



O'HERLIHY & Co. Ltd.
MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS
INNOVATION • STRATEGY • CREATIVITY

Final Evaluation Report
Evaluation of Step Up to Net Zero Pilot

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Programme description & key design elements	4
3. Programme Activity	9
4. Business Feedback	14
5. Participant Feedback	21
6. Impact Assessment	28
7. Conclusions & Recommendations	33

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of an evaluation of the Step Up to Net Zero (SUTNZ) Pilot that was delivered by Glasgow Chamber of Commerce between September 2022 and August 2023 and funded by Glasgow City Council. The evaluation was undertaken between June and August 2023.

The data used to assess the effectiveness of the Programme comprised:

- Data from supported businesses provided through an end of engagement on-line questionnaire
- Data from Participants collected through an on-line questionnaire
- Focus groups meetings (4) that engaged 21 businesses (54% of the population)
- 1-1 consultations with the delivery team and managers
- 1-1 consultation with a representative of Glasgow City Council.

1.2. The Step Up to Net Zero Programme

Glasgow has set particularly ambitious climate targets and aims to become a net zero carbon economy by 2030, and a circular city by 2045.

Funding for the Pilot was approved at a City Administration Committee meeting on the 24th of February 2022. Committee members were advised of the intention to deliver a circular economy demonstrator as part of the Council's commitment to delivering a COP26 legacy. The Committee was asked to approve the provision of £628,676 to deliver the Programme that would last for 12 months.

This decision followed approval by the Committee of six Community Renewal Fund applications to the UK Government in June 2021. The Step Up to Net Zero proposal, presented by Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and delivered through Circular Glasgow, was the highest scoring application received but we understand it was not selected by the UK Government for Community Renewal Fund support.

One of the eight areas of focus outlined in the Glasgow Green Deal is ensuring competitive industry and a circular economy, and there was felt to be an opportunity to roll-out a city-wide programme of support that would help businesses adopt circular principles and net zero carbon ambitions as part of Glasgow's COP26 Legacy. That was the purpose of SUTNZ.

The principal output expected of the 12-month Pilot was that it would create 40 job placements in Glasgow and provide upskilling and reskilling opportunities both for those not yet in the workplace, as well as those already in work and looking for re-skilling opportunities.

1.3. Scope of report

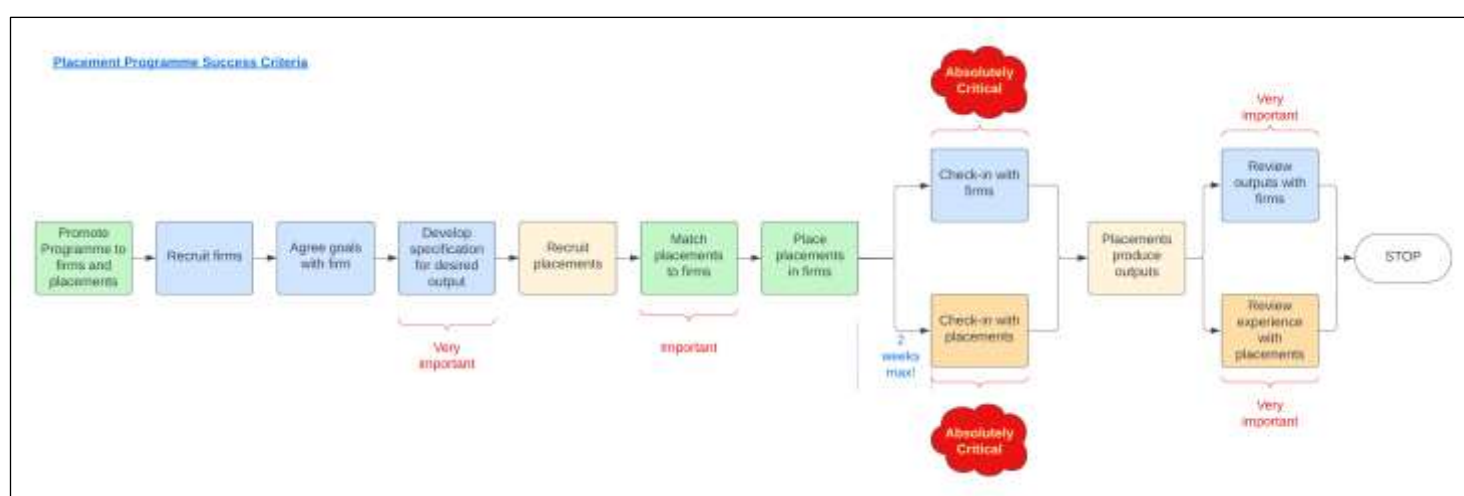
This is a final evaluation report. It includes quantitative analysis of impact data provided by firms on completion of their engagements. This analysis, which follows HM Treasury Green Book guidance on evaluation, is presented later in the report but we would note that it would not normally be expected that this type of intervention would have an immediate and direct impact on bottom line performance. This type of quantitative impact is usually assessed after there has been

some elapsed time between the intervention being delivered so as to allow time for the business to absorb good practice recommendations and take the actions that lead to impact accruing.

The report includes qualitative, contextual analysis based upon feedback collected through four Focus Group meetings. These meetings engaged 21 businesses (54% of the population of supported business). This feedback provided valuable contextual inputs to the quantitative data captured through the on-line survey.

1.4. Context and previous research

O'Herlihy & Co. Ltd has evaluated a range of programmes at the UK involving executive, graduate and undergraduate placement. These evaluations have highlighted a number of design criteria that are critical to the interventions' success – these criteria are independent of the type or level of placement being supported.



These evaluation exercises, which have been undertaken across the UK for programme management organisations, Government departments, economic development bodies and universities have identified:

- It is important to agree with host businesses their goals for engaging the placement and to manage their expectations of what might be achieved within the timescale available – this is especially true where the placement is a recent graduate and the duration is short
- Once the hosts' goals have been agreed, it is very important that a *written* specification of the desired output is prepared at the outset which records the hosts' desired deliverables and how these should inform the selection criteria of those recruited – it is important for the Programme Managers to review hosts' expectations and ensure they are realistic for the level of person being appointed and their experience
- In addition at this stage, it is important that the Placement is matched to the host firms on the basis of their skills and experiences *as well as* their likely "fit" with the host's culture and team dynamics
- Within 10 days to two weeks of the placement being appointed, it is critical that independent and private checks are made both with the host firm and the Placement to assess whether any fundamental issues with the arrangement have arisen that might affect

either or both parties – this has been a consistently observed success factor in our placement programme evaluations that have under-delivered due to a breakdown in relationships between the placement and the host. Identifying a problem at an early stage allows rectification measures to be taken - these may include the placement being removed. When a problem has not been rectified early, our evaluations identified several incidents of catastrophic relationship breakdowns that were very damaging both for the hosts and the placements

- It is good practice to maintain contact with the host and the placement throughout the duration of the exchange
- Assuming problems don't occur, it is important to review the output with both the host and placement on completion. This assessment should include individual interviews with each party and with both parties together. In cases where host organisations are dissatisfied with the placement's output, there is a role for the Programme Manager to assess whether the host's expectations were inappropriately high (in a similar way to when they appraised the host organisation's expectations before placements commenced) or whether there has been "scope creep" or "expectation creep" on the part of the host.

When commencing this evaluation, our previous experience and these process check-points informed our evaluation design. We will consider later how well the GCoC delivered in this regard. The next chapter summarises the SUTNZ Programme design and the process followed for its delivery.

2. Programme description & key design elements.

2.1. Step Up to Net Zero Programme

Strategically, the Programme is framed within the Glasgow Green Deal ambitions for the city as well as:

- Glasgow Economic Strategy
- Glasgow Climate Plan
- Glasgow Climate and Adaptation Plan
- Circular Economy Roadmap for Glasgow 2020-2030
- Greenprint for Investment
- Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan (CESAP).

The project is of one year's duration, commencing in September 2022 and due to finish August 2023. The target was to engage 40 participants and up to 40 firms – 39 firms have participated (one dropped out). The design is based loosely around the *Kickstart Programme* which was successfully delivered by GCoC previously. All of the participating businesses are SMEs.

The Programme structure commences with:

- An Assessment to understand current practices in the organisation and identify opportunities for the business to reduce carbon emissions, adopt circular practices and reduce waste
- The development of a bespoke Action Plan that contains actions around three pillars – circular economy, net zero and waste management.

The Action Plan is structured around short, medium and long-term actions. The Plan is prepared by the SUTNZ team and passed to the business to review and adopt.

The Programme supports the employment of a person (the 'Participant') to help the business implement the Action Plan's short-term actions - medium and longer term actions are identified for the business and included in the Action Plan but it is not expected they would be delivered within the duration of the placement. The Participant is engaged on a contract (between 16 and 25 hours per week) for a period of 16 weeks.

The Participant's remuneration package is equivalent to a pro-rata salary of £27,500. Businesses can choose to increase this should they wish and can also choose to increase the number of hours the participant is employed. Businesses are encouraged to recruit the participant once their engagement on the programme ends.

Participants were recruited on an all-age offer and their profile comprises a mix of graduates, returners to the labour market, employed seeking to upskill/reskill and unemployed.

Participants receive a broad range of training inputs:

- IEMA-certified 2hr 'Introduction to Net Zero' training course
- A follow-on 2 day IEMA-certified 'Pathways to Net Zero' course.
- Training (by Small99) created specifically for SUTNZ participants focused on net zero, sustainable business strategy and circular economy.

- In addition, participants also receive skills-based training to support personal development with a choice of courses including communication, time management, project management and budgeting.

Specialist consultancy input (notably around carbon calculations) is provided by a consultancy (Mabbett).

Participants also receive eight hours mentoring support from an external work coach (Progressive Partnership).

2.1.1. Anticipated benefits of business.

Based on the Programme's description, benefits to business were anticipated to include:

- Circular and net zero capacity building across to business
- Resource efficiencies
- Improved profitability
- Higher quality products
- Increased customer base
- Alternative supply chains
- Potential to tap into additional funding and support to implement medium and longer term action plan goals
- Contribution to the city's "Green Charter".

It was also anticipated that the Programme could help businesses to transition to a more circular and net zero future, providing innovative solutions and tools to support this activity. Businesses and participants can also be engaged in knowledge transfer activity through events and the creation of a supportive environment and network of businesses. Although the Glasgow City Council Approval Paper only identified 40 Placements as the output from the pilot, it was hoped that there will be a potential employment increase in supported businesses as a result of support – the ideal situation would be that the business sees the value in driving these issues forward and looks to retain the Placement as a member of staff once the pilot ends.

Given the reach of the Programme within the business, it was anticipated that there would be increased awareness of the sustainability and net zero agenda across the *whole* business and that this would be gained through knowledge-sharing and information dissemination within the business. Thus, this could lead to upskilling the wider workforce.

2.1.2. Placements

With the Placement at the heart of the Programme's design, a central benefit of the Programme provides an additional dedicated resource, at no cost to the business, to accelerate its transition where this person is focused solely on improving the business's sustainability credentials. Simultaneously, the Programme also facilitates opportunities for Placements to gain experience of working with businesses to implement meaningful, real-life projects and thereby gain valuable experience that enhances their future employability.

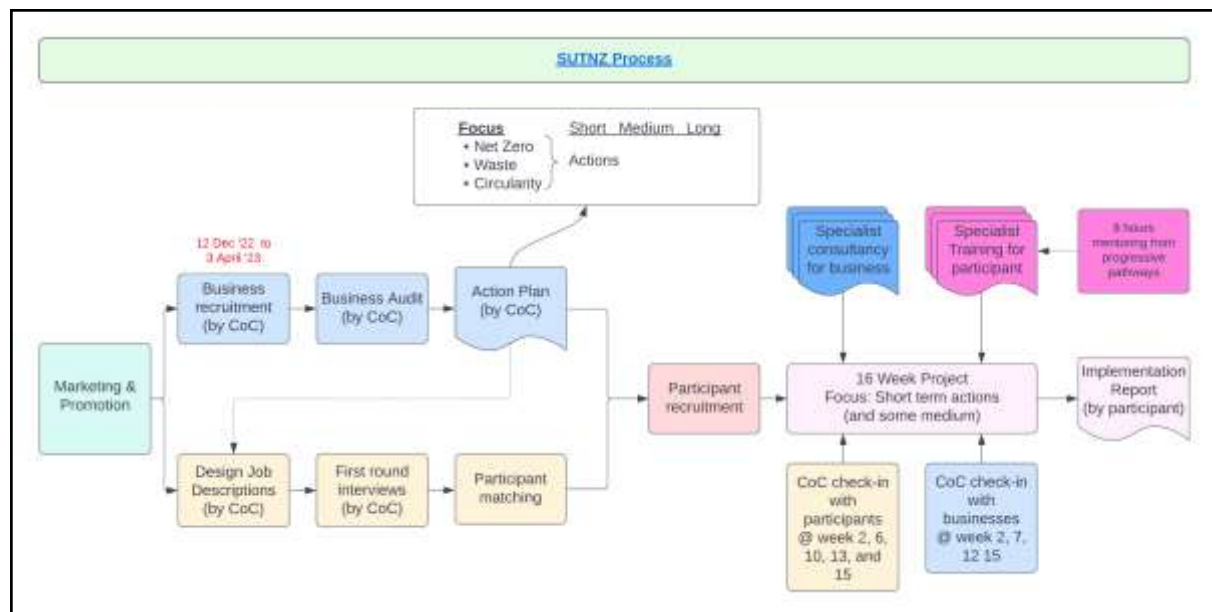
Specifically, the benefits that Placements might gain over their engagement were anticipated to include:

- New knowledge, skills and capacity and circular economy and sustainability.
- Future proofing their career aspirations.

- Improved employability.
- Real industry experience.
- Paid employment for 16 weeks.

2.1.3. The delivery process

The diagram below presents an overview of the delivery process.



The key elements of the process followed by the Chamber of Commerce are:

- Recruitment interviews with businesses which were selected based on their interest in the topic areas and capacity to utilise the inputs of a placement and their capacity to support a participant for a 16 week placement
- Detailed assessment interviews with the successful applicant businesses to understand their current practices and identify opportunities for the business to reduce carbon emissions, adopt circular practices and reduce waste. The development of a bespoke SUTNZ Action Plan is structured around three areas of focus and three timeframes. The areas of focus are:
 - Net Zero
 - Waste Management
 - Circularity
- The timeframes are short, medium and long-terms - the Participants were tasked with delivering the short term actions and any medium term actions that might have been possible to (partially) address (participants were not expected to address long term actions)
- The GCoC uses the Action Plans to prepare participants' Job Descriptions that are advertised via the SUTNZ website and coordinates the application process (including application form, collation of applications, eligibility checks).
- The GCoC also undertakes first round interviews of potential participants and shortlists applicants
- Businesses receive details of a shortlist of suitable candidates and selects those they would like to interview. It is the business that chooses the applicant whom they feel is best suited to their needs and culture
- The GCOC conducts the participant registration process and liaises with businesses regarding start dates and onboarding
- Once the participant is appointed, the GCoC:

- Presents the Action Plan to participants to assist them in understanding the actions and the business's remit and responsibilities during the placement
- Arranges an initial call with Mabbett (providers of technical support) to enable the business and participant to agree the areas of support Mabbett will provide
- Checks-in with the participant five times over the course of their engagement (week 2,6,10,13 and 15) and four times with the business (week 2, 7,12,15) - notes are recorded on an interaction tracker by the SUTNZ team and participants record progress on a progression tracker
- Organises specialist training and mentoring for the participant and specialist consultancy for the business (described above)
- Responds to requests from groups of businesses should a common issue emerge that would warrant an additional consultancy or training input (as happened for businesses around the *Development of a Sustainability Strategy* and the *Measurement of Scope 3 emissions* – bespoke workshops on these topics were arranged for businesses. GCoC also responded to a request from participants for the provision of an additional bespoke Waste Management training session)
- Organises networking events
 - for Participants (held on the 27th March 2023) to facilitate them forming a participants' network and providing access to a panel of subject matter experts and
 - a *business and Participant event* (held on the 17th May 2023) to facilitate networking and to highlight the longer term barriers faced by SMEs in their sustainability and net zero journey
- Reviews each participant's Implementation Report, outputs and action outcomes to establish how many actions were completed/progress against the Action Plan
- Coordinates completion of post-placement questionnaires by each business and each participant.

2.2. Observations on the SUTNZ process delivered by the GCoC

As set out in Chapter 1, our evaluation evidence allows a range of success criteria to be identified. Below we compare the SUTNZ to these good practice criteria. The Step Up to Net Zero Programme team:

- Meets the host businesses in-person and assesses what they wish to achieve and why they are suitable beneficiaries on the Programme. Firms' previous activities and their ability to resource the Action Plan implementation are assessed at this stage – this is good practice
- Develops an Action Plan for the businesses that is structured around Net Zero, Waste Management and Circularity. Actions are organised by Short, Medium and Long Term. The Action Plan is passed back to the firm for review, comment and amended if appropriate before being signed off – this is very good practice
- Uses the Action Plan to build a profile for the type of person the business needs – this is good practice

- Undertakes the first round interviews with applicants which filters out unsuitable candidates and thereby “lightening the load” on the business – this is good practice
- Allows the business to choose who they wish to appoint (based on a separate interview) i.e. it is the business’s decision – this is good practice and much better than simply allocating a placement to the business
- Checks in with the Participant and Business at week 2 to check everything is going to plan and to identify any issues that may be emerging – this is an absolutely critical success criterion and very good practice
- Maintains regular contact with both participants and businesses throughout the placement process – this is very good practice
- Undertakes a close-out meeting with the business and participant – this is very good practice.

It can be seen that the core design elements of the Programme are comprehensively robust and, based on evaluation evidence from similar programmes, should delivery (very) positive outcomes for businesses, participants and the city economy as a whole.

The next chapter summarises key aspects of the Programme’s activity.

3. Programme activity

3.1. Introduction

The analysis of Programme activity presented below is based upon data collected by the SUTNZ team and feedback from firms that had completed their 16 week projects at the time of our analysis.

3.2. Company engagement

There were 57 applications by businesses resulting in 40 being selected to join the Programme. One business dropped out due to unforeseen circumstances. Thirteen businesses were on a waiting list (it wasn't possible to start one of these firms following the drop out as, by that point, we understand there was insufficient time to complete a placement).

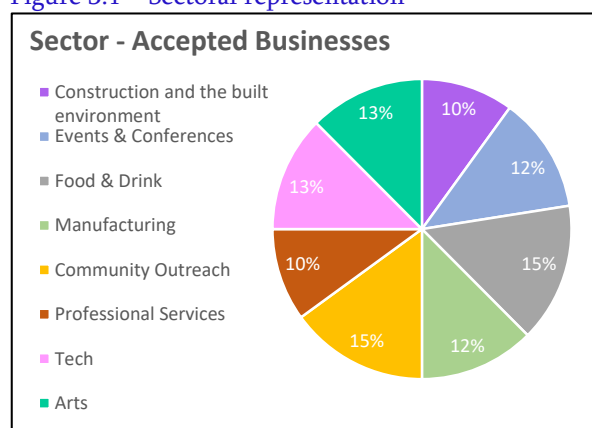
The participating businesses are set out below.

Participating Businesses		
Sculpture Placement Group	Austin Smith Lord	Brett Nicholls Associates
Clydeside Distillery	Kabloom	CCA
National Theatre of Scotland	Glasgow Film Theatre	Glasgow Science Centre
DF Concerts	Optimum Business Growth	Lingo Flamingo
Dear Green Coffee	Healing for the Heart	Connect Three
Tennent's Wellpark Brewery	Scottish Sports Futures	Cryptic
Impact Arts	SWG3	WEEE Scotland
GCVS	QTV	Move On
The National Piping Centre	Green Fulfilment	Blazing Griffin
Cassiltoun Housing	Taco Mazama	Krucial
Wasps	Story Shop	FOMO Protection
AutoRek	Matthew Algie	NG Homes
McTaggart Construction	With Kids	Cullen Packaging

3.2.1. Sectoral coverage

A breakdown of the sectoral representations is presented in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1 – Sectoral representation

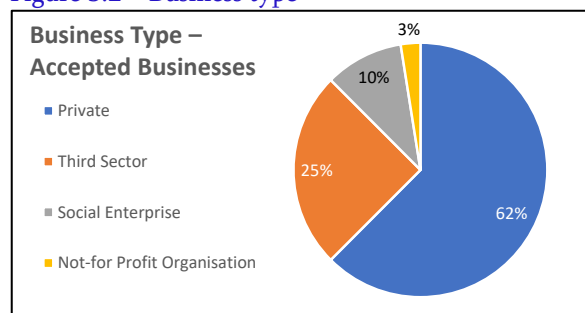


We use this sectoral distribution later in our Impact Assessment.

It can be seen that there is a broad spread of sectors – manufacturing, construction, professional services and the arts are all represented. Given that this is a pilot programme (so without a brand image in the market) this spread is a positive indication from the market of potential latent demand. It also reflects well on the GCoC in managing to reach such a broad pool.

There was also a good balance of for-profit and not for profit businesses with the majority (62%) being for-profit and a further 35% being Third Sector/Social Enterprise (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 – Business type

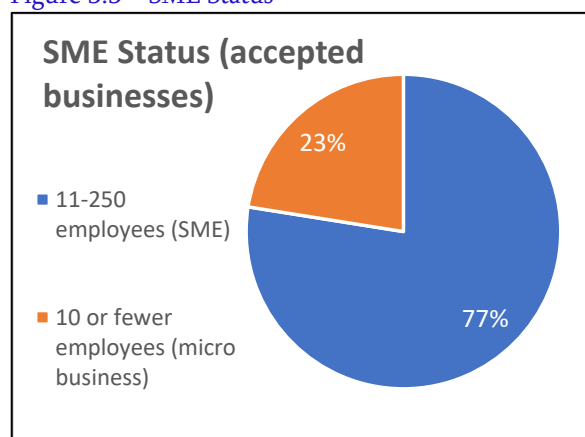


3.2.2. Business Size

The smallest company employed two people and the largest employed 240.

Over three quarters of participating organisations are small-medium-sized businesses (Figure 3.3). This fulfils one of the Pilot's goals. It also aligns with Glasgow's wider business profile where 80% of businesses are service-based. These statistics indicate that the sectoral profile (including construction and manufacturing businesses) achieved by the Programme and depicted in Figure 3.1 is all the more impressive.

Figure 3.3 – SME Status



3.2.3. Business subject-matter knowledge

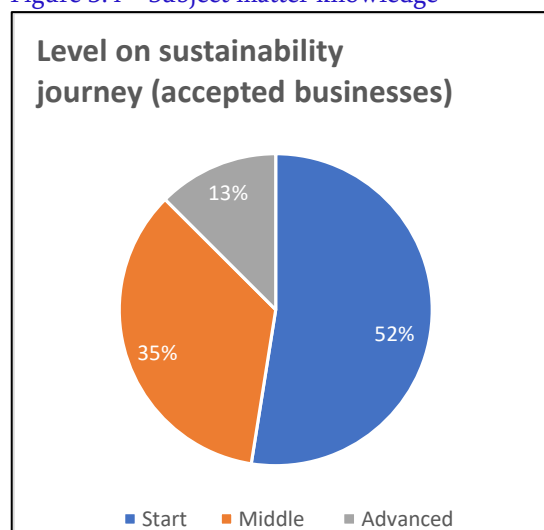
Just over half of businesses had no prior knowledge of the subject matter addressed by the pilot (Figure 3.4).

Focus Group feedback (see below) suggests that of those who were informed or had attempted to make progress independently, very few had achieved much by way of implementation progress.

Given the level of business interest (as evidenced by the size of the sample and the delivery of the pilot within a one-year timeframe), it suggests that the launch of the Programme was timely and that latent demand may be comparatively strong.

The finding that businesses were at the start of their journeys also reinforces the central design of the Pilot around an initial assessment (Audit) followed by a prioritised and structured Action Plan.

Figure 3.4 – Subject matter knowledge



3.3. Participant engagement

Before presenting the analysis of applications and placements, there are some general points to note about the Participants.

Demand amongst Participants was intense. A total of 574 applications were received from 240 applicants for the 40 vacancies available.

There was no requirement for the Participant to have a formal qualification in a sustainability subject. While many were clearly well qualified in a relevant technical subject, others had a passion for sustainability but no formal training.

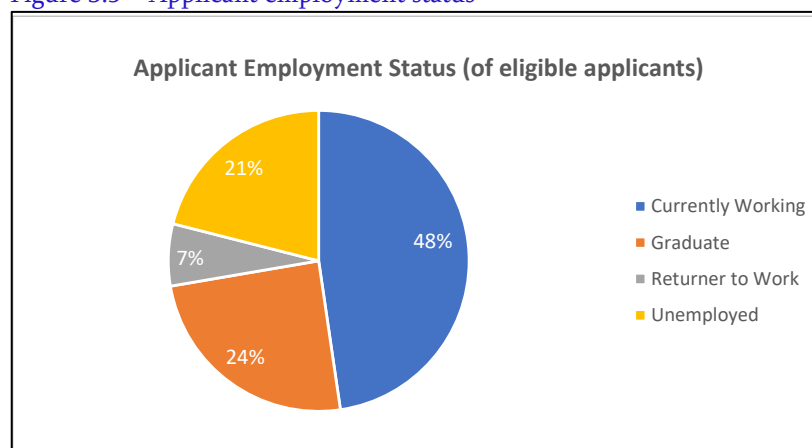
Half of the participants stated the main benefit they wanted to gain from the placement was *'looking to upskill in a new sector'* while over one third (35%) indicated that they wished to *'increase [their] sustainability knowledge'*

3.3.1. Applicant employment status

Just under half of applicants were working at the time of presenting for the Pilot (Figure 3.5). Just under a quarter were unemployed and over one fifth were (recent) graduates. Returners accounted for 7%.

This indicates clearly that the participants were bringing work experience as well as technical knowledge to their roles.

Figure 3.5 – Applicant employment status



3.3.2. Participants – Gender and Age profiles

Seventy two percent of participants were female - a quarter were male.

In terms of age, most of the participants were under 34 years:

- 62% were under 25
- 87% were under 34
- 3% were in the 60-64 band.

This distribution indicates that while the bulk of the participants were under 34 years of age, the Programme was not exclusive and that older applicants with motivation were also provided with an opportunity to participate.

Figure 3.6 – Participant gender

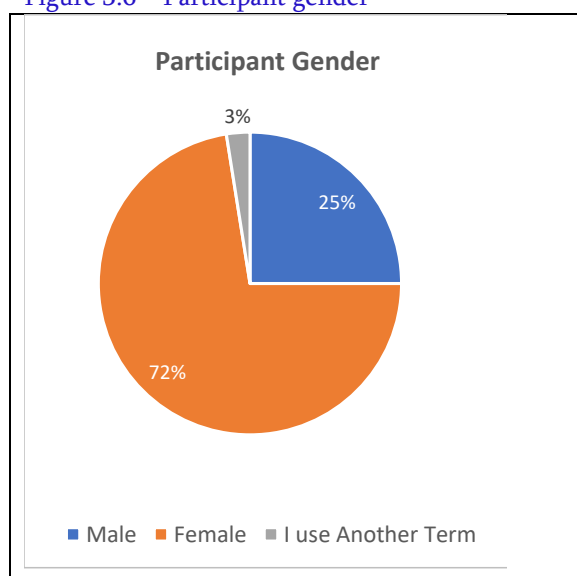
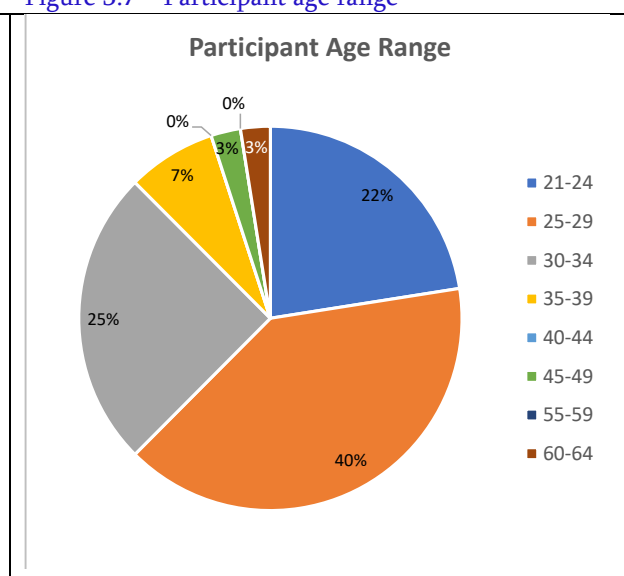


Figure 3.7 – Participant age range



3.3.3. Participants' characteristics and employment barriers

At total of 18 Participants (45%) were graduates (Bachelor-level) while 22 (55%) were post-graduates (Masters' level).

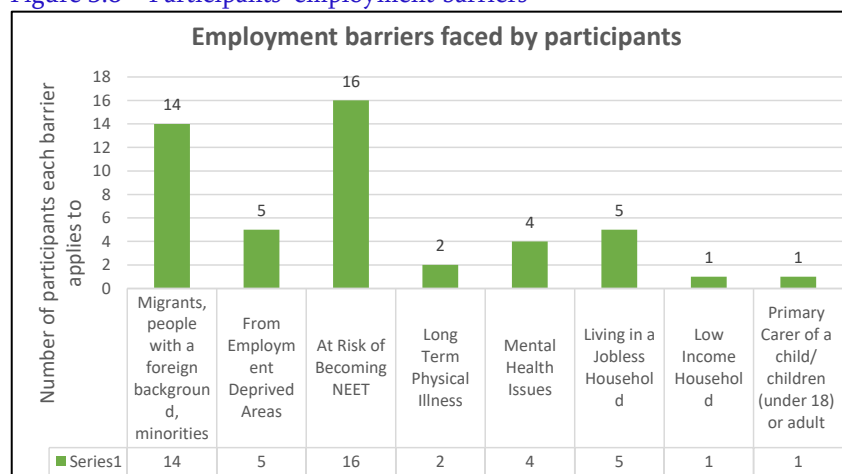
Participants' Social Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) profiles are presented in the table below.

SIMD Level	Number of Participants	%
SIMD 1	3	8%
SIMD 2	5	13%
SIMD 3	2	5%
SIMD 4	1	3%
SIMD 5	8	20%
SIMD 6	1	3%
SIMD 7	1	3%
SIMD 8	3	8%
SIMD 9	9	23%
SIMD 10	7	18%

It can be seen that over a quarter (26%) of Participants are from SIMD 1, 2 or 3 while just under half (19 or 47.5%) are within the SIMD 1-5.

Building on the SIMD analysis above, Figure 3.8 below presents the distribution of employment barriers cited by Participants in the applications and subsequent interviews – note, a Participant may choose more than one barrier.

Figure 3.8 – Participants' employment barriers



Two barriers stand out for the sample:

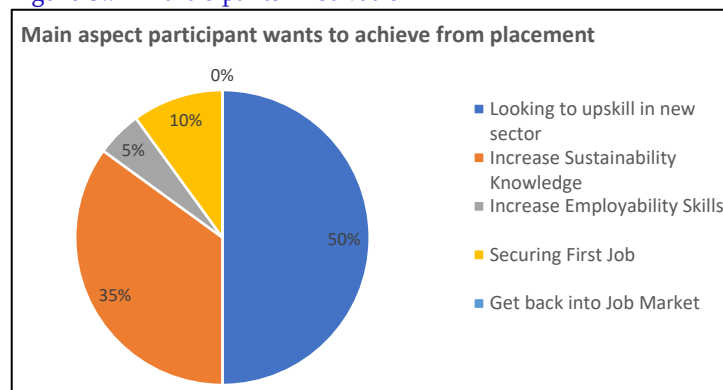
- *At risk of being not in employment, education or training (NEET)* which received 16 citations
- *Migrants, people with a foreign background, minorities* which has 14 citations.

The first of these classifications indicates a clear expression by Participants of their fear of being unemployed.

3.3.4. Participants' motivation

Participants' principal motivation (Figure 3.9) was *to get (back) into the job market* (50%) and *to increase their sustainability knowledge* (35%) – a further 10% hoped *to gain their first job* through the role. This feedback indicates that Participants perceived the Programme being beneficial to their future employment opportunities. It will be seen below that several of the early project completions have offered their placement follow-on employment opportunities.

Figure 3.9 – Participants' motivation



4. Business feedback

Thirty eight completed business surveys were available for analysis. We would note that over half of the businesses had no prior knowledge of key environmental issues on commencement (Figure 3.4 above).

For our analysis, we reviewed the distributions of awareness/understanding responses for a range of key criteria. While the distributions were informative, we further analysed the data through developing a *heat map*. For this exercise, we applied a score to each of the ratings with to 5 for “Excellent”, 4 for “Very Good” etc. The purpose is to derive an overall score for each of the categories that allows their comparative value to be appraised. This is presented below in Figure 4.1 – Heat Map - Businesses

Reviewing the tables and the Heat Map below indicates that *The Value of a Sustainability/Environmental policy for the Business* is the single most significant area where businesses developed a deep understanding of the benefit.

Other areas that were beneficial included *What is Circular Economy, Implementation of the Circular Economy* and how to manage and derive value from *Waste* and the importance of a *Sustainable Waste Management* system.

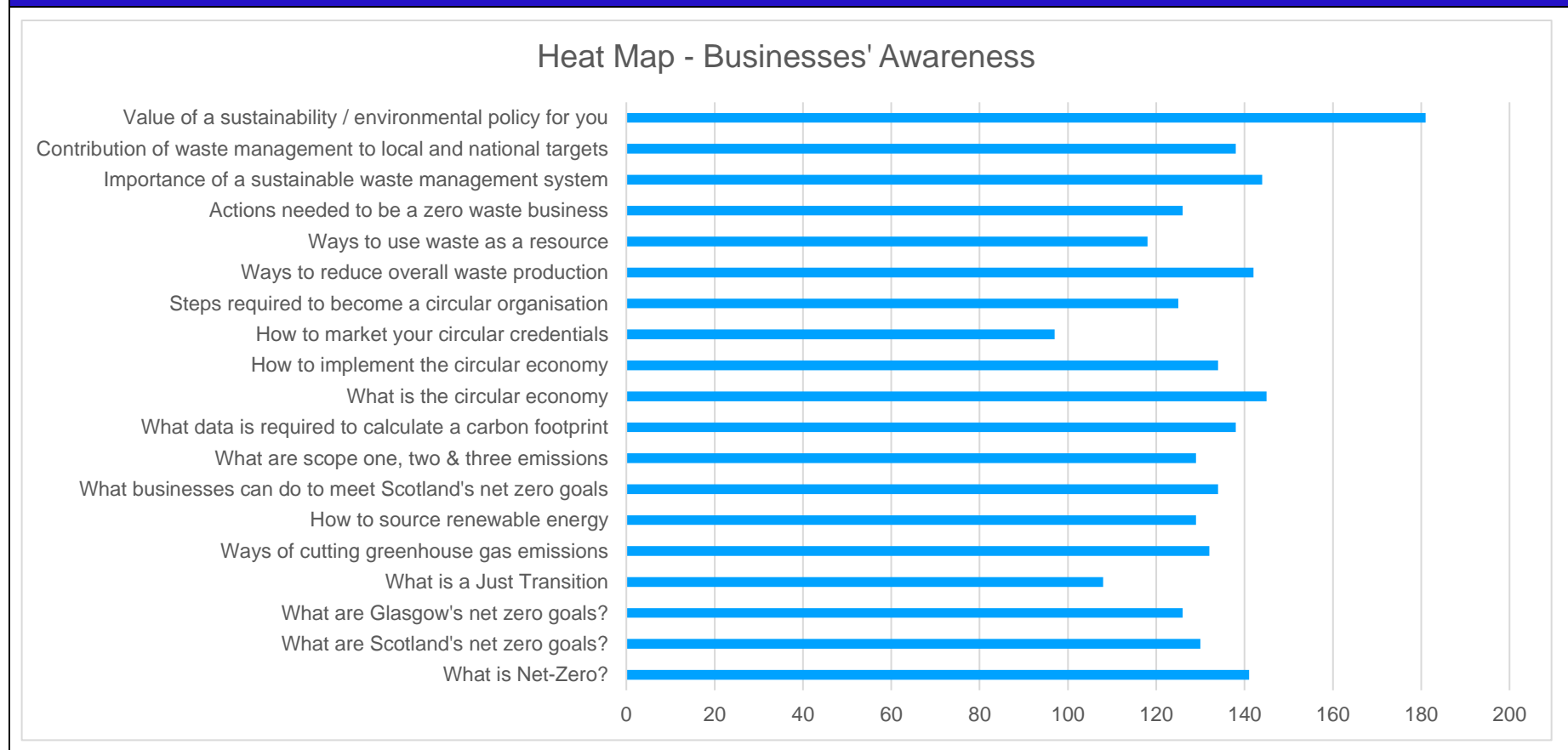
The survey feedback also indicated areas where firms may benefit from further understanding and support. These included: *Just Transition, Understanding Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, How to market their business's Circular credentials, How to use waste as a resource; and How to become a zero waste business.*

Businesses' Awareness of key Net Zero, Circular and Waste Topics (following participation)

	What is Net-Zero?	What are Scotland's net zero goals?	What are Glasgow's net zero goals?	What is a Just Transition	Ways of cutting greenhouse gas emissions	How to source renewable energy	What businesses can do to meet Scotland's net zero goals	What are scope one, two & three emissions	What data is required to calculate a carbon footprint	What is the circular economy
Excellent	6	4	4	4	2	4	3	7	6	10
Very Good	18	13	13	8	19	14	18	10	17	16
Good	11	16	13	9	12	14	13	13	11	8
Average	3	5	7	12	5	5	4	7	3	3
Poor	0	0	1	5	0	1	0	1	1	1

	How to implement the circular economy	How to market your circular credentials	Steps required to become a circular organisation	Ways to reduce overall waste production	Ways to use waste as a resource	Actions needed to be a zero waste business	Importance of a sustainable waste management system	Contribution of waste management to local and national targets	Value of a sustainability / environmental policy for you
Excellent	4	0	1	5	2	1	6	4	30
Very Good	17	7	16	21	11	17	21	21	7
Good	13	12	15	9	15	14	8	9	1
Average	3	14	5	3	9	5	3	3	0
Poor	1	5	1	0	1	1	0	1	0

Figure 4.1 Heat Map - Businesses



4.1. Focus Group Feedback

Four Focus Groups have been held with businesses that have recently completed their engagements:

- 7th June – 5 participants
- 13th June – 8 participants
- 3rd July – 3 participants
- 18th July – 5 participants

Thus, over half of the participants have been engaged in these group discussions

Focus Group meetings lasted one hour and were held on Zoom/Teams over lunch-time.

4.2. Key points arising from focus groups

The meetings covered six topic areas:

- Firms' motivation to engage
- The value of the Audit and Action Planning stage
- The value of having a dedicated placement
- Benefits the businesses have derived and the likelihood they would have derived them through a different route
- How the programme will help the business going forward
- Changes they would suggest to design and delivery if the pilot is repeated.

Before considering responses to each of these topic questions below, we would note that the feedback from Focus Groups was comprehensively positive – indeed very positive. When compared to our evaluations of similar programmes, this is very unusual. Based on feedback, this is largely due to a combination of good Programme design and diligent implementation – both of which were provided by Glasgow Chamber of Commerce.

4.2.1. Firms' motivation to engage

There were seven drivers that encouraged businesses to apply:

- They were being asked for evidence of their environmental policies and actions by customers but had a low knowledge base (so could not respond appropriately)
- They had some knowledge but did not have the resources (staff) available to take forward their activity
- (especially for publicly-funded businesses) funders required the businesses to set out clearly their environmental and sustainability policies when making the funding applications – the availability of robust policies in these areas is becoming a core funding award criterion.
- The businesses had attempted some early actions but these were unstructured, insufficient and mostly viewed as ineffective by businesses.
- Businesses were located in old and environmentally inefficient buildings and wished to improve their carbon footprint - they needed expert input to do this

- Businesses had made public pronouncements on net zero, waste and/or environmental emission targets, but were failing to implement appropriate actions to achieve them – this failure was down to a mix of lack of technical know-how and a lack of people resource
- Businesses had a specific issue to address (frequently related to Waste management) but did not know how to deal with the issue.

4.2.2. The value of the Audit and Action Planning stage

The GCoC's Audit helped businesses to “translate their unstructured thoughts into coherently presented goals”. One business noted that “it gave us real clarity at the outset”.

Although many of the organisations had already undertaken audits of their activities, and some had developed action plans, all found the Audit and Action Planning stage (very) valuable – one business described it as “life saving”.

Where firms had considered actions previously, these were not always written down. The SUTNZ process recorded issues in print – this was valuable.

The Audit and associated Action Plan provided firms with a powerful framework within which to frame actions. It was coherent, understandable and relevant (in a way that their earlier in-house activities were not).

Structuring activity around *Net Zero, Waste and Circularity* helped firms to see what needed to be done in each area while also providing them with a strategic oversight into how the three areas interrelated. Businesses noted that the GCoC's audit consultation quickly identified relevant areas and then drilled down to investigate these in depth. It was thorough and businesses valued the detail.

Separately, businesses gained considerable value through the way the Audit organised actions around time-frames (short, medium, and long-term). This allowed them to prioritise, focusing on delivery of short-term actions with the Participant. It also made monitoring much more straightforward. This observation was true of firms that had taken no action previously and those that already had in-house action plans in place. The Action Planning process seems to have contributed real value to businesses regardless of their previous experience or levels of activity.

4.2.3. The value of having a dedicated placement

Firms recognise that climate issues are “very important” for them to address – but day to day pressures of running a business means that important climate issues tend to be displaced by “the urgent”.

There was a unanimous view that the placement was “vital” as it provided them with the resource to undertake meaningful actions on climate issues.

Access to a placement provided businesses with a knowledgeable, dedicated resource that allowed them to take their plans forward. None of the firms had previously been able to dedicate this level of attention to climate and environmental topics.

Placements fulfilled different roles:

- They undertook research and collected data necessary to inform good policy development and action implementation – this was a critically important task that firms had been unable to undertake previously. One firm had an in-house action plan with 120 actions – the SUTNZ Audit process, coupled with the Participant's input, assimilated the areas on which

the firm needed to focus and gave them clarity. The Participant also prepared “an amazing spreadsheet” that accurately assessed the business’s carbon footprint in a way that they had never been able to achieve previously. This greatly enhanced their understanding of net zero and what they need to do to achieve it. The feedback from this firm was echoed by others who derived similar benefits. Participants also helped businesses establish their Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions.

- They engaged with different groups within the businesses, as well as the businesses’ customer and supply bases. Thus, they acted as a facilitator across internal and external groups, enhancing communications and environmental messaging when doing so – these included landlords which the business could not easily approach on this subject (but where they could utilise the Placement to act effectively as a third-party intermediary).
- In addition to undertaking their direct activities, the Participants also put in place capacity building measures (indirect) that meant the influence of their input continued after their placement finished. These measures typically took the form of staff-training and communication/explanation sessions with different teams that showed how Net Zero, Waste and Circularity related to their day-to-day business activity – this was particularly valuable for (especially larger) businesses that had little prior knowledge of the topics. Participants also prepared guidance documents (e.g. on Circularity) and policy (e.g. procurement) that will have legacy impact
- They identified opportunities for businesses to enhance their market profile through gaining accreditations (e.g. B-Corp, Considerate Constructors etc) and through enhanced social media presence (blog posts).

Based on the Focus Group feedback, the GCoC’s recruitment and interviewing processes appear to have been effective. Businesses commented on how well the placement fitted within their teams, and how they hit the ground running. One firm noted that the placement “got more done in two weeks than we had achieved in two years – and we are knowledgeable about this stuff”. The other firms present agreed with this sentiment.

4.2.4. Benefits the benefits have derived and the likelihood they would have derived them through a different route

Businesses now have policies and evidence in place to support tender requirements. This has been immediately valuable and is likely to generate more significant returns in the future – this makes businesses more competitive.

Publicly funded organisations now have objective and relevant information to provide to funders who pose questions around their commitment to climate and environmental issues.

Several businesses have identified immediate financial benefits around cost saving/bottom line improvements through energy efficiency and waste management. This type of saving is likely to grow as medium and long-term actions are implemented.

In certain cases, the placement’s research led to the creation of large banks of information on the businesses’ positioning on climate and sustainability issues. Focus Group feedback suggests firms feel this knowledge could be shared with other businesses of their types and within their sectors.

As firms now have tangible information, it has increased their credibility with funders, customers and the wider market. It can be included when participating in tendering exercises and means that

when funders do a due diligence, SUTNZ firms have a better chance of being selected as key suppliers.

A specific example of the participant's influence was where the company's financial controller would not sanction expenditure as it did not lead to a direct bottom-line benefit. The participant compiled an information dossier and presented this to the management team, explaining that the business would need to spend money in advance of being able to see business improvement or bottom-line contribution. The firm's accountant did not like the idea of a time lag between spending money and generating an impact but the proposal was approved. This would not have happened previously.

4.2.5. How the programme will help the business going forward

The principal future benefit to businesses is having an Action Plan that can justify the allocation of dedicated resources for climate-related issues going forward. All of the firms indicated that it would need a dedicated resource of some form.

In addition, most firms recognised (as indicated above) that measures put in place by the Participant when addressing short-term actions are likely to provide a commercial return to the business in the medium to longer terms.

The Programme has mobilised commitments by firms to resource activities for the future. One notable example was a company (employing 68) that created a Green Team which will investigate all aspects of the business's activity and identify areas where consumption can be driven down and sustainability driven up. This team will employ eight people to start (so is a significant commitment).

4.2.6. Changes businesses would suggest for the design and delivery if the pilot is repeated.

Firms were asked to identify one key change they would make to improve the program.

The most consistent feedback was around the duration of the placement – businesses suggested that a slightly longer placement (for example, 26 weeks or 6 months) would make a very big difference. It took time for placements to understand their host businesses and to complete the data collection and research activities that were essential at the start. This meant that they were often under pressure to deliver on other short-term actions within the 16 week timeframe.

There was a suggestion across Focus Groups that information collected as part of the research stage could be collated for businesses in a given sector or organisational type and published as an information guide to other similar (non-participating) businesses. It was felt that this could broaden the impact of the Programme.

Linked to the last point, businesses suggested that there may be an opportunity to look at “buddying” where a firm, that has completed the Programme, pairs up with another that has expressed an interest - they may or may not be a participant on a future cohort.

Firms wondered what would happen next. They felt there was an opportunity to facilitate businesses to take forward their actions and achievements to date. Understandably, this was often framed as a request for further assistance, but it was coupled with a suggestion to create some form of peer to peer networking/coaching group.

There were suggestions that engagement with the consultancy inputs could be enhanced through the introduction of a formal progress review meeting at the midpoint (8 weeks in the case of the

Pilot) that involved the Placement, the business, the Chamber of Commerce and potentially the specialist consultants. Specifically, the meeting would be held after the Placement has completed their data capture and analysis task and as they start other aspects of the Action Plan implementation. The purpose would be to review progress at a point where the business and the participant better understand their challenge – and therefore help to identify how the specialist support could best be utilised.

While the Programme had networking sessions for Participants and a separate session for businesses and participants together (see 2.1.3 above), Focus Group feedback suggests that there was no dedicated networking meeting for businesses on their own. They felt that this would be valuable and noted that they found participating on the focus groups to be worthwhile and uplifting as they learned that their experiences matched those of others on the calls.

5. Participant Feedback

Thirty nine responses were received to the on-line questionnaire at the point when the analysis was undertaken.

5.1. Usefulness of the support

During their placements, Participants had access to a set of supporting elements:

- Technical support from Mabbett consultants
- On-line, bespoke, training seminars on *Net Zero* and *Circularity* by Small99
- Two in-person training courses by IMEA (*Introduction to Net Zero* and *Pathways to Net Zero*)
- Personal Mentoring support delivered fortnightly by Progressive Partnership.

Through the online survey, Participants were asked to rate this support on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the best or highest rating. The table below summarises the responses across the sample. Some points to note when reviewing the data:

- **Median** is the middle response after the 39 responses are arranged in increasing order (i.e. the 20th value in the sequence)
- **Mode** is the most frequently occurring response.

When Average, Median and Mode are the same, the dataset is normally distributed. Where Median and Mode are below or above the average, the dataset is said to be skewed.

	Mabbett - Expert Support	Mabbett - filling knowledge gaps	Small99 Net Zero/Circular Training	IMEA "Intro to Net Zero"	IMEA "Pathways to Net Zero"	Other Training Support	Progressive Partnerships mentoring
Average	7.2	7.3	8.9	6.9	7.5	7.3	7.9
Median	7.0	8.00	10.0	7.0	8.0	8.0	8.0
Mode	8.0	8.00	10.0	7.0	9.0	10.0	10.0

The data above indicates:

- The average scores are quite high ranging from 6.9-8.9 out of 10

- The responses are skewed upwards (positive) for most of the criteria – this indicates that the average was lowered by a number of lower scores and that the mid-point and most commonly occurring scores were higher. For example, the responses for the Small99 training were as low as “4” but 20 of the 39 respondents scored it “10”
- The lower scored inputs were *Mabbett-Expert Support* and *IMEA “Input to Net Zero”*
 - Lower scores for *Mabbett’s Expert Support* reflected *Participants’ difficulties in accessing Mabbett staff* (the principal issue cited); Participants felt *that their requests were “passed off” or dismissed; Mabbett being disinterested;* or that the *Participant was not clear on how to best to use Mabbett*
 - Lower scores for the IMEA input were framed around *Workshops used big company examples, not SMEs; too much information in one session, should have had several shorter sessions or being able to work on presentation material offline; Should have been scheduled earlier in the placement; a bit theoretical and overlapping.*

5.1.1. Contribution to Participants’ skills development

The Participants’ survey also assessed the contribution of the Programme to their development of skills. Training and support were provided around:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Change Management | • IT Skills |
| • Creative Thinking | • Managing Projects |
| • Researching Skills | • Compiling Information |
| • Analysing Information | • Microsoft Excel – Spreadsheets |
| • Microsoft Word | • Communication |
| • Marketing | • Time Management |
| • Networking | • Public Speaking |
| • Strategic Planning | • Financial Management |
| • Negotiation Management | |

The tables below present the distribution of responses across the sample of 39 Participants.

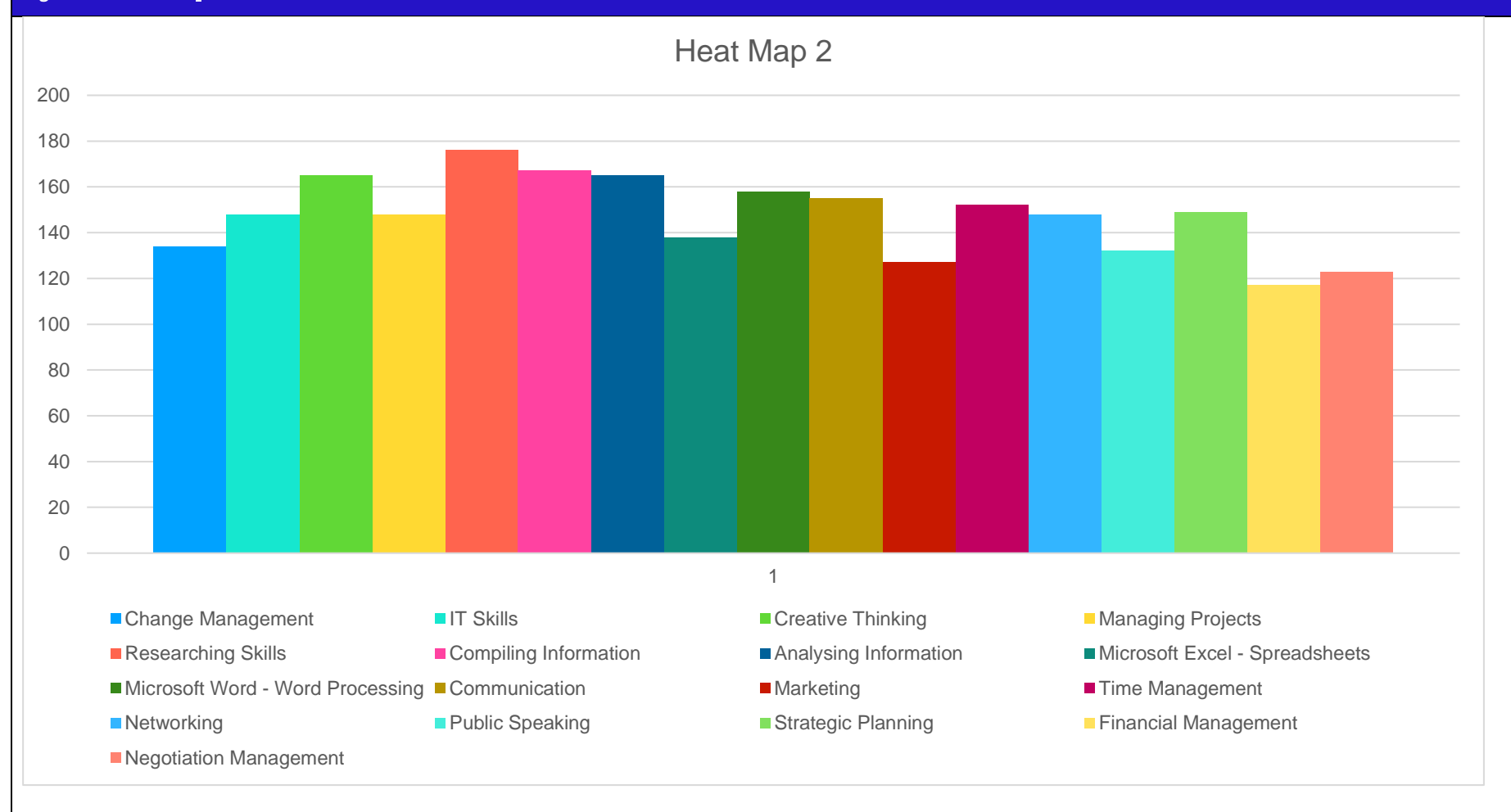
As with the feedback from businesses, we have analysed the data to produce a Heat Map for Participants’ skills acquisition. This is presented below in Figure 5.1 – Heat Map 2.

Contribution of the pilot to Participants' skills development

	Change Management	IT Skills	Creative Thinking	Managing Projects	Researching Skills	Compiling Information	Analysing Information	Microsoft Excel - Spreadsheets	Microsoft Word - Word Processing
Excellent	2	9	16	6	20	15	10	6	12
Very Good	18	14	16	20	19	20	28	13	19
Good	14	15	7	12	0	4	1	17	6
Average	5	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	2
Poor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

	Comm.s	Marketing	Time Management	Networking	Public Speaking	Strategic Planning	Financial Management	Negotiation Management
Excellent	8	4	10	8	4	8	3	2
Very Good	23	11	17	15	16	17	8	11
Good	7	15	10	16	11	13	15	17
Average	1	9	2	0	7	1	12	9
Poor	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0

Figure 5.1 – Heat Map 2



It can be seen that:

- *Research Skills, Compiling Information, Analysing Information and Creative Thinking* have the highest overall scores
- *Word processing/Microsoft Word, Communication Skills, Time Management, Networking and Strategic Planning* are also highly rated
- *Change Management, Microsoft Excel/Spreadsheets, Financial Management and Marketing* tend to score lowest.

The questionnaire did not ask for explanations around scoring for these criteria, so it is not clear why training for *Microsoft Excel* was rated notably lower to that for *Microsoft Word* or why *Marketing skills* was the least impactful.

5.1.2. Knowledge Gained by the participants

The survey also captured feedback from Participants on the knowledge they gained through their engagement on the Programme. As above, a five point scoring was used with the options being:

- Expert knowledge
- Sufficient knowledge
- Basic knowledge
- Poor knowledge
- No knowledge.

The data in the Table above indicate:

- Overall, the scores are high
- Five areas receive very high ratings for knowledge acquisition, namely – *What is Net Zero; What is Circular Economy; The difference between Recycling and Circularity; What are Scope 1, 2 and 3 Emissions; Ways of Cutting Greenhouse Gases.*
- In addition, the Table also gives insight into areas where participants gained less knowledge, namely - *The Butterfly Diagram and its importance; Campaigning and Influencing; What is Just Transition.*

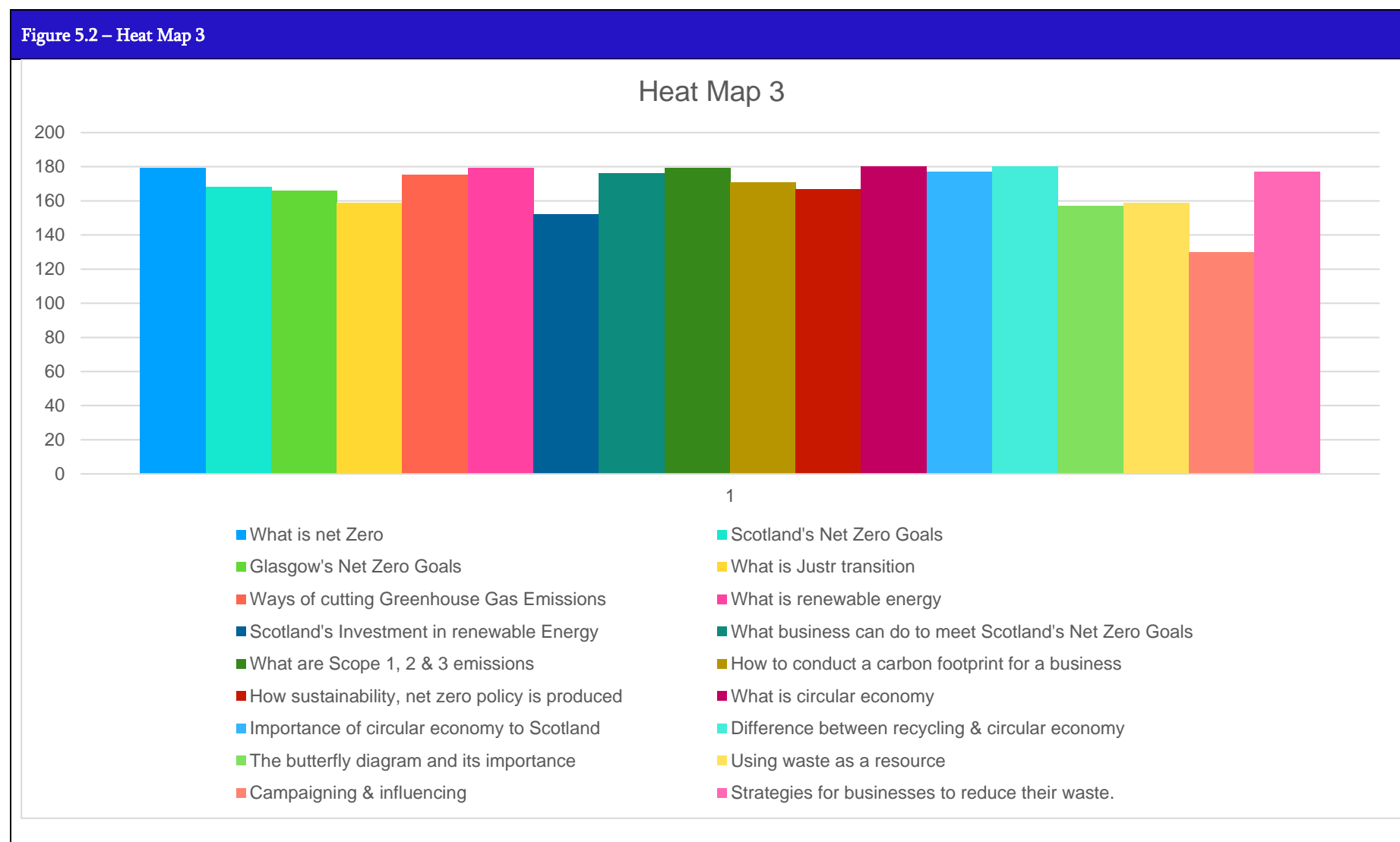
We would note that within categories where lower scores are observable, a number of the participants gained “Expert Knowledge”. It may be that the knowledge gained by a Participant is a function both of their personal interest and areas on which they were required to concentrate when delivering the project for the firm.

Pilot's contribution to Participants' Knowledge acquisition

	What is Net Zero	Scotland's Net Zero Goals	Glasgow's Net Zero Goal	What is Just Transition	How to cut GHG emissions	What is Renewable Energy	Scotland's Investment in Renewable Energy	Business's contribution to Scotland's Net Zero Goals	What are Scope 1,2 and 3 emissions	How to conduct a carbon footprint for a business
Expert knowledge	23	15	13	14	23	21	6	20	23	20
Sufficient knowledge	16	19	23	16	15	16	19	17	16	15
Basic knowledge	0	5	3	5	0	2	12	2	0	3
Poor knowledge	0	0	0	3	1	0	2	0	0	1
No knowledge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

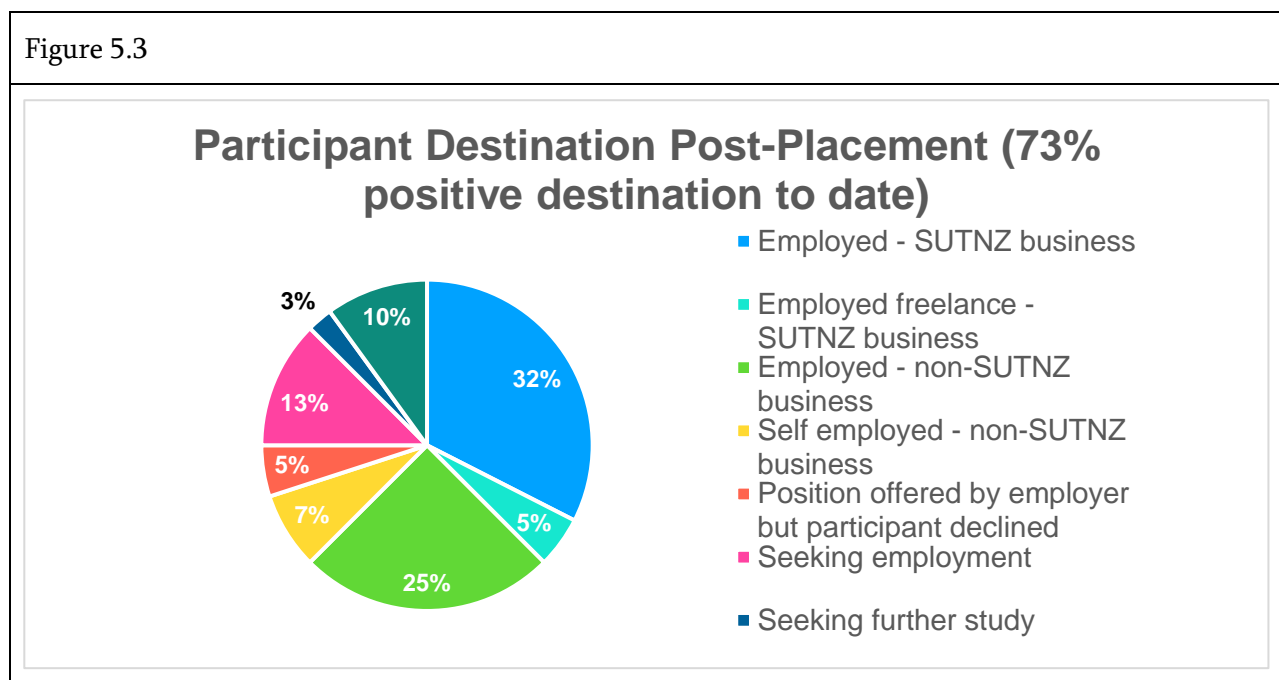
	How sustainability net zero policy are produced	What is Circular Economy	Importance of Circular Economy to Scotland	Difference between recycling & Circular Economy	The Butterfly Diagram and its importance	Using waste as a resource	Campaigning and influencing	Strategies for businesses to reduce their waste
Expert knowledge	13	24	20	24	11	11	4	18
Sufficient knowledge	21	15	18	13	16	23	12	18
Basic knowledge	4	0	1	2	8	4	14	3
Poor knowledge	1	0	0	0	4	1	9	0
No knowledge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Figure 5.2 – Heat Map 3



5.2. Participants' Outcomes

Figure 5.3 below summarises the employment outcomes of the participants (as of 31 July 2023)



Thirteen businesses have employed their placement following the pilot. These engagements vary but can be broadly summarised as follows:

- 4 - Full time permanent
- 3 - Part time permanent
- 1 – Full time (three-month extension)
- 5 – Part time (varying extensions).

The Part Time “varying extensions” range in duration from one month and one year.

In addition:

- 2 are employed freelance with a SUTNZ business – they are working with the business to help them implement medium and long-term actions
- 10 are employed but with a non-SUTNZ business
- 3 are self-employed
- 2 have declined an offer of employment
- 1 is pursuing further study
- 5 are seeking employment
- 4 are to confirm their status.

Overall and given this was a part-time engagement, the outcomes are positive.

The next chapter considers the economic impact of the Pilot.

6. Impact Assessment

6.1. Context

Before considering the quantitative data in detail, we would note:

- This was a *Pilot* programme that included a relatively short Placement of 16 weeks
- The Placement was part time (~25 hours per week)
- The impact assessment is based on feedback captured through an on-line survey – qualitative feedback gained through Focus Groups suggests that the Programme is likely to have significant commercial impact (both in terms of new business and “protected sales”) but this may not be reflected in the questionnaire responses received. Capturing the full impact of an intervention of this kind is best done through 1-1 interviews
- The survey was completed between months 9-11 of the Programme delivery i.e. before the Pilot had finished. Economic impacts attributable to a programme such as SUTNZ take time to emerge. Firms need to absorb the information assembled, collated and presented by the Placement before they can apply it within the business – it is only through *application* that a causal improvement in business performance is likely to accrue (and it will not accrue in every case). Typically, evidence of improvements in business performance takes 1-2 years to emerge.

These observations suggest that while the economic impact assessment below is thorough and informative, it is likely to underestimate the true impact of the Pilot on businesses – Focus Group feedback indicated that its influence on commercial aspects of the business was broad-ranging and significant.

6.2. Impact model

When evaluating the quantitative economic impact of projects such as SUTNZ, the HM Treasury Green Book¹ guidance identifies five factors that allow gross impacts to be converted to net impacts. These are:

- **Deadweight** (also known as non-additionality) refers to the extent to which outputs/outcomes might be achieved anyway through a different route had the business not engaged with the SUTNZ project
- **Displacement** relates to the number or proportion of project outputs that might be accounted for by reduced outputs elsewhere in the Glasgow or Scotland i.e. Firm A is assisted through SUTNZ and derives an identical benefit to that which would have been achieved by Firm B, had Firm A not been supported
- **Leakage** refers to the number or proportion of project outputs external to the project target area (Glasgow) and Scotland in this instance
- **Substitution** impacts arise when a beneficiary substitutes one activity for another to take advantage of public sector assistance
- **Multiplier effects** are the wider positive downstream benefits associated with an increase in demand (the ripple effect). These are assessed by applying associated Type I (direct and indirect) and Type II (direct, indirect and induced) multipliers to projected impacts.

In addition to these five adjustments, further effects need to be considered.

6.2.1. Time Value Discount Rate

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-green-book-appraisal-and-evaluation-in-central-government>

HM Treasury propose that economic projections are presented in *constant prices* not *current prices* (where inflation adjustment factors would be applied to future cost and income projections to assess current values).

The HM Treasury Green Book provides detailed guidance on the handling of impacts that will be achieved in the future. In these cases, future impacts are discounted to take account of the “time value of money” and to profile future costs and income at constant prices – the adjustment reflects a desire on the part of users to have the benefit today rather than wait some years to derive it. Currently, the HM Treasury discount rate is 3.5% and we use this for our calculations. A base year of 2023 (Year 0) was used for our assessment.

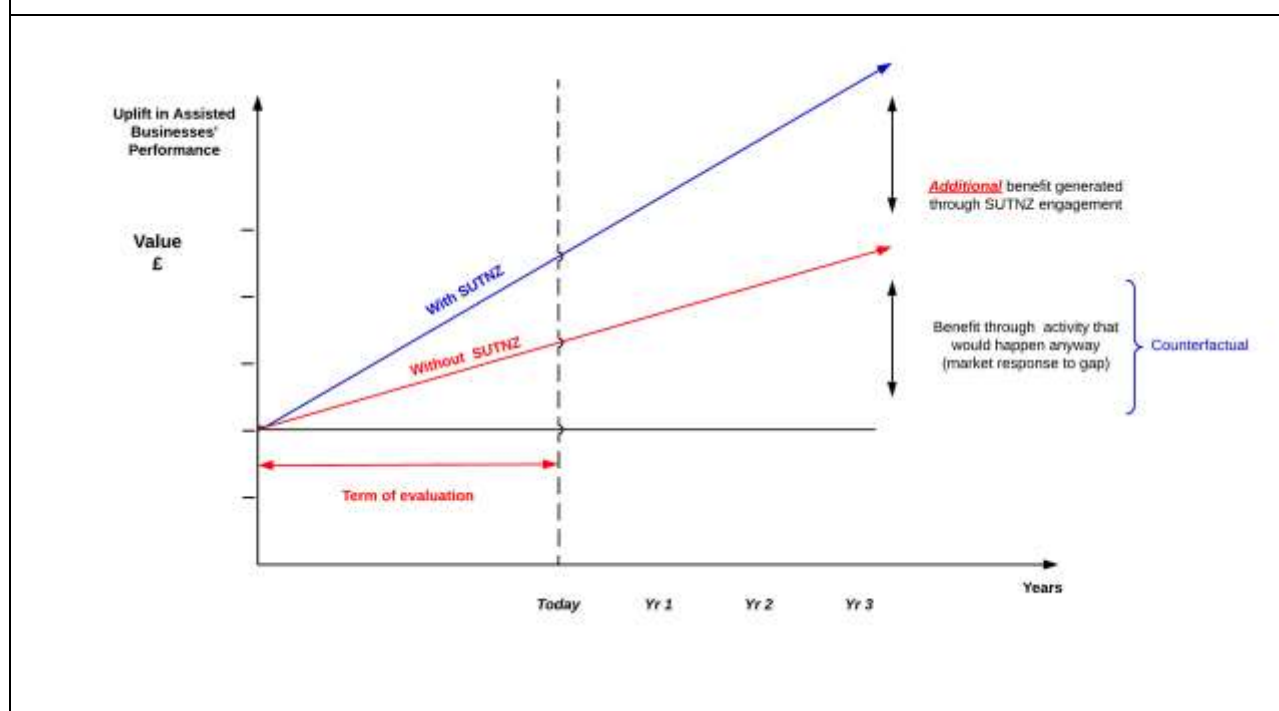
6.2.2. Optimism Bias

There is a demonstrated, systematic, tendency for project appraisers to be overly optimistic. This is a phenomenon that affects both the private and public sectors. A general guidance note published by the Department for Communities and Local Government recommends project appraisers should consider using 40 per cent underperformance as the starting point for their sensitivity analysis. For the SUTNZ impact model, a figure of 20% was used. This was chosen on the basis of Focus Group feedback.

6.2.3. Overall

In essence the above adjustments aim to establish the net impact or value-added benefit deriving from the SUTNZ support. When undertaking these assessments, we use the cumulative benefit, by year and adjusted for time preference, over the term as shown graphically below.

Figure 6.1 – Gross and Net impacts



6.3. Impact

Three businesses identified financial benefits accruing from their engagement. Note, the table below shows the survey responses where two firms indicated future sales could be quantified – one of the respondents who stated that they could not quantify an impact subsequently estimated a future impact. Thus, for our calculations, we have assumed 3 could quantify and 14 anticipated a benefit but could not quantify.

Impact Summary	Has or will sales or income increase?	Has or will costs decrease?
Yes	2	2
Yes, but we can't quantify	15	27
No	21	9

For the purpose of estimating an attributable quantitative impact, we have assumed:

- There is a linear increase in sales over the three years, starting 2024
- For firms indicating their participation would lead to an increase in sales but who could not quantify this change, we have assumed that they would achieve 50% of the average level of the three firms who provided a quantum (so assuming a modest attribution) – the average value of the three firms was £37,167 at Year 3

6.3.1. Non-Additionality (Deadweight)

The survey captured the likelihood of businesses developing a similar Action Plan had they not engaged on SUTNZ (i.e. through a route that was different to SUTNZ). In terms of responses, companies indicated the likelihood that they would have developed an Action Plan covering Net Zero, Circularity and Waste with their responses summarised in the table below.

Deadweight	Likelihood of developing a similar Action Plan without SUTNZ
Definitely	3
Likely	7
Possibly	18
Unlikely	7
Not at all likely	3

To calculate an average level of Deadweight, we assume the Deadweight of taking a similar action would be as follows:

- Definitely – 100% Deadweight
- Likely – 75% Deadweight
- Possibly – 50% Deadweight
- Unlikely – 25% Deadweight
- Not at all Likely – 0% Deadweight

Using these factors and the distribution of responses, we calculate the level of Deadweight for the sample to be 50%.

Reflecting on the Focus Group conversations, we consider this figure for Deadweight to be particularly prudent – it was evident that none of the firms would likely have taken a similar action without support

and over half of the Pilot had no subject matter knowledge. Thus true Deadweight is likely to be lower (leading to higher levels of attributable impact).

6.3.2. Displacement

Displacement was assessed through using the on-line survey to ask companies *“If the business was to cease operation today what proportion (%) of sales would be taken by competitors in Glasgow?”*.

Twenty businesses provided estimates of Displacement that ranged from 0 to 100%. The average was 45.5% and this figure has been applied in our model.

6.3.3. Optimism Bias

Optimism Bias was assumed to be 20% as explained above

6.3.4. Multiplier Effects.

Type II Multipliers were sourced through the Scottish Input Output Tables, published in 2022 and relating to 2019 data (the most recent dataset available).

Chosen multipliers were based upon the SUTNZ sectoral descriptions (Figure 3.1 above).

Multiplier Summary				
SUTNZ Classification	SIC Code	Multiplier Category	Type II Multiplier	GVA Effect
Construction	41-43	Construction	1.7	0.8
Events & Conferences	79	Travel & Related Services	1.5	0.7
Food and Drink	56	Food & beverage services	1.5	0.9
Manufacturing	32	Other manufacturing	1.5	0.8
Community Outreach	84	Public Administration & defence	1.6	0.9
Professional Services	74	Other Professional Services	1.6	0.9
Technology	72	Research & development	1.5	0.8
Arts	91	Arts - Creative Services	1.4	0.9
Average Value			1.54	0.84

The GVA ‘effect’ multiplier estimates the indirect or induced GVA change as that results from a direct change of in output generated by the final demand sector. It was applied to the net additional sales/income values provided by business (i.e. after Deadweight, Displacement, Leakage and Substitution effects have been assessed) and estimated for those who anticipated an uplift but who could not quantify its scale.

Adjustment factors were applied as follows:

- The application of Deadweight is based upon the businesses’ likelihood of pursuing another and similarly impactful net zero business activity as described above
- For the assessment of quantitative impacts, average Deadweight is applied as set out above
- The value of Displacement is based on the average of 20 responses – thus this level is likely to be representative of the population
- We have adjusted the projected 3-year sales/income values to take account of the time value of impacts (using 2023 as the base year) by applying the currently published HM Treasury Discount Factor of 3.5%

- Linked to time value, we have used the projected sales projections in three years' time to estimate the growth in sales in the intervening years with the assumption being that sales grow linearly to the three year point
- We have used an average Type II Output multiplier of 1.54 and an average GVA effect of 0.84 (capturing direct, indirect and induced effects).

6.3.5. Impact Assessment

In terms of achieved and anticipated impacts, the data for those who provide a quantitative impact are presented in Impact Summary table below.

Impact Summary					
	Yr 0	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Total
Discount Factor	1.00	0.97	0.93	0.90	
Income - 3 businesses, future benefit		£37,167	£74,259	£111,500	£222,926
Income - 14 businesses, assume 50% of average quantum		£86,721	£173,427	£260,167	
Total Gross Impact across sample		£123,889	£247,687	£371,668	£743,244
Less Optimism Bias	20%	£99,111	£198,149	£297,334	
Discounted Gross Impact (3.5%)		£95,642	£184,521	£267,193	
Less Average Deadweight	50%				
Discounted Additional impact		£47,821	£92,260	£133,596	
Less Average Displacement	45.5				
Net Additional Sales		£26,062	£50,282	£72,810	£149,155
Add Type II Multiplier Effects and Type II GVA Effect					
Net Impact (direct, indirect and induced)		£40,071	£77,308	£111,945	£229,325
Net GVA (direct, indirect and induced)		£21,827	£42,111	£60,978	£124,917

The *Total Gross impact across sample* is the figure firms would present if one were to interview them in three years time (and assuming changes in business performance reflect their anticipated improvements).

The net additional **sales/income impact** of the pilot at the level of the Glasgow economy is **£229,325**

The net additional **GVA** attributable to the Programme is **£124,917**.

6.4. Employment Impact

Based on monitoring feedback supplied by the GCoC, 11 of the participants have been retained (in some way) by the business in which they completed their placement.

There were an additional two participants who moved into roles with SUTNZ businesses that were not their Programme hosts.

Thus, the total who gained on-going employment engagements is 13 (33%) to date.

7. Conclusions & Recommendations

7.1. Context

This Programme was a Pilot that aimed to complement the city's goals for a COP26 legacy and contribute to its achievement of being a net zero carbon economy by 2030 and a circular city by 2045.

The Pilot was allocated a total of £628,676 by Glasgow City Council to support a 12 month programme.

The key deliverable for the Council was that the pilot would create 40 placements each lasting 16 weeks. It is clear that this deliverable has been met.

7.2. The Pilot design

The Programme is very well designed by GCoC and included core design elements that are likely to have significantly reduced the possibility of unsuccessful projects. Specifically:

- On commencement, the GCoC agreed hosts' business goals for engaging the Placement and they managed the businesses' expectations of what could be achieved within the limited available timescale – the projects addressed a clear business need
- A written specification of the desired output was prepared at the outset, recording the hosts' desired deliverables - this informed the selection criteria for potential Placements – The Chamber's Programme Managers reviewed hosts' expectations and ensured they were realistic for the person being appointed
- Separately, the Placement was matched to the host firms on the basis of their skills and experiences *as well as* their likely "fit" with the host's culture and team dynamics
- Within two weeks of the Placement being appointed, the GCoC checked-in with both the host firm and the Placement to assess whether any fundamental issues with the arrangement had arisen – this has been a consistently observed factor in our placement programme evaluations that helps to avoid problems. Early identification of a problem allows remedial measures to be taken which may include the Placement being removed. When a problem is rectified speedily, our evaluations identified several incidents of catastrophic relationship breakdowns that were very damaging both for the hosts and the placements
- The GCoC maintained regular contact with the host and the placement throughout the duration of the engagement that included both project management and technical advice
- On completion, the GCoC reviewed the output with both the host and Placement to appraise the relative success of the Placement, reviewing the original specification to ensure that expectations have not "drifted" on the part of the business.

7.3. Pilot Implementation

The GCoC's Audit and Action Planning stage was considered by businesses to be very valuable. This positive feedback included businesses that had already invested time in developing action plans. It covered the full spectrum of businesses' knowledge of Circularity, Net Zero and Waste (from those who had no prior knowledge and those who had extensive knowledge).

The "check-ins" with businesses and Participants were valued by both groups. They allowed them to discuss technical issues associated with the project/business activity *and* personal issues relating to the projects' progress. This may explain the extremely positive feedback by Focus Group businesses on the value of the Programme to their operations.

Participants were rated very highly by Focus Group participants which reflects the thorough and phased recruitment process adopted by the GCoC.

Participants are filling gaps in businesses' knowledge and providing technical inputs that have contributed to cost savings in selected cases to date and are anticipated to lead to further bottom-line improvements in the future.

7.3.1. Management and delivery

The GCoC's achievement in identifying, appraising, selecting and recruiting 40 businesses within a three month window is significant. Most of these were small-medium sized businesses whose participation on Programmes of SUTNZ's duration can be challenging – SMEs encounter significant, random but urgent business challenges that divert management attention. The loss of just one business from the cohort is impressive but may reflect the significant proportion of businesses employing more than 10 (77%). Our evaluation evidence from other business support programmes indicates that micro businesses often have difficulty resourcing their participation on initiatives such as SUTNZ and can notably struggle to support post-participation programme actions due to a lack of people resources.

In terms of sectoral representation, manufacturing, construction, professional services and the arts are all represented. Given that this is a Pilot programme (without a brand image in the market) this sectoral distribution is a positive indication from the market of potential latent demand. It also reflects well on the GCoC in managing to reach such a broad pool in a constrained timeframe.

Overall, the management and delivery of the Pilot by GCoC is best in class based on our evaluations of a range of comparable programmes. Placement initiatives are notably difficult interventions to deliver successfully. In this instance, the GCoC's approach succeeded both in designing-out potential problem areas, effectively managing the activities of the Placement and the business while also leading to significant and broad-ranging knowledge transfer to both parties.

The core design elements of the Programme are comprehensively robust and, based on evaluation evidence from similar programmes, should deliver (very) positive outcomes for businesses, Participants and the city economy as a whole.

7.4. What worked and what could be improved

Overall, feedback on the value of the Programme through our Focus Groups was very positive. None of the businesses indicated that their participation had not been valuable and many cited specific benefits they had gained which should lead to downstream commercial improvement.

The online survey indicated that just two businesses² cited quantitative financial benefits and these were at a point three years in the future but a further 14 businesses suggested they would derive a benefit but could not quantify its scale. This complements our Focus Group feedback where we would estimate that over half of the businesses suggested that SUTNZ would have a positive influence on their commercial performance (but this group was also unable to quantify the level of contribution). Online evaluation surveys generally underestimate quantitative benefits as their identification usually requires a conversation between the consultant and the business to establish the true level.

7.4.1. Programme elements that worked well for businesses

The Value of a Sustainability/Environmental policy for the Business is the single most significant area where businesses developed a deep understanding of the benefit. Focus Group feedback suggests that this

² Three businesses provided a quantum

understanding is feeding through to other (in many cases, all) areas of the business and leading to changes in the way businesses perform. The pilot had a strategic influence.

Other areas where businesses gained a benefit included detailed knowledge of the *Circular Economy* and how to manage and derive *Value from Waste*. *Waste* in particular seems to be an area that is presenting increased challenges for firms and one where the Programme made a direct and beneficial contribution.

7.4.2. Programme elements that might be reviewed for businesses

The survey feedback identified where firms would benefit from further understanding. These included: *Just Transition*, *Understanding Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions*, *How to market their business's Circular credentials*, *How to use waste as a resource*; and *How to become a zero waste business*. Addressing these areas could be reviewed if repeating the Pilot or delivering a new Programme

While the Programme had networking sessions for Participants and a separate session for businesses and participants together, Focus Group feedback suggests that there was no dedicated networking meeting for businesses on their own. They felt that this would be valuable and noted that they found participating on the Focus Groups to be rewarding in this regard.

There was also a suggestion that businesses who had completed the Programme could “buddy” with others who expressed an interest.

Separately and reflecting the intensive data collection activities, Focus Groups suggested a common data set could be assembled by sector which firms could use to get a quick start.

7.4.3. Participants' profiles

While Participants were qualified to graduate (45%) or post-graduate (55%) levels, the cohort identified specific barriers to employment Participants encountered when applying to be part of the Pilot. Separately, over a quarter of Participants were from SIMD 1-3, while just under half were from SIMD 1-5.

7.4.4. Programme elements that worked well for Participants

Participants scored the Programme very highly with average score around 7.5/10.

Research Skills, *Compiling Information*, *Analysing Information* and *Creative Thinking* were given the highest overall scores. While these topics may appear contradictory, it seems that Participants had to think carefully and laterally about how to use the data and influence people within the business. This may explain the high score for *Creative Thinking*.

Word processing/Microsoft Word, *Communication Skills*, *Time Management*, *Networking* and *Strategic Planning* were also highly rated. This reinforces the role the Participant played in helping the firm to change the direction of the business.

7.4.5. Programme elements that might be reviewed for Participants

Participants indicated that *Change Management*, *Microsoft Excel/Spreadsheets*, *Financial Management* and *Marketing* attracted the lowest scores.

The questionnaire did not ask for explanations around scoring for these criteria, so it is not clear why training for *Microsoft Excel* was rated notably lower than that for *Microsoft Word* or why *Marketing skills* was the least impactful.

We would also review both the provider and engagement of the specialist/technical consultancy support to Participants based upon their feedback.

7.5. Single greatest benefit of the Programme

Based on Focus Group feedback, the single greatest benefit of the Programme was access to the Participant for a period of 16 weeks – it was the availability of a dedicated resource, focused on the environmental aspects of the business and who was supported by technical inputs and training that was most valuable. However, it is clear that the value of the Participant was greatly enhanced by:

- The Action Plan with clearly presented priorities framed within business objectives – the Action Plan shaped and focused the Participants' activities
- Regular, external progress monitoring to ensure the project was on track
- Access to high quality technical support on Waste Management, Net Zero and Circularity.

7.6. Quantitative impact

The table below summarises the impact that is attributable to the Programme.

Impact Summary					
	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
Total Gross Impact across sample		£123,889	£247,687	£371,668	£743,244
Net Additional Sales		£26,062	£50,282	£72,810	£149,155
Add Type II Multiplier Effects		£40,071	£77,308	£111,945	£229,325
Net Impact (direct, indirect and induced)		£40,071	£77,308	£111,945	£229,325
Net GVA (direct, indirect and induced)		£21,827	£42,111	£60,978	£124,917

Business support interventions take time to deliver commercial value for assisted businesses. Interventions that directly relate to commercial growth (trade development initiatives, export assistance, cost reduction or business process improvement schemes) tend to produce bottom line results quickly.

Developmental activities, in which SUTNZ would fit, tend to take longer as the effect on bottom line performance is indirect. Firms recognised this in their survey responses – for example they identified *How to market their business's Circular credentials* as an area where their understanding could be improved.

For these two reasons, we anticipate that the impact recorded to date is conservative, especially given Focus Group feedback from businesses who highlighted the value of the Pilot in providing them with tangible evidence of policies and actions that they could include on future tenders and provide to funders and customers.

In essence, we consider it too early to draw firm conclusions on the full quantitative impact of the Pilot on businesses.

7.6.1. Employment

The pilot has created a momentum amongst participating business which they are keen to carry forward, both individually within their enterprise and potentially through a form of network or peer-peer learning group:

- 13 businesses have employed their placement following the pilot.
- 2 are employed freelance with a SUTNZ business – they are working with the business to help them implement medium and long-term actions

- 10 are employed but with a non-SUTNZ business
- 3 are self-employed
- 2 have declined an offer of employment
- 1 is pursuing further study
- 5 are seeking employment
- 4 are to confirm their status.

Overall and given this was a short-term part-time engagement, the outcomes are positive.

7.7. What next?

Firms wondered what would happen next. They felt there was an opportunity to facilitate businesses to take forward their actions and achievements to date. Understandably, this was often framed as a request for further assistance, but it was coupled with a suggestion to create some form of peer to peer networking/coaching group.

From an evaluation perspective, it also raised the issue of “strategic fit”. It is clear that the Pilot filled an unmet gap. It delivers Action Plans tailored to firms’ needs and utilises the Participants’ intensive inputs to build momentum within the business so as to take forward key environmental actions. There is a danger that this momentum dissipates once the Placement ends.

We conclude that it would be appropriate to continue to support the firm but in a different way post-Placement – providing longer term support that encourages them to maintain their commitment to implementing their Action Plans in full. This may be an area where the Council’s wider economic development support could be engaged.

7.8. Recommendations

7.8.1. Issues for scaling up

The Pilot’s design should be retained, specifically:

- Framing the Participant’s specification within business goals and priorities
- Retaining the focus on three subject areas (Net Zero, Circularity and Waste) as well as the short, medium and long term focus to the Action Plan
- Using Action Plans to frame job specifications
- Providing businesses with choice when selecting Participants
- Early check-ins (two weeks maximum) once projects start
- A longer Placement, ideally of six months duration
- A formal review meeting with the business, Participant, Chamber and provider of technical support at the point where the Participant has completed their primary data gathering and analysis activities (likely to be around eight weeks)
- Lower frequency check-ins with businesses and Participants during delivery
- New business to business networking events while retaining Participant to Participant networking events
- Retaining the close out meetings with businesses and Participants.

Recognising the relative success of the Pilot and the fact that the overall satisfaction of both parties with their experience, we suggest reducing the frequency of check-ins during delivery.

We would recommend assessing how businesses' momentum can be maintained once the Placement finishes and whether the Council's wider economic development support could be engaged for this purpose.

7.8.2. Recommendation to proceed

We conclude that the Pilot has met its objectives, has an inherently strong design, was comprehensively and effectively delivered by the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and should be considered for full scale delivery.