



B4NZ SME Data Taskforce- Working Group 7 - March 20th

Meeting Purpose

To discuss progress on the SME sustainability data standard, prepare for the upcoming Net Zero Council presentation, and plan next steps for adoption and reporting, with a focus on aligning efforts across government and industry stakeholders.

Key Takeaways

- The group is nearing completion of Phase 1, with broad consensus achieved on the data standard and supporting documents, including guidance and data sourcing materials.
- Key asks for the Net Zero Council in May have been refined, including formal government backing, assignment of a council member champion, and support for a wider market consultation.
- A comprehensive public report and parliamentary reception are planned for June to formally launch the standard and recommendations, emphasising the pro-growth narrative and SME-centric approach.
- Productive discussions with the Cabinet Office have opened potential pathways for convergence with PPN06/21, signalling positive momentum for government adoption.

Topics

Omnibus Reflections

- Recent EU omnibus proposals have recognised the unintended consequences of top-down reporting on SMEs, aligning with the task force's messaging.
- The concept of a voluntary SME standard was acknowledged, supporting the group's approach of building consensus and reducing the proliferation of standards.
- Some members suggested potentially including some Social and Governance elements in addition to Environmental factors, whilst maintaining simplicity. This sparked discussion on balancing comprehensiveness with ease of use for SMEs.
- Concerns were raised about the complexity of Scope 3 emissions reporting for SMEs, particularly in areas like downstream transportation and distribution that may be out of their direct control.

Data Standard Updates

- Minor clarifications have been made to the standard to extract primary data more effectively and focus on performance and usage metrics.



- The group has achieved broad consensus on data attributes and phrasing, with only small iterations remaining.
- A significant discussion centred on potentially making five key Scope 3 categories from PPN0621 mandatory, but with a "do not track" option to maintain flexibility for SMEs. This proposal received 80% agreement in initial polling.
- The importance of data quality and validation was emphasised, with suggestions to develop a middle-ground approach between full verification and self-reporting that would be suitable for SMEs.

Net Zero Council Preparation

- Key asks for the council include: a formal statement of support, assignment of a council member champion, positioning government as an early adopter, and backing for a market consultation.
- The team is working to brief council members in advance through the SME working group and a detailed briefing paper.
- While specific timelines for adoption are being approached cautiously, productive discussions with the Cabinet Office have occurred regarding convergence with PPN0621.
- The group aims to showcase alignment between their proposed standard and the government's existing frameworks to strengthen the case for adoption.

Public Report Planning

- The report structure will align closely with the Net Zero Council asks and provide comprehensive market context, methodology details, and a standard overview.
- The team is actively seeking data, quotes, and potential co-authors from working group members to enrich the report's content and credibility.
- There is a strong focus on pro-growth framing, emphasising how the standard can streamline processes, enhance competitiveness, and remove barriers for SMEs.
- The report will highlight how the UK can go "further and faster" whilst maintaining equivalence with EU standards, positioning the initiative as a competitive advantage.

Launch Events

- A parliamentary reception is scheduled for 23rd June, preceded by a high-level executive roundtable focusing on SMEs as drivers of green growth.
- The team is developing a comprehensive amplification strategy, including targeted media outreach to publications like the Financial Times.
- Support is being sought from partner organisations for design and graphics to enhance the visual appeal and accessibility of the report.



Next Steps

- Update the standard based on feedback, particularly regarding the inclusion of key Scope 3 categories.
- Prepare detailed materials for the Net Zero Council presentation in May, including pre-briefing key stakeholders.
- Draft the public report for review at the next working group session, incorporating pro-growth messaging and SME-centric narratives.
- Finalise plans for the June launch events, including confirming high-profile attendees and refining the media strategy.
- Continue engagement with government departments to progress discussions on adoption timelines and PPN convergence.
- Distribute a follow-up questionnaire to gather any additional reflections on the Omnibus proposals and their implications for the standard.