

# From the Editor

## Freelancing and carbon accounting



**Raquel Billiones**  
Editor-in-Chief  
editor@emwa.org

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There are regional and national differences with regard to fuel sources and energy policies. It is thus best to use a calculator that has been validated in your place of residence.

As part of EMWA's sustainability efforts, we have published a first estimate of EMWA's carbon footprint on p. 72. The authors of the paper also proactively disclosed their personal carbon footprint.

Finally, a huge thanks to Laura Kehoe and Satyen Shenoy for putting together this fantastic issue which is a great resource for the freelancing community!

**I**n the world of carbon accounting, there is some good news, and some not-so-good news ...

The good news is that the pharmaceutical industry has made strong commitments to decarbonisation.<sup>1</sup>

As pharma companies strive for carbon neutrality, carbon accounting is now part of day-to-day business; the carbon footprint for each process, each step, and each stakeholder is closely scrutinised. Freelance medical writers and communicators as business partners, vendors, and service providers within the healthcare industry will be part of this scrutiny.

Carbon footprint is a measure of greenhouse gas emissions produced by an organisation, activity, event, product, or individual in units of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>).

The not-so-good news is that carbon footprinting is not yet fully standardised. The methodologies are still evolving, the calculations and metrics are not completely harmonised.<sup>3,4,5</sup>

The Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol provides recommendations for carbon accounting for companies, organisations, cities, and countries.<sup>2</sup> However, the GHG tools are not always easily "downsized" to small businesses and the self-employed.

There are many carbon footprint calculators available online, from the simple to the

sophisticated, from the expensive to the free. To navigate this ocean of carbon calculators, here are some suggested resources:

- The UK National Federation of Self Employed & Small Businesses Limited released the following blog in May 2023: <https://www.fsb.org.uk/resources-page/how-to-calculate-your-carbon-footprint-as-a-small-business.html>
- The Carbon Trust launched the first ever carbon footprint label in 2007. Check out their recommendations for small and medium-sized enterprises: <https://www.carbontrust.com/our-work-and-impact/guides-reports-and-tools/sme-carbon-footprint-calculator>
- The National Association of Local Councils cites the following resource: *An evaluation of online carbon calculators in the UK*, by Amit Rastogi and Gareth Williams. <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/our-work/climate-change/3305-online-carbon-calculators-in-uk-an-evaluation-report/file>
- Greenyearth reviewed 5 calculators and presents the pros and cons of each at <https://greenyearth/en-gb/blog/company-guide/5-best-carbon-footprint-calculators>
- Also check our Paul Tisdale's tips for freelancers on p. 107.

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