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DRIVING AMBITIOUS CORPORATE CLIMATE ACTION

SBTi Corporate Net-Zero Standard Expert Working Group (EWG) Meeting Minutes

EWG CDR Second Session

7 May 2025 - 14:00-16:00 CEST

Virtual



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info@sciencebasedtargets.org

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As per clause 6 in the EWG Terms of Reference, members serve on the EWG in their individual capacity as technical experts.

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Meeting participants

Expert Working Group Members

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1. Louis Uzor, Climeworks
2. Hannah Hunt, Heineken
3. Fiona MacIver-Jones, Gold Standard
4. Toby Bryce, Yale Centre for Natural Carbon Capture
5. Lene Petersen, WWF
6. Shantanu Agarwal, Mati Carbon PBC
7. Ryan Maloney, Apple
8. Kelly McNamara, Food System Innovations
9. Phung Thuy, PepsiCo
10. Matt Ramlow, WRI/GHG Protocol
11. Hilde Stroot, Oxfam
12. Fabiola De Simone, Carbon Market Watch
13. Noel Gurwick, University of Maryland
14. Injy Johnstone, Oxford Net Zero
15. Fiona Perera, Gold Standard
16. Thea Lyngseth, Environmental Coalition on Standards
17. Sifa Kinoti, Octavia Carbon
18. Mai Bui
19. Eva Massa
20. Sarita Marques
21. Silke Mooldijk

SBTi

1. Piera Patrizio, Head of Research
2. Humphrey Adun, SME Research
3. Emma Watson, Head of Corporate Standards

Meeting agenda

Welcome and introductions	5 min
Recap of previous session and open questions	10 min
Miro exercise: How does each option perform against SBTi principles?	25 min
Miro exercise: Which removal option is best-aligned with SBTi principles?	30 min

Guardrails, design choices, and incentives to ensure alignment of removal options	50 min
Expectations for the session on the durability of removals	10 min

1. Welcome & Introductions

The meeting opened with a welcome from SBTi's Head of Research, who thanked participants for their involvement. Attendees absent during the welcome meeting held on April 15 were introduced.

2. Recap of the Previous session and Open questions

The discussion focused on three key areas that need further clarification.

- First is how the removal targets account for companies' overperformance on Scope 1 reductions and companies joining after key milestone years. The standard revision process will address these questions and incorporate feedback from public consultations.
- The second question addressed the feasibility of removal targets, including their alignment with sustainable supply and financial implications for companies. The SBTi will also explore these concerns through quantitative assessments in upcoming sessions.
- Third, the relationship between interim targets and post-2050 obligations was outlined, including how to scale removal capacity and reconcile cumulative targets with annual commitments. These topics will be discussed in collaboration with the BVCM working group.
- The facilitator clarified that interim removal targets are meant to help companies build capacity for addressing residual emissions at net zero and are not designed to cover the broader role for CDR. A complementary 'responsibility to remove' (RTR) framework was briefly mentioned to be under development, which could address other roles of removals.
- Participants requested clarification on the distinction between annual and one-time removal purchases and raised concerns about the framework's sole focus on net-zero year targets. Suggestions were made to integrate early action and scale-up elements into interim targets. The facilitator noted that these broader considerations would be addressed jointly with the BVCM group.
- Questions were also raised about whether interim targets sufficiently prepare companies for post-2050 annual removal commitments.

3. Feedback and discussion: Miro Board Offline exercise

There was consensus that Option 1 (required targets) would send the strongest market signal, while Option 3 allowed greater flexibility through additional abatement. Some key talking points include:

- Option 1 offers ambition but lacks flexibility required to account for uncertainties in technological scale-up
- Option 2 was considered misaligned with SBTi principles and possibly more suitable for SMEs.
- Some members preferred Option 3 because it aligned with mitigation hierarchies, but it ran the risk of weakening removal market signals.
- Some questions were raised on the definition of residual emissions within option three, connecting it to the ISO perspective
- Participants raised questions concerning how to define residual emissions, with views ranging from treating them as a present-day issue to addressing them incrementally.
- The responsibility principle received low scores across options, with calls for more sector-specific context.
- The group also discussed whether a sector-specific or global residual emissions approach would be more appropriate, with SBTi confirming both remain under consideration.

4. Group Miro board exercise on assessing removal options

Participants engaged in a breakout room exercise using Miro to compare the three removal options against the SBTi principles, assessing which option best aligned with each principle.

- Group 1 compared options one and two, viewing option one as more ambitious due to its clear market signal while recognizing the feasibility and flexibility of option two. They emphasized that ambition should also reflect practicality. Scope 3 omissions were flagged as a limitation across all options, potentially undermining broader ambition.
- Group 2 favoured option one for its investment incentives but noted it might discourage future abatement efforts. They stressed the need for clearer definitions of removals and questioned the suitability of option two for large companies.
- Group 3 initially leaned toward option three for its alignment with the mitigation hierarchy and sectoral flexibility but acknowledged it may reduce incentives for CDR investment. The group highlighted concerns that excessive flexibility could weaken CDR signals, although some members viewed it as a potential path to achieving net-zero sooner. The group ultimately leaned toward option one for its strong signal on CDR scaling and alignment with SBTi's objectives while recognizing elements of flexibility in both options one and three.
- Group 4 favored option 1 as best aligned with the ambitious principle, seeing it as the only option that can trigger a clear market signal for CDR.

4. Group Miro board exercise on removal option consensus

In the final Miro exercise, participants proposed refinements to enhance options one and three. Several members recommended shifting from cumulative to annual removal targets to improve clarity and ambition while avoiding potential perverse incentives. Additional suggestions included broadening the types of investments recognized under option one and introducing incentives for building long-term removal capacity beyond fixed target requirements.

5. Next Steps

The next session will focus on the durability of removals. Some members presented their expectations for the durability session.

- A member shared concerns about the implications of setting a high permanence threshold for conventional CDR, potentially limiting allowable pathways.
- There was also a request for clarification on the scope of future discussions regarding land-sector emissions and their interaction with the FLAG guidance