

# 2023 Northern Ireland environmental BENCHMARKING survey

## QUESTIONS



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## 2023 NORTHERN IRELAND ENVIRONMENTAL BENCHMARKING SURVEY

### Survey questions

*Please note – this document is provided as a hard copy of the online 2023 NI Environmental Benchmarking Survey questionnaire. Please do not submit your answers to the Survey via this document. The Survey must be completed online by 28 June 2023.*

Contact [environment@bitcni.org.uk](mailto:environment@bitcni.org.uk) to receive your unique link to start the Survey.

### Organisation details

**Organisation name:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(This will be used in any Survey publicity and communications, please write it exactly as it should appear.)*

**Please indicate the sector in which your organisation operates:**

- Construction
- Education
- Engineering
- Financial
- Food and Drink
- General Manufacturing
- General Services
- Government Department and Agency
- Health and Social Services Trust
- Information Technology
- Local Authority
- Mining and Quarrying
- Non-Governmental Organisation
- Retail
- Textiles and Clothing
- Utilities
- Waste/Environmental services

**Please indicate below your organisation type:**

- Private sector organisation operating exclusively in Northern Ireland
- Multinational organisation, with operations outside Northern Ireland
- Public sector body
- Not-for-profit

**Number of employees in Northern Ireland operations:** \_\_\_\_\_

**If your organisation employs fewer than 25 people, you will be eligible for our Small Business Environmental Benchmarking Survey. Please see the Small Business questionnaire for the relevant questions to be completed in this case.**

**Please describe your organisation's top three environmental priorities for this year:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Environmental practitioner's contact details – main contact for the Survey

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Job title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Second contact (if applicable):

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Job title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

*We will use these details to share useful Survey participation information and results, images and copy with you that can be used in press and online.*

## Chief Executive's/Managing Director's contact details

Please provide contact details for the **Chief Executive** or **Managing Director** of your organisation who, as well as the Survey practitioner(s) noted above, will receive an invitation to the **2023 NI Environmental Benchmarking Survey Results Launch event** on **Wednesday 15 November 2023**.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Job title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

### GDPR

*The information provided in your organisation's NI Environmental Benchmarking Survey submission is shared with our verification partners who use this data to analyse and verify the Survey results. Business in the Community will retain the Survey submissions to analyse the results and to provide annual data comparisons. The personal data provided in your Survey will be stored in Business in the Community's CRM system, so that we can communicate with you regarding this Survey and future Surveys.*

## SECTION 1: CORPORATE STRATEGY

### 1. Strategic decision making

Has your organisation integrated environmental issues into its commercial decision-making and business-planning process? *Select one option.*

- No
- Yes, for operational decisions (eg waste management, procurement)
- Yes, for operational decisions (eg waste management, procurement) AND for long-term, strategic decisions (eg Research & Development, market opportunities)
- Yes, for operational decisions (eg waste management, procurement) for long-term, strategic decisions (eg Research & Development, market opportunities) AND our organisation delivers training on climate-related issues to employees involved in strategic and financial decision making

**If you answered yes, please provide an example:**

## 2. Leadership

### 2a. Leadership responsibilities

**At what level of seniority have you allocated specific responsibility for the environment?**

*Select one option.*

- No-one has specific responsibility for the environment
- A manager has specific responsibility for the environment in Northern Ireland
- A board member or other top-level manager has specific responsibility for the environment

**If you answered no-one, please explain if this is something that you are considering, along with any barriers to implementing this:**

**Board member/Name of person with responsibility:**

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**Job title:**

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## 2b. Board-level discussion

Are environmental reports provided regularly for discussion at senior level? (E.g. senior management team/board level). Select one option.

- No
- Yes, at least annually
- Yes, at least quarterly

If you answered no, please explain if this is something that you are considering and whether there are any barriers to implementing this:

## 2c. Advocating commitment – Bonus question

Have you successfully encouraged other organisations to take part in the 2023 Northern Ireland Environmental Benchmarking Survey (ie. taking part in the 'Bring a Business' initiative), with at least one having taken part in the 2023 Survey for the first time? *Select all that apply.*

- No
- Yes, we have encouraged at least one other organisation to participate in the 2023 Survey
- Yes, AND we have helped this business to complete the 2023 Survey
- Yes, AND we have an ongoing mentoring relationship with this business (or a previous 'Bring a Business' nominee) to help them to improve their environmental management and performance

Please click [here](#) to download the Bring a Business invite template.

Please email [environment@bitcni.org.uk](mailto:environment@bitcni.org.uk) with the organisation's name and contact details by **Friday 16 June 2023**.

Name of organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact details: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2d. Public reporting

Apart from taking part in the NI Environmental Benchmarking Survey, does your organisation publicly report on its environmental impacts and performance eg via your website, social media or publications, such as environment or sustainability reports? *Select one option.*

- No
- Yes, we publish our strategy and details of key initiatives
- Yes, we publish our strategy, details of key initiatives AND our objectives, detailing progress against quantified targets
- Yes, we report in line with [The Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures: Streamlined Energy & Carbon Reporting](#); [Carbon Disclosure Project](#); or [Global Reporting Initiative](#).

## 2e. Demonstrating leadership

Has your organisation made public commitments to reduce its environmental impacts?  
*Select one option.*

- Yes, to reduce significant environmental impacts
- Yes, to reduce or eliminate our significant environmental impacts, AND this commitment is aligned with a reputable external initiative (eg [BITC's Climate Action Pledge](#), Race to Zero, Science-Based Targets Initiative)
- No

If you have selected 'yes', please provide details:

If you have not made a public commitment to reduce environmental impacts or your commitment is not aligned with a reputable external initiative, would you like Business in the Community to contact you with more information about taking the [Climate Action Pledge](#), a public commitment to reduce your organisation's greenhouse gas emissions by 30% or 50% by 2030?

- Yes, we are interested, please contact me





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We are already aware of the Climate Action Pledge

No

### 3. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

#### 3a. Employee engagement

**What does your organisation do to engage with employees on environmental issues?**

*Select all that apply*

- Promotes environmental awareness among employees (eg through inductions and/or internal campaigns)
- Assigns specific environmental responsibilities to employees
- Provides relevant training on key environmental issues (eg recycling, sustainability, pollution, climate change)
- Seeks input and opinions from employees on environmental issues or initiatives
- Environmental issues are part of the work culture and contribute to continuous business improvement through focussed activity underpinned by robust policies and processes
- We don't engage with employees on environmental issues

#### 3b. Customer engagement

**How does your organisation engage with customers on environmental issues?**

*Select all that apply*

- Raising customers' awareness of environmental issues (eg informing customers of your key impacts and how you are managing them strategically)
- Advising customers on how to reduce environmental impacts associated with the use of your products or services
- Working directly with customers to reduce environmental impacts (eg through recovering used or end-of-life materials from customers)
- We don't engage with customers on environmental issues

### 3c. Supplier engagement

Does your organisation have any of the following in place?

*Please answer all questions below*

**A procurement policy that specifically includes environmental criteria (or an environment policy that specifically covers supply-chain issues) which is approved by the board/senior management and reviewed at least annually**

Yes

No

**A procurement policy that meets the criteria above and is in the public domain**

Yes

No

**A risk/opportunity assessment process to prioritise key suppliers/contractors or the products/services procured, based on environmental criteria**

Yes

No

**A requirement for prioritised suppliers/contractors to provide information on how they manage their environmental impacts (e.g. provision of environmental policies and reports, completion of a supplier survey, etc)**

Yes

No

**A procurement decision-making process that incorporates a weighting for environmental factors**

Yes

No

**Regular environmental audits of prioritised suppliers, whether conducted independently or shared with others?**

Yes

No

**An ongoing and meaningful provision of encouragement, help and support for prioritised suppliers/contractors, to improve their environmental performance (eg partnering to eliminate waste, optimising and re-using materials, sharing resources)**

Yes

No

### 3d. Regulator engagement

**Does your organisation engage with regulatory bodies on environmental issues?**

*Select one option.*

No

Yes, we engage in response to requests (eg to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements)

Yes, we engage proactively (eg to develop best practice, to go beyond compliance, etc).

**If you selected the last option, please provide an example:**

## SECTION 2: ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

### 4. Does your organisation have an Environmental Management System (EMS) in place?

*Please choose one of the following options below. If you select the last option for this question, we recognise that by having a certified EMS system in place you will have an effective and up-to-date register of legislation, policies, objectives and targets.*

**By selecting this answer, you will automatically gain full marks for this section and can move on to Section 3.**

- No, we do not have an EMS in place
- No, but we are developing an EMS for the organisation
- We have an EMS in place that covers our significant environmental impacts and have identified individuals responsible for the EMS
- We have an EMS in place, which has been externally certified to ISO 14001 (or EMAS, BS8555 or equivalent standard – please specify)

**If your selected answer is 'We have an EMS in place, which has been externally certified', please specify the details below:**

**Standard:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Level:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Last certified:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Note:** *If you selected that you have an externally certified EMS you will NOT be required to answer any further questions within the Environmental Management Section and can move automatically to the next section.*

## 5. Policy

Does your organisation have a formal Environmental Policy?

Yes

No

If you have selected yes, please indicate when this was last reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Issues

How does your organisation determine its environmental issues? *Select one option.*

Through this Survey process

Issues identified and reviewed as part of this Survey process and incorporating a cross-functional review process

Issues identified and reviewed as part of a regular, formal environmental impact/risk evaluation process

## 7. Register

Does your organisation have a formal register of relevant environmental legislation?

*Select one option.*

Yes

No

## 8. Legislation

Does your organisation have a formal system to identify emerging legislation that affects your business? *Select one option.*

Yes

No

If you answered yes, please explain how you do this:

## 9. Objectives

Does your organisation have environmental objectives? *Select one option.*

No

Yes, our organisation has set environmental objectives that reflect its significant environmental impacts

If you answered yes, please provide an example:

## 10. Targets

Has your organisation set environmental targets that relate to the objectives covered in question 9? *Select one option.*

No

Yes, management targets only (eg to implement an Environmental Management System by 2024)

Yes, management and resource targets (eg to reduce the amount of energy used by at least 10% by 2024)

If you answered Yes, please provide an example:

## SECTION 3: ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

### 11. Climate and Carbon

#### 11a. Measuring and reporting

**Do you measure your greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions?**

*Tick all that apply*

- No, we do not measure scope 1, 2 or 3 GHG emissions
- Yes, scope 1 (direct emissions from the combustion of fossil fuels like natural gas)
- Yes, scope 2 (indirect emissions from the use of purchased electricity)
- Yes, scope 3 (indirect emissions)
- Yes, we measure scope 1,2 and 3 GHG emissions AND we also publicly report on at least our scope 1 and 2 emissions

#### 11b. Scope and boundaries

**What GHG emissions data do you collect?**

*Tick all that apply*

- Purchase of products and services (scope 3)
- Capital goods (scope 3)
- Fuel- and energy-related activities (scope 3)
- Upstream transportation & distribution (scope 3)
- Downstream transportation & distribution (scope 3)
- Waste generated in operations (scope 3)
- Business travel (scope 3)
- Employee commuting (scope 3)
- Upstream leased assets (scope 3)
- Downstream leased assets (scope 3)
- Processing of sold products (scope 3)



- Use of sold products (scope 3)
- End of life treatment of sold products (scope 3)
- Franchises (scope 3)
- Investments (scope 3)
- None

Do you have targets to reduce scope 3 emissions?

- Yes
- No

### 11c. Data quality

Describe the quality of GHG data you collect

- No data collected
- Mainly estimates
- Based on a combination of estimates and verifiable data (approx. 50/50)
- Mostly based on verifiable data (accounting for >75% of the total)
- All verifiable data, which has been independently reviewed and checked

### 11d. Taking action

Does your organisation have any current GHG emission-reduction projects underway?

No

Yes

If you answered 'Yes', please briefly describe these initiatives:

### 11e. Renewable energy

Does your organisation use renewable energy?

*Please indicate what percentage of your overall energy consumption is provided by this source*

0%

1 – 25%

26 – 50%

51 – 75%

76 - 94%

>95%

Where does the renewable energy you use come from? (unscored)

Assets owned by our organisation (such as on-site photovoltaic or wind)

Assets owned by a third party with direct purchase agreements in place

Purchased from a renewable energy supplier

### 11f. Climate risks

**Have you identified the potential risks from climate change for your organisation?**

For example, from flooding, extreme weather, and from others, such as those listed in the [UK Climate Change Risk Assessment](#)

**Select one option**

- No
- Yes, we have identified the significant risks and have planned action to mitigate risk to some extent
- Yes, we have quantified the risk and have developed a risk mitigation plan that has been approved at a senior level and has been implemented

**If you answered yes to the above, are these climate-related risks on your organisation's risk register?**

- No
- Yes

### 11g. Science Based Targets (unscored)

**Have you set GHG emissions reduction targets that align with science?**

- No
- Yes, we have set targets that align with the science but have NOT been approved by the Science Based Target Initiative (SBTi)
- Yes, we have set targets, and these have been approved by the Science Based Target Initiative (SBTi)

### 11h. Energy storage (unscored)

**Has your organisation considered investing in energy storage, such as batteries or thermal stores that allow you to capture heat or electricity?**

- No
- Yes

If you answered Yes, please provide an example:

### 11i. Carbon offsetting (unscored)

Does your organisation invest in carbon offsets as part of your GHG emissions strategy

No

Yes

If yes, please tick all that apply

We invest in offsetting initiatives to offset residual (unavoidable) emissions

We invest in carbon offsets that are tangible, restorative and local to our business activity

We use carbon credits to help accelerate our emissions reduction beyond our net zero targets

None of the above

### 11j. Community engagement

Does your organisation work with local communities to mitigate climate impacts and build climate resilience?\*

No

Yes

If you answered Yes, please provide an example:



\*For example, providing monetary support for renewable energy projects, training and activities to raise awareness, support for green infrastructure (green walls, green roofs, sustainable urban drainage, trees) and blue infrastructure (ponds, lakes) which build climate resilience in local communities and support carbon sequestration. Any activities undertaken should be linked to and driven by the business's nature stewardship strategy and its core business model.

## 12. Circular economy and resource use

### 12a. Measuring and reporting

Do you measure and monitor your consumption/usage across the following impact areas?

Select one for each impact area.

#### Waste to landfill

- No
- Yes, it is measured
- Yes, it is measured and compiled centrally
- Yes, it is measured, compiled centrally, and reported publicly

#### Waste diverted from landfill

- No
- Yes, it is measured
- Yes, it is measured and compiled centrally
- Yes, it is measured, compiled centrally, and reported publicly

#### Water use

- No
- Yes, it is measured
- Yes, it is measured and compiled centrally
- Yes, it is measured, compiled centrally, and reported publicly

## 12b. Scope and boundaries

How much of your business operations in Northern Ireland does your performance data cover?

Select one option

### Waste to landfill

0%

1 – 25%

26 – 50%

51 – 75%

>75%

### Waste diverted from landfill

0%

1 – 25%

26 – 50%

51 – 75%

>75%

### Water use

0%

1 – 25%

26 – 50%

51 – 75%

>75%

### 12c. Data quality

**Describe the quality of environmental data you collect.**

*Select one option*

#### **Waste to landfill**

- No data collected
- Mainly estimates
- Based on a combination of estimates and verifiable data (approx. 50/50)
- Mostly based on verifiable data (accounting for >75% of the total)
- All verifiable data, which has been independently reviewed and checked

#### **Waste diverted from landfill**

- No data collected
- Mainly estimates
- Based on a combination of estimates and verifiable data (approx. 50/50)
- Mostly based on verifiable data (accounting for >75% of the total)
- All verifiable data, which has been independently reviewed and checked

#### **Water use**

- No data collected
- Mainly estimates
- Based on a combination of estimates and verifiable data (approx. 50/50)
- Mostly based on verifiable data (accounting for >75% of the total)
- All verifiable data, which has been independently reviewed and checked



### 12d. Taking action

Is your organisation currently undertaking any improvement projects to reduce waste production? (eg through prevention, reuse, recycling, diverting waste from landfill)?

No

Yes

If you answered Yes, please briefly describe these initiatives:

Is your organisation currently undertaking any improvement projects to reduce water consumption?

No

Yes

If you answered Yes, please briefly describe these initiatives:

## 12e. Recycling

**What proportion of your waste generated is recycled?**

**(Waste recycled does not include waste that is incinerated and/or sent for energy recovery)**

Don't know

0-24%

25-49%

50-74%

75%+

**What are the current barriers to increasing your recycling rate?**

*Select up to three options*

Recycling infrastructure or vendors are not widely available at our sites

A significant proportion of the materials in our waste streams are not currently recyclable (eg composite materials, contaminated materials or hazardous waste)

Challenges with training our people to recycle

Increased costs of recycling

Lack of understanding of recyclability and availability

Challenges with separating waste streams (eg lack of space, or complex processes required to separate)

Other (please specify)

## 12f. Circular economy

**How is your organisation addressing the environmental impacts of its products or services?**

*Select all that apply*

- Purchasing or producing materials/equipment that have a high-recycled content and/or have been previously used
- Purchasing previously used equipment or products rather than buying new
- Reducing or eliminating single-use packaging
- Sending waste products to other sites, organisations, or operations to be used as a raw material or input for other products or processes\*
- Refurbishing equipment instead of replacing with new
- Policies or action plans in place to reduce or prevent waste from specific waste streams
- Responsibility for circular resources is formally assigned to member(s) of staff along with generic targets
- None of the above

**\*(NB this does not include recycling or sending waste for incineration, but could include industrial symbiosis/resourcing matching)**

Please provide an example of how you meet some or all of the options you have ticked above.

## 12g. Capital investments (unscored)

**Has your business made any capital investments in areas that will allow it to transform its approach to the Circular Economy, or do you plan to make any such investments in the next two years?  
(unscored)**

- No
- Yes, we have already made capital investments in the circular economy with the assistance of grant funding
- Yes, we have already made capital investments in the circular economy without the assistance of grant funding
- Yes, we are considering investing regardless of any grant support that may be available
- Yes, we are considering investing only if supported by grant assistance

If you have answered yes to any of the above, please provide an estimate of the total capital investment your business has made or may consider making.

Please also provide details of the initiatives that you are investing in or planning on investing in below.

### 13. Additional impacts

**Please select your additional impact area from the list below**

*Please select only one*

- Pollution/environmental incidents
- Biodiversity initiatives
- Pollutant usage
- Pollutant discharge/emissions
- Environmental awards or recognition
- Environmental training or engagement
- Material usage
- Other

**Please describe the action your organisation is taking related to your chosen additional impact area**  
*(Refer to the Survey Guidance Notes for assistance and examples of answers to this question which can be found [here](#).)*

### 13a. Measuring and reporting

**Do you measure and monitor your consumption/usage across your chosen additional impact area?**

*Select one option*

- No
- Yes, it is measured
- Yes, it is measured and compiled centrally
- Yes, it is measured, compiled centrally, and reported publicly

### 13b. Scope and boundaries

**How much of your business operations in Northern Ireland does your performance data for your chosen additional impact area cover?**

- 0%
- 1 – 25%
- 26 – 50%
- 51 – 75%
- >75

### 13c. Data quality

**Describe the quality of environmental data you collect for your chosen additional impact area**

- Mainly estimates
- Based on a combination of estimates and verifiable data (approx. 50/50)
- Mostly based on verifiable data (accounting for >75% of the total)
- All verifiable data which has been independently reviewed and checked
- No data collected

### 13d. Taking action

Is your organisation currently undertaking an environmental improvement project that addresses your chosen additional impact area?

No

Yes

If you answered Yes, please briefly describe these initiatives:

## 14. Nature and Biodiversity

Does your organisation currently have any commitments, policies or actions in place to maintain, enhance and/or conserve biodiversity?

Select all that apply.

- We have a clearly defined nature and biodiversity policy
- We have undertaken (or are undertaking) an assessment of our operations to understand our exposure to or impact on nature and biodiversity
- We have programmes and/or management plans in place to maintain, enhance and/or conserve nature and biodiversity
- We have set nature and biodiversity targets
- We are involved in cross-sector initiatives and/or partnerships to address nature and biodiversity
- Responsibility for nature and biodiversity formally assigned to at least one member of staff
- We have received accredited achievement in biodiversity eg: [BITC's Business & Biodiversity Charter](#), [Biodiversity Benchmark](#)
- None of the above

If you have selected any of the above, please briefly provide further detail on the associated activities (eg, a link to a public commitment, details of activities, impact assessments, targets or partnerships).

If you have selected 'none of the above', please explain the barriers to engaging in biodiversity activities (eg don't see this as a significant impact area for our organisation, limited budget etc)

Please note that if you have provided details on biodiversity as part of the additional impact in question, you don't need to provide the same details again in the description.



## 15. Environmental performance and improvement

Can you demonstrate performance improvement in each of the impact areas noted in the table below?

Please use the table below to record data in each of the impact areas noted below, for the baseline year and the most recent year.

We ask that you “normalise” the data if possible ie divide it by a relevant factor, such as: turnover/sales (£); profit (£); employees (headcount or FTE/hours worked); quantity of production (eg tonnage produced, customers, etc); number of sites/buildings, Please note N/A if the data is absolute/not normalised and include detail if another normalising metric has been used. Normalising data is especially important if you have noticed a significant change in performance data caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Please see the guidance notes for further information.

You may only enter integer or decimal values into the data reporting fields.

Impact Area	Total Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	Waste generated	Percentage of waste diverted from landfill	Water	Additional impact
<b>Absolute</b>	Yes/No	Yes/No	No	Yes/No	Yes/No
<b>Unit</b>	kWh/GWh/kgCO <sub>2</sub> e/tCO <sub>2</sub> e/kJ/gJ	Kg/tonnes (t)/m <sup>3</sup> /lbs	Percentage (%)	Litres (L)/ML/m <sup>3</sup>	
<b>Current/most recent year data</b>					
<b>Base year data</b>					

## 16. Assurance

**Do you have a management process to provide you with assurance that the environmental information you have provided in this Survey is accurate, relevant, and reliable?**

No

Yes, our organisation has established clear reporting requirements and has systems in place. This has been reviewed and approved by a person with appropriate authority.

In line with our drive to ensure the Survey remains credible, robust, transparent, and fair for all participants, we have added a caveat in relation to those organisations that have been successfully prosecuted by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. While we do not wish to preclude any organisation from participating in the Survey, it will not be possible to achieve Platinum status if you have been successfully prosecuted by the NIEA in the last 12 months.

**Has your company been successfully prosecuted over the past 12 months?**

***Please note this question is entirely confidential and will NOT be marked.***

Yes

No

**If yes, please provide details:**

## Sign-off by senior management

A requirement of taking part in this Survey is sign-off by the most senior manager presently responsible for the operations of your organisation in Northern Ireland. Please ensure completion of the statement below.

I am satisfied that the completed questionnaire is in accordance with our organisation's commitment to environmental management and performance improvement. I can confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, the information provided herein is true. I also confirm that supporting materials required by Business in the Community for validation purposes will be provided, if requested.

**Organisation Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Your Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Once signed by the senior manager, please return via email to [environment@bitcni.org.uk](mailto:environment@bitcni.org.uk).

Thank you for participating in the 2023 Northern Ireland Environmental Benchmarking Survey. The results launch event will take place at an event on Wednesday 15 November. You will receive information on this event closer to the date.

## Contact us

If you have any queries relating to the Survey, or for further information, please visit [www.bitcni.org.uk/niebs](http://www.bitcni.org.uk/niebs) or contact [environment@bitcni.org.uk](mailto:environment@bitcni.org.uk).