

# Glossary of Sustainability Terms



To establish a baseline understanding of sustainability and other relevant phrases for the promotional products industry, PPAI has collated a list of commonly used terms and definitions. This is not an exhaustive list but it does include several useful phrases as outlined on Sustainability Day during PPAI's Product Responsibility Summit 2022.

## **Carbon Dioxide Equivalent**

The metric used to account for the release of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and other greenhouse gases (GHGs) from both natural and human sources CO<sub>2</sub> is used.

## **Carbon Disclosure Project**

Not-for-profit charity that runs the global disclosure system for investors, companies, cities, states, and regions to manage their environmental impacts.

## **Carbon Emissions**

Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions stem from the burning of fossil fuels and the manufacture of cement. CO<sub>2</sub> is the most common greenhouse gas in the atmosphere.

## **Carbon Footprint**

A carbon footprint is the measure of total greenhouse gas emissions caused by an individual, event, organization, service, place or product, expressed as carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e).

## **Carbon Neutral**

Policy of not increasing carbon emissions and achieving carbon reduction through offsets.

## **Circular Economy**

A structure where investments are made in advanced technologies related to material science product design, recycling, and manufacturing that leads to zero waste "closed loop" system in which resources are not wasted. The elements of the loop entail production, usage, reduction, recycling, and reuse. Another description of this model prioritizes products that are "made to be made again."

## **COP27**

As of 2022, the 27th Conference of the Parties occurs yearly in the scheme of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

## **Ecofriendly**

A reference to products and processes that have beneficial effects on the environment or at least avoid causing environmental damage. Considerations beyond the product beyond the product should be included, such as composition of the materials used to make the product, the product's function, and a life cycle assessment. Other process concerns include resource and energy efficiency, and how the materials needed to manufacture the product are gathered.

## **ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance)**

The three key factors when measuring the sustainability and ethical impact of an investment in a business or company; also called sustainable investing, responsible investing, and impact investing.

## **Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)**

An international non-profit organization that promotes responsible management of the world's forests via timber certification.

## **Greenhouse Gases**

All gases within our atmosphere that absorb energy (like that from the sun) causing a greenhouse effect, this phrase can be used interchangeably with carbon emissions.

## **Greenhouse Gas Protocol**

Comprehensive global standardized frameworks to measure and manage GHG emissions from private and public sector operations, value chains, and mitigation actions.

## **Global Reporting Initiative**

Independent, international organization that helps businesses and other organizations take responsibility for their impacts, by providing them with the global common language to communicate those impacts - claims to be the world's most widely used standards for sustainability reporting.

### **Global Warming Potential**

A measure of how much energy the emissions of 1 ton of a gas will absorb over a given period of time, relative to the emissions of 1 ton of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>).

### **Greenwashing**

Disinformation or misinformation used in marketing to present an environmentally responsible public image.

### **International Sustainability Standards Board**

A standard-setting body whose mandate is the creation and development of sustainability-related financial reporting standards to meet investors' needs.

### **Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)**

A globally recognized framework for healthy, efficient, carbon and cost-saving "green" buildings.

### **Life Cycle Analysis (LCA)**

Methodology for assessing environmental impacts associated with all the stages of the life cycle of a commercial product, process, or service.

### **Net Zero**

Making changes upstream to reduce carbon emissions to the lowest amount – and offsetting as a last resort.

### **Offsets**

A reduction or removal of emissions of carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases made in order to compensate for emissions made elsewhere.

### **Renewable**

Capable of being replaced by natural ecological cycles or sound management practices. Often referring to resources or energy, this term does not always equate to a product or process being sustainable. The difference lies in the product's manufacturing process. For example, if a product is to be sustainable, it must not compromise future generations. A renewable product must be able to fulfill current needs without running out of the resources required to make the product.

### **Renewable Energy Credits**

Tradable energy certificates in the US that represent 1 MWh of electricity generated from an eligible renewable energy resource and was fed into the shared system of power.

### **Science Based Targets**

Targets aligned to meet the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement that provide a clearly defined pathway for companies to reduce GHG emissions.

### **Sustainability**

Refers to fulfilling the needs of current generations without compromising the needs of future generations, while ensuring a balance between economic growth, environmental care, and social well-being. This description embraces the concept of the "three Ps" referring to people, planet, and profits. Traditionally, many companies' sole interest was their bottom line. However, companies will need to embrace a balance between economic growth, environmental care, and social wellbeing to remain competitive.

### **Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB)**

Climate-related financial disclosure recommendations designed to help companies provide better information to support informed capital allocation.

### **Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)**

International non-profit organization that promotes responsible management of the world's forests via timber certification.

### **Task Force on Climate Related Disclosures**

Climate-related financial disclosure recommendations designed to help companies provide better information to support informed capital allocation.

### **Total Resource Use and Efficiency**

A zero-waste certification program dedicated to measuring, improving, and recognizing zero waste performance.

### **United Nations Global Compact**

A call to all companies to align strategies and operations with universal principles on human rights, labor, environment, and anti-corruption, and take action to advance societal goals.

### **United Nations Guiding Principles**

A short series of questions to which any company should have answers, both to know whether it is doing business with respect for human rights, and to show others the progress it is making.

### **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**

A collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future"