



TRIODOS

“A lot of what we’ve done has been ahead of the curve, so we have had to design the systems ourselves”

.....

Design for Planet is Design Council’s ambitious new approach to galvanise and support the UK’s 1.69 million-strong design community to address the climate crisis.

This strategic shift recognises the fundamental need to redesign our lives to save our planet, and champions the power and responsibility of designers to shape a better world.

Our Design for Planet case studies will showcase ten leaders in sustainable design from a diverse range of disciplines. They will explore the role of design as a powerful agent of change through sustainability and climate-action. We want these case studies to inspire and motivate the design community to prioritise the welfare of the planet in their own work and practises.

TRIODOS

The term ethical banking might seem like a contradiction in terms – after all, the finance sector is not usually associated with being a force for good. For sustainable bank Triodos however, using money to make a positive impact is fundamental to the business model. Founded over forty years ago and operating in the UK since 1995, the bank's commitment to its principles is precisely the appeal for over 700,000 customers who see themselves as part of a movement that's changing the world for the better.

At the vanguard of sustainable design in the finance sector, Triodos are challenging systemic practices and setting an example of what can be achieved when you change your mindset.

Amy Robinson, corporate projects manager at Triodos Bank UK, champions its work to change the financial system for the better.

Can you describe Triodos and how it is different to a conventional bank?

We were set up expressly to support projects, companies, charities, any sort of organisation that's demonstrating environmental, social and/or cultural good. We have much higher levels of transparency than you would usually see in the finance sector, publishing details of every organisation that we lend money to.

Our annual impact report breaks down the number of acres of organic farming that we fund, the number of social care beds that we fund, and our renewable energy generation.

The bank's Dutch founders' view was that banking can be a powerful force for good. They thought Triodos would only be around for a few years, until everyone caught on and saw that this was a better way of doing things and we became obsolete. But over 40 years later we're still here!

.....

“The bank's Dutch founders' view was that banking can be a powerful force for good.”



Triodos Bank

Welcome to Triodos Banking
Triodos Bank

ACCOUNT

GRIT

What role do banks have to play in sustainability and how is it informed by design?

Innovative design has been integral to our success and continues to drive us. As one of the founders of the Global Alliance for Banking on Values, we've worked with others to change the financial system and demonstrate that banking can be done in a different, sustainable way.

We were one of the organisations that initially established PCAF (the Partnership For Carbon Accounting Financials) with the aim of understanding the carbon emissions of our loans and investments. We believe that banks must be accountable for the impact of their portfolios.

We invest in projects led by values, on a longer return basis, whether it's a renewable energy project or regenerative, organic farming.

.....

“A lot of what we've done has been ahead of the curve, so we have had to design the systems ourselves.”



Designers need to define clear and meaningful goals, with partners, from the beginning of the design process. How have Triodos managed this?

We try to focus on using money as a powerful force for good. We believe money is a means to an end, not an end in itself. Many businesses still view acting in an ethical and sustainable way as compromising their ambition and their bottom line, but we have seen steady, sustainable growth and our default rate is extremely low.

We inform the design of the businesses we invest in. We're able to help them design their businesses with sustainable principles because our motivation is not to maximise our profit, but to further their impact.


We've also just announced our net zero strategy and target. In doing so, we have adopted a holistic approach which supports our mission to create positive impact on people and nature. We want to reduce emissions, whilst also considering biodiversity and social inclusion of all people. We will do this by collaborating with clients, customers and other stakeholders to help ensure the transition is fair and inclusive.



.....

“We’ve worked with others to change the financial system and demonstrate that banking can be done in a different, sustainable way.”

AMY ROBINSON
CORPORATE PROJECTS MANAGER,
TRIODOS BANK UK



Welcome
to
sustainable
banking

Triodos  Bank

How do you measure your impact?

You have to have a consistent, coherent way of tracking your sustainable goals and as a small bank we punch above our weight in this area.

Because a lot of what we've done has been ahead of the curve, we have had to design the systems ourselves. We've got an internal impact assessment tool called PRISM, which was set up to help determine the environmental, social and cultural impacts of our lending. We use the results as a basis for discussions with our customers throughout the duration of their lending relationship with us, to support them to increase their impact.

Where possible, we aim to collaborate with others in the sector to share best practice. PCAF (referenced above) is a good example of this. It has enabled us to analyse our loan portfolio by sector, so that we can better understand how to decarbonise. The methodology has now been adopted by over 100 financial institutions worldwide.

We are working to create a movement for change, joining forces with other sustainable banks around the world to increase our impact.

.....

“We are able to help our customers design their businesses with sustainable principles because our motivation is to further their impact through our relationship with them.”



Design Council
Eagle House
167 City Road
London EC1V 1AW



info@designcouncil.org.uk



020 7420 5200



designcouncil.org.uk