

Clean Energy Regulator - Northmore Gordon

Canonical: <https://northmoregordon.com/glossary/clean-energy-regulator/>

Details:

Home > Glossary > Clean Energy Regulator

Clean Energy Regulator

The Clean Energy Regulator (CER) is the Australian Government regulatory body responsible for administering the country's key environmental and energy schemes. It oversees the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting (NGER) scheme, the Renewable Energy Target (RET), the Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) scheme, the Safeguard Mechanism, and the Renewable Electricity Guarantee of Origin (REGO) scheme. CER sets reporting deadlines, establishes facility and corporate thresholds, provides eligibility guidance, and determines facility coverage under various regulatory frameworks. For organizations planning energy or emissions projects, understanding CER's role is essential because the regulator defines the rules, thresholds and administrative requirements that govern participation in Australia's major environmental certificate and reporting schemes.

Related guidance

Carbon advisory

Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions

Certificates

Government schemes

Certificate trading

Measurement and verification

What is the Clean Energy Regulator and what is its primary role in Australian energy and emissions policy?

The Clean Energy Regulator (CER) is the Australian Government regulatory body responsible for administering the country's key environmental and energy schemes. It oversees the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting (NGER) scheme, the Renewable Energy Target (RET), the Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) scheme, the Safeguard Mechanism, and the Renewable Electricity Guarantee of Origin (REGO) scheme. CER sets reporting deadlines, establishes facility and corporate thresholds, provides eligibility guidance, and determines facility coverage under various regulatory frameworks. For organizations planning energy or emissions projects, understanding CER's role is essential because the regulator defines the rules, thresholds and administrative requirements that govern participation in Australia's major environmental certificate and reporting schemes.

What NGER reporting thresholds does the Clean Energy Regulator establish, and why do they matter for facility assessments?

The Clean Energy Regulator establishes NGER facility thresholds at 25,000 tonnes CO₂-e of Scope 1 and 2 emissions, or 100 terajoules of energy produced or consumed. Corporate-group thresholds are set at 50,000 tonnes or 200 TJ respectively. These are screening facts used to determine whether an organization must report under NGER; exceeding any applicable threshold triggers reporting

obligations. However, these thresholds should not be confused with Safeguard Mechanism coverage or sustainability reporting requirements, which have separate tests. Keep these reporting regimes distinct - a facility's NGER position, Safeguard status and sustainability report should use separate data maps with reconciled boundaries and methods rather than collapsed into one checklist.

How does the Clean Energy Regulator's Safeguard Mechanism differ from NGER, and what coverage threshold applies?

The Safeguard Mechanism is a separate reporting regime from NGER, administered by the Clean Energy Regulator. While NGER requires reporting once facility or corporate thresholds are exceeded, the Safeguard Mechanism covers facilities exceeding 100,000 tonnes CO₂-e of covered emissions per year. Covered emissions are assessed against an applicable baseline rather than representing an organization's total Scope 1 - 3 footprint. The Safeguard Mechanism applies only to responsible emitters - a distinct group from NGER reporters. Organizations must assess their position under both frameworks separately; a facility registered under NGER is not automatically covered by the Safeguard Mechanism. We recommend using a single underlying data map but documenting how each regulatory output is constructed separately.

What ACCU scheme requirements and newness guidance does the Clean Energy Regulator provide?

The Clean Energy Regulator oversees the Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) scheme, which converts eligible emissions reductions into tradeable carbon credits. CER provides critical guidance on project eligibility, including newness requirements that determine whether a project can be registered before activities commence. The regulator distinguishes preparatory work from actions indicating commencement, including certain final investment or asset commitments. Regulatory additionality and government-program restrictions also apply. Before relying on ACCU revenue, organizations must establish the proposed method, project proponent, real commitment history, required rights and consents, and monitoring obligations. CER's guidance is essential because the regulator determines which projects qualify and when registration must occur relative to physical work.

How does the Clean Energy Regulator distinguish between the Renewable Energy Target pathways, and what is the significance of the 2030 end date?

The Clean Energy Regulator administers the Renewable Energy Target (RET), which contains two pathways: the small-scale scheme creating Small-scale Technology Certificates (STCs) and the large-scale scheme creating Large-scale Generation Certificates (LGCs). CER provides eligibility guidance distinguishing technology, capacity, output requirements and changes to existing systems. Critically, the Renewable Energy Target scheme ends in 2030, after which no new certificates will be created under these pathways. However, the separate Renewable Electricity Guarantee of Origin (REGO) scheme continues beyond 2030. This distinction matters for project planning: organizations cannot assume indefinite access to RET incentives. Facilities may participate in both REGO and LRET, but cannot create REGOs and LGCs for the same electricity generation, making scheme selection a strategic decision that requires CER's current eligibility guidance.

What is the Renewable Electricity Guarantee of Origin (REGO) scheme, and how does the Clean Energy Regulator distinguish it from the Renewable Energy Target?

The Clean Energy Regulator administers the Renewable Electricity Guarantee of Origin (REGO) scheme, which records renewable electricity attributes separately from the physical electricity. REGOs operate as a standalone scheme with different rules, timing and eligibility criteria than the Renewable Energy Target. A facility may participate in both REGO and the Large-scale Renewable Energy Target (LRET) scheme, but cannot create REGOs and LGCs for the same electricity generation - the same restriction applies to I-RECs. Because the RET ends in 2030 while REGO continues beyond that date, REGOs provide a pathway for organizations seeking renewable attribute claims after RET closure. The distinction matters for renewable electricity procurement strategy: selecting the correct instrument

depends on technology, intended claim, reporting framework and whether the generation period aligns with scheme availability.

What NGER reporting deadline does the Clean Energy Regulator set, and what adjustments apply?

The Clean Energy Regulator sets the standard National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting deadline as 31 October each year. However, if 31 October falls on a weekend or Australian Capital Territory public holiday, the deadline is moved to the following business day. This is a fixed administrative deadline that organizations must observe; missing it triggers non-compliance. The deadline applies to facility and corporate-group reporters who exceed NGER thresholds. Organizations should not assume flexibility around this date or treat it as a guideline - CER enforces compliance. Planning data collection, boundary reconciliation and emissions calculations well in advance is essential to meet the deadline reliably. Build a data map with separate outputs for NGER and other applicable schemes to ensure timely and accurate compliance reporting.

How can Northmore Gordon assist organizations in understanding Clean Energy Regulator scheme eligibility and assessment?

We support clients in navigating Clean Energy Regulator schemes through multiple service offerings. We conduct eligibility assessments, registration screening, and advisory on NGER, ACCU, renewable certificate pathways (STCs, LGCs, REGOs) and other CER-administered schemes. Our knowledge library provides guidance on scheme-specific requirements, thresholds, evidence standards and reporting deadlines. For organizations considering environmental certificates, we offer project-registration support, certificate creation and trading assistance, and engineering and commercial assessment. We also provide carbon advisory services connecting emissions inventories with CER reporting requirements and environmental-attribute procurement through our moREnewable100 service. By preparing a project brief describing the decision, site, and intended outcome, organizations can engage Northmore Gordon to identify applicable CER pathways and confirm evidence requirements.