Your clean growth sustainability audit guide



Why conduct a sustainability audit?

Most businesses know the benefits that being more sustainable can bring; lower carbon footprint, improved efficiency and productivity, cost savings, engaged staff and improved reputation, to name a few. But what can be trickier is knowing where to start in pinpointing which sustainability changes are best for your business.

This is where a sustainability audit comes in. Taking a closer look at every area of your business, across your entire value chain, allows you to more accurately assess how your actions compare to sustainable best practice and what opportunities are available. You can then effectively plan the changes you'd like to implement over the coming months and years.

The process itself isn't complicated, however, it's something that often gets forgotten about amidst the day-to-day challenges of running a business. Improvements, big and small, can help your business reap the benefits of being more sustainable as well as having a positive impact on your bottom line.

The business benefits of being more sustainable include:

Improved productivity – research shows employees working in green-certified buildings have higher cognitive function and get better sleep, making them more productive during the day.¹

Attracting the best staff - 60% of UK job hunters research a potential employer's sustainability commitments before accepting a position.²

Competitive advantage - research shows that 83% of people would always pick a brand with a better record of sustainability.³

Greater access to investment - companies with green credentials are increasingly attractive to investors, with climate impact often among the criteria investors use to assess suitability.

90%

of SMEs said considerations around sustainability were important to their business

2in**5**

SMEs have made a commitment to Net Zero



If you want to accelerate your action on climate change we can help. In this guide we'll:



Walk you through the process of conducting a sustainability audit using our easy-to-use checklist.



Help you use your findings to identify possible sustainable improvement projects.



Introduce you to our Clean Growth Financing Initiative which can help you access discounted lending to fund sustainable business changes.

news.harvard.edu

www.totaljobs.com

³ intelligence.wundermanthompson.com Statistics taken from report From Now to Net Zero, 2021, Bank of Scotland and Yonder

What should you be looking at?

It's important that your sustainability efforts target both your business's direct and indirect environmental impacts.

The Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHGP), which was developed by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and the World Resources Institute, categorises businesses' carbon emissions into 3 distinct scopes:

Scope 1

Direct emissions from sources you own or control. These include emissions generated by your manufacturing process, company owned vehicles and onsite heating facilities i.e. gas boilers.

Scope 2

Indirect emissions from electricity, heat or steam purchased or acquired for your own use i.e. from your utilities provider.

Scope 3

Indirect emissions that occur as part of your value chain, including both upstream (i.e. raw materials acquisition and pre-processing activities) and downstream (i.e. distribution and storage, product use and product end-of-life activities) emissions. These include emissions generated by purchased goods and services, transportation, employee commuting, outsourced activities etc.

Scope 3 emissions can be harder to assess, but as they typically make up the bulk of a business's carbon footprint, it's important to consider them as part of any sustainability audit.

Your guide to conducting a sustainability audit Getting started

To make sure you get maximum value from your sustainability audit, before you get started, we'd recommend you:

Look through the audit checklist in advance.



The audit covers a wide range of areas and requires some specific information to complete it fully. Reviewing it before you get started can help you identify what you'll need. It may be that there's a particular person whose input you'll need, or a certain area of the business you'll require access to.

Assemble an audit team or nominated person.



Ideally this should involve different people from various areas of your business to ensure you have access to all the information you need to complete the audit accurately. This team/individual will also be crucial in supporting you on any projects you embark on as a result of the audit.

Pick the right time.



To get the most out of the audit, it's best to conduct it when you're in a position to implement some real changes. Perhaps when you're preparing to upscale or launch a new product set, or make some updates to your premises, or as part of your annual planning cycle?

Set a clear timeline.



How long the audit will take will depend on your business size and how many people you have supporting. Break down the various tasks you'll need to conduct as part of the audit so you can get a better idea of the scale of the job and how long it might take overall and then schedule them in. It's also worth booking in the subsequent meetings with your audit team to review the findings, discuss areas where improvements can be made and put plans in place for any projects you identify. Having this set up in advance will help you maintain momentum.

Approach the audit with an open mind.



You may already have some thoughts about what areas of your business are the most, or least, sustainable or which green improvements will bring the biggest benefits. For the purposes of conducting an audit, try to put them out of your mind, otherwise you may find yourself interpreting your results in a certain way or being swayed towards projects regardless of your audit findings.



Using the audit checklist

Each section contains a number of questions relating to sustainability best practice within your business, with the option to answer 'Yes', 'No', 'Not sure' and 'Not applicable'. Once you've completed each section, you'll be given a coloured rating - Green, Yellow, Orange or Grey for that area.

- Green = You've already made significant sustainability progress in this area.
- Yellow = There are some opportunities for you to make sustainability improvements in this area.
- Orange = There are significant opportunities for you to make sustainability improvements in this area, or further research is required to understand your sustainability credentials.
- Grey = This area isn't relevant to your business.

Simply check the boxes that apply to your business and your rating will be automatically generated.

Please make sure to answer every question within a section to get an accurate rating, and only supply one answer per question. If any questions don't apply to your business, just answer 'not applicable' - it won't affect your overall score.

You can choose to complete every section, or just the ones you feel are most important or relevant to your business.

When you've mapped the areas that have the biggest opportunities for improvements, you can refer back to this guide for example projects within each area.

Make sure you open in Adobe Acrobat Reader and save a copy to your computer - the checklist functionality may not work on other PDF readers. The audit checklist includes seven sections, each covering a different area:



Transport



Waste and recycling



Supply chain and procurement



Energy



Water



Social



Sustainability skills

Your sustainability audit

YES Business Can.



General					
	Yes	No	Not sure	Not applicable	
Do you measure your carbon emissions?					
Have you set clear emissions reduction targets?					
Have you written a statement for your business that includes a commitment to environmental and social responsibility?					
Do you have a 'sustainability team' established to promote sustainability within your organisation?					
Note - This is different to your audit team which is purely for running the audit process, although it could involve the same people.					
Do you use, or have you considered, sustainable finance options?					
Rating					

Transport					
	Yes	No	Not sure	Not applicable	
Do you have a working from home policy, to reduce the number of staff commuting each day?					
Are you fully equipped for video and teleconferencing and promote online meetings where possible?					
Do you promote a company car share scheme to staff?					
Do you encourage staff to take public transport to meetings rather than driving?					
Do you take part in the Cycle to Work scheme?					
Do you provide showers and changing rooms for staff who want to walk or cycle to work?					
If you have your own fleet or company cars, are they primarily low-emission, hybrid or electric vehicles?					
Have you considered how you will provide an electric charging infrastructure for your fleet in the future?					
If you use delivery companies, are you aware of their efforts around transport sustainability?					
If you use delivery companies, do you try to encourage consumers to select longer delivery times or have all their parcels delivered at once?					
Do you have a clear checklist in place for determining whether any business travel is essential?					
Do you offset* any business-related air travel?					
Rating			•		

 $[\]star$ Offset - compensating for emissions created by reducing them in another part of your business or investing in environmental projects elsewhere

Waste and	l recyclin	g		
	Yes	No	Not sure	Not applicable
Waste disposal				
Do you have a clear recycling policy and/or appropriate colour-coded or labelled bins in place for:				
- Paper				
- Cardboard				
- Glass				
- Tins and cans				
- Plastic				
- Food waste				
- Printer cartridges				
- Electrical equipment				
- Batteries				
Have you removed under-desk bins to encourage staff to use recycling bins instead?				
Have you banned the use of single-use plastic bottles and cups for all meetings/events and provided re-useable alternatives?				
If you're working on site or at events, do you have a clear policy for disposing of waste sustainably?				
Do you use 'FollowMe' or 'Push' printing?				
This helps reduce paper consumption by requiring users to activate print jobs				
Do you have a paperless policy?				
Rating		1	1	

Your packaging				
	Yes	No	Not sure	Not applicable
Is any packaging you use designed to be as compact as possible?				
Do you clearly state what materials any packaging is made of so customers can recycle effectively?				
Does the plastic packaging on any products you produce contain 25% or more recycled content?				
Do you use single-material packaging that can be recycled?				
Do you use compostable* packaging?				
Rating				

Waste and recycling (continued)						
	Yes	No	Not sure	Not applicable		
Production						
Do you have a strategy in place for recycling any waste created as part of your production process?						
Have you considered how you could produce 'zero-waste' versions of your products?						
Have you reviewed your processes to maximise efficiency and prevent overproduction?						
Rating						

End of life treatment of products				
	Yes	No	Not sure	Not applicable
Are your products designed in a way which is easy to repair?				
Are your products easy to recycle i.e. can they be disassembled easily?				
Can your products be reused, recycled, composted or diverted from landfill in other ways? And are they clearly labelled as such?				
Do you offer a recycling scheme for used products?				
Do you use your social media channels and/or website to educate and inform customers about the way your products can be recycled or reused?				
Do you calculate emissions from end-of-life treatment of sold products?				
Rating				

Sustainability skills						
	Yes	No	Not sure	Not applicable		
Do you employ anyone in a role dedicated to sustainability i.e. a sustainability co-ordinator?						
Have you ever employed a sustainability consultant to advise you?						
Do you feel confident you, or a member of your team, could develop a sustainability strategy for your business?						
Do you feel confident measuring and reporting on sustainability efforts?						
Are your workforce flexible and adaptable?						
Have you invested in sustainability training for your management team?						
Have you invested in sustainability training for your whole workforce?						
Rating						

Supply chain and procurement					
	Yes	No	Not sure	Not applicable	
Do you use local suppliers where possible?					
Do you regularly carry out audits on your suppliers?					
Are all of your suppliers asked to adhere to a code of conduct ensuring that their production processes meet certain sustainability criteria?					
Do you give preference to suppliers who have a commitment to sustainability or adhere to voluntary certification schemes e.g. Fair Trade?					
Rating					

Er	nergy			
	Yes	No	Not sure	Not applicable
Are all your lightbulbs CFL* or LED*?				
Do you have motion detectors for lights in meeting rooms, hallways and other communal spaces?				
Is your thermostat at the optimum level: 20 degrees C for offices and 16 degrees C for warehouses?				
Do you have any air leaks around doorways or windows?				
Are all (or as many as possible) radiators clear of furniture and other obstructions?				
Do you have cavity wall and roof insulation in your office space?				
Is energy-rating included in your criteria when replacing machinery?				
Have you established an optimum setting for all equipment i.e. the speed of fans in production machinery?				
Has the optimum setting referred to in the previous question been communicated to all staff?				
Do you use timers to power down machinery and computers out of office hours?				
Are you on a green energy tariff?				
Do you use any methods of renewable energy generation i.e. mini wind turbines or solar panels?				
Rating		•	-	-

^{*}CFL - compact fluorescent lamp, the original energy-saving bulb. They are reasonably cheap and last around 10,000 hours

^{*}LED - light emitting diode, the most energy-efficient bulbs, they last around 25-30 years

Water					
	Yes	No	Not sure	Not applicable	
Do you regularly monitor your water usage?					
Do you regularly inspect/maintain your pipes and taps to help detect any leaks?					
Do you have efficient flush toilets?					
Are your toilets and showers fitted with low-flow restrictors?					
Do you have automatic taps, so no one can leave them running, or spray taps which use less water?					
Do you use any alternative means of collecting water i.e. rainwater or greywater* harvesting?					
Rating					

Social						
	Yes	No	Not sure	Not applicable		
Do you have a diversity and inclusion policy?						
Do you work with any charity partners or take part in community outreach?						
Do you have any green spaces in your workplace?						
Do you have a biodiversity* action plan in place?						
Do you pay your staff the Living Wage?						
Do you offer staff mental health and wellbeing support i.e. access to an Employee Assistance Programme?						
Do you offer traineeships and/or apprenticeships?						
Rating						





^{*}Greywater - waste water from sinks, showers, dishwashers etc with low levels of contamination

^{*}Biodiversity - all the kinds of life you'll find in one area, including animals, plants and microorganisms. They work together in ecosystems to support life

Using your audit findings

When you have completed your audit, you will have a rating for each area, giving you an insight into where you have opportunities to focus your sustainability efforts.

What's possible for your individual business will depend on your current circumstances and this is where your audit team comes in.

- Review the audit findings together are there any quick wins which you could implement and start reaping the rewards of straight away?
- Identify any opportunities which fit in with your plans for the coming months i.e. if you're making any building updates can you incorporate any energy or water-saving projects?
- Assess if the audit flagged any areas which have so far been overlooked in terms of sustainability and where you need to brainstorm what changes you could make?

Over the coming pages, we take a look at some of the first steps you can take once you've got your audit results, resources you may find useful on your sustainability journey and some suggested sustainable projects which could make a difference to both your carbon footprint and bottom line.

First steps

First things first, take a deep breath. Becoming more sustainable won't happen overnight and it's likely you may have more areas to focus on than you initially anticipated. If that's the case, remember, small, incremental adjustments can have a huge impact over time and will also go a long way to changing your culture, making future adaptations easier to implement.

Decide your priorities



Now you know the areas where most progress is needed, pick one or two to focus on initially. Trying to do everything at once means you won't be able to easily assess the effects of the changes you make. You may want to prioritise areas where the changes needed are low-cost or easier to implement, or that align with your business strategy.

5

Set clear targets and timelines

Once you've chosen an area of focus, it's time for a clear plan. Decide what timeframe you want to conduct your activity over and what improvements you want to see. Remember to set goals that are SMART - specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed.



Share the findings

Even if your findings aren't very positive, share them with your employees and outline what steps you're going to take as a result. Getting everyone on board will make it easier to introduce changes and your staff may have some great ideas to support your plans.



Bring in external support

If your results have left you feeling overwhelmed, it may be useful to bring in some external support. Someone who can take an objective look at your business and identify the key changes needed.



Re-audit after a set period

The audit doesn't have to be a one-off activity. Save a copy and re-look at it every quarter or six-monthly, perhaps just focusing on the areas you've been trying to address. Hopefully you'll see clear progress.

Where can you get help?

Access useful resources and guidance on our sustainability hub.

Get guidance on making your premises greener from the UK Green Buildings Council.

The Carbon Trust provides tools, guides and reports to help you achieve your sustainability goals.

<u>Learn more about the circular economy with The Ellen MacArthur Foundation.</u>





The four-year cost saving for a small panel Battery Electric Van is

£3,688

Making your fleet low emission

Upgrading your fleet to be more sustainable is a big commitment, but one which can reap benefits in terms of reduced emissions and lower ongoing running costs. In terms of deciding which low-emission vehicles are right for you, it's worth considering what vehicles are most practical for your business needs i.e. do they have sufficient range, payload and load volume to meet your needs and what is their whole lifetime cost as well as the upfront cost?

The Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership suggests the four-year cost saving for a small panel Battery Electric Van is £3,688⁵ - considering the initial vehicle cost, fuel, tax and maintenance. For plug-in hybrid and extended range electric vehicles, the expected savings across four years are £1,768.⁵



Experts suggest that between 20% and 25% of packaging-related expenses can be saved if companies ditch oversized packaging

25%



Waste and recycling

Investing in machinery to help recycling efforts

Cardboard is a significant waste stream for many small to medium-sized enterprises. Investing in machinery like balers can help flatten and compress cardboard, making it easier to transport it to recycling facilities and helping reduce often costly collection fees.

Shifting to lightweight packaging

Eco-friendly packaging has the potential to reduce your carbon footprint, minimise overheads and boost your green credentials with customers increasingly looking for sustainable options. Shifting to a lightweight design is one way to reduce your packaging's environmental impact while also reducing shipping costs. This could be as simple as always using boxes that fit the product rather than being too big. This would not only cut down on wasted material, but also transport costs. Experts suggest that between 20% and 25% of packaging-related expenses can be saved if companies ditch oversized packaging. ⁶

Incentivise customers to recycle

You may think that once your product is in the hands of the customer you have little influence over what happens when it reaches the end of its life. However, there are ways to encourage customers to recycle and ensure your products end up back in the supply chain. This could involve 'nudging' customer behaviour by offering an incentive for returning used products to you i.e. money off another purchase, or outlining the benefits of recycling, and clear instructions of how best to do so, on your packaging. Some tech companies offer trade-in schemes where customers can get cashback when they return qualifying devices, for example. They'll also collect old electronic goods of any brand, in any condition, and recycle them for free. T-shirt maker Teemill's new stock is made from old products, which are specifically designed to be sent back to them when they are worn out.

⁶ <u>Packsize research</u>



Engaging with suppliers on sustainability

Making contact with your suppliers on sustainability can bring numerous business benefits, including reducing reputational risk through greater transparency, and cost and emissions savings through increased collaboration in areas like packaging and transport. Ways to encourage engagement between you and your suppliers could include regular meetings – virtual or face-to-face – for sharing experiences and best practice. You could also introduce supplier score cards which can be completed annually to help identify which suppliers are meeting your green requirements and, particularly with critical suppliers, can also be used as a starting point for discussions about sustainability.



Ways to encourage engagement between you and your suppliers could include regular virtual or face-to-face meet-ups for sharing experiences and best practice

Energy

Making the switch to LEDs

It may seem like a simple change but switching out traditional incandescent bulbs for LEDs can significantly reduce both your carbon emissions and your energy bills. For example, in a 120 sq ft office, swapping out 20 60-watt lights for LEDs could result in cost savings of around £240 a year and emissions savings of 1,039.64kg - the same amount of CO2 generated by driving 2,571 miles.⁷

Insulating your office space

Typically, two-thirds of heat generated in a building is lost through the building's fabric. According to the Carbon Trust, insulation is one of the most cost-effective methods of increasing a building's energy efficiency. Using natural and low-embodied carbon insulation materials such as sheep wool, cellulose, hemp blanket or boards, or cork is preferable as there is less need to offset the emissions generated during production. In particular, the Carbon Trust highlights cellulose as a cost-effective means of loose insulation, with very low embodied carbon, and cork as a low cost, low embodied carbon option for rigid insulation.

Renewable energy technology

There are a number of renewable energy options open to businesses, from signing up to a green energy tariff with your supplier to going a step further and producing your own energy using wind power, solar panels, ground source heat pumps or combined heat and power. If opting to produce your own renewable energy, it's important to consider both the upfront cost and also how long it will take for you to recoup your investment through energy cost savings. Solar PV panels are a popular option for businesses as they are suitable in urban environments.

ywww.inui.co.uk/led-lighting-calculator

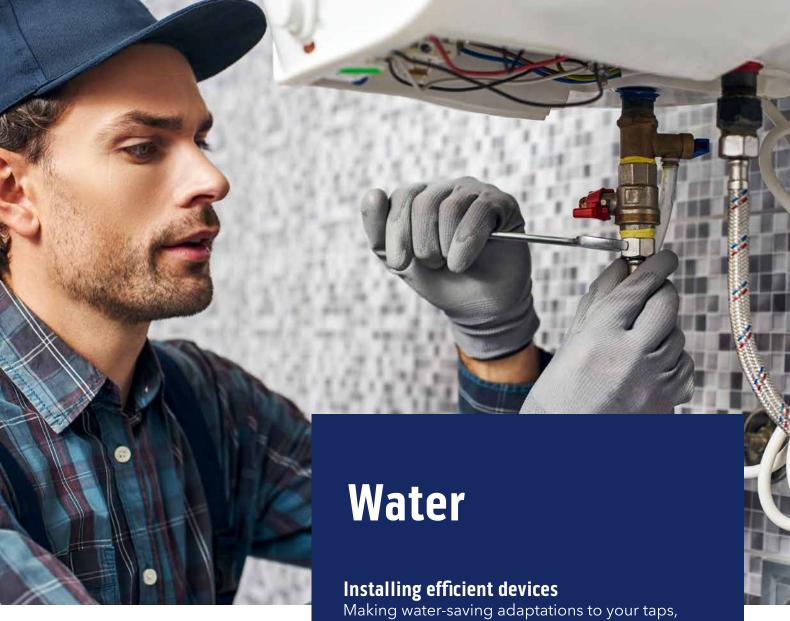


In a 120 sq ft office, swapping out 20 60-watt lights for LEDs could result in cost savings of around £240 a year and emissions savings of 1,039.64kg

£240



⁸ prod-drupal-files.storage.googleapis.com





Rainwater recycling systems can help reduce mains water consumption by over

50%

Making water-saving adaptations to your taps, toilets and showers could help you cut down water usage significantly. Tap adaptors which fit on existing taps combine water with air to lower output by as much as 50%, while switching to sensor or spray taps cuts tap water use by as much as 70%. If your workplace has showers, or is looking to install them, aerating showerheads can cut water flow by as much as 50%. 'Save-a-Flush bags', which you place in the toilet cistern, can cost less than £2 each but save 1.2 litres of water for every flush."

Rainwater recycling system

Rainwater recycling systems can help reduce mains water consumption by over 50%. How much the initial system costs depends on various factors including the tank capacity, size and shape, where the tank/s will be located and whether a bespoke solution is required. Businesses may also require more sophisticated systems which include leak detection, additional disinfection measures and multiple pumps.

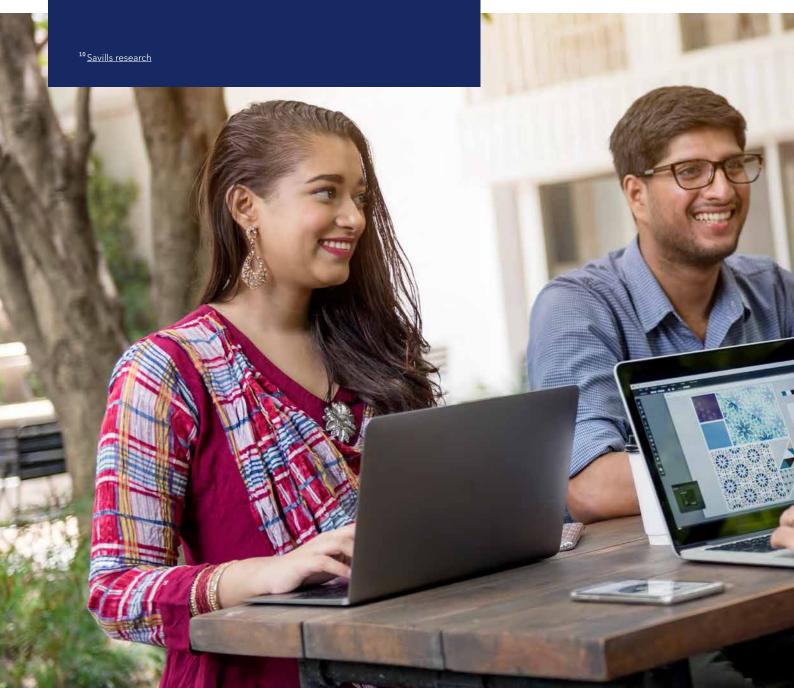
Social

Creating a green space

Following in the footsteps of Amazon and Facebook and establishing a green space in your workplace not only boosts your green credentials it can improve employee wellbeing and productivity. Recent research by Savills found that 55% of employees consider proximity to green space to be important in their ideal work environment 10. Adding a wildlife garden or pond to any outdoor space can also help boost biodiversity, while planning and developing the area is a great teambuilding activity.



of employees consider proximity to green space to be important in their ideal work environment





Sustainability skills

Invest in staff training

Providing all staff with sustainability training is a great way to create a greener culture within your organisation and equip them with the skills they need to support your sustainability initiatives. Training can be informal, from simple lunch and learns with experts to more formal training programmes using an external provider. Training can include identifying opportunities, managing transformational change, measurement and reporting and communicating sustainability to both employees and customers.

Providers who can assist with sustainability training include Cambridge University's Institute for Sustainability Leadership, who have been training teams at Bank of Scotland for a number of years.

Hire a sustainability specialist

Having a sustainability specialist on staff can help drive your green agenda and ensure it maintains momentum. If left solely with the existing management team there is a risk sustainability will take a back seat to other operational priorities. A sustainability manager needs to be able to reconcile your day-to-day operations with the innovative sustainability activities that are increasingly required by customers, investors and your supply chain. Key skills for a sustainability manager include a good understanding of your industry, strong communication, conflict management, strategic planning and innovative thinking. Having a sustainability manager can also ensure you maximise the benefits of going green they can improve your public image by demonstrating your commitment to the environment and improve your bottom line by accelerating practices that promote efficiency.



Having a sustainability specialist on staff can help drive your green agenda and ensure it maintains momentum.

Making sustainable changes with the Clean Growth Financing Initiative

Making sustainable changes to your business often comes with an upfront cost. Our Clean Growth Financing Initiative (CGFI) can help you access discounted lending to fund green improvements.

It is designed to support a broad range of investments, from small improvements in environmental impact, right through to large-scale renewable energy infrastructure projects. The scheme is open to businesses with an annual turnover of more than £3 million and funding is available across Term Lending (£50k min) and Asset Finance (£25k min).

Examples of eligible green investment could include:

- Reduction in carbon and greenhouse gas emissions for core business processes, properties and infrastructure.
- Energy efficiency, renewables, environmental sustainability improvements or production of related products.
- Investment in low carbon vehicles and transport.
- Investment to improve water efficiency.
- Investment to reduce waste or improve recycling rate.

Loan purpose must be on the eligibility list - please contact your relationship manager for more information.



Take a closer look at your buildings' green credentials

Our Green Buildings Tool, created in association with sustainability consultancy CFP Green Buildings, can analyse how a range of energy-saving initiatives would affect the energy performance certificate (EPC) rating of your buildings, and allow you to estimate the investment cost, helping you to make a business case for sustainable improvements.

Speak to your Relationship Manager for more information.

How other companies have benefitted from the CGFI

A number of companies have already used the Clean Growth Financing Initiative to make sustainable changes within their business. We take a closer look at what some have done with the funds and the benefits they're seeing as a result.



Allan Munro Construction

Family-owned Allan Munro Construction secured a six-figure package, including a development loan and specific funding as part of the CGFI, to fund the development of new homes in the Highlands.

The business used the CGFI to install a biomass district heating system at the development, combating the issue of fuel poverty in certain areas of the Highlands where limited alternatives to electric heating are available. The new system will reduce the carbon footprint of the development and save homeowners at least 20% compared to standard electricity costs.



Teemill

Print on-demand t-shirt fulfilment and online store builder Teemill uses circular economy processes, including offering £5 credit to people returning old t-shirts. It borrowed a six-figure sum under the CGFI to purchase land for a factory extension, which is entirely powered by renewable energy.



Tamar Nurseries

The plant nursery borrowed £600,000 to support expansion and greenhouse construction using 80% recycled material. The development will include 250 square metres of solar panels, a state-of-the-art battery system which can store 95KW and a drip-feed irrigation system which reduces water consumption by up to 50%.



Newlyns Farm

The family-run farm borrowed £150,000 under the CGFI to install a combined heat and power (CHP) system to provide energy for the farm shop and café. The new system, which uses sustainably-sourced biomass fuel, runs alongside existing biomass boilers and means the farm shop now predominantly runs on sustainably produced heat and power.

YES BUSINESS CAN.



Find out more about the CGFI

To find out more about the CGFI and how it could help your business, speak to your Relationship Manager or take a look at our website

ANY PROPERTY GIVEN AS SECURITY, WHICH MAY INCLUDE YOUR HOME, MAY BE REPOSSESSED IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON YOUR MORTGAGE OR OTHER DEBTS SECURED ON IT.

All lending is subject to a satisfactory credit assessment.

Important Information

Our service promise

If you experience a problem, we will always try to resolve it as quickly as possible. Please bring it to the attention of any member of staff. Our complaints procedures are published at <u>bankofscotland.co.uk/business/contactus</u>

Please contact us if you would like this information in an alternative format such as Braille, large print or audio.

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We adhere to The Standards of Lending Practice which are monitored and enforced by the LSB: <u>www.</u> <u>lendingstandardsboard.org.uk</u> and apply to businesses which have an annual turnover of no more than £25 million.

Eligible deposits with us are protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS). We are covered by the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS). Please note that due to FSCS and FOS eligibility criteria not all business customers will be covered.