

FACTSHEET

BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY NI | CARBON REDUCTION PLAN

Business in the Community Northern Ireland's (BITC) goal is a just transition to an environmentally sustainable Northern Ireland.

We will help to achieve this by; driving environmental awareness through education to empower positive change; challenging and supporting businesses to set and achieve climate and sustainability targets; and promoting implementation of business practices that benefit biodiversity.

Our values commit us to be focused, passionate, pioneering, collaborative, and to act with integrity. We strive to ensure that what we do internally is aligned to the asks that we make of our members.

It is paramount that we 'walk the talk' and as an organisation BITC has set an ambitious target to reduce our greenhouse gases (GHG) by 50% by 2030.

Governance and oversight

The [BITC Northern Ireland Advisory Board](#) is comprised of senior leaders from a wide range of industry sectors. They set the strategic direction for our work in Northern Ireland and ensure environmental issues are integrated into our commercial decision-making and business-planning process.

Our [Climate Steering Group](#) gives guidance and direction in developing the [Climate Action Pledge](#) and determining content, activities and events organised as part of the Business Action on Climate campaign. The steering group reports key decisions to BITC's [Environmental Leadership Team](#) and other partner business organisations.

Our baseline and current emissions

Baseline emissions are a record of the greenhouse gases that have been produced in the past and act as a reference point to which current emissions can be compared. BITC's reporting period begins on 1 July and ends on 30 June the following year, in line with our financial year. Our baseline year for emissions is financial year 2018/19. Our GHG emissions have reduced by 25% tCO₂e since 2018.

GHG Emissions

Emission Sources	2018/19 (Baseline)			2022/23			
	Amount	tCO2e	% of tCO2e	Amount	tCO2e	% of Total tCO2e	% change of tCO2e from baseline
Scope 1	-	31.65	69.56	-	29.24	85.45	-7.62
Stationary Combustion	-	31.65	69.56	-	29.24	85.45	-7.62
Burning Oil Litres, L	7,607.00	19.29	42.40	7,709.00	19.50	57.23	+1.50
Natural Gas Cubic meters, m3	6,037.00	12.35	27.15	4,776.00	9.65	28.21	-21.86
Scope 2	-	13.85	30.44	-	4.98	14.55	-64.05
Utilities	-	13.85	30.44	-	4.98	14.55	-64.05
Green Tariff Kilowatt-hour, kWh (Gross CV)	0.00	0.00	0.00	17,818.00	0.00	0.00	+0.00
Main Electricity Kilowatt-hour, kWh (Gross CV)	48,932.00	13.85	30.44	25,752.00	4.98	14.55	-64.05
Scope 3	-	0.00	0.00	-	0.00	0.00	+0.00
Total	-	45.50	-	-	34.22	-	-24.80

Emission reduction targets

BITC NI has signed the [Climate Action Pledge](#), a public commitment to reduce our environmental impacts and through the pledge we are working in collaboration with other businesses across Northern Ireland to address the climate emergency.

BITC NI has committed to:

- Reducing our organisation's scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gases by 50% by 2030 against our 2018 baseline
- Measure and report scope our 3 GHG emissions.
- Report company-wide GHG emissions on an annual basis.

How we will get there – measurement, reporting and verification

Firstly, we gather data to measure and assess our current situation regarding our emissions.

BITC currently collects and reports data on scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions which are related to our energy use. We upload this data to an online data management platform to track progress. We also submit this data to the Climate Action Pledge Reporting Platform which is then externally verified and made publicly available through a yearly report.

The following are the main sources of our GHG emissions:

Energy, Light & Heat | We meet our electricity needs at our office with 100% sourced renewable electricity. Heating and lighting use is carefully monitored; our office heating is now controlled by an app to reduce unnecessary use due to hybrid working. Senior management is considering options for the viability of the office premises going forward and how this may impact on our emission reduction targets.

Waste | is carefully monitored and waste streams are regulated with responsibility allocated to specific staff members. We use recycling waste contractors with a 0% to landfill guarantee. Responsibility for collecting and monitoring waste data is allocated to a member of the environment team. Wider employee awareness raising and staff training on recycling practices is ongoing.

Our digital footprint | A designed email signature adds 1.2g of CO2 emissions per email ([click here for more information](#)). A recent assessment of BITC's email signature has resulted in a stripped back version with minimum required information.

We recently undertook a carbon audit of the BITC website and this [highlighted some areas for](#)

[improvement](#) and actions to make our website as eco-friendly and low-carbon as possible.

Online cloud-based documentation storage and sharing is in use by all employees and file storage is routinely monitored, with unused files deleted.

Paper usage | Employees are asked to print paper only when necessary, and events and meetings are paperless as much as possible.

Office equipment | We aim to purchase materials/equipment that have a high recycled content, and/or have been previously used.

Events | BITC strives to reduce energy used at its events and to ensure that energy-saving measures are in place where possible, with a particular focus on avoiding single-use plastics. We consider the supply chain for our events by trying to ensure all suppliers and caterers are local. BITC has developed a [Sustainable Events Guide](#) this is used to support and guide BITC staff who are organising events.

Suppliers | We have a [Responsible Procurement Policy](#) which specifically includes environmental criteria. The next step is for BITC to measure and report on its scope 3 GHG emissions, emissions generated via our supply chain. To do this, we will produce a GHG inventory of our suppliers to examine the products, goods and services we use.

Business travel and employee commuting | Staff are working from home 60% of the week and most internal & external meetings & workshops now take place online. However, most employees commute to the office by car. There remains occasional staff business travel by air and staff mileage is collected.

At our events, where possible, we ensure that the venues chosen have good public transport links and we encourage guests to use public transport.

Environmental Management certification | BITC has maintained [BS 8555 Environmental Management System certification](#) for the last 15 years, we continue to engage staff in awareness raising activities.

Employee engagement and upskilling | We believe that empowering our people with knowledge on sustainability can further decarbonise our business. Since 2021 we have

implemented mandatory accredited Climate Literacy Training for all staff, with an aim to become a Carbon Literate Organisation.

BITC has published a toolkit on [The Power on Nature for Employee Wellbeing](#) which includes examples of best practice from NI-based organisations.

[Internal Environmental Management Induction](#) – is mandatory for all new starts

Eco Action campaign and eco-volunteering opportunities are offered to all staff

BITC has its own 'Walk the Talk' channel on Teams – an internal online platform for sharing hints & tips on eco-friendly living practices at work and at home.

Biodiversity

Nature positive actions at our premises:
In 2014, the BITC community garden was created to transform a derelict car park in one of Belfast's most deprived urban neighbourhoods into a green space for the locality. The garden measures approximately 50m² and encompasses grass space with a number of flowering plants, shrubs and native trees. Even this small pocket of green space can absorb carbon from the air and has positive effects on mental health.

Following the post-Covid re-opening of the garden in 2022 a decision was made to make some improvements and manage the space in a more nature-positive way.

BITC signed up to the [All-Ireland Pollinator Plan \(AIPP\)](#) where we have made public commitments to enhancing biodiversity on site, with targets that we must meet. Following AIPP advice and guidelines, we use native plants and flowers only to ensure that any new planting reverses pollinator decline.

We intend to take further action around biodiversity, and implement and develop the [BITC Biodiversity Action Plan](#), as well as apply principles of the [Business & Biodiversity Charter](#) to our own operations.

We plan to offer fully accredited Biodiversity Training for the BITC NI Environment Team. Delivered by Veri Connect, this training, which is

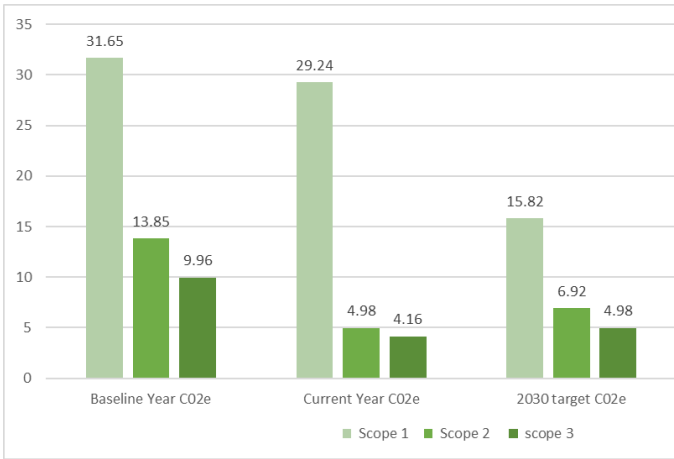
a mix of online learning and outdoor sessions, will upskill our team in practical skills and knowledge vital to developing our Biodiversity Action Plan, in communicating with our member companies on biodiversity, and will add to a nature-positive company culture.

Offsetting

BITC is currently investigating carbon offsets that will be invested as part of our GHG emissions reduction strategy. These carbon offsets must be tangible, restorative and local to our business activity.

We will only invest in offsetting initiatives to offset residual (unavoidable) emissions and we will only use carbon credits to help accelerate our emissions reduction *beyond* our net zero targets.

Carbon Reduction Plan expected outcome



Currently, in 2022/2023 reporting year, we have saved a total of 2.41 CO2e in scope 1, 8.87 CO2e in scope 2 and 5.8 CO2e in scope 3.

When comparing these to our 2030 targets, we have already surpassed our goals in both scope 2 and scope 3.

Although we have already reached these goals, BITC acknowledges the importance to continue to monitor these, to ensure external factors do not affect this in a negative way. To reach our 2030 targets for scope 1 emissions, we need to further reduce our emissions by 13.42 CO2e. BITC will continue with its Reduction Plan, to achieve this goal by 2030.

Sign Off

Emissions have been reported and recorded in accordance with the Climate Action Pledge.

Kieran Harding
Managing Director
30 November 2023 (to be reviewed June 2025)