

**2021 Northern Ireland Environmental Benchmarking Survey Report**

# **GIANTS OF SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS**

[www.bitcni.org.uk/NIEBS](http://www.bitcni.org.uk/NIEBS)

## GREENWORDS



**Grainia Long**  
Chief Executive,  
Northern Ireland  
Housing Executive, and  
Chair, Environmental  
Leadership Team,  
Business in the  
Community Northern  
Ireland

I am delighted to present the results of the 2021 Northern Ireland Environmental Benchmarking Survey. Now in its 23rd year, the Survey plays a key role in ensuring environmental issues are on the agenda in boardrooms across Northern Ireland. It also serves as a way for organisations to demonstrate to their stakeholders, to their sector, and to the general public that they are taking steps to become more sustainable.

I am very proud that my own organisation, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, is one of 33 organisations to have been awarded Platinum in the Survey results this year.

In 2021, 113 organisations participated in the Survey, which was an increase of 10% from last year, and the highest participation level since 2013. It is heartening that, despite the challenges of the pandemic, a commitment to sustainable business practices remains a priority for so many.

We welcome an impressive 21 'newcomers' to the Survey, in a large part due to the 'Bring a Business' initiative, which continues to demonstrate the positive influence organisations can have on their stakeholders and suppliers, ensuring environmental improvement works throughout the value chain.

16 organisations with fewer than 25 employees have taken part in the Small Business Survey, which was introduced in 2019. This demonstrates that, regardless of size, every business has a responsibility to take actions that are better for the planet.

Congratulations to all of the 2021 Survey participants and thank you for your involvement. I hope that you will continue to participate, continue to drive forward your environmental agenda, and encourage your key stakeholders and suppliers to get involved too.

Many challenges lie ahead. As announced at COP26, we are already 'at one minute to midnight' in terms of keeping global warming below 1.5C. I urge all Survey participants to sign up to Business in the Community's [Climate Action Pledge](#) (a cornerstone of the [Business Action on Climate](#) campaign) and to set and work towards ambitious targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Through this campaign, organisations in Northern Ireland can demonstrate their commitment to collaborating and addressing this critical issue.

Finally, I would like to thank Moy Park and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for making the Survey possible through their invaluable and continued support.

[Click here to watch the Northern Ireland Environmental Benchmarking Survey Greenwords on YouTube.](#)



**Minister Edwin Poots**  
Minister of Department  
of Agriculture,  
Environment and Rural  
Affairs

Since 1998, the NI Environmental Benchmarking Survey has been an important exercise enabling organisations in Northern Ireland to measure and compare their environmental performance and development.

However, the timely release of this report in the weeks following COP26, and considering the need to take action on climate change, it has never been more pertinent that businesses understand that 'green action' is no longer optional but necessary for a successful business, a stronger economy, and for a sustainable planet.

As Minister for the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, I am pleased to support the Survey once again. I am encouraged that 113 business participated in 2021, an increase on 2020, demonstrating that despite the challenges of the past 18 months, Northern Ireland organisations are continuing to prioritise the environment, and make and meet the commitments needed to ensure the highest standards of environmental performance.

I would like to commend each of these organisations, and their senior leaders and employees, for driving responsible and sustainable approaches, for their positive contribution to good environmental stewardship, and for their commitment to reducing environmental impacts and managing resources efficiently.

The Survey only increases in relevance every year, pushing the environmental agenda to the fore in Northern Ireland. It gives us insight into the extent to which environmental business practices have been embedded within the corporate strategies and operations of organisations, and it provides a clear framework for improvement. It is a powerful driver for action to improve environmental performance throughout organisations, sectors, and the region.

I would also like to extend a special welcome to the 21 new participating organisations who took part in the Survey for the first time this year. It is always encouraging to see newcomers join the Survey, clearly committed to better environmental practice and showing their desire to improve year-on-year.

A final congratulations to all participants for taking part and for putting themselves forward to publicly demonstrate their 'green credentials'.

## THE SURVEY

### THE SURVEY IN 2021

In a significant year, when the UK hosted the UN Climate Change Conference COP26, we continue to see rapid change in advancing the environmental agenda. Organisations are making ambitious commitments that are unprecedented, and many are committing to net-zero emissions through their own operations and supply chains.

Interest in the Northern Ireland Environmental Benchmarking Survey stays strong. Despite fears that the pandemic would take attention away from the environmental agenda, the opposite has been the case. In 2021, we recorded the highest participation level since 2013, and we have seen an increase in both the participation and average scores, highlighting businesses' commitment to environmental improvement.

This year, we are delighted to see participation in the Survey increase by 10% on 2020, from 103 to 113 companies, despite the challenging context in which we find ourselves. This was also the third year we offered the Small Business Survey.

The 2021 Survey questions remained largely the same as the previous year, with the addition of two new questions relating to the impact of COVID-19.

We continued to push participants to measure greenhouse gas emissions, not just their energy and transport usage, as had been the case before the 2020 Survey. We also asked participants whether they were measuring their value chain (scope 3) emissions, and whether they are considering and mitigating against climate risks posed to their organisation.

The Survey continues to attract companies at all stages of their environmental journey. It benchmarks organisations against both their sector peers and against leading Northern Ireland organisations, based on their environmental management and performance in key areas. It is a free and voluntary exercise that helps organisations identify environmental impacts, measure progress, drive improvement, and raise awareness of the environment as an important strategic and competitive issue at board level. The Survey has grown to become Northern Ireland's leading environmental benchmarking exercise, attracting

organisations from numerous industry sectors. It is recognised as a positive influencer that is helping organisations throughout Northern Ireland to achieve more sustainable ways of doing business.

### SMALL BUSINESS SURVEY

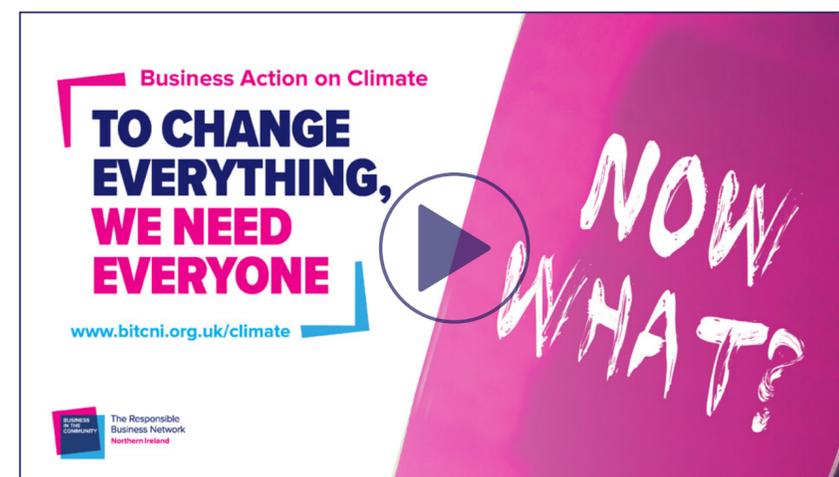
16 of Northern Ireland's small businesses participated in the Small Business Survey, a reduced version of the main Survey. The Small Business Survey was introduced in 2019 and offers businesses that employ fewer than 25 people the opportunity to demonstrate their environmental credentials alongside the major players in Northern Ireland.

### UPDATES TO THE SURVEY

We did not include any new scored questions in the 2021 Survey. Instead, we asked participating companies how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected their environmental impacts.

### BUSINESS ACTION ON CLIMATE

To date, 26 businesses have signed the [Climate Action Pledge](#), publicly committing to an ambitious reduction in GHG emissions by 2030. The pledge is part of Business in the Community's collaborative climate campaign **Business Action on Climate**, which puts Northern Ireland organisations at the forefront of action on the climate emergency.



For more information on this campaign visit [www.bitcni.org.uk/climate](http://www.bitcni.org.uk/climate)



## THE SURVEY

### WHY BENCHMARK?

The benchmarking process enables organisations to examine their performance and compare themselves with similar organisations. It also provides valuable opportunities to share ideas and to learn from what others are doing. Effective environmental management provides a way for organisations to make tangible cost savings, while contributing to a more sustainable future.

Set effective  
targets for  
improvement

Self-assess  
operational  
performance

Engage  
stakeholders

Obtain data  
to support  
decision-  
making

Achieve  
greater  
transparency

Strengthen  
organisational  
identity

Enhance  
reputation

Measure against,  
and compare  
with, other  
organisations

# 70%

of participants have identified  
potential climate-related risks to  
their organisation

# 85%

of participants have confirmed they have  
a procurement policy that incorporates a  
weighting for environmental factors

# 82%

of participants seek input from their  
employees on environmental  
issues or initiatives

## BENCHMARKING PROCESS

### HOW ORGANISATIONS ARE SCORED

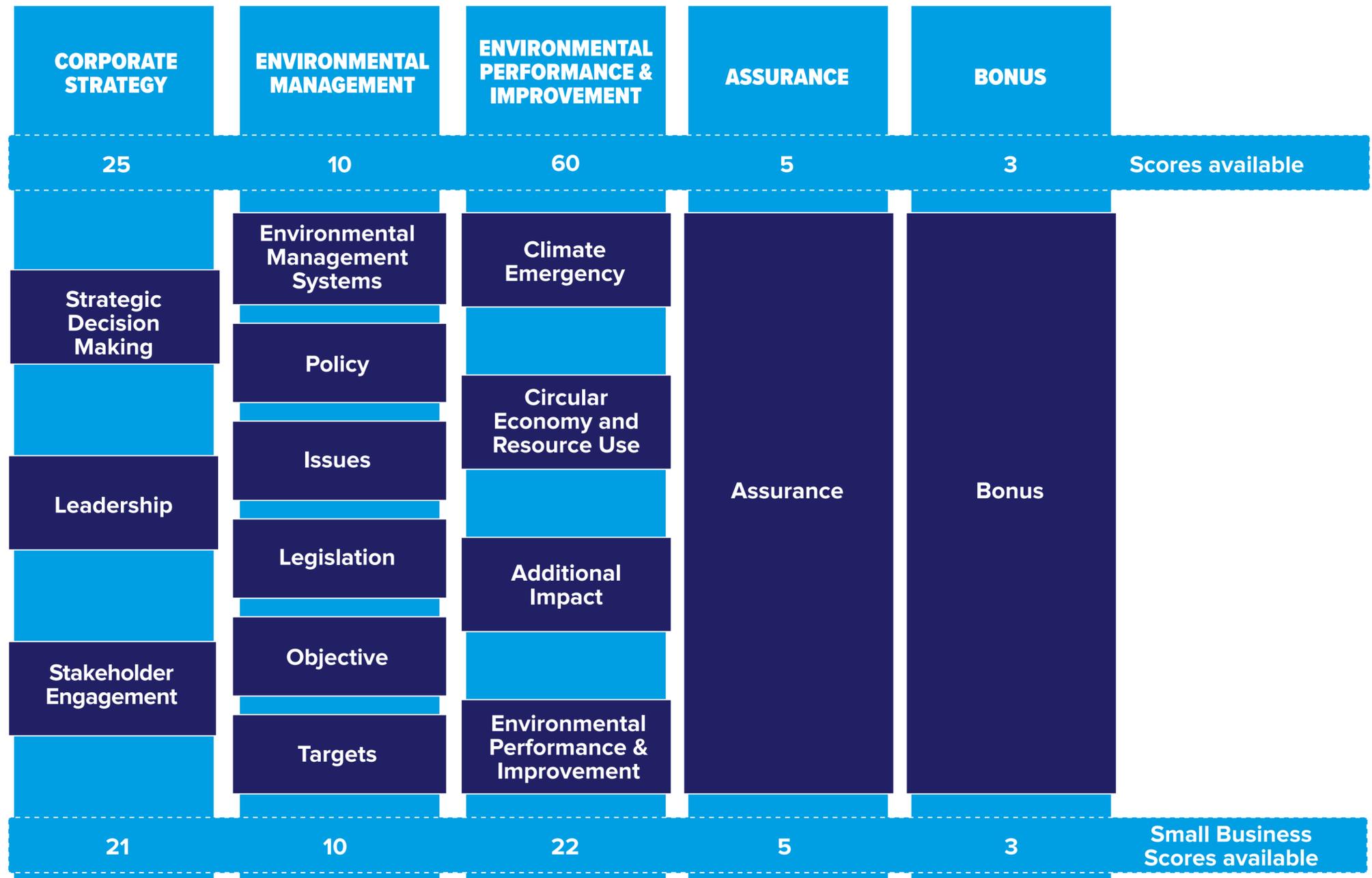
Participating organisations are ranked by level: Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze or Green. The higher the overall score, the higher the organisation will rank. There is no limit on the number of organisations that can fall into any one ‘band’.

The first two sections of the Survey relate to environmental management rather than performance improvement. For organisations to increase their score and advance up the rankings, they need to have well-established management systems and must be able to demonstrate performance improvement, as most marks available are in this section (60%). Investing in improving environmental performance in the impact areas will also increase marks for each business. Participants that show an ongoing performance improvement over several years will perform best, so those wishing to rise towards a higher band level must focus their efforts on continual improvement.

Participants of the Small Business Survey can achieve Silver, but they tend to achieve Bronze or Green level rankings.

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Survey is split into the following sections:



## THE RESULTS

## TOP PERFORMER

Belfast Harbour Commissioners

Organisations ranked in alphabetical order within band.

## PLATINUM

ABP Food Group	↔
Alpha Resource Management Ltd.	↔
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	↔
Belfast Harbour Commissioners	↔ 20+
Belfast Metropolitan College	↑ 10+
Coca-Cola HBC Northern Ireland Ltd.	↔
Danske Bank UK	↔
Dunbia Dungannon	↑ 20+
Encirc Ltd	↔
Farrans Construction	↑
firmus energy	↑
Foyle Food Group	↔ 10+
George Best Belfast City Airport	↔ 10+
GRAHAM	↔ 10+
Henderson Group LTD	↑
Henry Group	↔ 20+
Heron Bros Ltd	↑
Hyster-Yale Group	↔ 20+
Interface	↔
Kier	↔
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council	↑
Moy Park Ltd	↔ 20+
Musgrave	↑
Northern Ireland Electricity Networks	↔ 10+
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	↑↑
Openreach Northern Ireland	↑↑
Phoenix Natural Gas Ltd	↔ 20+
Queen's University Belfast	↔ 10+
Seagate Technology (Ireland)	↔ 20+
Spirit AeroSystems	↔

## PLATINUM

Translink	↔	20+
Ulster University	↑	10+
Whitemountain Quarries Ltd.	↔	

## GOLD

Allstate Northern Ireland	↑	
Belfast International Airport	↔	20+
Biffa PLC	↔	
Business in the Community Northern Ireland	↔	10+
Caterpillar (NI) Ltd	↔	
Collins Aerospace	NEW	20+
Education Authority	↑	
Enisca Limited	↔	
Felix O' Hare & Company Ltd	↑	
Gilbert-Ash Limited	↔	
JH Turkington and Sons Ltd	↓	
JP Corry	↔	
Lakeland Dairies Newtownards	↓	
McLaughlin & Harvey	↔	20+
Northern Ireland Assembly	↓	20+
Ove Arup & Partners LTD	↑	10+
Patrick Keenan	↔	
Southern Health and Social Care Trust	↑	
Tayto Group Limited	↔	10+

## SILVER

A&L Goodbody	↑	
AG Paving & Building Products	NEW	
AMG Contracts	NEW	
Ardmore	NEW	
Ards and North Down Borough Council	↓	
Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council	↔	
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	↔	10+
Ciena Corporation	↔	

## SILVER (continued)

Citibank	↔	
Dowds Group	↑	
Haldane Fisher Ltd	↔	20+
HM Revenue and Customs	↔	
Huhtamaki Foodservice Delta Ltd	↔	10+
ISS Facilities UK & Ireland	↔	
Lidl Northern Ireland	NEW	
Linamar Light Metals Belfast	↔	20+
Linden Foods Ltd	↓	
Marcon Fit-Out Ltd	↓	
McCue	↓	
Northstone (NI) Limited	↔	
Power NI	↔	
Public Prosecution Service	↔	
Ready Egg Products Ltd	↔	
RiverRidge Holdings Limited	NEW	
SONI Ltd	↑	
South West College	↔	
Stothers M&E Limited	↑	
Terex Material Processing Omagh	↔	
The Police Service of Northern Ireland	↔	
Ulster Carpet Mills	NEW	
Western Health & Social Care Trust	↔	10+

## BRONZE

Ambipar Response Ltd	↑	
Antrim Electrical & Mechanical Engineers Ltd	NEW	
Combined Facilities Management (CFM) Ltd	NEW	
Co-Ownership	↔	
Dalzell Landscape Co Ltd	↔	
H M Electrics Ltd	↑	
Highway Barrier Solutions Limited	NEW	
McKinstry Skip Hire Ltd	↓	
Morrow Contracts Ltd	↓	

## BRONZE (continued)

Suki Teahouse Ltd	↑	
Walsin Ltd.	NEW	

## GREEN

Antrim Supplies T/A Work Wear Mallusk	↔	
BLK BOX	NEW	
Chip Ahoy	↔	
Cora Technologies	NEW	
CW Graphics	NEW	
D&J Drain Services Ltd	NEW	
Doyle Shipping Group (Belfast) Ltd	↔	
Environmental Chemical Engineering Services Ltd	↔	
GmCG Group Limited	NEW	
Habinteg Housing Association (Ulster)	↔	
McCormack Demolition	↔	
MCE Public Relations Ltd	NEW	
Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority (NIFHA)	NEW	
Olenick Global Ltd	↔	
RDA Coleraine	↔	
Sharpe Mechanical Services Ltd	NEW	
Technidrive Ltd	NEW	
The Consumer Council	↔	
Volunteer Now	NEW	

## KEY

Small Business Survey	SBS
New to the Survey	NEW
Remained in the same band as 2020	↔
Moved up one band from 2020	↑
Moved up two bands from 2020	↑↑
Dropped one band from 2020	↓
Dropped two bands from 2020	↓↓
Participated for at least 10 consecutive years	10+
Participated for at least 20 consecutive years	20+

## THE RESULTS

## TOP-PERFORMING SMALL BUSINESS

SUKI Teahouse Ltd

## SMALL BUSINESS SURVEY

Suki Teahouse Ltd	Bronze	↑
Dalzell Landscape Co Ltd	Bronze	↔
H M Electrics Ltd	Bronze	↑
Antrim Supplies T/A Work Wear Mallusk	Green	↔
Chip Ahoy	Green	↔
Cora Technologies	Green	NEW
CW Graphics	Green	NEW
D&J Drain Services Ltd	Green	NEW
Doyle Shipping Group (Belfast) Ltd	Green	↔
Environmental Chemical Engineering Services Ltd	Green	↔
McCormack Demolition	Green	↔
MCE Public Relations Ltd	Green	NEW
Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority (NIFHA)	Green	NEW
Olenick Global Ltd	Green	↔
RDA Coleraine	Green	↔
Technidrive Ltd	Green	NEW



**TOGETHER WE CAN  
LEAD RESPONSIBLE  
BEHAVIOUR  
THROUGHOUT THE  
SUPPLY CHAIN.**

Declan Cunningham, Head of Sustainability and Risk, Moy Park

## SECTOR RESULTS

Organisations ranked by score within sector.

## CONSTRUCTION

Farrans Construction	Platinum
GRAHAM	Platinum
Henry Group	Platinum
Heron Bros Ltd	Platinum
Felix O' Hare & Company Ltd	Gold
Gilbert-Ash Limited	Gold
JH Turkington and Sons Ltd	Gold
JP Corry	Gold
McLaughlin & Harvey Ltd	Gold
Patrick Keenan	Gold
AMG Contracts	Silver
Dowds Group	Silver
Haldane Fisher Ltd	Silver
Marcon Fit-Out Ltd	Silver
McCue Crafted Fit Out Ltd	Silver
Stothers M&E Limited	Silver
Antrim Electrical & Mechanical Engineers Ltd	Bronze
Combined Facilities Management (CFM) Ltd	Bronze
Dalzell Landscape Co Ltd	Bronze
H M Electrics Ltd	Bronze
Highway Barrier Solutions Limited	Bronze
Walsin Ltd.	Bronze
McCormack Demolition	Green
Sharpe Mechanical Services Ltd	Green

## EDUCATION

Belfast Metropolitan College	Platinum
Queen's University Belfast	Platinum
Ulster University	Platinum
Education Authority	Gold
South West College	Silver

## ENGINEERING

Hyster-Yale Group	Platinum
Spirit AeroSystems	Platinum
Caterpillar (NI) Ltd	Gold
Enisca Limited	Gold
Ove Arup & Partners Ltd	Gold
Linamar Light Metals Belfast	Silver
Terex Material Processing Omagh	Silver
BLK BOX	Green
Environmental Chemical Engineering Services Ltd	Green
Technidrive Ltd	Green

## FINANCE

Danske Bank UK	Platinum
Citibank	Silver
GMcG Group Limited	Green

## FOOD AND DRINK

ABP Food Group	Platinum
Coca-Cola HBC Northern Ireland Ltd.	Platinum
Dunbia Dungannon	Platinum
Foyle Food Group	Platinum
Henderson Group LTD	Platinum
Moy Park Ltd	Platinum
Lakeland Dairies Newtownards	Gold
Tayto Group Limited	Gold
Ready Egg Products Ltd	Silver
Linden Foods Ltd	Silver
Suki Teahouse Ltd	Bronze
Chip Ahoy	Green

## GENERAL MANUFACTURING

Encirc Ltd	Platinum
Interface	Platinum
Seagate Technology (Ireland)	Platinum
Collins Aerospace	Gold
AG Paving & Building Products	Silver
Huhtamaki Foodservice Delta Ltd	Silver
CW Graphics	Green

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS  
TECHNOLOGY

Allstate Northern Ireland	Gold
Ciena Corporation	Silver
Cora Technologies	Green
Olenick Global Ltd	Green

## LOCAL AUTHORITY

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Platinum
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council	Platinum
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	Platinum
Northern Ireland Assembly	Gold
Ards and North Down Borough Council	Silver
Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council	Silver

## NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION

Business in the Community Northern Ireland	Gold
A&L Goodbody	Silver
Co-Ownership	Bronze
Habinteg Housing Association (Ulster)	Green
Volunteer Now	Green

## GENERAL SERVICES

Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Platinum
George Best Belfast City Airport	Platinum
Translink	Platinum
Belfast International Airport	Gold
ISS Facilities UK & Ireland	Silver
Doyle Shipping Group (Belfast) Ltd	Green
MCE Public Relations Ltd	Green
RDA Coleraine	Green

## GOVERNMENT DEPT AND AGENCY

HM Revenue and Customs	Silver
Public Prosecution Service	Silver
The Police Service of Northern Ireland	Silver
Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority (NIFHA)	Green
The Consumer Council	Green

## HEALTH &amp; SOCIAL SERVICE TRUST

Southern Health and Social Care Trust	Gold
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	Silver
Western Health & Social Care Trust	Silver

## SECTOR RESULTS

## RETAIL

Musgrave	Platinum
Lidl Northern Ireland	Silver
Antrim Supplies T/A Work Wear Mallusk	Green

## TEXTILES AND CLOTHING

Ulster Carpet Mills	Silver
---------------------	--------

## UTILITIES

firmus energy	Platinum
Kier	Platinum
Northern Ireland Electricity Networks	Platinum
Openreach Northern Ireland	Platinum
Phoenix Natural Gas Ltd	Platinum
Power NI	Silver
SONI Ltd	Silver
Morrow Contracts Ltd	Bronze

## WASTE/ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Alpha Resource Management Ltd.	Platinum
Biffa PLC	Gold
RiverRidge Holdings Limited	Silver
Ambipar Response Ltd	Bronze
McKinstry skip Hire Ltd	Bronze
D&J Drain Services Ltd	Green

## MINING AND QUARRYING

Whitemountain Quarries Ltd.	Platinum
Northstone (NI) Limited	Silver

**WE ARE ALREADY 'AT ONE MINUTE TO MIDNIGHT' IN TERMS OF KEEPING GLOBAL WARMING BELOW 1.5C. I URGE ALL SURVEY PARTICIPANTS TO SIGN UP TO BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY'S CLIMATE ACTION PLEDGE AND TO SET AND WORK TOWARDS AMBITIOUS TARGETS FOR THE REDUCTION OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS.**

**Grainia Long, Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, and Chair, Environmental Leadership Team, Business in the Community Northern Ireland**

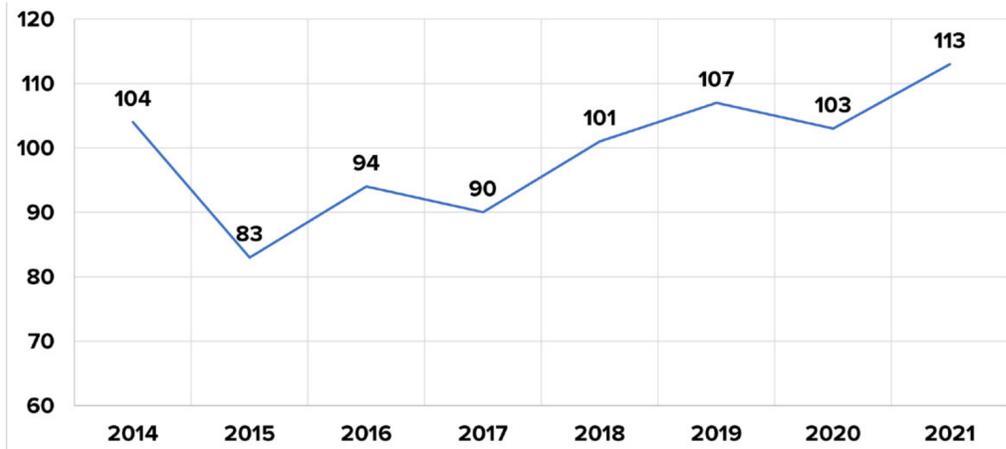
## THE HEADLINES

### PARTICIPATION IN THE SURVEY ROSE, DESPITE THE UNCERTAIN YEAR

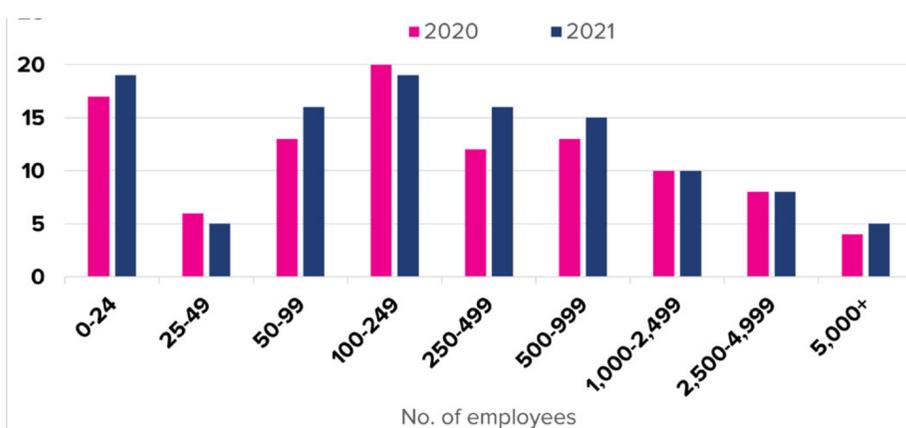
We were delighted that 113 organisations participated in the Survey this year, including 21 new participants, signifying that environmental issues are still on the radar of organisations, despite the challenges of the last year.

This was our third year offering the Small Business Survey, which is open to organisations in Northern Ireland with fewer than 25 employees. In 2021, small business participants represented 17% of the Survey cohort, including seven who participated for the first time.

Number of Survey participants by year



Survey participants by number of employees



### AVERAGE SCORES ROSE, RETURNING TO PRE-COVID LEVELS, WITH A STRONG GROUP OF LEADERS ACHIEVING HIGH SCORES

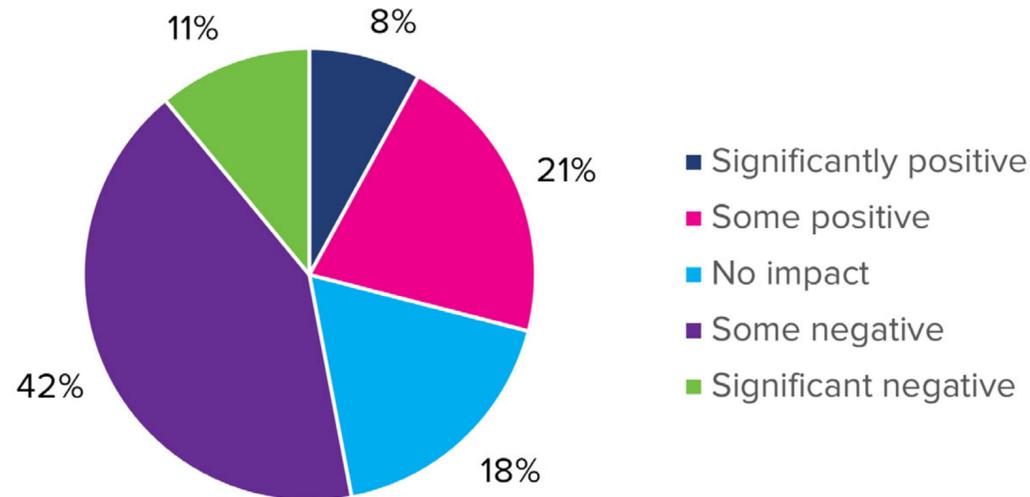
2021 saw an increase in overall average scores, with a greater proportion of participants achieving the Platinum band than ever before.

The Survey questions were unchanged, other than the addition of an unscored exploratory question on the impact COVID-19 has had on the environmental work of organisations. This showed that just over half (53%) of the participants' environmental work was impacted negatively from the pandemic, with 29% saying COVID had a positive impact, and 18% reporting no impact at all.

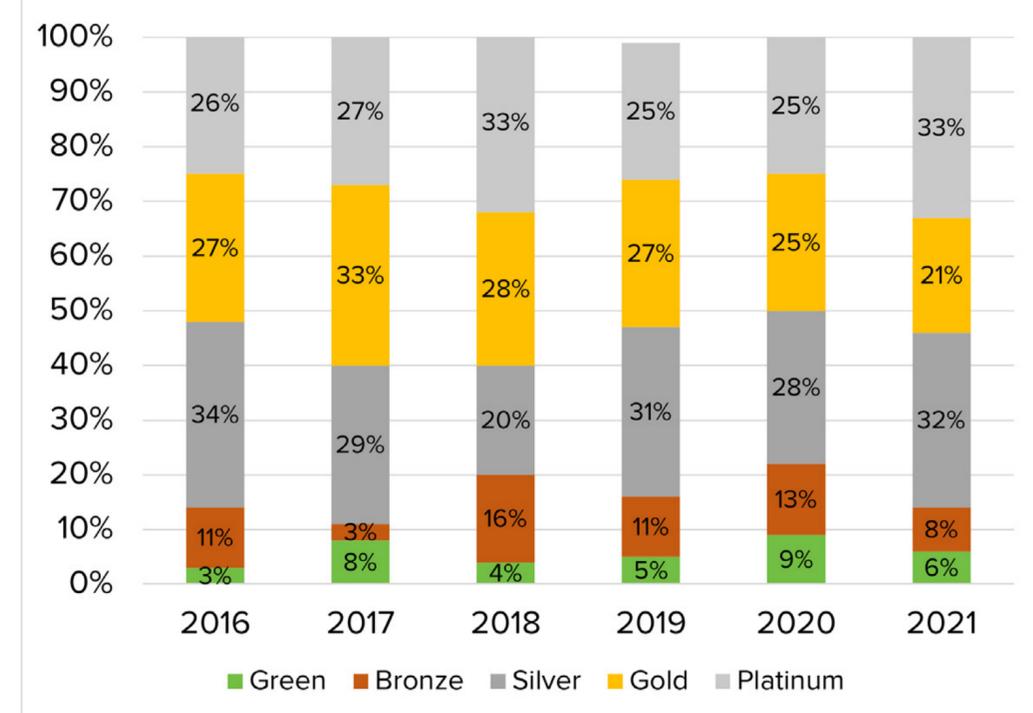
The major changes we made last year (consolidating the energy section so that transportation and energy were included under one section) remain, with greenhouse gas performance data continuing to hold significant value, due to the merging of the energy and transport-use sections.

This year, we welcomed 21 new main Survey participants. The average scores of these new participants were naturally lower (by 41.8%) than the overall average, as has historically been the case. This gives these newcomers a clear roadmap for improvement in future years.

Impact of COVID-19

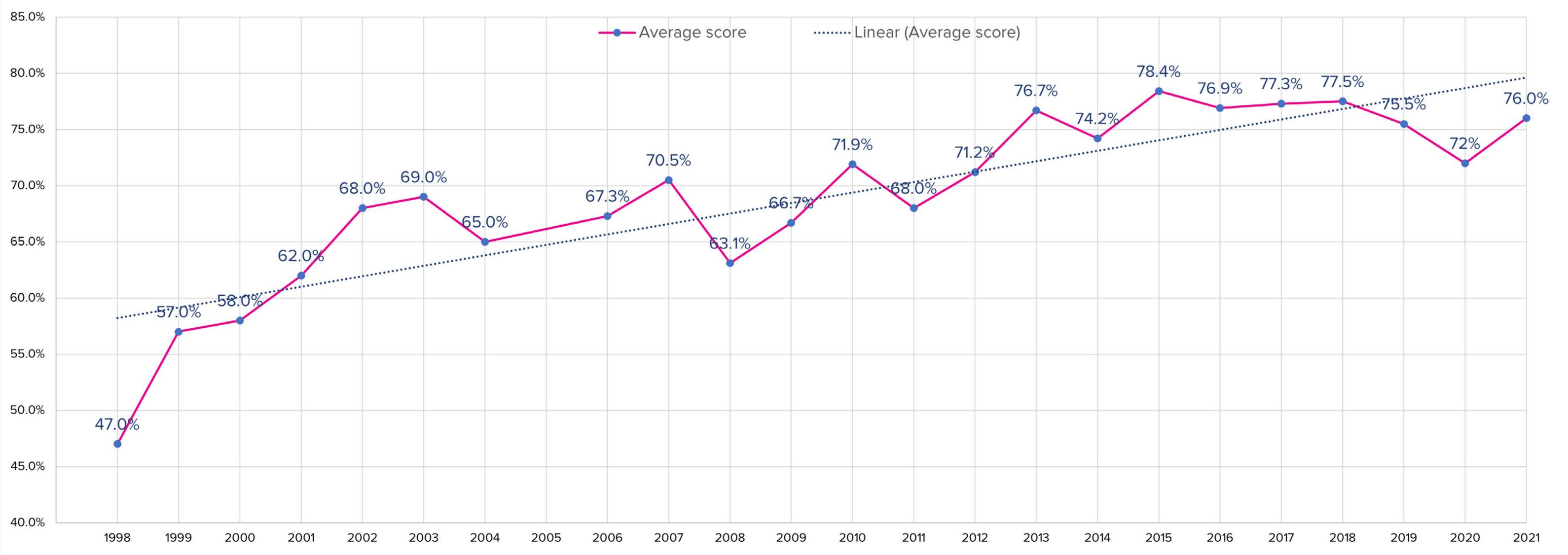


Proportion of participants in each band



# THE HEADLINES

### Survey scores over time



\*Averages excludes Small Business Survey participants, so that results are comparable to years prior to 2019

**THE HEADLINES**

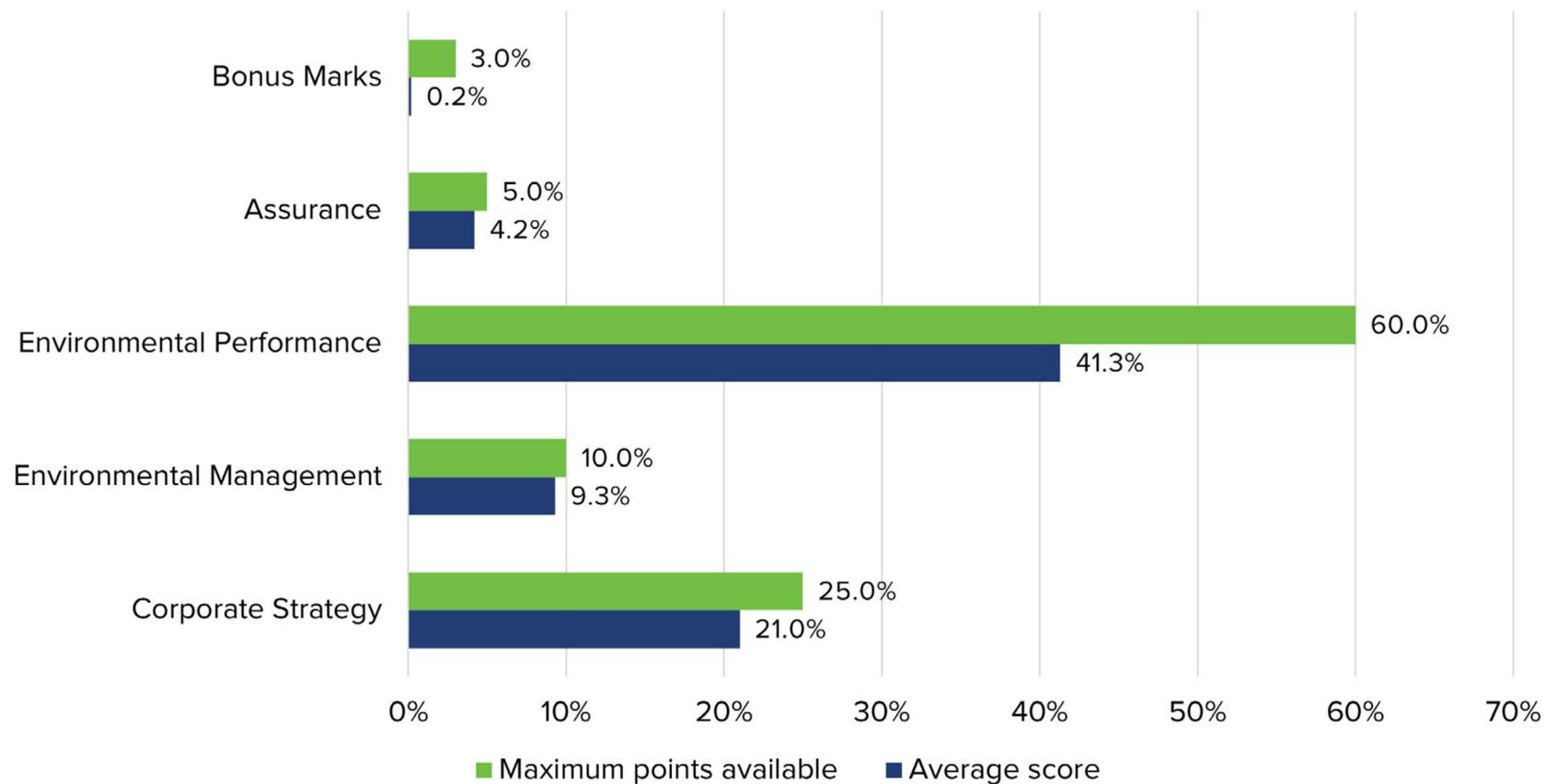
**THE SURVEY'S FOCUS IS ON AN IMPROVEMENT IN ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE**

Organisations seeking to improve their scores should explore ways to drive tangible environmental performance improvements.

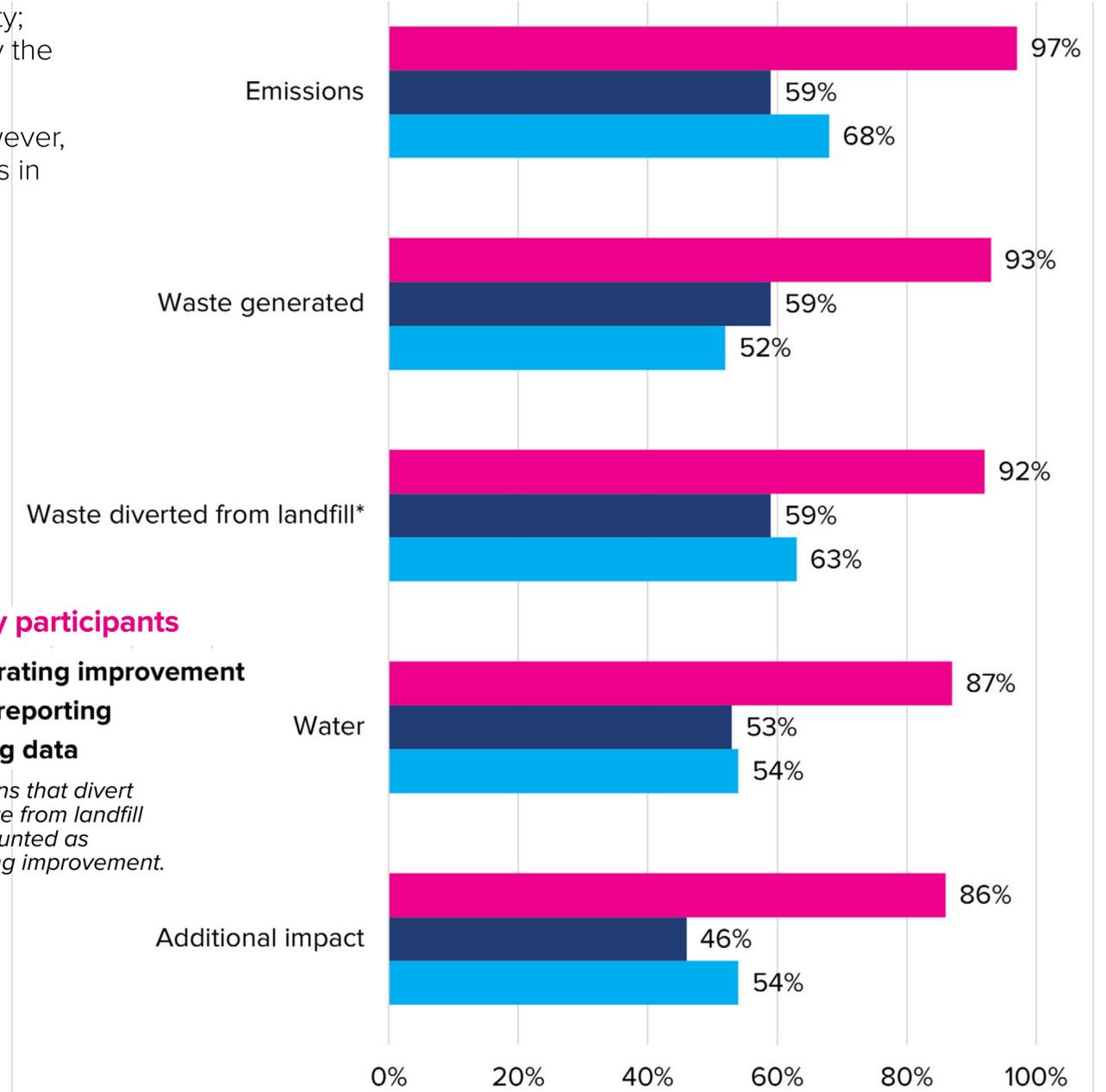
The Survey responses tell us that many participants have strong environmental strategies and management procedures in place. With the fundamentals established, the next step is to translate this into action by: kicking off improvement projects; improving data quality; realising performance improvements; and reporting on environmental impacts. We understand this can be a challenge, which is why the majority of the points are allocated in this section.

We are impressed by how many organisations are measuring their performance and have put in place initiatives to take action. However, there is still plenty of room for improvement by publicly reporting performance data and by innovating to demonstrate improvements in this area.

**Average score per section**



**Environmental Performance by proportion of total participants**



**% of Survey participants**

- \* Demonstrating improvement
- Publicly reporting
- Measuring data

*\* organisations that divert 100% of waste from landfill were also counted as demonstrating improvement.*

## THE HEADLINES

### SMALL BUSINESSES FINDINGS

Now in its third year, the Small Business Survey continues to be relevant to even the smallest businesses wanting to engage in the environmental agenda.

Open to businesses with fewer than 25 employees, the Small Business Survey contains a shorter version of the full set of questions and is tailored to be relevant to businesses that may not have the resources, processes, and personnel of larger organisations.

The top three highest-performing small businesses in 2021 were:

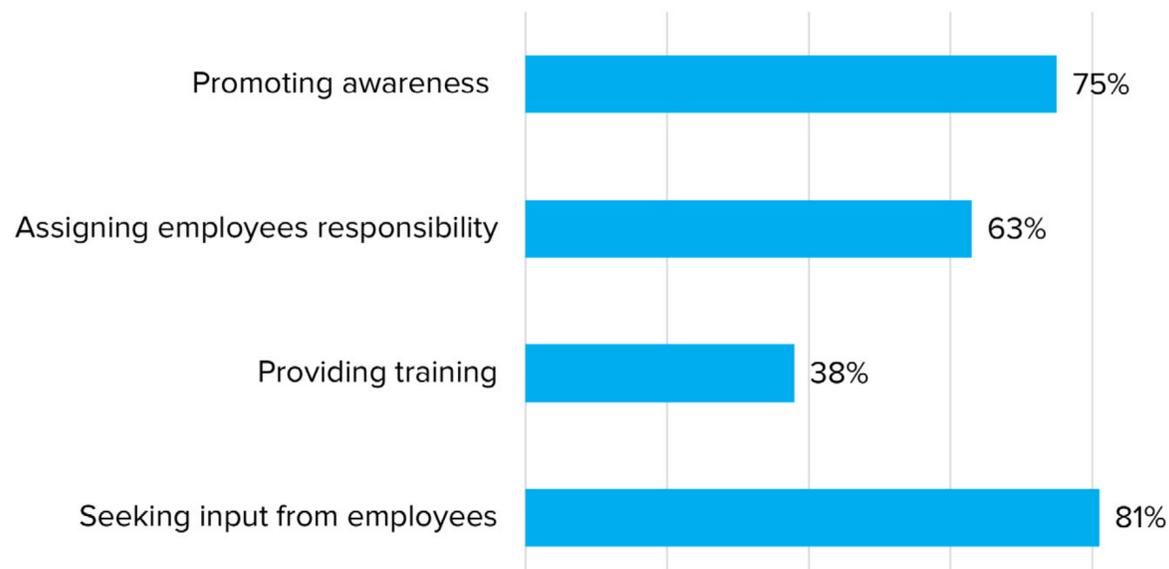
1. Suki Teahouse Ltd
2. H M Electrics
3. Dalzell Landscapes Co Ltd

Many small businesses performed well in terms of environmental management, however, as has been the case in the past, fewer measure their environmental impact. For many, this may be about becoming more mature in their approach. We would encourage

these businesses to make a start by tracking the consumption of fuel, as well as bills from suppliers.

While the Survey may be more challenging for smaller business with fewer resources, there are still some areas where small businesses scored almost as high as the main cohort. Small business participants were particularly strong in areas such as employee engagement and the circular economy.

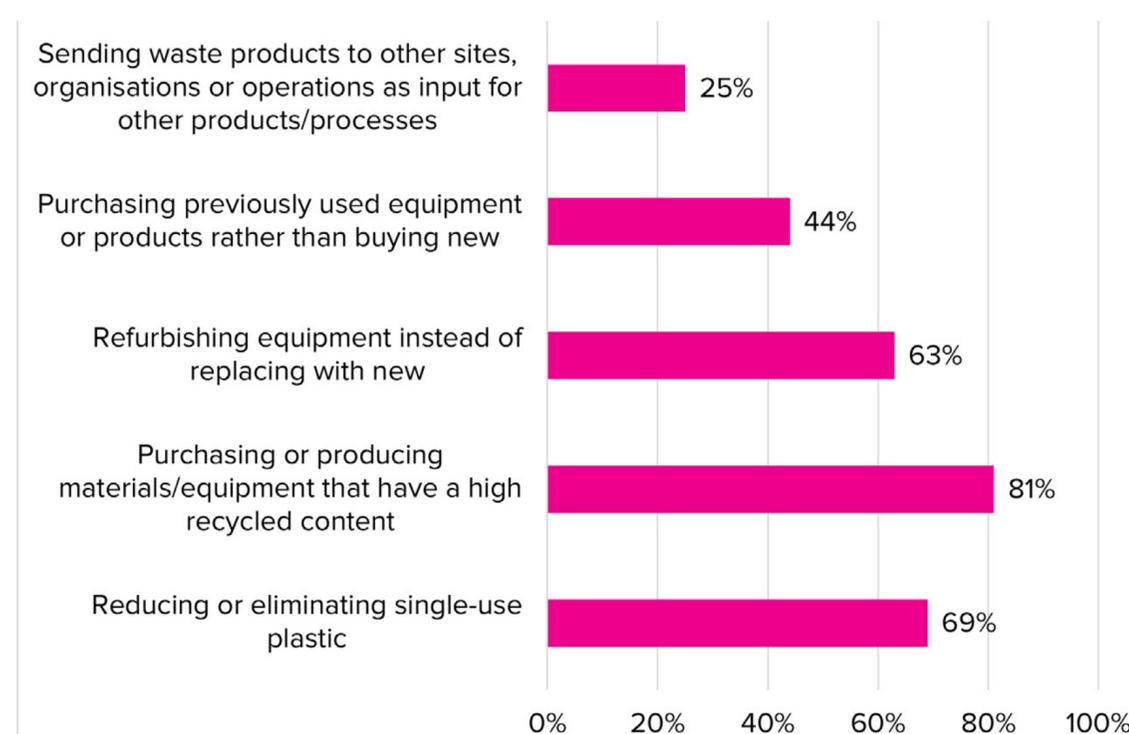
### How small businesses are engaging employees on environmental issues



81%

of small businesses purchase or produce materials that have a high recycled content

### How small businesses are implementing circular economy principles



## THE HEADLINES

### THANK YOU TO ALL ORGANISATIONS WHO HAVE ENCOURAGED OTHERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SURVEY

Each year, we recognise organisations that demonstrate environmental leadership and help to grow the Survey by introducing another organisation to take part. In 2021, twelve participants successfully brought another business on board through the 'Bring a Business' initiative.

What's even more encouraging is that the relationship often extends beyond the Survey, with more experienced environmental managers supporting their business contacts to progress. Additionally, ten participants either supported a business to complete the Survey, or have an ongoing mentoring relationship with another business.

The table (right) recognises those who introduced new businesses to the Survey. We encourage all participants to invite new organisations of any size to participate, and to share their environmental expertise with other organisations, helping them to improve their environmental impacts and be recognised through the Survey.

# 12

participants mentored  
another business  
on environmental  
management, helping  
them to complete the  
Survey

#### REFERRING PARTICIPANT

Allstate Northern Ireland

Belfast Harbour Commissioners

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Felix O' Hare & Company Ltd

Gilbert-Ash Limited

GRAHAM

JH Turkington and Sons Ltd

McLaughlin & Harvey

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

Northern Ireland Electricity Networks

Phoenix Natural Gas Ltd

Spirit AeroSystems

#### NEW PARTICIPANT

Ardmore

Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority

BLK BOX

Antrim Electrical & Mechanical Engineers Ltd

Sharpe Mechanical Services Ltd

Cora Technologies

Technidrive Ltd

Walsin Ltd.

D&J Drain Services Ltd

Highway Barrier Solutions Limited

AMG Contracts

RiverRidge Holdings Limited

## SECTOR ANALYSIS

Splitting the results by sector is a useful way for organisations to compare their scores to their industry peers. It also allows us to see which sectors are performing well in terms of environmental performance.

While it can be useful to compare participants in each sector, it is important to note that some sectors are very small, and the participants usually change each year. Therefore, it is not always a like-for-like comparison between the years.

Local Authorities was the highest-scoring sector this year, with an average score of 87%, increasing by 4% on 2020. The average score for 2020's top-performing sector, General Manufacturing, dropped by 14.6%, knocking the sector from the top spot in 2021. Waste/Environmental Services saw the largest increase in average score, with a 47.7% increase.

Across the board, most sectors saw an increase in score, which is reflected in the increase in the overall average score for all participants. Significant changes to sector scores can often be attributed to new participants because they tend to score lower while they get accustomed to the Survey (their first-year scores bringing their sector average down). We see this in both the General Manufacturing and Financial sectors, which saw 14.6% and 18.2% decreases in average scores respectively from 2020 to 2021.

SECTOR	2021 SECTOR AVERAGE	2020 SECTOR AVERAGE		CHANGE
Local Authority	87.0%	83.3%	↑	3.7%
Education	86.8%	79.0%	↑	7.8%
Utilities	81.4%	74.4%	↑	7%
Mining and Quarrying	80.6%	-		-
Food and Drink	77.6%	67.4%	↑	10.2%
Health and Social Services Trust	77.5%	71.0%	↑	6.5%
General Manufacturing	73.7%	86.3%	↓	-12.6%
Engineering	69.7%	62.3%	↑	7.4%
Construction	68.5%	72.3%	↓	-3.8%
Retail	62.7%	63.1%	↓	-0.4%
Waste/Environmental Services	62.4%	42.2%	↑	20.2%
General Services	62.0%	73.9%	↓	-11.9%
Textiles and Clothing	59.6%	51.9%	↑	7.7%
Financial	54.0%	66.0%	↓	-12%
Non-Governmental Organisation	47.8%	43.2%	↑	4.6%
Government Department and Agency	47.7%	50.6%	↓	-2.9%
Information and Communications Technology	46.6%	43.9%	↑	2.7%

## SPOTLIGHT ON ...

## ... EVALUATING CLIMATE RISKS

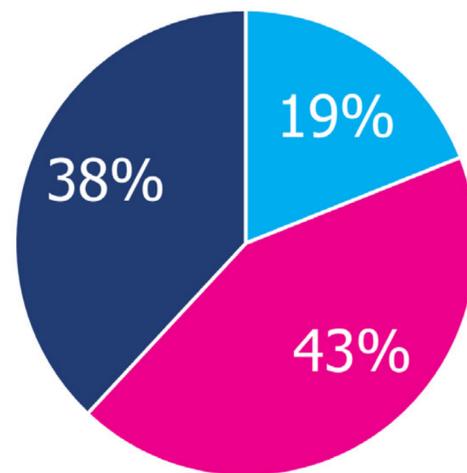
The Survey has traditionally looked at the impact companies are having on the environment. But what about the impact of climate change on companies?

Climate risks are those risks organisations face due to the implications of climate change – be that disruption to operations or supply due to extreme weather events, changes in customer preferences, increasing prices, or policy changes in response to climate change. The impacts on each organisation are likely to be different, and this year's Survey told us that many participants are already thinking about such risks.

81% of participants are future-proofing their organisations by considering these risks. One in three participants has formalised its assessments and has a risk mitigation plan in place.

Encouragingly, and despite the uncertainty of the last 18 months, climate risks remain a key area of future-planning for the vast majority of organisations. Even with a 10% increase in Survey participation in 2021, there has been no change to the proportion of participants developing risk-mitigation plans/ considering risk.

### How Survey participants are approaching climate risks



- No climate-risk assessment to date
- Climate risks identified, with some mitigation planning
- Climate risks identified, with an approved risk-mitigation in place

# 81%

of Survey participants are considering the risks that climate change poses to their organisation

## ... SCIENCE-BASED EMISSIONS TARGETS LEADING COMMITMENTS

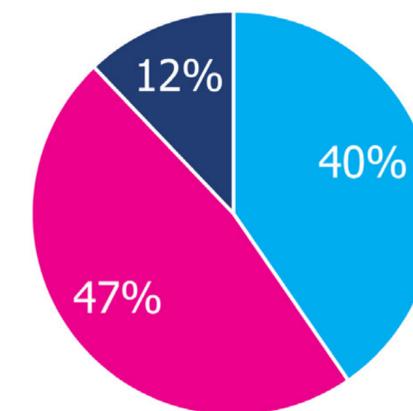
While many organisations set targets for their environmental performance, the question we're often asking is this: what makes a credible target? The opportunity now exists for organisations to set targets to reduce their emissions in line with the reductions required to limit global warming to the safe 1.5 degrees Celsius.

As part of the past two Surveys, we asked whether organisations were setting greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets that were aligned with what the science is telling us, and 58 participants told us they were. This is extremely positive as it equates to a 38% increase in participants aligning targets with the latest science, compared to 2020.

As an additional layer of rigour, organisations are able to have their science-based target approved by the [Science-Based Target Initiative \(SBTi\)](#).

Twelve participants told us that they have had their targets approved by the SBTi – five more than last year. Again, demonstrating an encouraging trend of organisations wanting to set credible and up-to-date emissions targets.

### Has your organisation set Science-based Emissions Targets?



- No
- Yes: we have set targets that align with the science but have NOT been approved by the SBTi
- Yes: we have set targets, and these have been approved by the SBTi

## SPOTLIGHT ON ...

## ... MEASURING VALUE-CHAIN EMISSIONS

For the past two years, we included more detailed questions on whether organisations were measuring the emissions associated with their extended value chain (scope 3 emissions) and what types of such emissions they are measuring.

51% of participants told us that they are measuring scope 3 emissions. This is an increase on last year when only 40% were measuring scope 3. Out of all participants measuring their scope 3, a staggering 98% are measuring emissions from business travel, third-party product distribution, and/or commuting.

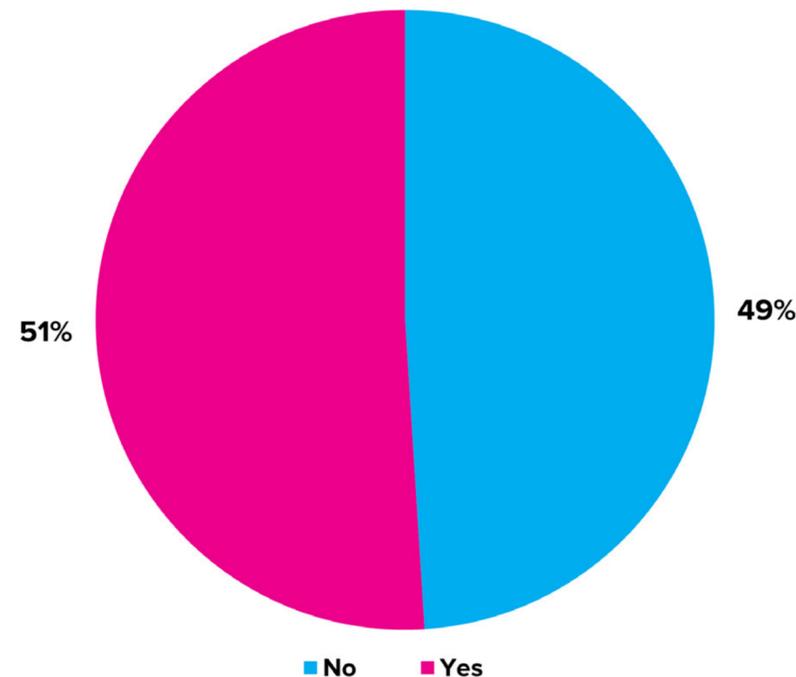
A key part of driving change is bringing others along, collaborating and sharing ideas. We observe that directly in the Survey where organisations invite other participants to join the Survey and support them to complete their submission. Beyond the Survey and through our verification meetings, we notice the same spirit of collaboration along the value chain. The first step in this collaboration is sharing emissions data with customers, so they can in turn understand their 'hot spots' for driving emissions reductions.

For organisations just starting to think about their own value-chain emissions, we'd suggest you start with business travel – how many emissions are associated with your air and overland travel (excluding company vehicles)? This data is often easy to access via expense claims and is the category where your organisation may have the most control.

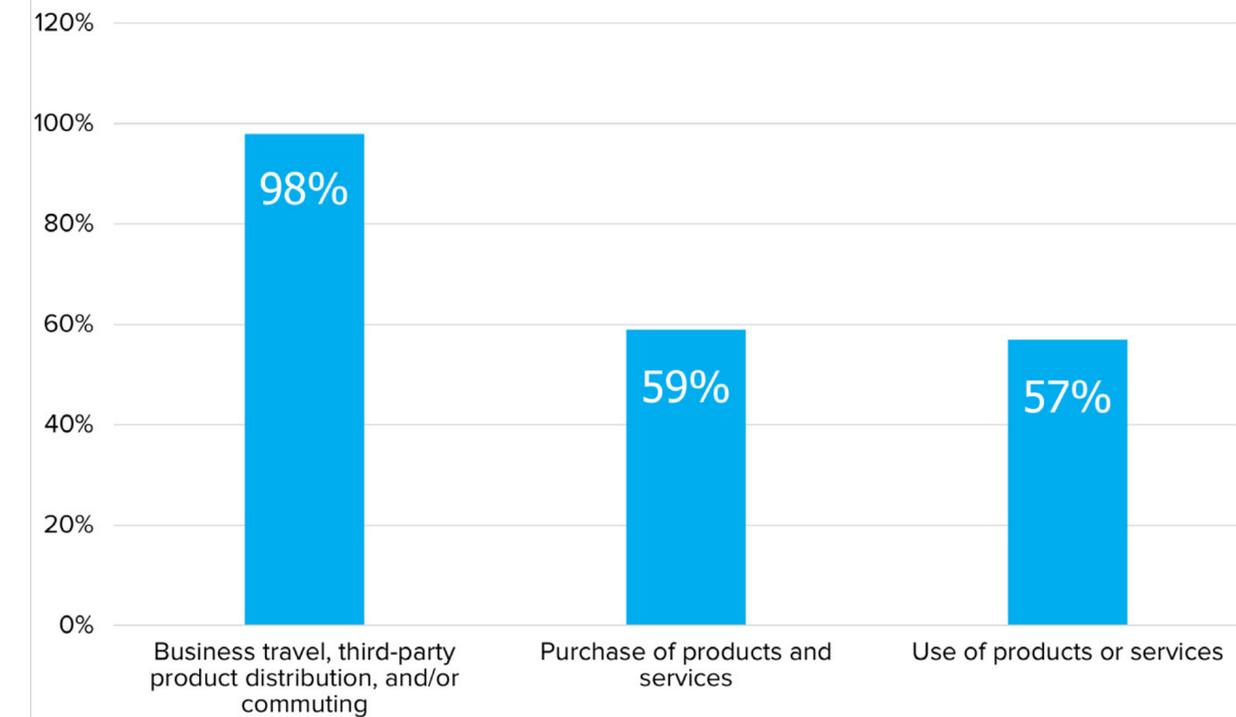
# 29%

of participants are sourcing more than half their energy from renewables

### Proportion of Survey participants measuring value-chain (scope 3) emissions



### What types of scope 3 emissions are being measured?



**IT HAS NEVER BEEN MORE PERTINENT THAT BUSINESSES UNDERSTAND THAT 'GREEN ACTION' IS NO LONGER OPTIONAL BUT NECESSARY FOR A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS, A STRONGER ECONOMY, AND FOR A SUSTAINABLE PLANET.**

Edwin Poots MLA, Minister of Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

**SPOTLIGHT ON ...**

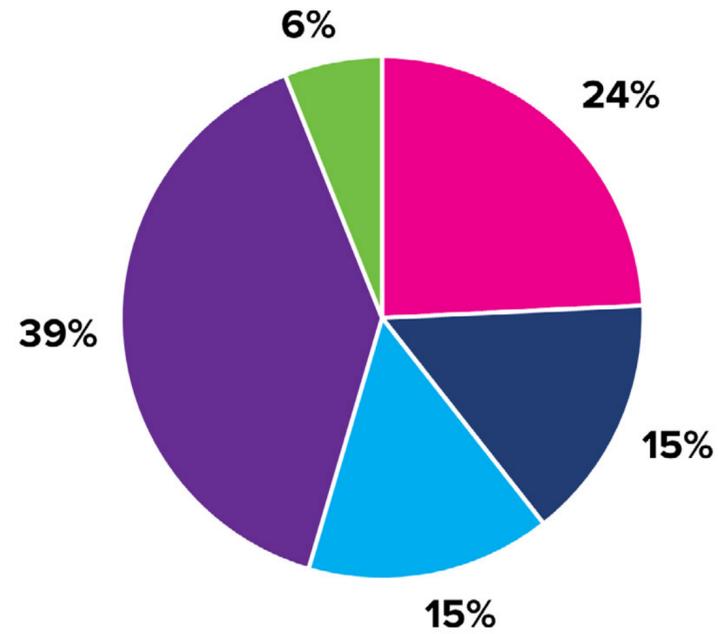
**... CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION**

It has become increasingly important for businesses to plan for future climate scenarios and to demonstrate to their stakeholders they are preparing for a changing climate. This question looks at various ways in which organisations are planning for the future.

15% of participants have been accredited as carbon literate, with a further 45% either planning to, or would like to. This is encouraging to see, as once an organisation's employees are fully literate and aware of the impacts of human-induced carbon emissions, rapid change is more likely to occur alongside a group-wide understanding on how the business can improve in the face of the climate crisis.

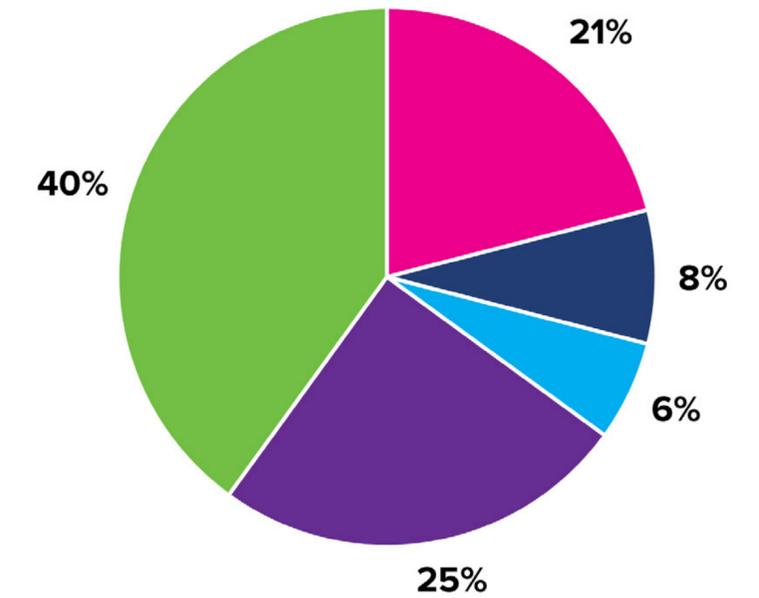
What is even more encouraging is the collaboration between organisations and the unified approach to helping support the business community to plan for climate change. 40% of participants have confirmed they have received support, with a further 31% saying they are planning, or would like, to receive support.

**% of Survey participants who have been accredited as Carbon Literate or similar**



■ No ■ Not planned/considered ■ Planned ■ Would like to ■ Yes

**% of Survey participants who have received support in relation to climate change planning**



■ No ■ Not planned/considered ■ Planned ■ Would like to ■ Yes

SPOTLIGHT ON ...

... ADDITIONAL IMPACTS

In addition to GHG emissions, water consumption and waste, organisations are asked to report their performance on an additional environmental impact that is relevant to their business.

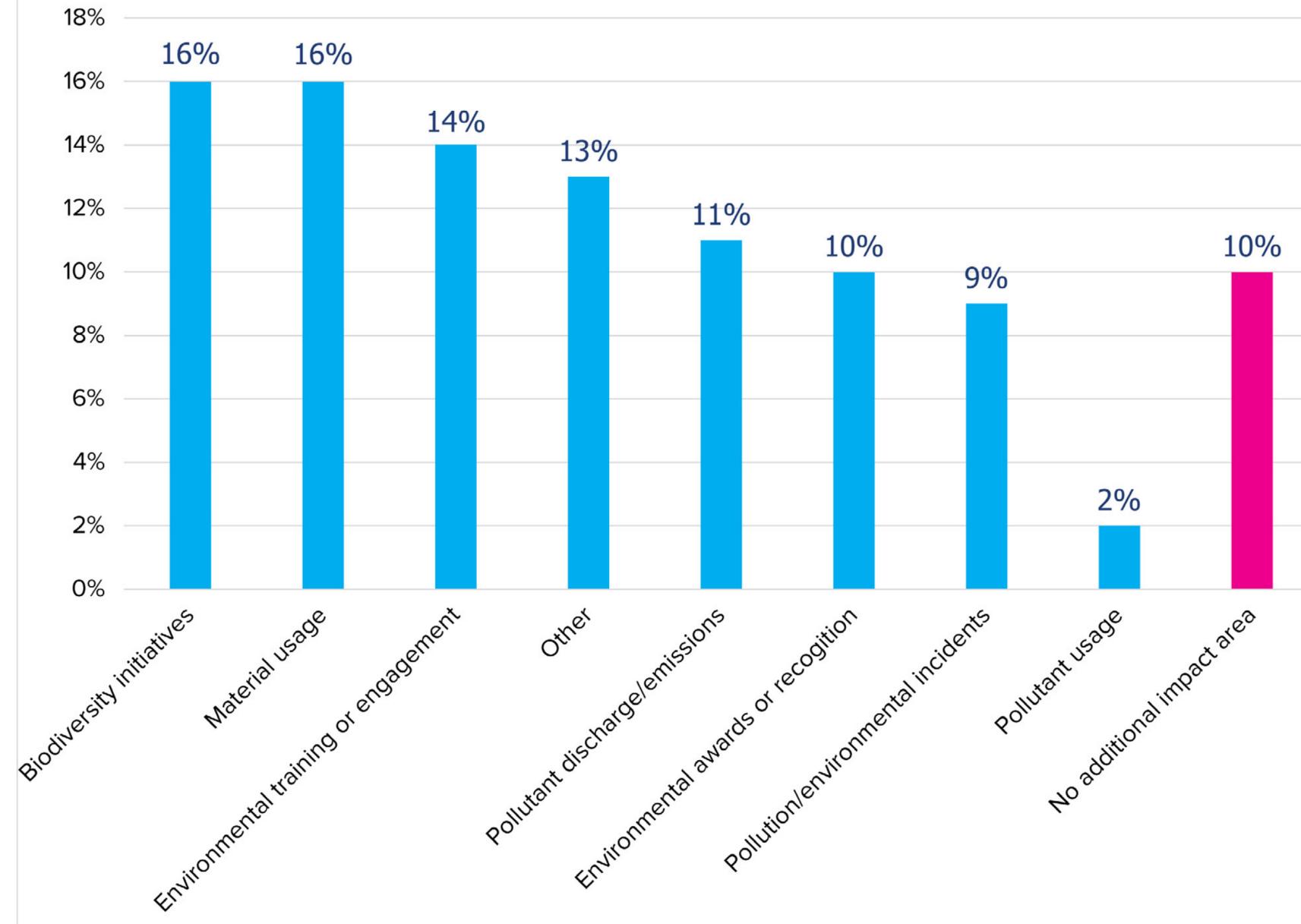
The responses told us that 90% of participants were tracking an additional impact. Reporting on additional impacts gives participants an opportunity to showcase another way in which they are making a positive impact on the environment—or how they are limiting any negative impacts.

The two most-reported additional impacts were biodiversity initiatives and material usage. Each was reported by 16% of participants. This ranges from planting trees to establishing biodiversity plans for entire supply chains, and from reducing paper consumption to using new materials for packaging. It remains encouraging to see these two being the most popular. Both biodiversity and waste reduction/material usage are two of the major environmental issues being reported globally, so hearing about real-world action being taken proves these issues aren't being ignored.

Other additional impacts included environmental training or engagement—selected by 14% of participants. This indicated a positive trend of organisations educating both their employees, external stakeholders, and the wider community about environmental issues and what can be done to address them.

We encourage participants to choose their additional impact by considering which environmental impacts align closely with the nature of their operations, as this is where organisations have the most scope for change. We also encourage participants to choose impacts that can be measured and, ultimately, demonstrate improvements over time.

Types of additional environmental impacts reported in Survey responses



## TROPHIES

The trophies for Platinum Level achieving organisations, the Top Performing Small Business, and the George Dawson Award were made by local producer David Keys Sustainable Woodworking.

David runs an unplugged and vintage workshop where he uses old and restored hand tools to reduce environmental impact. Most of the tools he uses date back to before the Second World War, and have been restored back to their original condition by David.

The inspiration for the 2021 Platinum Award design was 'giants of environmental leadership'. David said: "I think most people from Northern Ireland, when they hear the word 'giant', will think of the Giant's Causeway and the iconic hexagonal basalt columns. I wanted to replicate these in the design, so I decided to make three separate hexagons that are joined, to symbolise steps towards progress and togetherness.

"The wood used for the hexagons is pine that was reclaimed from a factory in Randalstown. I charred, brushed, and sanded the wood to make it resemble the basalt of the Causeway columns."



David Keys Sustainable Woodworking

Email: [d.keys01@gmail.com](mailto:d.keys01@gmail.com)



David Keys Sustainable Woodworking



2021 Platinum Level Trophy



2021 Top-Performing Small Business Trophy

### GEORGE DAWSON AWARD

This recognition award celebrates the significant contribution a business person has made to improving the environmental performance of his or her organisation, and recognises the impact of that contribution on the environment and on the wider community.

The award was established in 2008 to pay tribute to the memory of George Dawson, former Director of Business in the Community's ARENA Network.

George passed away in 2007 following a short illness. He was with Business in the Community for nine years and, during that time, he developed the ARENA Network (now Business in the Community's Environmental Sustainability) campaign into a highly respected and successful driver for corporate environmental improvement in Northern Ireland. George is credited for launching the Environmental Benchmarking Survey in 1998.

**Congratulations to the 2021 George Dawson Award winner, David Knott, Compliance Manager, Belfast Harbour Commissioners.**



The 2021 George Dawson Award is made from a fallen elm tree from Carnlough Forest and is finished with local homemade beeswax and pure flaxseed oil polish

## CASE STUDIES

## NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING EXECUTIVE

## Background

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive is currently demonstrating the effectiveness of renewable energy solutions in isolated rural communities through the HANDIHEAT Project.

The aim of the €2m EU-funded HANDIHEAT Project, which is in the third year of its implementation, is to contribute to improvements in energy efficiency by demonstrating the effectiveness of renewable energy solutions in isolated rural communities across northern Europe.

## What the Housing Executive did

The Housing Executive fulfils dual roles in the context of the Project, acting as the Lead Partner, as well as developing and assessing the benefits of a demonstration pilot involving the installation of renewable technology in a small number of Housing Executive-owned homes in Lisnaskea, Co Fermanagh. The feasibility of innovative heating solutions is being evaluated through two demonstration pilots on sites at Vártsila, in northern Finland and Lisnaskea, in Co Fermanagh, Northern Ireland.

The second pilot demonstration, that is being led by the Housing Executive, aims to explore the potential benefits of hybrid electricity generation and storage solutions for six Housing Executive-owned properties in Lisnaskea, Co Fermanagh. This pilot will evaluate a combination of hybrid installations in these properties, including: oil/ electric boilers; air source heat pumps; solar photovoltaic panels; and battery storage systems, as well as energy-efficient insulation measures. In the strategic context of the Clean Growth Strategy, there is an imperative to find alternative energy sources to counteract the current high level of fossil fuel consumption, particularly in rural settlements that do not have access to alternative sources of low-carbon heating.



*From left: Housing Executive Patch Manager, Kirsty Dixon; Handiheat Project Lead, Robert Clements; tenant, Mark Kiernan; Project Manager, Catherine Savage and Senior Admin Assistant, Amy Lewis*

## Impacts and Outcomes

- The Fermanagh pilot is also being supported by associate partners PowerOn, which specialises in energy storage solutions (storage batteries), and staff from Ulster University, who will analyse and monitor the effectiveness of the hybrid systems over a 24-month period
- Data from the pilot will be analysed to assess the suitability of low-carbon and hybrid options as alternatives to oil-fired boilers, which is still the predominant fuel source currently being installed in Northern Ireland



## MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Background

A conservation project aiming to reintroduce red squirrels in Carnfunnock County Park in County Antrim is showing real success. It is thought to be the first time that the native squirrels have been breeding in the area for more than 30 years. Their population has been in decline after their invasive non-native grey cousins were brought to Ireland more than 100 years ago.

## What Mid and East Antrim Borough Council did

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council has developed a partnership with the Ballygally Biodiversity Group (BBG), Cairndhu Golf Club, Ulster Wildlife and Belfast Zoo to re-establish breeding red squirrels in the Park. Five years after the start of this ambitious project, there is tangible proof of success with the birth of a number of squirrel kittens.

Red squirrel wardens regularly check, feed and monitor the red squirrels; however, the outreach is much wider, with members of the public reporting sightings, demonstrating the interest in this success story for everyone involved. Spring 2021 allowed a celebration of this hard work when the first wild-born red squirrel kittens appeared at Carnfunnock. This was swiftly followed by several more litters, demonstrating the success of this project.

## Impacts and Outcomes

- The Ballygally Biodiversity Group, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and all the partners involved are passionate about the core aim of re-introducing and supporting the red squirrel population in the area but also about engaging with the wider public, ensuring that everyone understands the importance of this project, both for today and for future generations. An adventure nature trail featuring the red squirrel has welcomed 1000s of visitors over the summer period.



- The work doesn't stop there – the group is continually looking for opportunities to extend the geographical range of this important species alongside the Council, creating appropriate habitat and buffering, and maintaining habitat in place.



## CASE STUDIES

**SUKI TEA MAKERS – REDUCING OUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT THROUGH CONVERSION TO PLASTIC-FREE PACKAGING****Background**

SUKI Tea Makers recognises that sustainability action at source is only part of the picture. That is why, over recent years, it has converted all of its principal tea packaging to plastic-free to mitigate its climate change impacts. Suki Tea Makers had been searching for an eco-friendly packaging solution for many years with industry experts. One caveat was that it would have to guarantee the freshness and flavour of its tea blends. From 2019 into 2020, it was delighted to succeed in its quest and subsequently removed 2.7 tonnes of plastic packaging from going to landfill (over a 12-month period)!

**What the Suki Teahouse Ltd did**

Suki Tea Makers found it a challenge over all packaging types in its range to deliver home-compostable, plastic free solutions. Its pyramid tea bags are made from a clever material called 'Soilon' which is from corn starch. Its retail teas are packed in 'Natureflex' bags, created from cellulose made from sustainably sourced wood pulp. Its large pouches now feature a triple layer to maintain the tea freshness, but is also fully home compostable in 12-26 weeks! Now, that's magic.

The Environmental Team at Suki is analysing all aspects of its day-to-day operations and where it can make the greatest positive impact, working closely with suppliers for many years to reduce and/or minimise the use of plastics throughout the business, from accessories protective packaging, to pallet wrap and the ongoing projects to complete the contact packaging picture such as plastic-free labels and pyramid envelope material. The team is working on a range of solutions.

**IT'S TIME FOR BUSINESS ACTION ON CLIMATE**

Together with the CBI, FSB, IoD and NI Chamber, Business in the Community is calling on organisations of all sizes and from all sectors to get involved in the Business Action on Climate campaign and sign the Climate Action Pledge, a public commitment to achieve ambitious greenhouse gas emission reduction targets by 2030.

By signing the Pledge, signatory organisations commit to reduce their absolute scope 1 and scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions by either 30% or 50% by 2030; and to work towards measuring and reporting their scope 3 GHG emissions.

If your organisation does not measure its GHG emissions yet or you're not sure what scope 1, scope 2 and scope 3 is, Business in the Community has the resources to help.

Find out more at [www.bitcni.org.uk/climate](http://www.bitcni.org.uk/climate)

## CARNSTONE'S VERIFICATION STATEMENT

**William Pickett**  
Partner Manager, Carnstone Partners Limited  
[www.carnstone.com](http://www.carnstone.com)

Since the Survey's inception, Carnstone has provided assurance that the results published in this report are accurate. While the Survey is self-reported, it is our job to check that organisations are being scored correctly and fairly, based on the information they provided in their submissions.

We conducted our verification in two stages: first, we analysed the raw data from the Survey, looking for inconsistencies, unusual changes in organisations' responses year-on-year, and missing data. Second, we took a sample of organisations to be verified via one-hour interviews, also collecting documented evidence in advance. In September 2021, we met with twelve organisations, covering approximately 10% of Survey participants – a proportion of participants consistent with previous years. As was the case in 2021, the visits were held remotely, to minimise risks associated with COVID-19.

The verification meetings are light-touch and do not constitute limited or reasonable assurance, however, are sufficiently rigorous for us to satisfy that what is being reported is materially accurate and supported by evidence. Carnstone and Business in the Community Northern Ireland would like to thank the organisations that offered their time to meet with us. We believe that this verification component helps ensure the Survey methodology is robust. It is also an opportunity to engage with the Survey participants and to gain their feedback.

The process was well managed by Business in the Community, and overall participants responded well and within the deadline. While we were generally satisfied that the responses provided by participants were complete and materially correct, we did observe inaccuracies in some Survey responses. Where we noticed possible errors and inconsistencies in the responses – either from our desk-based analysis or from the verification visits – we asked for explanations and corrections.

Most of the inaccuracies we found were in the environmental performance data section (Question 14 of Section 3: Environmental Performance). The difficulties that arose were mainly due to participants being unclear on how to effectively measure, record and report performance data, and how to normalise that data appropriately. We encourage all participants to pay particular attention to the quality and robustness of their performance data in future Surveys, to ensure that their commitment and achievements are accurately reflected by their scores.

Overall, we continue to be impressed by the commitment of organisations in Northern Ireland to the Survey, their willingness to disclose information, and their dedication to continual improvement in their environmental performance – especially in such unprecedented times.

**WE CONTINUE TO BE IMPRESSED BY THE COMMITMENT OF ORGANISATIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND TO THE SURVEY, THEIR WILLINGNESS TO DISCLOSE INFORMATION, AND THEIR DEDICATION TO CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE, ESPECIALLY IN SUCH UNPRECEDENTED TIMES.**

William Pickett, Partner, Carnstone Partners Limited

carnstone  
partners llp



The Responsible  
Business Network  
**Northern Ireland**

Business in the Community stands for responsible business. Set up in Northern Ireland in 1989, we now have over 210 members and are the largest business-led coalition dedicated to corporate responsibility.

### **BELFAST**

Bridge House  
Paulett Avenue  
Belfast, BT5 4HD  
T (028) 9046 0606  
E: [info@bitcni.org.uk](mailto:info@bitcni.org.uk)

### **NORTH WEST OFFICE**

BEAM Centre  
INVISTA House  
Third Street, Maydown  
Derry/Londonderry  
BT47 6TH  
T (028) 7186 1550  
E: [info@bitcni.org.uk](mailto:info@bitcni.org.uk)

[www.bitcni.org.uk](http://www.bitcni.org.uk)  
E: [environment@bitcni.org.uk](mailto:environment@bitcni.org.uk)

Registered Details  
137 Shepherdess Walk, London N1 7RQ.  
Registered Charity No: 297716. Company Limited by Guarantee No: 1619253