



Sustainability Goal Tracking

A Data-Driven Framework for Corporate Goal Setting Success

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Introduction: The 2025 Midpoint Reality Check

The corporate sustainability landscape looks very different in 2025 than it did even five years ago. In the early 2020s, bold pledges dominated the headlines: “Net zero by 2050,” “Carbon neutral by 2030,” “100% renewable by 2040.” These commitments helped set ambition, but as the years have ticked by, the spotlight has shifted, and momentum may be waning for corporations amid the current political climate. This doesn't change the fact that stakeholders like investors, regulators, and customers are now demanding accountability: Where are you now, and are you actually on track?

2025 marks a natural checkpoint. Companies that set 2030 targets are already halfway there, and those with 2050 horizons have had enough time to show measurable early progress. This midpoint forces an uncomfortable but necessary truth: ambition without evidence is no longer acceptable. The conversation has moved from making promises to proving progress.

This guide is designed as a practical framework for corporations to set, track, and evaluate sustainability goals in a way that is honest, data-driven, and resilient. It goes beyond one-dimensional net zero commitments to examine the broader portfolio of goals organizations may want to manage, such as energy, emissions, water, waste, supply chain, and social impacts, and offers a roadmap for turning pledges into tangible outcomes.



We'll unpack:

- How to differentiate between sustainability, CSR, and ESG goals.
- Why some earlier targets are already obsolete, and how to recalibrate.
- Which metrics matter most in 2025, and why precision is non-negotiable.
- A step-by-step framework for defining, tracking, and reporting goals.
- How Tango can help!

The Anatomy of a Goal: Sustainability vs. CSR vs. ESG

Not all corporate “goals” are created equal. One of the reasons sustainability strategies falter is that companies conflate three different but related concepts: Sustainability, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG). Each carries its own intent, audience, and level of accountability.

Understanding these distinctions is critical in 2025. Without clarity, organizations risk setting goals that are unmeasurable, irrelevant to business strategy, or easily dismissed as greenwashing.

Sustainability Goals

- Sustainability is the vision: a long-term balance between environmental health, social equity, and economic growth. It’s a global goal, not just a business strategy. (Long-term objectives focused on environmental and resource stewardship.)
- Examples: Reducing energy use intensity by 30% by 2030; achieving water neutrality across operations.
- Audience: Broad, regulators, communities, employees, and society.

CSR Goals

- CSR is the responsibility: a company’s moral compass guiding ethical practices, community involvement, and social good. (Often philanthropic or reputational, historically voluntary.)
- Examples: Supporting local education initiatives; planting 1 million trees.
- Audience: Primarily external stakeholders and the public.
- Risk: If not tied to core business impacts, CSR can drift into “optics-only.”

ESG Goals

- ESG is the measurement: a data-driven framework investors use to evaluate performance and risk across environmental, social, and governance metrics. (Investor- and regulator-facing, backed by quantifiable, finance-grade data.)
- Examples: Cutting Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 40% by 2030; increasing board diversity to 50% by 2028.
- Audience: Investors, rating agencies, regulators.
- Stakes: ESG goals directly influence access to capital, cost of borrowing.

From Overpromising to Real Progress

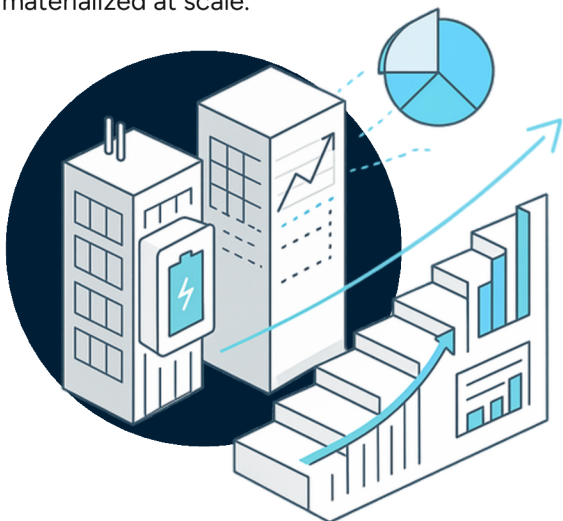
Many corporate goals set in 2015–2020 were ambitious but vague. Now, in 2025, we can start to tell which were realistic and which were overinflated PR. A goal that doesn't evolve with new data and market conditions is already obsolete. This section unpacks how companies can evaluate their existing commitments, focus on the milestones that matter, and recalibrate without losing credibility.

The Expiration Date on Old Goals

Many goals set five to ten years ago have not aged well. Some were created without clear baselines or metrics. Others ignored shifting external conditions like supply chain shocks, regulatory changes, or technological advances.

Signs your goals may be outdated:

- The target year is approaching, but there is no defined path to get there.
- Goal is framed in broad terms ("carbon neutral by 2030") without clear scope (which emissions, which operations).
- It relies on technologies or offsets that haven't materialized at scale.



Recalibration ≠ Failure

One of the biggest barriers to credibility is the fear of admitting when a goal is off track. But conditions change, and so must targets. In fact, recalibration is often a sign of maturity. Companies that are candid about progress, even setbacks, are more credible to investors, regulators, and customers.

When recalibration makes sense:

- Regulatory timelines shift (e.g., accelerated disclosure requirements).
- Economic or supply chain disruptions make interim targets unfeasible.
- New technology opens a faster or cheaper pathway to reduction.

How to recalibrate without losing trust:

- Communicate transparently: explain why a goal is changing.
- Show the new pathway clearly, with updated metrics and milestones.
- Frame recalibration as part of an adaptive strategy, not failure.

Sustainability Goal Tracking

Interim Targets Matter More Than Distant Pledges

A 2050 net zero pledge doesn't carry much weight if there's no progress by 2025 or 2030. Interim targets are the real litmus test of commitment.

Why interim milestones matter:

- They provide tangible checkpoints for investors and regulators.
- They allow companies to course-correct before it's too late.
- They separate "realists" from "greenwashers."

Best practice: Laddering goals

- **Short-term (1–3 years):** operational efficiencies, energy reductions, waste diversion.
- **Medium-term (5–10 years):** renewable adoption, supplier engagement, scope 3 data coverage.
- **Long-term (20+ years):** full decarbonization, net zero, circular business models.

The Laddering Framework



STEP 1: ANCHOR THE LONG-TERM VISION

Define the ultimate goal (e.g., net zero by 2050, 100% renewable electricity by 2040).

Clarify scope (which emissions, which business units, which supply chains).

STEP 2: ESTABLISH MID-TERM TARGETS (5–10 YEARS)

Translate the vision into tangible medium-horizon goals.

Examples:

- Cut absolute Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 40% by 2030.
- Source 60% of electricity from renewables by 2030.
- Achieve 90% supplier emissions data coverage by 2032.

These create the credibility bridge between today's actions and tomorrow's vision.

STEP 3: SET SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (1–3 YEARS)

Define operational goals that demonstrate near-term momentum.

Examples:

- Reduce facility energy intensity by 10% by 2027.
- Divert 70% of waste from landfills by 2026.
- Conduct baseline biodiversity assessments across top 10 sites by 2025.

These are often efficiency-driven and directly measurable.

Deciding on The Metrics That Matter: What to Track and Why

When approaching sustainability goals, companies tend to either over-index on a single high-profile number (like carbon tons) or set goals that are vague, immeasurable, or irrelevant to material risks. In 2025, stakeholders expect corporations to define progress with the same rigor they apply to financial performance. Metrics need to be material, measurable, and comparable. That means tracking the right categories of impact, ensuring data is accurate, and presenting it in ways that align with global frameworks and peer benchmarks.

- **Is it material?** Does it reflect an issue critical to your business model and stakeholders?
- **Is it measurable?** Can it be tracked consistently with reliable data?
- **Is it comparable?** Can stakeholders benchmark it against peers and frameworks?

Core Categories of Metrics

Carbon Emissions & Energy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scope 1, 2, and increasingly Scope 3 emissions.• Energy use intensity (kWh per sq. ft. or per \$ revenue).• Percentage of renewable energy sourced.	Water <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total withdrawal and discharge.• Water stress analysis (site-level, aligned with WRI Aqueduct).• Water recycling/reuse percentage.	Waste & Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diversion rate (landfill vs. recycled/composted).• Hazardous waste generated.• Material circularity (percentage of products recycled or reused).
Supply Chain & Procurement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Percentage of suppliers with disclosed GHG data.• Emissions from top-tier suppliers.• ESG performance of procurement categories.	Biodiversity & Land Use <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Land footprint of operations.• Habitat restoration or offset projects.• Impacts on biodiversity hotspots.	Social & Governance (ESG) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workforce diversity targets (e.g., % women or underrepresented groups in leadership).• Employee engagement scores tied to sustainability.• Board-level oversight of ESG.

Data as the Foundation

Behind every credible sustainability goal is data. Without consistent, reliable measurement, goals are nothing more than aspirational statements. After all, corporations can't change what they can't measure. In 2025, the quality of a company's sustainability data is the deciding factor between progress and greenwashing. When treated as a strategic asset, sustainability data informs smarter decisions across real estate, supply chains, capital allocation, and risk management.

Breaking Down the Silos

Too often, sustainability data lives in disconnected systems, energy bills in facilities, supplier disclosures in procurement, employee data in HR, ESG reporting in finance. These silos make it nearly impossible to assemble a reliable, enterprise-wide picture.

Best practice:

- Establish a single source of truth for sustainability data.
- Create standardized processes for data collection, validation, and governance.
- Ensure cross-departmental collaboration so data serves multiple functions (compliance, strategy, reporting).

From Reporting to Strategy

For many organizations, tracking has been treated as a compliance exercise or as a backward-looking report for regulators or investors. But the real value of data comes when it informs forward-looking decisions.

Examples of data-driven strategy:

- **Capital planning:** Using energy intensity data to prioritize retrofit investments.
- **Supply chain risk:** Flagging suppliers who fail to disclose emissions as high-risk vendors.
- **Real estate optimization:** Aligning occupancy data with energy use to consolidate space and cut costs.

The Cost of Poor Tracking

The risks of weak or inaccurate tracking are mounting:

- **Financial risk:** Missed tax incentives, higher cost of capital, regulatory fines.
- **Reputational risk:** Accusations of greenwashing or misleading disclosures.
- **Operational risk:** Misallocation of resources due to bad data.
- **Investor risk:** Divestment or loss of shareholder trust.

In 2023–24, several high-profile corporations faced lawsuits and regulatory scrutiny over sustainability claims that weren't backed by verifiable data. Those cases set the tone: vague or inaccurate disclosures can now carry the same weight as financial misreporting.



What Investors Expect in 2025

Credible Targets

- Goals validated by frameworks like SBTi.
- Clear link between sustainability metrics and business strategy.

Transparent Progress

- Year-over-year data showing interim milestones are met.
- Explanations for setbacks and course corrections.

Comparable, Auditable Data

- Consistency across geographies and business units.
- Alignment with recognized standards (ISSB, GRI, SASB, CDP).

Integration into Financials

- Evidence that sustainability metrics are tied to financial risk and opportunity.
- Examples: energy efficiency savings tied to EBITDA; carbon pricing integrated into forecasting.

How to Set, Track, and Adjust Goals: Step by Step

By 2025, the challenge is no longer whether companies should set sustainability goals, but whether they can track and deliver on them credibly. To bridge the gap between pledges and progress, organizations need a repeatable framework that makes sustainability goals as disciplined as financial targets.

Define: Set specific, material, measurable goals.

- Ensure goals are science-based and sector-relevant.
- Avoid vague phrasing (“carbon neutral”) and specify scope, baseline year, and boundaries.
- Link goals directly to business strategy.

Evaluate: Assess progress against interim targets.

- Compare actuals vs. milestones (2025, 2030 checkpoints).
- Conduct scenario modeling to understand future risks and opportunities.
- Share results internally to drive engagement across functions.

Baseline: Establish where you are now.

- Collect historical data (3–5 years if possible) to identify trends.
- Use finance-grade validation to avoid setting goals on shaky foundations.
- Benchmark against peers and global frameworks.

Adjust: Recalibrate based on evidence.

- Update goals when conditions change (regulatory shifts, new technologies).
- Communicate changes transparently, explain the “why” and the new path.
- Build resilience into goals by anticipating disruptions.

Track: Monitor progress continuously, not just annually.

- Build centralized data systems that eliminate silos.
- Automate data collection where possible (energy bills, supplier disclosures).
- Set KPIs at departmental and site levels to enable accountability.

Report: Share progress credibly.

- Align disclosures with global standards (ISSB, CSRD, SEC).
- Report setbacks as well as wins to maintain credibility.
- Use multiple formats: regulatory filings, sustainability reports, investor briefings, and digital dashboards.

Tango Technology Streamlines Goal Tracking

Reaching your goals is ultimately a data and systems challenge. Without accurate, accessible, and real-time data, companies can't measure emissions, track progress, prioritize investments, or meet reporting requirements. That's where technology becomes essential.

Centralizing Emissions and Energy Data

Most organizations struggle with fragmented data across utilities, vendors, departments, and geographies. A centralized sustainability data platform solves for this by:

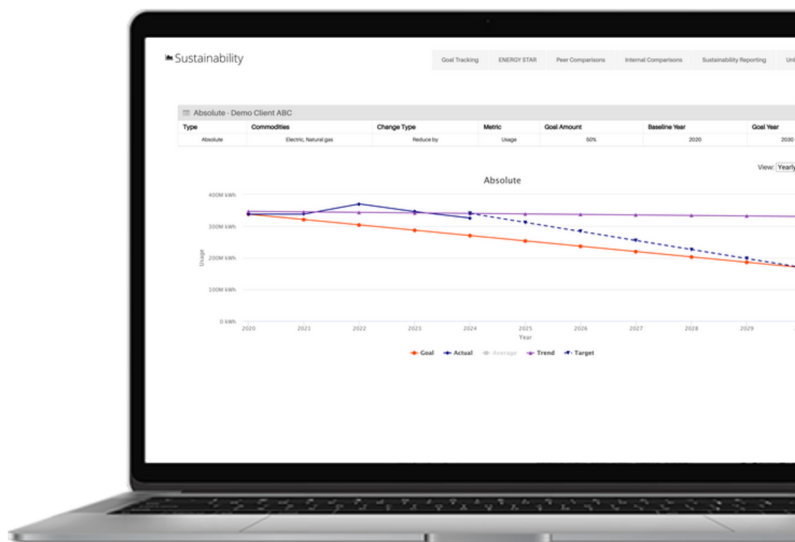
- **Automating utility data collection** (across electricity, gas, water, steam, etc.)
- **Normalizing usage data** for weather, occupancy, and rate fluctuations
- **Tracking Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions** using consistent, auditable methodologies
- **Visualizing performance** at the site, asset, and portfolio level



Enabling Target Setting and Forecasting

Modern software solutions can model emissions trajectories against climate targets. This allows companies to:

- Create site-specific or portfolio-wide **carbon reduction forecasts**
- Full support for all commodities and new metrics with absolute goal types and intensity goal types (relative to another metric, such as ft2 or FTE)
- **Visualization:** shows the target line, the actual performance to date, and the projected performance based on the current progress (current year through target year)
- **KPI:** Our system has the ability to define custom KPIs per client (ft2, widgets produced, etc.)

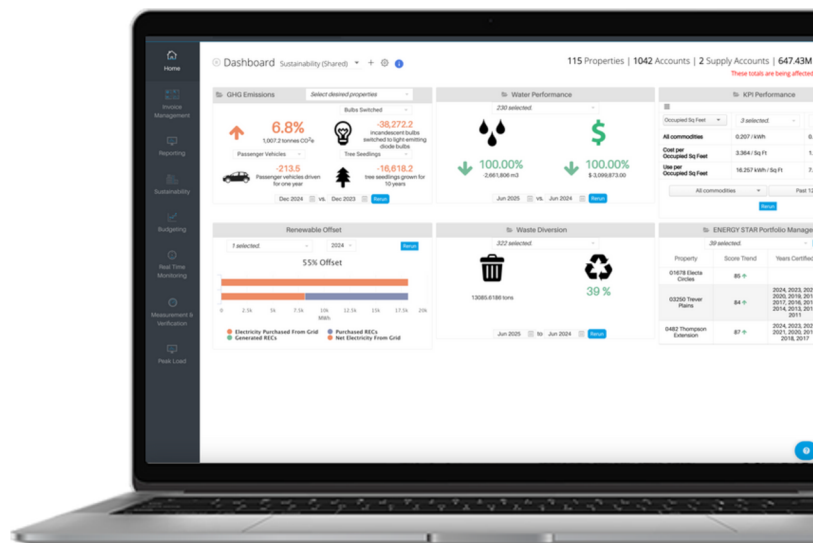


Sustainability Goal Tracking

Identifying and Prioritizing Action

Technology helps pinpoint which facilities are underperforming and which interventions will yield the greatest emissions and cost savings. With emissions intensity benchmarking and dynamic reporting, teams can prioritize:

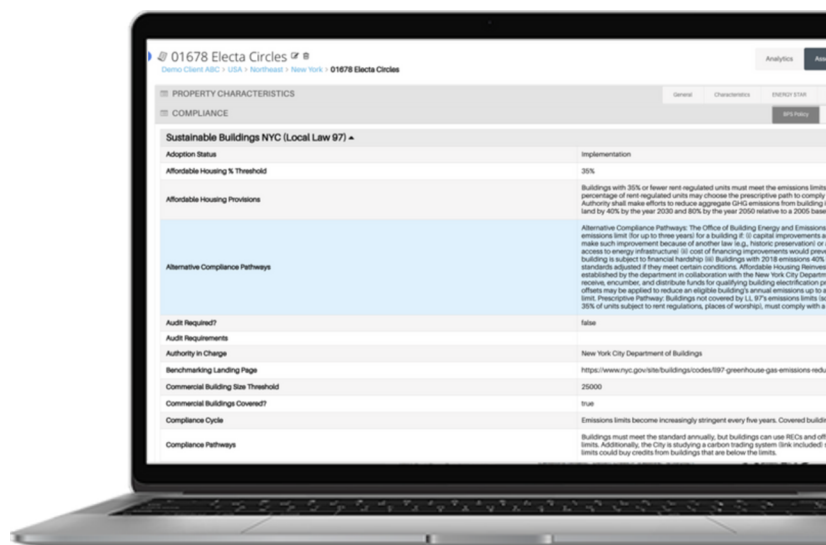
- High-emitting buildings for retrofits or electrification
- Load reduction opportunities (lighting, HVAC, envelope)
- Sites suitable for renewable procurement or on-site generation



Supporting Reporting and Compliance

Regulatory requirements around climate disclosure are rapidly increasing. Platforms like Tango support compliance by:

- Generating audit-ready reports aligned with frameworks like the GHG Protocol, CDP, CSRD, and more
- Flagging gaps in data collection or assurance
- Streamlining disclosures to investors, customers, or regulatory bodies



About Tango

THE POWER OF KNOWING. THE IMPACT OF ACTING.

Tango is a leading provider of Energy & Sustainability Management software. Global organizations rely on our solution to track and reduce energy consumption, manage carbon emissions, streamline utility data, and confidently meet sustainability goals. From utility data auditing to automated sustainability reporting, Tango empowers businesses to operate more efficiently and responsibly. As sustainability becomes a core business imperative and regulations evolve, data-driven insights from Tango's platform are critical to achieving long-term sustainability success.

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