

# Carbon Footprinting



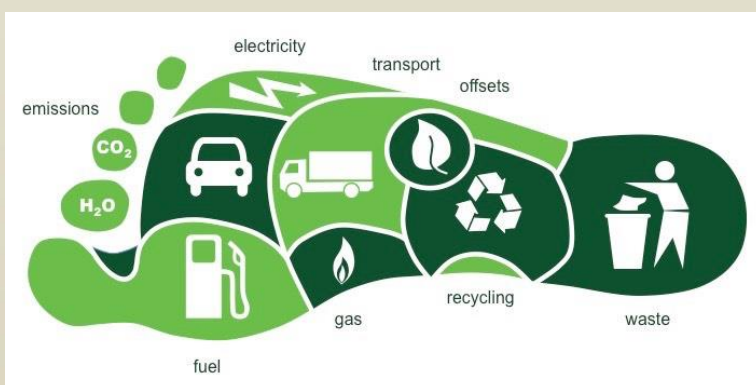
The term carbon footprint has become part of our day to day language in the 21st century but what does it actually mean and how do you calculate a carbon footprint for your organisation?

## What is a carbon footprint?

A carbon footprint is defined as the total amount of greenhouse gases produced directly or indirectly by a person, organisation, event or product and is usually expressed in equivalent tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>e).

It is a useful tool to understand the impact of personal or organisational behaviour on global climate change and key to managing and reporting on carbon emissions. **Studies have shown that businesses that calculate and monitor their carbon footprint are more likely to achieve reductions in their carbon emissions.**

In business terms these greenhouse gases are produced by the generation of the electricity you use to power your office and IT equipment and your air-conditioning, the gas you burn to heat your buildings and the fuel your delivery vans run on. Water consumption and the disposal of waste also generate greenhouse gases and contribute to your carbon footprint.



## How do I calculate the carbon footprint of my organisation?

Carbon footprints can relate to different aspects of an organisation's activities or services. In general, the Carbon Charter considers your organisational carbon footprint. This means the emissions arising from all activities across your organisation and includes building energy use, process or manufacturing equipment and the fuel consumed by your company vehicles.

A carbon footprint can also be calculated for a specific product (looking at the whole life time of a product or service, from extraction of raw materials, through use and re-use/recycling and ultimately disposal) or supply chain (which takes into consideration the emissions from the materials and services which are purchased by an organisation to deliver their own service or product).

## Carbon footprint calculator tools

There are several free online carbon footprinting tools which businesses can use to calculate the carbon footprint of their organisation for a specific time frame (usually a year).

In order to accurately calculate a carbon footprint you will need annual fuel consumption figures in units (e.g. kWh or litres). You can then input this data into a free online tool which will calculate your carbon footprint for that period. There is a free carbon footprint calculator tool available on the Carbon Charter website.





## Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e)

A carbon footprint is measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) which allows several different greenhouse gases to be compared and is calculated by multiplying the greenhouse gas emissions of each of the six greenhouse gases (as defined by the Koto protocol) by its 100 year Global Warming Potential (GWP).

