

# Yrittäjät



## The entrepreneur's climate guide

# Introduction

Climate change is one of the greatest threats of our time, one that affects us all. It has an impact on food and water supplies and on natural diversity. Changeable, extreme weather will cause costs both at home and abroad. Poorer living conditions increases the flow of environmental refugees, which can affect social order. All of this will affect the economy, entrepreneurship and companies – in other words, you.

Taking the environment into account is not necessarily bad: it can be a competitive advantage and make you stand out. It can also be the road to better, more profitable business.

The decisions of small and medium-sized decisions matter, because small businesses are often more agile than large ones when it comes to tackling climate change. One small solution can yield large streams – even phenomena that change the world. These solutions do not even necessarily require large investments and may even save businesses money.

## What can you do?

In this guide, we present simple methods you can use to tackle climate change in your business operations. Choose, for example, ten things you can commit to in the next few months. When they have become routine, chose the next ten. Daily choices matter both at home and at work!

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# Energy consumption

Moving from fossil fuels to low or zero-emission energy forms slows the advance of climate change. The use of fossil fuels, such as coal and oil, releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, which speeds up the warming of the environment. Energy efficiency is another way to reduce the amount of energy needed and thus reduce the consumption of fossil fuels.

**1** Reduce energy consumption by lowering the indoor temperature in your workplace. A difference of three degrees Celsius can yield reductions of up to 20% in energy consumption.

**2** Reduce your company's carbon footprint by choosing electricity contracts for clean or low-emission electricity. If your business rents its premises, contact the owner and suggest alternative energy forms.

**3** Consider small, clean localized energy production, such as solar panels or heat pumps. Even if they don't cover all your energy needs, they will still provide clean electricity or heat. You will thus reduce the amount of energy you need to buy. You can find out about support for projects like this on the Business Finland Energy Aid webpages.

**4** Keep windows closed if the air conditioning or heating is on. Otherwise you will consume energy pointlessly.

**5** Avoid air conditioning and heating in spaces that are rarely or never used.









NOTES

18 Actively search for alternatives. If a raw material is transported from the other side of the planet, find out whether you can find it from closer to you, or whether the material can be manufactured in your own country.

19 Cooperate with other businesspeople. When you share storage spaces or tools, for example, they do not stand empty. A good example of a functional sharing economy of this kind are libraries.

20 Invest in product design. Design your products to be as durable as possible, easy to repair, and, at the end of their service life, easy to recycle or to be reused as parts.

21 Extend your products' service life. Offer repair or maintenance, for example.

22 Move to selling services. Instead of selling individual products, sell services, such as machine hire or clothing hire.



Horizontal lines for taking notes.





# Purchases

The purchases your business makes have a significant impact on how responsible it is. Materially efficient products and services consume as little material and natural resources as possible over their entire service life. You can reduce the consumption of natural resources by investing in products and services of this kind. Investments in energy efficient equipment and technology can be recouped in the form of lower usage costs.

**29** Buy intelligently. Don't fixate on the investment costs at the time of buying; with each new investment, think about the possible environmental impact in the short and long term.

**30** Don't buy extra. Make only necessary purchases. Set minimum requirements for purchases, such as energy efficiency, low emissions, environmental friendliness and recyclability.

**31** Invest in durable, quality work clothes. When equipment is durable, it serves for a long time and is easy to clean, nor does it need to be constantly replaced. Choose environmentally friendly and durable materials, manufacturing methods and manufacturers.

**32** Avoid disposable products. For example, stop using disposable cutlery and dishes altogether and replace paper hand towels with cloth ones.

**33** Recycle and hire. You can get many products and goods used or on lease. Not all your office furniture needs to be new, for example.

**34** Find out the environmental impact of your product or service over its life cycle. For example, where and in what conditions are the raw materials you use produced? How are they transported? What emissions does product manufacturing cause and can the product be recycled?

**35** Choose quality. Choose products that are manufactured nearby and that are environmentally certified. Examples of environmental labels are the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, the EU Ecolabel and energy labels.

**36** Pay attention to packaging and how it is recycled. Large packages cause least packaging waste.

**37** Consider certified products and services. For example, you could start with the certificates recommended by the WWF.

**38** Make your production chain as transparent as possible. Find out where the raw materials for your products come from, who produces them and in what conditions. Demand transparency from external cooperation partners.

## Office work

A paperless office is both nature-friendly and space-saving, as documents are processed digitally and archives are not needed. Working digitally and using cloud services makes environmentally friendly working easier and faster.

**39** Ask if customers need receipts. Instead of printing the customer copy of receipts automatically, ask them specifically if they need it.

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**40** Go digital. Reduce printing or give it up completely.

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**41** Set double-sided printing as the default setting for your printer. Use smaller fonts, spacing and margins when printing to fit more text onto each page.

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**42** Do all possible edits on the computer. Only print the last version of the file instead of printing several versions of the same document.

**43** Use recycled paper. To maximise the proportion of recycled paper that you use, you may have to reassess the quality requirements for your paper. How white does the paper you use really need to be? Can you design your products and packaging to incorporate more recycled paper?

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**44** Set up a paper purchase and use policy. Examine your office and manufacturing facilities' ways of working with a view to reducing paper consumption. Design your products and packaging to include as little wood fibre as possible. However, do not switch to less sustainable material options. Choose paper that is as light as possible but still suits your needs.

**45** Switch to laptops when investing in new IT devices. They consume less electricity than desktops.

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**46** Do not keep electronic devices charging unnecessarily. Unplug chargers when the device's battery is full.

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**47** Turn devices off overnight. If computers do not need to be updated at night, switch them off. The energy that printers and computers consume on standby can be between 3 and 13% of a household's electricity consumption. The energy used on standby without you noticing it is called "vampire power".

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**48** Avoid screensavers. Set up your office computers to go to sleep or switch off after a certain period of not being used. This consumes less energy than a screensaver.





## Staff

When there are commonly agreed ground rules in the workplace, following them becomes a normal part of everyday life. Even small, everyday actions matter. In an environmentally positive environment, correct actions happen without noticing.



**59** Draw up ground rules. Agree with your staff, for example, that lights are turned off in spaces that are not being used, or that the dishwasher is only turned on when it is fully loaded.

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**60** Analyse and brainstorm with your employees about what you can do. Have a meeting and gather ideas by email beforehand. Make environmental thinking a part of your business identity. When it becomes a part of everyday life, environmental thinking is visible in all your actions and communications.

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**61** Engage your staff in taking and monitoring action. Encourage them to be less burdensome on the environment by providing bike racks instead of several parking spaces, or reward electric bike use with coffee vouchers, for example.

**62** Nominate an environmental officer in your company. He or she is the one who drives the company's environmental efforts forward. If you do not delegate as an entrepreneur, many good ideas remain thoughts. Tell your clients, too, that your company has its own environmental officer.

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**63** Be good to your heart. Use stairs instead of lifts and cycle instead of driving. You'll get into better shape, boost your mood, and help save the environment.

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**64** Learn new things. When you are searching for and sharing information on environmentally friendly options and service providers with your staff, learn something new and usable that you can take advantage of in your business. Accrue new competence in the whole company. If new hires are not possible, learn more and ac-

quire new skills both as a business-owner and as a company. New competence creates innovations and ways of doing things.

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**65** Get to grips with the basics. The internet offers a vast array of free guides, instructions and webinars on with extensive basic information on exploiting the circular economy and green, sustainable business.

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**66** Regularly analyse your company's situation. What environmentally friendly actions can you reinforce further, what can you highlight in communications and marketing, what could you update and what are the clear development areas?







## Food

Food is accountable for about 20% of a person's carbon dioxide emissions, that is, just as much as transport. The environmental impact of plant-based food is almost without exception smaller than meat and dairy. For example, between 400 and 500 million kg of edible food is thrown away in Finland annually, and the figure is probably similar in other countries.

**75** Serve more plant-based food when offering refreshments, at events and in break rooms.

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**76** Choose locally produced food. Buy seasonal products.

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**77** Minimize food waste. This reduces your environmental impact significantly.

**78** Brew filter coffee instead of disposable coffee capsules. Use recycled and unbleached filters.

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**79** Have your fridge serviced regularly. For example, cleaning it and replacing the seals ensures the fridge is more energy efficient and has a longer service life.

## Emissions offsets

Emissions, or carbon offsetting, means monetary compensation that is invested in projects for emissions reduction or growing carbon sinks elsewhere. Thus, you can offset the greenhouse gases caused by your operations.

**80** Offset the emissions your business cannot make an impact on.

## Sources:

### TIP 11:

[[https://www.motiva.fi/yritykset/energia- ja\\_materiaalikatselmus/energiakatselmus](https://www.motiva.fi/yritykset/energia- ja_materiaalikatselmus/energiakatselmus)]

### TIP 44:

[Source: WWF, <https://wwf.fi/mediabank/5959.pdf>]

### TIP 74:

Environment Canada

### WATER USE:

[Motiva.fi](https://www.motiva.fi)

### FOOD:

Estimate of annual food refuse according to Luke, the Natural Resources Institute Finland.

### EXPERTS INTERVIEWED FOR THE GUIDE:

lecturer and project manager Henna Knuutila, education and research officer Sami Lyytinen, lecturer and project manager Rauli Lautkankare and NollaE Oy CEO Nikolas Salomaa.

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KYLLIKINPORTTI 2, 00240 HELSINKI

PB 999, 00101 HELSINKI

(09) 229 221, TOIMISTO@YRITTAJAT.FI

WWW.YRITTAJAT.FI

## THANKS FOR READING THIS GUIDE!

This guide was written by Suomen Yrittäjät (SY), also known as Entrepreneurs in Finland, the national, non-governmental organization for Finnish small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and their owners. SY exists to defend the interests of SME owners and improve the conditions for doing business in Finland. It is also aware of its role as an international player, which is why it has written this guide, which can be used by anyone around the world. The aim is to empower SMEs and their owners to take action on climate change in their own countries and with the resources they have to hand. We hope you find it useful.

**IAN MAC EOCHAGÁIN, TRANSLATOR**