

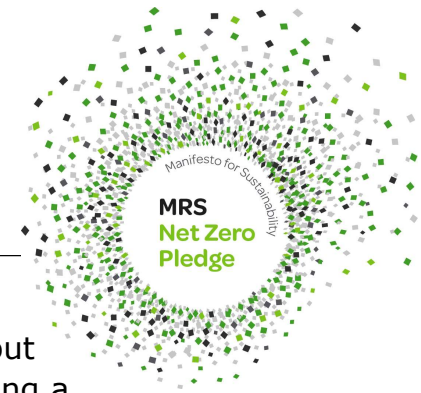


Results of the 2023 Net Zero Pledge tracking survey

Produced by the
MRS Sustainability Council

Manifesto for Sustainability
**MRS
Net Zero
Pledge**

The Net Zero Pledge: progress on emissions



Designed for organisations to demonstrate their commitment to sustainable practices, the MRS Net Zero Pledge calls for research organisations and teams to be Net Zero by 2026.

While we are not the first services sector to launch a pledge (the Ad Association established Ad Net Zero) we are responding to the groundswell of support from professionals and leaders in the sector. The Net Zero Pledge also builds on the learnings from the launch and success of the [Inclusion Pledge](#).

The Pledge was brought to the sector with the support of the [MRS Sustainability Council](#) which helps guide, inform and lead sustainability initiatives in research.

In July 2023, we surveyed the 90 MRS Net Zero Pledge signees to find out how they were faring in terms of measuring a baseline for their current emissions – and breaking these down into the three scopes of emissions (where they had them).

There were 27 respondents. The results of this survey are covered in this presentation. Charts will report findings in percentages (for convenience of interpretation) despite this low base size.



- 1 Baselineing
- 2 Scope 3
- 3 Regular measurement
- 4 External accreditations

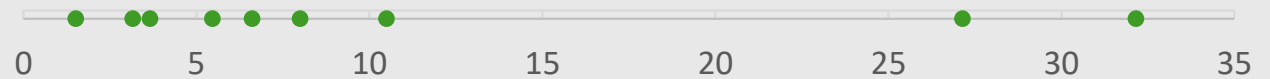


The state of play: sustainability and our sector

The research sector needs to play its part in the climate emergency and MRS has led the way with the Net Zero Pledge, pushing companies towards the goal of becoming Net Zero. But we, as a sector, also have a wider role to play as the voice of the consumer, helping companies understand the importance people place on the environment and hopefully nudging organisations to focus more on their environmental impact. This is a struggle we are all impacted by and one that we should all try and play a positive role in.

Steve Phillips, MRS Sustainability Council Chair and CEO of Zappi

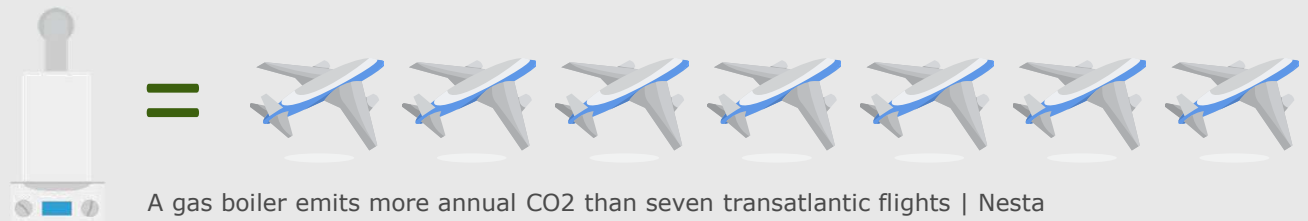
Total CO2e emissions per employee reported to MRS by pledgees



1 tonne =
The average CO2e emitted from one passenger on a return flight from Paris to New York

40 tonnes =
The average annual CO2e emitted from 18 household's gas boilers

n-22



1

Baselining

2

Scope 3

3

Regular measurement

4

External accreditations





Getting to your baseline

Understanding your journey to net zero starts with baselining. This allows companies to then set the realistic and achievable targets needed for reduction, track progress and performance of its mitigation actions, and subsequently report the results. Baselining also allows for the comparison of emissions with industry benchmarks and best practices, hence enabling the identification of opportunities for improvement and innovation.

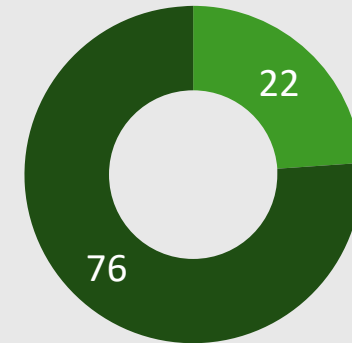
As the foundation for a Net Zero Pledge, the industry must do more in terms of getting on to the ladder of emissions measurement.

Proportion of all pledgees who have reported their progress to MRS in the MRS Net Zero Pledge tracking survey

For respondents to the survey, the majority (76%) have not yet reported their progress.

Baselining CO2 emissions is the key first step in getting to Net Zero.

Achieving this initial understanding of what impact the company's activities have on climate is what allows companies to identify the sources that contribute the most to their overall emissions.



- Have reported in the net zero pledge survey
- Have not reported in the net zero pledge survey

n-27



1
Baselining

2

Scope 3

3

Regular measurement

4

External accreditations



Understanding scope 3

Reduction of Scope 3 is a key unlock in a research company's journey to Net Zero. Our sector tends to have a relatively low scope 1 and 2 impact on the environment: emissions and energy usage from our operations are often minimal compared to some of our clients who create physical products.

However, scope 3 emissions from our value chain may be significant. We conduct surveys, interviews, focus groups and other research activities that require travel, communication, data collection, and analysis - all having a significant impact on the environment.

With business travel being one of the largest portions of a typical market research company's footprint, and also simpler to track due to travel companies' availability of primary CO₂e data, the vast majority (92%) of those who reported their scope 3 emissions were able to report on their business travel footprint. The second most reported upon scope 3 category was purchased goods (67%) as well as employee commuting (67%).

Scope 3 categories most reported upon by reporting MRS pledgees

Reported Scope 3 Categories		Reported Scope 3 Categories	
Business travel	92%	Downstream transportation and distribution	25%
Purchased goods and services	67%	Processing of sold products	17%
Employee Commuting	67%	Investments	17%
Capital goods	58%	Use of sold products	13%
Waste generated in operations	58%	Downstream leased assets	13%
Fuel and energy related activities (not inc. in scope 1 or 2)	54%	Franchises	13%
Upstream transportation and distribution	42%	End-of-life treatment of sold products	8%
Upstream leased assets	38%		

n-24





Understanding scope 3 (cont.)

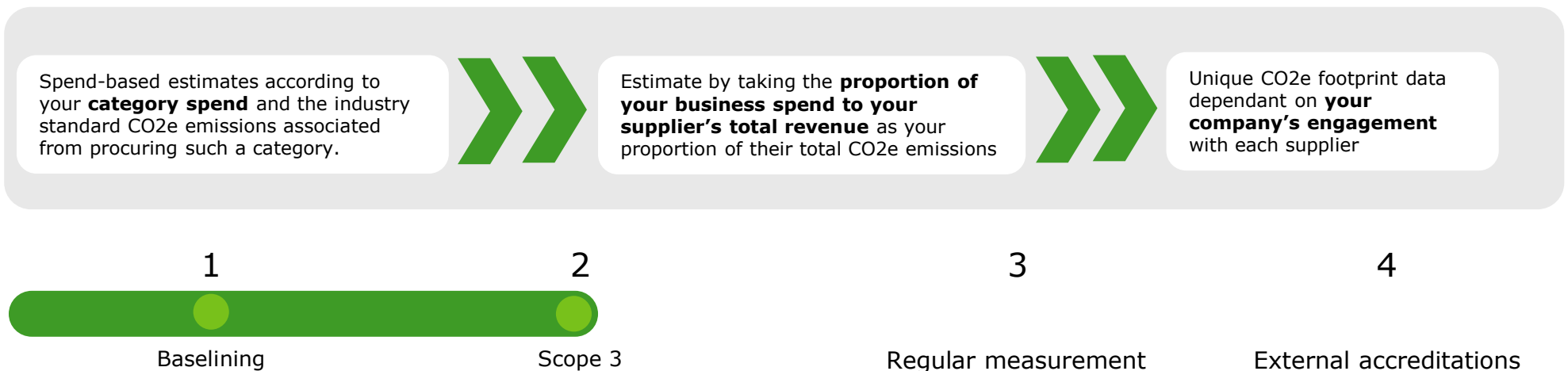
Collecting employee commuting emissions allows for both greater understanding of scope 3 emissions but also provides a good opportunity to engage with employees on their own footprint. The more we can open up wider communication channels around adopting more sustainable behaviours, the better. Hence, truly embedding sustainability in the heart of an organisation's culture.

When examining the footprint of purchased goods and services, the usage of spend-based estimates of category/supplier footprints is the first step towards collecting your data.

The important goal at first is to create a baseline, even if estimated. This gives your organisation the ability to spot the initial opportunities for CO2e reduction.

However, moving forward, companies will need to move beyond the estimation of travel, supplier spend and commuting. The aim should be to expand into more reporting categories, collecting data with greater data accuracy over time, to improve your ability to manage CO2e footprint hot spots and find additional reduction opportunities.

Crucially though, estimation is the best first step – using whatever data you have available.



The ability to track your ongoing emissions footprint

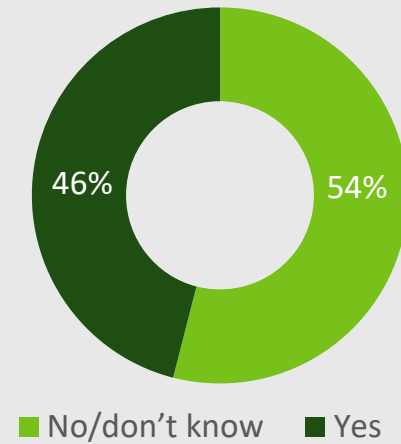


To measure emissions accurately and consistently, we recommend following internationally recognised standards and guidelines, such as the GHG Protocol and the ISO 14064. These standards provide a comprehensive and structured framework for quantifying, reporting, and verifying CO₂e emissions across the value chain.

From those pledgees who shared their 2022 results with MRS, the majority (54%) are not yet regularly reporting their CO₂ emissions and presumably therefore have not put in place the mechanisms and infrastructure to do so.

The ability to regularly measure companies' carbon footprints will help in the long term to set science-based targets and track progress towards net zero. By measuring emissions regularly, our pledgees can not only comply with the increasing regulatory and stakeholder expectations, but also create value and competitive advantage for themselves and their clients who will also be regularly requesting CO₂e data from their supply chain.

Is your organisation currently regularly reporting a total carbon emissions figure?



n-24



Getting help through external accreditations



One way to further demonstrate commitment to Net Zero is to gain external accreditations from organisations which are able to ratify your pledge, examining your reduction plans and sustainability governance.

Such accreditations provide a framework and a standard for measuring and reporting on the sustainability performance of a company, as well as a benchmark for comparison and improvement.

Some of the most recognised and rigorous accreditations MRS would recommend, in order to take meaningful steps towards Net Zero, are the SBTi Net Zero target setting programme or gaining B-Corp certification.

These easy to understand external accreditations can help research companies to enhance reputation and trustworthiness among clients and partners, but also to improve operational efficiency, innovation, and resilience. Moreover, these accreditations have been proven to attract and retain talent, investors, and customers who share their values and vision for a sustainable future.

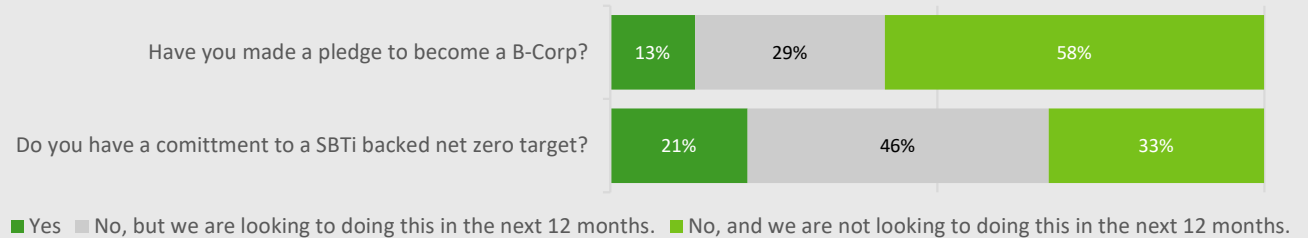


Getting help through external accreditations



67% of respondents reported that they already have committed, or will in the next 12 months commit, to SBTi Net Zero. This highlights progress across the industry should accelerate towards Net Zero. These companies will subsequently have ratified reduction plans and governance in place, meaningfully moving towards Net Zero without over reliance on offsetting.

From those companies which reported on their Net Zero progress, a significant proportion (42%) are looking to become, or have already become, a B-Corp. This part of the industry is in first mover stages when it comes to Net Zero. Companies who are willing to change their business principles and place people, planet and profit in more equal standing to this dramatic extent will likely move quicker towards Net Zero. It is therefore not surprising that they are often the first ones able to report their CO2e data.



n-27





Moving forward

- 1. Estimate your carbon emissions baseline.** Set the realistic and achievable targets needed for reduction, track progress and performance of your footprint's mitigation actions, and then report the results.
- 2. Understand where you can reduce your scope 3 emissions.** Find where your data quality is weakest and focus on how to improve that data's reliability. Spot the emission hot spots across your supply chain to work on reducing your most important areas.
- 3. Find the best way you can track your carbon footprint.** Work out what the best approach is for you and your business. Understand from your clients and interested parties what their expectation is from you on CO2e reporting, and set up your infrastructure to support that.
- 4. Consider a trusted external accreditation.** Are your clients expecting you to sign up to certain pledges? Understand what pledges are out there that will both allow you to showcase your commitment to climate action, but also keep you and your business honest on your progress towards Net Zero.

For more support on the MRS Net Zero Pledge please get in contact; we are here to help you on your journey.

info@mrs.org.uk

1

Baselining

2

Scope 3

3

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4

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MRS Net Zero report

Summary of key findings

There are varying degrees of progress towards net zero and wide variation in emissions

- Total measured GHG tCO₂e per employee ranges from 3 tonnes to 32 tonnes

Quality measurement is a struggle

- Despite signing the Net Zero Pledge, 42% are not currently regularly reporting total CO₂e figure
- Only 21% of pledgees have scientifically backed their Net Zero Pledge

Scope 3 starting points

- Of those who are reporting on scope 3, the most reported category was business travel at 92%
- The second most reported upon categories were purchased goods and services and employee commuting at 67%

Pledgees have shared useful tools to track their progress on their carbon emissions

- Various calculators including Green Element
- Other targets

The future is brighter

- 67% either have or will have an SBTi net zero target in the next 12 months
- 42% either already are or will become a B Corp in the next 12 months

