

Sustainable Energy First secures major investment to scale up net zero support for organisations

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Energy and utility consultancy [Sustainable Energy First](#) has secured a significant investment from Beech Tree Private Equity, to accelerate its net zero offering. The investment will support Sustainable Energy First's objective to decarbonise the UK's business community by 327,000 tonnes CO₂e by 2028.

Sustainable Energy First was founded by Russ Priestley and Chris Jones in 1997 to address the cost and complexity associated with business's energy needs. Since then, it has grown to become one of the UK's most prominent energy and net zero consultancies. It supports clients across the whole spectrum of the public and private sectors, including NHS trusts, councils, global restaurant chains and the majority of large UK supermarkets.

The company is focused on reducing the carbon footprint of its clients, which account for 3.5% of UK business power consumption. In effect, it has aligned its own sustainability ambitions with those of its clients and prospects. Eradicating 327,000 tonnes CO₂e by 2028 is the goal – this is the equivalent to taking 73,000 cars off the road.

To achieve this aim, Sustainable Energy First – which is a certified B Corporation and has Investors in People Gold accreditation – has engendered a culture where every team member is a “sustainability changemaker”. Staff are encouraged to use their vast collective experience to help customers slash their carbon footprint, identifying opportunities for decarbonisation.

Accelerating the clean energy transition

Beech Tree's investment will allow Sustainable Energy First to expand on its core service offering, which includes clean energy procurement, revenue recovery, compliance support and net zero consultancy. In particular, Sustainable Energy First has set its sights on accelerating corporate take-up of clean energy.

One service area earmarked for growth is the Sustainable Energy Consortium – a pioneering group buying approach which makes truly renewable energy accessible to more businesses. It will also be scaling up its successful Corporate Power Purchase Agreements (CPPAs) service for large organisations. A CPPA is a direct energy contract between a renewable generator and a large corporate consumer.

Russ Priestley, Founder of Sustainable Energy First, said: "The co-investment with Beech Tree and the management team will increase our service capabilities, marking a new highly progressive chapter for Sustainable Energy First and our clients".

Michael Abbott, CEO of Sustainable Energy First, said: "I am delighted to have been a part of the Sustainable Energy First journey over the last 7 years and hugely excited about what the future holds. Continuing to work with Russ alongside Beech Tree creates a unique opportunity for our colleagues and clients".

Commenting on the transaction, Andy Marsh, Managing Partner at Beech Tree, said: "We are delighted to partner with the Sustainable Energy First team whose core mission is to reduce the carbon footprint for its customers. We are excited to support the team in continuing to deliver market leading organic growth and supplement it with strategic acquisitions and further investment in data and technology to accelerate the momentum of the business".