

# GES UK: ESG Progress Report

Learn more about how GES is driving the events industry towards a sustainable future.



2024



# Overview

Welcome	03
<hr/>	
Our ESG Performance	05
Environment	06
Social	11
Governance	15
<hr/>	
Meet some of the people making good things happen	19
<hr/>	
Glossary	20

# Welcome

In order to meet our vision to grow with our customers and create a truly sustainable future for events, we're using our ESG Progress Report to openly take stock of what we've done so far to achieve this vision, and to detail what's on the horizon.

This is our first GES UK ESG Progress Report, and it provides us with the opportunity to be open about our impact journey to date. Crucially, this means that both our employees and customers can hold us to account, helping us to evolve and improve.

We hope the transparency in this report helps give you a better understanding of how we're constantly working towards our purpose - to be a key driver within the events industry to ensure we thrive in partnership with our people and the planet.

Yours sincerely,

Jason Stead  
President, GES EMEA



# What does a sustainable event look like?

A sustainable event minimises negative environmental impacts, maximises social benefits, and maintains economic viability.

We believe sustainable events are the future, and we're making them a reality.



# Our ESG Performance

Recently, more and more businesses have become aware that focusing on economic value alone won't deliver sustainable outcomes. However, the world of sustainability is wide-ranging and can, at times, feel overly complex.

That's why our approach to sustainability focuses on the three key components of ESG; Environment, Social and Governance. Looking at individual impact areas helps prevent confusion, meaning anyone can read this report and be part of our sustainability journey.

## What is 'ESG'?

Environment, Social and Governance refers to a set of principles to measure a business' impact on the environment, on society, and how transparent and accountable it is.

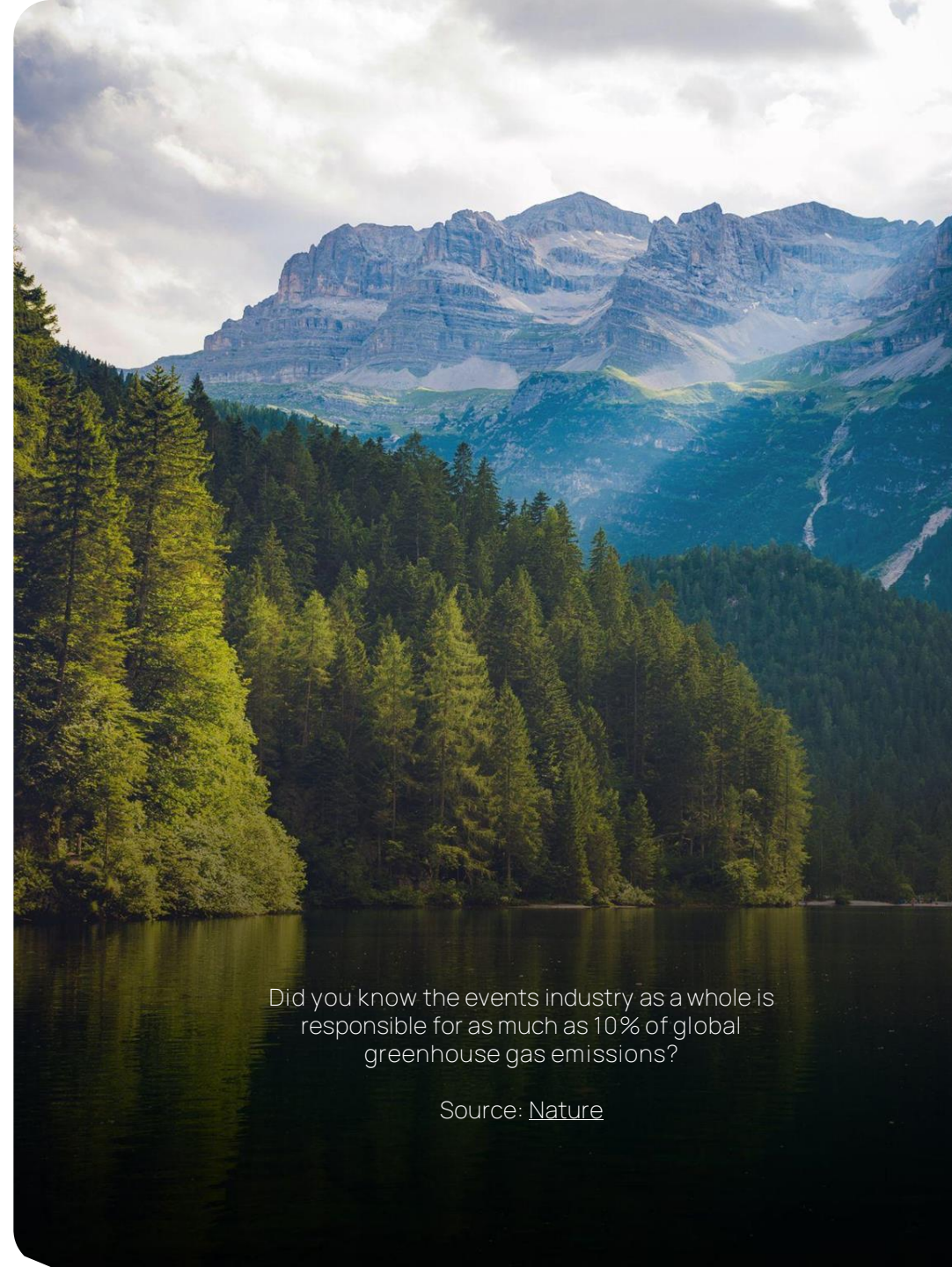
 **Bold text:** refer to definitions in the glossary at the end.

## Our ESG Performance

# Environment

The events industry is traditionally emissions-heavy, largely due to the materials used, energy consumed, waste generated and transport required for overall attendance. But, events provided by GES don't need to follow this trend.

Looking at how our operations impact the environment helps us to gain insight into where we can do better, and lets you know that we're genuinely working on having a lower impact on the natural world around us. Some of our environmental performance is mandated by law, but a lot of what we do in this area is voluntary.



Did you know the events industry as a whole is responsible for as much as 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions?

Source: [Nature](#)

# Environmental Management Systems and Processes

## Where we are today:

- ✓ We've signed up to the [Net Zero Carbon Pledge for the Events Industry](#) to deliver Net Zero events by 2050.
- ✓ We're a member of the Event Supplier and Services Association ([ESSA](#)) Working Group, and the Cross Association Sustainability working group between the AEV, AEO and ESSA.
- ✓ We've received ESSA Gold Sustainability Accreditation.
- ✓ We're ISO 20121 compliant, meaning we abide by strict Sustainable Event Management processes and procedures.

## By the end of 2024:

- ➔ We're working our way to B Corp Certification, which demonstrates high levels of environmental stewardship and contribution to the circular economy.

## By the end of 2025:

- ➔ We'll be developing a Supply Chain Management Plan, which will be scoped by the end Q1 2025.
- ➔ We're looking at aligning our Net Zero targets to an SBTi approved pathway. This refers to science-based targets that are in line with The Paris Agreement goals of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, and are verified by the Science Based Targets Initiative.

## By 2026 and beyond:

- ➔ We're trialling an onsite event delivery platform that logs all onsite services based on a show floorplan, detailing all exhibitors and organisers' orders. This improves efficiency, reduces waste and streamlines our process.

# Facilities and Event Footprinting

## Where we are today:

- ✓ By moving our offices and warehouses onsite at the NEC Birmingham and ExCel London, we've reduced our HGV road miles and emissions by 50%
- ✓ 35% of our forklifts are electric, meaning they have zero emissions during operation.
- ✓ We're continuously promoting resource conservation through more energy efficient alternatives like switching to motion-detecting LED lighting in our offices and LEDs on all show services.
- ✓ We've installed new large format graphics printers with improved LED technology that uses less energy, produces less waste and Greenguard inks which have lower chemical emissions in an indoor environment.
- ✓ We're in the process of conducting a Scope 1-3 carbon footprint with an independent organisation, [Enstic](#).
- ✓ We're evaluating the footprint of our events with an independent organisation, [Seismic](#).

## By the end of 2024:

- ➔ We are exploring new technology to help exhibitors make informed booking decisions, with real-time footprint estimates for various stand components.
- ➔ In an effort to reduce printing, we're trialling two digital, dynamic platforms which will stream live data to digital tables updating our floorplans in a digital format. Our aim is to roll this out to 80% of our shows by 2025
- ➔ We're ensuring all of our uniforms are sustainably sourced and made with sustainable materials with an end of life plan.
- ➔ There are plans to install automatic rapid roller shutter doors at our warehouse to reduce heat loss and save energy.
- ➔ We're in discussion with suppliers to source toilet paper with a lower carbon footprint for all offices.
- ➔ We're introducing cleaning products with a lower environmental impact.

## By the end of 2025:

- ➔ We're looking to increase our percentage of electric forklifts to 100%.
- ➔ We are investigating post-event footprint reporting for organisers and exhibitors to enable annual comparisons and influence future purchasing decisions that have a lower environmental footprint.





# Environmental Metrics (Waste, Biodiversity, Energy, Carbon, Chemicals)

## Where we are today:

- ✓ All waste returns to our HQ for processing and recycling. We work with [Reconomy](#) to manage our waste and look for the best next life options with zero going to landfill. 25% being made into building materials and road signs, with the rest (like contaminated carpets) being redirected and converted to energy.
- ✓ Due to operational improvements aimed at creating more efficient and streamlined warehousing and transport processes, we have managed to reduce waste caused by damage and excess packaging from our stand services.
- ✓ We have completed a cradle to gate assessment of some of our high-carbon materials, which will help us make more informed purchasing decisions.
- ✓ We are currently reviewing and evolving all our products, an example is the development of a new countertop range, recycled graphic panels and alternative flooring solutions
- ✓ We've funded the planting of 438 trees across reforestation projects in India and Uganda.

## By the end of 2024:

- ➔ By working with Reconomy, we're expecting our overall waste to decrease and our recyclable waste to increase. Our decision to localise our delivery warehouses onsite at major venues has been a key enabler to achieve these sustainable operations.
- ➔ We'll be running a company-wide challenge to encourage more nature and biodiversity around our offices through methods such as raised plant beds, bird feeders, and insect hotels.
- ➔ We've successfully achieved the FESPA UK Waste Accreditation standards, to help improve the circular economy and keep materials in use for as long as possible.



## By the end of 2025:

- ➔ Depending on venue capability, our future ambition is to be able to increase EV charging for our forklifts and LGVs. We're working in collaboration with our landlords on the benefits and opportunities of EVs to help move this target forward.
- ➔ We'll be further eradicating certain materials from our offering and replacing them with more sustainable alternatives.
- ➔ We are aiming to have 50% more sustainably accredited materials in our portfolio, directly replacing less sustainable alternatives.

# Graphic Waste



Our PVC foam boards  
Used for fascia boards and overseas graphics.



Fibre-based display board & 5mm swedboard  
All general graphics for exhibitor overlays and printed fascia and organiser feature graphics.



Polyester graphics banners (includes self-adhesive & vinyl)  
Used for all fabric banners for organiser features and exhibitor graphics. Hanging banners and Show Ready Stands



But what about the rest of our waste?  
General waste  
WEEE Waste  
Technology

These are some examples how we recycle our waste.



Some of the second life materials change due to market demand



Reprocessed into fascia boards for the construction industry.



Materials are reprocessed for use in paper mills for fibre-based products.



Materials are reprocessed for use in the production of barrier bases and traffic cones.

Converted to energy

Our hazardous waste and graphic inks are collected by external waste supplier and our ink cartridges are collected by our suppliers for safe disposal.

## Our ESG Performance

# Social

At its core, the Social pillar of ESG is about businesses committing to and respecting human rights.

Exploring the social components of ESG incorporates areas such as diversity and inclusion (D&I), workplace health and safety, and modern slavery. This helps us to be a better employer, understand our impact and influence to society at large, and gives you valuable insight into how we treat our employees and customers. Equipped with that knowledge, you're able to form a better understanding of how we're working to address social issues and manage social risks as a responsible employer and business.



## Financial Security and Support

### Where we are today:

- ✓ Free, confidential and independent financial advice is available to employees on an ad hoc basis.
- ✓ Employees Workplace Pension is invested in a sustainable tracker fund through our provider (Standard Life). We offer pension planning to all employees through our pension provider.
- ✓ Employees who voluntarily increase their pension contributions via salary sacrifice receive the employers NI savings directly into their pension helping to boost their overall pension contribution.

### By the end of 2024:

- ➔ We're working on an action plan to close the gender pay gap.
- ➔ As part of our B Corp ambitions, financial security for all employees has been identified as a best-practice target in our 2024 ESG Plan.

### By 2026 and beyond:

- ➔ We'll be looking at the feasibility of increasing pension contributions for employees.
- ➔ We'll be exploring switching our bank to one that aligns better with our sustainability targets.

## Team Health and Wellness

### Where we are today:

- ✓ We offer [Vitality Health](#) and [BHSF Healthcare](#) plans to all employees.
- ✓ Employees have the option to make use of our Cycle to Work scheme.
- ✓ We've worked hard to build a culture of inclusivity, running educational meetings like "understanding menopause" and "neurodiversity in the workplace".
- ✓ We offer "We Care Employee Assistance" programme, which provides mental health support, fitness and nutrition plans for our employees.
- ✓ We've introduced an end of year shut down and have provided our employees with an additional three days discretionary leave.
- ✓ We have reviewed our Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) Policy to ensure employees have a better work-life balance.

### By the end of 2024:

- ➔ We're keen to improve our wellbeing days by increasing optional Vitality Health checks, dental checks, blood donations and holistic therapies.

### By the end of 2025:

- ➔ We are looking into extending our secondary caregiver leave by an extra week.

# Safety

## Where we are today:

- ✓ We have implemented a H&S platform that mandates all employees and subcontractors attending show site have to complete our online H&S training in order to obtain a pass. Records are kept of all training completed and is regularly reviewed. This is to ensure that all contractors are well-equipped and skilled to fulfil their work, creating a safer environment for everyone.
- ✓ We're ISO 45001 compliant, meaning our Occupational Health & Safety Management practices are certified by an international standardisation system.
- ✓ Last year, we introduced service partner training from a Health and Safety point of view. So far, 78% of our service partners have completed the training, with 12% in progress!

## By the end of 2024:

- ➔ We'll be facilitating a contractor workshop to embed Health and Safety training, best practice and compliance.

## By the end of 2025:

- ➔ We'll be further engaging with our service partners to consolidate composite training records.

# Career & Personal Development

## Where we are today:

- ✓ Quarterly performance reviews are in place for all employees.
- ✓ Our online HR platform allows employees to recognise other members of our workforce and give Kudos for those believed to be going the extra mile and setting an example to our purpose and values.

## By the end of 2024:

- ➔ Working closely with our Culture Club, we'll be providing clearer career objectives through Sage People, making time to discuss progress on goals and aspirations.
- ➔ Our employee training days will be formalised in future, with both core and non-skills based learning opportunities on offer.

## By the end of 2025:

- ➔ We are aiming to offer a variety of apprenticeships within different areas of the business.
- ➔ We have plans to launch a Graduate Training Programme, focusing on early career development.
- ➔ We recognise that mentoring is an important component of career growth, and we'll be looking at providing this in the future.

## By 2026 and beyond:

- ➔ In an effort to support talent development, we'll be providing pay grading, inflation-led pay increases and a predetermined bonus plan and skills matrix for all roles.

## Inclusivity, Engagement and Satisfaction

### Where we are today:

- ✓ Our Culture Club is in place, which influences the Senior Leadership team on issues such as diversity and inclusion, holidays, new office changes, charity fundraising, mental health training and career progression.
- ✓ Our Culture Club conducted a D&I Survey and used the results to make quick but impactful changes such as an increase in annual leave, volunteering and food bank initiatives.
- ✓ Every year we have an anti-harassment, anti-discrimination, or other course that covers D&I topics. Our annual employee engagement survey is in place, which gives us our eNPS.

### By the end of 2024:

- ➔ Our Employee Engagement Strategy is a priority in our overarching ESG plan for 2024.
- ➔ For our customers, our focus will be on improving customer service within 2024 to support improvements to our NPS.
- ➔ We are working with the [Institute of Customer Service](#) to help drive our service excellence.
- ➔ We'd like to conduct an eNPS survey every four months to help us proactively address any issues our employees are experiencing.



## Civic Engagement and Giving

### Where we are today:

- ✓ Giving back is important to us, and we regularly donate to food banks, cake sales and get involved in local fundraisers for different charities.
- ✓ We also donate our surplus products to nearby charities and schools.
- ✓ All employees are entitled to two days every year to dedicate to volunteering initiatives.

### By the end of 2024:

- ➔ We'll soon be launching our Community Engagement Programme, which intends to drive positive impact across our local, internal and industry communities. Our Better Together Programme will focus on breaking down barriers and making connections that reduce anxiety and loneliness and improves wellbeing.

### By the end of 2025:

- ➔ We're introducing an additional company volunteering day for all employees to make use of. They are likely to take place alongside one of our company Town Halls and will be tied into our Community Engagement Programme.

## Our ESG Performance

# Governance

The days of organisations thinking exclusively in terms of revenue are over, and greater emphasis is being placed on who is making decisions and how organisations are run.

Spotlighting our governance procedures and future goals helps us to advance our social and environmental improvements by creating a stronger organisational foundation with established rules, policies and procedures to keep things running smoothly and sustainably.

By lifting the lid, we're giving you a high-level overview of how we do business, and the considerations we take into account when making decisions.



# Sustainability Strategy Adoption and Mission

## Where we are today:

- ✓ Our sustainability performance is embedded into individual objectives and bonus structures to incentivise buy-in and action.
- ✓ We've updated our policies to represent our purpose and vision by putting the environment at the core of our decision making.
- ✓ We've updated our Environmental Sustainability Policy to better represent our commitment and approach to ESG.

## By the end of 2024:

- ➔ Our ESG Strategy is being developed and is gradually aligning to the B Corp framework, evidenced by our B Corp Action Plan
- ➔ Following on from this ESG Progress Report we will continue to develop our ESG Strategy taking into account the initiatives and focuses we have already identified

# Ethics, Human Rights and Transparency

## Where we are today:

- ✓ We're one of the operating companies under Viad. This means that we abide by applicable group policies, one of which is the [Always Honest: Compliance and Ethics Program Manual](#). This manual sets the foundation for our commitment to ethical business which includes but not limited to:-

Anti-Corruption	Conflicts of Interest
Modern Slavery	Safeguarding
D, E & I	Data protection
Whistle blowing	Fair Labour practices

## By the end of 2024:

- ➔ We're in the process of updating a number of policies, including our Supplier Code of Conduct, Breastfeeding Policy, Training and Career Development Policy, Customer Service Policy, and Maternity and Paternity Leave Policy



## Reporting and Accountability

### Where we are today:

- ✓ Under the Viad we produce annual impact reports to enhance transparency, have a look at our [2021](#), [2022](#), and [2023](#) reports to see the progress we've made collectively.
- ✓ We conduct regular internal reporting, including some KPIs as part of Viad's board reporting.

### By the end of 2024:

- ➔ We're looking to set more KPIs to better measure our progress in different areas year-on-year.
- ➔ We'll be doing our own GES UK ESG Report from 2024, defining our targets and action plan for the future. This will be extended to cover EMEA and Visit in 2025.

### By 2026 and beyond:

- ➔ Our ESG Strategy is being developed and is gradually aligning to the B Corp framework, evidenced by our B Corp Action Plan.

## Stakeholder Engagement and Representation

### Where we are today:

- ✓ We have created an ESG Management board consisting of senior leaders to drive sustainable change through the business.
- ✓ We're running stakeholder engagement workshops to educate and highlight GES' operational and ESG approach.

### By the end of 2024:

- ➔ We're at the beginning of our internal engagement plan, with the development of our Strategy Holding Document as a key first step.
- ➔ We'll be sending out an ESG questionnaire to our employees, customers, suppliers, and board to see how we're performing on ESG through their eyes.

# As you can tell, we've had loads on the go...

There's even more that's just on the horizon. It's evident that our efforts to integrate environmental, social, and governance considerations into our business operations are producing tangible and meaningful results. From reducing our facilities footprint, to enhancing D&I initiatives, we're not just meeting regulatory requirements but exceeding them with a genuine dedication to making a positive impact.

It can't be stated enough that our ESG journey has no finish line, and will continue to be a team effort, driven by our desire to do better and to be a positive influence in our industry for current and future generations.

As we look ahead, we're excited about the opportunities to innovate and collaborate on all things ESG. We'll be presenting our detailed ESG Action Plan in early 2025, filled to the brim with measurable targets and anticipated milestones - so watch this space!



# Meet some of the people making good things happen

While these individuals may be spearheading our initiatives, our work on ESG is ultimately a company-wide effort and we rely heavily on the contributions from all employees to drive our ambition forward.



**Kate Holliday**  
Head of ESG

We recently appointed Kate as our Head of ESG to focus on the development of our ESG Strategy and to drive the initiatives in this Progress Report forward. That's no small feat.

*"Balancing the environmental, social and governance aspects of our business and making them integral to our economic and strategic decision making is both challenging and rewarding on many levels. Luckily, we've got such a motivated workforce who are fully on board to help make our ambitions a reality."*



**Jason Holt**  
Production Director

Jason is our Production Director, who set up all our fantastic waste management initiatives. He also manages our relationships with Reconomy and FESPA, the global federation of associations for the wide-format printing community.

*"Who knew waste could be so interesting! I get a real sense of achievement when we implement a new waste management stream or onboard a new sustainable material. I relish the challenge and opportunity to continue improving our materials and reducing our waste - onwards and upwards."*



**Leanne Griffiths**  
Chair of our Culture Club

Leanne is our Director of New Business Development and chairs our Culture Club. In her role as Chair, she helps bring the needs of our people to light, from wellbeing and volunteering, to menopause initiatives and office improvements.

*"I am passionate about people and believe personal wellbeing is so important as it impacts our day to day in so many ways. It is a real privilege to be Chair of the Culture Club, and bring to life so many new initiatives that have such a positive impact on our teams. I am really excited about what we will achieve next year!"*



**Katrina Rowbury**  
HR Director, EMEA

Katrina is our HR Director EMEA, and chairs the ESSA Event Industry HR Working Group. She is behind our people strategy and loves bringing people together, problem solving and developing plans that create positive results.

*"Through our commitment to ESG initiatives, we're not just shaping a sustainable future; we're fostering a workplace culture where purpose and progress come together to drive collective growth."*



**Paul Gibson**  
Head of Delivery, Midlands

Paul is responsible for the delivery of shows from The Midlands up to and including Scotland for core services, and the manufacture and delivery of all Show Ready, graphics and features products

*"I see sustainability not to be a goal but a process of continually improving, reviewing the energy, processes, and materials we use to see how we can reduce, re-use, recycle."*

# Glossary



## B Corp Certification

is awarded to a company that voluntarily meets the highest standards for social and environmental performance. These standards are intentionally set high and are meant to recognise leading companies.



## Carbon neutral

describes a state over a specified time period, where there's been no overall increase in GHGs into the atmosphere. This is usually done through offsetting or compensating for emissions by purchasing and retiring carbon credits.



## Circular economy

is a model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products for as long as possible. In this way, the life cycle of products is significantly extended.



## Cradle to gate

assesses the environmental impact of a product's lifecycle from resource extraction (cradle) to the production gate (i.e. before the product is transported or utilised by the consumer).



## Culture Club

is our internal team dedicated to being the channel between our employees and senior leadership team on all matters relating to company culture and workplace satisfaction.



## COP

stands for Conference of the Parties, an international summit on climate change attended by signatories of the United Nations Framework Convention of Climate Change. COPs are hosted by a different country each year and seek to revise and strengthen global ambitions to stop global warming, with this year's COP taking place during November in Baku, Azerbaijan.



## D&I

or Diversity and Inclusion is about empowering people by respecting and appreciating what makes them different in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, education, and national origin.



## eNPS

or Employee Net Promoter Score is an established way of measuring how likely our employees are to recommend our organisation as a good place to work. This metric assesses our employees' job satisfaction by measuring their readiness to recommend their company to others.



## Environmental Management System

refers to a system that generally includes environmental policy, planning, implementation, research, management review and identified improvements. A corporate Environmental Management System, or EMS, can also be developed in line with ISO 14001 standards.



## Emissions

or greenhouse gases (GHGs) are gases in the Earth's atmosphere that trap heat. As GHG concentrations increase, the warming effect they produce increases too.



## ESG

stands for Environment, Social and Governance, and refers to a set of principles and considerations that measure a business' impact on the environment, on society, and how transparent and accountable it is as a business.



## EVs

or Electric Vehicles are vehicles that can be powered by an electric motor, which draw their electricity from a battery that can be charged through a renewable energy source.



## ISO

is the International Organisation for Standardisation, and is an independent and non-governmental organisation tasked with the development of standard-setting. The ISO makes international standards and guidelines for a range of businesses and purposes, and publishes technical reports.



## Net Zero

means no longer adding to the total amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Committing to Net Zero is important because it helps stop climate change, which keeps our planet healthier for us and for the future.



## NPS

or Net Promoter Score is a market research metric that is based on a single survey question asking respondents to rate the likelihood that they would recommend us to a friend or colleague.



## Recycling

means treating used objects and materials that have reached the end of their useful life so that new materials and components can be created out of the original materials.



## Recyclable

materials are ones which can be re-processed and re-manufactured into new ones. Materials which are non-recyclable cannot be treated to dismantle and re-use their components.



## SBTi approved pathway

refers to science-based targets that are in line with the Paris Agreement goals of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, and are verified by the Science Based Targets Initiative.



## Scopes 1, 2 and 3 emissions

is a way of categorising the different kinds of emissions we create. Scope 1 covers emissions from sources we control directly, like our fleet vehicles. Scope 2 covers indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy from our utility provider. Scope 3 emissions are all indirect emissions (not included in Scope 2) that cover the entire value chain of our company. This is usually the most significant source of emissions.



## Solvent Free

refers to substances containing no solvents, which can have ozone-depleting effects.



SDGs

refers to the universal Sustainable Development Goals, which have been adopted by the United Nations. The 17 goals provide a shared blueprint and vision for peace and prosperity that benefits people and the planet for many generations to come.



Sustainable Materials

are ones which can be produced, used and disposed of with minimal impacts to the environment. They might be made of recycled materials or natural fibres which do not pollute the environment, or using a process which minimises the use of resources such as water or energy, or that produces minimal waste.



The Paris Agreement

is an international treaty on climate change which was adopted by 196 nation states at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2015. It contains nationally determined contributions (NDCs) which are commitments made by countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, aimed at limiting global warming to 1.5oC above pre-industrial levels by 2030.



WEEE Waste

refers to Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment.





**GES**