

NWoW4NetZero practices

Step-By-Step **Guide for Professionals implementing**



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**НАЦИОНАЛНА АГЕНЦИЈА
ЗА ЕВРОПСКИ ОБРАЗОВНИ
ПРОГРАМИ И МОБИЛНОСТ**

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About the project

The NWoW4Net-Zero project aims to position HR Directors as key players in contributing to the EU's ambition of carbon neutrality by 2050. NWoW4Net-Zero aims to give them concrete levers of action to drive the transition in their field of intervention and to take advantage of the New Ways of Working (NWoW), workplaces, and organisations resulting from the increased use of digital solutions. The aim of the project has been to develop a series of toolkits for action, a training pathway and a knowledge sharing platform. This 24-month Erasmus+ supported project has brought together 5 partners :

- **CKM - Centre for Knowledge Management** (coordinator, Northern Macedonia)
- **Htag by Références** (partner, Belgium)
- **Tal Tech** - Tallinn University of Technology (partner, Estonia)
- **C&R - Conseil & Recherche** (partner, France)
- **PLS - Pour la Solidarité** (partner, Belgium)

The EU's ambition is to be the first continent to achieve climate neutrality. Launched in 2019, the Green Deal for Europe commits states to reducing net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The ambition is to fundamentally transform the economic system so that by 2050 the Member States will be carbon neutral, with an intermediate target of reducing the EU's GHG emissions by 55% compared to their 1990 level by 2030. The new ways of organising work (emerged in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic) and the new digital solutions are an opportunity to contribute towards the achievement of these goals.

As a result, the NWoW4Net-Zero project explores three avenues which define the contribution of HRM to the achievement of carbon neutrality ambitions :

- **NWoWs** : what modes of organisation and hybridisation of work need to be put in place to support the objective of reducing environmental impacts ?
- **Work-related mobility** : what solutions need to be implemented to reduce the carbon footprint of travel to and from work ?
- **Digital** : how to reduce the carbon footprint through the responsible use of digital technologies at work and in teleworking ?

Expected results of the project :

- A training pathway presented as three toolkits: on NWoW, work-related mobility and digital.
- A methodology and training pathway for a personalised learning experience according to the needs of each learner and his/her organisation. An impact methodology and a user guide.
- A knowledge platform, an interactive environment in which users can easily learn and obtain information and knowledge about new ways of working and how they can be introduced into organisations via HR.



Foreword

After understanding the concepts, terminology and practices for the New Ways of Working (NWoW) and the global EU and national contexts (Belgium, Estonia, France and North Macedonia) for implementation of the NWoW with the objective of Net Zero, the present guide explains the concrete steps for how to develop and implement practices using the tools developed in this project and how to use the toolkits and training paths within the interactive platform.

This guide aims to equip HRM practitioners and professionals, but also employees identified as “employee champions” for New Ways of Working (NWoW) within organisations, with recommendations of concrete actions they can advocate for at management level and among fellow colleagues, ensuring implementation of sustainable practices increasingly needed in the fight against climate change. It serves as an essential resource for HR professionals and leaders committed to driving change and ensuring their organizations play a pivotal role in the global movement towards a sustainable, carbon-neutral future.

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1. NWoW4NetZero : a sense of urgency - “The Why”

According to EU Regulation on establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality (COM(2020) 80 final)¹, achieving climate neutrality requires a contribution from all economic sectors. In light of the importance of energy production and consumption on greenhouse gas emissions, the transition to a sustainable solution requires an affordable and secure energy system relying on a well-functioning internal energy market. The digital transformation, technological innovation, and research and development, are also important drivers for achieving the climate-neutrality objectives.

The digital transformation of working methods is a phenomenon that has been going around since years, but the Covid-19 crisis has acce-

lerated it considerably. Some organisations, both private and public, believe that they have gained up to 10-15 years in this area in the past few years compared to the ‘normal time’. Those changes are not only faster; they have also taken new orientations following the health crisis. Companies, for example, have announced that teleworking has started to become the ‘the norm’ rather than, the ‘exception’. More reasonably, the vast majority of organisations now seem to be moving towards a hybrid form mixing face-to-face and remote work, with middle ways still to be defined, and using more flexible work forces².

¹“Com(2020)80 EU – Regulation framework for Achieving Climate Neutrality and Amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 (European Climate Law) - Main Contents.” COM(2020)80 - Framework for Achieving Climate Neutrality and Amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 (European Climate Law) - EU Monitor, European Commission , www.eumonitor.eu/9353000/1/j9vvik7m1c3gyxp/vl6oocjp2z5. Accessed 27 Mar. 2023.

²“How COVID-19 Has Pushed Companies over the Technology Tipping Point-and Transformed Business Forever.” McKinsey & Company, McKinsey & Company, 5 Oct. 2020, www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/how-covid-19-has-pushed-companies-over-the-technology-tipping-point-and-transformed-business-forever.

The hypothesis of this project is that it is possible and desirable to guide these new ways of working by integrating the sustainability component, to contribute to achieving the ambition of Climate Neutrality change set by the EU for 2050. New digital solutions can support the move towards this direction. HR directors and HR managers have not been at the forefront in tackling environmental challenges related to the everyday ways of working (WoW). This project aims to empower them about the issue and subsequently put the HR professionals in the driver's seat. The experts we interviewed as part of this project are explicit about the positioning to be adopted in human resources management in order to meet companies' sustainability ambitions.

«The link between sustainable development and human resources management has been observed for more than a decade in academic work, notably with the development of a

trend known as 'Green HRM'», explains François Pichault, Human Resources Management Professor at HEC Liège-School of Management of the University of Liège in Belgium. "This movement is based on the idea that if a company is to adopt an environmentally-friendly business approach, employees are the key to its success, or failure. However, the focus of Green HRM remains very much focused on raising awareness of environmental issues, training employees in adopting greener practices, and encouraging them to find and join initiatives linked to sustainability.


One of the interests of getting HRDs to take on a more ambitious role in reducing carbon emissions is to force them out of their comfort zone. If HR Directors want to be (more) influential, they need to do more than just HRM in the strict sense. Their scope of activity could broaden to various fields, including certainly the field of sustainable development.

To do so, they must work to connect these three dimensions under their responsibility :



- everything to do with the organisation of work - particularly the New Ways of Working;
- the questions of mobility from home or other places to the workplace and vice versa – which, traditionally, is more in the
- hands of other actors than HR ; and the use of IT tools – notably in relation to remote work.³

³Focus Group Findings conducted by NWoW4NetZero project in 2022



STUDY

NEW WAYS OF WORKING FOR NET ZERO EMISSION

A new concept has emerged in literature, which is the notion of "Green HRM" (GHRM). GHRM emphasizes individual behaviour within the organization. It aims to influence and improve employees' ecological awareness and behaviour, and ultimately do both reduce an organization's carbon footprint and improve its environmental records. GHRM focuses on "greener human resource activities" and needs to become the transformation herald in our current context.

It is precisely here, that the NWoW4NetZero projects finds its importance. It identifies three key sectors where HR managers can influence their organisations and lead them in a carbon-neutral dynamic organisations. This cover: hybrid working behaviour, green digital behaviour, and sustainable workplace mobility.

This study reviews the academic and professional literature in these three fields.

Professor of Human Management at the Louvain School of Management (UCLouvain) in Belgium, Laurent Taskin, identifies six main issues to be addressed. "First, the identification of the tensions that will emerge when it comes to pursuing both economic performance and social and environmental performance objectives, in both short-term logics - which characterise organisations today - and longer-term logics - in which the notion of sustainability is anchored. Second, the need to consider workers in terms of their capabilities - skills, talents, etc. - with a perspective of long-term performance. Third, the analysis of the positive

and negative impacts of certain HR practices and activities and the identification of how to compensate the latter with the former. Fourth, paying attention to everything related to the development of people, and their well-being and quality of life at work. Fifth, establish and promote a clear line of ethics and values in terms of sustainable HRM: what is the commitment, the direction we are taking? Finally, the development of objectives and indicators to promote real change in society.⁴"

For more reading we invite you to download here [the NWoW4NetZero Study](#).

⁴ibid



2. The Case of NWoW4NetZero Practices in Organizations

The case for the strategic integration of New Ways of Working (NWoW) into the heart of organizational operations builds on the traditional models of the business cases. It is the language organisations understand - building the rationale, understanding the benefits, and creating the necessary groundwork for a shift towards Net Zero emissions. The focus is on understanding the audience, aligning sustainability with business objectives, quantifying benefits, and laying the foundation for effective stakeholder engagement. The goal is to develop knowledge and arguments needed to influence decision-makers and foster a culture where sustainability is ingrained in every business process and policy.



Step 1 : Understand Your Audience/ Identify Objectives

- Detailed Objectives Alignment: Conduct interviews, or surveys within the organisation to map specific business goals with sustainability initiatives. Illustrate how reducing carbon emissions aligns with corporate objectives, potentially reducing costs, complying with regulations, or enhancing brand reputation.
- Stakeholder Analysis : Create personas, or profiles for different stakeholders (HR, IT, department heads) highlighting their interests and concerns. Tailor your proposal to address these individual perspectives, emphasising how each initiative benefits their department, or area of responsibility.



Step 2 : Quantify the Benefits

- In-depth Analysis: Provide detailed breakdowns of cost savings, productivity improvements, and potential environmental impact using real data, or industry benchmarks. Conduct a thorough analysis of potential benefits, considering factors like reduced office space requirements, decreased commuting costs, and improved employee satisfaction leading to higher retention rates. Please see more in the Impact methodology.
- Employee Impact: Develop case studies, or testimonials, that demonstrate the tangible benefits to employees—increased flexibility, reduced stress, and better work-life balance. Use metrics like reduced absenteeism, or increased job satisfaction to highlight the positive impact on the workforce.



Step 3 : Propose a Pilot Program/ Look at Some Case Studies

- Pilot Program Guidelines: Develop a step-by-step guide for planning, executing, and evaluating a pilot program. Include criteria for selecting participants, defining success metrics, and collecting feedback for iterative improvements.
- Case Study Analysis: Analyse case studies in-depth, extracting key success factors, challenges faced, and lessons learned. Provide actionable insights and highlight adaptable strategies that can be applied to your organisation's context.



Step 4 : Highlight the Benefits/ Calculate Your ROI

- Visual Representation: Create visually appealing infographics, or charts illustrating the potential cost savings, increased productivity, and environmental impact. Utilise before-and-after scenarios to demonstrate the ROI of these initiatives.
- Long-term Perspective: Develop a timeline or projection showing the long-term benefits, emphasising the cumulative effects of sustained sustainability practices.



Step 5 : Address Any Concerns/ Highlight the Benefits/Show Environmental Impact

- **Mitigating Concerns:** Devote a section to addressing specific concerns that stakeholders might have regarding these initiatives. Offer detailed strategies or solutions to overcome resistance or potential challenges.
- **Employee-Centric Approach:** Share success stories or testimonials emphasising how these initiatives positively impact employees' lives. Showcase statistics on reduced stress levels, improved health, and increased job satisfaction.
- **Environmental Metrics:** Present detailed metrics showcasing the environmental impact, including reduced carbon footprint, energy savings, and decreased waste generation through responsible IT practices.



Step 6 : Align Sustainability Goals

- **Strategic Alignment:** Create a matrix or visual representation illustrating how each initiative aligns with the organisation's broader sustainability goals. Highlight the interconnectedness of these initiatives and their role in achieving larger sustainability targets.

Developing a case for New Ways of Working (NWoW) practices is a critical step in driving organizational transformation towards Net Zero emissions. The emphasis on creating a business case for NWoW underscores the need for sustainability to be seen not as an additional layer but as an integral part of business planning and decision-making. By aligning NWoW practices with broader business goals and demonstrating their positive impacts, we get engagement and commitment across all levels of the organization.



Step 7: Engage with Stakeholders

- **Tailored Engagement:** Provide tailored communication strategies for engaging different stakeholders. Offer specific talking points or materials that resonate with each group, emphasising how these initiatives benefit their respective departments, or interests.



Step 8: Present Your Case

- **Meeting Preparation:** Offer a comprehensive checklist or guide for preparing the presentation. Include key messages, anticipated questions, and supplementary resources.
- **Long-term Vision:** Reinforce the importance of these initiatives as part of an overarching sustainability strategy, highlighting the continuous benefits and the organisation's commitment to a greener future.



3. Impact Tools for Supporting implementation of NWoW practices

Expected results of the project :

A fundamental first-step towards positive change in the workplace is setting of clear, attainable, and relevant goals. It would be beneficial to work with the [Science Based Targets initiative](#)⁵ (SBTi) when implementing NWoW practices. The SBTi initiative is applicable for any company regardless of its size. The SBTi has over 2000 partner companies, and provides them with clearly-defined and attainable goals for reducing emissions that are aligned with the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement. Moreover, the SBTi provides technical assistance and expertise to help its partners reach their goals.

Commitment

Important element of implementing NWoW practices is communicating company's commitment to reducing emissions. There are a number of tools and initiatives that can be used to accomplish this. A good example is the [B Corp Certification](#), which is awarded to companies that meet high environmental standards, with a score of at least 80 and who make a legal commitment to be transparent to all stakeholders that allows their performance to be measured and be made public. Tests are performed every three years and must be continuously passed in order for the company to maintain its certification. This testing is rigorous and tests many aspects of the business throughout the company. However, by meeting the high standards set, companies awarded the B Corp Certification clearly communicate their commitment to Net-Zero.

Another way for a company to communicate its commitment to emissions reduction is through:

- [The Climate Pledge](#), which sees companies pledge to regularly measure and communicate their emissions, and to introduce emission reduction strategies in line with the Paris Climate Agreement. By signing the Pledge, companies can clearly show their commitment to emissions reduction and Net-Zero objectives.
- The [Climate Neutral Certification](#), which is a rigorous assessment process through which companies certified as 'Climate Neutral,' demonstrate their commitment to sustainability. This certification is a clear signal to customers, investors, and partners about a company's serious engagement in reducing its carbon footprint.
- The [Carbon Disclosure Project](#), which provides a platform for companies to make their carbon emissions data public. Participating in the CDP showcases a company's commitment to transparency in its sustainability journey and marks an important step in the pursuit of emission reduction.
- The [British Standards Institution](#) offers International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) Certifications in various sustainability domains. These ISO certifications are globally recognized and can be accredited to companies that meet stringent sustainability criteria. Achieving these certifications underlines a company's adherence to international standards in sustainable practices.

Policies

An integral aspect of embracing New Ways of Working (NWoW) practices involves the development and implementation of effective policies. Good examples can be found in tools aimed at sustainable mobility, such as [Eco-Union](#). Eco-Union offers a comprehensive framework for establishing sustainable travel policies. It provides extensive guidance and resources, aiding companies in transitioning towards eco-friendly travel options and reducing dependence on high-emission transportation methods. By leveraging Eco-Union's expertise, companies can craft policies that not only minimize their carbon footprint but also promote sustainable commuting practices among employees.

Strategies

A set of impact tools available to help with emissions reduction are services that aim to implement specific strategies that reduce workplace carbon emissions. [Plan A](#) offers a platform for strategic planning in overall sustainability, including setting targets, tracking progress, and identifying key areas for emission reduction. It can be used to shape and align hybrid work, work mobility and responsible use of IT initiatives.

In the context of hybrid work, strategizing for sustainability can significantly impact a company's carbon footprint. A key tool in this domain is [Carbon Analytics](#). While its primary function is measuring emissions, Carbon Analytics extends its utility to strategic planning. It provides crucial data and insights on how different working models, especially remote work, influence a company's environmental impact. This information is important for companies looking to shift towards a more sustainable hybrid work model. By understanding the emissions linked to various work practices, organizations can develop targeted strategies to minimize their carbon footprint while maintaining productivity and efficiency in a hybrid working environment.

In the area of the work mobility [Bike to Work](#) is another such service, as it offers tools and expertise that allows companies to monitor and implement cycling initiatives that encourage and reward employees that start cycling to work, rather than driving, reducing the emissions relating to work commutes. A similar service is provided by the [Travel Smart Campaign](#), which aims to help companies reduce the use of air travel, the most emissions-intensive form of transport. Travel Smart helps its 322 global partners by providing them with toolkits, expertise, and guides on sustainable travel that allows them to reduce their need for air travel, by reducing the overall need to travel, and by encouraging use of more eco-friendly forms of transport like trains.

When developing strategies for introducing responsible behaviour in the use of IT at the workplace, tools like [ATOS](#) and [Digital Beacon](#) play a pivotal role. ATOS, with its ability to calculate a company's digital carbon footprint, offers invaluable insights for companies aiming to enhance their IT sustainability. It guides strategies that target energy efficiency, data management optimization, and the overall reduction of digital emissions. On the other hand, Digital Beacon focuses on the environmental impact of web pages, providing critical data to inform strategies for more sustainable content management. By optimizing digital platforms for energy efficiency, companies can significantly reduce their digital carbon footprint.

Measurement

In order to effectively implement emission reduction practices, accurate measurements of a company's carbon footprint need to be conducted, and there are several impact tools which that can be used in this regard.

In the realm of hybrid work, accurately measuring a company's carbon footprint is crucial for implementing effective sustainability strategies, and tools like [Carbon Analytics](#) and [Watershed](#) are pivotal in this regard. Carbon Analytics automatically tracks and measures a company's carbon footprint and is particularly favourable for SMEs, specializes in providing SMEs with an automated and straightforward approach to track their carbon emissions, covering various operational activities including energy use and business travel, which are essential elements in hybrid work settings. On the other hand, [Watershed](#) offers a comprehensive solution for larger enterprises, focusing on detailed analytics and reporting of emissions across different business operations, including the nuanced environmental impacts of various working models, such as in-office and remote work, both crucial aspects of hybrid work environments. Its capabilities are especially relevant for companies are looking to balance productivity with sustainability goals.

	NWOW (Hybrid Work)	Work Mobility	Responsible use of IT
Setting Objectives	Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi)		
Communicating Commitment	Sustainability Certifications: Climate Neutral Certification, British Standards Institution (ISO Certifications) Transparency and Disclosure: Carbon Disclosure Project		
Policies	Eco Union	Eco Union	
Strategies	Plan A		
	Carbon Analytics	Bike to Work Travel Smart	ATOS Digital Beacon
Measurement	Plan A Carbon Analytics Watershed	Plan A Carbon Analytics Bike to Work Travel Smart	Plan A ATOS Digital Beacon

A significant set of impact online tools have been identified by the project team and placed at the NWoW34NetZero platform categorised by the area of interest.



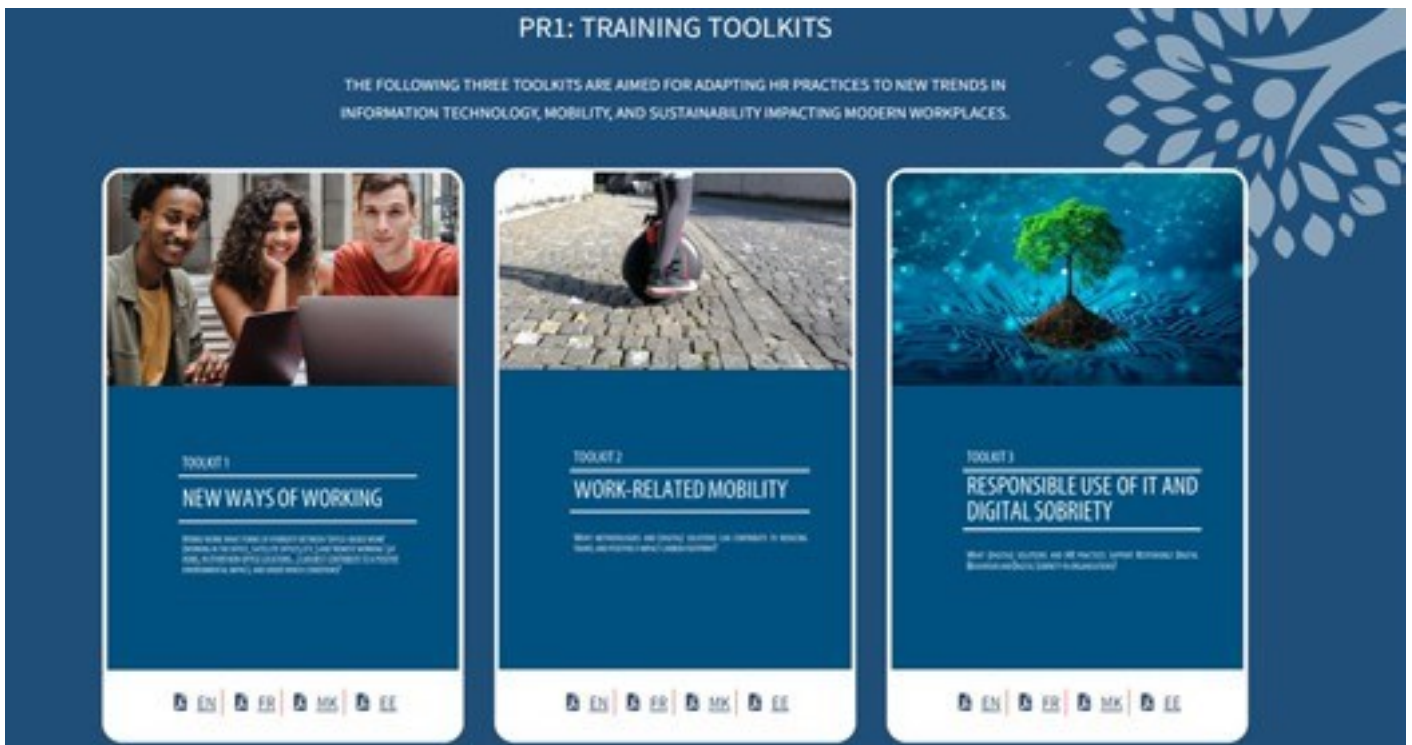
4. Implementation of NWoW Practices – “The How”

The How is focused on the NWoW4NetZero Toolkits and Platform, which provide a transition from the impact tools discussed in Section 3 and the business case discussed in Section 2 towards the implementation of broader change within organizations. “The How” is comprehensive change management plan, facilitating the transition towards sustainable New Ways of Working (NWoW) practices.

In contemporary world, change is the new status quo. It is no longer the periodic disturbance of organisations, or their environment. It is here to stay. Unfortunately, there is no widely agreed alternative tool provided to managers to deal with these constant changes, other than the rational models of change management, where the focus is placed on returning

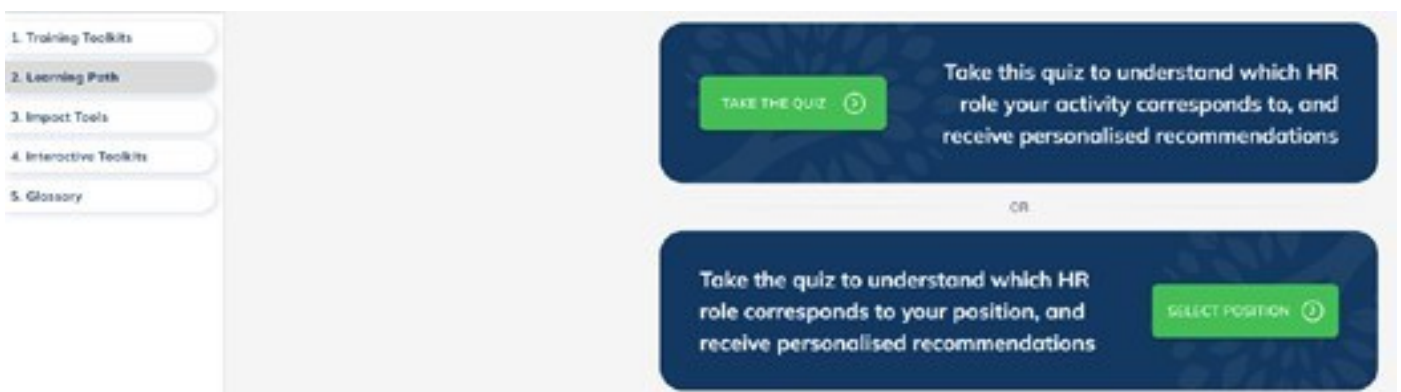
the organization in the state of balance. In the past decades and given the changes in the paradigm surrounding the change itself, there was some adaptation of these rational models (Lewin’s model, Kotter’s model and etc) to accommodate the frequent changes, but their essence has not changed – the focus is placed on planning the change and change responses.

The guide provides a step by step change management plan (implementation) based on the rational models and build on the resources given in the NWoW4NetZero Toolkits and Platform. Each [toolkit can be approached independently](#) and used in their entirety for all three dimensions: Hybrid Work, Work Mobility, or Responsible Use of IT.



Therefore, before the HR Director, Manager, and/or Professional begin this journey, they need to be equipped with knowledge on the essential NWoW trends, strategies and initiatives for their area of interest through the [NWoW](#)

[learning platform](#), where a flexible framework enables the creation of a learning journey tailored to the HR specific role and organisational scenario of the user.



Now, let's proceed to the structured steps of the implementation process, built upon rational models of change management and the resources provided in the NWoW4NetZero Toolkits and Platform. These steps are designed to

guide HR Managers through the assessment, planning, execution, and evaluation phases of incorporating NWoW practices, ensuring a smooth transition towards more sustainable, efficient, and adaptable working models.



1. Assessment and Planning

- **Identify the Need for Change** : Evaluate current processes, performance, market trends, and organisational goals to pinpoint areas requiring improvement or transformation.
- **Set Clear Objectives** : Define the vision for change, outlining specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals.
- **Stakeholder Analysis** : Understand and engage with key stakeholders to gather perspectives, address concerns, and build support for the change initiative.



2. Create a Sense of Urgency

- **Communicate the Need for Change** : Explain the rationale behind the change. Highlight challenges, risks, and opportunities that necessitate immediate action.
- **Leadership Involvement** : Secure visible support from leadership to demonstrate the seriousness and commitment to change.
- **Highlight Consequences of Inaction** : Illustrate the potential repercussions of maintaining the status quo, emphasising the benefits of change.



3. Develop a Strategy

- **Change Plan Creation** : Develop a comprehensive plan outlining the steps, timeline, resources, and responsibilities needed for successful implementation.
- **Risk Assessment and Mitigation** : Anticipate potential obstacles and devise strategies to manage and mitigate risks during the change process.
- **Training and Support** : Provide necessary training and support to equip individuals with the skills required to adapt to the change.



4. Implementation and Communication

- **Continuous Communication** : Maintain open and transparent communication channels throughout the change journey, addressing concerns and updating stakeholders on progress.
- **Empowerment and Involvement** : Encourage employee involvement, fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment in the change process.
- **Celebrate Milestones** : Acknowledge and celebrate achievements and milestones reached during the change process to reinforce progress and motivation.



5. Evaluation and Adaptation

- **Assess Progress** : Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the change initiative against established goals and metrics.
- **Adaptation and Flexibility** : Be willing to adapt the strategy based on feedback and changing circumstances, ensuring continual improvement.

Importance of Creating a Sense of Urgency

- **Motivates Action** : Urgency compels individuals and teams to act promptly and decisively, avoiding complacency and resistance to change.
- **Catalyze Commitment** : It fosters a shared understanding that the change is imperative, garnering commitment and alignment toward the common goal.
- **Prevents Procrastination** : Urgency minimises delays and indecision, promoting a proactive approach to change implementation.
- **Increases Agility** : A sense of urgency enables organisations to respond swiftly to market dynamics, staying competitive and adaptive.

By implementing NWoW practices, organizations are not only contributing to their growth and resilience, but are playing a pivotal role in the global movement towards climate neutrality.



Conclusion

The NWoW4NetZero project is not just a set of tools and strategies, but a transformative movement toward a sustainable future. Throughout this guide, we've navigated the intricacies of implementing New Ways of Working (NWoW) in the pursuit of the EU's ambitious goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2050. From the initial understanding of the urgency underpinning this initiative to the detailed methodologies for embedding sustainability into organizational practices, this journey has been about more than just compliance; it's been about change.

This guide emphasizes the critical role of HR in steering both strategic and everyday operational shifts towards more sustainable practices. By engaging with the NWoW learning platform, learning about the NWoW toolkits and applying

the identified impact tools, these professionals can initiate, develop, and execute sustainable practices, thus contributing significantly to the global challenge of climate change.

The steps outlined in this guide — from understanding diverse stakeholders to aligning sustainability goals — are a blueprint for integrating environmental consciousness into every aspect of organizational operations. Through this process, HR professionals are not just implementing policies; they are fostering a culture that prioritizes sustainability, shaping the behaviours and mindsets of their workforce.

In essence, this guide is a call to action. It challenges organizations to rethink and remodel their operations, not just for efficiency and profitability but for the well-being of the planet.