

# Building Your **Sustainability Blueprint**

*4 Steps to Developing a  
Roadmap to Decarbonization*



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It’s not just the planet that thrives on sustainability. It’s your business, too.

In today’s business climate, companies of all sizes, in all industries, are becoming increasingly motivated to effect change through environmental responsibility, sustainability initiatives, and positive ESG (environmental, social, and governance) results.

Through strong ESG strategies, businesses are better positioned to optimize investments, lower costs, expand revenue and reduce regulatory costs. An ESG study by McKinsey & Company states, “Executing ESG effectively can help combat rising operating expenses (such as raw-material costs and the true cost of water or carbon), which McKinsey research has found can affect operating profits by as much as 60 percent.”<sup>1</sup>

In addition, positive ESG strategies provide avenues for attracting customers through sustainable products and equipment, holistically reducing water and energy consumption and minimizing exposure to environmental risks. A new report by Bain & Company states that ESG isn’t just a nice thing to do. “Consumers are taking note: survey after survey shows millennials and post-millennials in particular flock to companies they think act with a high degree of social responsibility. Data from Nielsen estimates that in the US, alone, consumers will spend up to \$150 billion on packaged goods they view as sustainable in 2021.”<sup>2</sup>

Amid a global pandemic and economic fallout, a heightened focus on climate change environmental concerns, a volatile energy market, and the rapid advancement of renewable energy technologies have all combined to make sustainability no longer a “preference”, but rather an undeniable requirement for business resiliency. Commercial and industrial businesses today are transitioning their traditional energy mix to a more progressive energy strategy that reduces carbon and optimizes energy consumption and utilization.

Transitioning to a Zero-Carbon Footprint	3
Sustainability is Driven by Stakeholders	4
The Importance of Measuring Greenhouse Gas Emissions	5
Four Steps to Developing Your Sustainability Plan	6
1. Understand Your Energy Data	6
2. Establish Sustainability Goals	7
3. Implement Internal Oversight	8
4. Track, Analyze and Report Your Progress	9
Building Your Sustainability Blueprint	10
Conclusion	11
About Gexa Energy	11



Sustainability is no longer a choice. It’s a business requirement.

1 Henisz, W., Koller, T., and Nuttall, R. (2019). *Five Ways That ESG Creates Value*, McKinsey & Company. mckinsey.com.  
2 Seemann, A., Hardcastle, D., Diers, D., and Han, J. (2021, March 1). *The Expanding Case for ESG in Private Equity*, Bain & Co., bain.com.

# Transitioning to a Zero-Carbon Footprint

Sustainability is a journey, and no two sustainability plans are alike. Your sustainability plan should meet the unique needs of your business. The path to becoming a more sustainable organization requires strategic planning, continual nurturing, and corporate-wide involvement. Your sustainability plan will continually evolve as energy technologies advance, carbon mitigation mandates progress, your business grows, and energy needs change.

Sustainability is a gateway to positive ESG strategies. It is a cornerstone that touches all areas of a business—beyond just environmental. Sustainability encompasses the business programs, products, and practices of an organization which support environmental preservation and are intertwined with social responsibility and business resiliency.

Transitioning to an energy strategy that includes renewable energy sources is the foundation of sustainability. But incorporating renewable energy into an organization can be a nuanced and complex process. It requires understanding your energy consumption across the entire organization, uncovering opportunities for energy efficiency and integrating renewables, setting sustainability goals, and monitoring your progress. To achieve this, you must take a deep dive into your energy data.



## Analyzing your unique energy data over time can uncover opportunities for:

- » Reduced energy costs
- » Reduced carbon emissions
- » Reduced reliance on the grid
- » Greater budget certainty
- » Improved energy efficiency
- » Improved competitive advantage
- » Improved employee retention and customer loyalty
- » Compliance with carbon mitigation requirements and reporting



Your sustainability blueprint will continually evolve as energy technologies advance, carbon mitigation mandates progress, your business grows, and energy needs change.



# Sustainability is Driven by Stakeholders

The stakeholders in your sustainability plan are not only your investors, leadership team, board members, and employees, but also your customers, prospects and suppliers. These are your catalysts for change. It is essential to build a corporate culture around sustainability and to educate and inform all stakeholders along the way.

For internal stakeholders, it's crucial to articulate what you intend to accomplish, why it's important and how each person can contribute to company-wide success. Be sure to assign responsibility and accountability to the appropriate internal stakeholders and attract, develop and retain talent that will support and enable sustainability.

External stakeholders—clients, prospects, suppliers, and investors—are becoming aware of a company's dedication to and transparency around sustainability and ESG initiatives. Your external stakeholders should not only understand your organization's commitment to sustainability, but have visibility to your ESG criteria and positive sustainability outcomes.

**Building a corporate culture that educates and informs stakeholders along the way creates engagement and momentum for change.**



- » Leadership team
- » Board members
- » Employees
- » Investors
- » Clients
- » Prospects
- » Suppliers
- » Community



# The Importance of Measuring Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions

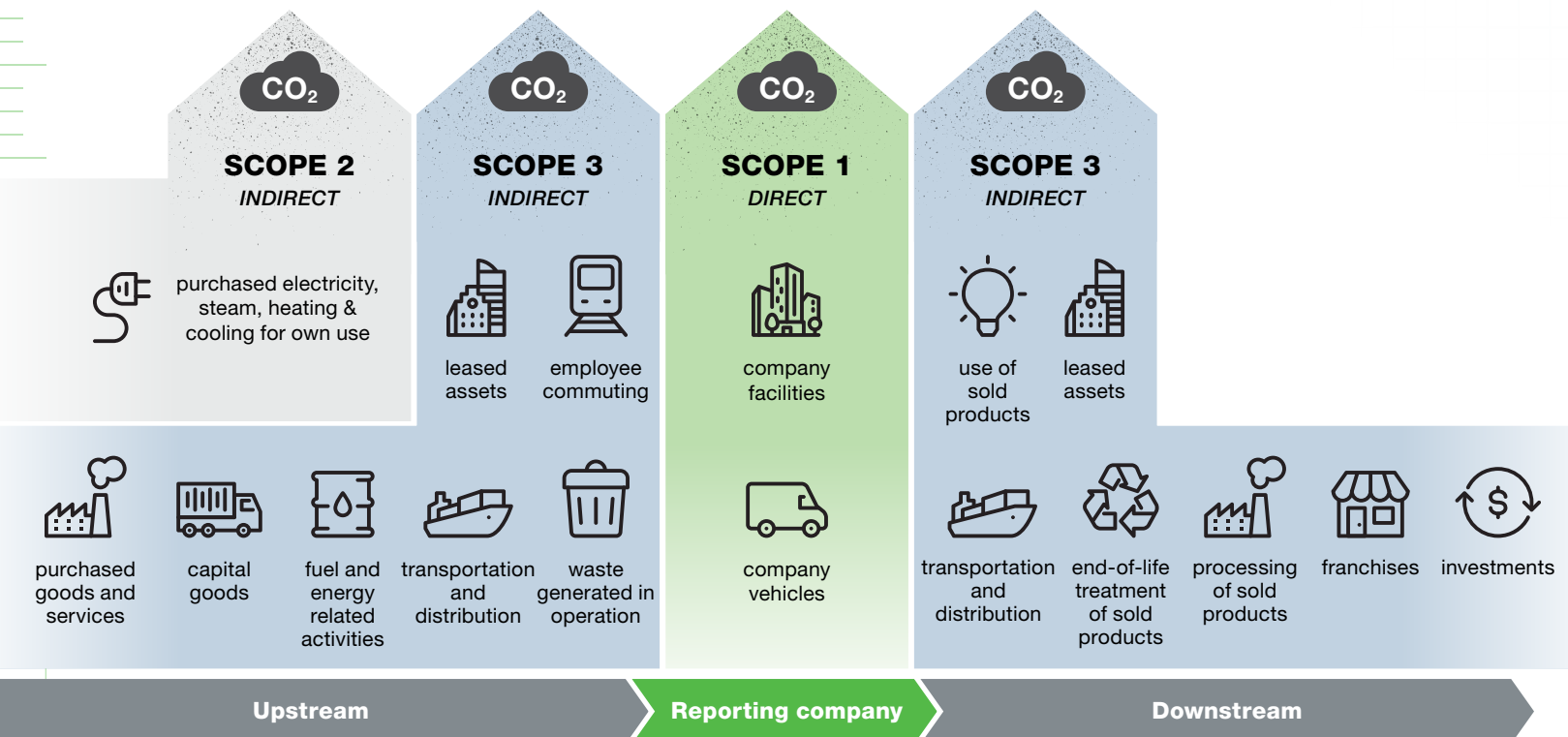
## Calculating GHG emissions is good for business.

It provides insight into energy usage across the entire organization and helps identify opportunities for energy efficiency, carbon mitigation, cost savings, and reducing your reliance on the grid.

ESG Investing, also known as Sustainable Investing, is growing exponentially as more investors and issuers utilize ESG and climate data and tools to support their investment decision making. The Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) has published recommendations for climate-related reporting and disclosure which includes inventory of an organization's scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions.

## Scope 1, 2 and 3 GHG Emissions

While emissions scopes might seem confusing at first, they can help you create a GHG inventory by identifying how much CO<sub>2</sub> your organization emits based on everything it takes for your business to operate. Greenhouse gas emissions are categorized into three groups or 'Scopes' by the most widely used international accounting tool, the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol.



Adapted from: [Greenhouse Gas Protocol Corporate Value Chain \(Scope 3\) Accounting and Reporting Standard](#)



1

## Understand Your Energy Data

Implementing a sustainability plan requires that you measure, monitor and analyze your organization's energy data. Your data provides insight into energy consumption across the entire organization. It allows you to measure and benchmark carbon emissions across all facilities and fleets, and develop reporting to demonstrate your progress and environmental impact.

Looking at energy efficiency, procurement, and sustainability as independent silos can create long-lasting, unnecessary, and costly mistakes. If you want to create a measurable, financially rewarding sustainability plan you need to break open historical silos and leverage integrated analysis for a more holistic approach. Conducting a forward-looking analysis that incorporates a variety of energy options allows you to prioritize, plan, and execute an optimized energy sustainability strategy. Once you understand the potential cost savings and sustainability benefits of certain actions, you can then take a deeper dive into your operation, facilities, and energy usage data to develop your sustainability blueprint.

**Uncover opportunities and extract value from your enterprise's energy data:**

- » Energy efficiency initiatives and cost reduction
- » The best renewable energy options for your business
- » Reducing carbon emissions to meet sustainability goals
- » Mitigating energy price volatility for greater budget certainty



## 2

# Establish Sustainability Goals

A sustainability plan typically includes the overarching goal to reduce carbon emissions, in addition to addressing environmental, economic, and social equity goals. When deciding where to start, think about your business' core values and processes to be sure your goals will align. From there, establish both short-term and long-term goals and determine timing, funding and responsibilities related to each.

Sustainability goal-setting can feel overwhelming. It's important to think big at first but follow with tangible, realistic goals that can be achieved over time. There are multiple frameworks you can look to for guidance, such as:

- » **Science Based Target Initiative (SBTi)** – Helps organizations set emissions reduction targets
- » **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** – The 17 goals created as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- » **UN Global Compact** – A corporate sustainability initiative for driving change

### Short-term goals



- » Review supplier contract structure and utility bills
- » Raise awareness with all stakeholders
- » Establish an internal sustainability task force
- » Identify internal opportunities to conserve energy and save money
  - Implement a corporate recycling program
  - Reduce the use of paper, plastics, single-use products
  - Reduce travel via video conferences and work-from-home policies
- » Measure current energy metrics across entire enterprise
- » Develop and execute energy efficiency initiatives

### Long-term goals



- » Ensure energy supplier contracts are structured to accommodate the integration of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency projects that reduce consumption of brown power
- » Integrate renewable energy into your energy mix
- » Benchmark and monitor energy metrics and carbon emissions
- » Establish sustainability reporting criteria and communication plan
- » Set carbon mitigation goals and monitor environmental impact
- » Engage your suppliers and vendors about their sustainability practices and where improvements can be made

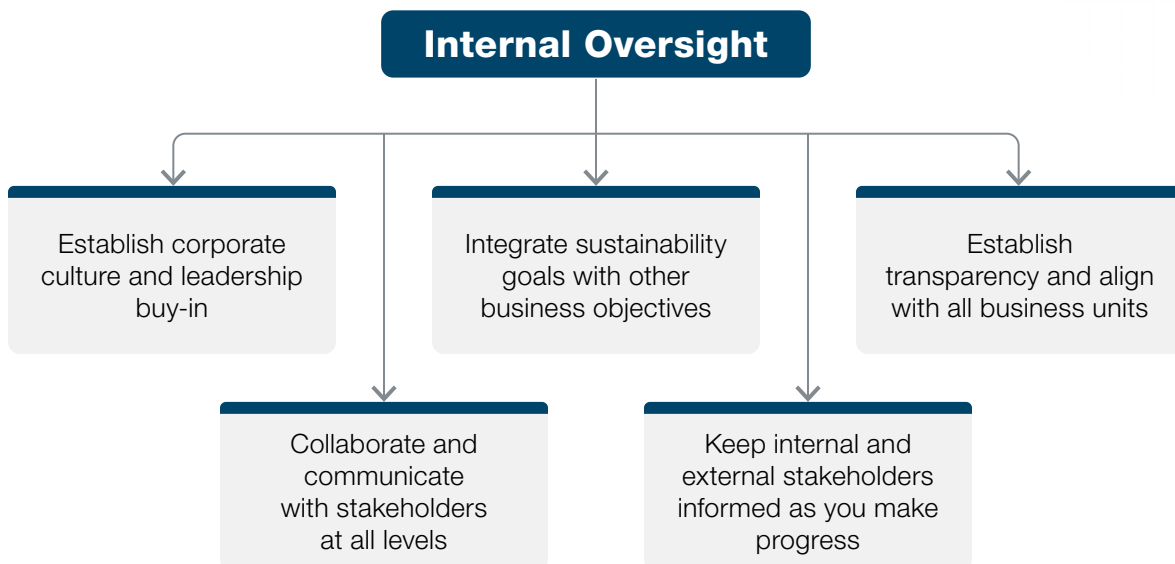


## 3

## Implement Internal Oversight

With goals set and aligned with your business' core values, you ensure your plan will maintain integrity when decisions need to be made. Your plan is not actionable without governance, alignment and consistent communication. To build a strong sustainability strategy, it is critical to identify an internal, dedicated sustainability champion(s) who will build your sustainability plan, set goals, gain stakeholder buy-in, assign tasks and manage all aspects.

Each company is structured differently and therefore must tailor its governance to meet the needs of the business operation. To avoid competing priorities or redundancies, your sustainability oversight structure should complement your existing organizational framework. You will also want a structure that can modify, adapt and flex as your company grows and sustainability initiatives advance.



A successful sustainability plan requires committed leadership, clear direction and business alignment.







## 4

## Track, Analyze and Report Your Progress

With the emergence of carbon mitigation mandates and renewable energy requirements, sustainability tracking and reporting is quickly becoming mandatory for large organizations. Determining which metrics to track and report, and how to communicate them in a reporting format, can be daunting.

### Metrics Matter

Analyzing your energy data, benchmarking your progress, and reporting your GHG emissions are all critical to your success. Tracking and analyzing your energy data will help you optimize, forecast and enhance your sustainability plan. Most organizations do not have the in-house expertise or data analytics capabilities necessary to produce the level of measurement and reporting that is required. Utilizing an end-to-end energy management solution can be a useful tool to help guide your decarbonization journey and ensure corporate performance and regulatory compliance. Depending on your internal capabilities, resources and sustainability goals, you may want to start by simply reporting your GHG emissions and work your way to a more robust published report.



Implementing a sustainability plan requires that you measure, monitor and analyze your energy data across the entire organization.



### Communicate Clearly and with Purpose

When talking publicly about your sustainability goals, process, policies and achievements, choosing the right reporting design is critical. Communication should include a clear explanation of your sustainability plan and carbon reduction goals as well as reporting specific GHG emissions metrics. According to an article by Joshua Levin, Forbes Business Council, organizations can boost public appeal by sharing their ESG values and plan in an engaging and comprehensive manner. “The missing link in ESG has been translating ESG data for the layperson... Organizations would be wise to explore how they can tell their ESG story more effectively.”<sup>3</sup>

In 2021, there is no required reporting standards all companies must follow, however there are several well-known reporting frameworks your organization could choose from. If you decided to use standards from a certain entity when you were determining your sustainability goals, you will want your reporting design to accommodate those goal standards. Your final report can be included with your organization's annual report or as a separate report.

<sup>3</sup> Levin, J. (2021, Feb. 9). *Three Unexpected Trends Driving 2021 ESG Inflection*, Forbes, forbes.com.

# Reaching Your Sustainability Goals Requires a Blueprint

Your sustainability plan can only begin once you have visibility into the comprehensive energy data that will drive your plan. Leveraging an energy supplier with the experience and robust energy reporting capabilities can help establish your sustainability strategy.

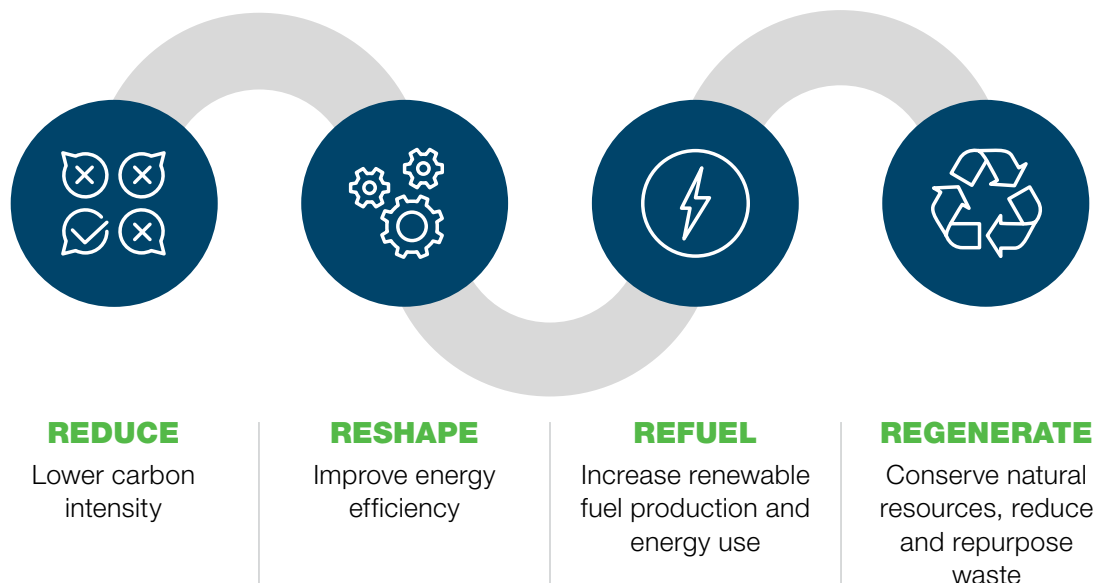
For more than 25 years ESG investing has been a core strategy at NextEra Energy. It's our Mission to accelerate industry towards a zero-carbon future. As part of the NextEra family of companies, Gexa Energy can analyze your organization's energy data and identify opportunities for cost savings, carbon reduction, renewable energy integration and energy management — so you can build your Sustainability Blueprint with actionable goals and measurable results.

Our Sustainability Blueprint is a customized roadmap to reaching your energy goals. Using our proprietary analytics platform and nearly 100 years of experience, we work with you every step of the way to develop a comprehensive energy and sustainability strategy. Whether your customized results call for energy efficiency, renewable energy, demand response, different supply contract structures, or all the above, Gexa Energy is your trusted energy partner.



## No two energy strategies look the same.

We partner with businesses like yours to develop new, creative and comprehensive energy solutions to decarbonize, lower costs and ensure business sustainability.



# Shifting to clean energy isn't an option. **IT'S THE SOLUTION.**

Today's commercial and industrial business leaders must transition their traditional energy mix to a more progressive energy strategy that includes renewable energy sources and reduces carbon emissions. But most organizations don't have the in-house expertise to navigate this often complex and nuanced process. An experienced energy partner can provide the energy data, insight, and resources necessary to help you successfully develop and execute a customized sustainability plan.

## In the pursuit of a cleaner, more sustainable future — It's good to have a seasoned partner.

Gexa Energy is a wholly owned subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources, the world's largest generator of renewable energy from the wind and sun, and a leader in battery storage. With a large portfolio of sustainable products and solutions, we're able to partner with your business to meet your clean energy goals across the entire supply chain.

As a premier energy supplier, Gexa Energy has been serving residential and commercial customers since 2002. Gexa Energy helps large business customers rethink their energy strategy and achieve enterprise energy optimization through advanced analytics and customized products and services.

## Ready to get started?

All it takes is the right partner and a blueprint to follow.  
Contact us today.



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