



E.ON's Green Glossary

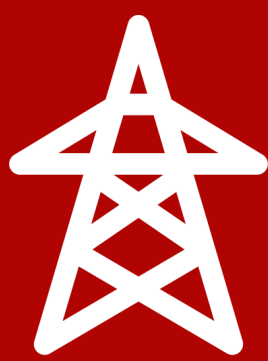
Launched ahead of COP26 – the key United Nations Climate Change Conference where world leaders will come together to discuss how best to respond to the climate emergency.

Greenhouse gases

A greenhouse gas is any gas released into the Earth's atmosphere that traps heat and contributes to climate change. The three main greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide which all primarily come from the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas).



Net zero



Net zero means creating an equal balance between the greenhouse gases we produce and the amount we remove from the atmosphere. This is done by changing our behaviour to produce less of the harmful gases in the first place, for example switching to renewable energy, while also actively removing the remaining greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, such as by planting more trees to absorb them.

Carbon offsetting

Carbon offsetting provides a way to balance out carbon dioxide emissions and our impact on the planet. This could be done by funding projects that reduce the carbon dioxide emissions generated or permanently remove the same amount of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere that you generate.



Carbon neutral



Companies, processes and products become carbon neutral when they calculate how much carbon dioxide has been emitted, and then offset these emissions via other means. The more we can do to minimise carbon dioxide emissions in the first place through behavioural change and new technologies, the less we have to rely on carbon offsetting projects to be carbon neutral.

Carbon negative and climate positive

Carbon negative and climate positive are interchangeable terms which mean the same thing. It's going one step further than net zero and aiming to remove more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere than you emit through your day-to-day activities.



Carbon footprint



In short, a carbon footprint is a measurement of your impact on the planet. It's the total amount of carbon dioxide that you as an individual, organisation or community releases into the atmosphere through your actions.

CO₂e

Known as carbon dioxide equivalent, CO₂e is the measurement we use for all greenhouse gas emissions rolled into one. It's a simple way to describe every greenhouse gas in one single unit – helping us to easily understand and compare the environmental impact of different activities.



A tonne of carbon dioxide



It's hard to know how to visualise one tonne of carbon dioxide but as an example each passenger on a return flight from London to New York is responsible, on average, for roughly one tonne of carbon dioxide(1). To put things into perspective, in 2020, the UK is estimated to have emitted 414.1 million tonnes of CO₂e(2), with each household emitting about 2.4 tonnes of carbon dioxide(3).

Kilowatt hour and megawatt hour

To fully understand your energy use and where you could make savings, you need to know how it's measured. A kWh is the unit we use to measure energy in your home, and simply put it's the amount of energy you'd use if you kept a 1,000 watt appliance running for one hour. And a MWh is 1,000 kWh.



Renewable energy



Renewable energy is power generated from natural resources that are quickly replenished, such as the sun (solar), wind (turbines) or water (hydroelectric dams) and it doesn't contribute to climate change. What's more, renewable energy is unlimited as the sun will keep shining, the wind will keep blowing and water will keep flowing.

Sources

1. The Guardian: How your flight emits as much CO₂ as many people do in a year.
2. Gov.uk: 2020 UK greenhouse gas emissions, provisional figures.
3. Calculated by taking total UK residential carbon dioxide emissions in 2020 (source: gov.uk) and dividing it by the number of UK households in 2020 (source: ONS).