



## ACCELERATED DECARBONISATION GOALS: A GLOBAL WAKE-UP CALL

During the past 12 months it hasn't always been easy for governments and businesses to focus on non-pandemic issues – particularly carbon change. But as we begin to emerge from the crisis, it is steadily regaining its former prominence. This is partly thanks to ambitious new decarbonisation goals.

The most notable news of all is US President Joe Biden's establishment of a new national target of a 50-52% reduction in carbon emissions from 2005 levels by 2030. This is a distinct move away from his predecessor's climate change denial. Speaking at a White House climate summit held to coincide with World Earth Day in April, Mr Biden outlined a strategy that includes dramatic changes to the power and transportation sectors, as well an accelerated transition from fossil fuels to renewables.

Mr Biden's new climate goal puts the US 'on a level' with the EU. The European block of 27 countries confirmed (in late April 2021) the terms of a European law committing to reducing emissions by at least 55 per cent over the decade against 1990 levels. The US goal is based on 2005 emission levels.

Meanwhile, in the same week at America's big announcement, the UK government announced its intention to enshrine in law this summer a new target of reducing carbon emissions by 78% by 2035 (compared to 1990 levels). It represents a step forward from the previous objective of a 68% emissions cut by 2030, and is set to take the UK more than three-quarters of the way to reaching net zero by 2050.

A number of other nations are apparently considering similar moves, it's clearly a trend that should be welcomed. For example, Chancellor Angela Merkel's ruling coalition in Germany said (in May 2021) that it aims to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, five years earlier than its previous goal and the shortest timeline among major economies. This is positive news. But it's also very timely as there is an acute need to keep carbon emissions in mind as the world begins to leave lockdown.

### **There can be no 'back to normal'**

One of the few major positives to be drawn from recent events is that we have all had a chance to review the way our working lives are constructed. Time off the commuter treadmill has shown us that – thanks to new technologies and improved broadband access – many people can work effectively from home. Of course, this has also brought the huge benefit of a major reduction in global carbon dioxide emissions by 6.4% according to Carbon Monitor – the first drop after decades of steady annual increases (1).

Some commentators are urging a return of 'the old normal' in which distinctly ungreen practices – including frequent business travel – were endemic. This seems to be a missed opportunity. There have also been some voices calling for employees to go back to the office in a major way, although these are easily drowned out by the business owners planning to adopt some degree of hybrid working.

That can only be good news given that 'hybrid working' models promise a golden opportunity to improve the efficiency of buildings. For example, where a company owns its facility, there will be scope to have employees working out of fewer areas – enabling reductions in the use of lighting and heating. With

fewer employees in a building at any given time, there will also be greater scope to fine-tune working environments so that they are more conducive to their wellbeing.

As a leading provider of building management systems, it is only logical that I point out the transformative potential of a high-quality BMS such as Priva Blue ID. Providing flexible and overarching control and monitoring of building systems, it can open the way to huge savings in energy consumption and expenditure.

In a broader sense, new technologies can also help businesses to ensure they make a strong contribution to decarbonisation. For if anything is certain in these unsettling times, it's that people and organisations everywhere will have to play their part as 2050 draws ever closer.

*Source:*

(1) <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-00090-3>

## CURIOUS ABOUT HOW NEW TECHNOLOGIES CAN HELP YOUR BUSINESS TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO DECARBONISATION?

Let's get in touch and discuss!



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