

Prompt cheat sheet for sustainability professionals

How do I use this?

Combine “The prompt” with context, role, tone, structure and constraints in one final prompt to your liking. Also, upload relevant documents to help AI stay on track. Remember that the first response from AI might not be ideal, so keep going and stay conversational: The second, fifth, or tenth might be the one you truly want.

You are still the expert

Reviewing and validating all AI activity is key; never blindly trust the AI’s output.

Prompt 1: The “report rescue” narrative drafter

This prompt is designed to bypass the “blank page” panic by forcing the AI to structure existing internal data rather than inventing facts. Use this when you have raw notes from compliance or stakeholders but need a formal draft.

The prompt

“Act as a Sustainability Controller for a [Insert Industry, e.g. Financial Services] firm. We need to draft the ‘[Insert Section, e.g. Social Governance]’ section of our report. **Do not invent facts.** Use the provided context only. Synthesize this information into a 3-paragraph narrative.”

The constraints and inputs

- ✓ **Tone:** Professional, audit-ready, and concise.
- ✓ **Structure:** Align strictly with [Specific EU Standard, e.g. ESRS G1] requirements.
- ✓ **Upload/paste:** Upload your raw meeting notes, internal compliance takeaways, or Q3 stakeholder survey results as the “context” for the AI to arrange.

Prompt 2: The data analyst and trend spotter

Instead of asking for generic text, this prompt uses AI to interrogate your specific environmental data to find the narrative for you. This is useful for writing the “Strategy” or “Metrics and Targets” sections for your report.

The prompt

“Show me our [Insert Metric, e.g. CO2 emissions] from last year, compare it with the year before, and identify the primary drivers of any changes. Based on this data, provide pointers on what to improve. You must only use the provided data.”

The constraints and inputs

- ✓ **Context:** Explicitly state that the AI must only use the dataset provided and not external benchmarks unless requested.
- ✓ **Upload/paste:** You must have your verified data (e.g. Scope 1, 2, and 3 spreadsheets) uploaded or available in the system so the AI is grounding its answer in **your reality**, not general industry averages.

Prompt 3: The compliance gap checker

Use this to validate a draft you have already written against the complex disclosure requirements of the ESRS. This applies the “Constraint” methodology to quality assurance.

The prompt

“Act as an external auditor. Review the text below against the disclosure requirements for [Insert Standard, e.g. ESRS E1-5: Energy Consumption]. Identify any mandatory disclosure points that are missing or where the language is too vague to meet compliance standards.”

The constraints and inputs

- ✓ **Reference material:** Ensure you have uploaded the specific text of the relevant ESRS standard as a knowledge base file so the AI has the correct “rulebook” to check against.
- ✓ **Input:** Paste your current draft of the section.

Prompt 4: The policy synthesizer

This is for when you have disparate internal documents (old reports, new emails, policy updates) and need to merge them into a single coherent policy statement.

The prompt

"I am providing you with our old sustainability report and notes on our new anti-money laundering updates. Synthesize these into an updated 'Governance Policy' text. Highlight exactly where changes were made to reflect the new notes."

The constraints and inputs

- ✓ **Role:** "Compliance Officer".
- ✓ **Upload/Paste:** Upload the old report and the new notes as separate distinct inputs. This prevents the AI from relying on its training data and keeps it focused on the task.

Prompt 5: The “transition plan” alignment check

Transition plans (ESRS E1-1) are complex and high-risk. This prompt helps you validate your strategic draft against the strict letter of the law without asking the AI to write the strategy for you.

The prompt

"You are a Senior Sustainability Strategist with a deep understanding of EFRAG guidelines. Review the attached draft of our 'Climate Change Mitigation Transition Plan'. Cross-reference it strictly against the disclosure requirements of ESRS E1-1. Identify any specific sub-requirements (e.g. locked-in emissions, decarbonization levers) that we have failed to address in this draft."

The constraints and inputs

- ✓ **Upload:** Upload the official text of ESRS E1-1 (referenced in the table of contents) and your current internal draft of the transition plan.
- ✓ **Constraint:** "Do not rewrite the plan. Only list gaps and missing mandatory disclosures."

Prompt 6: The “double materiality” synthesizer

This prompt helps you process large volumes of qualitative stakeholder data (surveys, interviews) into a coherent materiality assessment.

The prompt

“Act as a Data Analyst. I have uploaded the raw transcripts from our stakeholder interviews and the open-text responses from our Q3 survey. Analyze this data to identify the top 5 sustainability risks most frequently cited by our stakeholders. Group them by ‘Financial materiality’ and ‘Impact materiality’.”

The constraints and inputs

- ✓ **Upload:** Your raw spreadsheet exports or PDF transcripts from stakeholder engagement.
- ✓ **Context:** “Use only the provided transcripts. Do not infer risks from general industry trends.”

Prompt 7: The “tone of voice” calibrator

This prompt uses your old report not as a data source (which would be outdated), but as a style guide to ensure the new report sounds like your company.

The prompt

“You are a Corporate Communications Editor. I am pasting rough notes for our new ‘Biodiversity’ section below. Rewrite these notes into a polished narrative. **Use the attached ‘2023 Annual Report’ strictly as a style and tone guide (vocabulary, sentence structure, formality). Do NOT use any facts or data from the 2023 report; only use the data in the notes below.**”

The constraints and inputs

- ✓ **Upload:** Your previous year's full sustainability report (as the style reference).
- ✓ **Input:** Your current year's raw data/bullet points for the specific section.

Prompt 8: The policy gap analysis

With standards changing fast (e.g. anti-money laundering or human rights), you often need to see if old policies hold up.

The prompt

"Compare our existing 'Supplier Code of Conduct' (Document A) against the 'Value Chain' disclosure requirements found in the uploaded ESRS documentation (Document B). Highlight clauses in our current policy that need to be updated to ensure we can capture the necessary data for reporting."

The constraints and inputs

- ✓ **Upload:** Your current internal policy document and the relevant ESRS standard (e.g. ESRS G1 or S2).

Strategic note

All these prompts require you to add your real data. Never ask the AI to "write a report for a bank". Always provide existing, trusted information first to minimize the risk of the AI inventing things that are not real.

Disclaimer!

This document is for educational purposes and does not constitute legal advice.