Resources Guide for production companies
How to use this guide

AdGreen unites the advertising industry to eliminate the negative environmental impacts of production, and enable the community to measure and understand carbon and waste impacts.

This guide is for everyone working for production and service companies, and lists the actions where they can have an impact.

To get the most out of the guide, individuals should:

- Take time to read it all through, following the web-links where necessary
- Start working with the resources guide as early as possible on each project
- Be mindful of changes that could be made beyond current projects - like switching to renewables for office spaces, opening an account with a more sustainable supplier, or creating a company policy to encourage permanent behaviour change
- Encourage others to read the relevant resources guides
Each person will only be able to do so much **Individual projects** - as this is a collaborative effort. AdGreen empowers organisations and individuals to follow the sphere of influence:

- Things individuals and organisations can do themselves, with the help of AdGreen's resources, tools and training
- Things they can influence by asking more of their team and suppliers
- Unavoidable emissions that they will need to offset
The production company would usually act as the Third Party Production Partner (TPPP) when using the tool. Anyone working at a production company who has a carbon calculator contributor account can be added to campaigns by a PPP, and input information about production activities. There’s more about using the tool later in this guide.

The carbon calculator can be used at different stages of the production:

- To draft a production footprint using information from your budget to establish a rough overall picture, e.g., number of catering heads budgeted across the shoot
- To check the impact of one activity option against another to see which has the lower impact, e.g., beef vs vegetarian catering
- To complete a project with finalised details from your production to build your company’s dataset, e.g., actual number of catering heads per food option

Throughout the guide you will see suggestions of low carbon activities you can consider for your production.
Activity areas

All production activities will fall into one of these activity areas. Throughout this guide, action points will be shared which will reduce the impact in one or more of these areas.

Data shows that emissions from travel & transport activities will often have the biggest impact, then energy needed for spaces, then materials, and finally disposal, so try to prioritise reduction decisions accordingly, using information from the carbon calculator as a guide.

**TRAVEL & TRANSPORT**

Trains, planes and automobiles... even helicopters and boats! And not just for people - for equipment and product too.

**SPACES**

Power for all non-filming, filming, accommodation and post production spaces budgeted for an advertising project, and the energy needed to run and charge equipment in them.

**MATERIALS**

Set construction right down to paper, and all the water, drives, catering, batteries, costume and makeup in between.

**DISPOSAL**

Recycling, composting and energy recovery.
Pre-production: things to consider

THE SCRIPT - BEHIND THE SCENES

Avoid baking air travel emissions into the script with specific locations and casting:

- Develop scripts which can be shot locally, or remotely, as air travel will significantly increase a production's footprint
- Allow for seasonal weather advantages to keep shoots in your own hemisphere/country and avoid air travel
- Consider delivering certain elements in CG/VFX or using virtual production instead to avoid travel associated with shooting them in camera

Avoid baking an excessive use of materials (and waste!) into the script with specific set ups:

- Consider a smaller build, and try to use sustainably sourced materials (and reuse old items if possible); items like poly carving create a lot of waste and are best avoided
- Work with creatives and directors/photographers to remove or rework carbon intensive script elements, such as wet downs
- Consider delivering certain elements in CG/VFX instead to avoid materials associated with shooting them in camera

Here are some tweaks to consider if you are part of the script development. While they may not seem obviously conducive to creating great work, we’ve seen in our industry that it is possible for creativity to flourish when working within constraints. Why not make low carbon production part of the brief?
THE SCRIPT - ON SCREEN

As well as adjusting scripts to reduce negative impacts, positive ones can be added too!

Script or production choices, such as locations, character actions and props, can be used to promote and encourage sustainable behaviours, so discuss this with the director/photographer and producer at the earliest stage possible. These requirements can be passed onto the location manager and production designer as needed:

- Show characters using public transport
- Use electric and hybrid cars as prop cars
- Show solar panels on homes/businesses in exterior shots
- Show wind turbines in landscape shots/GVs
- Show characters turning off lights as they leave rooms, turning off taps, and putting appropriate waste in recycling and compost bins
- Show characters using reusable coffee cups, water bottles and canvas bags
- Show characters eating vegetarian/vegan food options with real cutlery, on real plates
Pre-production: things to consider

**PRODUCTION CHOICES**

Once the script is in place, there are a number of choices which can be made to reduce the emissions on a production even further. These could be developed into company policy, to help everyone understand what is expected on every project. Remember, you can check the impact of one activity option against another at any point by using the carbon calculator to see which has the lower impact, e.g., driving vs public transport.

- If the shoot is based overseas, encourage non-essential attendees to join the production remotely rather than flying
- Consider cast and crew local to the shoot
- Book suppliers with hybrid/electric transport options
- If flying, book economy instead of business class
- Encourage travel to the shoot by public transport
- If cars are required, choose electric vehicles
- If driving, don’t idle vehicles whilst stationary and encourage facilities drivers to avoid fuel waste by having a no idling policy
- Consider VFX before live product shots to avoid the impact of shipping hero items

- If booking accommodation, stay in economy or midrange hotels rather than luxury ones, or hotels running on renewable energy
- Select studios or locations running on 100% renewable energy
- Use mains power before diesel generators, or see if there are rechargeable battery options
- Use electric generators over diesel
- Switch off aircon and heating when not in use
- Use low energy lighting to reduce the amount of power required - and turn things off when they’re not in use
Pre-production: things to consider

- Choose veggie or vegan catering options
- Consider the life span of any materials purchased for the shoot
- Go paperless instead of printing
- Reuse hard drives from previous productions where possible
- Provide access to drinking water/a water cooler for cast and crew to refill water bottles
- Supply reusable cups/glasses for cold drinks/water and reusable mugs for hot drinks (or compostable if you have a disposal plan)
- Use reusable location protection rather than disposable items

- Consider more sustainable materials and discuss the cost with your agency/client at budget stage
- Discuss reuse and rehoming plans for any set build items such as timber, as well as costume, and food - aim for zero waste in the first place
- Consider hiring materials, e.g., clothing, rather than purchasing
- Arrange for recycling and/or food waste composting on set
- If product is being supplied by the client, make sure it is reused, rehomed or recycled/composted afterwards
HERE ARE QUESTIONS TO ASK THE AGENCY (OR BRAND TEAM IF WORKING DIRECTLY)

- Can any clients join the production remotely rather than flying?
- If in person attendance is essential, can the number of clients be reduced?
- If flying, can the clients travel economy instead of business?
- Can the clients travel to the shoot by public transport, and if cars are required, can electric vehicles be chosen?
- If clients are attending and staying overnight, can they stay in economy or midrange hotels rather than luxury ones? Or hotels running on renewable energy?
- If meals are being provided, can the clients choose veggie or vegan options?
- Can the clients go paperless instead of printing?
Pre-production: things you can influence

QUESTIONS FOR THE POST PRODUCTION SUPPLIER IF WORKING DIRECTLY

- Can the post team work remotely or work with local teams to avoid/reduce travel emissions?
- Is the studio, office, or home-working set up powered by 100% renewable energy?
- Are energy efficient computers, render farms etc, in use to reduce energy needs where possible?
- Are cloud storage and remote servers for short term storage powered by 100% renewable energy?
- Can long term, infrequently accessed data be stored on LTO tape (two copies in two separate locations) to avoid carbon emissions from cloud servers and consumption of hard drives?
- Can VFX be used instead of live product shots?
- Can VFX be used instead of set builds?
You can collect additional information while you are on set, which will speed up your data gathering.

It is not just the production manager who is responsible for reducing the footprint of a production. Here are a number of things you can do in any role.

- If driving, avoid idling your vehicle whilst stationary as this contributes to localised air pollution
- Avoid leaving items on charge overnight
- View documents digitally, use digital POs
- Collect paper receipts or ask colleagues and clients to send digital receipts for any travel, food or activities which will become part of your budget
- Sort waste appropriately as per the waste/recycling/composting collection - ensure there are bins with signage on set
- Encourage attendees to bring reusable bottles and coffee cups and use reusable/canvas bags when making purchases
Using the carbon calculator

The next few pages walk through how to use the tool as a Third Party Production Partner. The quick start guide, calculator walkthrough video and how-to shorts demonstrate the simplest and quickest way to set up an account and navigate the activity areas of a project, so take a look before getting started.
Using the carbon calculator: get set up

If you already have an account, follow the steps below. If not, please register here. This guide shows both actions for the PPP and TPPP, as this will depend on which role you take on each project.

PPP = This is the company working direct to brand. This is usually the creative agency although it can be the production company

TPPP = This is usually the production company but could be a supplier if they are entering data directly into the calculator

ADD CAMPAIGN, ASSIGN REVIEWERS

ADD PROJECT, ASSIGN TPPPS

ADD ACTIVITY FORMS FOR BUDGETED ITEMS

If the reviewer doesn’t exist you can invite them by email, and set up without them for now. You’ll need to assign a brand before submitting for review.

If the TPPP isn’t registered you can invite them by email, and set up without them for now. Including your TPPPs will help you share the load.
Create a draft footprint as soon as possible. These are the activity areas you may want to focus on for a draft calculation, as they will give you the information you need to make reduction decisions before the shoot. Remember, only input activities in your portion of the budget, and each project is different so the items below are just an example.

**AGENCY ENTERS:**
- Agency and brand travel
- Agency and brand hotels
- Meals for agency and brand outside of the shoot catering
- Post production

**PRODUCTION COMPANY ENTERS:**
- Travel for cast and crew
- Transport for materials
- Energy used to power and heat filming and non-filming spaces (benchmarks)
- Catering for the shoot
- Large material items, e.g. set build, wardrobe
- Disposal

**FOR ANIMATION OR CGI CONTENT, ENTER:**
- Spaces as included in budget including post production
- Transport
- Catering

While on set, anyone who is assigned to the project can enter or change activity data on the draft footprint you have created.
Using the carbon calculator: wrapping

Once a production has finished, you can finalise your draft activity forms. Look back through your entries to confirm if you followed through with the draft activities, and amend the estimated quantities for the final numbers. If you used benchmarks to complete the draft calculation, try and find the exact figures, if that is possible. If not, you can continue to use benchmarks. At this stage you can also enter the final post-production figures, if your organisation is budgeting for it.

And remember, if it’s not in your budget as a line item, we don’t need to enter it into the calculator.

Once you have completed a production, you can finalise your activity areas. We recommend doing this as soon as possible, as it is much easier to gather the data immediately following a shoot (if your project had one) while the production team have the information to hand.
Once you have submitted the project, the AdGreen team will review it and check for any errors or omissions. If there are any questions from the AdGreen team you will be notified by email and through the chat feature in the calculator. If any amendments are requested you will be able to resubmit the project for review once these have been addressed. Once the project is complete you will be able to use the final figure to offset the remaining emissions.
ABOUT US

Do you want to know more about AdGreen? Watch the AdGreen Overview video below for an introduction into how AdGreen began, how we support the advertising industry, why measurement and reduction are important, and how we keep everything free at the point of use. We also walk through a typical shoot to show you where the carbon emissions are generated.

If you’d prefer to read rather than watch, download the 2-pager which provides a brief summary.
Further support, resources and templates

TRAINING

The flagship Sustainable Production module provides an insight into the climate crisis with science-based carbon literacy education, an introduction to the impact of the advertising industry, and information on practical solutions for those wanting to act. It also includes a step-by-step walkthrough of the carbon calculator.

Free to access for all, our training supports each individual working in production to become carbon-literate. Trainees can assess their comprehension of the material along the way with relevant quizzes and further reading. In addition, electronic badges enable trainees to demonstrate their carbon literacy and tool know-how to colleagues and future employers.
GREENPEACE’S ‘THE LONELY SHARK’ BY SPINDLE

As soon as we received the ‘Shark’ brief from Greenpeace, we knew that the subject would require a special creative treatment. The campaign needed to reach global audiences and raise awareness about disappearing shark populations in the Atlantic. It was a huge subject to approach, but the campaign production couldn’t cost the planet.

Through the whole process, from the creative development to final delivery, we produced 0.73 tCO2e - that is less than one European flight for a crew member. If we had chosen to execute the film differently, for example by flying 3 crew members abroad and serving meat meals on set, that would have produced almost 15 times more CO2e!

We reduced our carbon footprint by working remotely and not using cars and taxis, or renting offices and hotels. The music track was licensed from the artist, hence no new recording was needed, and we used 3D animation and archive footage from Greenpeace which helped us to keep our carbon footprint to an absolute minimum. All our files were then exchanged digitally, without the need for hard drives and couriers.

No sets were built so our material output was low, and to top it all the production process didn’t generate any waste, with no materials or catering for the crew to dispose of. Our production was paperless and plastic-free!

Throughout the process we relied on the AdGreen carbon calculator to estimate our potential footprint. Based on the information, we could make informed decisions on how to reduce our carbon emissions. All of our producers had previously joined AdGreen training, hence we had the entire team fully aware of the impact that choices at different stages of production could have on the planet.

At Spindle we are making a concerted effort to reduce our impact on the environment, and we hope this campaign case study will be the first of many we share with AdGreen.
Further support, resources and templates

CREATING AN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Here are some headings to think about when writing an environmental policy:

- Transport preferences: When is flying acceptable? How many people will travel? Who are your preferred suppliers?
- Energy and water: Can you switch to renewables and discuss how to save water with your supplier?
- Materials: Can you limit purchases of new items, procure from sustainable suppliers, go paperless, or plan how to rehome items?
- Waste: Can you organise for recycling and composting to be available?

Measuring your operational emissions (as opposed to those associated with a particular project) will give you a benchmark to start from - see the Ad Net Zero website for more. Once ready, display your policy, add to employment contracts, send to freelancers and appoint a champion to review it periodically and ensure everything is implemented.
Supplier listings

Based in the UK? Our partners at BAFTA’s albert have compiled a list of sustainable suppliers serving those in advertising, TV and film production. The list can be filtered, making it even easier to find what you’re looking for.

Look out for those powered by 100% renewable energy.

Take a look through the supplier listings.

FAQs

Got a question? Check out the FAQs here - it might have been asked already. Think an answer is missing? Get in touch.

I’ve requested access to the carbon calculator as a new company and not heard back yet.

What's the value of all of this, for the client?

Does it cost more to produce advertising work in a more sustainable way?

What is the carbon footprint of an average shoot?
**Glossary**

**USER**
A user can only view projects they have personally created or been assigned to (and the associated campaign details). A user can invite other users to the project or campaign as relevant.

If they are part of a contributor company, a user can also add activity forms to the project. If the company they belong to is acting as the PPP on a particular campaign, they can also edit the campaign details and assign reviewers, and edit the details of any project held with the campaign, and assign contributors. They can also submit projects for review.

**ADMIN**
An admin can view every project the company has created or been assigned to (and the associated campaign details). An admin can invite other users to the project or campaign as relevant.

The admin is responsible for managing the company’s users incl. adding, removing and creating other admin. They can also perform the functions of a user.

**CAMPAIGN**
An entity to which projects belong. A campaign must be created before a project. Each campaign has its own overview page, where varying detail of data is visible depending on the company the user / admin belongs to.

**PROJECT**
Each project belongs to a campaign. A project can be defined as audio, stills or motion. Each project has its own overview page, where varying detail of data is visible depending on the company the user / admin belongs to.

**ACTIVITY FORM**
Each activity undertaken as part of a project is logged on its own activity form, by the relevant contributor company’s user or admin. Each activity falls under one of the activity areas: Non-filming spaces, Filming spaces, Travel and Transport, Accommodation, Materials, Disposal, Post-Production.

**REVIEWER COMPANIES**
These are defined as brand parents, brands, production consultancies and advertising agency parents and holding companies. Reviewer companies do not have access to create campaigns and projects or add or amend data on activity forms. Companies whose users and admins will only view (not input) carbon activity data about campaigns to which the company has been assigned (and the campaign’s associated projects).

**CONTRIBUTOR COMPANIES**
These are defined as advertising agencies, production companies and service production companies. Each contributor company can act as either the principal production partner (PPP) or the third-party production partner (TPPP) on any given campaign. Companies whose users and admins will input and view carbon activity data about motion, stills and audio projects to which the company has been assigned. Privileges afforded to the contributor company depend on which role they are fulfilling on a particular campaign.

**PRINCIPAL PRODUCTION PARTNER (PPP)**
A role taken on by a contributor company on a particular campaign. The Principal Production Partner is the principal supplier of production services to the advertiser, who will be billing them for said services. In most cases this will be an advertising agency. In some cases, the PPP will be an in-house agency at the advertiser, or could also be a production company, service production company, audio post-production company or visual post-production company working directly with the advertiser.

PPP users and admins set up campaigns and assign reviewer companies. PPP users and admins also set up projects within campaigns and assign TPPPs so that their users and admins can contribute activity forms in order to generate a footprint for the project (and subsequently, the campaign).

**THIRD-PARTY PRODUCTION PARTNER (TPPP)**
A role taken on by a contributor company on a particular campaign (meaning they only see specific projects within the campaign, to which they have been assigned by the PPP).

A further production partner that the principal production partner has engaged to provide specific production services which they themselves do not specialise in. In most cases the 3rd party production partner will be a production company contracted by an advertising agency. In some cases, the TPPP will be a service production company, audio post-production company or visual post-production company. TPPPs users and admins contribute activity forms in order to generate a footprint for the project (and subsequently, the campaign).