



Once a company or product has measured and reduced its emissions to net zero in accordance with the CarbonNeutral Protocol, it is awarded the appropriate CarbonNeutral certification.

# Carbon Certified

*Organizations are increasingly coming under pressure to reduce their environmental impact. This pressure comes from various sources; cost reduction is often a large part of the picture, but so too are differentiation of product and service, reputation management and pressure from businesses within the supply chain. Consumers, with an enhanced awareness about the environmental impact of their choices, are demanding more environmentally friendly products.*

By Mark LaCroix

Science is telling us that an absolute reduction of 80% in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is required by mid-century to prevent the increasingly severe effects of climate change and limit the impact on the world's economy. This is at a time when global emissions are growing at their fastest rate ever.

All organizations face a similar challenge: how to grow profitably and reduce carbon emissions.

## Establishing an Offset Inclusive Carbon Management Program

Many organizations are realizing the environmental and commercial value of implementing an offset inclusive carbon management program. The program can establish a cost benchmark against which to measure the efficiency of all internal reduction opportunities. In addition, it is a cost-effective way to gain a climate change credential that will drive revenue and enhance corporate reputation.

## How Carbon Offsetting Works

For every one tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> that an organization produces, it pays to enable an equivalent amount of CO<sub>2</sub> to be saved

by an offset project somewhere else in the world. At these projects, the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> saved is measured and sold as a "carbon credit," and without carbon financing the projects would not be viable.

Carbon offsetting is often the fastest way to achieve the deepest reductions within an organization or activity, and is almost always the only way to achieve deep reductions in a cost-effective manner. At the same time, it often delivers added benefits at the project site, such as employment.

## Becoming CarbonNeutral

For a number of years, Nimbus Water Systems, a manufacturing company that produces water filtration systems for the residential and commercial sectors, has focused on innovative product development including eco-friendly residential and commercial systems under the Green by Design label. As a business it changed its corporate culture and retooled its product line in an effort to be more environmentally friendly.

Nimbus decided to further reduce its environmental impact by measuring and reducing its carbon emissions. Consequently, in December

*Implement an offset inclusive carbon management program*

## 10-point checklist recommended for checking the quality of a carbon partner

1. Do they use third parties to calculate greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with international standards, reporting calculation methods, assumptions and underlying data?
2. Do they sell a full range of quality assured carbon credits?
3. Do they have global reach?
4. Do they use third-party verifiers to assure the delivery of carbon credits?
5. Do they make use of third-party registries to manage the carbon offsets you contract and ensure that they are retired?
6. Do they submit their own business to independent audit and professional review?
7. Do they publicly publish information about the emission reductions projects they contract?
8. Can they guarantee the delivery of every tonne of carbon offset purchased?
9. Do they provide robust evidence that the CO<sub>2</sub> reductions promised are delivered?
10. Are they a member of the International Carbon Reduction and Offset Alliance ([www.icroa.org](http://www.icroa.org)) or similar self-regulated industry?

2009, Nimbus became the first U.S. water treatment equipment company to achieve CarbonNeutral company and CarbonNeutral product certifications.

To earn these certifications, Nimbus completed a program laid out by the CarbonNeutral Protocol, the global standard for organizations to reduce their carbon emissions to net zero and be certified as CarbonNeutral. To achieve the CarbonNeutral company certification, the process involved:

- An independent third party conducting an assessment of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with Nimbus' energy consumption, transport of raw materials, business travel, manufacturing waste disposal and employee commuting; and
- A reduction of these CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to net zero through a combination of internal reductions, and external reductions in the form of high-quality, robust and permanent carbon offsets.

In addition, the Nimbus WaterMaker Five reverse osmosis system measured the emissions produced by the extraction, processing and transport of raw materials, manufacturing, packaging and storage of the product and distribution of the product to the purchaser. These

emissions were then reduced to net zero to achieve CarbonNeutral product certification. Nimbus chose to offset its emissions in two U.S. projects: a conservation-based forest management project in the Big River/Salmon Creek Forests in Northern California and a methane capture project at the McKinney Landfill near Dallas, Texas.

### The Benefits

Due to the nature of its business, the water treatment industry has had to balance the consumer's desire for clean, demineralized drinking water with environmental responsibility. All organizations are under pressure to reduce their carbon emissions as much as possible and doing this is an additional way to be environmentally sensitive—reducing water waste, reducing landfill waste and also reducing the carbon footprint.

An offset-inclusive carbon management program can deliver value from revenue growth, reduced operational costs and reputation enhancement.

Adopting a CarbonNeutral position can enhance the profile of a brand, help win more requests for proposals and enhance the development of a leadership position against competitors. Organizations that reduce their carbon footprint to net zero can also achieve real cost savings within their operation. For

example, improved facilities management within an office, such as implementing light sensors in meeting rooms which automatically turn off the lights when the room is not in use; improved operational efficiencies, such as implementing an energy efficient data room for servers that uses less energy; and reduced travel through introducing sustainable biodiesel vehicles or adopting teleconferencing solutions. In addition, organizations can use a carbon management strategy as an opportunity to further engage staff, clients and prospects.

On its own, carbon offsetting does not provide an answer to global warming but it does have a large part to play in the overall approach to carbon management. Internal reductions take time to kick in (the change of the profile of a car fleet, for example), and even targets of 20% reductions are stretching to growing organizations. Carbon offsetting brings the possibility of 100% reductions achieved immediately and provide the added benefit of adopting a CarbonNeutral position to increase revenue, reduce overheads and enable an organization to get ahead of the competition. *wqp*

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