



# **Sustainability:** **A Work in Progress**



# Introduction

Embarking on the path to sustainability and achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions begins with a fundamental principle: you can't manage what you can't measure.

Establishing a baseline of current consumption patterns is the crucial first step, providing organizations with a clear understanding of their inefficiencies and areas for improvement. By regularly measuring and tracking performance against this baseline, organizations can set realistic reduction targets, monitor progress, and adjust strategies as needed, all while enhancing transparency and accountability in their sustainability efforts.

This structured approach not only drives continuous improvement but also supports effective management and reporting of sustainability initiatives. Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) best practices are evolving rapidly as organizations and regulators recognize their critical role in business operations, both from a risk and opportunity standpoint.





This article highlights practical ESG strategies that business leaders can adopt to build credible, measurable, and future-ready sustainability programs.

**Below are some recognized practices that can help enhance sustainability efforts:**

[Click image to learn more](#)

## Net zero roadmap

Also known as a decarbonization plan, is the strategic framework for achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions. It outlines specific actions, reduction targets, milestones, and timelines.

It involves assessing current emissions, setting reduction targets, and incorporating strategies to offset remaining emissions. The Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol is a widely used framework for measuring and managing greenhouse gas emissions. It provides standards and guidance for organizations to quantify and report their GHG emissions, facilitating transparent and consistent accounting practices. The protocol categorizes emissions into three scopes:

## The Greenhouse Gas Protocol





## Due diligence

It is defined as the “process to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for how the organization addresses its actual and potential negative impacts.”<sup>1</sup>. ESG Due Diligence offers an assessment of the asset’s sustainability performance concerning both its design and operation.



This assessment may encompass various activities such as:

- Energy audits and management
- Carbon assessments
- Environmental regulation review
- Climate risk evaluation
- Water usage and efficiency
- Waste production and management
- Accessibility
- Transport infrastructure and mobility options
- Health, safety, and wellbeing
- Sustainability labels and certifications
- Property management
- Green leases, and
- Past ESG measures, among other aspects.



## Peers benchmarking

This involves comparing an organization's sustainability performance against similar organizations within the industry. This process helps identify best practices, performance gaps, and areas for improvement by analyzing competitors' strategies and outcomes. By understanding how peers approach ESG challenges and opportunities, organizations can adopt more effective practices and set competitive targets.





## Materiality assessment

It is a strategic process to identify, prioritize, and address the ESG issues that are most significant to the company's stakeholders and that have the greatest impact on its business performance. This assessment enables organizations to align their sustainability efforts with the expectations of clients, investors, employees, and other key stakeholders, while also ensuring their contribution to broader societal and environmental goals.





## Gap analysis

It involves identifying discrepancies between an organization's current ESG performance and its desired goals or industry standards. This process helps pinpoint specific areas where improvements are needed, whether in policies, practices, or performance metrics. By assessing these gaps, organizations can prioritize actions and resources to address shortcomings and enhance their sustainability efforts.



## ESG action plan

It outlines the specific steps an organization will take to address the gaps identified in the gap analysis and achieve its sustainability goals. It includes setting measurable targets, assigning responsibilities, and defining timelines for implementation. The action plan should also detail the resources required and mechanisms for monitoring progress and reporting on achievements. This structured approach ensures that sustainability initiatives are effectively managed and integrated into the organization's overall strategy.





# Solutions spotlight

Creating high-quality and innovative spaces is the baseline for most developers, but making sure these are done sustainably is what truly sets the visionary ones apart. This is true for a leading real estate developer in the Philippines, whose mission is to build a sustainable future for their communities.

To support this mission, they engaged Arcadis to develop a decarbonization roadmap in response to directives from their parent company. Arcadis delivered expert sustainability advisory services that provided the client with a clear, actionable strategy aligned with industry standards and regulatory requirements.

The project began with a comprehensive benchmarking analysis of both local and global developers, providing valuable insights into the client's current sustainability positioning. This was complemented by an evaluation of emerging megatrends and innovations within the real estate sector, uncovering gaps and opportunities for advancement.

Establishing a robust baseline and conducting a materiality assessment enabled the identification of critical sustainability priorities specific to the client's operations and stakeholder interests.

Drawing on insights from benchmarking, megatrends, materiality, and gap analyses, Arcadis partnered with the client's team to conduct detailed interviews and facilitate a focused three-day workshop. This collaborative effort led to the alignment of strategic objectives and the establishment of SMART goals covering four focus areas which are energy and carbon, water, biodiversity and land use, and waste management.

This structured and collaborative process resulted in a robust, data-informed decarbonization roadmap that supports the client's sustainability ambitions and long-term market resilience.





## Conclusion

Sustainability is no longer just a regulatory or ethical obligation—it's a strategic imperative for business leaders pursuing long-term success. By adopting robust ESG frameworks, conducting thorough assessments, and implementing measurable action plans, organizations can reduce environmental impact while unlocking innovation, resilience, and stakeholder trust. As ESG standards evolve, those who embed sustainability across their operations will be best positioned to create lasting value—for their business, communities, and the planet.



## About Arcadis

Arcadis is a leading global partner, delivering some of the world's most transformative projects with businesses, cities and industries. With 36,000 people active in more than 30 countries, we bring together the best minds from around the world to deliver intelligent products and solutions across the environment, energy, water, buildings, transport and infrastructure sectors. We take design, engineering, architecture and consultancy to the next level, advising clients at every step of every project, and combining our human and digital intelligence to co-create environments that reflect our clients' and stakeholder needs. We are committed to solving today's greatest challenges, creating a blueprint for a better future, designed to thrive.

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