

Is a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction Plan in your organization's future?

By Deeta Bernstein, LEED AP BD+C



Whether your intent is driven by philosophical goals or the bottom line - remember these 5 things as you undertake the GHG reduction planning process.

1 Building energy efficiency is a clear path to GHG reduction

(although not the only path!). Building operations account for as much as **40% of all energy use**, with HVAC and lighting accounting for 60-70% of this. Higher efficiency HVAC and lighting systems **reduce GHG emissions while lowering bills** by reducing overall energy use. Look at building energy efficiency work, undertaken to reduce overall energy use, through the lens GHG emissions as well.

2 Refrigerants can have widely varying GHG impact

and global warming potential depending on the refrigerant and leakage. Consider air conditioning systems or refrigerant replacement or upgrades. While you are thinking about the energy you will save, consider how **cooling systems can be designed to lower GHG impact** from refrigerants - lower-impact refrigerants and reduced leakage can be as much a part of your GHG reduction plan as using less energy.

3 Think across silos, and be bold!

Behavior can have a meaningful impact on your GHG management efforts. **Stakeholder buy-in and engagement** will be important to success, and great ideas can come from many places. **Engage stakeholders at all levels to set goals** and build and manage a result that all can be proud of. This can smooth the way to **bold and integrated** efforts, whether overhauling MEP systems, upgrading fleet vehicles, pushing the envelope in kitchen and lab venting, reducing potable water use and sewer loads, or rolling out alternative commuting programs.

4 Metrics matter.

You can't manage what you don't measure. Starting with a **GHG emissions baseline is critical**. This is the context for setting goals and measuring progress. Consider that there is more than one way to approach measuring GHG performance, including selecting what to track and where to set goals for reduction. **Develop a strategy that is meaningful to your organization** in context of your reasons for undertaking a GHG reduction plan, and based on how you plan to use the information.

5 You are not alone!

GHG emissions management has gained momentum in the corporate world as well as in institutional and municipal arenas, with a variety of drivers, and there is precedent. While some organizations are driven by **meeting regulatory requirements**, most take on GHG management for a combination of reasons - **demonstrating leadership, responding to clients, reducing cost and risk, and as a tool for self-knowledge and continuous improvement**.

Whatever the reason, whatever the scope of your GHG emissions management effort, the results can include **innovation, continuous improvement, and demonstrated industry leadership**, in addition to **energy cost savings, and lightening your organization's load** on the environment.



ABOUT DEETA

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