Climate-smart Business Plan Template

Company
Date
Project

Interreg Baltic Sea Region
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RESILIENT ECONOMIES AND COMMUNITIES
CliNeDest

About the template

How to plan for a climate-smart business?

This business plan template is designed to help you turn your climate goals into concrete actions that also make sense for your business.

The template takes you through four steps: **identifying** where your main emissions come from, **generating** ideas to reduce them, **assessing** which ideas bring the most value, and **planning** how to put them into practice.

Each step helps you connect climate action with everyday decisions: how you use resources, design services, and work with partners. By the end, you'll have a clear, realistic plan for reducing emissions and strengthening your business at the same time.

Identify your emission hotspots

Step 1

Identify your emission hotspots

Understanding where emissions come from gives a clear starting point for action. Most businesses have a few areas that dominate its footprint, depending on its business logic. When these are known, the focus can shift from assumptions to creating impact.

Working on the largest emission sources first is the most effective way to cut emissions and often brings wider benefits, such as lower operating costs or stronger credibility with customers and partners. It also helps avoid spreading effort too thin or investing in small improvements that make little overall difference.

Hotspot understanding also supports smarter decisions in the long run. It can show, for example, which parts of the business are most sensitive to resource pricing increases, supply chain issues, or future regulations. Acting on them early builds resilience and positions the company ahead of market and policy changes.

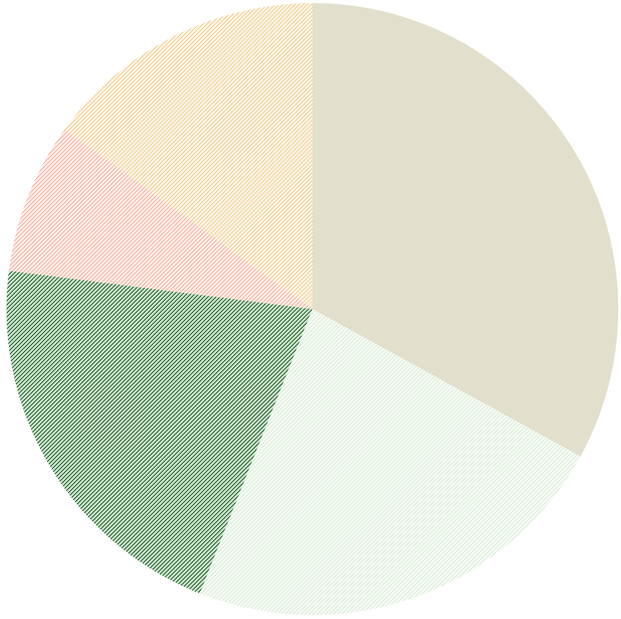
Step 1

Identify your emission hotspots

Use your emission calculator results and focus on the top 2–3 sources of emissions. These are typically the biggest opportunities for change.

Avoid choosing only what feels easy or familiar. Instead, look at where the company's choices or operations most influence the outcome. For example, energy use might be affected by how heating is managed, or food-related emissions by what is sourced and served. Areas that seem complex are often where the most meaningful reductions and innovations are found.

If the data shows several similar-sized sources, pick those that align with the company's strengths or where decisions are made internally. This ensures that the ideas developed later can be turned into action without waiting for others to move first.



Example:
DIVISION OF EMISSIONS

- Vehicle fuel
- Office electricity
- Gas / camping
- Equipment
- Waste

Explore tactics and new ideas to reduce emissions at hotspots

Step 2

Explore tactics and new ideas to reduce emissions at hotspots

Explore different ways of reducing emissions curiously.

Reducing emissions is about cutting waste and improving efficiency, but it can also be much more. Looking at the full range of tactics, from prevention to added value, helps **uncover new opportunities** for smarter operations, stronger products, and better guest experiences. Many of the most effective ideas come from rethinking what's "normal" in daily work: how services are designed, how resources circulate, and what guests truly value.

Exploring multiple angles encourages creative, practical solutions that fit each business's reality — whether that means using existing resources better, creating new low-impact offers, or building partnerships that save both emissions and effort. The result is a lower CO_2 amount, but often also **higher resilience, reduced costs, and a more distinctive market position.**

Step 2

Explore tactics and new ideas to reduce emissions at hotspots

Prevent

Can we stop this waste or emission from happening?

- Do we truly need this input, material, or step?
- Could we avoid overproducing, oversupplying, or offering more than is used?
- Could we reduce demand for high-impact resources by changing how the service is designed?

Example: We regularly patch tents and re-proof rain gear to keep equipment in use for longer.

Share / Reuse

Can we use the same resource more than once or together with others?

- Could equipment, vehicles, or facilities be used by multiple people or companies instead of standing idle?
- Could items be reused across different customers or service occasions?
- Could we create a system where guests/ clients return or pass on resources instead of discarding them?

Example: Creating a comprehensive local gear library with other operators, so visitors can rent quality tents, stoves, and clothing that meets their needs on-site instead of travelling in with new or heavy equipment.

Repair / Extend

Can we keep this resource in use for longer?

- Is it possible to fix, maintain, or upgrade instead of replacing?
- Could staff skills or service routines help extend the life of equipment or spaces?
- Could we design services so that they are easier to keep in good condition over time?

Example: Regularly patching tents and re-proofing rain gear to keep equipment in use for longer.

Step 2

Explore tactics and new ideas to reduce emissions at hotspots

Repurpose

Can this resource be used for something else when it's no longer fit for its first use?

- Could materials, equipment, or leftovers be redirected to another use?
- Could by-products or side streams become inputs for another part of the business?
- Could we partner with others who can use what we no longer need?

Example: Redesigning itineraries around local eco-lodges and food producers, creating multi-day routes where guests spend and eat locally. This shortens travel distances, supports the community, and replaces imported goods with local, lower-emission alternatives.

Added Value

Can we redesign the service, so the lower-emission option is also more comfortable, convenient, or authentic for guests?

- Can we use green nudges (easy defaults, attractive framing, social proof, timely reminders) to guide guests toward the better choice?
- Can this change create new benefits for the business, such as higher satisfaction, stronger reputation, or extra revenue streams?

Example: Redesigning itineraries around local eco-lodges and food producers, creating multiday routes where guests spend and eat locally. This shortens travel distances, supports the community, and replaces imported goods with local, lower-emission alternatives.

Optimize

Can we improve how we use resources so less is wasted?

- Can we streamline operations to avoid unnecessary usage of resources?
- Can we choose equipment, appliances, or vehicles that deliver the same service with lower inputs?
- Can we monitor performance regularly to spot where resources are being wasted (energy meters, smart sensors, data dashboards)?

Example: Optimizing transportation routes to minimize idle back-tracking.

Evaluate the business case for your ideas

Step 3

Evaluate the business case for your ideas

Exploring the business case means looking at each idea from an environmental angle but also through its practical and financial implications. This helps ensure that climate actions make sense for the company's daily operations, customers, and long-term stability.

By comparing one-time costs, ongoing expenses, revenue potential, and other benefits, it becomes easier to see which ideas deliver the most value for the effort required. Some actions may have quick payback and visible savings, while others bring longer-term advantages.

You may also find that some ideas would not yield enough benefits to justify the cost of change – and that's a perfectly good finding as well. You'll be able to prioritize what gets executed and what's not a priority based on this information.

Even when exact numbers aren't available, rough estimates make it easier to compare options.

Understanding the business case is often what makes climate action feasible. It connects sustainability with profitability and competitiveness, showing that emission reduction can also mean smarter use of resources, more distinctive services, and stronger trust among customers and collaborators.

Step 3

Evaluate the business case for your ideas

Every idea to cut emissions can also save money or bring other gains. This table helps you weigh the effort and benefits, so you can focus on the ideas that give the best return.

The table outlines how to assess financial impacts, climate effects, and other advantages, even when only approximate figures are available. Rough estimates are often enough to identify actions with the best overall return.

Cost to Change

ONE-TIME COST
What it takes to start

Add up anything you need to buy, install, or set up. If you don't have the number:

Use e.g. rough online prices

If it's mostly staff time, estimate hours × hourly pay

If it's a small operational change (e.g. menu redesign), mark as "low" or "none"

ONGOING COST
What it costs to operate each year (after the change)

Think of things like energy, supplies, cleaning or maintenance

If the cost will likely decrease, estimate a lower number than your current running costs

If unsure, think in categories: Energy/fuel costs per trip – Food or supply costs – External service costs (transport, waste collection)

DIFFERENCE TO CURRENT COST
The total change in cost compared to how you operate today

You can calculate roughly as running cost – current cost = difference, or just mark:

Decrease (–) if you expect savings

Increase (+) if you expect higher ongoing costs

If you can't quantify it yet, use a traffic light (↓, →, ↑) for expected direction

Revenue Potential

REVENUE IMPACT
How the change might affect your income

Ask:

Will this attract more guests or new types of customers?

Will it allow higher pricing or longer stays?

Will it create a new product or service to sell?

If numbers are unknown, estimate the size of effect qualitatively:

0 = no change

+ = small increase

++ = clear increase

– = possible decrease (if it makes something more costly or harder to sell)

PAYBACK TIME
How long until the investment pays off

If you have estimated savings per year, you can roughly calculate payback = one-time cost ÷ yearly savings × 12 months

If it's mostly non-financial (e.g. better reputation, less waste), use CO2 reduction and other benefits to evaluate the lucrativeness of the idea

Impact & Benefits

CO2 REDUCTION (YEARLY)
How much less CO_2 you expect to emit per year because of this action

Use results from your emission calculator, or make an educated guess:

High = a big drop in emissions, like changing from oil to renewable energy

Medium = visible but moderate reduction, like less driving or less waste

Low = small improvement, like putting up "turn off the lights" reminder stickers

OTHER BENEFITS
What improves besides money and CO_2?

Think about e.g.:

Guest experience:
better comfort or satisfaction

New service models:
improved ways of doing business overall

Reputation:
stronger brand or new visibility

Staff motivation:
pride and easier recruitment

Local ties:
stronger partnerships and community links

Future readiness:
fits new rules or funding

Resilience:
less dependence on fuel or imports

Even small gains count: simpler logistics, fewer complaints, easier upkeep

Plan for the implementation

Step 4

Plan for the implementation

Even the best ideas can lose momentum once daily work takes over. A bit of planning helps make sure the chosen actions happen on time, within budget, and without surprises.

By mapping what is needed in terms of time, skills, tools, and partners, it becomes easier to spot where bottlenecks might appear and what can be done with existing resources. It also helps to plan investments, apply for funding, and coordinate efforts with local partners or municipalities. A clear plan also signals commitment and reliability, which builds trust among guests, staff, and collaborators.

A clear implementation plan **provides structure:** a shared understanding of who does what, when, and with what tools or support. Visible responsibilities and timelines make it easier to coordinate efforts across a all participants. Implementation planning also allows to **pace the change:** deciding which improvements can start now and which ones make sense later.

Implementation plan is first and foremost a way to ensure that the effort invested in new ideas leads to real, visible change.

Step 4

Plan for the implementation

What do we need to make the change?

When an idea has been chosen, it's time to think through what it takes to make it real. Use this canvas to map all the practical elements that enable implementation, from people and skills to tools, partners, and timing.

The goal is to spot what resources already exists and what may still be missing, so the plan becomes concrete and doable. You do not need to write a detailed project plan, but you should make the next steps visible; identifying dependencies and seeing where collaboration or external support might be needed.

☑ Timeline

When could the change realistically be implemented?

Outline key phases (e.g., preparation, pilot, full rollout) and note any dependencies such as funding cycles or seasonal breaks.

☑ Skills, Knowledge, Personnel Capacity

What expertise do we already have that can help us make the change?

- How much staff time can we dedicate for driving this change?
- Do we need additional training or people to carry out the change?

List whether new skills, guidance, or extra capacity are needed – for example, maintenance know-how, communication support, or more seasonal staff hours.

☑ Partners, Service Providers

Which of our current partners and service provides could help us make the transition (or a part of it)?

- Do we need help from new partners or service providers or to collaborate with others to implement or maintain the change?

Include e.g. local suppliers, consultants, authorities, associations, or other SMEs that can provide materials, resources, logistics, or technical help.

☑ Infrastructure, Tools, Technologies

What equipment, systems or facilities do we already have that we could use to make this change?

- What equipment, systems, or facilities do we needed in addition to our current ones (if any)?

Think about e.g. physical goods, digital systems, energy solutions, or data tracking tools that enable or support the change.

☑ Support on Policy & Regulations

What external frame-works, permits, or incentives could affect the change?

Note if implementation depends on e.g. municipal permissions or EU regulations, national subsidies, certification programs, or alignment with tourism or sustainability standards.

Start your Climate Journey at:

kingpling.wixsite.com/climate-smart-travel