

CARBON FOOTPRINT AS A COMPETITIVENESS FACTOR IN SMES

Posted on 03/04/2025 by Naider

Measuring an organisation's carbon footprint can be an activity that in itself can **increase a company's competitiveness**. It is not a matter of calculating for the sake of calculating, but rather a preliminary step to establishing a plan to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in order to reduce the climate impact generated by the company's production activities. However, for SMEs, simply knowing the equivalent CO₂ emissions generated can be a **differentiating factor**, for example in **accessing new customers or responding to new market trends and requirements**.

Although it may be difficult for an SME to devote resources to this activity, the carbon footprint has **different scopes with varying degrees of complexity** when it comes to calculating each of them.

For example, it is relatively easy to know the greenhouse gas emissions generated by the company's fuel consumption in its facilities (Scope 1) or by its electricity consumption (Scope 2), for which there are tools approved by public administrations such as the Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge.

Another issue is so-called **Scope 3 emissions**, which can be quite complicated to calculate, although here too **it is the company itself that determines the depth of the calculation**. Scope 3 includes, among other things, the GHG emissions generated by the commuting of the company's employees, the GHG emissions generated by the entire logistics of the services provided by suppliers and deliveries to customers, the GHG emissions generated by the consumption of raw materials, the use and end-of-life of the products marketed by the company, etc. As it is difficult to obtain information on some of these aspects, it is important to accurately **select** the categories to be included in the Scope 3 calculation, **based on access to verifiable data, and to maintain them over time** in order to perform the calculation each year, make comparisons and establish an emissions reduction plan in consultation with suppliers and customers.

In this context, and in line with the **Clean Industrial Pact**, which aims **to increase the competitiveness of manufacturing industry** through decarbonisation, large companies are increasingly pushing their suppliers, themselves industrial SMEs, to know the climate impact of their activities. These SMEs are increasingly being asked to provide information on their corporate carbon footprint or even the carbon footprint of a specific product.

The calculation of the carbon footprint is here to stay, and although in principle, and more so due to a lack of knowledge, it may be a complex internal process to implement in an SME, if the scope is properly assessed and follows the main international standards such as ISO 14064-1 or the GHG Protocol, it will be a **differentiating competitive factor** that will improve **the image of the company and its internal management systems**, and above all allow the design of an emissions reduction plan that will contribute both to the decarbonisation of the industry and to the increase of its competitiveness.

