

Advancing Net Zero Snapshot: United Kingdom

Context

In June 2019, the UK became the first G20 country to set a net zero emissions target with the Government introducing legislation to reach this goal by 2050. This aligns the UK's target with WorldGBC's for a net zero carbon built environment by 2050. To support these ambitions, UKGBC has launched a wide-ranging Advancing Net Zero work programme and published a 'Net Zero Carbon Buildings: Framework Definition' to provide clarity on what net zero means for buildings in the UK.



1. Measure and Disclose Carbon

A net zero operational energy carbon balance should be verified and disclosed annually.

The energy scope for demonstrating net zero carbon is flexible to enable the decarbonisation of buildings at scale, including for tenancies, multi-building developments, and portfolios.



2. Reduce Energy Demand

Energy use reductions should be prioritised over all other measures, given it is the most cost-effective route for buildings and minimises the infrastructure required for a future zero carbon energy system.

'Paris proof' energy use intensity targets will be included in the future.



3. Generate Balance from Renewables

On-site renewables should be prioritised, and any off-site renewables should demonstrate additionality.

Offsets should be used for any remaining carbon balance, using a recognised offsetting framework.



4. Improve Verification and Rigour

Net zero carbon for construction can also be targeted alongside the approach for operational energy. A net zero whole life carbon approach covering all lifecycle impacts will be developed in the future.

Methodology and Verification

- Annual energy use should be based on in-use performance.
- GHG Protocol's location-based or market-based emission factors should be used.
- Third-party auditing should take place, in line with minimum reporting requirements (Appendix B).

Additional Information

- 'Net zero carbon – construction' currently tackles embodied carbon impacts to practical completion for new buildings and major refurbishments
- 'Net zero carbon – whole life' to be developed in future to tackle carbon impacts for all lifecycle stages of a building

Find out more

- [Net Zero Carbon Buildings: A Framework Definition](#)
- [Guide to Scope 3 Reporting in Commercial Real Estate](#)
- [Climate Commitment Platform](#)
- [WorldGBC's Advancing Net Zero global project](#)

GBC Definition

Net zero for operational energy is achieved when the amount of carbon emissions associated with the building's operational energy on an annual basis is zero or negative. A net zero carbon building is highly energy efficient and powered from on-site and/or off-site renewable energy sources, with any remaining carbon balance offset.

Advancing Net Zero

WorldGBC's global project to accelerate uptake of net zero carbon buildings to 100% by 2050. These snapshots outline specific GBC action, and how it relates to the project framework, including the four key principles shown left.