. It relates to the amount of greenhouse gases produced in day-to-day activities through burning fossil fuels for electricity, heating and transportation. The carbon footprint is a measurement of all greenhouse gases that are produced as a unit of tonnes (or kgs) of carbon dioxide equivalent.

## *A basic approach to carbon footprinting*

For most organisations, calculation of a basic carbon footprint is a fairly quick exercise. A basic footprint is likely to cover direct emissions and emissions from electricity as these are the simplest to manage, but exclude some of the indirect emissions.

There are usually a handful of major emissions sources that must be quantified, including:

- Onsite fuel use
- Onsite electricity usage
- Use of transport which you own

To get the key information to calculate a basic carbon footprint, collect data from all electricity meter and record the distances travelled by the establishment's vehicles. The easiest way to convert the fuel, electricity and transport consumption figures to CO<sub>2</sub> is by using one of the web-based carbon calculators available online.

When calculating a basic carbon footprint it is common to exclude sources of indirect emissions which the establishment does not control e.g. emissions from waste, from the supply chain of products, etc.

Once the basic carbon footprint has been established, it is then possible to take steps to manage your emissions:

- Set and agree efficiency or emissions reductions targets;
- Identify likely interventions, based on environmental or financial criteria;
- Take action to implement the interventions, in order to reduce the carbon footprint or to offset the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
- Monitor the performance of actions and interventions in order to track your carbon footprint.

You should present the results of your carbon footprint on your website or in other environmental marketing materials that you produce.

A full carbon footprint can also be done, which is a more accurate calculation of your carbon footprint and requires a more detailed approach. This is usually done by a specialist consultant, who can assist you in this process.

For more information on carbon footprint calculation and offsetting, visit the following websites:

Carbon footprint – [www.carbonfootprint.com](http://www.carbonfootprint.com)

Food and Trees for Africa – [www.trees.co.za](http://www.trees.co.za)

CO<sub>2</sub> Balance – [www.co2balance.co.za](http://www.co2balance.co.za)

Carbon Trust – [www.carbontrust.co.uk](http://www.carbontrust.co.uk)