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## Bee1 Carbon offsetting

The distance between environmental impact and mitigation activity means that the benefits of undertaking carbon offsetting are not always obvious. Seemingly harmless actions taken decades ago are today unpicking our society at the seams.

Bees are in serious decline in the UK and globally. In the UK alone, we have lost an alarming 13 species and another 35 are currently at risk. Activities include changes in farming practices, the use of pesticides and urban development – all contributory to habitat loss. Bees are now considered an endangered species for the first time ever.

Carbon offsetting is the process of investing in schemes that remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, typically in proportion to your own emissions/environmental impact. Initiatives can range from adopting a beehive, to planting trees, to investing in renewable energy capacity, there are many ways to do it.

### **Things that might lead you to offset**

#### *Understanding how the greenhouse effect works*

Gases that enter our atmosphere stay there for a long time, decades when it comes to our most commonly emitted greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide. Human activity is resulting in the addition of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere far more rapidly than they are removed by natural processes. This lag and accumulation means that even if we reduce the amount of greenhouse gases we emit, they are still accumulating in the atmosphere. The only chance we have at curbing climate change to a manageable level is reduce our emissions, to ZERO, and then actively take carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

#### *The risks of an unstable climate to society*

Climate change is not a linear process, there are natural checks and switches in our climate system that both amplify and hinder global warming. Our climate is warming as a result of human activity (by one degree so far), but there will come a point where human impact is no longer the dominant driver. This could warm our climate by up to eight degrees by the end of the century. This level of warming is completely incompatible with society in its current form – the impacts would be global, catastrophic and incomparable.

#### *Understanding your impact*

If you've measured either your organisational, production or personal carbon footprint, you will have discovered that generally, 50% of it will come from power used, 25% of it will come from transport, 20% the food eaten and 5% the stuff bought. In short, we cannot recycle our way out of climate change, even if we make all the changes we can – an enormous percentage remains beyond our control. If we want to keep on living, additional activity is required.

Bee1 is supporting schools, businesses and the community, some way to transition to zero-impact operations, this will require large scale changes at all levels. This is a long term objective but we must all take responsibility for our environmental impacts in the interim period, however long or short it may be.



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## Considerations and things to make your peace with

*We are where we are*

Carbon offsetting is an abstract concept, ideally action would have been taken long ago, rendering the process unnecessary. But that doesn't make the need for action any less necessary or urgent. We must not forget our long term objective of zero-impact. So, if you plan to offset your footprint and forget about your impact, then perhaps offsetting isn't for you.

*Carbon factors (the numbers behind foot printing) are based on averages*

Carbon offsetting is an in-exact science. Perhaps that makes it all the more important to invest in a scheme you feel passionate about anyway, be that increased pollination, UK woodland or wildflower meadow seed planting.

There is not enough land on earth to plant enough trees to offset humanities carbon footprint. We must take action to reduce it as well. But when the natural environment is so linked to human health, it is in our long-term interest to restore it and offsetting is a way to do this.

## **HOW TO OFFSET YOUR CARBON**

1. The first thing to do is to measure your impact. If you're measuring a production, use a carbon calculator, if you're a company then download DEFRA's carbon factors and measure your impact. If you want to offset your individual carbon footprint, use [WWF's personal carbon calculator](#) estimator or for a personal individual activity, use an online tool, like [calculator.carbonfootprint.com](http://calculator.carbonfootprint.com).
2. Next decide how much of what you've measured you want to offset. Costs vary from between £4-£14 per tonne depending on the scheme.
3. Next you need decide what scheme you want to invest in. Renewables are the cheapest kind of carbon offset and re-forestation is at the top end, with projects in the UK/EU costing the most. It is important to choose the type of scheme of you feel passionate about – if you feel passionately about saving our declining bee population, then you should consider adopting a hive [www.bee1.co.uk](http://www.bee1.co.uk).
4. Lastly, congratulations, you've finally discovered a company that you want to work with - Hello and welcome!