

NETs - Northmore Gordon

Canonical: <https://northmoregordon.com/glossary/negative-emissions-technologies-nets/>

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NETs

NETs stands for Negative Emissions Technologies. These are technologies designed to remove CO₂ from the atmosphere and sequester it, representing a distinct approach to emissions management that differs from emission avoidance or energy efficiency improvements. NETs are relevant to organizations developing comprehensive decarbonization strategies and considering approaches beyond direct operational reductions.

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How does Northmore Gordon define Negative Emissions Technologies (NETs)?

We define NETs as negative emissions technologies that remove CO₂ from the atmosphere and sequester it. This physical outcome distinguishes NETs from emission avoidance, which prevents emissions from occurring in the first place. Understanding this distinction is important when developing carbon management strategies and assessing the appropriate role of NETs within a broader decarbonization pathway.

How do negative emissions technologies differ from emission avoidance in carbon accounting?

Negative emissions technologies and emission avoidance represent different physical outcomes. NETs remove CO₂ that is already in the atmosphere and store it, while emission avoidance prevents emissions from occurring. This distinction matters for carbon accounting boundaries and claims. Organizations building comprehensive reduction strategies should understand both approaches separately and apply the correct terminology when describing their carbon management outcomes.

What is the relationship between carbon removal and NETs in decarbonization strategies?

Carbon removal, which involves storing carbon, is the physical outcome that NETs deliver. NETs are one category of technology for achieving carbon removal. When evaluating decarbonization pathways, organizations should specify the storage process and accounting basis for any carbon removal claims. Our carbon advisory services include opportunity assessment and transition planning that can help organizations understand where NETs fit within their overall emissions reduction strategy.

How should organizations account for NETs in their carbon inventory and reporting?

NETs should be clearly distinguished in carbon accounting boundaries and claims. Organizations must specify the physical storage process, the accounting basis, and the reporting framework being used. NETs are typically not part of an organization's operational emissions inventory but rather represent a separate intervention to address residual or atmospheric emissions. Proper documentation and boundary definition are essential, and our carbon advisory services can assist with establishing appropriate accounting frameworks.

What role can NETs play in meeting net-zero and carbon-neutral commitments?

NETs can support net-zero and carbon-neutral objectives by removing and storing atmospheric CO₂. However, they should not be assumed as a substitute for direct operational reductions or emission avoidance. Organizations should prioritize direct emissions reductions first, then use NETs for residual or hard-to-abate emissions. Our transition planning and opportunity assessment services can help organizations develop credible pathways that appropriately integrate NETs within comprehensive decarbonization strategies.

Are negative emissions technologies eligible for Australian carbon credit schemes?

ACCU projects involve specific approved methods and eligibility requirements. Carbon removal through NETs may be eligible under certain ACCU methods, but the assessment depends on the technology, storage process, monitoring approach and applicable method requirements. Organizations considering NETs for carbon credits should work with specialists to assess the relevant method, registration requirements and newness criteria before making investment commitments. We provide support for ACCU project assessment and environmental certificate services.

What practical considerations should organizations evaluate when considering NETs?

Organizations evaluating NETs should consider the technology maturity, capital and operating costs, permanence of carbon storage, monitoring and verification requirements, applicable regulatory pathways, and integration with existing decarbonization efforts. NETs typically involve higher costs and longer timeframes than operational energy efficiency. Our carbon advisory services, including feasibility assessment and transition planning, can help organizations understand the technical and commercial implications of NETs within their specific context.