

SBTi communications guide for companies and financial institutions taking action

Introduction

Welcome to our community of companies and financial institutions that are taking vital steps to help deliver a net-zero economy. By joining the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi), your organization is ensuring its climate action is in line with the latest science.

The climate emergency requires urgent climate action. Whichever stage of the journey your company or financial institution is at, we thank you for being a part of the SBTi's global movement for ambitious corporate decarbonization. We also call on you to do more, e.g. by increasing your ambition with the SBTi, lobbying for more positive climate policies or encouraging your colleagues to take more radical action, etc.

Who should use this guide?

This guide is for companies and financial institutions at all stages of the SBTi journey and provides guidelines for communicating your commitment or approved science-based target. General guidance for organizations at all stages starts at page 2. Pages 4-12 include specific guidance for companies at each stage of the SBTi journey. If you do not know which stage your organization is at [refer to our website](#) or contact info@sciencebasedtargets.org.

SBTi journey stage		Pages
Commitment stage	Near-term commitment	2 and 4
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Guidance for all organizations

Messaging

About the Science Based Targets initiative

The Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) is a global body enabling businesses to set ambitious emissions reductions targets in line with the latest climate science. It is focused on accelerating companies across the world to halve emissions before 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions before 2050.

The initiative is a collaboration between CDP, the United Nations Global Compact, World Resources Institute (WRI) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and one of the We Mean Business Coalition commitments. The SBTi defines and promotes best practice in science-based target setting, offers resources and guidance to reduce barriers to adoption, and independently assesses and approves companies' targets.

www.sciencebasedtargets.org @sciencetargets

FAQs

The answers to common FAQs can be [found on our website](#).

Messaging: Dos and Don'ts

It is important to understand the dos and don'ts of communicating your commitment in order to be consistent, transparent, and accurate.

Do

- **Emphasize the urgency of action.** The latest climate science from the IPCC - described by the UN as "code red for humanity" - shows it is still possible to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C, but we are dangerously close to that threshold.
- **Emphasize the importance of rapid and deep emission cuts** in halving global emissions before 2030 and achieving net-zero before 2050.
- **Encourage stakeholders to align with climate science by** committing to science-based 1.5°C and net-zero targets too.
- **Contact the SBTi communications team** if you have any questions or concerns around communicating your commitment or target.

Don't

- **Use the following terms in connection with the SBTi, your commitment or target:** carbon neutrality, carbon negativity, carbon/climate positive or any other claims that are not validated by the SBTi.
- Suggest that **offsets or beyond value chain mitigation** will be counted by your organization to achieve near-term science-based targets.
- **Over-claim:** avoid potentially misleading or inaccurate communications about your commitment or target by carefully fact checking your communications.

Examples

Example	Don't say	Do say
Overclaiming on a target	Our net-zero / decarbonization / abatement <i>strategy</i> has been validated / approved by the SBTi.	Our near-term / net-zero target has been validated by the SBTi. [link to/include target wording].
Communicating a commitment	[Insert company name] has validated science-based targets with the SBTi.	[Insert company name] has committed to set near-term company-wide emission reductions in line with climate science with the SBTi.
Communicating a net-zero target	Our carbon negative / carbon neutral / climate positive target / strategy has been approved by the SBTi.	Our net-zero target has been approved by the SBTi. [link to/include target wording]

Grammar

Science-based targets

- Use lower case if you are describing the concept of science-based targets.
- Use capitals when you are referring to the Science Based Targets initiative. Do not capitalize “initiative”.
- When talking about the Science Based Targets initiative do not hyphenate (i.e. Science Based).
- If you are referring to targets themselves do hyphenate (i.e. science-based targets).

Net-zero

- The first time you refer to the Net-Zero Standard should be worded as ‘the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) Net-Zero Standard’, then as ‘Net-Zero Standard’ or ‘Standard’.
- Net-zero is hyphenated, especially when referring to the Net-Zero Standard.

Digital toolkit

Our digital toolkit with information, assets and logos, etc. is [available for your use here](#).

Any questions?

Visit our [FAQs](#) or [contact page](#).

Commitment: Near-term target

Who is this section for?

This section is for companies that have committed to set a near-term target. This means you are featured on our [Target Dashboard](#) as having a near-term target commitment.

Talking about your commitment

- [Insert company name] has committed to set near-term company-wide emission reductions in line with climate science with the SBTi.

Dos and Don'ts

Do

- **Do** be clear that the SBTi is yet to approve your near-term target. This applies if you have not yet submitted your target for validation OR if you have submitted your target but the SBTi is yet to approve it.

Don't

- **Don't** imply that the SBTi has approved your target. Your organization has committed to cutting emissions inline with halving emissions by 2030. Submitting your target for validation and having your target officially validated by the SBTi are the next stages.
- **Don't** imply that your near-term commitment is inline with net-zero or a net-zero commitment. Organizations must have both near- and long-term science-based targets to be net-zero aligned.
- **Don't** suggest that your commitment alone implies concrete steps have been taken toward near-term emissions reductions. While commitment demonstrates intent, you will still have to satisfy our rigorous criteria before your target is approved.

Using the SBTi logo

Companies who have committed to set near-term science based targets:

- Your organization does not currently have permission to use the SBTi logo.
- You are welcome instead to use the wording: 'We have committed to set a science-based target with the Science Based Targets initiative'.

Commitment: Net-zero target

Who is this section for?

This section is for companies that have committed to set a net-zero target. This means you are featured on our [Target Dashboard](#) as having a net-zero commitment.

Talking about your commitment

- [Insert organization name] has committed to set near- and long-term company-wide emission reductions in line with science-based net-zero with the SBTi.

Messaging: Dos and Don'ts

Do

- **Do** be clear that you have yet to submit your net-zero (near- and/or long-term targets) to the SBTi for approval.
- **Do** - Any outdated claims that do not comply with specific elements of the SBTi net-zero criteria should be updated accordingly. Organizations should carefully cross-check any claims made about SBTi net-zero commitments or targets with prior claims surrounding net-zero and carbon neutrality.

Don't

- **Don't** - Imply that the SBTi has approved, validated, or certified your target. Your organization has *committed* to cutting emissions inline with 1.5°C and reaching net-zero by 2050, which is fantastic, but that's the easy part! Submitting your target for validation and having your target officially validated by the SBTi are the next stages.

Using the SBTi logo

Companies who have committed to set net-zero science based targets:

- Your organization does not currently have permission to use the SBTi logo.
- You are welcome instead to use the wording: 'We have committed to set net-zero science-based targets with the Science Based Targets initiative'.

Approved: Near-term target

Who is this section for?

This section is for organizations that have an approved near-term target. This means you are featured on our [Target Dashboard](#) as having a near-term target commitment.

Talking about your target

The SBTi has approved [insert organization name]'s near-term science-based emissions reduction target.

Messaging: Dos and Don'ts

Do

- **Do** write out your full near-term science-based target in communications and marketing content, or ensure this is easily accessible (e.g. by including a link or footnote).

Don't

- **Don't** describe near-term targets as net-zero aligned. To be in line with a net-zero future your organization has to have its long-term targets approved by the SBTi.
- **Don't** include any additional details that are not approved by the SBTi when communicating your target language.

Using the SBTi logo

- Your organization should only use [the SBTi logo](#) in relation to your approved near-term target. It should not be used in materials that mention net-zero.
- You can use the logos in relevant materials, including social media posts, website blog or news articles, videos, email updates or newsletters, presentation slides, or impact/sustainability reports.
- The logos must not be included in any communications materials in isolation from copy about your target. For example, you may not add it to marketing collateral, website footers, report covers, social media channels, etc where the connection to your target is not immediately clear, in line with guidance above.
- The full-colour SBTi logo must only be used on light, neutral colours (white and light greys) and can be used on very pale colours.
- The minimum size the logo should appear is 160px wide on screen or 50mm in print.



- You must include sufficient space around the logo. To measure this, add half the size of the circular icon to each edge. For example if the icon is 300px diameter, add a 150px diameter as a buffer round the edge.

When using the logos, do not:

- Transform, warp or skew the logo in any way.
- Change the location of the icon or use the icon stand alone without the text.
- Change the colours.
- Use white text with the full colour icon.
- Use the logo anywhere on an image where it is not visible.

Approved: Near-term target and net-zero commitment

Who is this section for?

This section is for organizations that have an approved near-term target and have committed to set a net-zero target. This means you are featured on our [Target Dashboard](#) as having a net-zero commitment.

Talking about your target and commitment

- The SBTi has approved [insert organization name]'s near-term science-based emissions reduction target. [Insert organization name] has also committed to set long-term emissions reduction targets with the SBTi in line with reaching net-zero by 2050.

Messaging: Dos and Don'ts

Do

- **Do** write out your full near-term science-based target information in communications and marketing content, or ensure this is easily accessible (e.g. by including a link or in a footnote).
- **Do** be clear that your organization has taken the first steps towards developing a net-zero strategy, and that it is actively working to establish long-term targets that are aligned with the SBTi's net-zero criteria.
- **Do** update any outdated claims that do not comply with specific elements of the SBTi net-zero criteria.
- **Do** - When referring to the net-zero target your organization has committed to set, it should be mentioned as: 'science-based net-zero target'.

Don't

- **Don't** describe near-term targets as net-zero aligned. To be in line with a net-zero future your organization has to have its long-term targets approved by the SBTi.
- **Don't** imply that the SBTi has approved, validated, or certified your net-zero target. Your organization has *committed* to cutting emissions inline with achieving net-zero by 2050. Submitting your long-term target and having it officially validated by the SBTi are the next stages.
- **Don't** include any additional details that are not approved by the SBTi when communicating your target language.

Using the SBTi logo

- Your organization should only use [the SBTi logo](#) in relation to your approved near-term target. It should not be used in materials that mention net-zero.
- You can use the logos in relevant materials, including social media posts, website blog or news articles, videos, email updates or newsletters, presentation slides, or impact/sustainability reports.
- The logos must not be included in any communications materials in isolation from copy about your target. For example, you may not add it to marketing collateral,



website footers, report covers, social media channels, etc where the connection to your target is not immediately clear, in line with guidance above.

- The full-colour SBTi logo must only be used on light, neutral colours (white and light greys) and can be used on very pale colours.
- The minimum size the logo should appear is 160px wide on screen or 50mm in print.
- You must include sufficient space around the logo. To measure this, add half the size of the circular icon to each edge. For example if the icon is 300px diameter, add a 150px diameter as a buffer round the edge.

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- Change the colours.
- Use white text with the full colour icon.
- Use the logos anywhere on an image where it is not visible.

Approved: Net-zero target

Who is this section for?

This section is for companies that have an approved net-zero target. This means you are featured on our [Target Dashboard companies](#) as having a net-zero target.

Talking about your target

- [Insert organization name] has approved near and long-term science-based emissions reduction targets with the SBTi.
- The SBTi has verified [insert organization name]'s net-zero science-based target by [insert year].

Messaging: Dos and Don'ts

Do

- **Do** write out your full near- and long-term science-based target information in communications and marketing content, or ensure this is easily accessible (e.g. by including a link or in a footnote).
- **Do** explicitly state that direct emissions reductions (decarbonization) will be prioritized and all residual emissions will be neutralized (if applicable) in line with SBTi criteria before reaching net-zero emissions.
- **Do** - In social media copy, state that your net-zero targets are validated by SBTi, and link to statements providing the detailed information above.
- **Do** - Update any outdated claims that do not comply with specific elements of the SBTi net-zero criteria.
- **Do** - Companies should only announce they have reached net-zero emissions when they have met their long-term science based targets across all scopes and any residual emissions (if applicable) have been permanently neutralized.
 - For example, if organization X has a 95% long-term reduction target for 2050 and plans to meet its near-term science based targets by 2030, this organization should not claim to have reached net-zero emissions in 2030, regardless of whether or not it will be investing in beyond value chain mitigation measures at that time. Net-zero would only be reached when organization X has achieved a 95% long-term reduction and has neutralized the remaining emissions.
- When referring to the net-zero target your organization has set, it should be mentioned as: 'science-based net-zero target'.

Don't

- **Don't** conflate any additional targets that have not been validated by SBTi with the SBTi approved targets. These should either be referenced in separate communications, or if they are included in the same statement, should have a disclaimer attached that they are not SBTi approved targets.
- **Don't** imply that your company has reached net-zero through the use of beyond value chain mitigation actions.
- **Don't** include any additional details that are not approved by the SBTi when communicating your target language.

- **Don't** - Companies may not claim to be net-zero in scopes 1 and 2 only, or scope 3 only. This applies to all companies, including those that plan to meet their long-term science-based targets for scope 1 and 2 sooner than their scope 3 reduction targets.

Using the SBTi logo and Net-Zero Standard mark

- Organizations with validated science-based targets can use [the SBTi logo](#) or [Net-Zero Standard mark](#) when communicating about their targets. For example, in social media posts, website blogs or news articles, videos, email updates or newsletters, presentation slides, or impact/sustainability reports.
- If using only the SBTi logo, it must not be included in any communications materials in isolation from copy about your target. For example, you may not add it to marketing collateral, website footers, report covers, social media channels etc where the connection to your target is not immediately clear, in line with guidance above.
- The Net-Zero Standard mark must always be shown alongside the SBTi logo.
- The full-colour SBTi logo and Net-Zero Standard mark must only be used on light, neutral colours (white and light greys) and can be used on very pale colours.
- The minimum size the logo and mark should appear is 160px wide on screen or 50mm in print.
- You must include sufficient space around the logo and mark. To measure this, add half the size of the circular icon to each edge. For example if the icon is 300px diameter, add a 150px diameter as a buffer round the edge.



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