

SME Guide to Responding to Customer Sustainability & ESG Requests

Why Your Customers Are Asking

Many large companies face pressure from investors, regulators, and their customers to demonstrate **sustainability performance**. That pressure flows down to their suppliers — meaning SMEs like yours are being asked to **report on environmental and social impacts**.

What Customers Typically Request

- **Carbon footprint data** (energy, fuel, travel, purchased goods)
- **Targets or improvement plans** (emissions reduction, energy efficiency, waste diversion, SBTi Targets)
- **Sustainability or ESG questionnaires** (e.g., EcoVadis, CDP Supply Chain)
- **Policies and practices** (climate, waste, ethics, health & safety)

Why This Matters for SMEs

- ✓ Maintain strong customer relationships
- ✓ Stay competitive in bids and tenders
- ✓ Identify operational savings (energy, water, waste)
- ✓ Build reputation with employees and future customers

How Achieve Sustainability Can Help

We specialize in **practical sustainability support for Ontario SMEs**:

- Carbon accounting, GHG targets and decarbonization strategies
- ESG questionnaire support
- Guidance to ensure credible, customer-ready results
- Affordable, actionable solutions tailored to SMEs

3 Steps to Respond Quickly & Effectively

1. Clarify the Request

- Review the questionnaire or request carefully
- Prioritize urgent items: carbon data, sustainability policies, or improvement targets

2. Collect Your Data

- Energy bills, fuel receipts, travel logs
- HR or health & safety policies
- Waste, recycling, or efficiency records

3. Get Expert Support

- SMEs don't need big-firm consultants
- A focused partner can help you:
 - Complete customer sustainability & ESG questionnaires
 - Calculate your first carbon footprint
 - Build a simple sustainability plan to grow over time

Pro Tip: The biggest risk is not responding to customer sustainability requests. Even a basic first response positions you as a proactive, reliable supplier.