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Womble Bond Dickinson
Net Zero Action Plan

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Introduction

The future of our planet is at stake and the climate crisis is threatening communities across the globe at this very moment. Mitigating catastrophic climate change is one of the greatest challenges our society has ever faced, with science showing that we must limit global warming to no more than 1.5°C. To do this requires rapid and deep emissions cuts in this decade, for emissions to peak by 2025 at the latest, and for global emissions to reduce to as close to zero as possible by 2050.

Jonathan Bower, WBD Partner Sponsor for Net Zero and Head of the firm's Planning and Infrastructure team, said: "At Womble Bond Dickinson (UK) LLP we believe we all need to act now. Through enhancing our environmental performance and improving our sustainable practices, we respect our surroundings and aim to have a positive impact on the world around us. Systemic changes take time, but we fully recognise our role in a sustainable future for all. Developing and stretching our environmental targets is core to our business and as a result, our firm has committed to achieving Net Zero emissions by 2030."

"We acknowledge that this is an ambitious target, but we at Womble Bond Dickinson want to play our part in a cleaner and greener future for all and we will continue, as we always have, to work collaboratively with our people, clients, and suppliers so we can consistently measure, report and reduce our impact on the environment, and all take positive action on climate change."

Jon Bower
Partner

Governance

This Net Zero Action Plan will govern Womble Bond Dickinson's current decarbonisation strategy, be future-focused to schedule ongoing decarbonisation projects and policies and will ensure there is accountability within the firm to carry out the steps to achieve Net Zero.

We are committed to full transparency of our decarbonisation efforts to avoid any reputational, legislative, and ethical risk of greenwashing. We have an appointed external governance body that oversees progress on all detailed projects included in this plan. An annual governance review of this Action Plan will be carried out by Planet Mark and Womble Bond Dickinson to ensure that:

1. Progress against decarbonisation solutions is tracked;
2. New technology is reviewed and incorporated where relevant;
3. Timelines are adjusted as required;
4. The roadmap remains aligned with science-based targets; and
5. Accountability is assigned for all ongoing initiatives.

We will use this governance structure and ensure that the plan is verifiable and externally communicated. Internally, our approach and focus are led from the top down, with our Chair Nick Barwood leading our Ethical Thinking Group who oversees our Responsible Business activity and meet on a quarterly basis. We also have a Net Zero partner, Jon Bower, who leads a committed Net Zero Team who meet regularly to ensure our progress in this space is continually monitored and reviewed.

It is inevitable that technological advances will impact Womble Bond Dickinson's transition to Net Zero carbon. Therefore, it is essential to regularly review and update this document as required. It is important that changes made due to delayed innovation are communicated honestly and openly, backed up with credible explanations.

Responsible Business Framework

Nicki Shepherd, General Counsel
Charlotte von Sicard, Responsible Business Manager

Ethical Framework

	Areas of focus	Ethical Thinking Group	Responsible Business Working Group	Partner & Employee Networks	
E Environment	Environment	**Lead Sponsors** Jon Bower, Partner and Martin Hall, Head of Facilities Management	**Lead** Mat Swift, Sustainability Manager	Environmental Reps Environmental Management Review Team (EMRT) Net Zero Working Group	Employee Forum
S Social	Community Engagement	**Lead Sponsor** Sally Dallow, Partner	**Lead** Charlotte von Sicard, Responsible Business Manager	Community Engagement Committees WBD Foundation Trustees	
	Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	**Lead Sponsor** Jess Tresham, Partner	**Lead** To be recruited	WBD Disability WBD Pride WBD Reach WBD Thrive	
	Social Mobility	**Lead Sponsor** Sam Lee, Head of Recruitment	**Lead** Skye Fenton-Wells, Early Talent Recruitment Manager	Apprenticeship Network Early Careers Ambassador Network	
	Wellbeing	**Lead Sponsor** Theresa Wilde, HR Director	**Lead** Jane Freeman, HR Manager	Family Network Sports and Social Committees Mental Health First Aiders Wellbeing Champions Menopause Champions	
G Governance	Ethics	**Lead Sponsor** Nicki Shepherd, General Counsel	**Lead** Louise Norman, Deputy General Counsel	WBD Board and Global Board Partner Representative Group Audit Group Risk Management Committee	
	Sustainable Procurement		**Leads** Charmian Leatt and Jenny Hill, Managing Associates General Counsel		
	Who We Act For		**Leads** Nick Barwood, UK Chair and Partner, and Nicki Shepherd, General Counsel		
	Privacy		**Lead** Alan Keith, Head of Risk Management		

Drivers for change

Our Net Zero plan is an extension of our values that continue to underpin everything we do. First and foremost – we care. We care for our people, the planet, and the success of Womble Bond Dickinson as a business. We want to grow our firm whilst leaving the world a better place for future generations.

Through our commitment to excellent client service and a mindset of continuous improvement, we protect our clients' interests, support their growth and build longstanding, trusted relationships. Client growth, Change and Communities are the three strategic pillars that underpin this vision and carbon reduction is a key pillar of our ESG strategy with firmwide endeavours to reduce emissions and lead action on a sustainable transition in the industry. We were amongst the first law firms in the UK legal profession to announce its commitment to achieving net zero emissions by 2030 and we are leading the way on green change, advising a wide range of clients on the delivery of clean and innovative energy projects in the UK and across the globe.

Our key drivers for pursuing Net Zero are:

Culture

Our internal culture is the most important driver for Net Zero. We are proud that our people want to work for a firm that is prioritising the health of the planet, doing the right thing, and protecting the environment for future generations. Womble Bond Dickinson feels a duty to act responsibly to ensure that we can continue to attract exceptional talent into the business while ensuring current employees are proud to be working here.

Compliance

The Government is using regulation to drive more sustainable practices by businesses. New regulatory requirements (SECR, ESOS, environmental legislation) demand that companies prove their commitments and efforts in line with the Net Zero by 2050 national target. And the voluntary certification bodies we work with (EcoVadis, ISO) are reflecting all these rapid changes in regulation to stay compliant.

Clients

Due to the cascading responsibility embedded within Net Zero frameworks, our clients are increasingly bringing carbon reductions to the top of their agenda. Prospective clients are looking to engage in business-to-business relationships that have robust Net Zero action plans in place. Clients, and society, are calling for greater transparency from businesses to report and disclose their impact on the environment and the communities that they work within.

External networks

Being executive members of the Legal Sustainability Alliance (LSA) and working with Planet Mark to achieve our target of becoming a Net Zero firm by 2030, we will be as ambitious and rigorous as they are to ensure we follow the best practice.

Overview of key progress

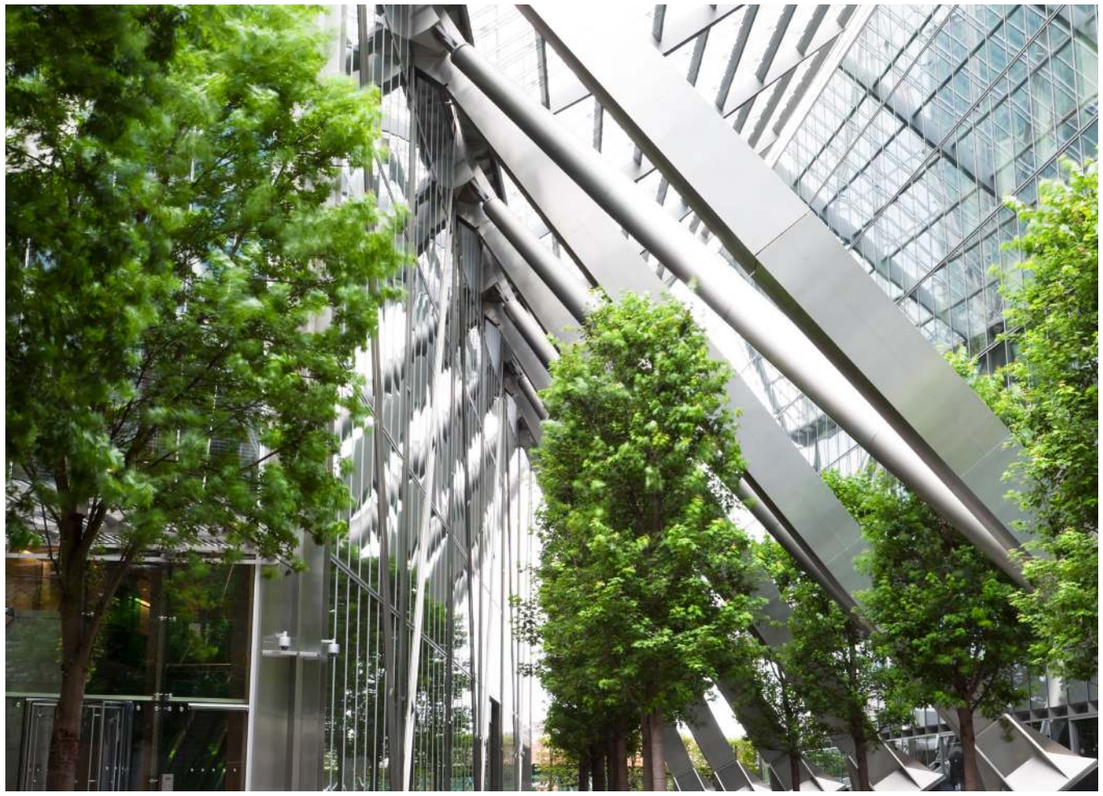
Womble Bond Dickinson has already made positive progress towards Net Zero emissions, putting in place a series of decarbonisation initiatives, policies, and processes that help embed the culture of sustainability minded decision making necessary to deliver against our net zero targets.

These initiatives include:

- ISO 14001 certification, recognising a framework is in place for continuous environmental performance improvement.
- EcoVadis Gold Medal, assessing our overall responsible business activity with a section focused on the environment. We have risen from Bronze in 2020 to Gold in 2022, which we've maintained in 2023. We are currently rated as 'outstanding' in environment and will continue to develop and grow in this space.
- Recognised in The Legal 500's first UK Green Guide, which highlights the top UK law firms leading the way on climate change, governance, and sustainability. We are amongst the 27 UK firms spearheading the 'green change' and ESG agendas whether this is through firmwide commitments and initiatives or in the work we do for clients advising on clean and renewable energy projects and energy transition.
- We won two Planet Mark awards this year including the Data Quality and Collection Award for efficiently managing, collecting, and reporting carbon emissions data across our UK offices as well as the Milestone Award for reaching five consecutive years of certification with Planet Mark.
- Completed refurbishment of Leeds, Bristol, and Plymouth offices, incorporating a full upgrade to LED lighting
- Installed PIR sensor lighting wherever possible at our offices.
- Significant investment in video conferencing technology at our offices.
- Upgrade to Microsoft Teams and enhanced remote working technologies to help reduce the requirement for travel.
- Implementation of robust travel and sustainable procurement policies.
- Investment in training to further develop the skills and knowledge base of our people in relation to sustainability and carbon emissions reduction – examples include IEMA training courses and net zero awareness workshops.
- Engaged colleagues in a Firmwide commuting survey, helping us understand the impact of commuting habits on carbon emissions and identify key areas of opportunity to promote sustainable commuting alternatives such as cycling through our Cycle to Work scheme.
- Launched our EV salary sacrifice scheme, offering colleagues the opportunity to drive a new electric vehicle and help further reduce carbon emissions associated with commuting.
- Relocated to a BREEAM building in Newcastle that meets the Fitwel standard, supporting a healthier workplace environment and improving occupant health and productivity. This building utilises geothermal activity to help heat and cool the building through a network of underground pipes. This helps to eliminate carbon emissions (associated with Scope 2). Almost half of the firm (approximately 450 staff) are based across 37,547 sq. ft of the new building.

The biggest challenges that lie ahead in terms of achieving our Net Zero target are:

- Resource – The Firm will ensure this challenge is met by allocating sufficient resources. Appropriate levels of investment will be allocated to the various projects proposed. We are also committed to ensuring our personnel with responsibility for project delivery are supported.
- Compliance – The Firm is aware of the ever-evolving compliance aspects associated with environmental management, sustainability and Net Zero. With this in mind, we will ensure both internal and external expertise is utilised to stay on top of changing legislation. This will be referenced as and when appropriate during reviews and updates of the action plan.
- Technological Developments – We understand advancements in technology will be key in helping us achieve our net zero targets. Some of these are challenging to predict and reference. We will work with our various stakeholders to understand changes in technology and how we can incorporate them within our operations.
- Direct/Indirect Control – As tenants in many of our buildings and with the impact of our supply chain emissions, we recognise that some potential carbon reduction projects may not be within our direct control. To tackle this, we aim to work in partnership with our external stakeholders with a positive and collaborative approach.
- Data – Our low data quality score or scope 3 reporting reflects that we were unable to obtain accurate consumption data from most of our suppliers. To allow us to better identify carbon reduction opportunities and ensure that our reporting is as comprehensive as possible, we are working closely with our suppliers and other stakeholders to help them navigate their own net zero journeys and ensure we have access to more activity-based data.



Key areas of focus (2023/24)

To progress towards our net zero targets, we have identified key actions that will help ensure significant carbon emissions reductions are achieved across all scopes. All actions are logged, monitored, and updated continually using an internal tracker document. Responsibility for this lies with the Womble Bond Dickinson Net Zero Working Group.

An overview of key areas of focus:

- Continued review of opportunities to help reduce scope 1 and 2 emissions further, including review of our occupied footprint and taking any opportunity to:
  - Consolidate our footprint,
  - Invest in energy saving technology including LED lighting, sensor technology and air quality monitoring technology.
- ESOS phase 3 assessments during 2023, identifying key energy saving opportunities and acting upon key recommendations relating to energy efficiencies at our buildings.
- Implementation of a carbon budget for business travel, as part of our ongoing efforts to reduce business travel and promote sustainable business travel options.
- Monitor employee commuting by office annually, with targeted initiatives promoting sustainable travel alternatives.
- Integrating waste as an annual reporting element, with targeted initiatives aimed at increasing recycled waste percentages as well as continued promotion of the waste hierarchy, with reducing waste as our primary goal.
- Enhancing our procurement process, ensuring sustainability and reporting is a core component of future contracts and a key element of supplier guidelines.
- Working collaboratively with our suppliers to enhance our impact and reduce emissions throughout the supply chain.
- Investing in gold standard carbon removal projects to help balance any residual emissions.
- Further investment in technology supporting our carbon reduction efforts, such as remote meeting technology and energy efficient IT equipment.

Baseline data

Womble Bond Dickinson have measured all material Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions through Planet Mark's Business Certification and extended Scope 3 measurement. The Planet Mark measurement methodology is fully aligned to the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol and all data is verified with evidence provided by Womble Bond Dickinson.

Reporting year:

01 May 2019 to 30 April 2020

Reporting Boundary:

Company operations including 8 sites (Newcastle St Ann's, Newcastle Trinity, Leeds, Plymouth, Bristol, London, Southampton, Edinburgh)

Key figures:

Baseline carbon footprint (tCO2e): 6,548.6 tCO2e

Emissions measured in Planet Mark Business Certification:

Electricity, T&D Losses, Natural Gas, Refrigerants, Water, Fleet.

Emissions measured in Planet Mark extended Scope 3 measurement:

- Purchased goods and services
- Fuel and energy related activities
- Upstream transportation and distribution
- Waste
- Business travel
- Employee commuting
- Downstream transportation and distribution
- Downstream leased assets

All other categories were excluded due to either not being applicable to Womble Bond Dickinson or de minimis.

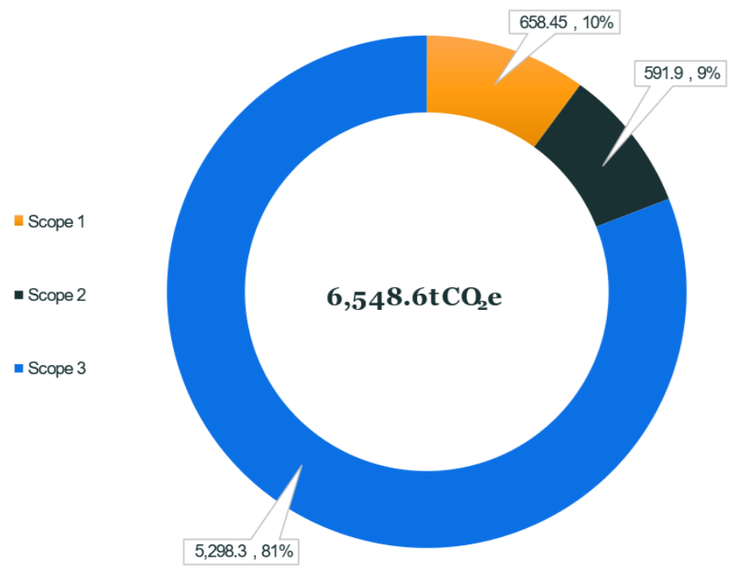
The baseline carbon footprint provides a robust starting point for Womble Bond Dickinson to measure future decarbonisation efforts. In accordance with the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) Corporate Net Zero Standard, an organisation can be considered net zero once it has reduced emissions across all three scopes by at least 90% of the baseline.

Total carbon footprint (baseline year 19/20)

Scope	Category	Emissions (tCO_2e)	Proportion of total footprint
Scope 1	Natural Gas	585.8	8.9%
	Refrigerant	59.2	0.9%
	Fleet	13.5	0.2%
Scope 2	Location-based	591.9	9.0%
	Market-based	425.8	6.7%
Scope 3	1. Purchased goods and services	3,144.5	48.0%
	2. Capital goods	N/A	N/A
	3. Fuel and energy related activities	285.1	4.4%
	4. Upstream transportation and distribution	54.2	0.8%
	5. Waste	20.7	0.3%
	6. Business travel	586.1	9.0%
	7. Employee commuting	1,097.6	16.8%
	8. Upstream leased assets	N/A	N/A
	9. Downstream transportation and distribution	28.3	0.4%
	10. Processing of sold products	N/A	N/A
	11. Use of sold products	N/A	N/A
	12. End-of-life treatment of sold products	N/A	N/A
	13. Downstream leased assets	81.8	1.2%
	14. Franchises	N/A	N/A
	15. Investments	N/A	N/A
	Total scope 3	**5,298.3**	**80.9%**
Total scope 1,2,&3 (location based)		**6,548.6**	
Total scope 1,2,&3 (location based)		**6,382.5**	

All rows and tables are rounded to one decimal place. This may lead to slight discrepancies in totals within the report.

Total scope 1, 2, and 3 carbon footprint for year ending 2020, tCO_2e



Total scope 3 carbon footprint

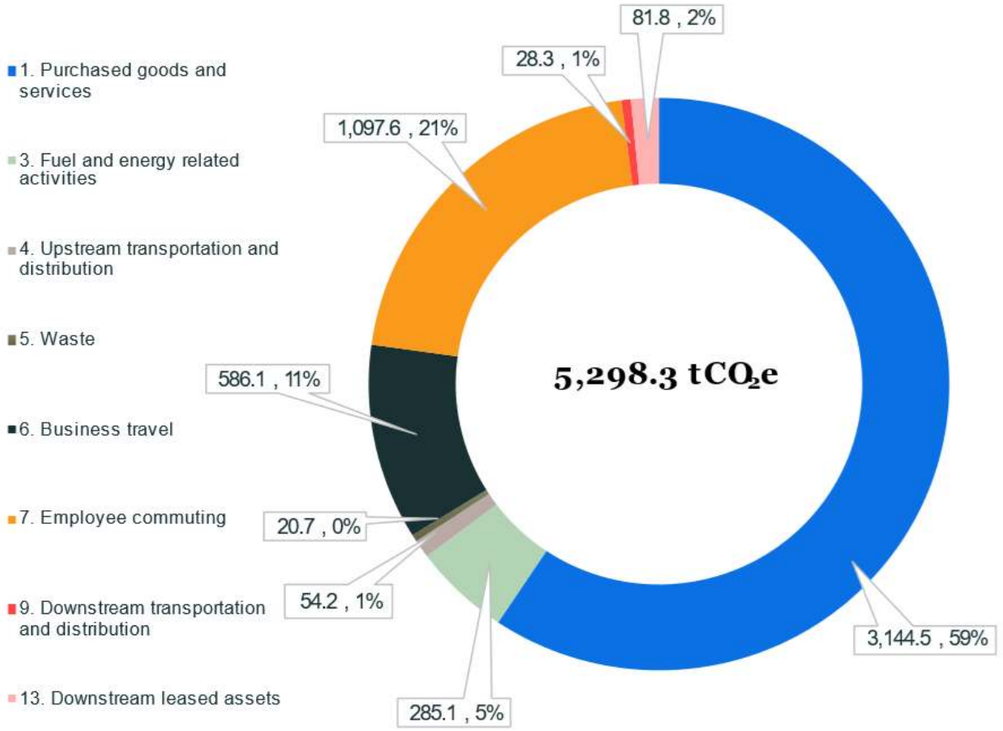
Reporting Year
1st May 2019 to 30th April 2020

Reporting Boundary
Company operations including 8 sites (Newcastle St Ann's, Newcastle Trinity, Leeds, Plymouth, Bristol, London, Souhthampton & Edinburgh).

Emissions measured
Purchased goods and services, fuel and energy related activities, upstream transportation and distribution, waste, business travel, employee commuting, downstream transportaton and distribution and downstream leased assets.

Data quality score
11 out of 16

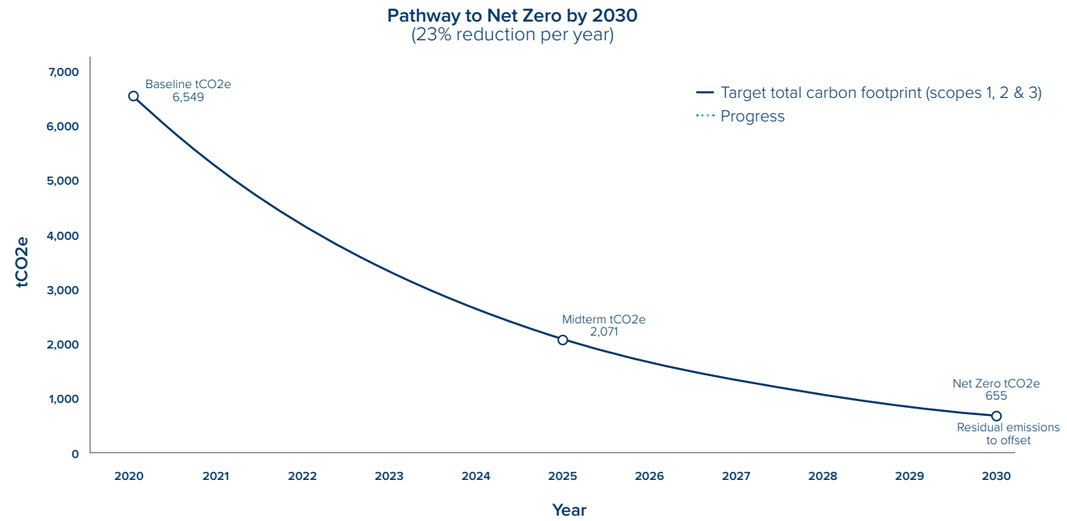
Carbon footprint by emission source for year ending 2020 (tCO_2e)



Target-setting & Future Reporting

Womble Bond Dickinson is committed to achieving net zero Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions across the entire value chain by 2030 from a baseline year of 2020. This will be achieved by a minimum 90% emissions reduction from a YE2020 baseline. Where necessary, unavoidable residual emissions (up to a maximum of 10%), will be balanced using certified carbon removal offsets.

This commitment is further supported by a near-term target to reduce GHG emissions across the entire value chain by 50% by the end of 2025.



Our target to achieve net zero by 2030 was proudly set by the Firm in 2021. This target was considered to be ambitious but achievable in line with the emissions reductions observed across the previous four years of Planet Mark Business Certification reports. Since this target has been announced, however, the Science Based Targets initiative launched the Corporate Net Zero Standard, which is the world's only framework for corporate net-zero target setting in line with climate science. Accordingly, to achieve net zero we will need to ensure that emissions reductions are made across the entire value chain, including those beyond our direct operational control within our supply chain.

While we recognise that 2030 now becomes an increasingly ambitious target, we want to keep striving towards this date to ensure that we maintain our momentum. Our emissions reporting to date, however, has primarily focused on scope 1 and 2 emissions, with a limited degree of scope 3 reporting. Moving forwards, we plan to complete extended scope 3 reporting approximately every 3 years and then in the final reporting year, as follows:

- FY 2019/20
- FY 2022/23
- FY 2025/26
- FY 2028/29
- FY 2030/31

The above reporting schedule will be continually monitored, reviewed, and revised if necessary.

It is important to note, to produce our baseline carbon footprint, 3.4% of Womble Bond Dickinson's purchased goods and services emissions were calculated using activity data and 86.7% calculated from spend-based data and 9.9% was extrapolated.* Empirical evidence has shown that emissions calculated using an activity-based methodology can be up to 30-50% higher compared to a spend-based methodology, even when accounting for inflation adjustment. Consequently, as we start to gain more information on our Scope 3 emissions, through repeated measurements, and improvements in data quality, it is anticipated that we may see these emissions initially increase.

Our net zero targets will be reviewed annually as part of our Net Zero Governance. This process is in line with the SBTi Corporate Net Zero Standard, whereby companies are required to check targets annually and at minimum, review them every five years. Targets are to be recalculated to reflect significant changes in company structure or operation, in methodology used for calculating the base year emissions inventory, or in the occurrence of significant error should any of this compromise the target.

**Note on calculating emissions from purchased good and services.*

In accordance with the GHG protocol, Planet Mark uses three main methods to calculate the emissions associated with purchased goods and services, listed below in hierarchical order:

1. *Supplier specific: Product-level cradle-to-gate GHG data from goods and services suppliers, typically in the form of an LCA.*
2. *Activity (average data): Emissions estimated for goods and services by collecting data on the mass (e.g., kilograms), or other relevant units of goods or services purchased and multiplying by the relevant secondary (e.g. industry average) emission factors (e.g., average emissions per unit of good or service).*
3. *Spend-based: Emissions estimated using BEIS spend-based emissions factors for goods and services. Calculated by multiplying the economic value of goods and services purchased by the relevant secondary (e.g. industry average) emission factors (e.g. average emissions per monetary value).*

Typically, as suppliers are often unable to provide the necessary consumption data, a hybrid approach of the above methodologies are utilised. Planet Mark will use the best data available from the client.

Summary

In summary, Womble Bond Dickinson acknowledges the role that our business has in society's transition to a Net Zero economy as a means of mitigating the worst impacts of climate change. Our 2030 Net Zero target is ambitious yet we are determined to make it achievable. This Action Plan will help us ensure it remains a top priority . In conjunction with this Action Plan, you can access our Environmental Policy Statement and Carbon Reduction Plan on our website (https://www.womblebonddickinson.com/uk) which further outline our commitment to sustainability, environmental management and carbon reduction.

Womble Bond Dickinson recognises the need to closely monitor and evaluate our performance and progress against this objective. We also recognise there may be a need to reconsider objectives and timelines. Through annual review and refresh of this document, we will ensure any significant changes are communicated clearly to all relevant stakeholders.

We are optimistic in continuing our Net Zero journey and are committed to doing all we can to achieve Net Zero by 2030 with Planet Mark's governance.

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