



Photo by Angel Gomez Herreros
Kearney, Madrid

**Kearney's
net-zero
strategy**

KEARNEY

Kearney has committed to a net-zero science-based target by 2050—focusing on deep emissions cuts, removing unavoidable residual emissions, and taking action beyond our value chain.



Our commitment

Inspired by our founder, Tom Kearney, and his principle of “essential rightness,” Kearney is dedicated to making a positive impact. We seek to be the difference by embedding environmental, social and governance best practices, and sustainability in all that we do: as a business, with our clients, our people, our planet, and our community.

The world continues to face some of its biggest challenges, and we remain committed to supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the 10 principles of the UN Global Compact. We firmly believe that achieving these goals requires dedicated action from the private sector, governments, and civil society. Building on our strengths in transformation and strategic operations, we strive to become the leading firm in making our clients’ bold sustainability ambitions a reality, alongside driving business growth. We’re proud to work with leading organizations across diverse sectors and geographies to tackle their most pressing opportunities and challenges: from ESG transformation and achieving net zero to sustainable and responsible sourcing, circularity, and fostering inclusive and equitable societies.

As consultants, the biggest sustainability impact we can create is through partnering with our clients and other stakeholders in the transition to a low-carbon future. We are also dedicated to becoming a sustainability leader in our own right and demonstrating leadership in our industry—acting fast, acting now, and basing our actions on science.

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Our science-based targets

Kearney is proud to be the [first management consultancy in the world](#) to have its near- and long-term science-based emissions reduction targets approved by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi).

SBTi is a collaboration between CDP, the United Nations Global Compact, the World Resources Institute, and the World Wide Fund for Nature to drive ambitious climate action in the private sector by enabling organizations to set science-based emissions reduction targets.

With the UN describing the latest climate science from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as “code red for humanity,” the chances of society limiting the global temperature rise to 1.5°C are dwindling, but it is still possible if we act fast.

Kearney’s commitments to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the value chain and reaching science-based net-zero targets are aligned with the 1.5°C pathway and include the following goals (see figure 1 on page 3):

Near-term targets

- Reduce absolute scope 1 and scope 2 GHG emissions by 50 percent by 2030.
- Reduce absolute scope 3 GHG emissions from business travel by 30 percent by 2030 and all other absolute scope 3 emissions by 30 percent in the same timeframe.
- Reach 100 percent renewable energy in Kearney offices by 2025, and continue sourcing 100 percent renewable electricity through 2030.

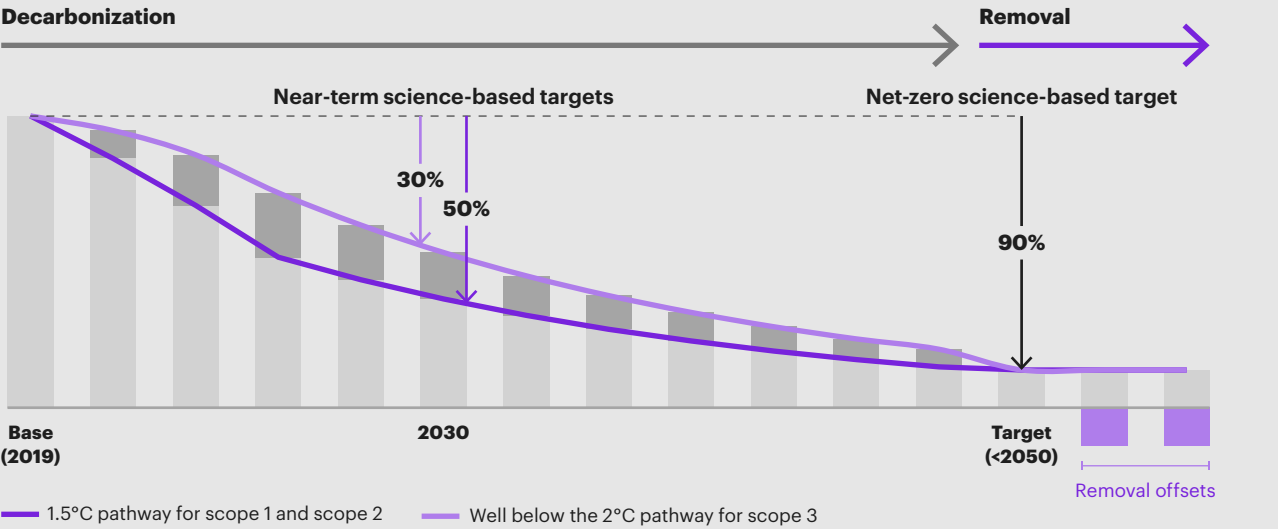
Long-term targets

- Reduce absolute scopes 1, 2, and 3 GHG emissions by 90 percent, and reach net-zero GHG emissions across the value chain by 2050.

We are proud of our bold ambition in setting absolute reduction science-based targets covering 100 percent of our scopes 1, 2, and 3 emissions while continuing on our double-digit business growth trajectory and demonstrating global leadership for our industry to follow (see figure 2 on page 3).

Figure 1
Kearney is aiming for science-based net-zero by 2050, neutralizing all residual emissions

(GHG emissions CO₂ equivalent)



Notes: We have committed to science-based targets: absolute reduction of scope 1 and scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 vs. 2019 base year and aligned with the 1.5°C pathway; absolute scope 3 emissions reduction by 30% by 2030 vs. 2019 and aligned with the well-below 2°C pathway. Long-term targets are aligned with the 1.5°C pathway.

Source: Kearney analysis

Figure 2
Kearney is already making progress to shrink our carbon footprint

Kearney’s baseline and progress to date
 Emissions by scope (tons CO_{2e})¹

	2019 (baseline year)	2020	2021	% change 2019-2021
Scope 1	1,376 (2%)	1,402 (5%)	1,709 (7%)	+24%
Scope 2	3,055 (4%)	524 (2%)	1,205 (5%)	-61%
Scope 3	76,760 (94%)	26,216 (93%)	20,168 (87%)	-74%
Scope 3 (business travel)	72,145 (89%)	18,549 (66%)	13,987 (61%)	-81%
Total	81,190	28,143	23,082	-72%

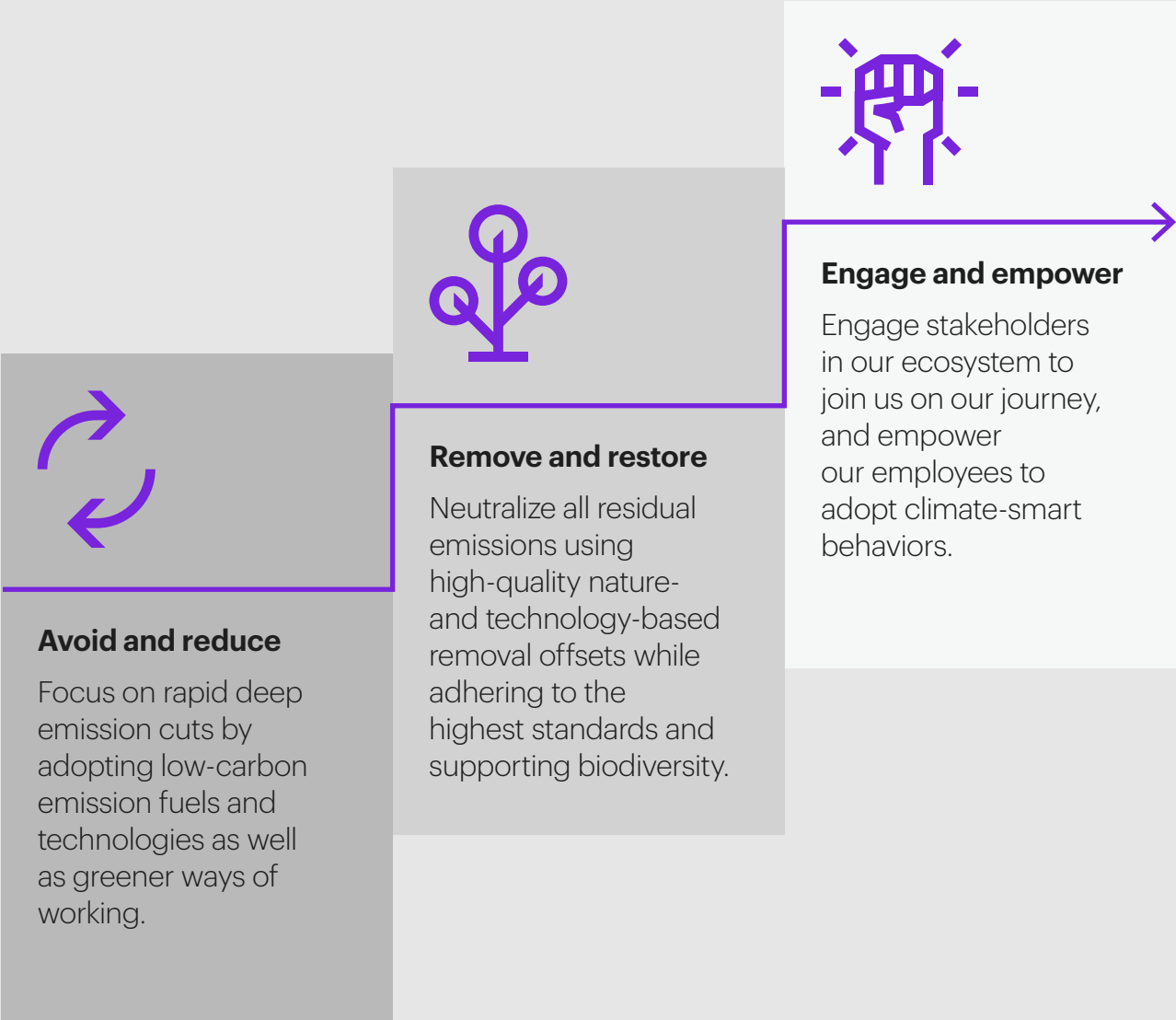
¹ Our baseline 2019 emissions have been recalculated to account for best-practice methodologies. As stated in our GHG recalculation policy, the recalculated baseline will be publicly reported in the following sustainability report. This is the official baseline approved by the Science Based Targets initiative as of September 2022.

Source: Kearney analysis

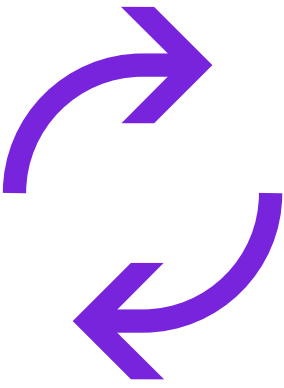
Highlights from Kearney’s net-zero strategy

Kearney net-zero strategy encompasses three major areas of focus (see figure 3):

Figure 3
Kearney’s net-zero strategy is mapped out across three areas



Source: Kearney analysis



Avoid and reduce

Our focus is on decarbonization.

Kearney is actively working across the firm’s offices and supply chain partners in more than 40 countries on a continuous journey to reduce our environmental footprint wherever we can. For example, we are embracing greener ways of working to reduce business travel, reducing our energy consumption, implementing sustainable mobility practices, and boosting our reduction and recycling of waste.

Across our offices, we are committed to **reducing the amount of waste and recycling more waste** (plastic, glass, paper, organic, and e-waste) and promoting sustainable offices. Our offices are implementing initiatives to reduce waste, including eliminating single-use plastics, installing drinking water taps, using and reusing resources wisely, improving waste sorting, donating used technology equipment, and running recycling campaigns. We are committed to achieve **100 percent plastic-free offices by 2025 and to reduce water intensity across our offices by 2030**—starting with improving our monitoring of water consumption.

In addition, we have committed to implementing **green mobility policies** to electrify our fleet and encouraging public mobility in **100 percent of our offices by 2025**.

We also aim to reach **100 percent renewable energy in Kearney offices by 2025 and continue to source 100 percent renewable electricity**, complemented by purchasing renewable energy certificates where necessary.

With our new offices or major renovations, we target high environmental standards for buildings, such as LEED Gold, Platinum, BREEAM, or equivalent local certifications available for each location. We also encourage sustainable building approaches, such as the use of recycled and locally sourced materials. We are targeting for **100 percent of our offices to be placed in green-certified buildings by 2030**.

Our sustainability ambitions are embedded across our global policies, our ways of working, and employee communications and training. Here are a few examples:

- Our **sustainability policy** lays out our commitments as a responsible business with our clients, our people, our planet, and our community.
- Our **global travel policy** highlights sustainability, encouraging employees to be thoughtful about when travel is necessary to meet stakeholder commitments and highlighting various options for collaboration, such as video conferencing, or greener travel, such as rail.
- Our **office guidelines** support our local teams in the design and construction of new offices, aligned with Kearney’s brand, values, and sustainability commitments.
- Our **supplier code of conduct** outlines our commitments to environmental sustainability and our expectations of our suppliers to meet these high standards. Within our **supplier sustainability and diversity program**, we are including environmental and social criteria to assess our suppliers’ sustainability performance during RFP processes.

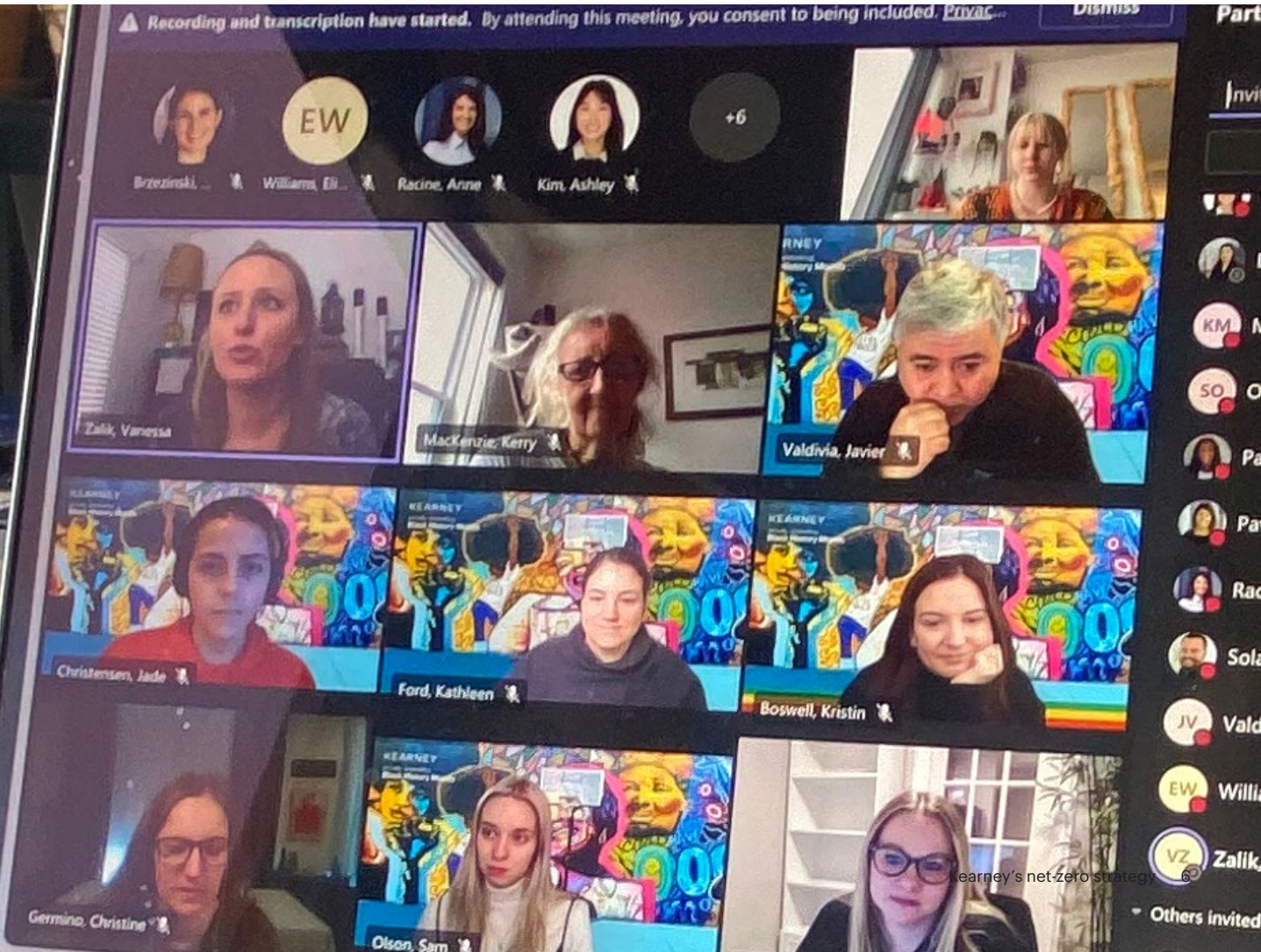
- Our **IT sustainability position and strategy** outlines our goal of making informed, intelligent, and impactful decisions regarding the design, operation, and delivery of global IT services and technologies. We aim to design and implement technical architecture that uses technologies in alignment with our sustainability goals by increasing operational efficiencies and reducing our power and HVAC requirements.

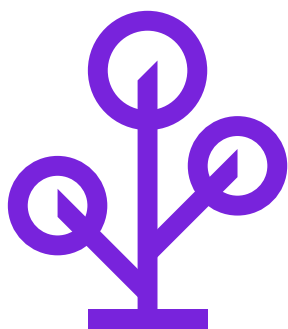
Business travel and sustainable aviation fuel

As consultants working with global clients, business travel makes up the largest portion of our emissions. We strive to implement greener ways of working and optimize our use of technology to reduce our business travel, such as by video conferencing.

While we already offset 100 percent of our global business travel annually, we are also co-creating a more sustainable aviation industry by investing in sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). SAF is made from a range of sources, including feedstock such as cooking oils or waste lipids, and offers up to an 80 percent reduction in emissions over the full life cycle compared with traditional kerosene aviation fuel. However, SAF production is still limited; market ramp-up must be accelerated on a global scale.

Kearney and Lufthansa have been working with other value chain partners since early 2020 to develop strategies that will accelerate the economic feasibility of SAF. And in 2021, we took it one step farther: we purchased SAF with Lufthansa through their Compensaid scheme, becoming the first global consulting partner to purchase SAF. Kearney’s financial support formalizes this inter-industry partnership and is a necessary step in developing crucial technology to ensure that the next generation of air travel becomes carbon neutral.





Remove and restore

We offset unavoidable residual emissions by investing in innovative quality projects, including supporting cutting-edge carbon removal technologies.

By 2030, we will achieve net-zero climate impact by removing all our unavoidable residual emissions and investing in innovative carbon removal projects with proven environmental, social, and economic benefits that meet stringent international certification standards. Our selected projects consider carbon performance, additionality, permanence, and associated co-benefits—amplifying the benefits to local communities and biodiversity to preserve, protect, and restore our ecosystems.

Kearney has been certified 100 percent carbon neutral across scopes 1, 2, and 3 since 2010, and we believe that investing in carbon removal technologies and projects will help accelerate the transition to a low-carbon future.



Kearney’s 2021 carbon offset portfolio

Sustainable Aviation Fuel, Compensaid, Germany

Supporting cutting-edge carbon removal technologies
Certified by TÜV Nord

Sustainable aviation fuel is made from a range of sources, including feedstock such as cooking oils or waste lipids, and offers up to an 80 percent reduction in emissions over the full life cycle compared with traditional kerosene aviation fuel. But currently, SAF production is still limited; market ramp-up must be accelerated on a global scale. Kearney and Lufthansa have worked with other value chain partners since early 2020 to develop strategies that will accelerate the economic feasibility of SAF. And in 2021, we took it one step further: we purchased SAF with Lufthansa through their Compensaid scheme, becoming their first global consulting partner to purchase SAF. Kearney’s financial support formalizes this intra-industry partnership and is a necessary step in developing crucial technology to ensure the next generation of air travel becomes carbon-neutral.



Climate Vault, United States

Supporting cutting-edge carbon removal technologies
CDP-accredited

Kearney partnered with Climate Vault—an award-winning, CDP-accredited non-profit—to neutralize part of its carbon footprint. On Kearney’s behalf, Climate Vault purchased carbon permits on government-regulated compliance markets and “vaulted” them to prevent those emissions from occurring, providing a verified carbon avoidance/offset. Climate Vault will then leverage the permits’ value to promote carbon dioxide removal (CDR) technologies and thus support Kearney’s Science-Based Targets. Climate Vault’s world-renowned Tech Chamber, which consists of CDR experts from Princeton, MIT, Harvard, UVA, and Scripps, is currently reviewing the first round of RFP applications that include a range of hybrid (nature + tech) CDR projects to eliminate CO2 already in our atmosphere. Climate Vault is aiming to award its first round of winners by summer 2022 and continues to review applications on a rolling basis.



Sustainable Plantations, Paraguay

Implementing sustainable afforestation for the domestic wood industry
Verified Carbon Standard

This early opportunity project in Paraguay is planting fast-growing trees on degraded grassland in order to sequester carbon while developing the country’s sustainable wood market. By meeting the demand of wood in this way, pressure on the country’s natural or primary growth forests—including the unique Chaco forest, considered the second largest forested landscape in South America after the Amazon—is reduced. As well as the environmental benefits, the project will create new opportunities for underserved rural communities and contribute to important infrastructure improvements like roads. In addition, there is a focus on moving toward a gender-balanced workforce.



Hebei Zhangjiakou Landfill Gas, China

Greening the East Electricity Grid with renewable resources
Verified Carbon Standard

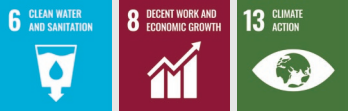
The project captures harmful methane emissions naturally released from a landfill site in Hebei and turns waste into a valuable source of renewable electricity. This simple solution represents a small but important step for China to tackle the environmental challenges it faces with its rapid development: increased energy demands, rising GHG emissions, and a growing mountain of waste.



Biosupply Wastewater Treatment, Thailand

Repurposing harmful greenhouse emissions to generate sustainable electricity
Verified Carbon Standard

This project captures methane at a Thai starch plant using two closed anaerobic wastewater treatment facilities and converts the gas into energy. With this project, not only has the local air and water quality improved but the starch plant has reduced its fossil fuel consumption significantly. In addition, the project and revenues from carbon credits have generated jobs for local people and supported social and educational activities in the community.

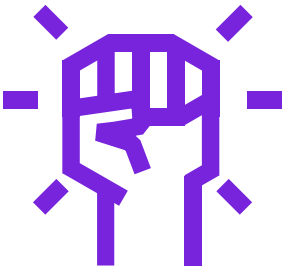


Koru Wind Power, Turkey

Kickstarting Turkey’s clean energy sector and creating jobs
Gold Standard

Located in western Turkey, this bundled wind power project has a 50 MW capacity with 16 turbines spanning several hilltops and multiple villages across the district. By powering homes in the surrounding area with renewable wind power, Koru Wind Power displaces fossil fuel-generated energy. As a result, the project reduces emissions by more than 80,000 tCO2e every year and stimulates the growth of wind power infrastructure in Turkey. Jobs have been created for both the construction and ongoing maintenance of the plant, as the Koru Wind Power Plant continues to employ workers from surrounding villages. In addition, the quality of employment is improved, as local workers are trained in specialist operational knowledge.





Engage and empower

We are deploying tools to create transparency, accountability, and engagement across the firm to accelerate our net-zero journey.

Our efforts will focus on cascading these global policies to every project team, aiming to influence the way our teams work. Our office-level environmental dashboards allow our teams to assess their baseline performance and set near- and medium-term targets that are aligned with Kearney global commitments.

We are also working toward implementing internal carbon pricing within the next two years to support Kearney's transition to a net-zero business (see figure 4 on page 11).

Carbon footprint and reporting

We report our emissions following the Greenhouse Gas Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard, and we update our baseline year in accordance with our GHG Base Year Recalculation Policy. We verify our global GHG emissions under the ISO14064 standard and share them as part of our social responsibility reporting, including in our annual [Kearney Sustainability Report](#).

We need carbon accounting that is more reliable, interoperable, and up to the task of measuring progress. That's why Kearney is honored to sign on to the [Carbon Call](#), an initiative led by ClimateWorks Foundation to improve the measurement, reporting, and verification of GHG emissions and removal, primarily for the corporate sector. We commit to reporting our greenhouse gas emissions comprehensively, transparently, and annually. Kearney uses strong data collection controls and verification processes, supported by our suppliers and external advisors, to track our emissions activities in detail. This enables us to drive continuous improvement in reducing our emissions, complemented by our offsets projects.

Figure 4
Different enablers will help accelerate the firm’s net-zero journey



Source: Kearney analysis

About Kearney

As a global consulting partnership in more than 40 countries, our people make us who we are. We're individuals who take as much joy from those we work with as the work itself. Driven to be the difference between a big idea and making it happen, we help our clients break through. Our global team is more than 4,400 people strong, with over 24,000 people in our alumni network. The headquarters and origin of the firm are in Chicago.

Going forward, we are dedicated to doing even better. We are dedicated to learning more about the perspectives of our stakeholders concerning sustainability at Kearney, and we welcome your feedback. Please contact sustainability@kearney.com or reach out to our Global Director of Social Impact Pei Yun Teng at peiyun.teng@kearney.com.



Kearney is a leading global management consulting firm. For nearly 100 years, we have been the trusted advisor to C-suites, government bodies, and nonprofit organizations. Our people make us who we are. Driven to be the difference between a big idea and making it happen, we help our clients break through.

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