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PLAN ZERO

The Carbon Reporting Compass

Best-practice advice for navigating the complexities of carbon reporting.



It's time to move the needle on carbon reporting

“Accurate energy and carbon reporting is an essential part of being compliant – but it can also be incredibly helpful from a strategic perspective. By gaining a clear picture of where you are and where you want to be, you create a framework from which you can apply all your carbon reduction strategies.”

Alex Avila, Director of Decarbonisation Consulting, Mitie



When it comes to carbon reporting, are your teams stuck in catch-up mode, struggling to keep pace with constantly evolving regulations and lacking the data they need to work effectively?

Don't worry. You're not alone. [Our research](#) shows that 40% of organisations have quality and accuracy issues with their reporting. And that's exactly why we put together this guide.

Based on input from Mitie's decarbonisation experts, it addresses the most pressing challenges organisations face in this area – and provides best-practice advice to take your reporting and reduction strategies to the next level.



Setting (and re-setting) your reduction targets

“The first step in any carbon reduction strategy is to set targets that are both realistic and ambitious. It's important to carefully consider all key areas and involve a wide range of stakeholders in the process. Getting these targets right is crucial for driving real change.”

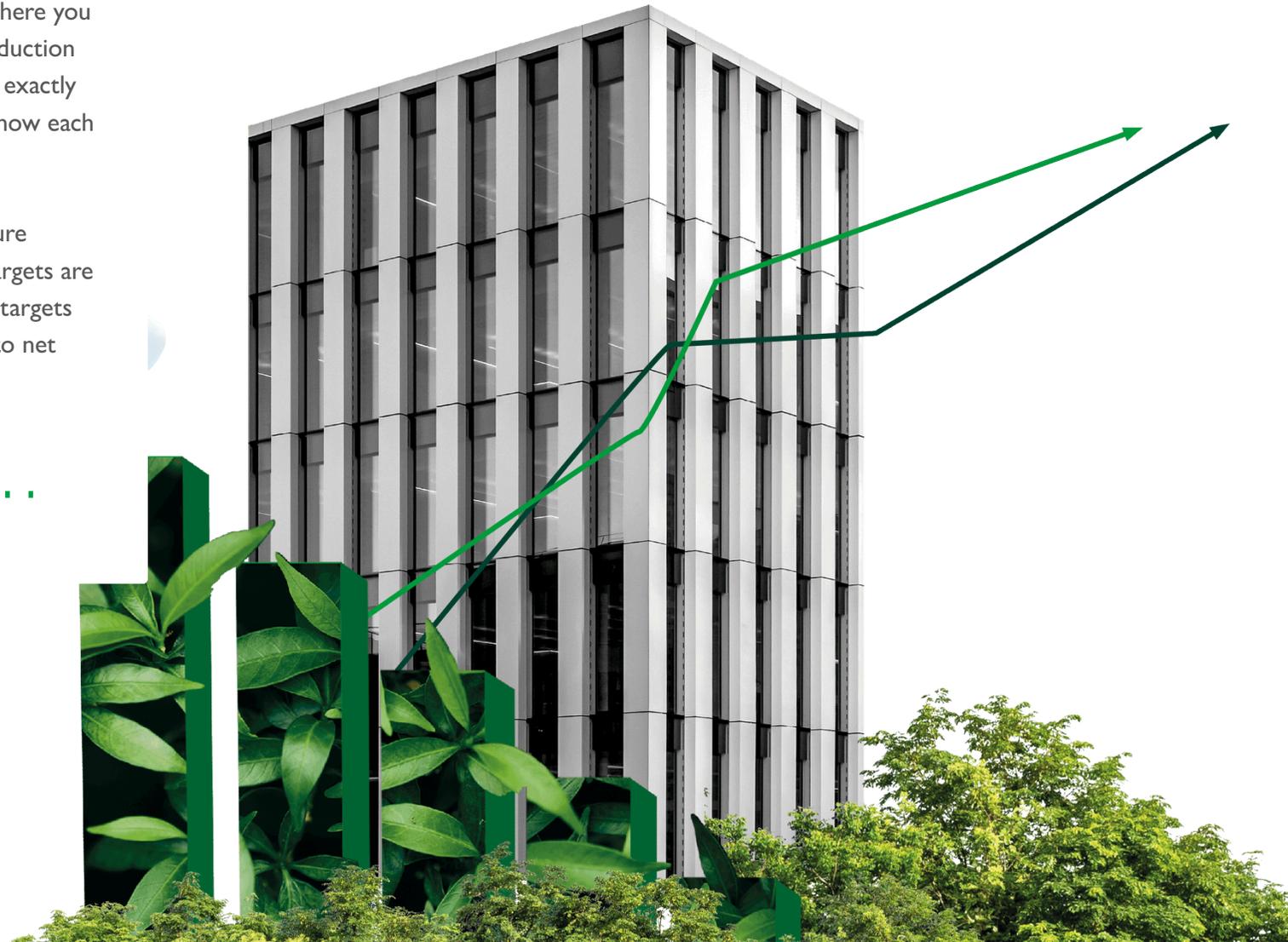
Parth Mehta, Director of Consulting, Mitie



To know where you're going, you must first know where you are – that's the first rule of any successful carbon reduction strategy. Which means your first step is to establish exactly what your emissions footprint looks like today, and how each part of your estate contributes to it.

This baseline will act as a foundation for all your future activities. It will allow you to make sure reduction targets are ambitious while remaining realistic. And once those targets are set, you can start to identify the best pathways to net zero.

But there is a catch...

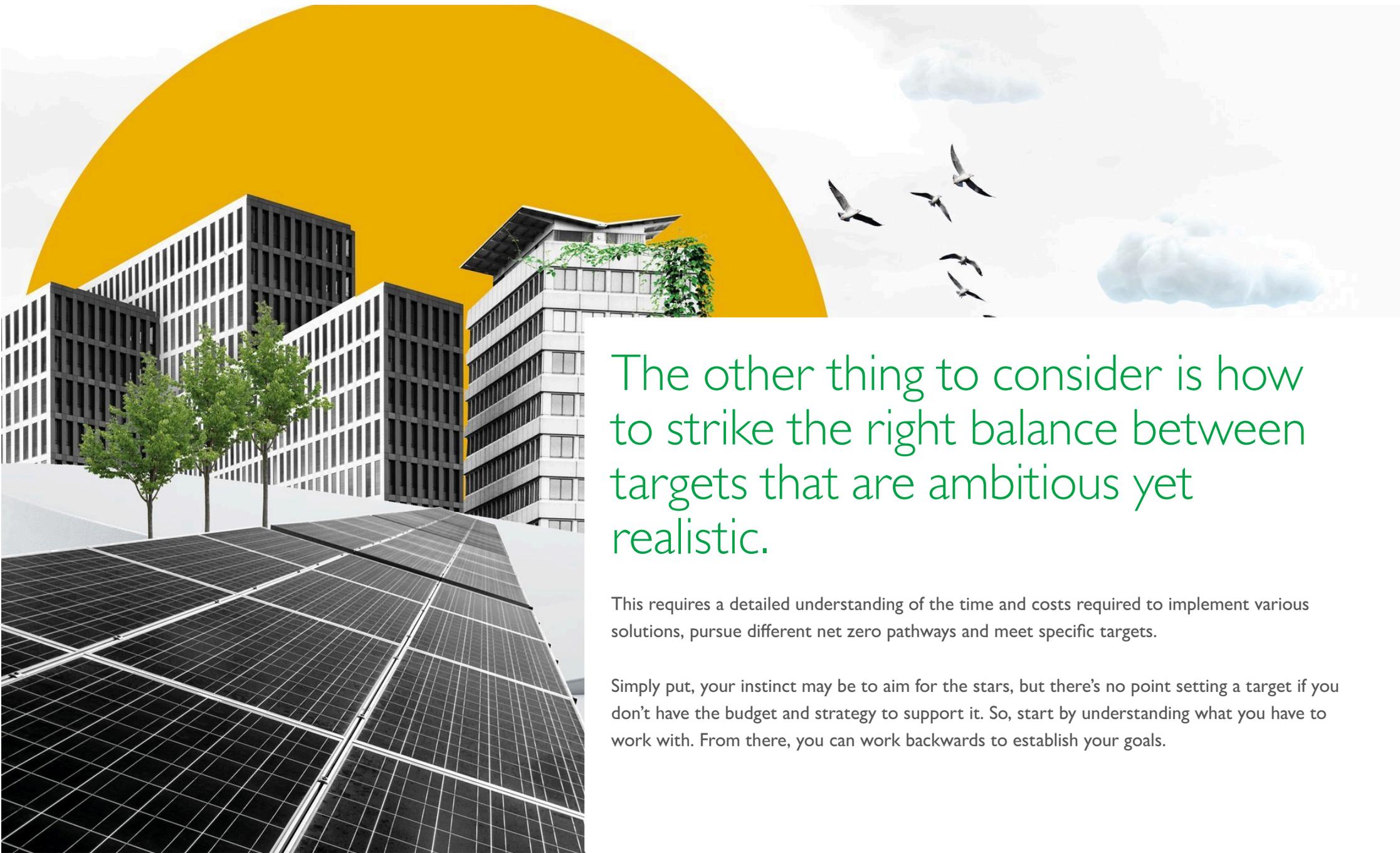


...Your targets must be flexible to remain relevant.

Carbon reduction initiatives take time, and there are lots of things that can change along the way. For instance, your property portfolio might grow or shrink, your operations may change or new legislation could be introduced.

For this reason, it's important to keep recalculating your targets to make sure they're still valid, achievable and ambitious. Our advice would be to reassess them annually to check they remain in line with your wider strategic goals.





The other thing to consider is how to strike the right balance between targets that are ambitious yet realistic.

This requires a detailed understanding of the time and costs required to implement various solutions, pursue different net zero pathways and meet specific targets.

Simply put, your instinct may be to aim for the stars, but there's no point setting a target if you don't have the budget and strategy to support it. So, start by understanding what you have to work with. From there, you can work backwards to establish your goals.

Target-setting checklist

1

Establish a baseline of your current emissions to understand which buildings and processes contribute to your carbon footprint – and how

2

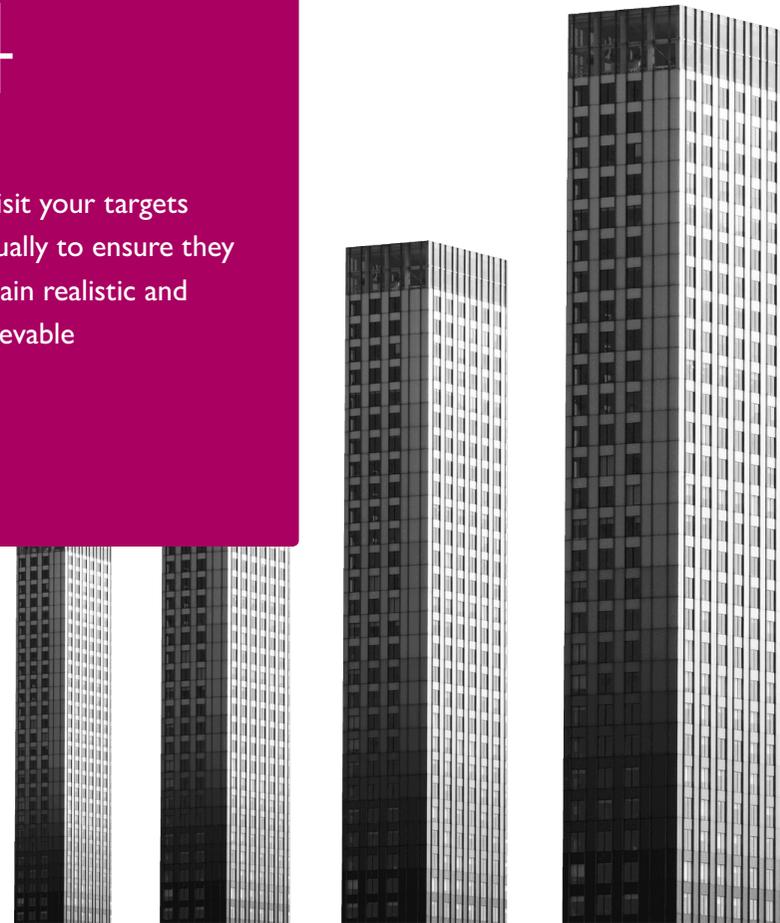
Understand your legislative requirements and deadlines

3

Set reduction targets accordingly, considering the resources realistically required to meet them

4

Revisit your targets annually to ensure they remain realistic and achievable



Calculating Scope 3 emissions

“Hitting your Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions targets is the first step. But reporting on Scope 3 emissions is just as important, and often twice as hard. In many cases, it requires specialist tools and expertise.”

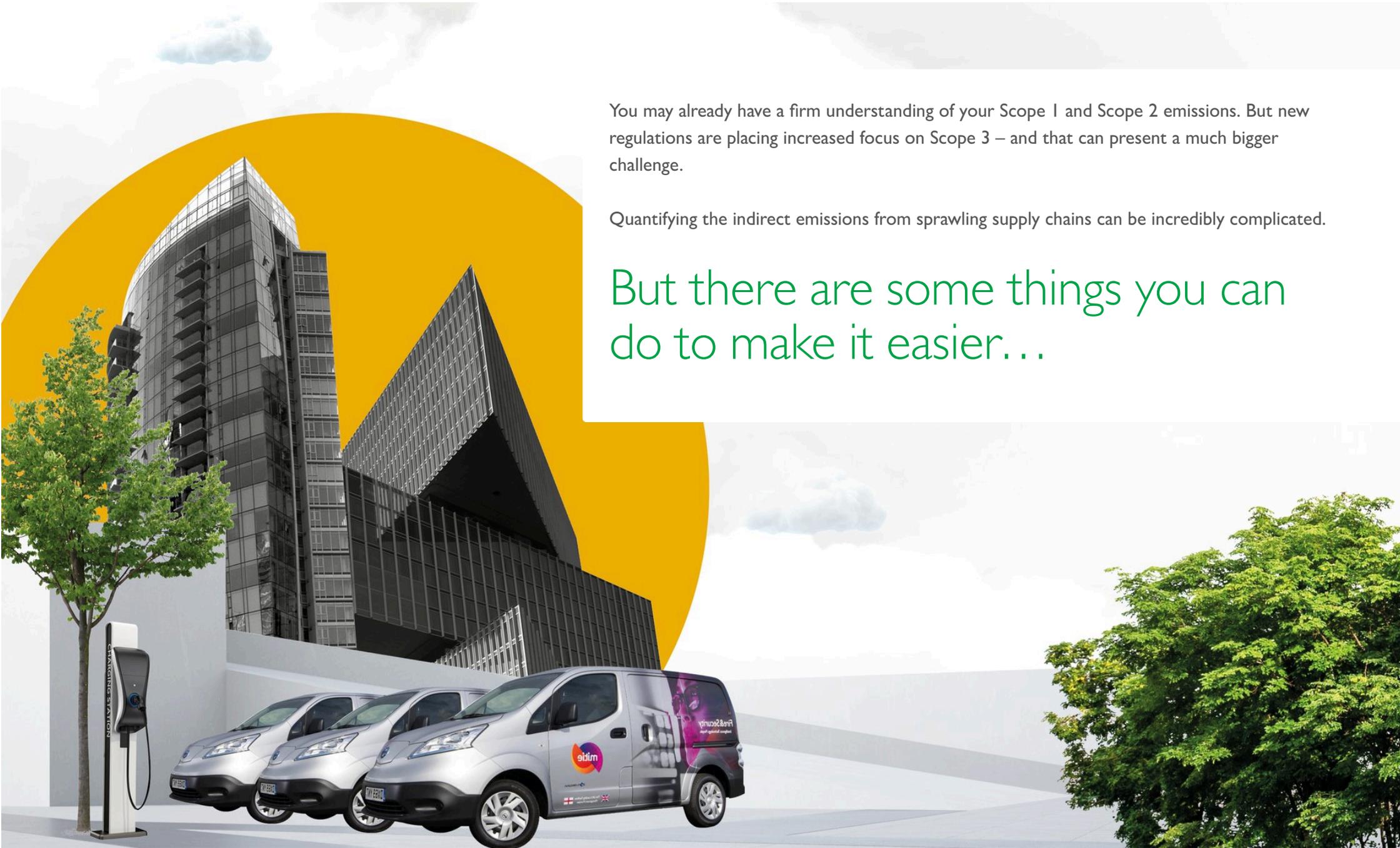
*Catherine Wheatley, Head of Data,
Technology and Analytics, Mitie*



You may already have a firm understanding of your Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions. But new regulations are placing increased focus on Scope 3 – and that can present a much bigger challenge.

Quantifying the indirect emissions from sprawling supply chains can be incredibly complicated.

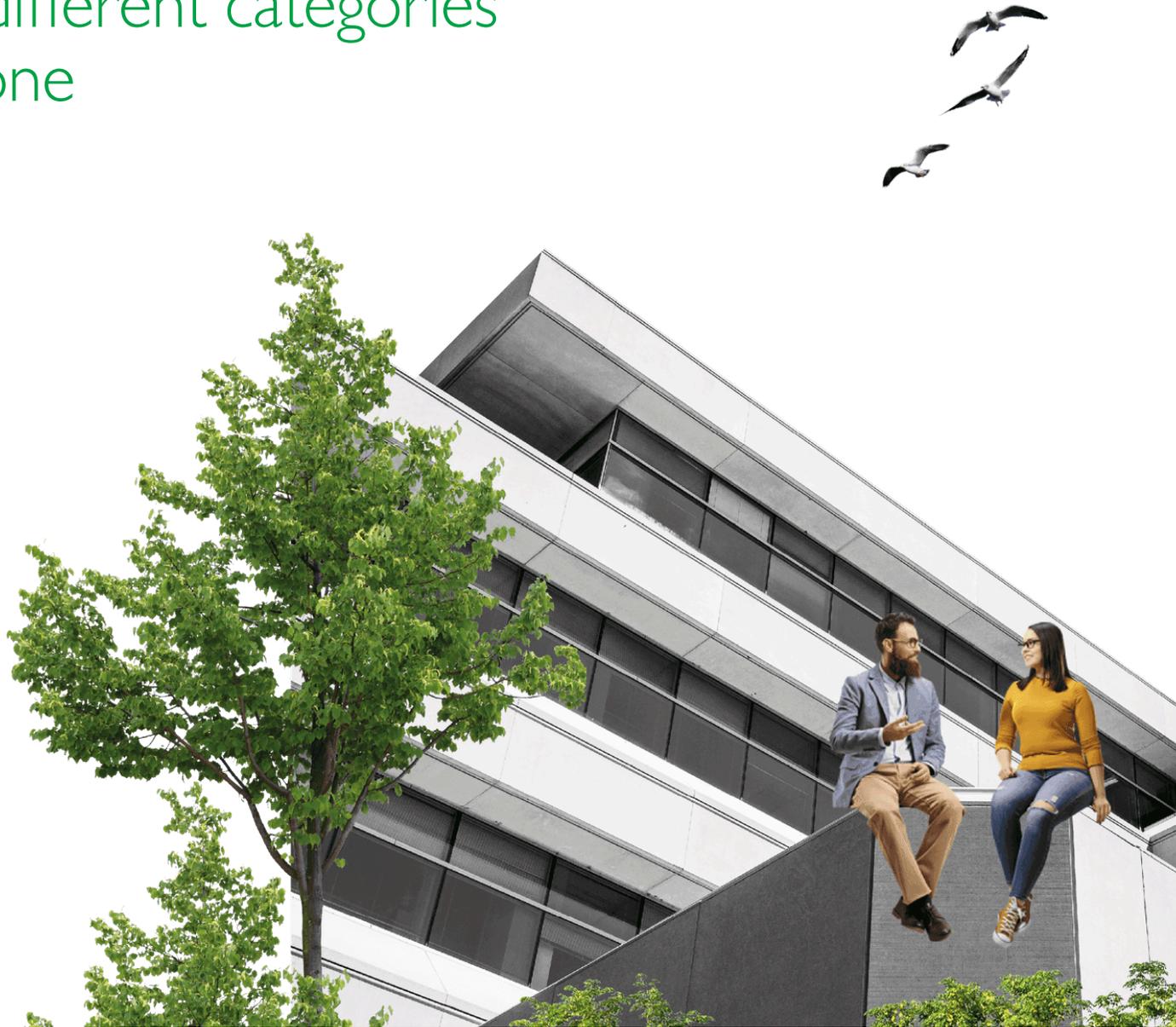
But there are some things you can do to make it easier...



There are currently 15 different categories of Scope 3 emissions alone

... so the first step is to assess how well you understand the criteria. Ask yourself if you have the internal resources to manage these requirements.

If the answer is no, you may want to find a specialist partner, so your own people can focus on the tasks that add value to your carbon reduction strategies.



Once you've made this decision, you need to engage with your supply chain partners, so you can measure and report on how their emissions contribute to your carbon footprint.

It's important to note that you can't make your suppliers change their habits, or even be transparent with their data. However, you can make choices about which suppliers you use based on their behaviours.

Choosing partners who also prioritise decarbonisation, and who are willing to work with you to achieve a common goal, will make a huge difference to your carbon reporting and reduction journey.



There are several tools and solutions designed specifically to help you calculate and report on Scope 3 emissions. Our very own **Emissions Intelligence** service can help you do all of this – and more.

[Read more](#)

Scope 3 checklist

1

Establish your level of understanding and in-house capabilities

2

Decide whether to outsource or tackle Scope 3 in-house

3

Engage and review your supply chain partners with Scope 3 reporting in mind

4

If relevant, reassess your supply chain partners and find those better aligned with your own beliefs and goals

5

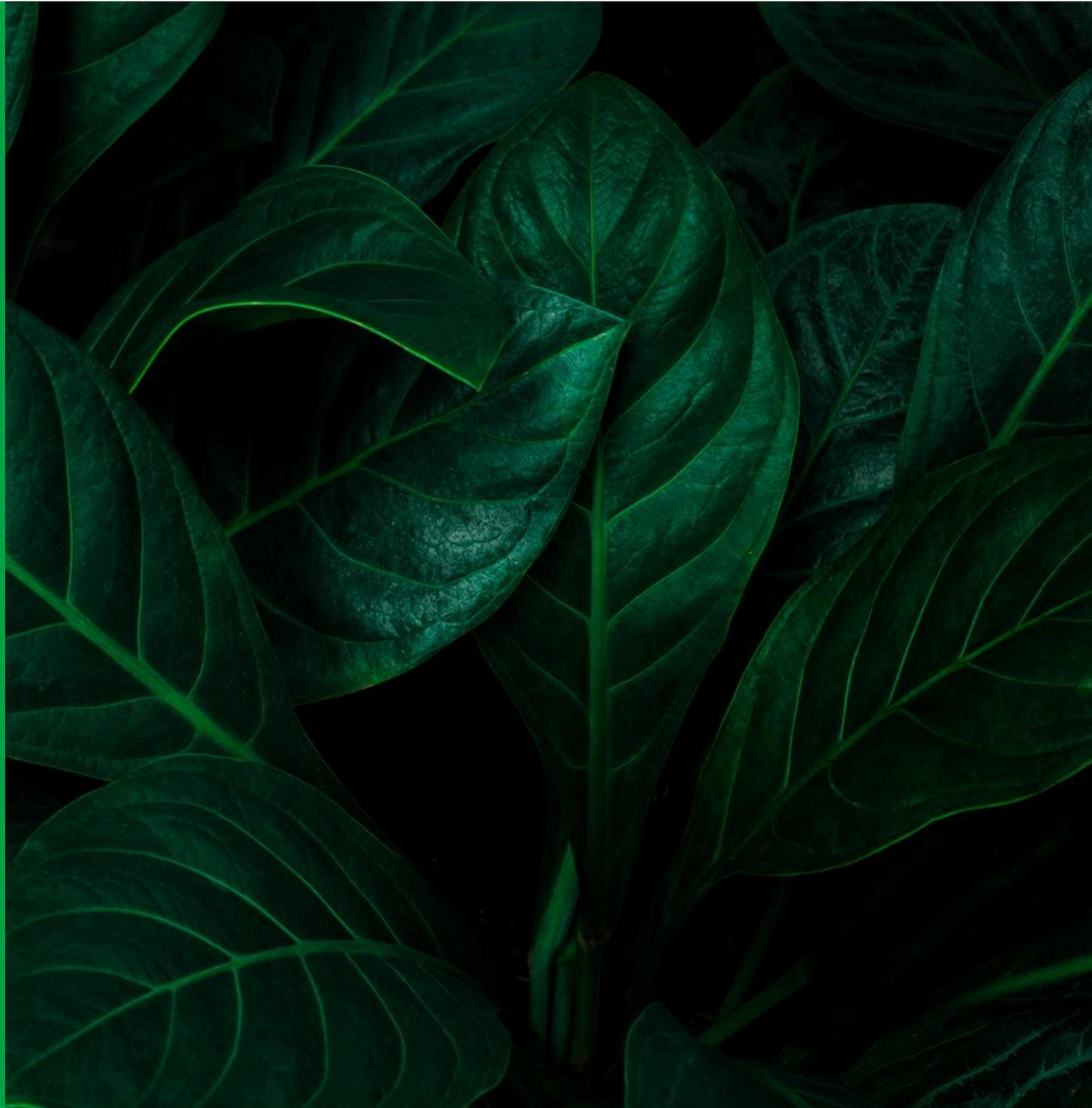
Explore the tools available to help you accurately measure and effectively report on Scope 3 emissions



Overcoming a lack of resources

“One of the biggest challenges with carbon reporting is the time and resource it takes to do it well. Organisations need to spend less time on admin activities such as data collection and validation. This means they can free up time for analysing the data, generating insight and taking important actions to accelerate their path to net zero.”

Alex Avila, Director of Decarbonisation Consulting, Mitie

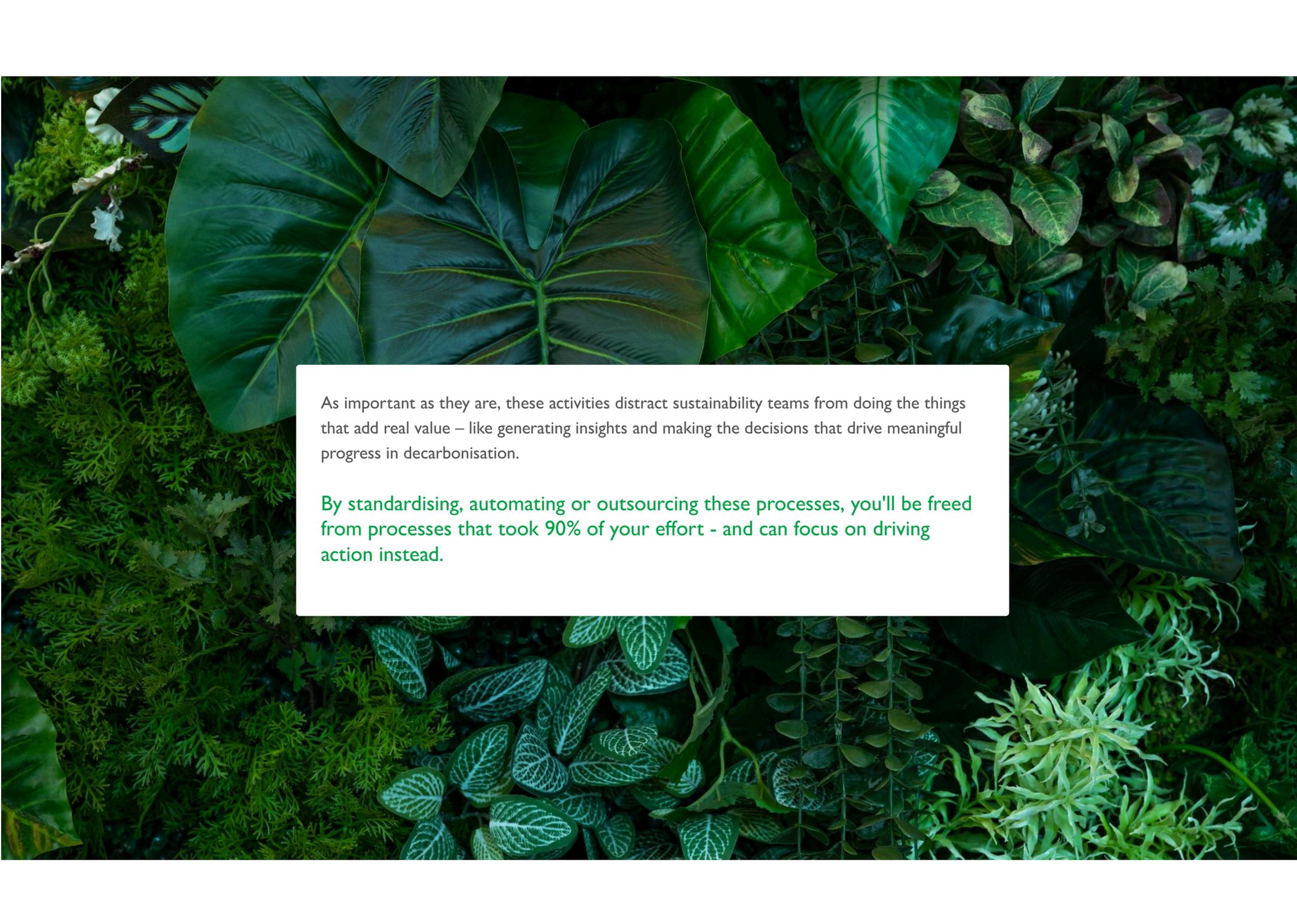


There's no other way of saying it...

... the time spent gathering data and carrying out the work associated with carbon reporting can be immense. Talking to suppliers and data holders to collect data, consolidating that data, making sense of it and submitting reports can be about 90% of the effort. And that's before you even start to think about carbon reduction.

This is especially true when you're going beyond the bare minimum and looking to gain voluntary certifications from different bodies – which usually requires resubmitting the same data in several different ways.





As important as they are, these activities distract sustainability teams from doing the things that add real value – like generating insights and making the decisions that drive meaningful progress in decarbonisation.

By standardising, automating or outsourcing these processes, you'll be freed from processes that took 90% of your effort - and can focus on driving action instead.

Automating data collection is one great way to free up your team's resources. This means they can focus less on crunching numbers and more on driving the initiatives and improvements that have a meaningful impact on reducing emissions.

There are plenty of tools and support services available to help you win your time back. Things to look out for when choosing a solution include:

1

Automated data collection across your entire estate

2

Automated report generation for every different disclosure

3

Data analysis and interpretation to help drive decision-making and add value

4

Solutions that combine consultancy and technologies in an end-to-end service



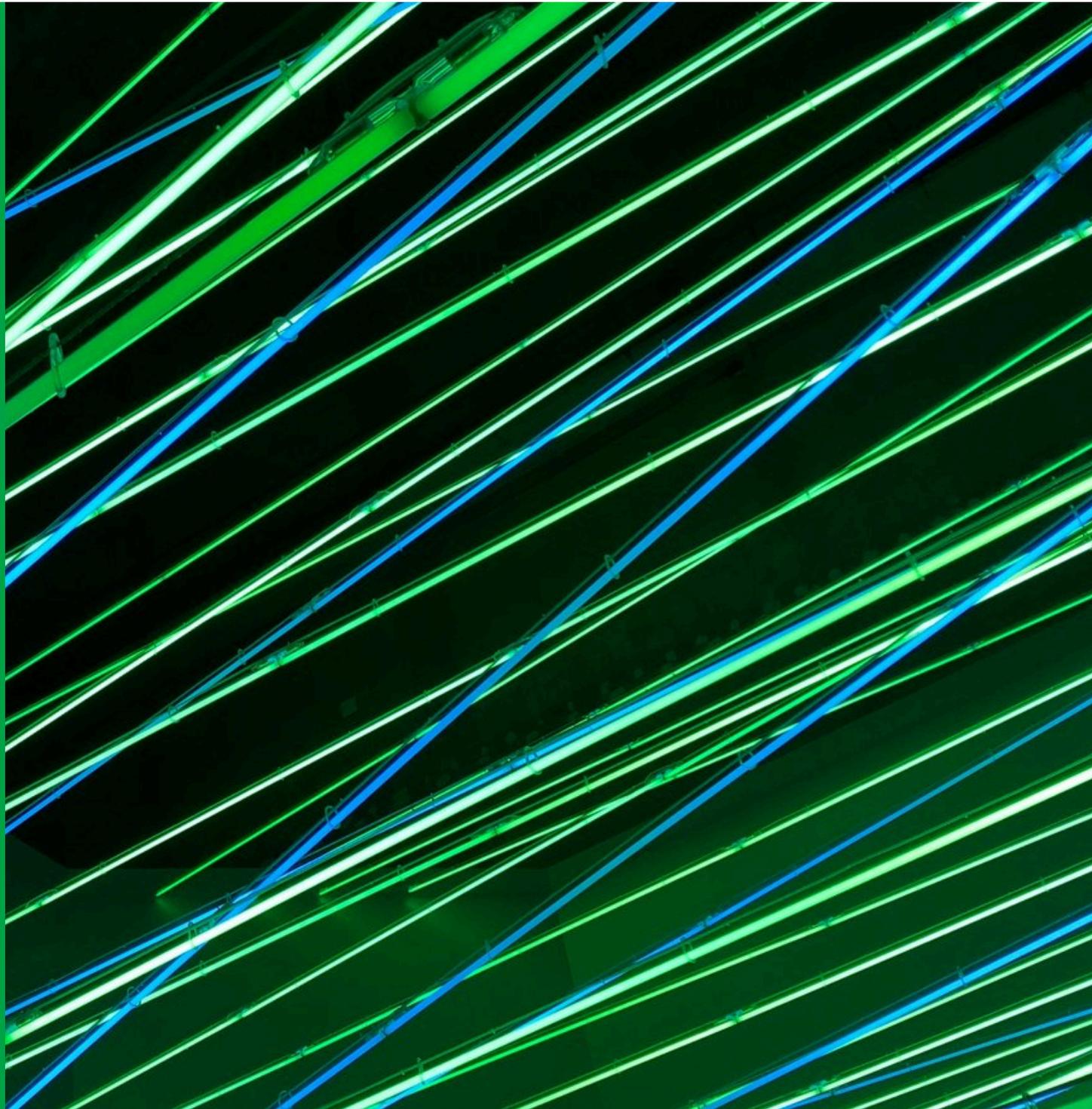
Our **Emissions Intelligence** service is fully managed. Our consultants can help you develop strategies to reduce carbon and optimise performance. You can easily visualise net zero transition plans from baseline to current year and target date.

[Discover more](#)

Getting data right first time

“As auditing becomes more stringent, the pressure to make sure data and disclosures are right-first-time increases. In this climate, accuracy and transparency must be prioritised.”

*Catherine Wheatley, Head of Data,
Technology and Analytics, Mitie*



The reporting landscape for decarbonisation is always changing, with new disclosures requiring greater transparency by the day. And transparency requires accuracy.

So how do you make sure your data is as accurate as possible?



The first step is to have a clear understanding of where all your data comes from. This might be a detailed list of all buildings and supply chain partners, with information about how data from each one is collected. And you also need a standardised and logical way of approaching estimations when data is missing.

Establishing these things will give you a full view of your data landscape and a clear hierarchy of sources. There'll be things like automated meter readings and invoices at the top and estimates per square metre as a last resort when data is lacking. With this information, you can see the areas where data practices need to be improved.

The other vital consideration is ensuring the data you collect remains accurate. Or at least knowing how to identify inaccuracies when they occur, and how to react to them.

For instance, how will you respond to unusual spikes or dips in your figures? What is the best way to resolve them? And how will you incorporate those anomalies into your reporting until they are resolved?

Having robust and repeatable processes in place for all of these things will help you to produce the most accurate results from your data – and keep pace with the uptick in auditing that we can all expect in the next few years.



Building a modern data infrastructure

“Data is at the heart of carbon reporting. You need to be able to access it quickly and trust it completely to unlock strategic decisions.”

Parth Mehta, Director of Consulting, Mitie



In a recent survey, 52% of our respondents* said they expect legislation to become stricter in the next three years.

This trend, alongside increasingly stringent auditing requirements, means there's a greater need for data that is both granular and timely, revealing which buildings or processes contribute to your emissions. And that data must be consistent, reliable and readily available to everyone who needs it. This is key to improving reporting accuracy and accelerating decision-making.

But the reality is often a little different. For many, working with data means juggling mountains of spreadsheets, trying to avoid, identify or resolve manual errors and, ultimately, having no single version of the truth.



*Source: Mitie-commissioned survey of 500 senior managers in large UK organisations who are involved in decision making or knowledgeable of ESG reporting.

If this sounds familiar, it's time to modernise your data processes. But first, you must understand what “great” looks like.

The *ideal* here is to have a centralised repository of data that feeds all reporting and decarbonisation activities.

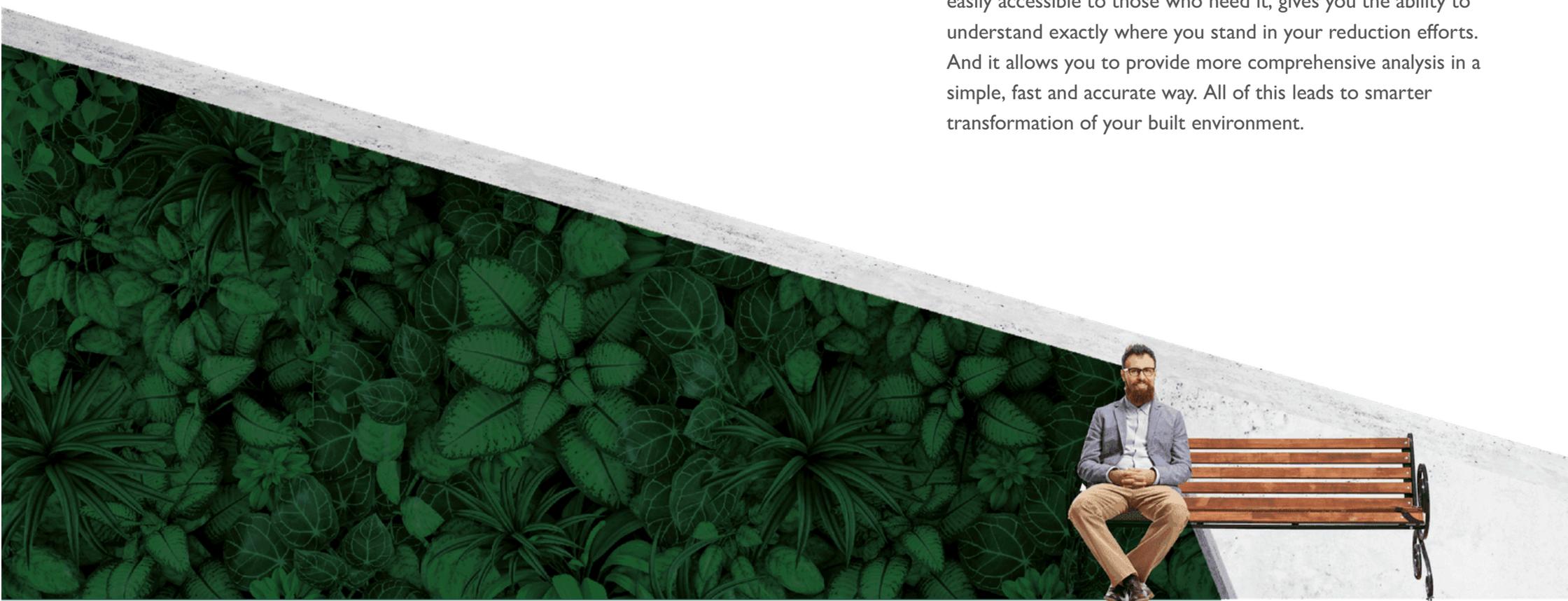
This will drive efficiency and trust throughout your reporting and remove the errors caused by data siloes and multi-spreadsheet management.

But these aren't the only benefits of modernising your data infrastructure...



By centralising your data, you will enable the automated processes that accelerate reporting and decision-making. And, in the same breath, future-proof your organisation with a foundation that enables you to adapt quickly and easily to any upcoming requirements.

Ultimately, having data that is cleansed, stored in one place and easily accessible to those who need it, gives you the ability to understand exactly where you stand in your reduction efforts. And it allows you to provide more comprehensive analysis in a simple, fast and accurate way. All of this leads to smarter transformation of your built environment.



Data management checklist

1

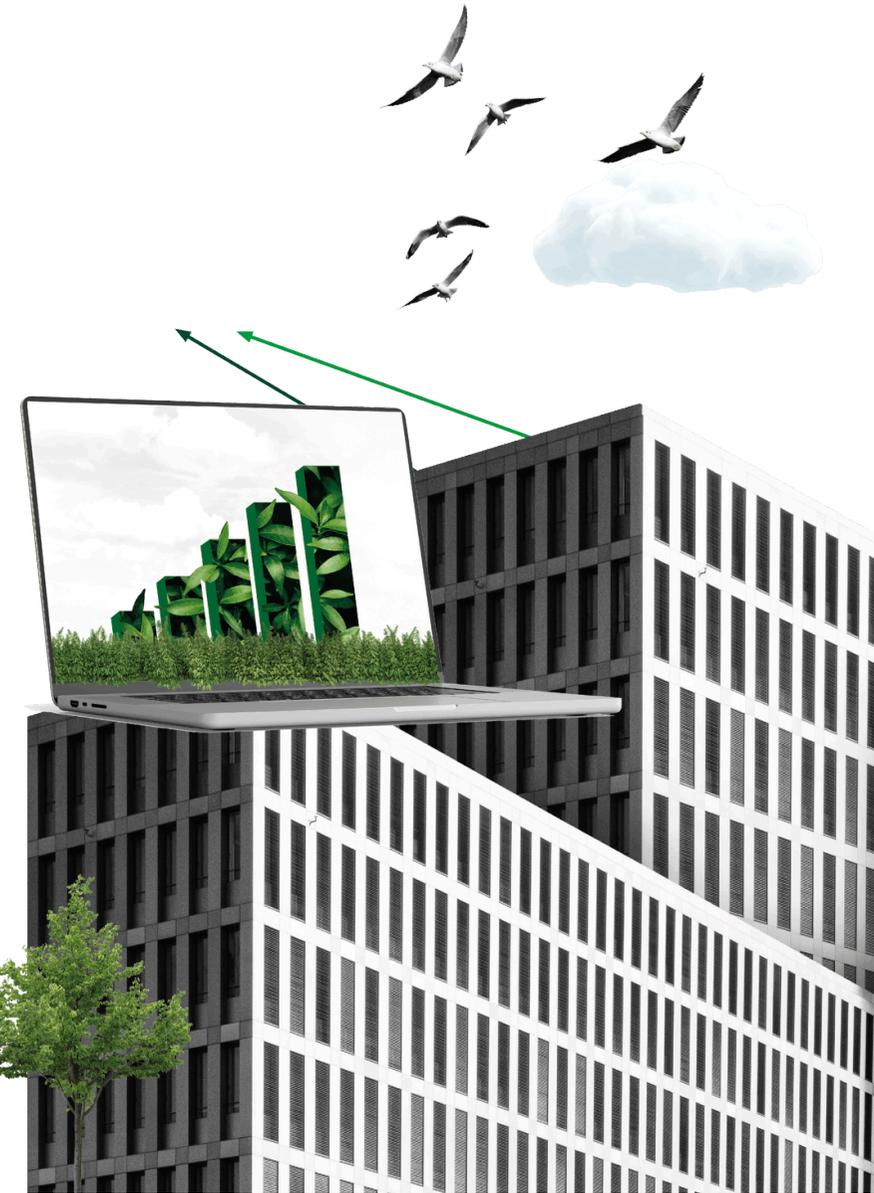
Conduct a health check of your current data activities and look for opportunities to unite data and modernise infrastructure and activities

2

If you don't have the capabilities in-house, consider looking for a data and decarbonisation partner that can help you centralise that data and apply the tools and strategies needed to explore it

3

Think about the initiatives you want that data to fuel. For example, what processes would you like to automate? What insights do you require, and how often?



Emissions Intelligence, built for net zero

At Mitie, our decarbonisation experts help clients overcome carbon reporting challenges every day. We provide bespoke consultancy and an end-to-end managed service designed to simplify the measurement, reporting and reduction of carbon emissions.

That experience and expertise has also helped us to develop our **Emissions Intelligence service**, which automates accounting and reporting to help you simplify compliance, reduce costs and take the first steps towards a cleaner future.

If you have any questions about how our experts or tools can help you on your decarbonisation journey, drop us a line.

[Get in touch](#)