

CARBON FOOTPRINTING CERTIFICATION SCHEME

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Business Carbon Footprint?

Your company's carbon footprint is a measure of the carbon generated by its routine operations.

Why should I calculate this?

Understanding the nature your carbon emissions is the vital first step to reducing them and their impact on the environment, and then offsetting those emissions that cannot readily be reduced. Reducing and offsetting carbon emissions is a clear demonstration of your commitment to the environment.

Why should I reduce this?

With carbon emissions now generally accepted as the chief cause of climate change, the action a company takes to reduce its carbon footprint has become a key measure of its quality and ability to move with the times.

Reducing your company's carbon footprint can bring very real commercial advantages. It helps you to stay ahead of the competition, and ahead of the legislation that will inevitably be enforced to curb emissions. Most importantly, it helps you to meet your customers' expectations - and increasingly, their insistence - that the companies they deal with will behave responsibly and promote sustainability

To what sort of business is the scheme calculator applicable?

The Scheme is designed for small to medium sized entities (SME's) in a wide range of sectors from office-based, service orientated companies, to distributors and manufacturers.

Who is behind the scheme Carbon Footprint Calculator?

The BRE Trust is the largest UK education and research charity for the built environment. The Trust works to advance knowledge, innovation and communication in all matters concerned with the built environment, for the benefit of all. The Trust owns the BRE Group of companies which have an international reputation for the quality and independence of their research, consultancy, training, testing and certification services. For more information, please visit the website at: www.bretrust.org.uk

Why another calculator?

There are actually very few carbon calculators that focus on the commercial sector and specifically on small businesses. The scheme calculator has a **robust** scientific base and technical calculation method, this combined with the BRE Group's strong reputation for independence and quality sets it apart from most other calculation methods. This quality and independence also applies to our carbon offsetting which provides users with a fully auditable and certified service that meets your expectations and those of your business customers, partners and investors.

What information will I be asked to enter?

Information is collected in five core areas that are generic to every small business regardless of the sector they operate in and cover the majority of CO₂ emissions emitted. To ensure that the calculation is accurate and that you can have confidence in the outcome, the information is collected and verified by an independent BRE trained assessor. The assessor will arrange a verification visit and ask to tour the premises.

Prior to the visit the Assessor will inform you of types of information for you to collect for scrutiny such as utility bills (which will be checked against meter readings) and business mileage statements (which will be checked against invoices and interviews with staff).

Where objective evidence is not available, the assessor will ask for this to be provided after the visit and in certain circumstances this may require a further visit. Examples of 'certain circumstances' would include:

- The business has more than one site and additional visits are required to satisfy the compliance requirements for each site
- Access has not been made available to meter rooms
- No staff were available on site to interview

What units will I be asked for?

The calculation is flexible regarding the energy units used so that various types of information can be entered. For example, gas amounts consumed in Kilo Watt Hours, Therms or Cubic Metres.

What time period does the calculation need data for?

The calculation is flexible in terms of the periods for the calculation. You have the option of entering total utility units used for the last complete month, quarter or whole year. So if you only have three months of data available you will still be able to use the tool. To ensure accuracy the tool does not extrapolate any data beyond the period entered, so if you only enter three months of data the tool provides a total CO₂ emissions figure for that period.

Do I need to complete the section on other greenhouse gases?

There is the opportunity to detail other greenhouse gases emitted as a result of your business operations. This is aimed at manufacturing based businesses operating plant and machinery that results in the release of these gases (all units are in tonnes).

What will the Assessor do once the information has been collected?

BRE Global requires a copy of this information to allow a credible audit process and requires copies to be submitted as part of the Business Certification Application process. The information also allows the calculation of the business carbon footprint.

Certification

Once the application and evidence has been reviewed for compliance by BRE Global a certificate will be issued containing the following information:

- Name and address of the enterprise
- Boundary conditions of the certification including size of the premises and number of floors and additional buildings
- The CO₂ emissions in tonnes resulting from the calculator
- Details of how the certificate can be used
- Date of expiry of the certificate, the certificate will last 12 months from the date of issue
- A disclaimer to state that the calculation is based on information verified at the assessment date and that no liability can be accepted for changes to the business activities after the visit.

One of the main aims of the scheme is to encourage the business to reduce its carbon footprint and at the certificate stage generic information on carbon reduction will be given together with signposting to further sources of information.

I have a large business - how can I calculate its footprint?

Larger businesses will require a bespoke tool that is out with the scope of the scheme calculator. BRE Group offers a bespoke carbon footprint calculator service for larger businesses that requires an extensive review of the client's business circumstances to deliver a meaningful assessment.

If you are a large business with over 30 staff or undertake complex and varied business operations please contact the Scheme Administrator on 01463 667309 highlands@bre.co.uk and they will advise you how to best to proceed.

If you have any further questions, please contact our helpdesk on 01923 664100 or e-mail: enquiries@breglobal.com

