

Starting Line and Leadership Practices 3.0 -

Minimum criteria required for participation in the Race to Zero campaign

- *In force from 15 June 2022 for new applicants;*
- *In force from 15 June 2023 for existing Partners and their members.*

Race to Zero is the UN-backed global campaign rallying non-state actors – including companies, cities, regions, financial, educational, and healthcare institutions – to take rigorous and immediate action to halve global emissions within this decade and deliver a healthier, fairer, zero carbon world in time to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. All members are committed to race towards the same overarching goal: reducing emissions across all scopes swiftly and fairly in line with science, with transparent action plans, robust near-term and long-term targets, and annual reporting against their progress. Led by the High-Level Climate Champions for Climate Action, Nigel Topping (COP26) and Dr Mahmoud Mohieldin (COP27), following their mandate from the member states of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Race to Zero mobilises actors across the global economy radical collaboration to decarbonise, giving national governments the confidence to go further, faster.

To help accelerate meaningful progress towards halving global emissions by 2030 and to ensure the integrity of the campaign, Race to Zero both sets a minimum floor for robust net zero commitments, and also lays out bold leadership practices for members to strive for. An independent Expert Peer Review Group reviews all Race to Zero partners against these criteria, and partners are in turn responsible for ensuring their members meet the criteria. Race to Zero is, in parallel, developing an accountability mechanism to ensure that members who persistently fail to comply with these criteria will be removed from the Race.

The R2Z criteria are delineated in two categories:

- **'Starting line'** criteria lay out minimum requirements for all members to meet, below which members cannot fall if they wish to join and remain in the campaign.
- **'Leadership practices'** signal how leading entities can light the way to a net zero world.

These criteria are supported by three complementary documents:

- **'Interpretation guide'**, first published last year, provides guidance for EPRG members and Partners for how to assess applications from Partners and shares insights for members to learn from to implement these criteria;
- **'Lexicon'** lists key terms in the net zero space, aiming to drive convergence in the use of language and to encourage specificity in using important terms.

	Starting line	Leadership practices
Pledge	<p><i>Pledge at the head-of-organisation level to reach (net) zero GHGs as soon as possible, and by 2050 at the latest, in line with the scientific consensus on the global effort needed to limit warming to 1.5C with no or limited overshoot, recognising that this requires phasing down and out all unabated fossil fuels as part of a global, just transition.</i></p> <p><i>Set an interim target to achieve in the next decade, which reflects maximum effort toward or beyond a fair share of the 50% global reduction in CO2 by 2030. Targets must cover all greenhouse gas emissions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Including scopes 1, 2 and 3 for businesses and other organisations;</i> <i>2. Including all territorial emissions for cities and regions;</i> <i>3. For financial entities, including all portfolio/financed/facilitated/insured emissions;</i> <i>4. Including land-based emissions.</i> 	<p>Target absolute zero or net negative emissions <i>Reduce emissions to absolute zero with no remaining residual emissions, or go further and ensure your activities remove more GHGs than they produce. See Lexicon for further details.</i></p> <p>Adopt inclusive boundaries <i>Widen the scope of your target to include cumulative emissions, especially where these are significant (for all actors) and / or consumption emissions (for cities, states, and regions). See Lexicon for further details.</i></p> <p>Set twin targets for reductions and removals <i>In addition to your emissions reductions targets, compensate for any unabated emissions year on year through investment in high quality carbon credits, disclose neutralisation milestones that demonstrate the integrity of commitments to neutralise unabated emissions and state how you plan to ultimately neutralise any residual emissions by 2050 through high-quality, permanent removals.</i></p> <p>Set specific targets for short-term reduction of methane and other GHGs <i>Pledge to reduce methane emissions by at least 34% by 2030, in line with the IPCC's 6th Assessment Report, and make near-term pledges to reduce other high global warming potential GHG emissions.</i></p> <p>Protect nature <i>Pledge to halt deforestation and protect biodiversity, making your activities consistent with climate resilient development. Pledge to make finance consistent with climate resilient development including ending deforestation and conversion of other natural ecosystems, and respecting biodiversity.</i></p> <p>Contribute to 2030 Breakthroughs <i>Set sectoral targets in line with the 2030 Breakthroughs or more ambitious sector targets. For financial institutions, use sector-specific targets that drive emissions reductions and do not simply shift investment from high-emitting to low-emitting sectors.</i></p>
Plan	<p><i>Within 12 months of joining, publicly disclose a Transition Plan, City/Region Plan, or equivalent which outlines how all other Race to Zero criteria will be met, including what actions will be taken within the next 12 months, within 2-3 years, and by 2030.</i></p>	<p>Support a just transition <i>Explain how you will support communities affected by both climate impacts and the climate transition, and strengthen their participation in achieving the global goal of halving emissions by 2030, seeking to address injustices and build towards a more equitable future.</i></p> <p>Integrate nature <i>Drawing on the Convention on Biological Diversity, integrate the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies.</i></p> <p>Empower stakeholders</p>

		<p><i>Explain what actions you will take to empower other stakeholders in your community and beyond to achieve their own targets, embracing the spirit of radical collaboration. Include how you will support the Sustainable Development Goals. Identify in your plan how you will help build the resilience of, and drive funding to, developing countries to achieve a just, inclusive transition.</i></p>
Proceed	<p><i>Take immediate action through all available pathways toward achieving (net) zero, consistent with delivering your interim targets. Where relevant, contribute to sectoral breakthroughs.</i></p>	<p>Contribute beyond your own territory / value chain <i>In addition to following a science-aligned net zero pathway to reduce your own emissions and neutralise any residual emissions that remain, contribute toward global (net) zero through beyond value chain / territorial mitigation efforts, such as the purchase and retirement of high-quality carbon credits (emission reductions, avoidance or removals) that do not substitute for nor delay emissions reductions necessary to meet the Pledge.</i></p> <p>Prioritise emissions-intensive sectors <i>Take immediate action to protect standing forests and avoid and reduce emissions in the most GHG-intensive activities and sectors, while not neglecting longer-term efforts. Align to the 2030 Breakthroughs sectoral targets.</i></p> <p>Scale up climate solutions <i>Proactively grow activities that contribute to the achievement of global net zero, such as new technologies, business models, policy approaches, and community practices.</i></p> <p>Empower your ecosystem <i>Empower those in your ecosystem to implement Race to Zero plans, including through financing, capacity building, knowledge-sharing, and access to resources. In particular for financial institutions, scale-up investment in emerging markets and developing countries.</i></p>
Publish	<p><i>Report publicly progress against both interim and longer-term targets, as well as the actions being taken, at least annually. Report in a standardised, open format, and via platforms that feed into the UNFCCC Global Climate Action Portal.</i></p>	<p>Report on progress in and beyond your value chain or territory <i>Outline progress both regarding within-value-chain / territorial emissions reductions and investment made / action taken outside of your value chain / territory. Report on how you have allocated resources and capacities to achieve the short-term and longer-term targets.</i></p>
Persuade	<p><i>Within 12 months of joining, align external policy and engagement, including membership in associations, to the goal of halving emissions by 2030 and reaching global (net) zero by 2050.</i></p>	<p>Activate the ambition loop <i>Proactively advocate for your peers, stakeholders, and governments to align their goals and actions to 1.5C. Demonstrate how the implementation of your own ambitious targets creates opportunities for others to follow.</i></p> <p>Mainstream (net) zero alignment <i>Advocate for appropriate regulation and facilitating measures to ensure that alignment to 1.5C becomes the default for all actors.</i></p>