



Net Zero Week

Webinar Summary

BSI Flex on net zero planning for SMEs: Views from the user community

Date: Wednesday, 25 September 2024

Time: 14.00 – 16.00 GMT

Location: Online

Facilitated by: Sara Walton, Net Zero & ESG Sector Lead



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The journey toward a sustainable future is gaining momentum, with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) playing a pivotal role in achieving Net Zero emissions. Recognizing the unique challenges and opportunities that SMEs face, the British Standards Institution (BSI) hosted a webinar to delve into the practicalities of this mission.

The event brought together industry experts involved in developing the BSI Flex 3030 standard—a practical guide designed to help SMEs navigate their Net Zero commitments.

BSI Flex 3030: Complementing Existing Standards

Understanding BSI Flex 3030 and its relationship with existing environmental standards was a primary focus. The panellists emphasized that BSI Flex 3030 is designed to complement established systems like ISO 14001, making them more accessible and actionable for SMEs. The Flex prioritizes practical implementation over extensive reporting, providing clear, step-by-step guidance.

Tackling Scope 3 Emissions: A Daunting Challenge

Addressing Scope 3 emissions, which include indirect emissions from supply chains, was identified as particularly challenging. The panellists advised SMEs to prioritize key suppliers that significantly impact their carbon footprint. Starting with rough estimates and engaging suppliers in the data collection process are critical steps in managing these emissions.

Reducing Emissions from International Travel

For businesses reliant on international travel, reducing emissions without hindering operations is a concern. The panellists suggested adopting virtual solutions like online meetings and training sessions to significantly cut travel-related emissions. Alternative transportation methods and company policies limiting unnecessary travel can also contribute to reductions.

Enhancements in the Next Version of BSI Flex 3030

The upcoming version of BSI Flex 3030 incorporates feedback to enhance clarity and practicality. A notable addition is a case study modelling an SME which develops and implements a Net Zero transition plan. Simplifying the language and structure in the Flex is intended to make the document more user-friendly.

Access to resources and support is essential for SMEs on their Net Zero journey. The [Net Zero Standards Hub](#) provides a wealth of resources and a platform for sharing best practices. SMEs are encouraged to consult local authorities and industry networks for grants and collaborative opportunities.

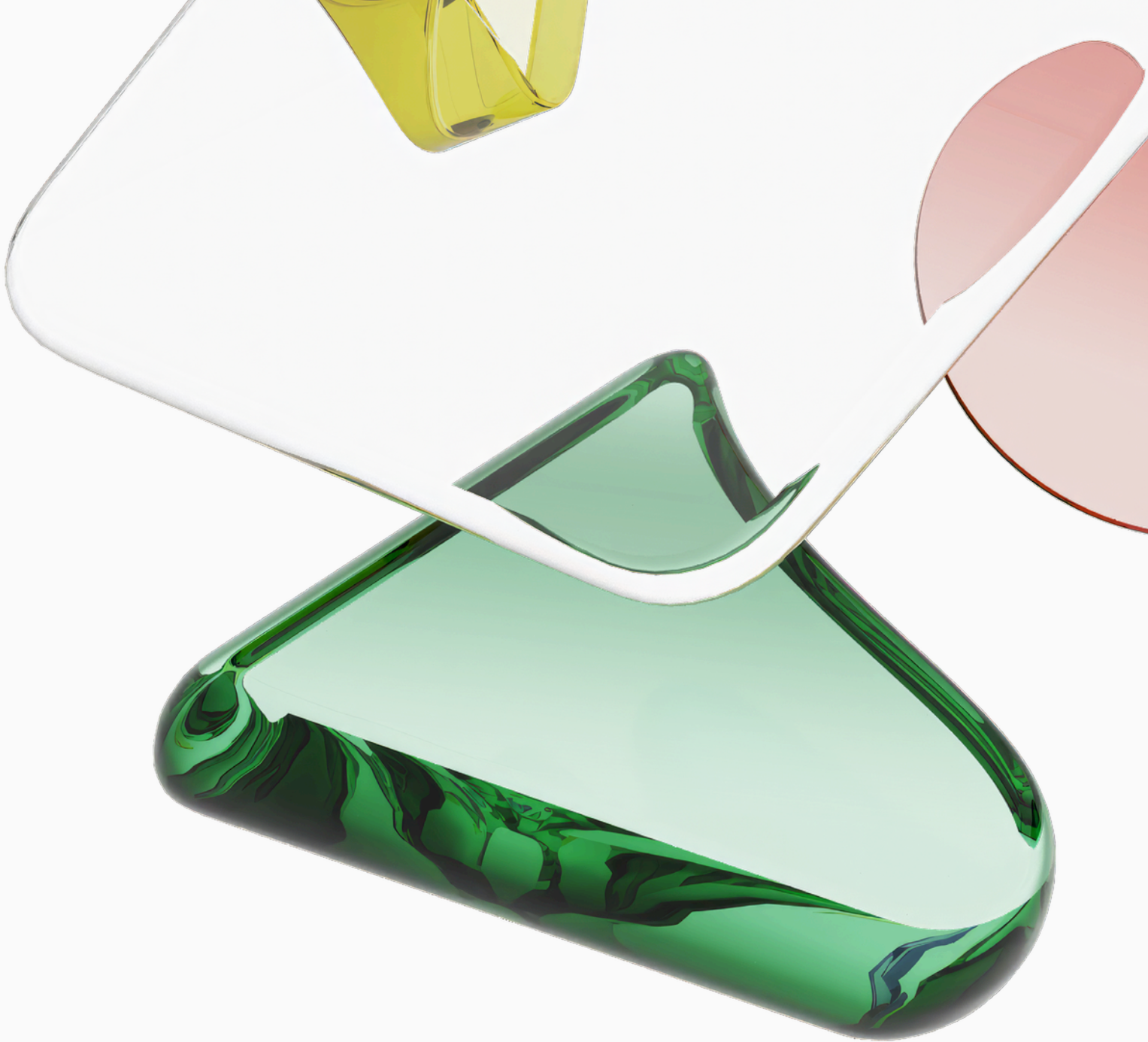
The webinar clarified the difference between Net Zero and carbon neutrality. Carbon neutrality involves balancing emissions through carbon credits as an interim measure, while Net Zero focuses on reducing emissions to the lowest possible level with residual emissions offset by removal efforts. SMEs are advised to aim for Net Zero as a long-term goal.

Panellists emphasized the importance of beginning the Net Zero journey immediately. Being transparent about methods and challenges builds trust and credibility. Integrating sustainability into core business strategies ensures long-term commitment, and focusing on progress over perfection encourages continuous improvement. Utilizing tools like BSI Flex 3030 and engaging with support networks provides valuable how to guidance.


To conclude, the webinar underscored the critical role SMEs play in achieving global Net Zero targets. With BSI Flex 3030, SMEs have a practical, accessible tool tailored to their needs. By addressing challenges such as Scope 3 emissions and integrating sustainability into daily operations, SMEs can make significant progress. Starting now, embracing transparency, and leveraging available resources can empower SMEs to embark on a transformative journey that benefits both the environment and their businesses.

For a deeper dive into these topics and to access the full expert discussions, we encourage you to [watch the webinar](#).





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