

CLIMATE CHANGE: IT'S TIME TO GET SERIOUS

Mark Hutchings, Director of Health, Safety, Environment & Quality at VINCI Energies UK & RoI, shares the logic behind the company's new environmental strategy.

https://www.vinci-energies.co.uk/content/uploads/sites/3/2020/08/1.-VINCI_Climate-Change_V3-1.mp4

We've all seen the headlines about the impact of lockdown on air quality and nature bouncing back over the last few months. More time at home has given us the space to reflect on the amount we travel and consume – and proven that by embracing new technologies and habits we genuinely can make a difference in the fight against climate change. Moreover, the pandemic has helped us re-evaluate our priorities and realise that protecting humanity and the environment must play a greater role in driving our agendas.

Environmental care has long been important to us at VINCI Energies UK & RoI. Since 2013, we have reduced our direct carbon emissions by 30%. But there is even more we can do.

Recently, our Group announced our pledge to reach carbon neutrality by 2050 in line with the Paris Climate Agreement. This is not unusual – many companies have made similar commitments. The difference is that we know we can achieve it because we have calculated it.

Science-based plan

We have spent a lot of time researching the measures we can take and the impact they will have to develop a science-based plan with manageable targets. We did not want to set ourselves up for failure with numbers plucked out of the air or end up with a commitment that felt like a hollow marketing ploy. That achieves nothing.

Instead, we have established a road map to reduce our direct carbon emissions by 5% a year with interim targets of 25% by 2025 and 40% by 2030. Of course, this is merely the baseline of what we know is realistic and will push ourselves to go faster and exceed our goals.

It is possible to meet these targets by simply offsetting our carbon emissions but that is not sustainable and does not have the impact we desire. We want to do this properly – and not just have a neutral impact on our environment but a positive one. This is why we have also challenged ourselves to bring about a net gain in biodiversity – to make the world better than when we arrived by promoting woodland or finishing a construction project with a beneficial habitat.

Appetite for change

Our CEO and senior leadership team are fully behind the plan. Within the wider VINCI network of companies, environmental care is being taken more and more seriously at director level and elevated to the same importance as safety. But this is not a top-down initiative.

In a recent staff survey, many employees responded that they would like to work from home more to cut down on travel or switch to an EV to reduce emissions. The appetite for change reaches right through the organisation – and our entrepreneurial spirit and autonomy among business units empower us to make it happen.

The skills for success

The very nature of our work at VINCI Energies – rolling out technologies for the digital transformation and energy transition – also puts us in a strong position to drive progress. We are involved in the installation of EV charging, the connection of renewable energy to the grid, the upgrade of IT networks that allow people to work remotely and improving the energy efficiencies of companies' operations.

All these projects help limit environmental impact – and they are not just services we offer to customers. We are our own guinea pigs, implementing the skills we have in-house to become a true industry leader. At VINCI Energies we have the



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