



## Global Compact Network UK

The UN Global Compact Network UK hosted a **'SME Climate Hub: Net Zero for Small Businesses'** webinar on 3 May, in collaboration with the [Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy \(BEIS\)](#).

The event featured guest speakers: Lydia Elliot, Supply Chains Manager, [We Mean Business Coalition](#); Keri Andriana, CEO/Founder, [Amschela](#); and Will Kirk, Head of Operations, [Forster Communications](#).

The recording can be found [here](#) and a summary of key takeaways can be found below. Additionally, a report of the answered questions (both written and live) can be found [here](#). Special thanks to Will Kirk for taking time to address some of the unanswered questions from the session.

### **Key takeaways:**

- [The SME Climate Hub](#) was developed by the [United Nations Race to Zero campaign](#), We Mean Business Coalition, [Exponential Roadmap Initiative](#), and [International Chamber of Commerce](#) as the one-stop-shop for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to commit to 1.5°C aligned net zero targets, access tools to measure and report on progress, and benefit from incentives to reduce emissions.
- It is critical that SMEs are involved in climate action, as they make up 90% of businesses worldwide and employ over 2 billion people. For this reason, small businesses are encouraged to make the [SME Climate Commitment](#), which involves:
  - Halving greenhouse gas emissions before 2030;
  - Achieving net zero before 2050; and
  - Disclosing progress on a yearly basis.
- The business case for taking climate action is strong for small businesses. There are several benefits, including:
  - Gaining a competitive market advantage
  - Improving efficiency and saving money
  - Managing climate and legislative risk
  - Enhancing access to capital
- There are challenges associated with the net zero journey for SMEs, particularly in starting the process. Some of these include:
  - Financial cost to make the required changes within the business.
  - Initial uncertainty at the lack of information or guidance.
  - Long process of deciphering global supply chains and working with suppliers to make changes within their businesses.
  - Fear of losing customers and/or clients.
- However, with early action, collaboration, and help from the Hub, many of these challenges can be mitigated or translated into benefits, so it is critical that SMEs act now to increase business resiliency over the long-term.
- The Hub provides [resources](#) to help SMEs reach net zero, including several new tools:
  - [Climate Fit](#) – a practical step-by-step course to help SMEs reduce emissions.

- [Business Carbon Calculator](#) – a simple, hands-on tool that calculates small business’ Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions, in line with the Greenhouse Gas Protocol.
- [Financial Support Guide](#) – a general resource to help SMEs locate and access capital for reducing their emissions.
- In their transition to a vegan brand, Amschela has reduced emissions by:
  - Choosing suppliers based on climate strategy and transparency of data.
  - Collaborating with industry partners to strengthen purchasing requirements.
  - Integrating climate criteria into their product research and development.
  - Using recycled and low-carbon materials, for example, those made from food waste.
- Amschela’s initial fear of losing business because of their transition was proven to be unfounded, as it instead resulted in a competitive advantage and the growth of their brand.
- With the help of the Hub, Forster Communications utilised the [1.5°C Business Playbook](#) and the four pillars it outlines to start their journey and shape their climate strategy.
  - To reduce their Scope 3 emissions, they have implemented a [supplier screening form](#) to ensure that the companies they work with are committed to net zero.
  - They have also made a commitment to only work with clients with net zero targets.
- Forster has made some key changes to the business to reduce their emissions, including:
  - Switching to a more sustainable banking and pension provider.
  - Implementing employee incentives for cycling or walking to work, for example, employees at Forster accrue holiday time for every cycle or walking journey.
  - Supplying only non-dairy and non-meat options in the office and in meetings.
  - Installing LED lights on sensors and low-flush toilets, heating the office less, and removing printers to decrease overall resource consumption.

**Resources referenced during the event:**

- [Amschela’s Sustainability Policies](#)
- [Better Futures+](#)
- [EcoAct Homeworking emissions Whitepaper](#)
- [Exponential Roadmap Initiative’s 1.5°C Business Playbook](#)
- [Forster Communications’ Impacts](#)
- [Forster Communications’ Supplier Screening Form](#)
- [GHG Protocol’s Technical Guidance for Calculating Scope 3 Emissions](#)
- [Gold Standard](#)
- [Green Element](#)
- [Make My Money Matter](#)
- [SME Climate Commitment](#)
- [SME Climate Hub Business Carbon Calculator](#)
- [SME Climate Hub Climate Fit Course](#)
- [SME Climate Hub Financial Support Guide](#)
- [SME Climate Hub ‘How it works’](#)
- [SME Climate Hub’s Tools and Resources](#)
- [Verra’s Verified Carbon Standard](#)