



India 2026 SBTi Roadmaps: Sector Targets, MRV and Finance-Ready Net Zero Plans

By Sudarshan Karweer · 31 August 2026 · growthifye.com

How Indian companies can build SBTi-aligned decarbonisation roadmaps in 2026 with MRV, capex sequencing, finance and sector-specific actions.

Indian companies are entering a phase where net-zero claims must stand up to investor scrutiny, customer due diligence, lender review and board-level capital allocation tests. In 2026, the bar is no longer limited to publishing a sustainability report or disclosing headline emissions. Companies are being asked a more practical set of questions: are targets aligned with a recognised pathway, are emissions data audit-ready, what projects will actually deliver abatement, what does each tonne cost, and how will progress be monitored year by year?

For many Indian corporates, the most credible way to answer these questions is to build a science-aligned decarbonisation roadmap anchored in robust measurement, sector-specific actions and financial realism. That is where SBTi alignment matters. A roadmap that translates climate ambition into a monitored capex-and-opex plan is becoming essential not only for listed companies and exporters, but also for private manufacturers, infrastructure platforms, large commercial consumers, RE developers, lenders and utilities serving industrial loads.

This article sets out a practitioner framework for building SBTi-style net-zero roadmaps in India in 2026, with specific relevance for sectors facing energy cost volatility, export pressure, BRSR Core expectations, supply-chain disclosures and rising lender attention to transition credibility.

Why SBTi-style roadmaps matter in India in 2026

Indian companies are now dealing with several overlapping pressures:

- BRSR and BRSR Core expectations have pushed many large firms to improve emissions data quality and assurance preparedness.
- Export-oriented sectors are under closer scrutiny from global buyers seeking product-level and supplier-level emissions visibility.
- Lenders increasingly want transition plans that link emissions reduction to cash flow resilience, energy security and regulatory preparedness.
- State and central policy support for renewables, storage, electrification and green hydrogen is improving, but project selection still requires disciplined economics.
- Carbon-market architecture, including India CCTS readiness and Article 6 opportunities, is making MRV capability strategically valuable.

An SBTi-aligned roadmap is useful because it imposes discipline on target design. Instead of a broad aspiration such as reducing emissions “substantially” by 2030, the company commits to a pathway tied to sector logic, baseline quality and time-bound implementation. In practice, this improves internal decision-making. Energy, operations, procurement, finance and sustainability teams can work from one plan rather than parallel narratives.

In India, this is especially relevant for steel re-rollers, cement grinding units, chemicals, auto ancillaries, textiles, food processing, data centres, pharma plants, commercial real estate portfolios and logistics-linked



businesses. These sectors differ in energy mix, process emissions, thermal requirements and financing structure, but all benefit from a roadmap that separates immediate low-cost actions from medium-term technology shifts.

Start with an audit-ready emissions baseline, not a target slogan

The first mistake many companies make is to announce a target before they have a defensible baseline. In 2026, that approach creates risk. If Scope 1, Scope 2 and material Scope 3 boundaries are weak, the roadmap will fail at board review, external assurance or customer validation.

A practical baseline in India should cover:

- Scope 1: stationary fuel combustion, process emissions where relevant, mobile fuel use, fugitive emissions such as refrigerants
- Scope 2: purchased electricity, with a clear treatment of grid electricity, captive supply, open access renewable procurement and contractual instruments
- Scope 3: prioritised categories such as purchased goods, fuel- and energy-related activities, upstream transport, waste, business travel, use of sold products or downstream logistics where material

For industrial companies, at least 24 to 36 months of energy and production data is useful to normalise anomalies such as demand curtailment, fuel switching, shutdowns or one-off process changes. Plants should reconcile invoices, meter data, DG consumption, fuel stock records and production logs. For diversified groups, legal-entity boundaries and operational control must be clearly documented.

Emission factors also need attention. Grid factors, fuel factors, refrigerant GWP values and supplier-specific data assumptions should be version-controlled. If product carbon footprints may be required by customers, plant-level allocation methods should be aligned early rather than retrofitted later.

This is where [Carbon accounting & disclosure](/coreservices/netzerodecarbonisation/carbonaccountinganddisclosure) becomes strategically important. Without reliable baseline architecture, no target pathway or financing narrative will be credible.

Build the roadmap by wedge, not by generic ambition

Once the baseline is set, the roadmap should be built as an abatement stack. That means identifying the key reduction wedges by source, timing, technology readiness and cost. For most Indian C&I businesses, the decarbonisation stack in 2026 will typically include the following:

- Energy efficiency and process optimisation
- Renewable electricity procurement
- Thermal fuel switching and electrification
- Refrigerant management and fugitive reduction
- Logistics optimisation and fleet transition
- Supplier engagement for high-impact Scope 3 categories
- Green hydrogen or low-carbon fuels for hard-to-abate heat applications where justified
- Residual emissions management supported by robust MRV and market readiness

This wedge-based design is superior to broad target statements because it reveals what is actually possible before 2030 and what may remain dependent on technology, infrastructure or policy post-2030.



For example, a ceramic, chemicals or food processing plant may reduce 15-25% of total emissions through efficiency, waste-heat recovery, motor-system optimisation, compressed-air leakage control and better heat integration, often at abatement costs below Rs 2,000 per tonne CO₂e and with paybacks under three years.

A large commercial or data-centre operator may achieve a major Scope 2 reduction through open access solar, hybrid wind-solar supply, storage-backed procurement and load management. Depending on state and contract structure, landed renewable tariffs in 2026 may sit around Rs 3.2-4.8/kWh for plain vanilla supply, while firming or RTC-style products can move into the Rs 5.0-7.5/kWh band depending on profile, state charges, banking rules and storage duration assumptions.

For thermal loads, electrification economics depend on temperature band and duty cycle. Low- and medium-temperature process heat applications can increasingly justify heat pumps, electric boilers or induction-based systems where power quality, connection capacity and tariff design work. However, above certain temperature thresholds, direct electrification may still be constrained by technology fit or operating cost, which is why green hydrogen and biomass-derived alternatives remain under active evaluation in select sectors.

Use MACC discipline to prioritise capex and sequence action

Many transition plans fail because they treat all opportunities as equal. In reality, the CFO and operating teams need a ranked portfolio. A robust marginal abatement cost curve, or MACC, remains one of the most useful tools in 2026 for Indian corporates because it converts climate action into an investment sequence.

A good MACC should show for each measure:

- annual abatement potential in tCO₂e
- capex requirement
- incremental opex or savings
- payback period and IRR
- implementation timeline
- technology risk
- dependency on policy, fuel availability or approvals
- co-benefits such as energy security, water savings, local air quality or export competitiveness

In practice, companies should separate “no-regret” measures from “optionality” measures.

No-regret measures usually include:

- high-efficiency motors and VFDs
- steam-system optimisation
- combustion tuning
- waste heat recovery
- compressed air optimisation
- HVAC and refrigeration upgrades
- lighting and controls
- rooftop solar where load and roof quality are suitable
- near-term open access renewable procurement where charges are stable and group captive structures are feasible



Optionality measures often include:

- deep process redesign

n- electric process heat retrofits requiring network upgrades

- battery storage for peak shaping or renewable firming
- biomass or biofuel conversion with feedstock reliability constraints
- green hydrogen pilots
- captive renewable plus storage configurations with complex financing structures

This is exactly where [Net-zero roadmaps & MACC](/coreservices/netzerodecarbonisation/netzeroroadmapsandmacc) adds value. The roadmap should not merely state what can be done; it should define what should be done first, what should be piloted, and what should be deferred until technology costs or policy conditions improve.

Align targets with Indian sector realities and global customer expectations

Indian companies should avoid copying overseas decarbonisation templates without adjusting for local realities. Grid emissions intensity, DISCOM tariff structures, open access charges, fuel availability, logistics bottlenecks, financing costs and state-level policy variation materially change project economics.

A credible 2026 roadmap usually needs to reflect:

- the company's sector-specific emissions profile
- expected production growth or product-mix changes
- site-level constraints on renewable integration and electrification
- access to low-carbon feedstock or fuels
- export-market expectations on emissions intensity and disclosure
- lender requirements for project bankability and monitoring

For example, a metals manufacturer with high thermal intensity cannot present the same pathway as an IT campus or warehousing portfolio. Likewise, a cement or lime player with process emissions must distinguish between energy-related reduction and process-related residuals. Textile exporters may face faster pressure from global brands on supplier emissions transparency than domestic-market peers. Auto and electronics suppliers may need product-level data to remain on approved vendor lists.

This is why target setting should include both absolute and intensity lenses where relevant. Absolute reduction is essential for climate credibility, but intensity metrics can help operational teams manage performance during output growth. The key is to avoid hiding rising total emissions behind efficiency improvements alone.

Make MRV lender-ready and implementation-focused

The roadmap is only as good as its monitoring system. In 2026, MRV is not a back-office reporting exercise; it is the operating spine of the decarbonisation programme.

A practical MRV framework for Indian corporates should include:

- source-wise activity data registers with ownership assigned to plant, utility, procurement and logistics teams
- monthly energy and emissions dashboards by site and business unit



- a documented factor library and update protocol
- renewable energy claim governance, including treatment of captive, open access and contractual supply
- project-level savings verification methods
- internal controls for meter calibration, invoice reconciliation and exception management
- supplier data collection protocols for material Scope 3 categories
- assurance trail suitable for board review, BRSR Core support and lender due diligence

For lenders and infrastructure investors, transition plans are becoming more useful when they can be monitored like any other operating programme. That means milestone-based capex tracking, verified performance, sensitivity analysis and downside scenarios. If a renewable procurement strategy depends on a certain open access charge assumption or banking regime, that sensitivity should be explicit. If a fuel-switching project depends on biomass availability within a certain radius, the supply risk should be documented.

Utilities and RE developers should pay attention here as well. Offtakers increasingly prefer solution providers that can support emissions accounting logic, not just energy delivery. A renewable contract that cannot be mapped clearly into a customer's emissions ledger and assurance process is less valuable than one that can.

Link decarbonisation strategy to finance, competitiveness and carbon-market readiness

The strongest transition roadmaps are not sustainability documents. They are competitiveness documents.

In India, a finance-ready roadmap can improve decision-making across several fronts:

- lower exposure to volatile grid tariffs and fossil fuel costs
- stronger case for capex prioritisation in internal budgeting
- better lender confidence due to clearer implementation milestones
- improved supplier standing with global customers requiring emissions transparency
- earlier readiness for carbon-market participation or compliance-linked MRV regimes
- reduced risk of stranded assets from delayed technology shifts

Carbon-market readiness deserves specific attention. Even where direct monetisation is uncertain, building high-quality MRV capability now has option value. Companies with reliable baselines, project-level quantification and auditable controls will be better positioned if India's CCTS architecture expands in sectoral depth, or if Article 6-linked opportunities become relevant for specific project types. The ability to evidence real, additional and measured reductions will matter far more than simply claiming intent.

For hard-to-abate sectors, this also means using pilot programmes intelligently. Not every company should invest immediately in hydrogen, storage-heavy systems or deep process redesign. But many should run technical and commercial pilots now, build data and understand the real abatement cost under Indian conditions. Pilot discipline is better than waiting for perfect clarity and then scrambling under customer or policy pressure.

Finally, governance matters. The board should see not just annual emissions totals, but project pipeline status, cost of abatement, policy dependencies and performance against target trajectory. Climate strategy becomes durable only when it is treated as an operating and capital allocation issue.



What a credible 2026 roadmap should look like

A strong Indian decarbonisation roadmap in 2026 should result in a practical output pack:

- verified emissions baseline with boundary notes and assumptions
- materiality assessment across Scope 1, 2 and 3
- sector-specific target pathway aligned to business growth assumptions
- site-wise abatement levers and quantified reduction wedges
- MACC with capex, savings, risk and sequencing
- renewable procurement and electrification strategy
- hard-to-abate fuel transition assessment where relevant
- MRV design for annual tracking and assurance readiness
- financing and implementation plan with milestones through 2030 and beyond

This is no longer optional for many Indian businesses. Whether the trigger is customer pressure, lender diligence, BRSR Core expectations, energy-cost management or export competitiveness, the market is moving toward roadmap quality over headline ambition.

Companies that move early will have more flexibility in project sequencing, technology pilots, procurement strategy and financing discussions. Companies that delay will likely face compressed timelines, weak data and higher-cost decisions.

If your business is building a science-aligned transition pathway, needs a credible implementation plan, or wants to strengthen MRV and investment sequencing, contact Growthifye's advisory desk. Our team supports Indian industry with practical decarbonisation strategy, emissions measurement and execution planning.

Explore Growthifye's related capabilities

This analysis connects directly to our advisory practice: [\[Carbon accounting & disclosure\]\(/coreservices/netzerodecarbonisation/carbonaccountinganddisclosure\)](#) · [\[Net-zero roadmaps & MACC\]\(/coreservices/netzerodecarbonisation/netzeroroadmapsandmacc\)](#) · [\[RE-led decarbonisation\]\(/coreservices/netzerodecarbonisation/releddecarbonisation\)](#) · [\[Industrial efficiency & electrification\]\(/coreservices/netzerodecarbonisation/industrialefficiencyandelectrification\)](#).

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