

Why standards will accelerate the **net zero transition**

Every economy is different. Every country's regulatory regime is different. Standards present an opportunity to deliver systemic change, if they can be embedded systemically in the economy.

What role do standards play in tackling the climate challenge?

Put simply, standards set out an agreed way of doing something. They encapsulate good practice, agreed by a broad range of stakeholders who are experts in their field. In that sense, standards are trusted knowledge for industry, consumers and governments that can be used to create a common approach to solving global issues.

In terms of climate action, the road to Net Zero affects all facets of society, posing a unifying challenge for government, industry and investors. Our proposition is that in the coming years, a company's progress towards Net Zero will become a routine measurement of success, demonstrating to its customers, employees, supply chain and shareholders that it is a socially conscious enterprise that is serious about sustainability. As the National Standards Body for the UK, we believe that standards can empower businesses to take the necessary action.

major role as part of every country's market framework to support a rapid transition to net zero.

How can the standards development process adapt to incorporate the need for greater climate action?

Ahead of COP26, BSI hosted the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) General Assembly in September. A major outcome of that meeting was the signing by BSI and ISO of the London Declaration, which commits ISO and its member bodies around the world to ensuring that all current and new international standards will accelerate action on climate change.

ISO members and their stakeholders will now actively consider climate science to ensure that the voices of civil society and those most vulnerable to climate change are fully heard in standards development. This is already proving to be a game changer for National Standards Bodies and the international standards community and has been adopted by the International Electrotechnical Committee (IEC) and the European regional standards organizations CEN and CENELEC.

What did BSI learn at COP26?

What we saw at COP26 was that 'non-state actors' (businesses and those stakeholders with public interest remits) are seizing the initiative, independent of national positions. The race is on. With investor, customer and employee pressure behind them, corporates have pivoted from the pre-Covid years. There is now competitive advantage to becoming more sustainable across the environmental, social and governance (ESG) agenda. The only way to demonstrate this is through common standards and measurement.

We launched a new initiative, 'Our2050 World' together with ISO, endorsed by UNFCCC Race To Zero (RTZ) campaign, to support non-state actors around the world use standards in their transition to Net Zero, and we had strong support for the announcement by the Integrity Council for Voluntary Carbon Markets (ICVCM) that BSI will support the development of a common framework for standards and assurance for the supply side (project side) of VCM.

In conclusion, we face a pivotal moment in the transition to Net Zero. Governments, industry and consumers everywhere are beginning to realise that common standards implemented globally need to work alongside regulatory frameworks to accelerate progress towards Net Zero. There is huge potential for international standards to align governments, non-state actors and civil society behind our joint ambition to create a more sustainable world for all.



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Although there are an increasing number of net zero corporate commitments and government targets, there has been a lack of real direction for business leaders as to how these targets can be met. The real value of standards is not just the words in the documents, but how they are used and integrated into the economy, alongside (or as part of) regulatory and contractual obligations. Every economy is different. Every country's regulatory regime is different. Standards present an opportunity to deliver systemic change, if they can be embedded systemically in the economy.

As countries continue to work out how they will meet their nationally determined contributions, consensus-based standards should play a

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