SBTi's new standard recognises what EKOenergy ecolabel users already do

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1. Introduction

The Science Based Targets initiative has published **version 2.0 of its Corporate Net-Zero Standard.**[1] Most attention has gone to the new target-setting methods, but one addition deserves a closer look: **Ongoing Emissions Responsibility, or OER.** For the first time, SBTi formally recognises that companies can take responsibility for the emissions they have not yet eliminated by funding climate action beyond their own operations, not to offset those emissions, but in addition to reducing them. EKOenergy has been built with similar goals in mind since its launch in 2013.

Let's take a brief look at **what changes with V2.0, what OER is, and how EKOenergy fits in:** every labeled MWh funds renewable energy projects in low- and middle-income countries, the kind of climate contribution OER sets out to recognize. This matters for companies with science-based targets, but also for energy sellers and consultants looking for simple ways to offer their clients more.

2. What is new?

Three groups of changes stand out in V2.0:

- **Targets become more flexible.** V2.0 offers different pathways depending on a company's sector, location and existing assets, and targets are set on a best-efforts basis. Companies are expected to use every lever available and to report openly on where they are falling short.
- **Energy certificates go further**. Companies can now use energy attribute certificates, such as GOs, RECs and I-RECs, to address the electricity emissions of their suppliers under Scope 3, not only their own consumption. For companies with manufacturing in Asia, this opens a new route to act on their footprint.
- **The recognition of the Ongoing Emissions Responsibility framework.** OER is the third pillar. It asks companies to fund climate action in proportion to the emissions they still cause on their way to net zero. SBTi describes it as a **complement to, not a substitute for, cutting your own footprint.** Participation is voluntary until 2035, when it becomes a requirement. In the meantime, companies can join a recognition programme: details are due in the second half of 2026, and companies with Version 1 targets can join from early 2027.

1 Check out the official standard documentation, as well as SBTi's FAQ.

3. SBTi-recommended actions to create additional impact

OER is not entirely new. Version 1 already encouraged beyond-value-chain mitigation, mostly through carbon credits, with one firm rule: **no neutrality claims.** V2.0 keeps that rule and widens the scope.

Contributions are no longer limited to credits, and six additional categories of climate action now qualify: verified mitigation outcomes, ex-ante mitigation funding, low- or zero-carbon research and innovation, **mitigation-enabling outcomes funding, adaptation and resilience funding, and loss and damage funding.**

4. How does EKOenergy fit in?

EKOenergy is a non-profit ecolabel for renewable energy, managed by the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation. Every labeled MWh funds our **Climate Fund**, which passed €10 million in April 2026, and our work promoting renewables worldwide.

To be clear: EKOenergy is **not a mitigation instrument.** It does not deliver verified reductions or removals measured in tCO_2e, and we make no such claim. But that is not the point. OER covers more than removals, and much of what it now recognises describes what EKOenergy users have already been funding for over a decade.

Mitigation-enabling outcomes

The Standard defines this as funding that changes "the conditions (policy, market, institutional, or infrastructural) that are necessary for widespread decarbonization."

In 2024, our Climate Fund granted €60,000 for a solar mini-grid in Pitas Laut, a fishing village in Sabah, Malaysia. It is part of the Sabah RE2 consortium, whose pilots aim to bring electricity to 60,000 people through 203 mini-grids. **The model is already shaping policy.** In July 2026, Sabah's Rural Development Ministry named Kampung Pokolon Paus, another Sabah RE2 village funded by EKOenergy, as a benchmark for future rural electrification, noting that "it is often non-governmental organisations who pioneer these efforts before we catch up."

Our advocacy follows the same logic. EKOenergy regularly joins other organizations in pushing for **better energy policy.** Most recently, in August 2026, we co-signed a joint letter to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, together with groups such as WWF, SolarPower Europe and Eurelectric. The letter asked her to commission an independent fossil fuel exit plan for Europe, built on renewables, energy efficiency and modern grids. Part of every labeled MWh helps fund this work.

SBTI CNZS V2'S OFFICIAL FULL DEFINITION

Providing funds for interventions that enable structural or system-level change, which unlock or accelerate mitigation at scale. These interventions do not directly reduce emissions in a company's own operations or value chain, but instead change the conditions (policy, market, institutional, or infrastructural) that are necessary for widespread decarbonization. For example, a company might provide grants to a regional planning authority to develop spatial plans that allocate land for renewable energy deployment, or it might contribute pooled capital into a collective action platform that accelerates grid interconnection and shared infrastructure.

Adaptation and resilience

The Standard defines this as funding **"actions that reduce vulnerability or increase resilience to climate impacts."**

Near Lake Titicaca, where about half the population lives in poverty and droughts are getting worse, we granted €319,116 to Practical Action in 2023 for solar-powered irrigation. Ten systems now serve 530 families, and local committees collect user fees and pay for their own repairs. The project was a national finalist at Bolivia's Premios Verdes 2026.



Solar-powered irrigation near Lake Titicaca, Bolivia, implemented by Practical Action with support from the EKOenergy Climate Fund.

SBTI CNZS V2'S OFFICIAL FULL DEFINITION

Funding of actions that reduce vulnerability or increase resilience to climate impacts, particularly in climate-vulnerable regions and communities.

Loss and damage

The Standard includes cases where "adaptation options exist but a community does not have the resources to access or utilize them."

That describes the same Bolivian villages before the project. Today, local leaders say solar-powered water is bringing "life and green pastures" back to land that had gone unused.

SBTI CNZS V2'S OFFICIAL FULL DEFINITION

Providing funds to support the response to, and recovery from, unavoidable climate-related losses and damages, prioritizing those least responsible for emissions and most affected by impacts.

While there is no internationally agreed-upon definition for loss and damage, it usually refers to the negative effects of climate change that go beyond what people can adapt to ("hard limits" to adaptation), or where adaptation options exist but a community does not have the resources to access or utilize them ("soft limits" to adaptation).

How to contribute?

There are two ways to support new renewable energy projects in disadvantaged communities through our Climate Fund. The first is to use EKOenergy-labeled energy in one or more countries and encourage companies in your supply chain to do the same, since every labeled MWh contributes automatically. The second is to **donate to the Fund directly.** We choose every project through a transparent selection process, based on benefits such as food security, income generation, gender equality, and health and well-being.

5. Want to know more?

The OER recognition program opens in 2027, so now is a good time to decide how your company will take responsibility for its remaining emissions. If you use renewable energy, adding the EKOenergy ecolabel is a simple way to start. Energy sellers and consultants can also offer it to their clients.



The EKOenergy team at the REC Market Meeting 2024 in Amsterdam.

Want to talk it through? Book a call with Gustav Nygrén, our Global Key Account Manager.

Have another question? Reach the whole team through our **contact page**.