

Title: [Do you still need convincing? '](#)

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There is no simple solution for businesses looking to address the environmental issue.

The vast array of advisers, consultants and professional persuaders that have emerged in recent years have aided but also muddied the waters somewhat as to who companies can turn to for robust advice.

The level of conflicting advice can not only be baffling but off-putting. The drinks industry is, however, well served by bodies whose sole task is to help businesses commit on environmental issues.

We asked both drinks specific and generic bodies what kind of steps they are taking to help businesses manage their own environmental footprints.

The Carbon Trust: Tom Delay, chief executive:

Climate change is becoming one of the most important issues facing business today.

Whether responding to consumer pressure for greener products, reducing energy costs through cutting carbon emissions or factoring it into planning, businesses will be impacted in all areas by changing conditions.

Cutting carbon emissions, the key cause of climate change, is essential. The beverages, food and tobacco industries are responsible for around 5% of all business emissions in the UK.

The Carbon Trust estimates that just through introducing simple low- or no-cost measures to reduce energy consumption, emissions could be reduced by more than 430,000 tonnes of CO2 each year.

The Carbon Trust can help businesses in the drinks sector reduce their carbon footprints. It offers a range of services – from energy efficiency audits to an online, free publication library with hundreds of factsheets detailing energy-saving steps.

Businesses with an energy bill of more than £50,000 a year can apply for a free energy survey from the Carbon Trust.

This involves a trust consultant visiting your site and looking at how energy use can be reduced across the business and producing a detailed action plan. Small and medium sized businesses can also apply for an interest-free loan of up to £100,000 (£200,000 in Northern Ireland) to fund the purchase of energy efficient equipment.

Once businesses have reduced their direct emissions, the next stage is to cut carbon emissions in the supply chain. The Carbon Trust worked with Innocent Drinks to conduct a source to shelf carbon audit of Innocent's supply chain, in order identify the carbon footprint of a mango and passion fruit smoothie.

Following this and other pilot projects, it is now working with Defra and the British Standards Institute to develop a publicly available standard that will enable businesses of all sizes to identify and analyse the carbon emissions embodied within the products and services they provide.

Innocent is also currently partnering with the Carbon Trust to trial a carbon reduction label, which gives consumers information on the carbon footprint of a smoothie, as well as illustrating Innocent's commitment to make further carbon cuts in the next two years. Boots and Walkers are also involved in the trial, with Walkers showing the carbon reduction label on packet, Boots at point of sale and innocent's footprint is available online.

Through cutting its own carbon emissions and demonstrating the carbon impact of their products, the UK drinks industry will have an important role to play in the fight against climate change.

For more details contact: www.carbontrust.co.uk or 0800 085 2005.

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World Wildlife Fund: Nora Berrahmouni, Cork Oak Landscapes Programme coordinator, WWF Mediterranean Office:

The issue of packaging, and closures in particular, is a key part of the green debate. The environmental impact of closures is more far-reaching than many people realise – beyond carbon emissions, which are much discussed at the moment, communities, economies and landscapes are all affected by closures.

The cork forests of the Western Mediterranean cover 2.7 million hectares and the region is one of the world's top 25 biodiversity hotspots. Over 100,000 people are employed in the forests, which rely on the wine trade for about 70% of their economic value.

Organisations' decisions on whether or not to use cork closures therefore affect hundreds of thousands of people and the survival of important natural habitats.

The environmental credentials of cork closures are strong. Cork is a totally green product. It is a 100% natural, re-useable and recyclable product. It is biodegradable, so there is no landfill, and there is no wastage during the production process – every last particle is used.

Cork oak trees are not felled during harvest; the bark grows back over a 9-12 year period making cork a constant and renewable product.

If the amount of cork needed by the wine industry continues to decrease, the people who live and work in the cork oak forests and earn their living from the cork trade would be forced to find alternative sources of income. Human desertification leads to physical desertification – when forests are then not managed properly they are prone to over-grazing, conversion to other uses, fires and soil erosion, all of which can result in desertified land very quickly.

In some cases, the land will be converted for more profitable, but less environmentally friendly uses.

Without rapid action, there could be a massive rural exodus from the cork oak landscapes. Forest fires are the first sign of abandonment and Portugal is already seeing huge numbers of forest fires year after year. In 2003, 425,000 hectares were destroyed by forest fires.

To guarantee the long term survival of cork forests, WWF is urging wine producers and retailers to consider their environmental credentials and keep using cork stoppers in order to maintain a market which ensures forests are preserved from fires and desertification.

WWF is also asking cork producers to improve and guarantee they have the best management practices on the ground.

The WWF is highlighting the availability of FSC-certified cork as a viable solution to the needs of both the environment and the wine industry. The FSC (Forestry Stewardship Council) is an international, non-governmental membership organisation that provides accreditation of forests around the world and ensures that forestry products come from a responsibly managed source.

FSC provides producers and retailers with a chance to tap into the growing demand for environmentally-friendly products. By providing and using FSC-accredited cork wherever possible, the cork and wine industries will be taking positive strides towards protecting the sustainability of the Western Mediterranean cork forests and economic vitality of the region.

At risk is an entire landscape, which could be lost forever.

Waste & Resources Action programme (WRAP): Andy Dawe, glass technology manager:

The WRAP Retail team is working with the retail supply chain to encourage and enable businesses to reduce waste.

WRAP's GlassRite Wine and GlassRite Beer, Cider and Spirits projects are investigating the economic, technical and quality issues associated with lightweight glass bottles and the bulk importation of wine and beer into the UK by working with the whole of the supply chain including winemakers, manufacturers, retailers and brands.

The UK is the largest importer of wine in the world, with over one billion litres imported every year. Around 80% of this currently arrives bottled. Much of this wine is imported in green bottles – not all of this green glass can be

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used in the UK, as most manufacturing is of clear glass containers.

Importing wine in bulk saves transport costs and emissions and also creates a market for the green glass to be used in UK manufactured wine bottles.

Currently wine bottles on UK shelves vary in weight between 300g and almost 1kg. By moving to lighter-weight bottles, drinks companies can reduce the amount of glass in the waste stream and save transport and material costs and carbon emissions.

The GlassRite project already involves the likes of Morrisons, Tesco, Asda, Constellation Europe, PLB Wines and Kingsland Wines & Sprints. To date it is expected to save a combined annual weight of just under 6,000 tonnes of glass.

For more information on using lightweight bottles and transporting wine in bulk can be found on WRAP's website at www.wrap.org.uk/retail, by emailing glassrite@wrap.org.uk