

Security, sustainability and social value

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Security and sustainability may not immediately appear intertwined, but organisations need to collaborate with all supply chain partners to meet ever-looming sustainability goals. Developing decarbonisation strategies, ESG commitments and social value service offerings all strengthen organisational partnerships and business cases.

Sharon McLaren, quality and compliance manager, [Corps Security](#), tells us more...

The [Paris Agreement's](#) international treaty on climate change aims to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5 °C degrees above preindustrial levels. Crossing this threshold would have a devastating impact on climates everywhere – from more frequent droughts to increased heatwaves and rainfall.

Across the FM sector, organisations need to work together to address climate concerns against ever-looming CO2 reduction targets. Some businesses need them to be met by 2050, others 2040, and some as soon as 2030.

The Government wants to prioritise renewable energy and help businesses decarbonise efficiently to reduce levels of CO2. However, for businesses to reach these targets, they must not only review their own CO2 emissions, but also those emitted by their suppliers.

Areas for supplier reduction like manufacturers, vehicle fleets, and estate assets may all immediately come to mind – but the sustainable practices of service providers such as security companies should not be overlooked. Like any business, the scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions of security organisations, their decarbonisation methods and social value commitments need to be core considerations in clients' procurement decisions.

A collaborative approach between client companies and security partners is essential for embedding the

most worthwhile sustainability practices – and this expands far beyond environmental practices encompassing social sustainability too. Both environmental and social sustainability are a critical part of underpinning every business partnership.

Trust the experts

Environmental sustainability needs to be a scientific, empirical, and fundamental part of any business strategy. Security partners can provide their status by collating raw data themselves, but it's best to ask for support from the experts.

External organisations can help meticulously track all emissions and develop decarbonisation strategies. [Neutral Carbon Zone](#) (NCZ), for example, offers measurement tools and net zero certification.

At Corps, our partnership with NCZ has helped us redevelop our organisational carbon footprint reporting. We achieved the NCZ Gold accreditation, submitting scope 1, 2 and 3 emission reports against the NCZ framework and reporting to the ISO 14064 compliance standard.

As a result of this activity, our scope 3 footprint, the total emissions of organisations indirectly affecting our supply chain, changed. Our footprint increased by several thousand tonnes more than previously reported. Though this may at first seem like a regression, this was due to more in-depth reporting methods to effectively track the right things and therefore be able to improve them. NCZ guided us to be as transparent as possible, and in doing so we built trust and a strong partnership.

Organisations such as NCZ can also provide transparency on very granular emissions produced by security and client partnerships. For example, lifecycle analysis can provide site-specific carbon reporting, including the emissions from on-site officers. These reports bolster security partners' credentials and ESG offering at the tendering and contract renewal stages.

Organisations like the [Science Based Targets initiative](#) (SBTi) and [EcoVadis](#) also offer well-known carbon reduction programmes. SBTi is a corporate climate organisation that provides standards, tools and guidance to help organisations set greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. EcoVadis supports environmental, social and governance risk and compliance, to develop scorecards and catered ecosystem and improvement platforms.

Together, these programmes are invaluable in allowing supply chain partners to produce in-depth, accurate reports on all emissions. These not only guide organisations on their next decarbonisation steps but also provide much-needed clarity and direction for new business partnerships.

Encourage company-wide engagement

Though security officers on the ground are not guiding the organisation's ESG strategies, engaging with them is a crucial way to bolster a sense of community, and encourage them to support the organisation's ESG goals, and educate them to make changes in their personal lives.

For security organisations, patrolling on foot is a large part of a security officer's role. We have introduced [Treekly](#), a step-counting app that encourages all staff to walk more. The app allows a mangrove tree to be planted in Kenya for every 20 days of 5,000+ steps walked.

These apps are accessible and easy-to-use for frontline workers who often do not have access to a desktop. They promote healthy behaviours amongst colleagues and can even develop friendly competitions with clients at certain sites – helping to push each other to new healthy heights and create a positive impact overseas.

Embedding social value

Along with carbon neutral initiatives, security providers can strengthen organisations' social value commitments at the tender stage. For example, supply chain partners should always advocate for fair pay – Corps proposes the Real Living Wage payment at all new contract negotiations.

Charity partnerships also strengthen business commitments. Corps' 1% scheme is a voluntary programme for our clients that sees a 1% surcharge on their contract value which is donated to [Combat Stress](#). This has amounted to over £30,000 in previous years.

Providing employees with yearly volunteering days also allows them to prioritise their local communities through their employer, in the spaces that matter to them the most. In 2024, Corps held activities to raise over £50,000 – from walks and cycling, to marathons, our teams across the UK took part in friendly competitions and group challenges to raise money for a range of organisations.

Stay curious

Accreditations, and environmental and social value schemes are all ways to embed sustainability into the DNA of an organisation. But it's important to never stop being curious and continue to explore new ideas.

For example, explore new technologies that increase efficiency – like heat pumps, options for uniform recycling and wastepaper management strategies. There are many possibilities, but their implementation hinges on one key factor – strength across a supply chain and a shared goal to do better for people and planet.

Strong relationships between security providers and clients can be a powerful catalyst for reimagining more sustainable practices and a better future.