



B4NZ SME Data Taskforce- WG6 - February 18

Meeting Purpose

To discuss the latest updates to the SME data standard, review the proposed adoption strategy, and plan the next steps for the B4NZ SME Data Taskforce, with a focus on preparing for wider market consultation and government engagement.

Key Takeaways

- The SME data standard is approaching broad consensus, with recent refinements made based on working group feedback and one-to-one consultations with data consumers.
- A comprehensive adoption roadmap was presented, emphasising the importance of government engagement through the Net Zero Council and a phased approach to market consultation and implementation.
- The next phase of work will focus on developing detailed guidance for SMEs and data consumers, with working group members asked to review and provide feedback on these materials.
- A public launch event is being planned for June, potentially aligning with London Climate Action Week, to showcase the standard and gain wider market support.

Topics

Data Standard Refinements and Consensus

- The working group has reached over 80% consensus on most aspects of the data standard, indicating strong alignment.
- Key refinements to the standard include:
 - Inclusion of SIC code collection using the 2007 classification system, despite some challenges, as it was deemed valuable by the majority.
 - Reframing of the optional question on business actions for energy efficiency to align with SME priorities, focusing on business growth, customer acquisition, talent retention, and operational efficiencies.
 - Clarification that the standard is asking for electricity consumption rather than broader energy consumption.



- Addition of a requirement for the name and role of the executive signing off the submission.
- The group acknowledged that while consensus has been reached on most areas, some questions, such as the relevance of 2050 net zero targets and submission validity periods, require further discussion.
- The group noted that while the ISO data provision ease assessment identified some "hard" data points, the team has made those optional in the proposed standard. The group agreed this approach meets the goal of simplification for SMEs.

Adoption Roadmap and Strategy

- A detailed adoption roadmap was presented, outlining three key phases:
 - Early government engagement and finalisation of Version 1 of the standard.
 - Wider market consultation (planned for 3 months) and trials with first adopters.
 - Showcasing early adopters and developing financial incentives for SMEs.
- The strategy emphasises gaining government backing without immediate legislation, recognising the current political climate.
- Key milestones in the roadmap include:
 - May 2025: Presentation to the Net Zero Council to seek endorsement and support.
 - June 2025: Parliamentary launch event, potentially aligned with London Climate Action Week.
 - Future engagement with COP30 to profile the standard via the SME programme.
- The importance of the Net Zero Council in providing strategic leadership and government buy-in was highlighted, with the financial institution members' support seen as particularly valuable.

Stakeholder Engagement and Support

- The group discussed the need for a dual ministry focus, engaging both BEIS (through the Net Zero Council) and the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) to emphasise the standard's role in reducing administrative burdens for SMEs.
- Plans to consult with market regulators during phases 2 and 3 of the adoption roadmap were mentioned.



- Technical partners, such as ESG Book, expressed readiness to support the implementation phase, with their platform already prepared for testing a draft version of the B4NZ framework.
- The importance of sector-specific guidance and early adoption case studies was emphasised as crucial for wider market uptake.

Guidance Development

- The taskforce is developing comprehensive guidance documents, including:
 - SME-focused guidance on implementing the standard.
 - Data consumer guidance on data quality assessment and scorecards.
 - A data sourcing summary providing an overview of expected data sources for core questions.
- Working group members were asked to review these documents and provide feedback via a questionnaire.
- The next working group session will take place on **20th March 14:00-16:00** with a focus on SME engagement strategies and key stakeholders to involve in the process.
- Preparation for the public launch includes developing a skeleton for the public-facing report and seeking endorsements and quotes from senior leaders in participating organisations.

Next Steps

- B4NZ Secretariat will distribute the updated data standard, guidance documents, and adoption roadmap to the working group for review with the next week.
- Members are asked to complete a feedback questionnaire on the shared materials, particularly focusing on the guidance documents and adoption approach.
- B4NZ Secretariat will begin on drafting the public-facing report and securing senior leader endorsements for the launch.
- Coordination with technical partners will continue to prepare for testing and implementation phases.
- The secretariat will follow up with specific members to secure quotes and endorsements for the public launch materials.