

Net-Zero

What is...?

'Net zero' refers to the net amount of carbon emissions produced by any one entity; net-zero emissions are achieved when the amount emitted is offset by an equal amount absorbed from the atmosphere.

Why is it important?

Carbon emissions pollute the environment and lead to global warming and climate change.

How is it achieved?

It is arguably impossible to stop all emissions, and more realistic to aim for the removal of emissions so that a 'net-zero' balance is achieved.

For example

1) Countries and companies can plant more trees to absorb carbon emissions from activities such as transportation and power generation.

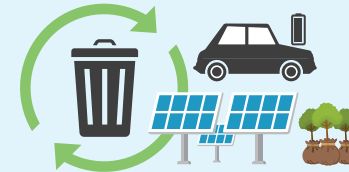
- The most forested country on earth, Suriname, is reportedly already carbon-negative, absorbing more carbon dioxide than it emits.

- Oil giant Shell plans to offset the bulk of its fossil-fuel-related emissions through nature-based projects that capture and store carbon, such as forest and ocean restoration.



2) Companies can capture the carbon created from industrial processes before it is released into the atmosphere, or by switching to renewable-energy sources.

- Property developer City Developments is using smart technologies and innovation to maximise buildings' energy performance, targetting 100 per cent renewable energy and phasing out diesel across all operations.
- Social media platform Facebook is cutting down on the emissions produced by its datacentres by pursuing sources of renewable energy such as wind and solar energy.



Singapore's Green Plan

Concrete targets over the next 10 years, such as:

- Plant 1 million more trees
- Quadruple solar energy deployment by 2025
- Reduce the waste sent to landfill by 30% by 2030
- At least 20% of schools to be carbon-neutral by 2030
- All newly registered cars to be cleaner-energy models from 2030

The issues now?

- Lack of uniformity/measurability when it comes to the various targets and ambitions voiced by countries and companies around the world.
- Lack of transparency as to how such 'net-zero' objectives are attained and if they are truly contributing towards positive climate change.

What can be done?

In order for pledges to be meaningful, the countries and companies behind them need to issue detailed targets and timeframes, and there needs to be much greater disclosure as to how these are achieved.