Society

Carbon Reduction Plan

Technical Support Document

February 2025

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Context

Society is a purpose-driven global executive search firm that specialises in board and leadership appointments across sectors such as Education, Not-for-Profit, Hospitality & Leisure, and Purpose-Led Businesses. Certified as a B Corporation since 2019, Society's ethos is deeply rooted in integrity, collaboration, and creating meaningful social impact. Through its people-centred approach, Society strives to make hiring processes more inclusive, effective, and aligned with its clients' values.

Recognising the urgency of the climate crisis, Society has declared a Climate Emergency and committed to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050 or sooner. This ambition reflects Society's dedication to its B Corp principles and its broader responsibility to contribute positively to the environment and the communities it serves.

Society's Carbon Reduction Plan is underpinned by the GHG Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard, ensuring a transparent and comprehensive assessment of its carbon footprint. This report outlines Society's journey towards net-zero, including its 2023 emissions baseline, key hotspots such as business travel and procurement, and actionable strategies for reducing emissions. By embedding sustainability into its operations, Society aims to lead by example, demonstrating that environmental stewardship is integral to a successful and responsible business.

Reporting Period

Society has calculated the carbon emissions associated with business activities for the period 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2024. Our annual reporting period is 1st January to 31st December.

Carbon Footprint 2023

Table 1: Society's 2023 carbon footprint by scope and emission source (tCO_2e)

Scope	Category	2023	2024	2024%
Scope 1	Gas	1.20	0	0%
	Sub-total	**1.20**	**0**	0%
Scope 2	Market-based	2.24	0.75	4%
	Location-based	2.46	1.26	-
	Sub-total	**2.24**	**0.75**	0%
Scope 3	Purchased Goods & Services	35.64	20.95	75%
	Fuel and energy-related activities	0.25	0.09	<1%
	Waste	0.22	0.08	<1%
	Business Travel	6.85	0.52	2%
	Employee commuting	6.94	5.52	20%
	Sub-total	**49.90**	**27.16**	97%
	Total	**53.34**	**27.91**	100%
	Emission intensity (tCO_2e/FTE)	**2.71**	**1.69**	

Categories not-relevant to the organisational boundary: Capital goods, transport & distribution, processing of sold products, use of sold products, end-of-life treatment, leased assets, franchises, investments.

2023 Carbon Intensity: 2.71 tCO_2e per employee

Target Setting

Society is committed to setting a credible carbon reduction target that aligns with the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) and the goals of the Paris Agreement to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C. By adhering to SBTi guidance, Society ensures that its emissions reduction efforts are rooted in climate science and contribute meaningfully to the global effort to mitigate climate change.

Objectives

To meet our climate goals, Society will align our decarbonisation targets with guidance set forth by the SBTi. Society will set a near-term target, and commit to measure and reduce our scope 3 emissions.

Near-term Target

Society commits to reduce absolute Scope 1 and Scope 2 GHG emissions 42% by 2030 from a 2023 base year, and to measure and reduce its Scope 3 emissions.

Recommendations Overview

The following recommendations have taken into account:

- The identification of carbon hotspots within the overall emissions profile
- The nature of Society's core business activities
- The values and culture of the business

Table 3: Recommendation impact area and actions overview

Impact Areas	**REF**	**Category**
Procurement	PR1	Supplier Engagement
	PR2	Sustainable Procurement Policy
Travel	TR1	Business Travel
Employees	EE1	Employee Commuting
	EE2	Working from Home
	EE3	Staff Engagement
Energy	EN1	Renewable Energy

Recommendation Portfolio

PR1: Supplier Engagement

Objective: Drive emission reductions in Society's supply chain by engaging core suppliers and improving data accuracy.
Carbon Impact: High - 35.64tCO_2e or 67% of overall emissions in 2023.

Actions:

- Develop a supplier engagement programme that encourages emissions reporting and transparency.
- Collaborate with key suppliers to collect accurate emissions data and shift from spend-based to supplier-specific emissions calculations.
- This would replicate the engagement process carried out in 2024, which saw **6 tCO_2e** revised from the initial calculation as a result of supplier engagement.

Detail:

1. **Supplier Data Collection:**

- **Impact**: Accurate emissions data from suppliers is key to refining Scope 3 calculations and ensuring that Society's sustainability efforts are rooted in reliable metrics.
- **Action**: Introduce a supplier engagement programme that requests carbon footprint data from core suppliers. Society should focus on obtaining primary data from high-emission suppliers to ensure precise calculations. This could involve partnering with suppliers to assist them in developing emissions tracking capabilities if they do not already have this in place.

2. **Shift to Supplier-Specific Emissions Factors:**

- **Impact**: Moving from a spend-based to supplier-specific emissions calculation increases the accuracy of Scope 3, Category 1 emissions. This allows Society to reflect the actual carbon intensity of its key suppliers, avoiding overestimation or underestimation of emissions.
- **Action**: For high-emitting suppliers that can provide direct data, update the Scope 3 methodology to reflect supplier-specific emissions factors. Inhabit will assist in the integration of such into Society's supply chain.

3. **Supplier Collaboration for Emissions Reductions:**

- **Impact**: Partnering with suppliers to reduce emissions upstream can lead to significant reductions in Society's overall carbon footprint.
- **Action**: Collaborate with key suppliers to identify emission reduction opportunities within their operations. Share learnings and challenges from Society's sustainability journey both horizontally and vertically through the supply chain.

PR2: Sustainable Procurement Policy

Objective: Align procurement practices with Society's sustainability goals, focusing on environmentally responsible suppliers integrating comprehensive sustainability criteria.
Carbon Impact: High - 35.64tCO_2e or 67% of overall emissions in 2023.

Actions:

- Develop and Implement a Sustainable Procurement Policy.
- Establish, enforce sustainability criteria for suppliers.
- Engage suppliers in emissions reduction.
- Monitor and track emissions transparency.

Detail: Society's existing Responsible Procurement Policy already demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainability, prioritising green hardware and responsible disposal methods (refurbishment, recycling, etc.). However, it can be strengthened in the following ways to maximise alignment with its Carbon Reduction Plan:

- Broaden Scope Beyond Hardware: Society's current policy focuses on hardware procurement but could be expanded to include other high-emission procurement categories, such as marketing and advertising services, restaurants, and travel providers.
- Mandatory Emissions Reporting: While the policy promotes the use of the B Corp Directory and green certifications, it should include a timeline for mandatory supplier emissions reporting, ensuring greater transparency across all major procurement categories.
- Supplier Sustainability Benchmarks: Introduce specific benchmarks for supplier performance, such as a minimum percentage of renewable energy usage or an annual emissions reduction target, ensuring alignment with Society's net-zero goals.

Establish Sustainability Criteria for Suppliers:
Requiring suppliers to meet clearly defined sustainability criteria ensures that Society partners with businesses actively working to reduce their carbon footprint. This approach also positions Society as a leader in the executive search sector by embedding sustainability in its procurement practices. Examples of criteria include:

- Using renewable energy for operations and committing to GHG emissions reduction targets.
- Transparent carbon reporting with third-party verification (e.g., via the GHG Protocol or CDP).
- Demonstrating alignment with Society's values of empowerment and authenticity through sustainability initiatives.

Supplier Collaboration for Emissions Reductions:
Collaboration with suppliers is crucial to reducing upstream emissions effectively. Society should:

- Host workshops to educate suppliers on emissions reporting and reduction techniques.
- Share success stories from Society's sustainability journey to inspire action.
- Encourage a shift to supplier-specific emissions factors rather than spend-based calculations, improving the accuracy of Society's Scope 3 emissions data.

TR1: Business Travel

Objective: To reduce business travel emissions by introducing a framework for evaluating the necessity of travel and encouraging the use of low-impact transport modes wherever possible. The policy will also improve the collection and accuracy of travel data, with a focus on reducing air travel emissions.
Carbon Impact: Medium - 6.85tCO_2e or 13% of overall 2023 footprint.

Actions:

- Build on current business travel policy to embed a framework that covers the following:
    - What determines necessary travel,
    - When travel is necessary, can it be done as low-impact as possible.
- When flying, only fly with airlines that have published decarbonisation commitments.
- Optimise Travel Planning

Detail: Society's current Expenses and Sustainable Travel Policy provides a good starting point, emphasising sustainable travel modes and conscious decision-making. However, several areas for improvement have been identified to align the policy more closely with Society's ambitions:

Strengths of Current Policy:

- Promotes the use of sustainable transport options, such as trains and buses, where feasible.
- Recognises the importance of travel for Society's operations and client relationships.

Improvement Areas:

1. Lack of Explicit Guidelines for Necessity of Travel:
- The policy could benefit from a defined framework to evaluate whether travel is essential. Encouraging virtual alternatives as the default option for non-essential meetings could significantly reduce emissions (see Table 4).
2. Limited Focus on Emission Reduction Targets:
- No explicit targets are set for reducing business travel emissions (e.g., aiming to halve emissions by 2026).
3. Missed Opportunities for Supplier Selection:
- Prioritise airlines and transport providers with published commitments to reducing their carbon footprint.

Table 4: Decision pathway for Sustainable Business Travel

Step	Key Considerations	Action
1. Is travel necessary?	• Can the objective be achieved through virtual meetings? • Does everyone in the organisation have equal opportunities to travel for the same reasons? • Is the meeting high-priority (e.g., board-level negotiations, client relationships, or events requiring presence)?	• Avoid travel if objectives can be achieved virtually. • Reassess whether the meeting type truly requires in-person attendance. • Ensure travel opportunities are allocated equitably across teams and departments. • Define specific criteria for meetings/events that justify travel.
2. What mode should be used?	• Can low-impact options be prioritised? • Avoid domestic flights. • Can multiple meetings or purposes be combined into one trip?	• Use public transport (e.g., trains, buses) or active travel (e.g., cycling, walking) for domestic/local trips. • Opt for rail over air travel for journeys under 6 hours. • Consolidate travel to minimise emissions.
3. Can travel emissions be reduced further?	• Are the most efficient transport providers/routes available? • Can you work with airlines or providers with better environmental practices?	• Choose direct routes and economy class for flights. • Prefer sustainable airlines or fuel-efficient transport services.

EE1: Employee Commuting

Objective: To further enhance sustainable commuting options for Society employees by building on existing strong policies and initiatives, ensuring continued reductions in emissions and alignment with the organisation's sustainability goals.
Carbon Impact: Medium - 13% of 2023 emissions, or 6.94tCO_2e.

Actions:

- Promote existing commute initiatives, including the cycle to work scheme, season ticket loan, and electric vehicle salary sacrifice.

Detail: Given Society's accessibility to low-impact public transport, employee commuting constitutes a somewhat small proportion of overall emissions. With Transport for London aiming to decarbonise their services by 2030, we can anticipate that employee commute emissions will continue to fall under a 'business-as-usual' scenario.[1] In addition to this, continued promotion of the various instruments in place to support staff in sustainable commuting will provide guidance and a reference point for all new and existing employees to positively impact organisational emissions.

EE2: Working from Home Emissions

Objective: To reduce emissions associated with hybrid and homeworking by introducing sustainability considerations into Society's hybrid working arrangements. This includes supporting employees in transitioning to renewable energy sources and improving home energy efficiency.
Carbon Impact: Medium - 12.5% of 2023 emissions, or 6.22tCO_2e.

Actions:

- Gather primary data on home office energy suppliers, uptake of renewable energy among Society employees.
- Support employees in the transition to renewable energy tariffs in their homes.

Detail: The current Home and Hybrid Working Policy does not address the environmental implications of homeworking. This represents a missed opportunity, as hybrid working arrangements can significantly impact Scope 3 emissions. By incorporating sustainability into the policy, Society can:

- Reduce its overall carbon footprint.
- Empower employees to contribute to organisational sustainability goals.
- Align its policies with the broader objectives of its Carbon Reduction Plan.

An effective strategy to further mitigate emissions will be via education about and incentivisation of renewable energy in employee homes. There are multiple organisations and resource providers that can provide businesses with toolkits to educate employees on reducing both cost and consumption of their home energy, as well as active monitoring of energy use.[2] Engaging employees on their individual energy usage is an effective tool to encourage more sustainable behaviour.

[1] London Assembly (2021) TfL's Plan to decarbonise by 2030. Available online here: https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/questions-mayor/find-an-answer/tfls-plan-decarbonise-2030
[2] Big Clean Switch

Society will further explore financial incentivisation of helping employees switch to renewable energy tariffs in their home. This will be determined after the next round of employee engagement on their commute and homeworking environments.

EE3: Staff Engagement

Objective: To ensure that all employees are informed, engaged, and actively participating in Society's decarbonisation journey. A collaborative and well-informed workforce is critical to achieving Society's goals and fostering a culture of sustainability.
Carbon Impact: High (indirect)

Actions:

- Provide comprehensive training for all staff to ensure they understand Society's aims and how their roles contribute to achieving them.
- Develop engagement initiatives to promote active participation in sustainability practices, ensuring feedback loops and ongoing progress assessments.
- Introduce a platform for employees to share sustainability ideas and feedback.

Detail: Society's workplace culture values empowerment and collaboration, as reflected in workshop insights. These attributes provide a solid basis for embedding sustainability into everyday operations. Current communication strategies include regular updates about sustainability products and services. However, these could be expanded to include progress updates and active staff participation.

Proposed Enhancements:

1. **Sustainability Training:**

- Design and deliver role-specific training to ensure all employees understand their contribution to the sustainability targets.
- Cover topics such as carbon literacy, responsible procurement practices, and reducing homeworking and commuting emissions.

2. **Sustainability Communication:**

- Publish monthly or quarterly sustainability updates that highlight progress, key initiatives, and individual contributions.

EN1: Renewable Energy

Objective: To ensure that all employees are informed, engaged, and actively participating in Society's decarbonisation journey. A collaborative and well-informed workforce is critical to achieving Society's goals and fostering a culture of sustainability.
Carbon Impact: Low - 6% of 2023 emissions, or 3.44tCO_2e.

Actions:

- Gather primary data on energy consumption
- Achieve zero scope 1 and 2 office emissions from 2025 onwards
- Maintain zero scope 1 and 2 office emissions to 2030

Detail: Currently, Society's energy-related emissions account for 3.44 tCO_2e annually, with energy data for the New York office estimated rather than based on actual consumption.

Given the restructuring occurring within the business in 2024-25, we can anticipate a drop in Scope 1 and 2 emissions in subsequent years. With New York closing in 2024, New Zealand being fully remote, and London procuring through a 100% renewable tariff, we can expect scope 1 and market-based scope 2 emissions to report zero. Key to this recommendation will be to maintain zero emissions, through ensuring any anticipated office acquisitions or moves take into account the decarbonisation targets.

- Ensure any office moves or expansions are done within the context of the target, and that new spaces are not powered by fossil fuels and have accessibility to renewable tariffs.
- Conduct regular audits to identify inefficiencies in office energy use.
- Highlight London's renewable energy success and New Zealand's remote operational model as benchmarks.

OF1: Offset Procurement

Objective: To mitigate Society's operational emissions through the procurement of verified, high-quality carbon removal offsets.
Carbon Impact: Medium

Actions:

- Mitigate Society's environmental impact on route to decarbonisation targets by procuring enough carbon credits to cover the entirety of the organisation's operational emissions.

Detail:
Demonstrate leadership in the procurement of carbon credits from verified programs to mitigate Society's environmental impact. Inhabit highly recommends this practice. In order for global decarbonisation targets to be met, carbon will need to be removed from the atmosphere as much as its production needs to be avoided. Investing in high-quality carbon offset programs allows the industry to continue to scale, while delivering a range of co-benefits for local ecosystems and communities. Offset procurement also allows reporting companies to enhance the narrative of their decarbonisation journey and engage staff and stakeholders in their environmental stewardship.

In deciding how to structure an offset portfolio, consider the following questions:[3]

- Why is my organisation offsetting (to achieve neutrality? Net-zero? Purely to minimise impact?)?
- Do I want to invest in local (UK-based) projects?
- Is there a certain technology that our team is interested in?
- Are we interested in the conservation of a particular plant or animal species?
- What is my budget (£/tonne)?
- Are there specific additionality metrics we want to see our project hit?
- What is our risk appetite for offsetting projects?

[3] Inhabit Offset Guide

Summary

At Society, sustainability is at the heart of our values and commitment to meaningful change. Our Carbon Reduction Plan focuses on reducing emissions across key areas, including business travel, procurement, and hybrid working, as we work towards achieving net-zero by 2030. By addressing high-impact areas and refining our operations, such as transitioning the New York office to renewable energy and enhancing supplier engagement, we're setting the foundation for long-term impact.

We've already made strong progress, with London operating on renewable tariffs, robust commuting initiatives like the EV Salary Sacrifice and Cycle-to-Work schemes, and a culture of collaboration and empowerment driving our efforts. Moving forward, we'll continue to share our progress, engage our team, and refine our approach to ensure measurable, science-based emissions reductions that align with global sustainability goals.

Declaration and Sign-Off

TBD