

## Retailers are pressing ahead with climate protection EHI white paper on climate protection management in the retail industry

Climate protection has played an important role in retail for some time now. The retail industry, an essential part of the economy, has been making major contributions to compliance with climate targets. “Eighty-four percent of retail companies have issued climate impact assessments, taken measures to reduce emissions or set binding, verifiable climate protection goals in accordance with the Paris Climate Agreement. Climate and environmental protection initiatives are also becoming increasingly important,” says Cathrin Klitzsch, Project Manager for Climate and Energy Research, commenting on the EHI white paper “Climate Protection Management in the Retail Industry 2023”, which was issued as part of the Climate Neutrality in Retail initiative.

### Climate protection activities in retail

Retail chains are already taking active steps to mitigate climate change. Forty-seven percent of the companies surveyed have climate impact assessments and are reducing their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Twenty-one percent are additionally setting climate targets in keeping with the Science Based Targets initiative. Eleven percent have set net-zero carbon emissions as a target, which means avoiding or removing as much CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere as they produce. Only 16 percent say they have no climate protection strategy in place.

More than half of the retail companies (53 percent) practise carbon offsetting, which involves supporting climate protection projects to compensate for unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions. Forty-two percent do not do this, and five percent plan to in the future. Almost two-thirds of the companies (61 percent) are additionally engaged in other kinds of climate protection projects.

### Budgets for climate change mitigation

Qualitative evaluations of suppliers are increasingly taking sustainability into account. Of the companies surveyed, 67 percent now rate their suppliers according to this criterion. Another 26 percent are planning to do so. Customer perceptions are also receiving attention. Almost three quarters of the retail companies (71 percent) are gathering data to make their customers more aware of sustainability when it comes to merchandise offerings and locations.

However, very few retailers have a main budget item for investments in climate change mitigation. Exactly one-third include budgeting for this purpose in their corporate strategy. The major hurdles to be overcome in budgeting are persistent pressure to cut costs, multiple crises and energy shortages.



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### Base data:

The white paper is the first analysis by EHI of climate protection management in the retail industry. It is based on the results of a cross-cutting online survey carried out in August 2022 in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The information, which was anonymised, reflects weighted averages. Data were evaluated from 19 retailers in Germany, Austria and Switzerland with sales areas totalling some 17.8 million sqm. In the weighting according to sales area, 62 percent was attributed to food retail and 38 percent to non-food retail.

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### About EHI

[EHI](#) is a research, training and consultancy institute for the retail industry and its partners. It has some 80 employees. The international EHI network comprises some 850 member companies from the retail, consumer goods and capital goods industries, along with service providers. EHI is also a shareholder of [GS1 Germany](#) and [FoodPlus](#). It is a partner of Messe Düsseldorf and important trade shows like [EuroShop](#). The President of EHI is Markus Tkotz, Managing Director of Markant. The Managing Director of EHI is Michael Gerling.

### About the Climate Neutrality in Retail initiative:

The initiative, which was launched in 2022, aims to make the carbon footprint of retail properties more transparent and draw up a roadmap for climate-neutral retail locations. Together with the [partners](#) of the initiative, a self-check for climate neutrality was developed which enables retail companies to see where they currently stand in terms of climate protection. It is available at <https://www.ehi-klimaneutralitaet.de>. In 2023, an orientation aid will be published with detailed recommendations on achieving climate neutrality.



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