

# AD NET ZERO

ALL FOR NONE

A guide to understanding advertising's role  
in addressing the climate emergency 2022/2023



ADVERTISING  
ASSOCIATION



IPA  
Incorporated  
by Royal Charter

ISBA

Green  
Element

**Welcome to the Ad Net Zero Guide. This document has been created by the Ad Net Zero team, using insights and tips drawn from our supporter base of advertisers, agencies, media owners and tech companies since its launch in November 2020.**

The purpose of this guide is to help simplify the complex issue of climate action and provide advice on how and where advertising and marketing professionals can take clear, practical action in their day-to-day working lives.

This guide is a public document produced by the Ad Net Zero team to help encourage systemic change across the global advertising industry. As advertising and marketing services professionals, we can all help tackle the climate emergency.

Our aim is for everyone in the advertising industry to use this guide to address any practical questions about how to measure and reduce operational carbon emissions generated by advertising and marketing. Ultimately, our aim is to help the industry make a meaningful and long-lasting change to the way we make advertising and limiting the impact it has on our climate.





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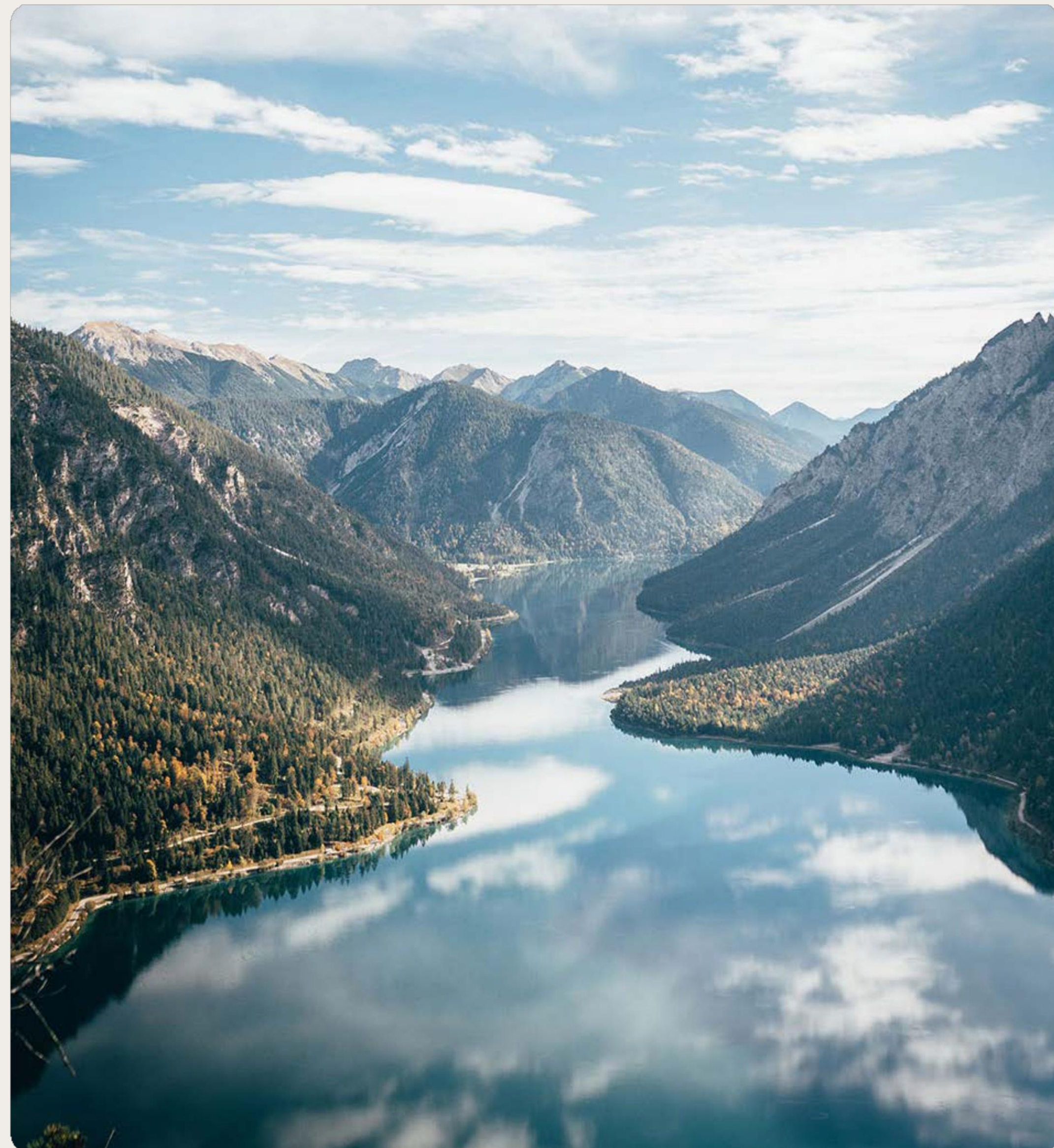


# what we know

The advertising industry has acknowledged its contribution to carbon emissions and has put a plan in place to reverse that, Ad Net Zero. The ambition is to make significant progress in getting the carbon emissions of our industry's operations down to 'real net zero'\*, during this decade. We believe that this goal could be within our reach, if we take a clear series of actions.

The UK advertising industry was the first to adopt Ad Net Zero, and research published in the Ad Net Zero report outlined that the total UK agency operational CO2e emissions from IPA-member agencies alone was estimated to exceed 84,000 tonnes a year.

**\*Net Zero:** A state of balance between anthropogenic emissions and anthropogenic removals. The term carbon neutral is often used interchangeably with 'net zero' but they are not the same - carbon neutrality is when organisations are counterbalancing CO2 emissions with carbon offsets without necessarily reducing their absolute emissions.







# 10-point plan

**For any business looking to put climate action into place within their advertising operations, the following is a 10-point plan to do just that.**

We have designed this based on best practice from across our Ad Net Zero supporter base. You can find additional information about each point on the relevant page, but, to summarise:

01

**Get top-level buy-in;** communicate your commitment to all stakeholders.

02

**Establish a senior sustainability lead and a cross-discipline “Green Team”** of like-minded individuals to help drive progress and hold the organisation accountable.

03

**Select a consultancy partner to support you in gathering data and setting reduction actions based on your individual operational emissions profile.**

04

**Measure:** If you have not already done so, start tracking your utility, waste disposal, water consumption and business travel as a starter. See **page 9** for the Ad Net Zero recommended data list. Get help from a consultancy partner if you need to get audited on your operational emissions.

05

**Reduce emissions** year-on-year. Key sources of operational emissions are travel and energy, so find ways to be more efficient and greener! You can find more recommendations on how to reduce these on **pages 10, 11 and 12.**

06

**Offset unavoidable emissions.** Some emissions are unavoidable or residual because the technology or alternative processes do not exist. If you really must offset, then seek a credible and permanent carbon removal scheme, but limit this to no more than 10% of your total emissions. Check **page 13** for more information.

07

**Establish scientific and verifiable reduction targets.** See **page 14** for more information.

08

**Sign up and be an active supporter of the Ad Net Zero initiative.** Invite all your colleagues to take part – from client-facing teams to those working in finance and operations.

09

**Enable and encourage your people to take the Ad Net Zero training programme.**

10

**Refer to other resources within Ad Net Zero to reduce emissions from advertising, such as AdGreen for practical ideas on how to reduce your emissions from production and isla for staging events.**





# 1. Get top-level buy-in; communicate your commitment to all stakeholders

**01**

**Educate top management about the environmental crisis and the key role that the advertising industry plays in fighting it.** This will ensure top-level buy-in.

**02**

**Update your organisation's policies** with the involvement of top-management (e.g. travel policy, procurement policy, environmental policy).

**03**

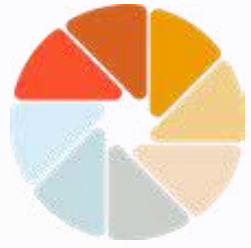
**Next, communicate a clear commitment**, from your company leaders affirming your public policy of achieving net zero operational emissions over time (proven by the fact that policies have been put in place and top management are following). This commitment should be communicated both internally (e.g. to your own employees) and externally (e.g. stakeholders).

Doing this will keep Ad Net Zero's ethos for collective industry collaboration front-of-mind:

We are 'All for None'.







## 2. Establish a cross-discipline “Green Team” with a senior sustainability lead

**Establishing a Green Team with senior leadership can help drive action through the company. This can work well to spread the word and hold the organisation accountable.**

Find out if there is a “**senior green lead**” and associated “**Green Team**” or working group in your organisation. If there is one, why not join and actively engage with it? You could be involved in the decisions that are being made at a company-wide level. If there isn’t one, you can suggest initiating one.

Establishing a Green Team is a vital step to helping your company tackle the environmental crisis as it ensures wider buy-in and cooperation at all company levels. The transition to global net zero and to sustainable living must be inclusive and not only for an exclusive group of people.







## 3. Consultancy options

There is nothing wrong with attempting the net-zero challenge yourself, especially if you have the in-house expertise and resources to tackle it. But if you need help with your carbon-cutting programme, there is always the option of seeking expert assistance.

Several companies offer a range of support services. Here are some of the consultancies that Ad Net Zero UK supporters are working with:

Green  
Element



carbon  
footprint



Carbon  
Intelligence



ecoact  
an atos company



PlanetMark



SGS



SOCOTEC



3 ACORNS



S&P Global



Local market research on the best consultancy partner for your business may be required.





## 4. Essential data points

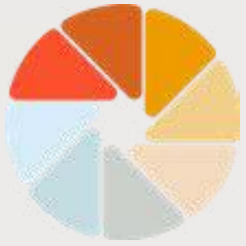
**To reduce your carbon emissions, it is important that you have a means to collect and track data on an annual basis. Only then will you be able to understand where the source of higher emissions are and what to do to reduce them.**

You can collect data from your finance, office management and other internal sources. You can also get help from consultancies. The type of data you should collect will include areas like:

- **Annual electricity use for the reporting year**
- **Annual gas use from the grid**
- **Air con refrigerants**
- **Business travel** – such as public transport and taxis
- **Flights:** origin, cabin class, destination and distance travelled
- **Hotel stays**
- **Fleet car data:** fleet and fuel type, as well as distance travelled
- **Annual water consumption**
- **Recycled and Non-recycled paper usage** (annual)
- **Information about employee working patterns and commuting to the office**

Ad Net Zero Action 1 provides a central data collection point for the industry's operational carbon footprint. The key benefit of aggregating the data is that we can get an industry-wide picture to understand the progress we are all making. This will provide a database against which your performance can be measured.





## 5. Actions to take in reducing operational emissions



### Transport

- Establish low carbon travel policies for business travel. Examples could include, justifying reasons for travel, ensuring flights (if deemed essential) are booked in economy class and not business class.
- Provide facilities and incentives to facilitate low carbon travel by staff where possible (bike storage, showers, season ticket loans, electric car charging points etc).
- Discuss options with your cab and courier suppliers – could they supply electric or hybrid options to you as standard for example?



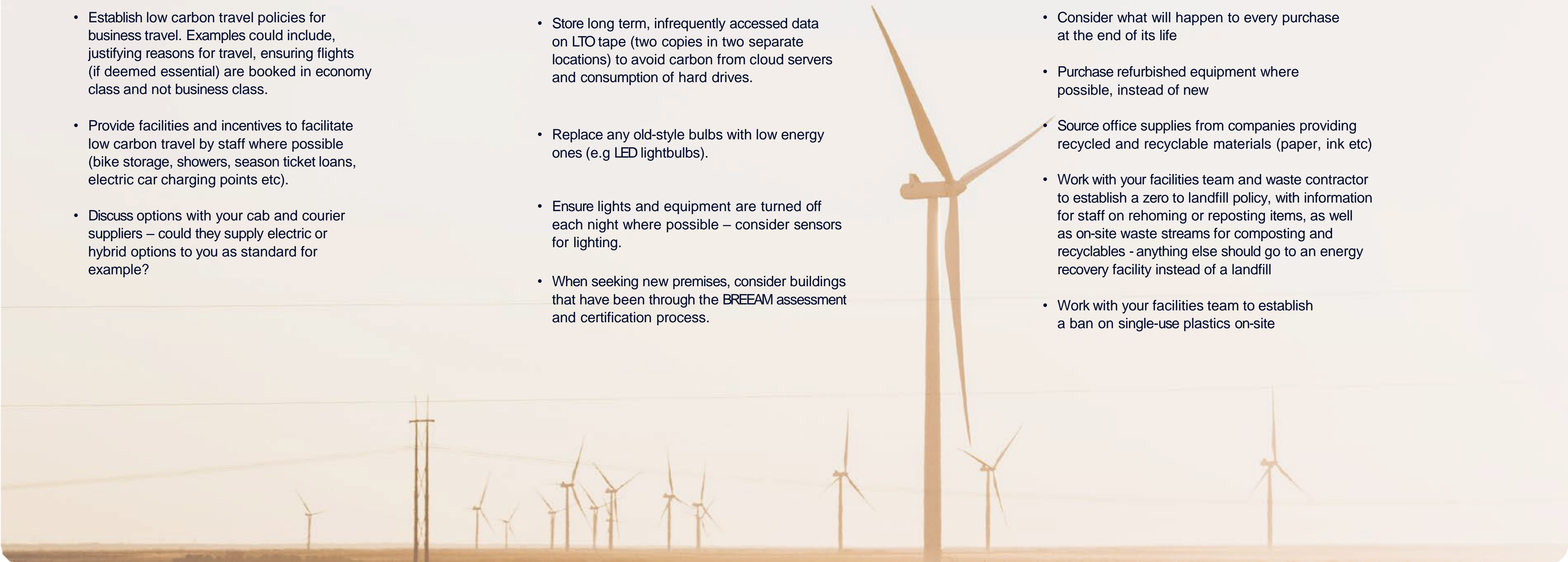
### Energy Consumption

- Store long term, infrequently accessed data on LTO tape (two copies in two separate locations) to avoid carbon from cloud servers and consumption of hard drives.
- Replace any old-style bulbs with low energy ones (e.g LED lightbulbs).
- Ensure lights and equipment are turned off each night where possible – consider sensors for lighting.
- When seeking new premises, consider buildings that have been through the BREEAM assessment and certification process.



### Materials & Waste

- Consider what will happen to every purchase at the end of its life
- Purchase refurbished equipment where possible, instead of new
- Source office supplies from companies providing recycled and recyclable materials (paper, ink etc)
- Work with your facilities team and waste contractor to establish a zero to landfill policy, with information for staff on rehoming or reposting items, as well as on-site waste streams for composting and recyclables - anything else should go to an energy recovery facility instead of a landfill
- Work with your facilities team to establish a ban on single-use plastics on-site







## 5.1 Air travel policy ideas

**Business travel, especially flying, typically accounts for 60% of an advertising agency's total emissions.**

One transatlantic business class round trip generates more carbon than the average agency employee does in a whole year at work (c.3.4tCO<sub>2</sub>e)<sup>1</sup>. Hence, one of the main opportunities for reducing your carbon footprint is to reduce flying.

Doing so often needs the co-operation and understanding from clients. But increasingly they too are seeking to reduce the emissions associated with their suppliers, as well as appreciating the benefits in time and cost that come with flying less. Several agencies have adopted flight-reduction policies which have created a shift in behaviour change.

1. LHR to JFK return in business class generates 5,112 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>e (source, [Atmosfair.de](#)). 3.4 tonnes per person working in UK advertising calculated by using the GHG protocol carbon factors and consumption data from Green Element, then the total number of full-time equivalent staff was divided over the data years (2017- 2019), and the result was the total emissions into annual emissions per person.

01

**Require employees to use a decision tree** (see next page) to ascertain whether taking a flight is justified.

02

**Instructing corporate travel agents to credit any air miles** or equivalent reward to the company, not the individual taking the flight.

03

**Impose an economy-only seating policy.** Economy class travel is less carbon intensive than business class travel. For example, emissions per [passenger.km](#) for economy class travel is 0.15kg CO<sub>2</sub>e but for business class it is 0.43kg CO<sub>2</sub>e and for first class it is 0.60 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e. ‘

04

**Give clients real commercial benefits from a no-flying policy on their business:** For instance, in the UK Iris has launched a programme which encourages clients to sign up to a new “climate charter” where you can get access to Iris’ sustainability specialists free of charge. The charter’s main focus is on decreasing international travel.

05

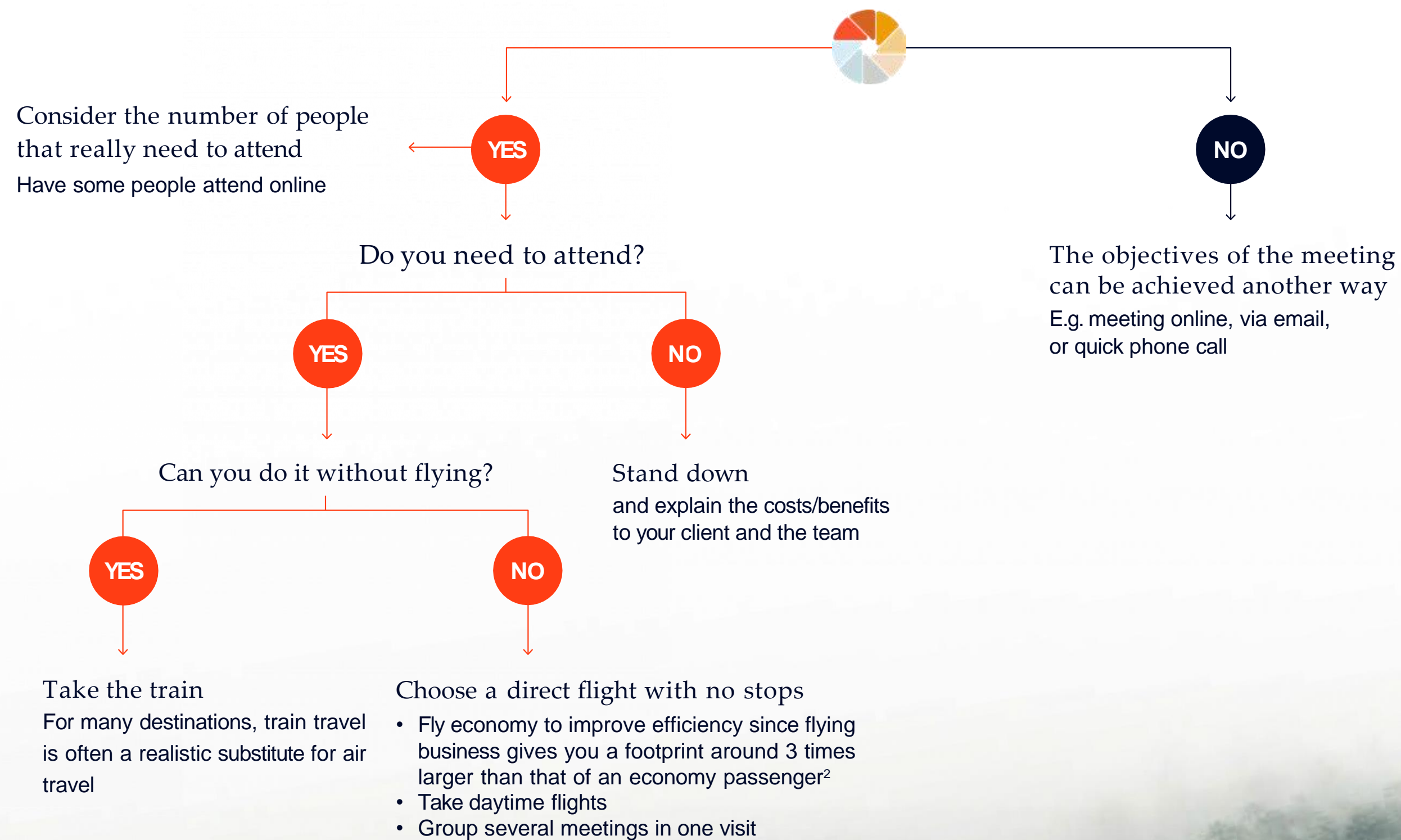
**Offer employees additional holiday if they choose to take a train or drive** instead of flying for their personal travel.

06

**If you must fly,** choose an airline with newer, more fuel-efficient fleets. Google Flights, for example, provides information on the carbon emissions of flights.



## 5.2 Is the physical meeting necessary?







## 6. Set a credible net-zero target

**Set a credible science-based net-zero target. This target needs to set a clearly defined pathway to net zero in-line with the Paris Agreement goal. The minimum date is 2050 to get net-zero but we encourage everyone to set more ambitious targets. Most organisations have committed to net-zero before 2040 at the earliest, but some have gone further to commit to 2030.**

You should have your science-based target externally validated. The Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) is the leading and most recognised organisation for this. **See page 14** for more info.

When you reach your net-zero date, you can emit no more than a maximum of 10% of your baseline footprint. You might find that there are residual emissions that are extremely difficult to eliminate. In this scenario, some companies choose to use permanent carbon removal offsets to address these residual emissions at their net-zero target date and for every year until they no longer have any carbon emissions.







## 7. Sign up to the Science-based Targets Initiative

**The Science-Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) enables companies to demonstrate credible leadership on climate action by publicly committing to and reporting on, science-based GHG reduction targets.**

SBTi has created a framework based on robust climate science to support businesses/ companies in setting GHG emissions reduction targets which are aligned with capping global warming to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels.

### Steps to SBTi's

**01****Commit:**

Submit a letter to the SBTi establishing your intent to set a science-based target

**02****Develop:**

Work on an emissions reduction target in line with the SBTi's criteria

**03****Submit:**

Present your target to the SBTi for official validation

**04****Communicate:**

Announce your target and inform your stakeholders

**05****Disclose:**

Report company-wide emissions publically (e.g. through CDP) and progress against targets on an annual basis

If you are an SME, you should use the streamlined route for SMEs. For more, see [sciencebasedtargets.org](https://sciencebasedtargets.org)





## 8. Become an Ad Net Zero supporter



**Come and join the movement and sign up to the Ad Net Zero initiative. More companies being part of Ad Net Zero will facilitate the exchange of ideas and collaboration. We are creating a community of advertising companies who have a clear plan on how to tackle the climate crisis together.**

If you want to find out more, drop us a line at [adnetzero@iapi.com](mailto:adnetzero@iapi.com)







## 9. a d n e t z e r o t r a i n i n g

**Ad Net Zero offers a training qualification to help people working in the advertising and marketing services industries understand the climate crisis and the actions to achieve net zero emissions from the development, production and media placement of advertising.**

**The qualification will equip every ad professional with the knowledge, tools and resources to act on the climate crisis and find ways in their work – day to day, to do this. This is a 6 hour course delivered via five modules and a final multiple-choice exam, with a digital certificate of completion and a MIPA star awarded to successful participants. It is available at a discounted cost for Ad Net Zero supporters. There is currently a UK and Global version of the training, with a USA version being released in the second half of 2023.**

Learning is delivered via five modules to help participants understand the key concepts related to our climate future and where to seek out tools to enable them to act in their professional role and as a member of society. The course also offers further reading to deepen understanding of the topics, but this is optional.

### MODULE 01

#### Climate fundamentals

Climate change, its history and current key legislation, policies, initiatives and organisations to be aware of.

### MODULE 02

#### Ad Net Zero

deep dive into Ad Net Zero, its origins, ambitions and the action plan needed to drive change through the advertising industry.

### MODULE 03

#### Changing the way we work

A step-by-step guide to the actions we need to take as individuals and businesses, exploring the proportionality of impacts and decisions we make around all aspects of the way we work.

### MODULE 04

#### Sustainable behaviour change

An introduction to the #ChangeTheBrief initiative, focusing on how the skills and influence of the industry can be applied to promoting sustainable lifestyles with practical ways to incorporate action into the creative process

### MODULE 05

#### Understanding the rules and regulations around greenwashing in advertising

A guide to the fundamentals of 'greenwashing' and how to actively avoid it in the work we produce. This module will provide an understanding of the global regulatory landscape, reviews examples of rulings by regulators around the world, and offers practical tips for both agencies and advertisers.

[SIGN UP](#)





## 10. Further resources to reduce emissions from the advertising process



### AdGreen Training and Carbon Calculator

This training is aimed at those who work in creative departments, advertising agency production departments, production companies for both motion and stills, and crew.

The AdGreen Carbon Calculator allows you to work out the carbon footprint of motion, stills and audio projects within advertising campaigns so that you can assess the environmental impact of your production activities.

Additionally, you can check further resources for actions where you can make an impact.

[FURTHER RESOURCES](#)



### Reducing emissions through awards and events

isla is an independent industry body supporting the events sector transition to a more sustainable future, working with agencies and brands, organisers and suppliers, providing practical guidance, tools and support on environmental issues.

They have also launched proseed, the event industry's first universal best practice framework and TRACE, the carbon measurement platform for sustainable events. Thanks to our partnership, all Ad Net Zero supporters are entitled to a discounted membership of isla.

Contact: [hello@weareisla.co.uk](mailto:hello@weareisla.co.uk)



### Harnessing advertising's power to support consumer behaviour change

The industry can play a critical role in shifting consumers towards more sustainable values, attitudes, and behaviour by explaining to agencies how to challenge a brief to make it more sustainable.

The Alliance provides an on demand and face to face [learning programme](#) and community to all its members, offering insights and expert advice at a category level on how we can adapt our work to promote more sustainable choices and behaviours in line with a zero-carbon world.





## GET IN TOUCH

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