

AN EASY-TO-USE JARGON BUSTER OF SUSTAINABILITY TERMS AND PHRASES YOU MAY NOT KNOW.

Sustainability can be a jargon-filled forest of acronyms and technical speak.

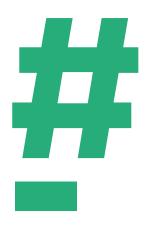
This quick reference guide should help you decipher some of those that you come across.

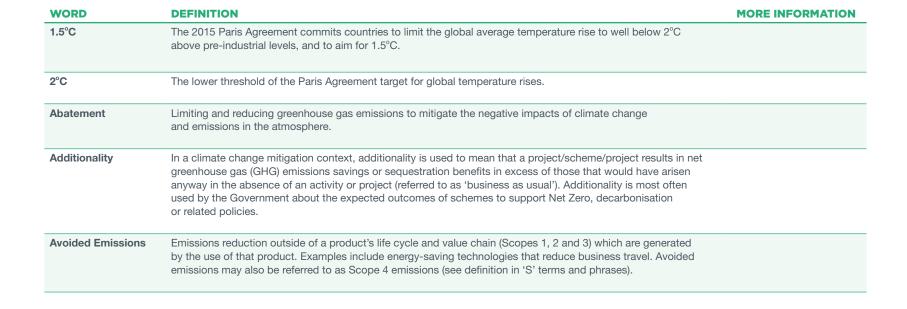
Select a letter below to see a glossary starting with that letter.







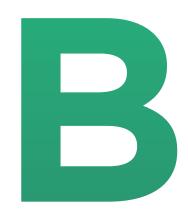












WORD	DEFINITION	MORE INFORMATION
Behind the Meter	Refers to energy-related activities that occur on the consumer's side, typically within or close to their premises. It involves the generation, consumption, storage, and management of energy using various distributed energy resources (DERs) located on-site. These resources can include solar panels, wind turbines, batteries, fuel cells, and even small-scale cogeneration systems.	
Bioenergy Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS)	Electricity generation that is produced using biofuels where the resultant ${\rm CO_2}$ is captured and stored long term, resulting in net negative carbon emissions.	
Biofuels/Biomass	A fuel that is derived from biological/ organic matter.	
Blue Carbon	Refers to carbon captured by oceans and coastal ecosystems.	
Blue Hydrogen	Blue hydrogen is produced mainly from natural gas, using a process called steam reforming, which brings together natural gas and heated water in the form of steam. The output is hydrogen, but carbon dioxide is also produced as a by-product. So, the definition of blue hydrogen includes the use of carbon capture and storage (CCS) to trap and store this carbon.	
Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS)	The scheme provides eligible householders with grants to cover part of the cost of replacing fossil fuels heating systems with a heat pump or biomass boiler. The current scheme runs from 2022 to 2025.	
BREEAM	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method is one of the longest-established assessment and certification methods for sustainable buildings. It provides a way for clients to establish their environmental goals for a building, as well as an independent assessment of asset performance.	







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Building Regulations: Part L (2021)	Building regulation in England sets standards for the energy performance of new and existing buildings.	
Building Regulations: Part F (2021)	Building regulation in England for the ventilation requirements to maintain indoor air quality.	
Building Regulations: Part O (2021)	Building regulation in England sets standards for overheating in new residential buildings.	
Bundled Power/ Bundled REGOs		







DEFINITION	MORE INFORMATION
The UK Government sets five-yearly carbon budgets which currently run until 2037. They restrict the amount of greenhouse gases the UK can legally emit in a five-year period.	
CCS stands for carbon capture and storage. You may also see CCUS used, which means carbon capture, utilisation and storage, see below. It is a technology that captures carbon dioxide from industrial facilities such as power stations to avoid emissions entering the atmosphere.	
The capture and re-use of CO ₂ . It can also refer to the long-term storage of captured CO ₂ .	
CO ₂ e or Carbon Dioxide Equivalent is a unit used to equate the emissions of other greenhouse gases (GHGs) to emissions of carbon dioxide (see Global Warming Potential). It also allows the impact of activities that result in the emissions of a variety of different GHGs to be described by a single number.	
Carbon dioxide emissions are mainly produced by energy production from fossil fuels. They are the largest share of greenhouse gases and are the primary cause of global warming. Emissions refers to the release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere over a specified area and period of time.	
A measure of the emissions intensity of a process or fuel.	
Greenhouse gas emissions are created by human activity and released into the atmosphere. A carbon footprint can relate to a service, product or building. The standard measure of a carbon footprint is CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent).	
Trading systems allow businesses to buy and sell carbon credits. Each credit equals one tonne of ${\rm CO_2}$ (or another greenhouse gas).	
An activity which has the effect of reducing its carbon footprint to below zero - so that it removes more CO_2 (or other GHGs) from the atmosphere than it adds.	
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Carbon Neutral	An organisation, activity or product is carbon neutral when it balances the CO ₂ it produces in its activities, manufacture or delivery, through offsetting e.g. buying carbon credits.	
Carbon Offsetting	The mechanism for claiming a reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with a process or product through the removal of, or preventing the release of, GHG emissions.	
Carbon Pricing/ Carbon Price	Carbon pricing is an instrument that captures the external costs of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions—the costs of emissions that the public pays for, such as damage to crops, health care costs from heat waves and droughts, and loss of property from flooding and sea level rise—and ties them to their sources through a price, usually in the form of a price on the carbon dioxide (CO ₂) emitted. A price on carbon helps shift the burden for the damage from GHG emissions back to those who are responsible for it and who can avoid it.	
Carbon Sequestration	Carbon sequestration is the process of storing atmospheric carbon dioxide once it has been captured (see Carbon Capture). Some methods include storage in forests; or underground in rocks. New methods of sequestration are being explored.	
Carbon Sink	Anything which absorbs more carbon than it releases. This includes forests, peatlands and oceans.	
Carbon-Free Energy/Electricity	A term used to describe zero-emissions sources of energy/electricity generation. This includes renewables and nuclear power.	
Carbon-Free Energy/Electricity (CFE) score	A score between 1 and 100 reflecting the percentage of an energy consumer's demand that is matched with carbon-free supply at an hourly resolution or better, over the course of a year.	
Circular Economy	An economic system based on the reuse and regeneration of materials. A circular economy is one in which waste is eliminated. The implication is that products are designed to be recyclable or reusable.	
Clean Energy Sources	Energy sources that are zero carbon but not renewable.	







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Climate Adaptation	The process of adjusting to current and/or anticipated effects of climate change. One example is the introduction of Building Regulations Part O which anticipates increase in heatwaves in cities and therefore sets standards for overheating in new residential buildings.	
Climate Change	Climate Change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. These shifts may be natural, such as through variations in the solar cycle. But since the 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas.	
Climate Change Act 2008	Introduced the UK's carbon reduction commitment into legislation. In 2019, the Act was updated to make the Net Zero 2050 goal a legal obligation for the Government.	
Climate Change Committee	An independent statutory body which was established in 2008 under the Climate Change Act. It advises the UK Government and tracks progress in meeting Carbon Budgets.	
Climate Mitigation	Refers to efforts to reduce or prevent the emission of greenhouse gases.	
Climate Neutral	Climate Neutral refers to the emission and mitigation of all greenhouse gases – not just carbon. Much like carbon neutrality, climate neutrality can be achieved by emitting greenhouse gases at an equal rate to its removal from the atmosphere.	
Contracts for Difference (CfD)	A Contract for Difference (CfD) is a contract between a low-carbon electricity generator and the Low Carbon Contracts Company (LCCC), a Government-owned company. CfDs incentivise investment in renewable energy by providing developers of projects with high upfront costs and long lifetimes with direct protection from volatile wholesale prices, and they protect consumers from paying increased support costs when electricity prices are high.	
Corporate Power Purchase Agreement (CPPA)	A long-term contract between a business and a renewable energy supplier such as a wind farm. They are increasingly popular with corporate clients looking to lower their carbon emissions.	







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Decarbonisation	Decarbonisation is a policy of eliminating the use of fossil fuels such as oil and natural gas. In the UK, this policy is critical to achieving Net Zero 2050 goals and can apply specifically to sectors e.g. the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. In the context of buildings, decarbonisation generally refers to the switch away from gas (or oil) boilers to electric heating and hot water production (e.g. with heat pumps).	
Demand Response	At a national level, demand response refers to balancing the demand on power grids by encouraging customers to shift their electricity use. This is usually done by applying higher pricing per kWh at peak times during the day. Demand response can also refer to building controls which ensure that heating or cooling is only used when required e.g. through the use of presence detectors that turn off cooling when a meeting room is empty.	
Distribution Network Operator (DNO)	A licenced company that manages the operation of a distribution network.	
Distribution Networks	The electricity networks that manage the flow of electricity from the national transmission network to end customers.	







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Ecodesign for Energy Related Products Regulations (ErP) 2010	Originally introduced via the EU, the legislation around the ecodesign of energy using products remains in place in the UK. The legislation covers building services equipment such as air conditioning, fans, electric motors, ventilation and heating. Relevant products must have: * supporting technical documentation to demonstrate compliance * a Declaration of Conformity * and must display the appropriate conformity mark, which is known as the UKCA mark in Great Britain, or the CE mark in Northern Ireland	
Electricity Market	There are several markets operating in our electricity system including the Wholesale and Retail electricty market as well as the Balancing Mechanism and Balancing Services markets. It makes for a complex mix of prices and factors influencing energy costs for businesses and consumers.	
Embodied Carbon	In the building industry, embodied carbon refers to the greenhouse gas emissions arising from the manufacturing, transportation, installation, maintenance, and disposal of building materials. The embodied carbon emissions of a product are the total GHG emissions and removals associated with its manufacture, transport, installation, maintenance, and end-of-life treatment.	
Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)	With an ETS, the Government sets a cap on the maximum allowed level of GHG emissions an organisation can make. Companies are given permits for emissions and any emissions in excess of this require further permits to be purchased from the Government or other businesses. ETS members are usually larger businesses and large emitters of GHGs.	
Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations	Introduced the requirement for Energy Performance Certificates for dwellings and non-dwellings (and Display Energy Certificates for public buildings). Most recently updated in 2020.	
Energy Storage	Covers a range of technologies that store low-carbon energy (e.g. generated from wind or solar), for when it is needed. Batteries are the most common form of storage.	
Energy Use Intensity (EUI)	Measured as kWh/m2/yr, EUI is increasingly regarded as a key measure for building energy use. It relies on the collection of actual, metered energy. Because of its increased accuracy several leading construction organisations including CIBSE. RICS and the UK Green Building Council are proposing that the Government adopt EUI as the measure for building efficiency and carbon emissions in future Building Regulations.	







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F Gases	Fluorinated gases (F-gases) are man-made gases used in a range of industrial applications. F-gases are often used as substitutes for ozone-depleting substances because they do not damage the atmospheric ozone layer. However, F-gases are powerful greenhouse gases, with an even higher warming potential than carbon dioxide (CO ₂). They thus contribute greatly to climate change.	
F Gas Regulation	The F Gas Regulation aims to reduce F gas emissions by establishing rules on their containment, use, recovery and destruction. They impose conditions on the use of F gases and impose limits on the quantities of F gases allowed onto the UK market. Originating in the European Union, the F Gas Regulation has been transposed into UK law.	
Flexibility Provider/ Flexibility Services Provider (FSP)	An owner of assets, or an aggregator managing multiple assets, can provide flexible services by making temporary changes to the way they consume, generate, or store electricity when requested, to ensure continuity of supply.	



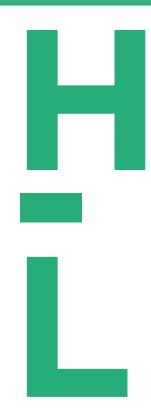




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The GHG Protocol 2021 established a global standardised framework to measure and manage greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from private and public sector operations, value chains and mitigation actions. It was this protocol that introduced the terms Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. Scopes are the basis for mandatory GHG reporting in the UK.	
GWP measures a chemical's potential to add to global warming by trapping heat in the earth's atmosphere. GWP is measured against CO_2 which has a GWP of 1. For example, methane's GWP is 25, meaning 1 tonne of methane traps 25 times more heat than 1 tonne of carbon dioxide.	
Green hydrogen is made by using electricity from renewable energy sources, such as solar or wind power, to electrolyse water. Electrolysers use an electrochemical reaction to split water into its components of hydrogen and oxygen, emitting zero-carbon dioxide in the process. Green hydrogen currently makes up a small percentage of the overall hydrogen, because production is expensive.	
A green tariff means that some or all of the electricity bought by consumers or businesses is matched by purchases of renewable energy that your energy supplier makes on your behalf.	
Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) are gases which become trapped in the atmosphere, forcing heat back to the earth's surface - increasing global temperatures. The UN identifies the three most hazardous GHGs as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide. Methane is about 80 times more potent than CO ₂ , and nitrous oxide is around 280 times. Human activity is increasing the presence of GHGs in our atmosphere.	
Poor communications (usually from businesses) about their green strategies or progress.	
Making unsubstantiated claims about a business or product and its environmental credentials. The aim is to make consumers believe that the business is environmentally responsible when it's not.	
Grey hydrogen is created from natural gas, or methane, using steam methane reformation but without capturing the greenhouse gases made in the process. Grey hydrogen is essentially the same as blue hydrogen but without the use of carbon capture and storage. Currently, this is the most common form of hydrogen production.	
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Hydrogen is a gas of high calorific value and when burned does not produce carbon dioxide, which is a harmful greenhouse gas. So, in principle, hydrogen could play a role in decarbonising the UK economy and help reach Net Zero emissions by 2050, the UK's legal target.	
Refers to energy-related activities that occur on the utility side of the grid, typically involving large-scale energy generation, transmission, and distribution infrastructure. These activities are primarily managed by utility companies and are designed to meet the energy demands of a wide range of consumers.	
Renewable electricity generators depend on variable renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar.	
The InterGovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change.	
A 'green building' rating system developed by the US Green Building Council but is now used globally and in the UK.	
LEED is a points-based assessment and certification system that covers different areas such as energy, water efficiency and indoor environmental quality.	
A methodology for calculating carbon emissions based on the carbon intensity of the local grid area where the electricity usage takes place.	
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Marginal Emissions Factor	A measure of the emissions caused by a small change in demand on the system, reflecting the fact such changes in demand do not increase or decrease the demand for all generation types equally.	
Marginal Pricing	In the context of electricity procurement, marginal pricing is an approach to pricing electricity that sets the price of all electricity based on the cost of meeting the marginal demand (i.e., the final bit of demand on the system).	
Market-Based Accounting	A methodology for calculating carbon emissions based on the specific procurement decisions made by an electricity customer (e.g., claiming the benefit of Energy Attribute Certificates).	
Mitigation Hierarchy	The mitigation hierarchy is a tool used to limit the amount of damage an action, such as a development, will have on the environment. There are three steps, and each step must be followed in order and to the greatest extent possible before moving on to the next: Avoid, Mitigate, Offset.	







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NABERS	This certification scheme was developed in Australia (its full title is the National Australian Built Environment Rating System). NABERS was introduced in the UK in 2020 and is a voluntary scheme focused on the energy efficiency of office buildings.	
National Grid and National Grid Electricity System Operator (ESO)	National Grid (the Transmission Owner) owns and operates the network, a system of cables, pylons and substations, designed to carry energy long distances at high voltages. National Grid ESO then operates the electricity system, balancing supply and demand, second by second, 24/7.	
Natural Capital	UK natural capital is comprised of all the ecosystem services that UK natural assets provide; natural assets include soil, air, water and all living things.	
Nature-Based Solutions	Nature-based solutions are actions that involve working with nature to address the climate and biodiversity crises, as well as other societal challenges. They include actions that protect or restore natural ecosystems, or that manage working land sustainably.	
Net Zero 2050	In June 2019, with the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019, the Government committed to a 100% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 compared with 1990 levels. This is referred to as the net zero target. The Government stated that net zero means: "Any emissions would be balanced by schemes to offset an equivalent amount of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, such as planting trees or using technology like carbon capture and storage".	
Net-Positive	The United Nations defines 'net positive' as: "An approach that means doing more good than bad. It goes beyond 'doing less harm' and urges businesses to have a positive impact on the world.	
Operational Carbon Emissions	Operational carbon in the built environment refers to emissions created during the operating lifetime of a building. These are produced on site, for example from burning fossil fuels in boilers and through the use of electricity which is generated using fossil fuels.	





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Paris Agreement	The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 Parties at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, France, on 12 December 2015. It entered into force on 4 November 2016. Its overarching goal is to hold "the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels" and pursue efforts "to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.	
Peak Demand	National Grid defines peak electricity demand at a given time.	
Power Purchase Agreement (PPA)	A contractual arrangement for power between a generator and a supplier or consumer.	
Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) Also referred to as the 'Salix' scheme	The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme provides grants for public sector bodies to fund heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures. The PSDS supports the aim of reducing emissions from public sector buildings by 75% by 2037, compared to a 2017 baseline, as set out in the Government's Net Zero 2050 and Heat and Buildings strategies.	
Renewable Energy	The UN defines renewable energy as energy derived from natural sources that are replenished at a higher rate than they are consumed. Sunlight and wind, for example, are such sources that are constantly being replenished.	
Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGOs)	The Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO) scheme provides transparency to consumers about the proportion of electricity that suppliers source from renewable electricity. This scheme provides certificates called REGOs which demonstrate electricity has been generated from renewable sources.	
Renewable Generation	A general term for any electricity generated using renewable sources of energy.	







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Science-based Targets	Science-based targets provide a clearly-defined pathway for companies to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, helping prevent the worst impacts of climate change and future-proof business growth. Targets are considered 'science-based' if they are in line with what the latest climate science deems necessary to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement – limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.	
Scope 1 Emissions	Direct emissions from sources that are controlled or owned by an organisation. This includes any onsite combustion (e.g. from gas boilers for heating, and company vehicles).	
Scope 2 Emissions	Indirect emissions that result from the purchase of electricity, heat, or steam that is generated offsite.	
Scope 3 Emissions	Emissions that are not produced by the company itself and are not the result of activities from assets owned or controlled by them, but by those that it's indirectly responsible for up and down its value chain. For example, buying, using and disposing of products from suppliers. Scope 3 emissions include all sources not within the scope 1 and 2 boundaries.	
Scope 4 Emissions	Emission reductions that occur outside of a value chain or the life cycle of a product – which are also commonly referred to as avoided emissions. An example of scope 4 emissions is when a product or service advertises the energy or emissions that have been saved as a result of the new climate or energy-saving technology associated with that product or service. Scope 4 emissions are a new concept created by the World Resources Institute.	
Self-owned generation	Electricity generating capacity that is owned and operated directly by the referenced party. This could refer to energy suppliers or building owners with on-site renewable generation (e.g. solar PVs).	
SKA Rating	An environmental assessment method owned by the Royal Institute for Chartered Surveyors (RICS). It is aimed at fit-out projects which are assessed against a set of good-practice sustainability criteria.	







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Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund	The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) will upgrade a significant amount of the social housing stock currently below Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band C up to that standard. The scheme is open to local authorities and registered social housing providers. Grant funding for Wave 2.1 must be for projects completed by 31 March 2025.	
Stranded Assets	In terms of the built environment this phrase refers to buildings which lose value because they do not meet environmental or carbon performance standards set in legislation. An example is buildings which do not meet the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES). The phrase also covers buildings which are affected by climate change impacts such as flooding or overheating.	
Subsidised Generation	Electricity generation that is financially supported by the Government or other schemes, such as the Contracts for Difference (CfDs).	
Suppliers	Companies that procure energy and supply energy to customers in the retail market.	







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Tariffs	The price at which energy is sold by a supplier to a customer.	
Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD)	The Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) is an advisory body set up by the G20 to address concerns around insufficient disclosure of climate-related risks and opportunities for businesses.	
Task Force on Nature-Related Financial Disclosures (TNFD)	The Taskforce on Nature-Related Financial Disclosures is an international initiative that builds on a model developed by the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD). Its mission is to provide a framework for how organisations can address environmental risks and opportunities with the ultimate goal of channelling capital flows into positive action.	
Time-Matched	Electricity demand that is matched with renewable supply at an hourly resolution or better.	
Total Generation Mix	The mix of all generation types supplying the system over a given period.	
Transition Plans	Set out how a country, region or organisation will adapt to the low-carbon economy. The Climate Change Committee provides information for UK businesses on what should be included in a Transition Plan.	
Transmission Network	The high voltage system for the transmission of power from large-scale generators to the distribution networks.	







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UKCA Mark	The UKCA marking is the conformity marking used for products being placed on the market in Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales). The UKCA regime has been operational since 1 January 2021 and from this date where a product is covered by the UKCA marking and meets the relevant requirements, you can place the UKCA marking on your product and then place the product on the GB market. This can be a complex area, with changing requirements so it is important to check the Government website for the most recent information.	
Unbundled Power	Renewable electricity that is sold without the associated Energy Attribute Certificates (EACs).	
Waste Incineration	A process where household waste is incinerated to boil water which is subsequently passed through a turbine to generate electricity.	
WELL Building Standard	Focuses specifically on the impact of buildings on occupant health and wellbeing. It is an independent certification scheme that looks at areas such as indoor air quality, light, comfort, and water as well as nourishment, comfort and mental wellbeing.	
Whole Life Carbon	Whole Life Carbon emissions are the sum total of all the associated GHG emissions and removals, for the embodied, operational and disposal of a product through its whole life cycle.	







OOPS!

WE DON'T SEEM TO HAVE ANY TERMS OR
PHRASES FOR THESE LETTERS.

IF YOU KNOW OF ANY, PLEASE LET US KNOW
AND WE WILL ADD THEM TO OUR
SUSTAINABILITY JARGON BUSTER.

