

ESG Readiness Checklist for SMEs

A quick, honest way to see how prepared your business is for ESG questions from customers, banks and investors. Tick what applies — the more boxes you can tick, the more ready you are.

1 Understand your position Environmental

- ☐ Do you know roughly what your business spends on **energy** each year?
Electricity, gas, fuel — from your utility bills.
- ☐ Can you identify your main sources of **waste** and how it's handled?
- ☐ Do you record **business travel or fleet fuel** use?

2 Your people Social

- ☐ Do you have an up-to-date record of your **headcount**?
Full-time, part-time and contractors.
- ☐ Do you keep **health & safety** records and report incidents?
- ☐ Do you offer **training or development**, and can you evidence it?

3 How you're run Governance

- ☐ Do you have basic written **policies** (e.g. code of conduct, data protection)?
- ☐ Are your **anti-bribery / anti-corruption** practices documented?
- ☐ Is it clear **who makes key decisions** in your business?

4 Responding to requests Readiness

- ☐ Has a **customer, bank or investor** asked you for ESG data?
If so, note exactly what they requested.
- ☐ Do you know about the **VSME** standard as a proportionate way to respond?
- ☐ Could you **reuse** your answers across multiple requests, or do you start over each time?
- ☐ Can you **show where your figures come from** (traceability)?

How did you do? Every unticked box is simply a place to start. You don't need to be perfect — a proportionate, honest baseline is what matters most.

See your full result → trustesg.com.cy

This checklist is provided for general guidance only and does not constitute legal, financial or regulatory advice. EU sustainability reporting requirements continue to evolve; verify the current rules applicable to your business, or seek professional advice, before acting.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Turn your ticks into a plan

Wherever you landed, the path forward is the same: build a simple, honest baseline and improve it over time. You don't need a sustainability department — you need your existing information, organised well.

- ✓ **Fill the biggest gaps first.** Start with the sections where you ticked fewest boxes — usually the quickest wins.
- ✓ **Gather what you already have.** Most answers live in bills, payroll and existing policies. You likely hold more than you think.
- ✓ **Prepare once, reuse often.** Organise your data in a recognised format (the VSME) so you can answer many requests from one source.
- ✓ **Keep it traceable.** Note where each figure comes from — that's what makes your data credible and trusted.
- ✓ **Revisit regularly.** Treat this as a living checklist and update it as your business and the requirements evolve.

HOW TRUST-ESG CAN HELP

TRUST-ESG is a research and innovation project developing **AI-powered tools to make ESG reporting simpler and more transparent for SMEs**. The aim is to help smaller businesses bring their sustainability data together and present it clearly, with traceability built in — so what you share can be understood and trusted.

Take the assessment online

This checklist is a starting point. For a more complete picture, take the free **ESG questionnaire** on our website — it walks through your business in a few minutes and helps you see where to focus.

- ✓ **Assess your readiness:** visit trustesg.com.cy and start the ESG questionnaire.
- ✓ **Learn the essentials:** read our SME's Guide to ESG Reporting and latest articles.

Organisation and standard names referenced (e.g. EFRAG, VSME, CSRD) are provided for context only. Requirements continue to evolve — always confirm the current position for your business.