

Let's *Talk*

Green Economy

Workshop Toolkit

10 Steps to a **Low Carbon** Workplace

Why Focus on Carbon Emissions?



The scientific consensus on climate change is that the current trend - unprecedented rapid warming of our planet - is the result of greenhouse gas emissions from human activity, mainly since the industrial revolution.

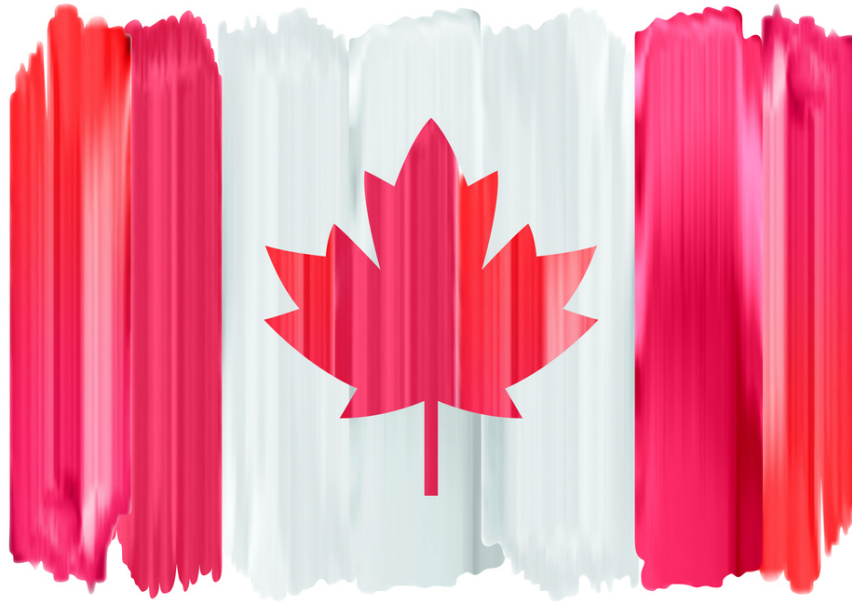
Carbon dioxide, methane, and other byproducts are expelled into the atmosphere, where they act like a “greenhouse”, trapping heat that would otherwise be reflected away from the Earth.

Reducing the amount of these greenhouse gases (GHG) entering our atmosphere is the single most effective way to mitigate the most serious impacts of climate change.

In simple terms, the green economy refers to an economy that keeps up in a livable, sustainable world.

Focusing on reducing your carbon emissions contributes to a greener economy by mitigating the impact your activities have on the larger problem, but also by making you more resilient to changes in resource availability, cost fluctuations, and regulatory requirements.

The global value of the green economy is projected to be US\$26 trillion (*Source: New Climate Economy*). Here in Canada, the clean energy sector is on track to employ 559,400 Canadians by 2030 (*Source: Clean Energy Canada*).



On a global, federal and municipal level, targets are being set to reduce emissions. In Ottawa, the municipality has set a target of achieving net zero by 2050 ([City of Ottawa](#)).

Of course, we're on this journey together. In Ottawa, there are over 18,000 small-to-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and they matter when it comes to reaching our targets. In Canada, 99.8% of businesses are SMEs with less than 500 employees.

Read more here:

[Clean Jobs Future - Clean Energy Canada](#)

[City of Ottawa - Business Energy and Emissions Profile \(BEEP\)](#)

[Canada will develop a plan to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050](#)

[Key Small Business Statistics - June 2016](#)

Sustainability: It's Good For Business



According to Jeffery Hollander, Co-Founder and Former CEO of [Seventh Generation](#) and co-CEO of [Sustain Natural](#), sustainability is “a systematic approach to thinking about the total impact a business has on the planet, as well as society”.

Sustainability is an increasingly important business consideration.

Bain & Company surveyed 297 global companies in 2018: **81% said sustainability is more important to their business today than it was five years ago**, and 85% believe that it will be even more important in five years.

Going green is good for your bottom line.

Nearly 80,000 emission-reduction projects from 190 Fortune 500 companies delivered **almost \$3.7 billion in savings for 2016 alone**, due to a combination of lower energy costs and improved efficiencies.

Read more here:

[Sustainability - its good for business by Green Economy Canada](#)

[Sustainability is 'good for humanity, but it's better for business'](#)

Ten Steps to a Low Carbon Workplace

1. Discovery

Know where your emissions come from.

2. Commitment

Your strategies and policies should reflect your commitment.

3. Engagement

Engage staff, they're part of the solution.

4. Low hanging fruit

Start with a known problem that will have a quick impact.

5. Automation

Leverage technology to reduce guesswork and human error.

6. Commuting

Think beyond the personal vehicle.

7. Corporate transportation

Reduce/avoid air travel, maintain fleets, electrify.

8. Offsets

Can be part of the solution, but not the only one.

9. Reduce waste

Engage staff, measure results and build momentum

10. Green your procurement & supply chain

Go green and demand more from your supply chain.

Step 1: Discovery

Businesses measure everything else that matters, so why not measure sustainability too? Identifying all your carbon emission sources will help determine where you can make significant carbon reductions. Some common sources of carbon emissions include:

- Building heating and cooling systems
- Electricity & water consumption
- Business travel
- Corporate fleet vehicles & commuting

Once you know your emissions sources, you can track them over time as you make reductions.

Read more here:

[Carbon management tips for businesses](#)

[Carbon Accounting: Seeing the Opportunity](#)

[Greenhouse Gas Protocol](#)



Step 2: Commitment

Making a commitment to reduce your organization's carbon impact is an important step, and goes hand-in-hand with corporate strategy, keeping your business on track and communicating your direction to customers and stakeholders.

Once you have made your commitment – share it publicly! This will let your audience know that you are proactive in the transition to a low carbon economy.

Read more here:

[Angela's B&B a Carbon 613 Member](#)

[Carbon 613 Pledge](#)

[IKEA Climate Positive by 2030](#)

['This is an enormous milestone': Maple Leaf Foods goes carbon neutral](#)

[Microsoft's plan to be climate negative by 2030](#)

Step 3: Engagement

Your staff are an important part of reducing your climate footprint. A **culture of sustainability** is also a desirable draw for new talent, and can improve staff retention.

Creating a sustainability committee or “green team” is a great way to involve staff. Depending on the type of business, you may need to tweak your engagement efforts to engage different audiences like tenants, volunteers, donors, etc.



Step 4: Low Hanging Fruit

Low-hanging fruit" is a term for projects that are easy to implement or tap into existing activities and/or plans. These quick wins benefit your business, familiarize staff with implementing sustainability measures, and build momentum to carry your organization through longer-term planning. Some common examples include:

- Reducing waste
- Setting up composting
- Equipment lifecycle
- Lighting retrofits
- Replacing with the greenest option

Unsure where to start? Conduct an Energy Audit! This specialized facility assessment will help in identifying those key opportunities for energy efficiency upgrades to maximize investments. EnviroCentre can provide assistance with this service!

Read more here:

[PSPC's Green Procurement List](#)

[NRCan ENERGY STAR rating](#)

envirocentre

Step 5: Automation

Automation improves the performance of your building or office space by systematizing things like heating, cooling and lighting controls, adjusting them automatically based on occupancy or scheduling, energy and cost savings.

Using a building automation system to adjust thermostat and lights can contribute to energy savings of up to 30%.

Read more here:

[Building Automation for Efficiency](#)



Step 6: Commuting

Think beyond the personal

vehicle! We live in a car-centric culture. As a result, many businesses have a singular focus in accommodating staff commutes: parking spaces. Have your business

service all modes of transportation instead of just cars. Consider some of the following:

- Bike parking: do we have it? Is it in a well lit area? How can we encourage more staff to cycle to work?
- Transit: do we have nearby bus stops? Can we share information with employees, clients, and customers about transit options?
- Carpooling: Can we promote carpooling at our business? Look into the City of Ottawa's carpooling platform [OttawaRideMatch](#).

Read more here:

[The High Cost of Hospital Parking – Canadian Parking Association](#)

Step 7: Corporate Transportation

According to the City of Ottawa's [emissions inventory](#), 90% of community based emissions are sourced from buildings and transportation, 44% of which comes from on-road transportation - community emissions are anything City operations do not control, so transportation does not include City fleet vehicles or OC Transpo. Consider how your business can support and encourage sustainable modes of transportation for commuting, daytime business travel, and your fleet vehicles.

Read more here:

[Keeping Your Tires Inflated for the Environment and for Your Safety](#)

[Compare savings when travelling by train](#)

Step 8: Offsets

Carbon offsets are credits your organization can purchase to support outside projects that reduce atmospheric carbon. While not an actual reduction of emissions, offsets can help make up for emissions you aren't able to eliminate right away.

It is important to remember that while offsetting is great - it does not directly reduce your business emissions. Don't let offsets offset your focus!

Read more here:

[A guide to carbon offsets](#)

[About carbon offsets](#)

[Bullfrog Power](#)



Step 9: Reduce Waste

Tackling waste is a natural step, since it is something most people interact with directly, and a great way to engage with staff, clients and customers. Consider conducting a Waste Audit to help understand your major sources of waste, and the effectiveness of your disposal systems. With a baseline established, you will be able to set targets and measure progress, just like with GHGs.

Additionally, consider a circular economic model: one where a product's lifecycle does not begin in manufacturing and end in a landfill. Evaluate how procurement decisions are made, and formalize a policy to favour products that are reused or repurposed, and can be repurposed again when your organization no longer needs them.

Read more here:

[Circular Economy – Waste Reduction Week in Canada](#)

Step 10: Green Your Procurement & Supply Chain

Go green and demand more from your suppliers! When you purchase products or services, remember that you have influence as a client. A good supplier will listen to the needs of their customers, and adjust their operations accordingly.

By spending time considering your supply chain, you are amplifying your efforts and influencing other businesses in other industries. This is a great communication tool, demonstrating that you are looking beyond your own business operations at the bigger economic picture.

Read more here:

[Purchasing for Sustainability – Government of Canada](#)

Thank You!

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