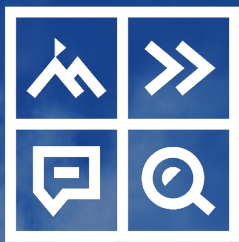


WE MEAN
BUSINESS
COALITION



THE 4 A'S OF CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

Leading businesses respond to the climate crisis with **Ambition**. They deliver on that ambition with **Action**. They speak up to secure wider change through **Advocacy**. And they drive progress by demonstrating **Accountability**.

Accelerate your journey with this step-by-step guide. Explore best-in-class climate action resources brought together by We Mean Business Coalition through our partners and collaborators. For the latest case studies and full list of resources, visit:

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AMBITION

Climate ambition is a commitment and plan to shape the future. It's a positive vision for a net-zero world, for people, business, economy and environment. Ambition guides strategy, empowers employees, and informs stakeholders.

How to lead

1. Aim for zero, led by science
 2. Factor in nature
 3. Prioritize people
 4. Have a concrete plan
-

>> ACTION

Climate action means delivering on bold ambition. This is a process of innovation and transformation. Done right, climate action unlocks opportunities for business success in the net-zero economy and protects against risks.

How to lead

1. Embed climate into business
 2. Drive down emissions
 3. Address supply chains
 4. Go beyond the value chain
-

ADVOCACY

Advocacy is essential to bring about science-based climate policy that unlocks investment and delivers action at scale. Corporate climate leaders use their powerful voices, activities and associations to call for strong policy ambition.

How to lead

1. Commit to speak up
 2. Make your voice heard
 3. Align trade associations
 4. Allocate advocacy spending
-

ACCOUNTABILITY

The climate emergency demands results. Clear and consistent disclosure of plans, progress, risks and opportunities builds trust among stakeholders, directs capital, and informs strategy. It shows resilience and readiness for the net-zero world.

How to lead

1. Share your plan
2. Report on progress
3. Disclose your advocacy
4. Transparent governance

AMBITION

Climate ambition is a commitment and plan to shape the future. It's a positive vision for a net-zero world, for people, business, economy and environment. Ambition guides strategy, empowers employees, and informs stakeholders.



1. AIM FOR ZERO, LED BY SCIENCE

Set science-based net-zero targets with near-term and long-term goals, in line with a 1.5°C pathway. The science is clear. Credible climate ambition aligns with holding global temperature rise to 1.5°C. This means setting targets to halve emissions by 2030 and reach net zero no later than 2050 – ideally by 2040.

How to achieve it:

A

- [The Science Based Targets initiative \(SBTi\)](#) is the leading standard for verified net-zero, 1.5°C-aligned targets. Commit to, and set, a science-based target, following the Net Zero Corporate Standard. Include ambitious interim (5-10 year) targets for deep, rapid emission cuts.
- Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) should join the [SME Climate Hub](#) to commit to net zero with a tailored target-setting pathway.

B

Factor in your entire value chain and include the indirect emissions from your supply chain (Scope 3 emissions) in your targets.

C

All companies who can go faster, should. The most ambitious climate leaders are picking up the pace to reach net zero sooner than 2050.

- Join [The Climate Pledge](#) to target net zero by no later than 2040 — a decade ahead of the Paris Agreement goal.

- By joining these leading initiatives, your company becomes part of the [UN-backed Race to Zero](#)
- Measure your emissions: To set robust targets and inform your plans, you need to establish your baseline emissions across scopes 1-3. Use the [GHG Protocol](#) for guidance (the global standard for carbon accounting).

2. FACTOR IN NATURE

Prioritize nature-based solutions to build a net-zero, nature-positive future — faster

Protecting, managing and restoring nature accelerates emissions reductions, conserves critical natural carbon sinks, and secures the health of business, people and planet for generations to come.

Nature-based solutions can provide one-third of the emissions reductions and removals needed to meet the Paris Agreement, and deliver the clean water, air and thriving diverse systems that let nature and people prosper. Climate leaders work in concert with land and nature to cut emissions, remove carbon, and build resilient and biodiverse ecosystems

How to achieve it:

A

Commit to direct engagement in your value chain, supporting suppliers to accelerate the transition to a net-zero, nature-positive future:

Eliminate tropical deforestation and other forms of land-use change and ecosystem degradation from your supply chain by no later than 2025:

- [Accountability Framework](#)
- [Tropical Forest Alliance](#)

Transition to preferential sourcing for agricultural and forest products that produce regenerative outcomes for people, planet, and nature. Target reducing agricultural emissions by at least 35% and scaling up carbon removals to achieve net-zero food production by 2030:

- [Forests Solutions Group](#)
- [Ceres Climate Smart Agriculture and Healthy Soil working group](#)
- [Regen10](#)

B

Commit to investing in nature-based solutions to the climate and ecological emergencies.

Join forces with other companies to use your leverage and resources to scale up momentum, build understanding of the wider benefits for people and business, and plan high-quality projects:

- [NCS Investment Accelerator](#)
- [Business Alliance Scaling Climate Solutions](#)
- [LEAF Coalition](#)
- [CISL](#)

C

Align your ambition for nature with a commitment to the GHG emissions mitigation hierarchy. This means focusing on avoiding and reducing emissions first — and only then also investing beyond your own value chain to compensate for residual emissions. Commit to prioritizing responsible carbon credit purchases that support the improvement and scale-up of nature-based solutions.

- Incorporate this principle into your climate action planning, with guidance from the [Natural Climate Solutions Alliance](#)

3. PRIORITIZE PEOPLE

Commit to an equitable, inclusive climate transition

Climate leaders fully consider all the issues that intersect with climate, with a vision for a fairer, resilient net-zero economy that leaves no one behind. As companies work towards this vision and decarbonize, they must commit to a just transition, to build public support for climate action, empower their workforce, communities and customers, and help deliver better jobs and thriving societies.

How to achieve it:

A

Understand how your transition to net zero will impact the people you rely on to remain competitive – your workforce, communities, suppliers and customers. Develop plans to minimize these risks, maximize opportunities and help them build resilience and adapt.

B

Be inclusive when transforming business models and supply chains. Discuss your decarbonization strategy with workers, communities and local government, and create mechanisms for joint implementation.

C

Seize the opportunity to create new green, inclusive jobs which diversify your workforce, whilst also reskilling and redeploying workers.

Further guidance:

- [Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- [BSR Just Transition Guidance](#)
- [B Team Just Transition Guidance](#)
- [City-Business Climate Alliance](#)

4. HAVE A CONCRETE PLAN

Develop a credible action plan to match your ambition

There's no leadership on corporate climate ambition without a time-bound, credible plan for how your company will achieve its vision for a just and resilient net-zero economy. This needs to be feasible and include your ambitions for nature and people. The planning process can further inform commitments and targets and uncover opportunities to raise ambition.

How to achieve it:

A

Ground your plan in your GHG emissions inventory. Pinpoint hotspots, and climate-related risks and opportunities, from physical to regulatory. Analyze the technological, economic, and institutional feasibility of addressing emissions across your value chain. Identify any additional investments or public policies that are needed to meet your goals.

B

Build out your action steps: incorporate the climate action leadership steps that businesses across all sectors must follow. Where available, use credible sector-specific climate transition roadmaps, peer-learning and insights to map out how you will achieve your targets:

- [The Mission Possible Partnership](#) (aluminum, aviation, cement and concrete, chemicals, shipping, steel, and trucking)
- [SME Climate Hub](#)
- [Industry](#) (procurement)
- [Built Environment](#)
- [Transport](#)
- [Energy](#)

C

Set out a robust plan that clearly shows how concrete actions will lead to progress against 1.5°C-aligned targets, and how the plan will be integrated into the overall corporate strategy and financial planning. Have your board review the plan and formally approve it.

By following all the steps in The 4 A's of Climate Leadership you will have a solid climate transition action plan in place. We are working with our partners on additional guidance to put a finer point on the most critical elements to include and disclose in your plan.

For the latest case studies and full list of resources, visit:
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» ACTION

Climate action means delivering on bold ambition. This is a process of innovation and transformation. Done right, climate action unlocks opportunities for business success in the net-zero economy and protects against risks.



1. EMBED CLIMATE INTO BUSINESS

Align your core business strategy and every department with your climate goals

Climate action is a process of business transformation. Companies will only achieve their net-zero ambition if they review core strategy, move with urgency to rethink business activities and their functions, and adopt an innovation mindset. Employees at all levels should be responsible for implementing the climate transition action plan and have incentives to deliver progress at the scale and speed needed.

How to achieve it:

A

Rigorously review your core business strategy. Embed climate-related risks and opportunities, and identify material areas of change, including governance, innovation, capital investment, procurement and recruitment.

B

Define roles and responsibilities for the execution of the climate action plan and for climate-related decision-making. Tie executive pay to the delivery of the climate strategy. Create incentives and training for employees to meet climate objectives and identify sufficient capital to deploy to business units responsible for implementation.

C

Ensure responsible leadership, with ongoing board-level oversight of your climate strategy.

2. DRIVE DOWN EMISSIONS

Rapidly reduce emissions under your direct control, and switch to renewables or other zero-emissions energy sources

To achieve ambitious targets, companies must reduce their direct emissions (Scope 1) from things like fuel combustion, alongside emissions from purchased energy (Scope 2), which typically make up a large proportion of a company's carbon footprint. Companies should immediately seize the negative or low-cost opportunities to decarbonize that are readily available in most markets.

How to achieve it:

A

Engage business units (manufacturing, logistics, operations and R&D) to identify and deploy low- and zero-carbon solutions, as well as improve overall efficiencies. When solutions are prohibitively expensive or unavailable, show leadership and innovate: strategy teams can review portfolio choices and cost savings, and R&D can develop new products and explore new markets.

B

Identify and secure sources of zero-emissions electricity, for space heating, vehicle fleets and processes, in all your markets (energy sourcing and procurement teams will play a key role). Help improve availability of supply by joining demand-side initiatives such as RE100 and (if in the US) the Clean Energy Buyers Alliance. Improve supply by incentivizing suppliers to seek certification for cleaner products produced, such as via [ResponsibleSteel](#).

C

Join collaborative peer groups to share learnings and best practice to galvanize progress towards Scope 1 and 2 climate targets. Participate in global initiatives with a technology, sector or supply-side focus:

- Decarbonize heavy industry with the [Mission Possible Partnership](#)
- Join the companies switching to 100% renewable energy with [RE100](#)
- Accelerate the transition to electric vehicles with [EV100](#), [CEVA](#), and (for India) [ReMobility](#)
- Drive energy efficiency and achieve net-zero buildings with [EP100](#) and decarbonize buildings owned and operated through the [Net Zero Carbon Buildings Commitment](#).

3. ADDRESS SUPPLY CHAINS

Catalyze supply chain action and reduce Scope 3 emissions through innovation

For most companies, the largest proportion of their emissions come from their supply chains: the products and services purchased from suppliers, and the use and disposal phase of their products. Corporate climate leaders uncover the risks and opportunities in their supply chains, work with suppliers, and transform product design to drive emissions reductions across the chain.

How to achieve it:

A

Ask all direct suppliers to raise their climate ambition and join the race to zero. Make science-based targets and emissions disclosure a requirement. Trigger a chain reaction by encouraging suppliers to engage with their own suppliers to uncover and address their Scope 3 emissions.

Engage with suppliers on disclosure and action:

- [CDP supply chain membership](#)
- [1.5°C Supply Chain Leaders](#)
- [1.5°C Supplier Engagement Guide](#)
- [Forest Solutions Group](#)

B

Identify your top Scope 3 emissions hotspots and engage your value chain in addressing them. Tie procurement decisions to climate ambition and action by including climate performance as a meaningfully weighted factor in all purchasing decisions

- [Forest Solutions Group](#)
- [SteelZero](#)
- [ConcreteZero](#)
- [Sustainable Freight Buyers Alliance](#)
- [Net-Zero Built Environment](#)

C

Innovate and rethink the design of your products and their lifecycles, to minimize the embodied emissions in their materials, manufacturing processes, supply chains, transportation, customer use and disposal phases. Develop new products, services and processes aligned with the concept of a circular, rather than linear, economy.

Tools and resources for circular economy solutions:

- [Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#)
- [WBCSD](#)

Start building a high-quality Scope 3 emissions inventory to support your efforts. Valid approaches include collecting direct suppliers' emissions data, developing product lifecycle carbon footprints, as well as using economic models, third-party tools and proprietary databases. Where possible, collect primary data from suppliers or develop methodologies to track your emissions reductions.

Tools and resources for estimating Scope 3 emissions:

- [GHG Protocol](#)
- [ISO standards](#)
- [SME Climate Hub](#)

4. GO BEYOND THE VALUE CHAIN

To accelerate the net-zero transition, invest beyond your value chain

Climate leaders go beyond their own targets, by contributing to climate action, adaptation and mitigation efforts outside their operations and value chains. They invest in nature-based solutions, carbon removal technology and innovation, harnessing the potential of climate finance to unlock growth and innovation.

How to achieve it:

A

Nature-based climate solutions are available now and need corporate investment to scale up their critical role in limiting warming to 1.5°C. Invest directly into credible, high-quality projects (at specific sites) or programs (at landscape or jurisdiction level). Or invest indirectly through offset purchases (which must complement, not replace or detract from, actual emissions reductions against your science-based targets).

- Follow guidance to ensure the credibility of your investments and carbon credits: [The Voluntary Carbon Markets Initiative \(VCMI\)](#), [Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market \(ICVCM\)](#) or [Natural Climate Solutions Alliance](#).
- For guidance on other types of offsets, see the [EU draft rules](#).

B

Invest collectively into projects that benefit nature, climate and livelihoods, and share best practice.

Get involved:

- [NCS Investment Accelerator](#)
- [Business Alliance Scaling Climate Solutions](#)
- [LEAF Coalition](#)
- [CISL](#)

C

Invest in technology and innovation that fall outside normal R&D activities. Join or set up multi-stakeholder groups to identify new ways to approach a climate challenge: impacting corporate value chains beyond your own.

Examples:

- [Circulate Capital to improve plastic recycling infrastructure](#)
- [Transform to Net Zero \(TONZ\) group to innovate and share learnings](#)

ADVOCACY

Advocacy is essential to bring about science-based climate policy that unlocks investment and delivers action at scale. Corporate climate leaders use their powerful voices, activities and associations to call for strong policy ambition.



1. COMMIT TO SPEAK UP

Make a public commitment to advocate for ambitious climate policy, and engage key stakeholders

Corporate climate leaders embed advocacy into their core strategy. They are keenly aware of the business benefits of a thriving decarbonized economy, which can't be achieved without strong public policy. They make their position clear and activate internal and external stakeholders.

How to achieve it:

A

Get started by publicly promoting your commitment to advancing high-impact climate policy. For example, a statement on your website, a press release, or a foreword from your CEO in your annual report.

B

Establish governance, decision-making and review processes on direct and indirect climate lobbying across the company.

C

Get management, directors and employees on board with climate policy engagement. Inform suppliers and customers about your ambition and rationale for advancing climate policy.

For the latest case studies and full list of resources, visit:
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2. MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

Publicly advocate for bold science-based climate policies, and call out those that obstruct the 1.5°C pathway

Businesses must clearly and confidently make the case for rapid decarbonization policies at the international, national, sub-national and sectoral levels, and not lobby against them. This helps drive the 'ambition loop': growing corporate action spurs governments to set stronger policies that help businesses achieve their climate goals faster.

How to achieve it:

A

Directly engage with policymakers across geographies (through company lobbyists, your CEO, senior management and staff), backed with evidence of your own climate ambition, action and accountability. Encourage stronger climate policies and oppose those that obstruct the path to a net-zero economy.

B

Mobilize your networks and collaborate with peers and suppliers to call for change and demonstrate growing corporate action. Include your climate position in corporate and brand communications, set up or join business initiatives and alliances, and act as a guide for industry groups. Sign joint letters and speak up together at events and on social media.

C

Use corporate activities and investments to leverage and influence. For example, choose locations for new facilities based on climate policy: a tech company may open a data center where there's sufficient renewable energy supply, or a new electric vehicle factory may influence local or national low-carbon transport policy.

Further guidance

- [Learn what strong climate policy looks like](#) and join the hundreds of business leaders calling for it
- [Ceres Blueprint for Responsible Policy Engagement on Climate Change](#)
- Learn which high-impact, just climate policies to call for: [Going "All in" \(Climate Voice\)](#)
- Read CLG Europe's policy briefing: [Fit for 55? A progressive business perspective on the EU's transformative climate package \(pdf\)](#)

Join

- [Ceres Policy Network \(US\)](#)
- [Corporate Leaders Group \(CLG\)](#)
- [Japan Climate Leaders' Partnership](#)
- Advocate for policy to reverse nature loss: [Business For Nature](#)



3. ALIGN TRADE ASSOCIATIONS

Align the climate policy advocacy of your trade associations, alliances and coalitions with the goal of net zero by 2050

Corporate lobbying against strong climate policy is common and extremely powerful when carried out by business groups and associations. It risks diluting companies' individual advocacy efforts and discrediting the voice of business more generally in the climate debate. Trade associations (and other alliances and coalitions) are often misaligned with individual members' own climate ambition — and silence implies support.

How to achieve it:

A

Map your company's links to trade associations (and other relevant alliances and coalitions). Assess the alignment of their direct and indirect climate change positions and lobbying activities with the 1.5°C pathway.

Map your company's links:

- [InfluenceMap](#)

B

Publicly acknowledge and commit to resolving misalignment. Take action to address it, for example by publicly distancing your company from relevant trade associations' positions or statements, working with trade associations to develop 1.5°C-aligned positions, or, if necessary, leave.

C

Collaborate with other corporate members to pressure trade associations and build momentum for positive climate advocacy. If, as a group, you can't enact change, then leave as one to send a powerful signal.

- [Toolkit: Addressing Trade Association Misalignment on Climate Policy](#) (The B Team)

4. ALLOCATE ADVOCACY SPENDING

Allocate advocacy spending to advance climate policies, not obstruct them

Corporate spending can greatly influence policy makers, and your political giving and funding of third-party organizations sends a strong message about the climate policy you want to see.

How to achieve it:

A

Assess all spending that's relevant to climate policy, including direct lobbying, contributions to trade associations and other organizations involved in climate change, and contributions to political parties, candidates and elected officials.

B

Contribute to organizations and initiatives that advance climate policy, including policy research, policy advocacy and communications that amplify the voice of corporate climate leaders. Stop all contributions to third parties that oppose or undermine climate policies

C

Ensure that the net effect of any company contributions to organizations and political parties, candidates or elected officials is to advance climate policy, not obstruct it.

By following these steps, your company is aligning with the Advocate-Align-Allocate Leadership Framework. [Get more guidance from the Environmental Defence Fund \(pdf\)](#)

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Q ACCOUNTABILITY

The climate emergency demands results. Clear and consistent disclosure of plans, progress, risks and opportunities builds trust among stakeholders, directs capital, and informs strategy. It shows resilience and readiness for the net-zero world.



1. SHARE YOUR PLAN

Disclose your climate transition action plan for leadership and resilience in the net-zero transition

Climate leaders back up their claims and commitments with transparent information. They listen to critical voices. They learn from scrutiny of their ambition, the consistency of their activities, and feasibility of their action plans. With a clear understanding of risks and opportunities, they show stakeholders they're ready to thrive — not just survive — in a net-zero world.

How to achieve it:

A

Start by bringing your existing plan, strategy and goals into the framework of a 'climate transition action plan'. This combines your core climate action plan with all other key information about your business's preparedness to shape and succeed in a net-zero world.

This will ensure your disclosure covers the core elements stakeholders want to see, to assess a company's transition towards a 1.5°C world: targets; governance, scenario analysis, risks and opportunities, value chain engagement, emission reduction initiatives, financial planning, Scopes 1, 2, and 3 accounting with verification, and policy engagement.

Further guidance:

- [CDP Climate Transition Plan: Discussion Paper](#)

B

Share your climate transition action plan with employees, investors, shareholders, trustees and customers, and invite feedback. Include it in your CDP disclosure and share it on your own public channels so it can reach stakeholders, build trust, and influence your industry.

C

Listen and learn: introduce formal mechanisms and procedures to engage a cross-cutting range of stakeholders on the robustness of your plan. Ensure critics are listened to; start with employees and develop a network of individuals and organizations to act as 'critical friends' to help raise your ambition.

By following all the steps in The 4 A's of Climate Leadership you will have a solid climate transition action plan in place. We are working with our partners on additional guidance on the most critical elements to include and disclose in your climate transition action plan.

2. REPORT ON PROGRESS

Track and publicly disclose your emissions, clearly, consistently and transparently

Companies must deliver on their targets and demonstrate rapid, sustained emissions reductions. Annual emissions disclosure is vital to tracking progress. The process of carbon accounting and reporting helps uncover risks and opportunities, to guide strategy. Transparency also highlights barriers that companies in certain markets or sectors are facing, which can spur policy, incentives and tools to help close the gap between corporate ambition and action.

How to achieve it:

A

Measure your emissions at least annually in line with the [GHG Protocol Guidance](#), covering Scopes 1, 2 and 3. Ensure the information is itemized, categorized by scope, and verified by a credible third party.

B

Report your emissions: align with the recommendations of the [Taskforce on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures \(TCFD\)](#). Fulfil any regional or global voluntary or mandatory reporting directives. Make your emissions data easily and publicly accessible through your corporate communication channels (such as your website, annual report or sustainability report). For easy comparison with your peers, also disclose through CDP.

C

Explain any changes in annual emissions. Attribute them to your company's own actions or to external developments. Put reductions or increases in the context of your ambition and ability to meet your targets. Share learnings, barriers to progress and any planned changes to your strategy and action plan.

DISCLOSE YOUR ADVOCACY

Climate leaders are fully transparent about their direct and indirect advocacy and lobbying

Companies must disclose how their memberships, financial contributions and direct engagement on climate policy support their own climate ambition and action, while reporting misalignments and plans to address them. Investors expect corporate lobbying to be aligned with the three disclosure asks of the [Global Standard on Responsible Corporate Climate Lobbying](#).

How to achieve it:

A

Publish a detailed annual review for investors of the 1.5°C alignment of your company's direct and indirect lobbying.

B

Acknowledge and report on actions and plans to address misalignments.

C

Publicly disclose:

- Membership of, support for and involvement in associations, alliances and coalitions engaged in climate change-related lobbying, across all geographies.
- For each of those organizations: annual membership payments (or equivalent), board or committee membership, or other active roles related to climate change.
- An overall assessment of the influence that your lobbying has had on supporting ambitious climate policy, and on the company's ability to meet its own climate transition goals.

4. TRANSPARENT GOVERNANCE

Disclose how your C-Suite and board are accountable for the company's climate performance

To fulfil their duties to shareholders, corporate climate leaders demonstrate how their most senior leaders and board members are taking responsibility for the company's climate action, through strong and robust oversight.

How to achieve it:

A

Disclose the details on the board's oversight of climate-related issues. Report the defined governance mechanisms you have in place to ensure delivery of the strategy and plan, and that climate ambition and action are frequent agenda items at board meetings.

B

Be transparent about any incentives provided for executives for managing and delivering on the climate strategy, from the quality of carbon accounting to company-wide progress.

C

Report your governance information to shareholders and make it public and easily accessible in your CDP disclosure and annual reports.

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