

Carbon check



Startups are helping companies and even individuals know the carbon footprint of their activities

VAISHALI DAR

WANT TO CHECK your carbon emissions when you eat a burger, travel with work or sleep through your air conditions? Apps and technology developed by new-age startups can now help mitigate or calculate carbon impact on everyday activities.

But first, let's understand what carbon footprint is. It is the total amount of greenhouse gases generated by our actions or activities. So when you charge your phone, order a burger online or even commute to work, there is energy consumption. This energy consumption is the biggest source of human-caused greenhouse gas emissions responsible for a whopping 75.6% worldwide. The energy sector also includes transportation, electricity and heat, buildings, manufacturing and construction, fugitive emissions and other fuel combustion.

Many apps like The Earth Hero, Klime, Map My Emissions help discover ways and steps to act towards climate change. These apps track and measure carbon footprint with around 100 personalised actions to suggest dietary, transport, and lifestyle changes and alternatives to users.

However, modern businesses have a larger responsibility towards a country's carbon emission apart from corporate organisations and industries. Startups are leading the way in designing new platforms to help them solve problems around carbon emissions.

"With the explosive growth of the Indian startup ecosystem—now in the climate tech space—we're increasingly seeing startups developing innovative, cost effective, carbon credit platforms, whether by leveraging India's tremendous fintech talent or exploiting technologies such as blockchain," says Pratap Raju, founding partner, Climate Collective, a non-profit focused on empowering entrepreneurs addressing climate change and circular economy.

Mumbai-based Sachin Sengar, who started a company called Lowsoot last year to reduce carbon footprint and make a positive impact in the world, says there is a need for a push from government policies to keep a tab on carbon emissions, only then can it trickle down to an individual.

Lowsoot is working with individuals and organisations to calculate, trace and offset their carbon footprints by incorporating digital tools and tracking their sustainable activities. "All organisations must have a vision to become net-zero. But for that they need to have a process in place to measure and improve their sustainability performance, and that's where our work comes in. A climate catastrophe by 2050 is imminent if we as individuals or organisations don't act," says Sengar, who is working with B2B companies like semiconductor, chemicals, textiles and FMCG brands.

The changes are bound to have a positive impact on climate change and pollution if businesses imbibe carbon monitoring and reduction capabilities. "The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the GHG (Greenhouse Gas Protocols) define specific carbon emissions factors related to business activities. These emissions factors vary, based on geolocation and other factors and are used to calculate carbon emissions," says Rajeev (OG), co-founder and CEO, Onlygood (IN), a new-age platform helping businesses to reduce their carbon footprints through technology.

Another company, 3SC Analytics, helps companies measure, manage, reduce and monitor their carbon footprint while achieving their cost saving targets with ease. Their platform Carbonex is designed specifically to reduce the environmental footprint of corporate supply chains, using AI-powered and data-driven advanced analytics to enable monitoring, screening, mea-

surement, and reduction of an organisation's carbon footprint in each leg of the supply chain journey.

"Companies that to communicate their product carbon footprints have realised added costs, including greater carbon—and cost—savings, product differentiation and general brand enhancement. Labelling can boost emissions reduction efforts. The public commitment to reduce emissions over time helps create a sense of urgency across the supply chain, creating momentum to follow through with emission reduction measures," says Lalit Das, founder and CEO of 3SC Solutions.

The ROI from carbon monitoring is realised from operational efficiencies identified during the carbon reduction analysis, which helps reduce operational costs. Sinha explains how sustainability activities like carbon reduction can become a company's competitive advantage. "Carbon disclosure

enhances a company's brand allowing it to attract new customer and partner segments and amplify growth. Further, data-based carbon monitoring, and analysis can reduce ESG compliance costs. So, companies that disclose carbon attract woke buyers (especially millennials); they can attract European buyers where carbon laws require them to work with vendors who disclose carbon; publicly traded companies which disclose carbon can join ESG portfolios of mutual funds and grow their market value," says Sinha.

Brands and companies are increasingly becoming conscious of their carbon footprints. Zara, in June this year, released a limited-edition line of 'sustainable fashion' created from captured carbon emissions from industrial processes that helps limit the use of virgin fossil resources. To Zero' Bira 91 announced 'Mission To Be Brand to become a Net Zero beer company by 2025.

Many apps like The Earth Hero, Klime, Map My Emissions help discover ways and steps to act towards climate change