

Dentsu International one of first companies in the world to have net-zero target validated

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The advertising giant calls for corporates to set deep decarbonisation targets in response to IPCC 'Code Red for Humanity'

Dentsu International has announced it is one of the first companies in the world to have its net-zero target validated by the globally recognised Science Based Targets initiative. It includes a new deep decarbonisation target to reduce absolute emissions by 90% by 2040 across its entire value chain.

The announcement comes on the same day the SBTi launched a new global Net-Zero Standard, responding to calls for greater transparency and alignment between corporate net-zero targets. Dentsu International is one of only seven global organisations to have their target formally validated against the new standard, alongside AstraZeneca, CVS Health, Holcim, JLL, Orsted and Wipro.

Recent years have seen an influx of net-zero commitments from companies, with 70% of global GDP covered by commitments to reach net-zero by 2050. However, the quality and ambition of such commitments have been inconsistent, leading to calls for greater standardisation. The new SBTi Net-Zero Standard provides a common, robust, science-based understanding of net-zero.

Under the new SBTi Net-Zero Standard – a benchmark for corporate net-zero commitments – companies reach net-zero when they have achieved their long-term science-based target. This requires deep decarbonisation of 90-95% before 2050 for most companies.

Wendy Clark, CEO, dentsu international, said: “At dentsu we are proud to be one of the first companies to have our net-zero target validated by the SBTi. The IPCC report shows that long-term action on carbon is essential to limit the worst impacts of climate change. Our new long-term plan sets an ambition that matters to our people, our clients and society. It will require innovation, diversity of thought, creativity and multi-sector collaboration. That’s the type of challenge our 45,000+ people embrace.”

Dentsu’s new long-term deep decarbonisation target – a first for the industry - drives the decarbonisation already underway in its business deeper and further. It follows the launch of its near-term science-based target in 2020 to reduce absolute emissions by 46.2% by 2030. Clear, long-term emissions reduction targets are the only way the worst impacts of climate change can be limited, reducing the reliance of business and industry on offsetting, and supporting the acceleration of wider energy, transport and societal transformation.

Anna Lungley, chief sustainability officer, dentsu international, said: “The SBTi has set the bar on climate action high, providing clear guidelines that focus on deep decarbonisation over the long term. The new SBTi Net-Zero Standard will create alignment, facilitate investment and most importantly, drive action. At dentsu we are committed to the most ambitious level of climate action and won’t claim net-zero until we get there.”

Alberto Carrillo Pineda, co-founder and managing director of the SBTi, said: “Companies are currently self-defining net-zero targets without credible and independent assessment of their ambition and integrity.

“For the first time, the SBTi Net-Zero Standard offers companies robust certification to demonstrate to consumers, investors and regulators that their net-zero targets are reducing emissions at the pace and scale required to keep global warming to 1.5°C. We’re now inviting all companies with net-zero targets and ambitions to show stakeholders that their decarbonization

pathway is aligned with science. And the rest of the business sector - we call on you to join the Race to Zero.”

Year-on-year, dentsu reported strong results against its environmental and social targets for 2020, leading the industry in being the first to achieve both RE100 accreditation for its sourcing of 100% renewable electricity, reducing absolute carbon emissions by 39% across its operations in 2019, and setting a 2030 science-based target for emissions reduction.

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