
Carbon Reduction Plan

2025/26

How we are addressing Climate Change

We deliver an ambitious portfolio of climate projects through our work in arts and culture, education and the English language. Since 2020 we have directly engaged with 22 million people around the world and connected with more than 7,500 partners. This includes participation at COP26, 27, 28 and most recently COP29. We are also committed to operating in a more environmentally responsible way.

Our priorities are to:

- Strengthen climate and sustainability education and research
- Build the resilience of education systems to climate impacts
- Support young people and future leaders to build their skills and knowledge to respond to climate change
- Protect cultural heritage at risk from climate change
- Raise awareness of climate change and biodiversity loss by supporting the arts and culture sector to develop creative responses and adopt more sustainable practices
- Be environmentally responsible and decarbonise our activities and operations
- Share knowledge and best practice by commissioning research and participating in the Conference of Parties (COP) and Conference of Youth (COY)

Carbon Emissions targets

By the end of financial year 2025/26¹, we are targeting a 33% reduction in scope 1, scope 2 and scope 3 annual emissions against the 2017/18 baseline². Total emissions will decrease from 50,338 tCO₂e in 2017/18 to 33,725 tCO₂e in 2025/26 and then to net zero carbon emissions by 2040 at the latest.

¹ Our financial year runs from April 1 to 31st March.

² A 2017/18 baseline has been chosen to align with HMG reporting and Greening Government Commitments

<i>(All figures are in tCO2e)</i>	Baseline Year 2017/18	Interim target 2025/26	% Net reduction
Scope 1 emissions Direct Greenhouse Gas emissions occur from sources that are owned or controlled by the British Council, e.g. from boilers, generators or vehicles	1,321	885	33%
Scope 2 emissions Indirect Greenhouse Gas emissions are from the generation of purchased electricity and heat consumed by the British Council	15,316	10,260	33%
Scope 3 emissions All other indirect emissions occurring at sources we do not own or control across the entire value chain	33,701	22,580	33%
TOTAL	50,338	33,725	33%

Performance in 2024/25

In 2024/25, we reduced global carbon emissions by 53 per cent, from a 2017/18 baseline, surpassing our 33 per cent reduction target for 2025/26.

	Total global emissions (tCO2e)		UK emissions (tCO2e)		Rest of the world emissions (tCO2e)	
	2017/18 baseline	2024/25 actual	2017/18 baseline	2024/25 actual	2017/18 baseline	2024/25 actual
Scope 1 emissions	1,321	752	304	112	1,017	640
Scope 2 emissions	15,316	9,897	727	554	14,588	9,343
Scope 3 emissions	33,701	12,737	9,906	2,040	23,795	10,697
TOTAL	50,338	23,386	10,938	2,706	39,400	20,680

- The 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 baseline aligns to Greening Government Commitments.
- Carbon emissions are reported for the global estate and calculated using the operational control approach in line with GHG Protocol. Data collected includes electricity and natural gas usage at locations, water usage, waste water, waste generated, as well as travel for business purposes. Data has been estimated for missing electricity, water and waste data. Gas and travel data was not estimated due to the variable nature of these data elements.
- Exclusions to scope: Scope 1 emissions – fugitive emissions of refrigerant gases. Scope 3 emissions - all purchased goods & services (revenue) except materials (paper) & water supply which are reported, purchased goods & services (capital), upstream emissions of fuels and electricity, employee commuting, employee homeworking.
- Estimation methodology: For base year estimates for missing electricity data, the average kwh per meter squared was calculated for the entire estate in the base year and used to determine estimates for missing electricity data. For water the missing data was estimated using m2 per FTE average and waste estimated using kg of waste per FTE average.
- Carbon calculation: Defra/BEIS conversion factors used for the appropriate reporting year, IEA conversion factors for electricity use outside of the UK. Scope 3 includes ‘Transmission and Distribution’ from electricity consumed and natural gas ‘Well to Tank’ emissions.
- Baseline recalculation policy is set at significant changes to the organisation over and above 5% variance. This has not yet been required.

In 2024/25 we focussed on the following areas:

<p>Initiatives to reduce our carbon footprint</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our offices in Dubai, Colombo and Port Harcourt introduced measures to save energy and reduce carbon emissions, such as the installation of solar panels, which are now supplying a significant proportion of these locations’ energy needs. • Business travel emissions have decreased by 65% compared to our 2017/18 baseline year. The widespread adoption of virtual collaboration has played a key role in these changes, alongside travel restrictions in 2024/25.
<p>Improved management of our carbon footprint</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued to explore how to capture scope 3 emissions linked to the purchase of goods and services.
<p>Leadership and engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalised and launched our first organisational Climate Change Strategy. • Shared experiences on our journey towards net zero as part of our participation at COP29 in Azerbaijan. • Maintained a network of regional and country environmental co-ordinators to support collection and analysis of our carbon footprint data.

- Developed a bespoke carbon literacy training course, certified by the Carbon Literacy Project, to equip staff with the knowledge and tools to identify and implement positive change, wherever they are in the world.

Priorities for 2025/26

- Share experiences on our journey towards net zero as part of our participation at COP30 in Brazil.
- At the mid-way point of delivering our climate change strategy, conduct and evaluate our progress, using key performance indicators verified by The Social Investment company and publish a progress report.
- Upskill and train British Council staff to become Carbon Literacy training facilitators, in preparation for a pilot rollout of our Carbon Literacy programme to staff in 2026.


Declaration and Sign Off

This Carbon Reduction Plan has been completed in accordance with PPN 06/21 and associated guidance and reporting standard for Carbon Reduction Plans.

Emissions have been reported and recorded in accordance with the published reporting standard for Carbon Reduction Plans and the GHG Reporting Protocol corporate standard³ and uses the appropriate Government emission conversion factors for greenhouse gas company reporting⁴.

Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions have been reported in accordance with Greening Government Commitments, and the required subset of Scope 3 emissions have been reported, where data is available, in accordance with the published reporting standard for Carbon Reduction Plans and the Corporate Value Chain (Scope 3) Standard⁵.

This Carbon Reduction Plan has been reviewed and agreed with our Executive team.

Signed: 

Andy Williams: Chief Operating Officer

Date: 13 November 2025

³<https://ghgprotocol.org/corporate-standard>

⁴<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-conversion-factors-for-company-reporting>

⁵<https://ghgprotocol.org/standards/scope-3-standard>