

Glossary of Terms

Carbon Footprint

The amount of CO₂ emitted by an activity, individual, product or service. The benefit of working out carbon footprints is that you can see how much CO₂ is produced and where emissions come from so that action can be taken to reduce these emissions.

Carbon Neutral

The process whereby CO₂ emissions are measured, reduced and residual emissions are offset to produce overall net carbon emissions of zero.

Carbon Offsetting

The process of reducing an organisation's own carbon emissions by reducing the equivalent elsewhere. Commonly achieved via reforestation (tree planting) and off-site renewable energy projects.

Climate change

Changes in long term weather patterns on a regional or global scale.

CO₂

Carbon dioxide is one of the most common greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and a major contributor to climate change. It is emitted through the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas.

Ecology

The study of the relationship between organisms and their environment – the latter including both the physical and the biological environment.

Embodied/Embedded Energy

The total energy required to design, manufacture and supply a product or service. Typically applied to construction materials on a project.

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Environmental limits

Using the natural resources of the planet in such a way that the natural systems that regenerate them, including the climate we depend upon, are not damaged beyond repair for future generations.

FSC

Forestry Stewardship Council – International non-for profit organisation that promotes the responsible management of the world's forests.

Fossil fuels

A naturally occurring carbon rich deposit such as petroleum, coal, peat or natural gas used as fuel. Created by the decomposition of plants and animals millions of years ago. Non-renewable as cannot be created in our lifetime.

GHG

Greenhouse Gases linked to global warming. These are carbon dioxide, methane, water vapour, nitrous oxide, halogenated fluorocarbons (HCFCs), ozone (O₃), perfluorinated carbons (PFCs), and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).

Global Warming

The increase in the average temperature of the earth's surface and oceans which in turn causes changes in climate.

Landfill

A method of waste disposal whereby waste is buried beneath soil.

MFD

Multifunction Device (combined printer, scanner, and photocopier).

NGO

Non-Governmental Organisation.

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Potable water

Term used to describe water of drinking quality.

PPP

Public Private Partnership.

Renewable Energy

An inexhaustible energy supply that comes from naturally occurring sources in the environment and can be replaced. Examples include solar, wind, wave and fuel crops (sometimes referred to as biofuels).

Responsible sourcing

A documented set of criteria setting out the sustainability obligations for the manufacture and supply of a product or service. Applications include responsible sourcing schemes for construction materials.

Stakeholder

A person, group or organization with an interest (stake) in a project or our actions as a business. Stakeholders include our employees, customers, investors, suppliers, business partners, local communities, the public, trade bodies and NGOs.

Sustainability

Aligning the economic, social and environmental impacts of what we do to deliver value.

Whole life costing

A method of costing an asset that takes into account its total cost over the lifetime of the investment, including in use. Assists in decision making between options with different up-front capital costs and on-going operating and maintenance costs. Useful when justifying a lower impact alternative with a higher capital cost.