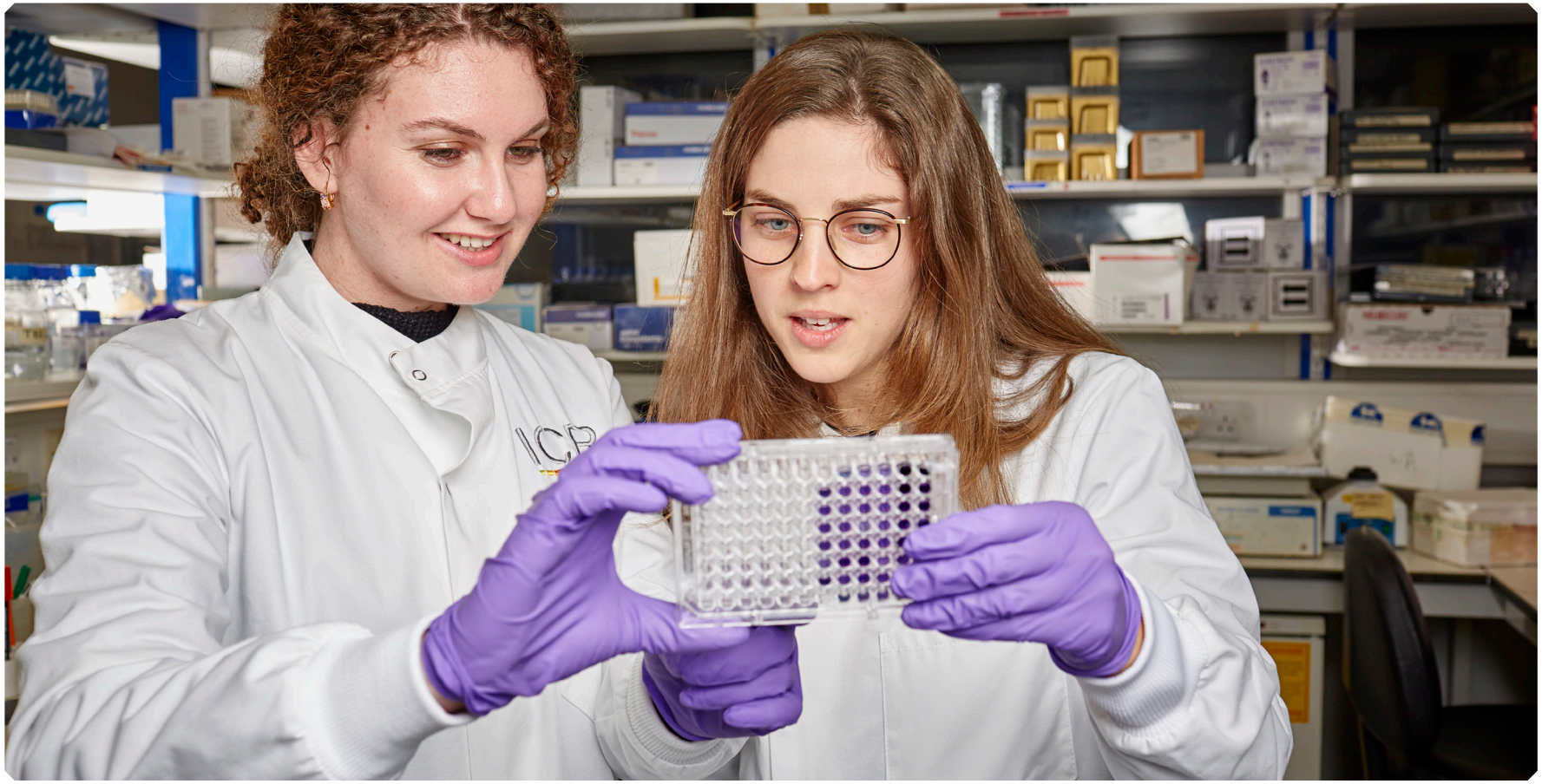
ICR The Institute of Cancer Research

Sustainability Report



2023/24

Executive Summary

The ICR has set an ambitious target of achieving net zero across all three scopes by 2040, and achieving an interim reduction of 42% by 2030. This requires a coordinated effort by all areas of the ICR, from research to building management and engagement. This annual report provides a year in review of sustainability activities from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024 and reflects the work that has been taking place to reduce the ICR's carbon emissions against our baseline year of 2018/19.

Thanks to activities such as a new energy management system and research led energy saving behaviours, the ICR's emissions from direct sources (Scope 1) and indirect sources (Scope 2) have decreased by 16% since 2018/19. To meet the Net Zero carbon reduction target infrastructure improvement projects identified in the site decarbonisation reports must be implement.

Business travel has seen a further bounce back this year, with increased travel to conferences the ICR has implemented a new policy of no domestic UK flights where a better sustainable alternative is available. There has also been an increase in staff commuting carbon emissions as people increasing return to sites. Home working emissions have reduced, reflecting this.

There has been small decrease in waste emissions compared to the baseline year of 2018/29, with fluctuations in waste volumes in the intervening years due to the pandemic and large construction projects. The ICR continues to be zero waste directly to landfill and is going out to tender for a new waste contract in 2025.

A new biodiversity action plan has been carried out that includes all of the ICR and a new ground maintenance contract has been successfully tendered to implement this action plan.

Carbon emissions from purchased goods and services have decreased by 6% compared to the baseline year of 2018/19. There has been an increase of 0.6% compared to the 2022/23 academic year. This is in part due to increased expenditure and a sector reliance on a spend-based methodology, though we now use hybrid calculations for our larger suppliers to improve data used. The carbon footprint for our computer equipment is now completely provided by our suppliers.

The ICR has successfully retained certification to ISO14001, an international standard that sets out the requirements for an environmental management system, since 2013 as part of our integrated management system.

The new Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice primary aims are to promote environmentally responsible practices in research and innovation, reducing negative environmental impacts and emissions associated with these activities. The ICR is proud to be a signatory to this Concordat.

Targets:

2040

Net Zero across all three scopes

2030

Achieve an interim reduction of 42%

Contents

Foreword

Professor Kristian Helin – Chief Executive

I welcome the opportunity to share with you, the progress made towards a sustainable Institute of Cancer Research, one which conducts leading-edge cancer research in a more responsible and sustainable way.

As this academic year 2023/24 has seen the first signs of global temperatures exceeding the 1.5°C limit, needed to overt the most significant impacts of climate change, it is pertinent to demonstrate the ICR's continued commitment and momentum to deliver sustainable science.

This report outlines the progress against targets set out in our sustainability action plan 'Sustainable Discoveries', foundations to deliver sustainable infrastructure & procurement as well as looking forward to projects and initiatives for the coming year.

We have made ongoing reductions in our scope 1 & 2 emissions, put in place methodology for a more accurate calculation of our emissions from purchased goods & services and updated our travel policy to align with our carbon reduction targets.

As an organisation we have publicly committed to the concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice, which is key for driving sustainability in the sector.

Warm Regards

Professor Kristian Helin
Chief Executive and President

Richard Woods – Head of Sustainability

This is the second ICR annual report about our sustainability journey, showing the progress and achievement we have made so far.

The cultural engagement has been great to see across the ICR, from laboratory sustainability certification, energy reduction and a new commitment to reduce short haul flights.

The next stages of the decarbonisation of our estate are due to commence in 2024/25, with two buildings at Sutton having solar panels installed on their roof, the replacement of all our lighting with a smart LED system and a long-term plan to improve the sustainability and wellbeing of our campuses for staff, students, visitors and neighbours.

Richard Woods
Head of Sustainability

Introduction

What does sustainability mean for the ICR?

In this second report, we will show our progress in implementing our sustainability plans and our actions in addressing the environmental impact of our science, all while keeping our primary focus on our core mission: Defeating Cancer.

We recognise the importance of integrating sustainability principles into our work and to achieve our sustainability vision, we require a determined approach involving all members of our institution, from our research scientists to professional services personnel and all other stakeholders.

ICR and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

The SDGs were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. They address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental protection peace and justice.

Sustainable Discoveries

The ICR's Sustainability Action Plan

Sustainable Discoveries represents our commitment to align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, addressing economic, social, and environmental challenges locally and globally.

This initiative, part of our strategy, aims to integrate sustainability principles into our work at the ICR.

Sustainable Discoveries has 4 pillars:

Sustainable Operations:
- The transformation of our estates and facilities
- Supporting our people across the ICR

Sustainable Science:
- How we undertake our research to defeat cancer whilst reducing environmental impacts

Sustainable Procurement:
- Refers to how we improve the environmental and social impacts from our supply chain - the largest share of our carbon footprint

Sustainable Foundations:

• Governance • Accountability • Training • Awareness
• Systems to Support Sustainability

Pillar 1
Sustainable Foundations

Under the Sustainable Foundations Pillar, we establish the groundwork for implementing our plan. We involve and educate our colleagues on sustainability topics, closely monitor our progress, while sharing our accomplishments.

In this section of the report, we will outline our sustainability strategy and our commitment to achieving net zero emissions by 2040.

ICR's Climate Impacts

- Net zero emissions by 2040
- 42% reduction in our carbon footprint across scopes 1, 2, and 3 by 2029/2030

The climate crisis stands as one of today's most fundamental global challenges. The Climate Change Act 2008 mandates that greenhouse gas emissions must reach net zero by 2050.

In a determined effort to lead by example, the ICR has set an ambitious goal to achieve net zero emissions by 2040, requiring a reduction of emissions by a minimum of 90% by that deadline. We have established an interim target based on the methodology from the Science Based Targets Initiative, aiming for a 42% reduction in our carbon footprint across scopes 1, 2, and 3 by 2029/30.

Our emissions fall into 3 main areas:

Scope 1 – emissions from combustion of gas in heating boilers, emissions from burning fuel for back-up generators, leakage of cooling system refrigerant gases and emissions from our own vehicles.

Scope 2 – emissions associated with the consumption of purchased electricity from the national grid.

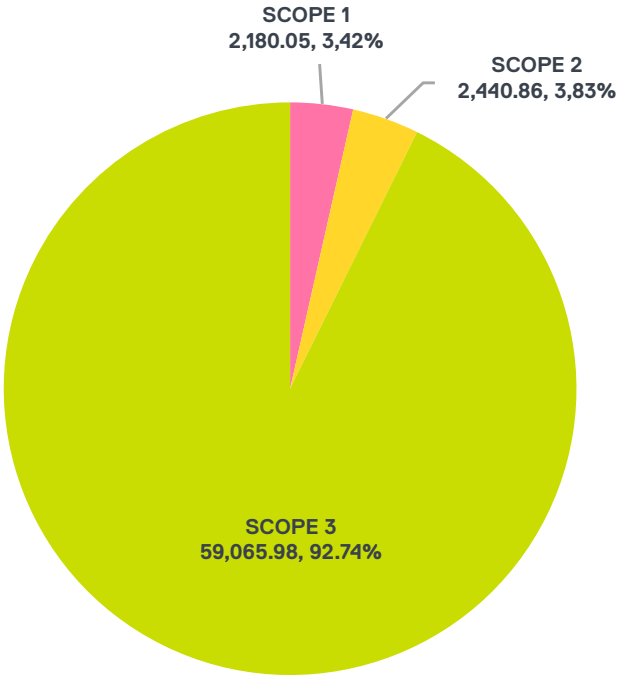
Scope 3 – our wider value chain, including emissions from procurement, waste management, commuting and business travel (Scope 3 is by far the main source of emissions)

ICR Carbon Footprint 2023/24

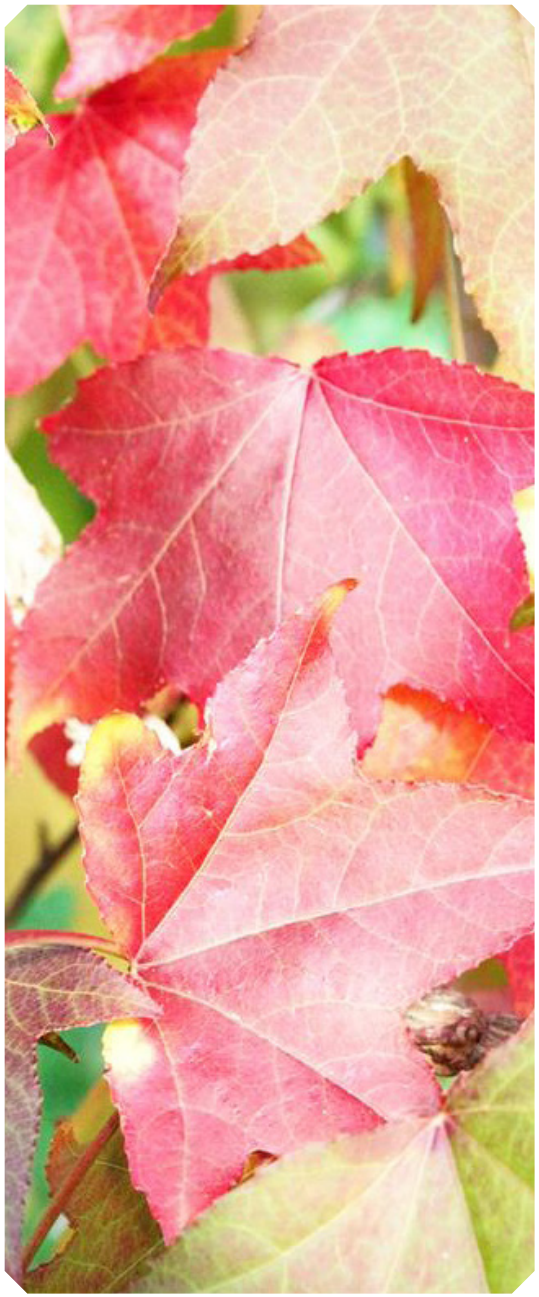
Summary data

Our carbon footprint is calculated for each academic year, August'23 to July'24. In 2023/24 the total ICR carbon footprint was 63,688 tCO_2e.

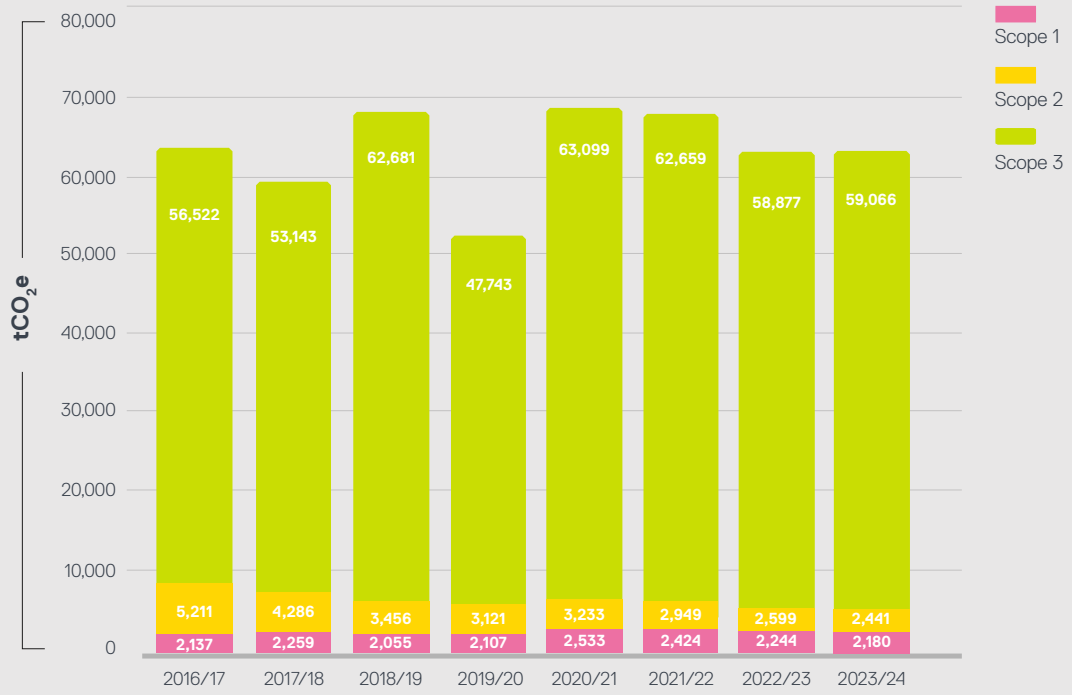
2023/2024 share of emissions tCO_2e



This was a decrease of 0.05% compared to the previous academic year. This is mainly due to improvements in the data accuracy, reductions in gas and electricity usage off set against an increase in business related travel.



Yearly emissions comparison with share of scopes (tCO_2e)



Impacts Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions:

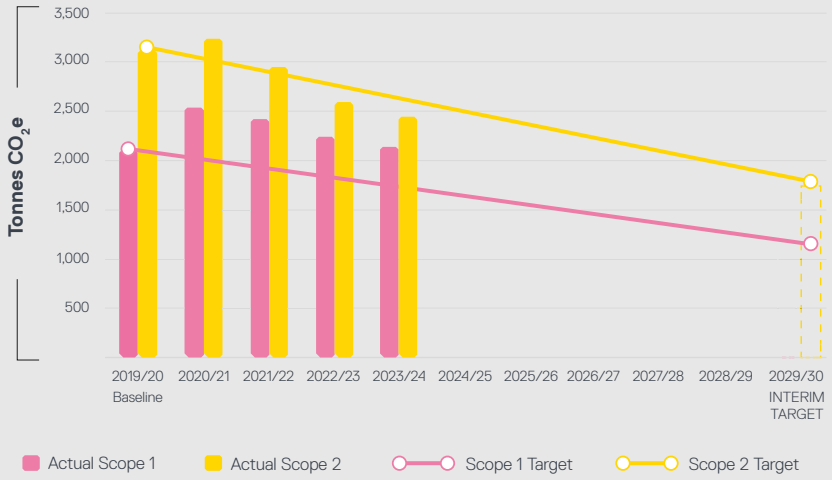
In 2023/24 electricity and gas usage were down 6.1% compared to the previous academic year. Overall Scope 1 and 2 emissions were down in 2023/24 by 4.6% compared to the previous academic year (this also includes other CO_2 emissions directly from the site).

Energy savings across 2023/24 have been due to the implementation of new Energy Management software, raising the temperature of freezers, the use of the Combined Heat & Power plant in CCDD and energy usage awareness.

Gas consumption is still slightly higher than our baseline of 2019/20, due to the opening of the CCDD building in 2020/21. However there has been continuous reduction in gas usage since 2020/21, with a 12% reduction in gas usage in 2023/24 compared to 2020/21.

Scope 2 accounted for zero emissions under the market-based approach. This was because purchased electricity was supported by certification demonstrating the ICR's acquisition of nuclear energy through the grid. Our Scope 2 is on track to reach our near-term and net zero targets.

Scope 1 and 2 science-based target with progress



Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions:

Emissions from purchased goods and services represent 92.74% of our total carbon footprint in 2023/24. For the past few years our procurement activities have constituted the majority of our carbon emissions. Significant efforts continue into making our supply chain more environmentally friendly.

Procurement Carbon Footprint – Comparison with Previous Year

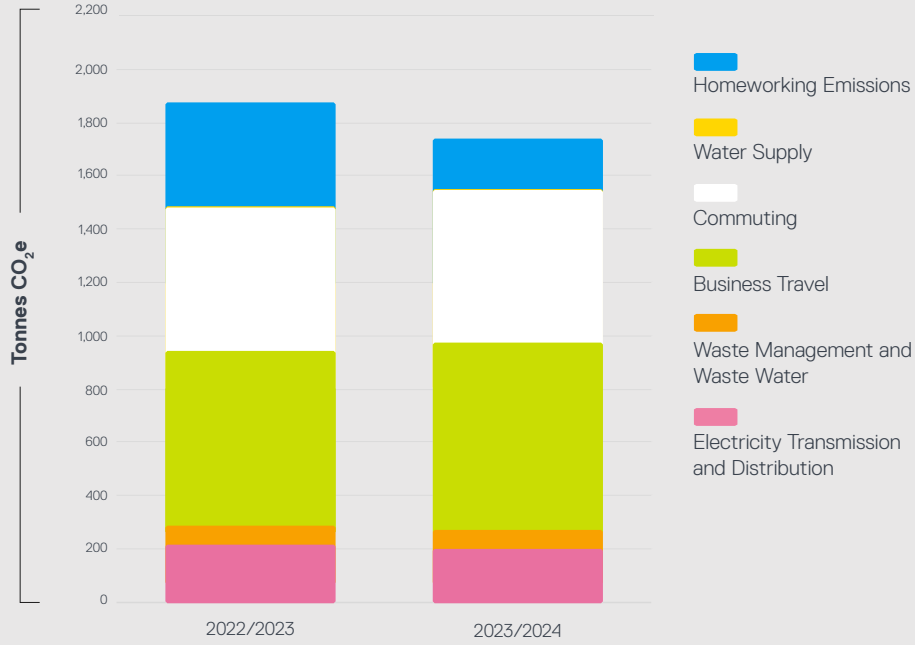
Other scope 3 categories:

Scope 3 emissions without procurement are lower in 2023/2024 compared to 2022/2023, mainly due to the decrease in home working emissions.

Emissions from Business travel have increased overall by 6%.

Emissions from Waste Management and Water have increased from 61.7 tCO_2e in 2022/23 to 76.5 tCO_2e in 2023/2024. The emissions from water supply remains low due to previous and current work undertaken by Building and Maintenance.

ICR Carbon Footprint – Comparison with previous year Scope 3 (excluding procurement)



IEMA Transforming the world to sustainability

Sustainability Training and Capacity building

Sustainability training for our staff and students is critical for engaging and raising awareness of the global issues we face. Working in an organisation that is very resource intensive, it is particularly important to inform people of the role that ICR as an organisation has to play in mitigating and building resilience against these problems and how individuals can all play their part.

'Sustainability at the ICR', the mandatory E-learning course for all new starters has been embedded within the learning and development web pages and completion is a requirement for staff to pass their contractual probationary period.

The ICR also offers an ICR orientated Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) and accredited course. This includes environmental sustainability skills for everyone, and a specific module for managers and is hosted by Watts Sustainability. Since 2021, 140 staff/students have completed this sustainability course. An optional short multiple-choice test leads to this externally recognised course being certified by one of the country's leading sustainability institutes.

Environmental Sustainability Skills – For the Workforce:

An introductory course that helps staff and students get to grips with the basics, giving a fundamental awareness of environment and sustainability issues. Thirty percent of the course content is specifically designed to examine the impact of research science, raise awareness of what the ICR is doing at the organisational level to mitigate and adapt to global issues such as climate change and biodiversity loss and encourage participants to embed sustainability in their area of work.

Environmental Sustainability Skills – For the Manager:

Building upon the introductory course this training focuses on the issues in more depth. It provides managers and supervisors with the tools to implement their broadened knowledge and skills within their area of expertise. This is ideal for group leaders and managers who want to oversee organisational improvements that drive sustainability across the organisation.

This academic year has seen maximum take up of the Environmental Sustainability for the work force course (20), with additional 10 people taking the advanced manager course.

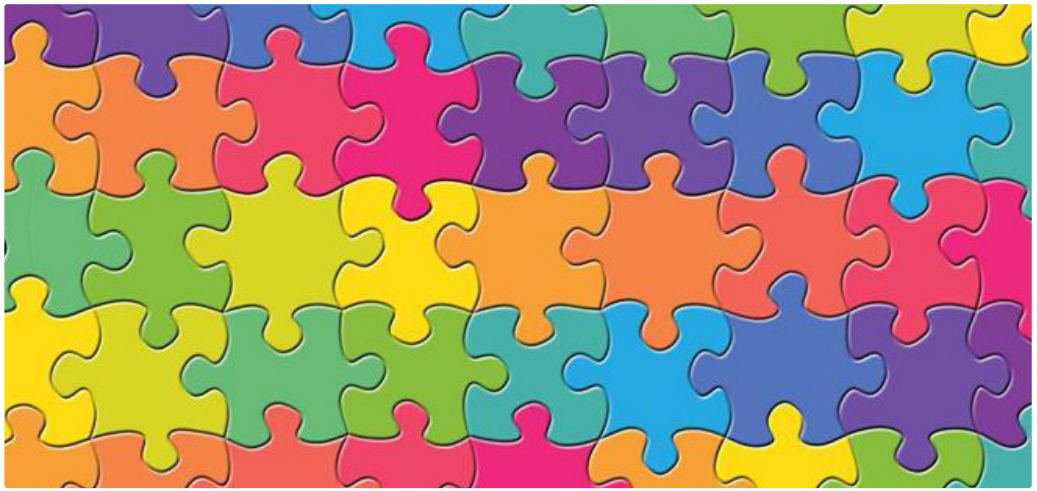
Comments from staff and students who took the introductory course included,

> 'I found this course very thought provoking and it was extremely interesting to hear about the projects the ICR have or are undertaking to help the organisation become more sustainable',
>
> 'There was a clear structure, and having the overall aim of the final IEMA examination gave an extra incentive to pay full attention' and 'the opportunity to gain this qualification was another plus!'
>
> 'Overall, I think that there was a good balance of information/presentation, discussion and break-out rooms during the course. I would definitely recommend it to my colleagues.'

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

At the ICR we understand the importance of Equality Diversity and Inclusion, both for producing the best science, but also for building a strong, happy workforce of students and employees all striving for the single mission of making the discoveries that defeat cancer.

We do not underestimate the journey that we are on. It will take dedicated work to drive inclusion in everything we do, but we are committed, open to change, willing to learn. Most importantly we are ready to put in the hard work needed to ensure all of our employees and students feel safe, feel empowered and can thrive.



Athena Swan

The Athena SWAN Charter, managed by Advance HE, is a framework designed to support and transform gender equality within higher education and research institutions.

The Charter acknowledges and celebrates exemplary practices in higher education and research institutions aimed at advancing gender equality in terms of representation, progression, and success.

The ICR proudly holds an Athena SWAN Silver award, recognising the significant impact of our efforts on gender equity. The Athena SWAN Steering Group, chaired by Professor Christina Yap, is diligently working towards our Silver renewal submission in 2025.

In 2024, the Athena Swan Steering Group have worked on:

- Legislative updates, including policies on flexible working, sexual harassment, and enhanced parental and maternity leave
- Thoroughly reviewing data to understand reasons behind the gender and ethnicity pay gaps and putting in place measures to address this on-going focus area
- Networking and development events for senior and aspiring women across the ICR

In the next year we will double down on efforts to reduce the gender and ethnicity pay gaps, focus on building our Employee Networks so that we can amplify and learn from the voices of students and staff across the institute, and optimise our recruitment, progression and retention programmes.

Annual equality objectives 2024

The ICR sets equality objectives through the Equality Steering Group and these are published in our annual equality report.

In 2024 we have achieved:

- Enhanced inclusive recruitment training for all recruiting managers
- Enhanced inclusive recruitment practices, including a policy to challenge single gender shortlists
- New guidelines, support and training for our working culture projects within the Chemistry department
- The launch of a new development programme, Accelerate, aimed at developing underrepresented managers

Pillar 2
Sustainable Operations

Energy Savings hit £240k

Due to cultural change, ActNow and our energy manager the ICR has continued to achieve substantial savings of nearly a quarter of a million pounds on its 2023/24 bills compared to predicted usage.

These initiatives were monitored by the Sustainability Advisory Group, resulting in a 7% reduction in electricity consumption and a 4% decrease in gas usage compared to the previous academic year.

Measures included continuing to implement the good practises initiated last year, such as transitioning to -70 degrees Celsius for ultra-low temperature freezers, using the Energy Management System to identify increases in energy and water usage, using the Combined Heat & Power Plant in CCDD, the Big Christmas Switch Off, and the Space Temperature Policy.

Waste at the ICR

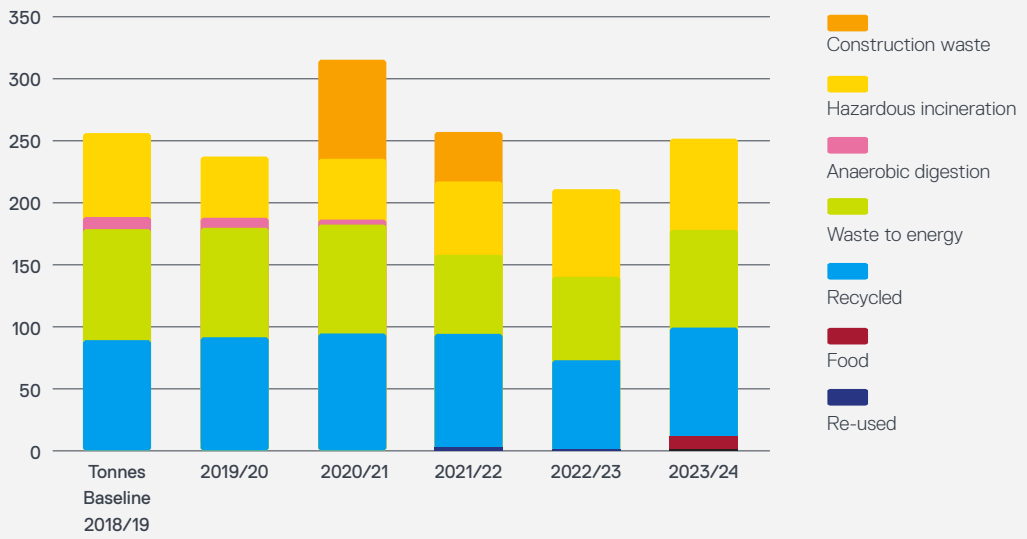
Waste – Sustainability Report 2023-24

- Reduce Waste arisings by 4.2% per annum
- Recycle at least 50% of site waste by 2024/25

Waste performance

In 2023/24 our overall waste total in tonnes generated increased by 41.22 tonnes compared to 2022/23. Just over half of this (22.857 tonnes) can be attributed to the decanting and refurbishment of the office facility at 123 Old Brompton Road. The overall weight of waste decreased by 1.35% (3.5 tonnes) when compared to the baseline year 2018/19. However, the overall total waste weight increased from the previous year 2022/23.

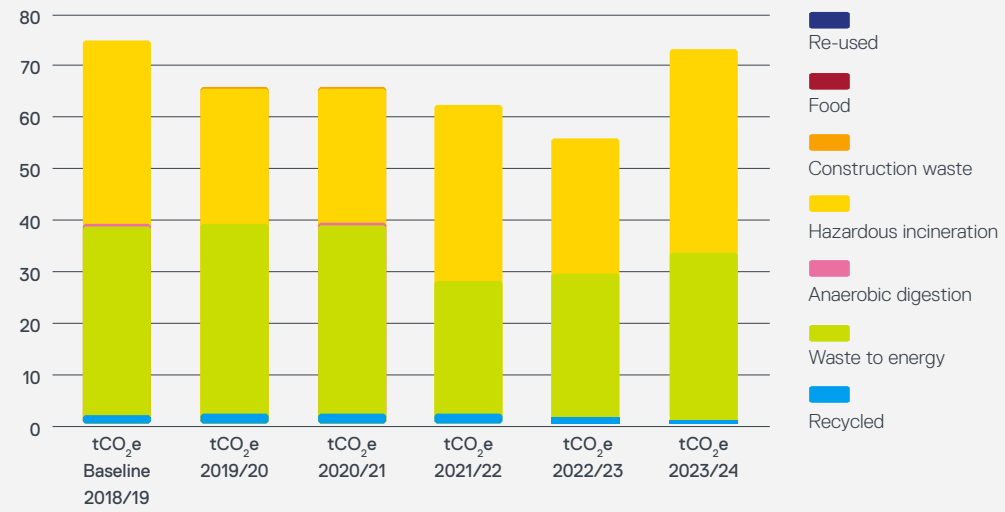
Waste Comparison by Type (Tonnes)



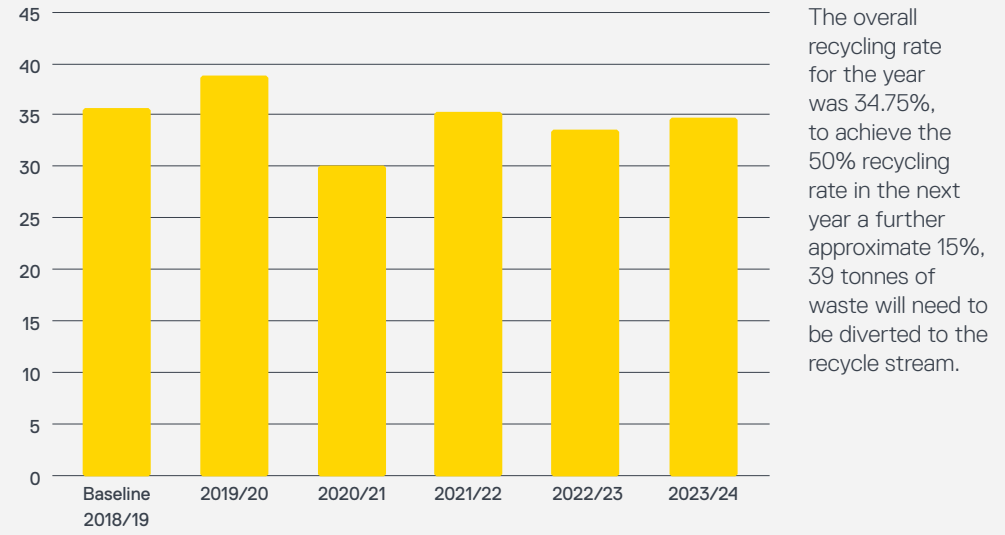
The target set is to reduce waste arising by 4.2% per annum based on the baseline year which should have resulted in only 217.10 tonnes of waste generated overall in year 2023/24 compared to actual of 254.24 tonnes. To align with the target the quantity of waste to be generated in year 2024/25 will have to be no greater than 207.98 tonnes.

Our total waste in tCO_2e increased to 73.05 tonnes.

Waste Comparison by Type (tCO_2e)



Total Recycling Rate (%)



The overall recycling rate for the year was 34.75%, to achieve the 50% recycling rate in the next year a further approximate 15%, 39 tonnes of waste will need to be diverted to the recycle stream.

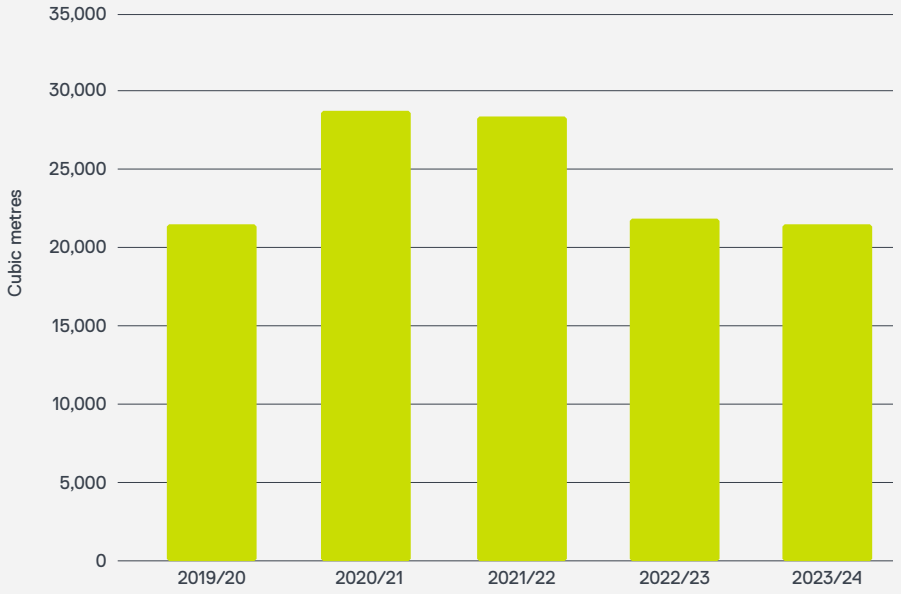
Water Use at the ICR

- Reduce water usage by 10% per ICR member by 2029/30

Water consumption has continued to reduce since the opening of our new research building in 2020/21, the Centre for Cancer Drug Discovery (CCDD) when water consumption peaked. In 2023/24 our water consumption dropped by 2.5% against our baseline water consumption in 2019/20, and this is a drop of 26.5% against our peak consumption in 2020/21.

The ICR's new Energy Management System also monitors water usage across all ICR buildings and provides alerts if the anticipated consumption changes, allowing our Building and Maintenance team to identify and investigate leaks and increased usage.

Water Usage (cubic metres)



Travel to ICR sites

Commuting and visiting the ICR.

- Support greener commuting and better facilities for cyclists and electric vehicles
- Update green travel plan including the requirement to decarbonise travel in line with the ICR's science based targets
- Undertake staff travel survey
- Reduce carbon intensity of commuting inline with our net zero objective including improving cyclist facilities and charging for electric vehicles
- Reduce carbon intensity of commuting by 4.2% per year
- Improving cyclist facilities at Chelsea- implementing secure and easily accessible cycle storage by end of 2022/23

The Sutton site has 381 car parking spaces which include 22 EV charging points, 12 disabled bays, 30 visitor bays and 36 lift share bays (discontinued August 2024). 11 spaces for motor bikes and 118 bicycle spaces.

The Chelsea site has only 6 car parking spaces at 123 Old Brompton Road allocated for visitors. There are 55 bicycle storage spaces across 123OBR and Fulham Road. Bicycle storage was increased with a further 10 spaces being located at 123OBR.

Following a review by Sutton Site Management the Liftshare scheme license was not renewed in July 2024 with the allocated parking bays discontinued.

The biannual travel survey was conducted in June 2024 across both Sutton and Chelsea to understand commuter patterns, travel preferences and attitudes amongst personnel. There were 580 respondents. Additionally, Socius as part of their work towards the planning application for the London Cancer Hub undertook a monitoring entering and leaving survey at ICR Sutton.

A successful bike maintenance event was held at Sutton in May 2024, with one planned for Chelsea later. Nexus articles reminded staff salary sacrifice is available for purchase of new bikes and the use of Santander bikes in London. The Bike User group was relaunched in summer 2024 and now includes cyclists from Chelsea and Sutton and is chaired by the ICR Transport Coordinator.

The carbon emissions from commuter travel for 2024 were calculated to be 568 tonnes of CO_2e. This has increased from the previous report of 539. The majority being 421.32 tonnes from cars and motorbikes commuting and 147.8 tonnes from public transport commuting. 2022-23 figures being 416 and 123 tonnes respectively.

The majority of personnel use Petrol vehicles and the take up of electric vehicles using the site EV points is only 46 cars. ICR recently launched a new electric vehicle scheme in partnership with Octopus EV to provide salary sacrifice EV options to staff.

The car miles per year had increased from 1,539,532 miles in 2022-2023 (based on the 2022 survey results) to 1,675,384 miles. This increased due in part to a different way of calculating the average distance per car type, previous surveys relied upon estimated mileage rather this time the distance was determined using google maps.

The use of the car remains the preferred choice for those living south and southwest of the Sutton site due to the poor public transport options.

Business travel

Key Targets

- Greener business travel

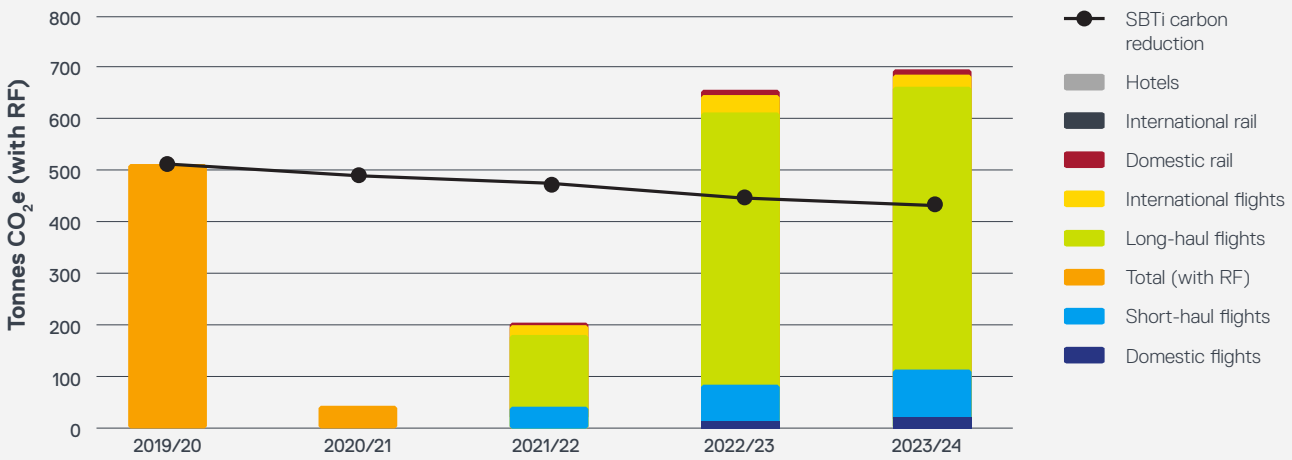
This year has seen the introduction of a new Expenses Policy, which includes an updated travel policy aligned with the ICR's ambitions of a year-on-year SBTi reduction of 4.2% carbon emissions.

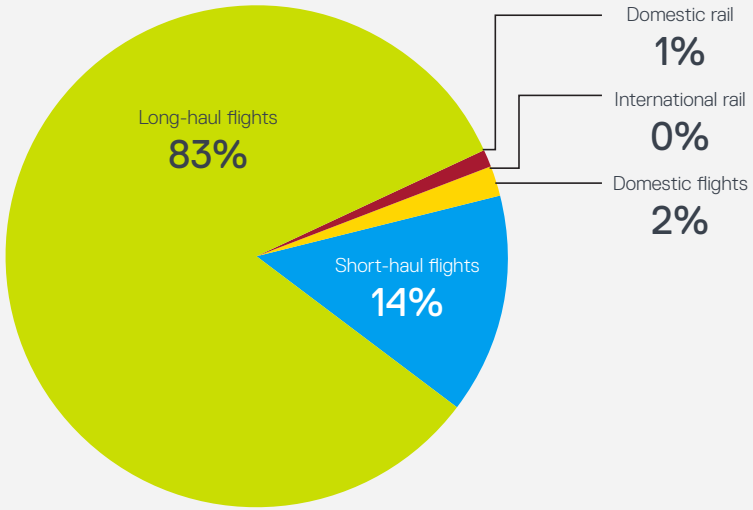
Reduction of carbon emissions associated with business travel has very much been in the spotlight this year within the HEI sector. A number of organisations have been working on updating their travel policies and ActNow was fortunate to have a speaker from Imperial College London to talk about how they went about putting their policy together, the stakeholder engagement, implementation and communication.

The new Expenses Policy asks staff and students to consider the impact of travel on the ICR's carbon footprint, where possible making use of virtual meetings and promoting lower carbon travel options. Focusing on reducing the carbon impact from domestic flights, where there are clear reduced carbon routes and modes of travel, approval of these flights will be limited. The policy also introduces the possibility of a carbon budget for travel, to target reduction of the emissions associated with Long-haul flights, which account for 83% of the overall business travel emissions in academic year 2023/24.

The policy reiterates the necessity for all staff to book travel through the ICR's approved travel management company, this not only allows for accurate carbon calculations from travel, but it also saves costs, that are associated with processing each expense claim.

Cumulative carbon emissions from business travel

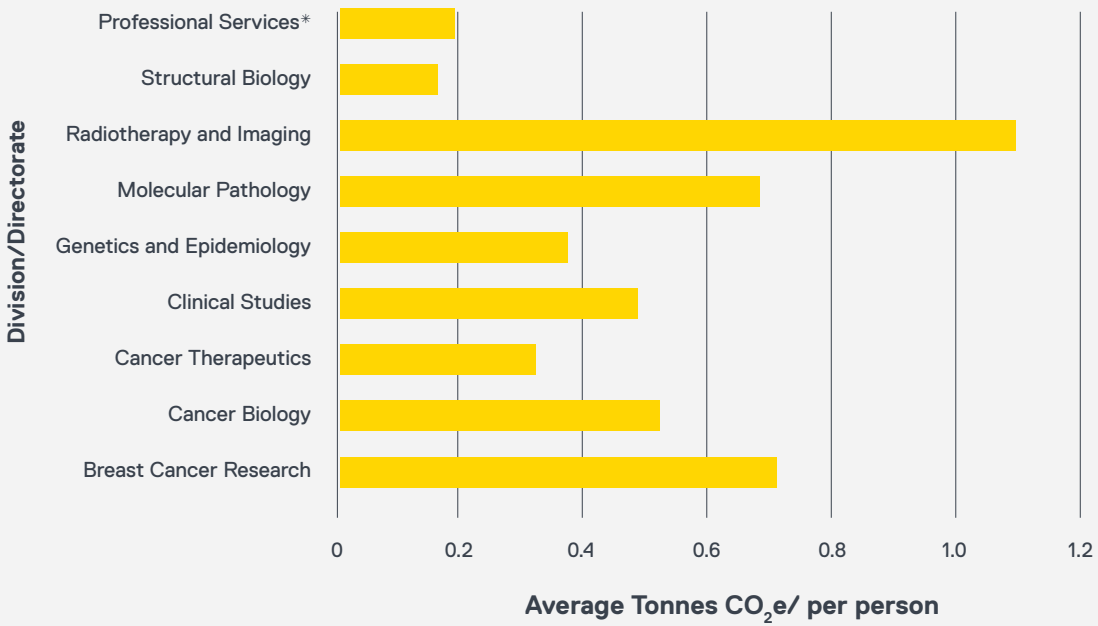




Carbon emissions from business travel captured by our travel provider Clarity show a slight increase over the previous academic year since the baseline in 2019/20. With the approval and communication of the new Expenses Policy at the end of the year we hope to see an impact, particularly in the reduction of emissions from domestic flights in the coming year.

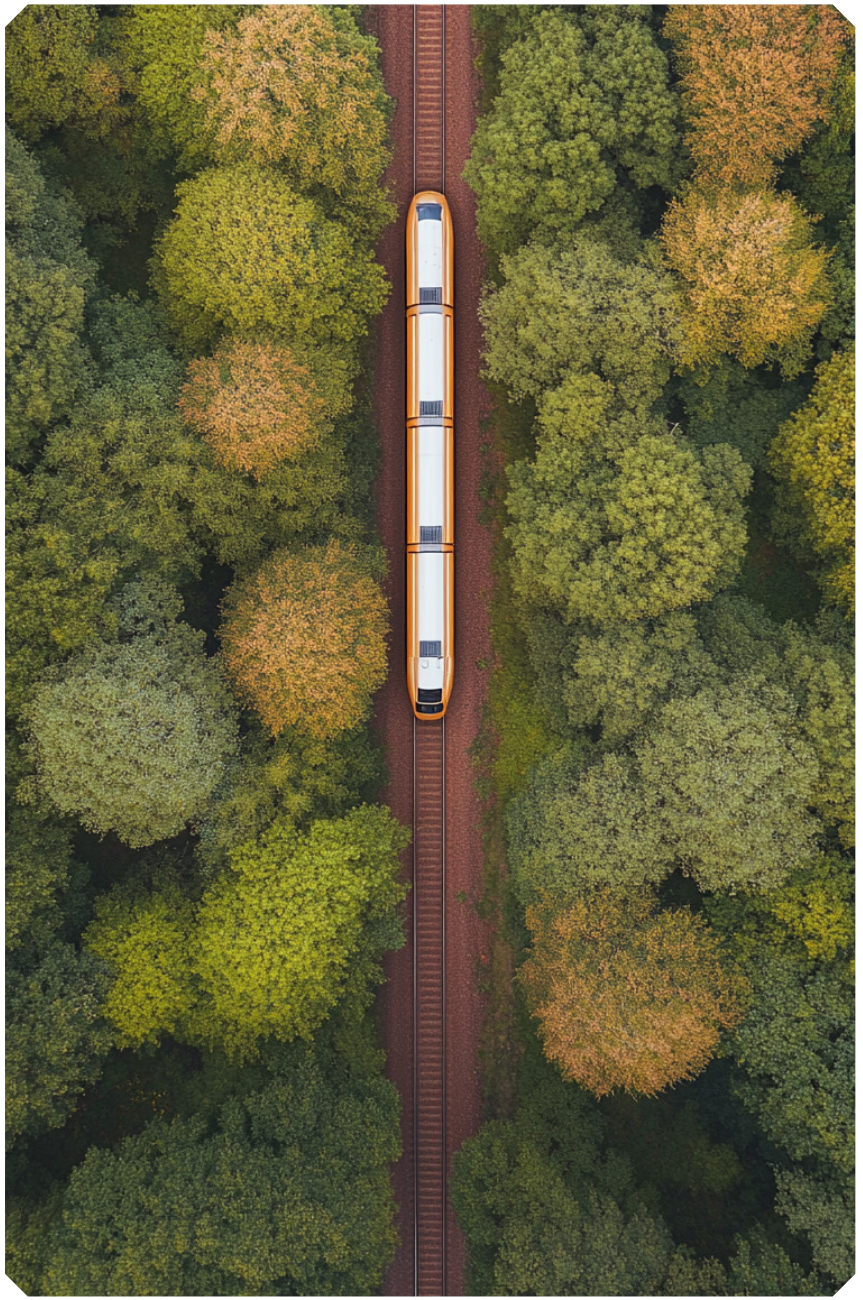
The lower figures reported in the baseline figure year 2019/20, and subsequent years 2020/21 and 2021/22 reflect the lack of travel undertaken as a result of the global Covid pandemic.

Business Travel emissions by Division/Directorate



*Includes the CEO office.

It has been important to raise awareness and share data around our business travel emissions, as this enables our staff and students to make more informed decisions with a lower carbon impact. It is important for us to understand the business needs for travel in each area and to ensure our strategy does not limit career progression and business opportunities.



Biodiversity

- Improving biodiversity on our sites
- Commission new site biodiversity plan
- Develop habitat relevant to London Borough of Sutton Local Biodiversity Action Plan at Sutton site.

A new expanded Biodiversity Action Plan was commissioned to include all the ICR Sutton site. The plan now provides guidance to maintain and enrich the biodiversity on all the ICR Sutton site whilst ensuring that it aligns with local and regional biodiversity action plans.

A competitive tender was undertaken for a grounds maintenance company to undertake the work as laid out in the new biodiversity action plan. The RSK company was appointed with the contract commencing September 2024.

Ecologists continue to conduct site visits to monitor biodiversity progress in compliance with Improving planning conditions. Any remedial work will be handled by the ground maintenance company.

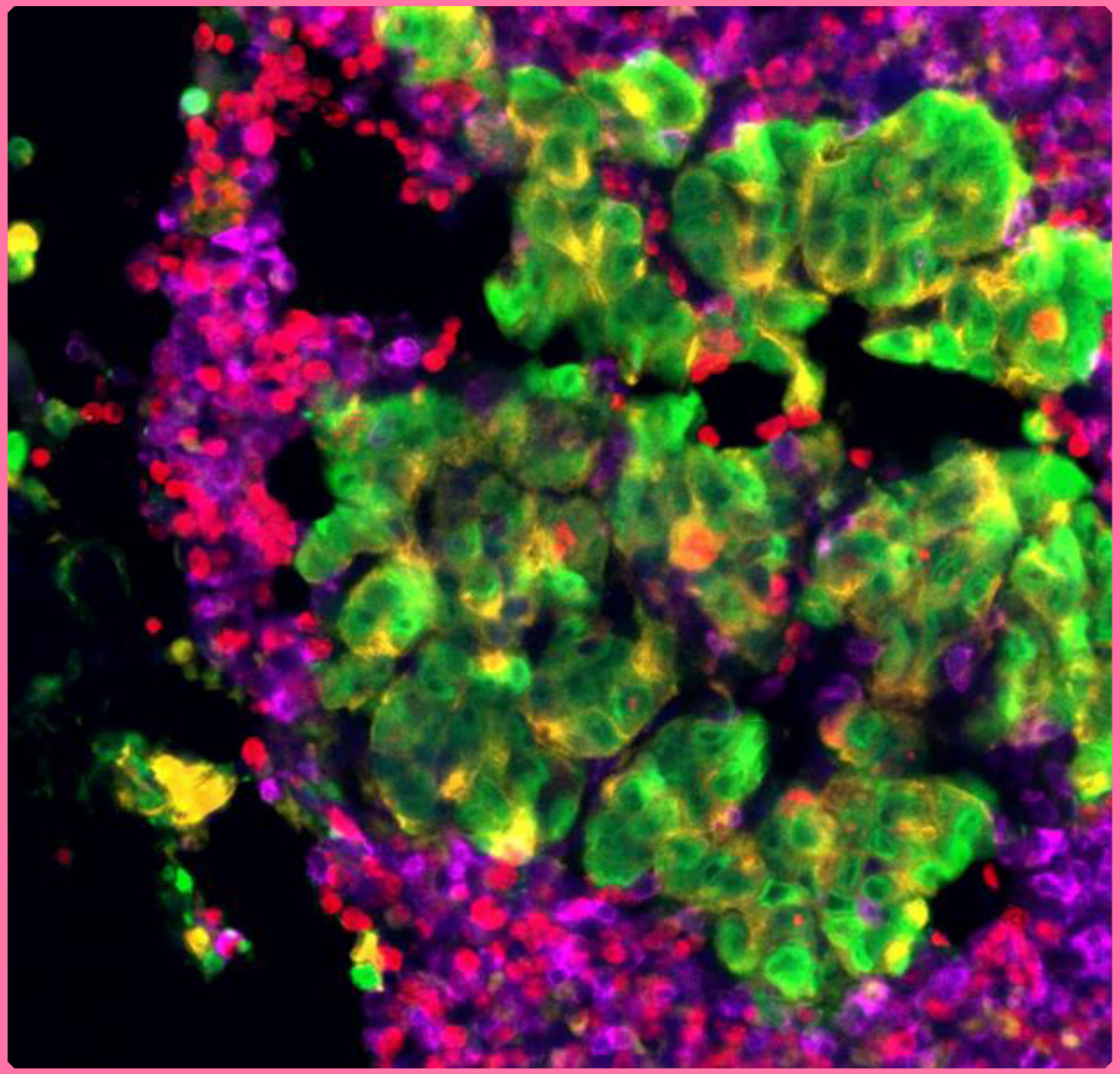
The introduction in February 2024 of a new legal requirement called Biodiversity Nett Gain within the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 will require all future developments to land regardless of size to make sure that habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than they were before the development. Both the ICR Framework plan and the London Cancer Hub developments will need to meet this requirement by a minimum of 10% increase ideally on site or by purchasing credits on the open market.

ICR own a parcel of land called Pollards Wood located in Chalfont St Giles in Buckinghamshire adjacent to the GE Healthcare site. In a joint initiative both organisations have made an offer to the local Chalfont Bee Group to allow them to site honeybees hives on areas within the site. An initial visit was undertaken, and it is hoped this will start towards the end of 2024.

Articles were published on Nexus encouraging staff and students to participate in national nature surveys – Great Garden Birdwatch and Butterfly Count.

Staff and Students were also invited to participate in biodiversity volunteering afternoon maintaining Belmont Pastures. With the aim to contribute to biodiversity conservation locally.

Pillar 3
Sustainable Science



Concordat for Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice

In April this year the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice was published. A collective vision and strategy, put together by organisations across the sector, it outlines actions that will reduce and eliminate negative environmental impacts and emissions associated with carrying out research and innovation.

Key areas for signatories to prioritise and work towards are leadership and system change, sustainable infrastructure, sustainable procurement, emissions from business and academic travel, collaboration and partnership, and environmental impact and reporting data.

By achieving these collective ambitions, the UK will maintain it's leading influence within the research and innovation sector, building upon existing strong partnership and collaboration to inspire and elevate organisations, researchers and innovators globally.

There is a significant alignment between goals set out in the concordat and the ICR's sustainability action plan. For stakeholders within each of the priority areas, the concordat adds a renewed focus and, in some cases, offers a new approach for action.

An essential area addressed through the concordat is the requirement of laboratory accreditation for future grant funding. The large laboratory footprint and the associated resource use, energy, single use plastics and water this incurs, makes laboratory certification a key element for delivering sustainable science.

The added engagement from staff at investigator/group leader level, that this requirement will bring is critical for organisations, joining up sustainability awareness and action from the grassroots level to the senior management level and board level leadership.

At the time of writing, the ICR had signed the concordat, publicly committing to making progress in the six priority areas, with annual reporting as part of the ICR's sustainability reporting mechanism.

ActNow

ActNow is the Institute of Cancer research's sustainability working group. It provides an opportunity for all staff and students to contribute to making our organisation more sustainable.

A collaboration between passionate and driven individuals, ActNow has really accelerated sustainability at the ICR since its inception in early 2022.

ActNow not only holds senior leadership to account at the ICR in meeting its sustainability commitments in terms of climate change and biodiversity loss, but champions and shares best practise approaches in sustainable science at the practical and strategic level.

ActNow
For a sustainable ICR.

This academic year has seen key discussions focused on sustainable food, travel, and computing. Mike Hanson, Sustainability Operations Manager for Baxter Storey, outlined their sustainability agenda, raising questions about tracking food waste and creating a more sustainable menu. Progress has really been made in this area with a Vegetarian focused day at both Chelsea and Sutton every week, promotion of reusable takeaway containers, to cut down on disposable packaging and jugs of water, rather than glass bottles for catering events.

Rhea Samra, a Sustainability Officer at Imperial, presented Imperial's sustainable travel policy, detailing its development, stakeholder engagement and university-wide implementation. Escalated for approval by the Sustainability Advisory Group (SAG), ActNow members have had the opportunity to feed into the ICR's updated travel policy, aligned with making reductions in business travel emissions.

Jonathan Monk, ICR's CIO, addressed the steps taken to reduce the environmental impact of computational research. Initiatives include recycling obsolete technology, exploring long-term data storage on tape, and reducing cooling in server rooms.

Key members of ActNow have continued to actively drive sustainability certification schemes across the ICR, including Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF), My Green Lab and more recently Green DiSC, a sustainable computing framework.

ActNow have hosted several academic speakers this year including a Christmas lecture, Sustainable wellbeing 'more fun with less stuff' by Dr Amy Isham, University of Swansea, and Dr Liz Marks, a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Bath University, who discussed 'Navigating eco-emotions at a time of climate crises.

For the third year, ActNow, in collaboration with the Royal Marsden's Green Matters group, organized activities for World Environment Day (June 5th). This year's theme, focusing on deforestation and desertification, emphasized sustainable food choices. A vegan/vegetarian BBQ was held at RMH Chelsea and ICR Sutton, and prior to the day, ICR hosted the first screening of We Are Guardians, outside of South America, followed by a discussion. Staff and students engaged through information stands, sustainable pledges (e.g., reducing meat consumption), and our annual sustainability raffle.

Sustainable Science

Sustainable Discoveries

- Sustainability certification for 80% of labs by 2030

Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice

- LEAF Silver, My Green lab or equivalent by January 2026 for grant funding

Delivering sustainable science; reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, limiting resource consumption, biodiversity loss and building resilience to climate change is vital for a sustainable ICR, now and in the future.

The large laboratory footprint: resource use, energy, single use plastics and water associated with 'making the discoveries to defeat cancer' makes laboratory certification a key element for delivering sustainable science.

This academic year we have continued our program of Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF) and My Green Lab, wet laboratory certification and at the time of writing have launch Green DiSC dry lab / Digital Sustainability Certification.

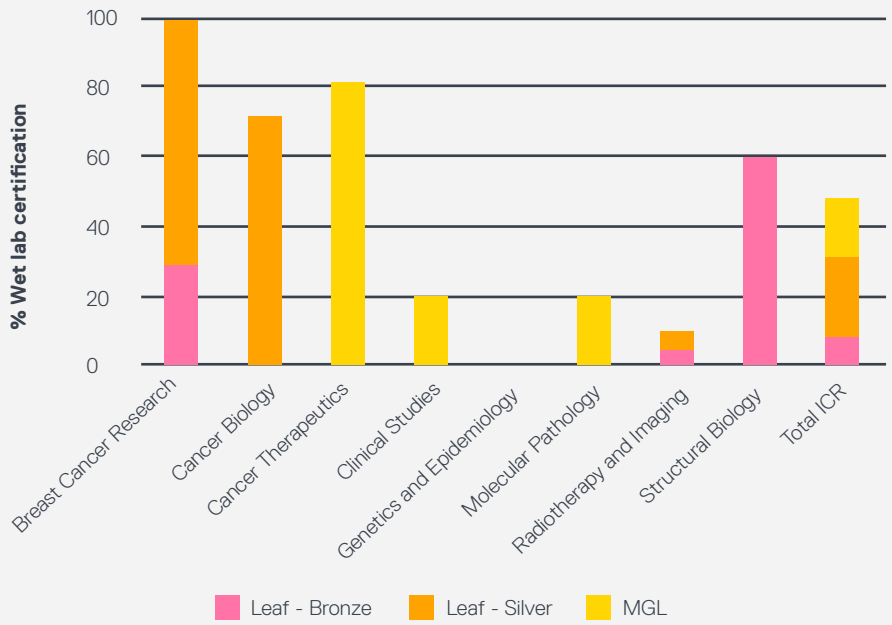
These accreditation schemes accelerate sustainability, not just within our scientific divisions, but across the whole organisation. They raise awareness and empower individuals and teams to make more sustainable choices in how they carry out their day-to-day research.

LEAF and My Green Lab certification focus on laboratory specific areas of sustainability including, waste & recycling, purchasing, equipment & energy use, resource management & green chemistry and water, and the wider organisational areas of community, infrastructure energy, IT and business travel.

Activities carried out this academic year, as part of laboratory certification have included energy monitoring, in conjunction with the engineering team, to identify pieces of equipment that consume the highest amounts of energy, waste audits to ensure that we are following best practice with regards to the waste hierarchy, training, signage and logistics, sustainable procurement training and a talk from a senior scientist at Astra Zeneca, 'experimental design with sustainability in mind'.

Green DiSC certification provides a roadmap for research groups and institutions who want to tackle the environmental impacts of their computing activities. Piloted by the Breast Cancer Data Science team alongside ten other UK institutions at the end of 2023, the Green DiSC program has now officially been launched. Data science and digital services teams across the ICR have expressed significant interest, and we look forward to reporting progress in this area, in the coming academic year.

Percentage of wet labs holding lab certification LEAF or My Green Lab to date



With the funding signatories (Wellcome, CRUK etc.) to the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice mandating LEAF silver, My Green Lab or equivalent for successful applications, there is an even greater need to achieve sustainable lab certification across the ICR. Currently 39% of our teams have certification to this level and we look forward to the next cohort including labs from Genetics & Epidemiology and Radiotherapy & Imaging starting in October.

ICR-CTSU

The Institute of Cancer Research Clinical Trials and Statistics Unit (ICR-CTSU) translate cutting-edge science into quality clinical trials that can transform cancer care. However, clinical trials also contribute to healthcare related greenhouse gas emissions responsible for anthropocentric climate change. ICR-CTSU recognises the importance of embedding research and fostering innovation to face global sustainability issues, and we are committed to reducing the environmental impact of our trials.

As the first step towards this, ICR-CTSU led the development of the NIHR-funded method and guidance to carbon footprint clinical trials, the first iteration of which is now available for use (https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2023-075755). Further collaboration with 10 international and UKCRC Clinical Trials Units resulted in application of the guidance to 12 trials, and their carbon hotspots identified (https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-4363597/v1).

Recognising the activity in this area and the growing interest and support from the academic clinical trials community, the NIHR MRC Trials Methodology Research Partnership (MIHR MRC TMRP) convened the Greener Trials group. The multi-disciplinary group, led by ICR-CTSU's Assistant Operations Director Dr Lisa Fox, aims to disseminate greener research practice and facilitate collaboration between stakeholders to drive the paradigm shift to lower carbon clinical trials. Through funding awarded to the group, ICR-CTSU are now leading dissemination of the method and development of the tools required by academic CTUs for this to become common place.

To identify ways to make the units everyday activities more sustainable, ICR-CTSU have established a Sustainability Working Group and implemented initiatives to reduce the carbon footprint of the department activities, reduce waste, encourage recycling and educate and increase awareness. ICR-CTSU are also working towards a de-centralised approach to clinical trials by using remote patient visits and routine data collection where possible, reviewing on-site monitoring processes and moving to electronic systems.

Pillar 4
Sustainable Procurement

Procurement Report 2024

- Reduction of over-ordering of laboratory consumables
- Procurement of more sustainable alternatives for laboratory consumables
- Evaluation of suppliers' sustainability practices and carbon emissions
- Potential enhancements in laboratory consumables procurement through product lifecycle analysis, emission reduction, and waste minimisation

Supplier Engagement

In the last academic year Procurement have analysed data from top spend in Laboratory consumables. The top 6 consumable types have been identified and engagement with suppliers has started to gain knowledge of

- Suppliers and/or Manufactures Sustainability Policies
- Better base emission data per product type.
- Cost and fit for purpose

Thereby improving upon sustainable choices within the lab consumables in line with Green Lab Certification requirements.

Carbon Hot Spotting

With over 90% of our emissions in the Scope 3 category it is essential we improve upon the accuracy of our Scope 3 calculations.

This will be achieved by

- Using the correct Agresso code for the product requested
- Accuracy of the emission calculation methodology – moving to a hybrid rather than spend based.
- In the last year emission data relating to digital equipment is now supplied by the manufactures and is no longer based on the spend calculation

Business Travel

By utilising our travel management booking system (Clarity) we have gained a greater insight to our travel emission data. We will be able to target and base our travel and expense policies to target emission reduction of 4.2% year on year. The primary focus is limiting our domestic flight category with the potential of banning all UK based flights where an alternative rail option is available. The next phase will be an insight into European destinations where similarly an alternative rail option is available within timing and cost-based advantages.

Increase Supplier Base Knowledge

The ICR is committed to increasing our Small Medium Enterprise (SME) spend base knowledge to work collaboratively to not only gain a better insight of emission baseline but then further work with our SME suppliers to increase their knowledge with the aim of assisting them to reduce their baseline emissions and generate year on year targets of emission reduction.

Standardised Policy Selection

Policies are designed with sustainability requirements to assist in setting out frameworks to allow staff and researchers to make the most informed choices keeping in mind the balance of Quality, Cost and Delivery. An example of this is the review and alterations to the expenses policy and the business travel policy with the intention of reducing our business travel emissions by 4.2% year on year, such alterations as restricting domestic flights and utilising rail where possible with a reasonable destination time

South KenZen

Recently the South KenZen group has been setup to operate within the South Kensington Borough with the aims of aligning members within the area/borough to a single code of conduct focussing on four key areas.

- Zero Emissions
- Nature Positive
- Circular Economy
- Sustainable Transport

The aim is to ensure business size and distance through the sustainability journey is irrelevant and provides a knowledge sharing platform where the alignment provides benefits for the entire borough. This one fit's all approach ensures that resource allocation and a focussed aim is achieved, and the group hold workshops, meetings and the knowledge sharing platform to allow this. The ICR is a keen supporter of the charter and the creation of this aligned code of conduct is soon to be released

Looking Ahead

Reflecting on the progress in the last academic year with our sustainability initiatives driven by the Sustainable Discovery Action Plan we continue to strive to reduce our carbon footprint with the following over the coming years.

The infrastructure decarbonisation reports for Chelsea and Sutton have been completed. The recommendations from these reports if all undertaken will result in the ICR meeting our carbon reduction targets. The first of these projects committed for 2024/25 include the installing of solar panels on the roofs of SRD and BLB, and starting the replacement of all lighting with smart LED system. With the usage of AI in our research it is anticipated our energy usage from digital work will increase in the coming years.

Waste Management tender will take place during 2025 for the best available sustainable options on handling our waste. Looking at innovative options for increasing recycling of our waste.

The Framework Strategy for Sutton has sustainability embedded into the plans. These are being developed along with the London Cancer Hub and the Royal Marsden Hospital with the submission of planning permission taking place in 2025. The plans will see an enhanced green and biodiverse environment to promote physical and mental wellbeing.

Enhancements to the public travel commuter options for Staff, Students and visitors by way of increasing number of trains to Belmont and TFL introduction of electric buses are anticipated to start in 2025.

Business Travel has seen the introduction of no domestic UK flights where a better sustainable alternative is available. The next phase will be to look at the alternatives for European destinations.

The Scope 3 emissions arising from procurement continues to be a challenge, an action plan will be drawn up with emphasis on the following improvements.

- Procurement in the coming year will continue to work with the top category spend laboratory suppliers to investigate ways to reduce the laboratory equipment emissions and to improve upon sustainable choices
- Switch to a consolidated inventory utilising less suppliers but with a higher sustainability agenda
- Work with Small Medium Enterprises to gain a better insight into their emissions
- To enable better data capture, develop procurement training for ICR staff and students to ensure the correct procurement category code is assigned for each item ordered.
- Utilising a category risk matrix standardise the tender questions in our tender selection software (Mercell) for new and renewal contracts to enable more and better sustainable supplier selection.

The Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice places the requirement for all projects receiving Wellcome and CRUK grants to achieve a laboratory certification by 2026. It is encouraging that several laboratories have achieved certification and others are commencing their lab certification journey.

Looking ahead, as the ICR and RMH strengthen their partnership, the collaboration between ActNow and Green Matters will become increasingly important. With our connections through the London Higher sustainability network, EAUC, LUEG (chair being held by the ICR) and sustainability certification community, ActNow will continue to champion best practice and lead-edge sustainability initiatives as well as building a network of like-minded organisations across the Research and Innovation sector.