



Answering
tomorrow's
challenges
today

Ecorys UK Social Value Report 2022

An overview of our Social Value
activities and achievements in 2022

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Nicola Smith,
Managing Director,
Ecorys UK

Foreword

I'm pleased to be able to share our latest annual Social Value report for Ecorys UK. This is our second annual report, showing our achievements during 2022, and follows on from our first annual report in 2021.

I'm proud to have become Ecorys UK Managing Director in August 2022 and to be able to continue the company's social value work that started under our previous MD, Darren Jackson.

The achievements outlined in this report belong to the whole company including the Board and team who oversee and deliver our Social Value work across the key themes. Many of our staff also volunteer in their communities outside of the workplace, helping to support communities locally and globally.

In the report we've also shared the achievements of some of our client projects to help them showcase what they do to make the work a better place and to deliver social value to their service users, customers and stakeholders.

As last year, we've arranged our report in line with the UK Government's five Social Value Pillars. We are a values-driven business, with social purpose at our heart, and having the UK government set up a framework to capture that is a very helpful way to illustrate all the good work that we (and the projects we support) do. One of our key values is caring; this is a part of what attracts people to work here and underpins our social value work.

The Five Social Value Pillars covered in this report are:

- ▶ COVID-19 Recovery
- ▶ Tackling economic inequality
- ▶ Fighting climate change
- ▶ Equal opportunity
- ▶ Wellbeing

In 2023 we expect that social value will score up to 15% on UK government tenders. This shows the increasing importance of social value to our business both commercially and ethically.

We end the report with a look forward to some of the things we will be working on during 2023.

COVID-19 recovery

In 2022 we continued contributing to COVID-19 recovery, through supporting our staff as well as helping local communities.

Activities and achievements in 2022

During 2022, we fully embedded our **hybrid working structure**. This meant we could continue to offer the same level of service to our clients, while offering staff increased flexibility to support a **healthy work-life balance**. All this was part of establishing the “new normal” as we all continued to recover from the impact of COVID-19.

As part of our hybrid working we:

- ▶ Redesigned our London and Birmingham offices to better enable collaboration and offer more flexible workspace. This included improvements to common areas, IT upgrades and refresh of workstations.
- ▶ Continued to develop new working practices to increase the flexibility and efficiency of remote working. These include the removal of core working hours and a new “working whilst abroad” policy and guidance.



Staff from the Birmingham office helping to distribute food to local charities at the Birmingham Fare Share depot.

Corporate Social Responsibility:

- ▶ As part of our commitment to help local communities manage and recover from the impact of COVID-19, Ecorys UK continued to work with our UK Charity of the Year “FareShare” throughout 2022. FareShare is a network of charitable food redistributors, made up of 18 independent organisations. Every week they create almost a million meals for vulnerable people.
- ▶ In May 2022 we made our **2021 profit-based donation** of £8,000 to Fare Share and £2,000 to Care for Kids in Zambia (our International Charity).
- ▶ In the summer, staff **spent a day volunteering** at FareShare warehouses in London and Birmingham, helping to prepare food donations to be sent to food charities across the region. Other staff members used their Ecorys Volunteering Day allowance to volunteer individually or in groups with a wide range of charities. In total, we gave more than **200 hours of staff time (30 days)** to volunteering in 2022.
- ▶ We made a corporate donation of £5,000 in May to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) **to support families affected by the Ukraine crisis.**



Some of the team from our Leeds office getting close to nature on their Volunteering Day with the “Wildlife Trust”.

Client projects that made a difference

Evaluation of COVID-19 Recovery Funding for Post-16 Education; Welsh Government

The Welsh Government allocated additional funding to Post-16 providers of education and training across Wales, to support their work in responding to, and recovering from, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of the funding was to provide additional support for learners, whose education and development has been disrupted by the pandemic, and support the education workforce, who have faced considerable pressures during this period. In 2022, Ecorys UK started evaluating the funding - exploring the effectiveness and early impacts of its utilisation. Our aim is to provide evidence to inform the Welsh Government's strategic and operational approaches to ongoing support for post-16 education and training, as the sectors is recovering from the disruptive impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Evaluation of the Culture Recovery Fund; Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Ecorys led the evaluation of the Culture Recovery Fund (CRF) along with Ipsos UK and BOP consulting, for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The CRF was the Government's flagship COVID-19 support package for the culture sector, offering a programme of grants and loans approaching £2 billion in value. The aim of the CRF was to support the survival of organisation's across the breadth of the culture sector, many of which had been particularly affected following the first COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020. The evaluation shone a light on a new delivery model which was forged for this programme, through which Government support was delivered via a number of Arms-Length-Bodies across the cultural sector. Through case studies, a process evaluation and economic analysis the evaluation looked at the impacts of this COVID recovery programme, including how supported cultural organisations have been made more resilient for the future. The evaluation also identified that learning from the programme can help to inform emergency response interventions into the future.

Further plans for 2023

- ▶ In spring 2023 we will be able to announce how much our donation to FareShare will be for 2022 and confirm our **new UK and international charity partners for 2023 - 24**.
- ▶ Ecorys UK will join with Ecorys Brussels on an initiative to match staff private donations to the **Turkey and Syria Earthquake** appeal with Ecorys funds.
- ▶ Our Leeds office will relocate in 2023 to a new office space to allow our team to **work flexibly** in line with London and Birmingham offices.

Tackling economic inequality

We are committed to supporting economic equality and this is integral in the development of our policies and initiatives. We have been working on increasing the resilience and capacity of our supply chain and creating new employment and training opportunities.

Activities and achievements in 2022

Supporting our staff during the Cost-of-Living crisis whilst still providing employment and training opportunities was our key focus in 2022. Ecorys UK gained **Real Living Wage** accreditation in 2020, committing to paying a fair wage to all our employees and people in our supply chain. In 2022, we reassured all our staff that Ecorys UK is dedicated to maintaining this commitment by conducting annual reviews to ensure we continue to meet the real living wage criteria.



"We intend to continue honouring our commitment as a Real Living wage employer to all of our UK employees and staff so that no-one falls behind, especially during these times of financial difficulty. Since we became an accredited Real Living wage employer in 2020 we have increased our pay rates in line with the changes each year and will continue to do so in future"



Nicki Smith
UK Managing Director
Ecorys

We successfully implemented our **Supplier Selection and Management Policy** which encourages a more diverse range of organisations including SMEs/ VCSEs to be part of our supply chain for contract delivery. This policy aligns with a 2015 UN Global Compact (UNGC) report 'Support Your SME Suppliers', which advocates supply-chain diversification to promote human rights and economic development. Ecorys UK is also a UNGC signatory. To further support our VCSE, SME and individual expert suppliers, supporting our work in the UK, last year we developed a pilot **Associate Database**. Launched by our Policy and Research team, the associate database simplifies contracting processes with our regular suppliers and partners.

Client projects that made a difference

Apprenticeship Support Services (AppSS); European Commission (DG EMPL)

Ecorys was commissioned by the European Commission to provide assistance in designing, setting-up and implementing a set of demand-driven Apprenticeship Support Services, built around three pillars of services: (1) a knowledge hub; (2) a networking hub, and (3) bench-learning. AppSS is supporting the European Commission-led network 'European Alliance for Apprenticeships' aiming to increase uptake and quality of apprenticeships. Quality apprenticeships have the potential to support young people in acquiring skills and competencies required by the labour market while working and earning a salary. They can also be used as an effective and inclusive tool for upskilling and reskilling older workers. In 2022, AppSS implemented fourteen activities (including in-person and online events, training modules, podcasts and more) and several communication activities to foster knowledge about apprenticeships and support the development of networking and collaboration opportunities among key actors.

Evaluation of IPS Works Programme, Twining Enterprise

Twining Enterprise charity's IPS Works Programme is an employability programme aimed at supporting individuals with common mental health disorders take steps towards and into the labour market, including moving into education or training, employment, or active job-searching. By October 2022, the programme had supported 2,051 individuals, including people furthest from the labour market, those who were 'economically inactive' (meaning they were not available for or looking for work at the point of joining the programme), women from ethnic minority groups, and those who faced multiple barriers to work. Our evaluation identified the project's key achievements: 53% of participants moved into employment, 31% entered education or training; 73% improved their confidence, and 63% improved their wellbeing, through the projects support. Outputs from our evaluation supported the charity's sustainability planning, by producing key learning to incorporate into future delivery and a graphically designed summary report to support their social media promotion and bids for future funding.

Further plans for 2023

We aim to continue strengthening the resilience and capacity of our supply chain by creating meaningful opportunities for new businesses and entrepreneurs, start-ups, SMEs and VCSEs to participate in delivery across our contracts. Our team continues working towards creating a new contract database, which we hope will allow us to **accurately track diversity in our supply chain**. We also aim to continue our recruitment of new talent from diverse backgrounds and expanding the pool of universities and colleges with which we advertise our graduate and other opportunities.

We will explore with our 2023 UK Charity Partner the opportunity of transferring some of our **Apprenticeship Levy** payments to them to support the **employment and training of young people**.

Fighting Climate Change

Ecorys UK is committed to running its business in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner. We strive to become a carbon neutral company by 2030 while working towards lowering the business impact on the environment.

Activities and achievements in 2023

The Climate Neutral Task Force worked to achieve a set of goals throughout 2022 to **decrease Ecorys UK's environmental footprint**. Our overall objective following the ISO14001 certification achieved in 2021, is to **become carbon neutral by 2030**. The recording and monitoring of the company's emission footprint remains UK Board priority. We have been piloting our project carbon calculator to **track CO₂ emissions across the business**.



One of colleagues planting trees, as part of her volunteering activity.

Staff travel is the main source of our emissions; therefore, we are focusing our efforts to tackle the most highly polluting means of travel. In 2022, the proportion of staff travel which was by train (generally considered a cleaner means of travel) increased compared to 2021. However, the overall carbon emissions for 2022 increased on 2021 as we returned to the office, but is still decreased compared to 2019 (our baseline). To reflect new working practices we have **added cloud storage services emissions and home working emissions to further improve the accuracy of our calculations**.

We continue to revise our business emission sources to ensure accuracy of our carbon footprint and so we can improve our performance each year.

A [carbon reduction plan](#) was created and uploaded on our website. This action is to comply with the governmental standards regarding emission reduction and complements our ISO14001 certificate, and shows our public commitment to reducing our impact on the environment.

Another achievement linked to reducing resource usage is office space reduction. Our Birmingham and London offices both reduced from two floors to one to **maximise the use of office space and minimise energy use**. This should positively contribute to our emissions - on average, providing heating for commerce and housing accounts for nearly half of all energy consumption worldwide.

As part of our ISO14001 certification, two supplier visits were completed in 2022. We visited our key supplier "Lyreco" and "PaperRound" where we jointly explored future collaboration and **shared best practices in sustainability**. We have also increased our expenditure on green products in 2022 and aim to work with our suppliers to explore further ways to increase the share during 2023.



Rob and Adriana, Climate Neutral Task Force members, visiting PaperRound.

Throughout 2022 staff used their volunteering days for environmental purposes such **tree-planting and supporting pollinators**. We continue providing induction for new employees which includes information about the ISO14001 certification and a brief overview of the overall goals and plans. This is part of the wider effort to raise awareness within the company and have all employees on board in a joint effort to decrease CO₂ emissions.

Client projects that made a difference

Evaluation of 30by30, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

In July 2022, the UK government commissioned Ecorys UK and Pegasys International to conduct an evidence review and scoping exercise. This was to inform the business case for a new UK government fund for low- and middle-income countries in support of the “30by30” target. 30by30 is the commitment to protect at least 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030. Given the greater understanding of the link between nature conservation and climate change mitigation and adaptation, working towards the 30by30 target should also strengthen global landscapes’ resilience to climate change. One of the key points that emerged from this work was the importance of indigenous peoples and local communities’ (IPLCs) lands and territories to achieving the 30% target. IPLCs themselves must be involved in an equitable way in the establishment of any new protected areas, or Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs).

Further plans for 2023

In 2023 we aim to maintain and continually improve our work under our ISO14001 standard. The action plan for 2023 includes continuous work on CO₂ data gathering and analysis and a revised carbon calculator across Ecorys UK in 2023. This should lead to improved data on our actual emissions. We also aim to **explore climate-conscious pension schemes** which invest in sustainable activity.

As not all of our emissions can be completely reduced, we aim to offset those that we cannot prevent. In 2023 we aim to **select and partner with an offsetting provider**.

We aim to continue to raise staff awareness about clean travel, recycling and energy saving opportunities. For example, we will explore possibilities of **supporting a local cycling initiative** and engaging our employees on a greater scale in clean traveling and **improving our office waste management**.

We will also work on integrating our environmental ambitions into our company-wide Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) strategy, as well as exploring “Scope 3” emissions further (those which are not generated by us but by partners in our value chain).

Equal Opportunity

Ecorys is committed to creating an inclusive and diverse culture where every person feels respected and empowered to reach their potential.

Activities and achievements in 2022

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Taskforce sets a shared EDI vision and annual goals which enable us to take **positive action across the business to promote our EDI principles**. In 2022, two specialist taskforces – Gender, and Race and Ethnicity developed and delivered annual action plans together with overseeing the delivery of wider EDI activities and staff networks in broader diversity areas.



Ecorys UK Women's Network social event in November 2022.

In 2022 the **Gender Task Force** and **Women's Network** continued to be active in supporting Ecorys UK's women employees. We surveyed women employees on gender equality at work, helped to launch a **new Carers Policy** (with an event featuring advice from a previous Ecorys Charity of the Year, Carers UK) and set up an informal **Carers Support Network**. We also secured the provision of **free sanitary products** in all Ecorys UK offices with the installation of free-vend machines offering eco-friendly products. The thriving Ecorys UK Women's Network held six meetings to discuss a range of topics including self-confidence, career progression and work/life balance, as well as produced resources to capture the wisdom of staff.

Our **Race and Ethnicity (R&E) Task Force**, in its first year, undertook a baselining exercise and analysis of the 2019/2020 to 2020/2021 pay gap, working in collaboration with the Gender Task Force. This exercise has contributed to the development our first **Race & Ethnicity (R&E) employee survey** to gather information which will help to further shape the two-year R&E Action Plan. Our first joint **Gender and Ethnicity pay gap report** was published in March 2023. This work will contribute to company policies in order to further improve equality and diversity at Ecorys.

Client projects that made a difference

Pilot assessment activities for the European knowledge and support facility on Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) in research and innovation organisations, European Commission

The pilot assessment built on our wider work supporting the EU's Directorate General for Research Science and Innovation in promoting gender equality in the field of research and innovation (R&I). Ecorys analysed the impact that EU and national policies and programmes supporting or imposing GEPs have had on gender equality in R&I across the European Research Area (ERA), and beyond this, the impact that these policies have had on R&I quality and efficiency. Additionally, the study proposed a relevant monitoring framework to measure progress on gender equality in the ERA, and thus contribute to the ERA scoreboard and related dashboard.

Education Results Review, Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI)

Ecorys was commissioned by ICAI to assess the effectiveness of Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office's (FCDO, formerly DFID) work in the area of education. The review built on ICAI's previous review of education focus on marginalised girls, however, it looked at education results more generally with a special focus on methodologies and reporting mechanisms. Applying a gender lens throughout, it assessed progress, both at the aggregate level and within particular countries and programmes, on improving learning outcomes, including for the most marginalised. The review assessed whether the results claims generated through the education portfolio were well founded, including whether they were based on sound evidence and methodologies, and consistent with the data available from partner countries.

Further plans for 2023

In 2023 we will run staff focus groups and conduct a staff survey to gather feedback from staff about race and ethnicity in the workplace. The focus groups will help us to shape the questions we would like to include in the survey.



During 2023, the launch of the Ecorys LGBTQ+ Staff Network will provide an opportunity for colleagues who identify as LGBTQ+ to better understand different LGBTQ+ issues and experiences through educational sessions, as well as providing a space to discuss current policies, processes, and experiences. This will include an opportunity to feedback concerns, queries, and requests to senior staff. The Network will provide a space for LGBTQ+ staff to meet and support each other in both a formal and social context, discussing experiences, expressing concerns, or simply enjoying each other's company. Meetings will be held regularly in-person and virtually, with a Teams site providing space for regular exchanges and discussion.

Wellbeing

Caring is one of the key values of our business. We prioritise the health and wellbeing of all personnel including employees, contractors, suppliers, and participants. Ecorys also actively supports communities that we are operating with, and we strive to improve community integration.

Activities and achievements in 2022

We continued to work with Validium, which offers 24/7 support lines and other online resources, including counselling, financial and debt advice, legal advice, health and wellbeing support, guidance for managers, and other advice to help with wellbeing, to ensure that all employees have **free and confidential access to wellbeing support services**. Additionally, our staff reward scheme **Ecorys Extras launched a Wellbeing Centre** in 2022.

Our team of **Wellbeing Ambassadors** provided information and support to staff across the UK business throughout 2022. These included “lunch and learns” and regular staff bulletins on a range of topics including working tips for wellness.

Our Ambassador team also promoted Health and Wellbeing campaigns in 2022 including Mental Health Awareness Week in May, Works Mental Health Day and World Menopause Day in October, and National Stress Awareness Week in November.

Client projects that made a difference

Winter of Wellbeing (WoW), Welsh Government

The Winter of Wellbeing built on the success of the Summer of Fun Programme also evaluated by Ecorys UK. The £20m package of wellbeing funding was used to deliver activities in the community and learning opportunities for children and young people (CYP) aged 0 to 25 in Wales. This was vital for CYP's recovery from the pandemic as well as for skills-building and their long-term development. In 2022, Ecorys provided a process evaluation of the delivery of WoW and its added value for CYP. Our findings showed that the programme was positively received by strand leads and providers who called for long-term funding to provide ongoing support for COVID-19 recovery and ensure that the positive outcomes from WoW are sustained. The vast majority of CYP taking part had positive experiences. In addition to the main [WoW Evaluation](#), our team also delivered an [evaluation of the Additional Enrichment Session Trial](#), testing how adding one hour to the school day could help learners to catch up on the social, academic and wellbeing opportunities at selected schools across Wales. We found that the experience was very well received by learners and schools taking part.

Further plans for 2023

Across 2023 we will be encouraging line managers to have frequent “wellbeing” check-ins with their teams; creating a feeling of belonging through employee groups and events and continuing to improve flexibility options to better balance work/life.

Action Plan

During 2023 we will deliver the below action plan and report on our progress to our staff and in our 2023 annual report.

COVID-19 Recovery

- ▶ Make our annual profit-based donation to our UK Charity of the Year Fare Share and to our International Charity Care 4 Kids in Zambia.
- ▶ Confirm our **new UK and international charity partners for 2023-2025**.
- ▶ Join an Ecorys Brussels initiative to match staff private donations to the **Turkey and Syria Earthquake** appeal.
- ▶ Relocate our Leeds office to a better space to allow our team there to **work flexibly** in line with our London and Birmingham offices.

Tackling Economic Inequality

- ▶ Continue strengthening the resilience and capacity of our supply chain by creating meaningful opportunities for new businesses and entrepreneurs, start-ups, SMEs and VCSEs to participate in delivery across our contracts.
- ▶ Establishing a new contract database, which we hope will allow us to **accurately track diversity in our supply chain**.
- ▶ Continue our recruitment of new talent from diverse backgrounds.
- ▶ Explore with our 2023-2025 UK Charity Partner the opportunity of transferring some of our **Apprenticeship Levy** payments to them to support the **employment and training of young people**.

Fighting Climate Change

- ▶ Work on CO₂ data gathering and analysis and a **revised carbon calculator** across Ecorys.
- ▶ **Explore climate-conscious pension schemes** which invest in sustainable activity.
- ▶ Identify and **partner with an offsetting provider**.
- ▶ **Supporting a local cycling initiative** and engage our employees on a greater scale in clean traveling and **improving our office waste management**.
- ▶ Explore **"Scope 3" emissions** (those which are not generated by us but by partners in our value chain).

Equal Opportunity

- ▶ Set up employee focus group to support the **Race and Ethnicity survey**.
- ▶ Launch the Ecorys **LGBTQ+ Staff Network**.
- ▶ Looking into becoming a **Disability Confident Committed employer**.

Wellbeing

- ▶ Encouraging line managers to have frequent **"wellbeing check-ins"** with their teams.
- ▶ Creating a feeling of belonging through **new/revived employee social groups**.
- ▶ Continue to improve working flexibility to better **balance work/life**.



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