

Change-log

v1.3 – Added measurement matrix (Appendix A); clarified CP7 suitability and measurement boundary.

[COMPANY NAME]: Record of Social Value Contribution:

Applied Research Programme on Sustainability, ESG & Social Value

This document provides an independently authored, procurement-ready record of [INSERT COMPANY]'s contribution to an applied research programme creating social value. It is authored by Contented ESG and intended for participating organisations to upload as evidence of senior time and insight contributed, aligned to recognised procurement and sustainability frameworks.

Assurance & standards

This third-party report is intended for upload by the named organisation as qualitative supporting evidence within buyer portals (e.g. RSVT, SVP, Network Rail IM), alongside its own quantitative entries. This evidence has been prepared using a principles-based approach aligned with Social Value International (SVI), emphasising outcomes, proportionality and transparency. It supports UK public procurement requirements under the Procurement Act and associated Procurement Policy Notes, including the Social Value Model, and is structured to be compatible with reporting through the Social Value Portal (National TOMs). Within the rail context, it aligns with the RSSB's Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT) and sector expectations for attributable, auditable social value reporting across operators and supply chains. The authors consider it suitable evidence for use in CP7 contract management as proportionate, auditable supporting material alongside portal-based reporting. Activity and outcomes are also mapped to relevant UN Sustainable Development Goals, supporting consistency between domestic procurement reporting and internationally recognised sustainability frameworks. Appendix A provides a cross-framework measurement matrix to support consistent entry of this evidence across SVP, RSVT, Network Rail IM templates and related buyer systems.

Reporting context

- **Reporting organisation:** [insert interviewee organisation]
- **Delivery partner / assurer:** Contented ESG
- **Reporting period:** Summer 2025 (with ongoing learning application)
- **Geography:** United Kingdom
- **Sector context:** Rail, infrastructure and regulated supply chains
- **Type of activity:** Skills development; education; knowledge exchange
- **Time invested:** [insert time]

1. Programme overview

The programme formed part of a wider research initiative led by Contented ESG, focused on sustainability, environment, social and governance issues (ESG) and Social Value within value chains including rail and infrastructure. The activity supported a university student undertaking applied, real-world research into how sustainability and social value are interpreted and implemented in the UK rail value chain. Working with students, early-career professionals and business leaders to explore sustainability has been a core part of Contented ESG's work since 2010. This document records social impact created during summer 2025 and is informing ongoing sector learning and engagement.

2. Nature of the activity

Participants contributed time through a structured, in-depth interview of approximately [xx] minutes including administration. Interviewees included strategic leads, CEOs, finance directors, HR leads and Heads of Sustainability and SHEQ (Safety, Health, Environment and Quality), ensuring that insights reflected real decision-making roles rather than solely operational or advisory perspectives. Discussions explored how sustainability, ESG and Social Value are governed, resourced and embedded in practice, particularly in response to procurement policy, regulatory obligations, buyer and investor requirements in a rapidly changing context of public-sector reform, procurement regulation and sector restructuring. It explored the opportunity for leadership to improve return on investment by shifting from compliance to management, strategic and civic mindsets.

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3. Intended outcomes

The activity was designed to address a recognised systemic barrier for students and early-career professionals: limited access, for primary research, to engaged senior practitioners in regulated sectors. Intended outcomes included improving applied understanding of sustainability, ESG and social value, personal leadership, strengthening professional research and communication skills, and producing research with direct relevance to employers and public-sector buyers.

4. Evidence-based outcomes

Based on the student's independently completed reflection, informed by Social Value International (SVI), the activity led to a clear shift from predominantly theoretical understanding to applied, strategic insight into sustainability, ESG and Social Value. Professional confidence and analytical capability increased materially through independent qualitative research and direct engagement with senior practitioners. Interview discussions also prompted reflection among participating organisations, creating reciprocal learning through the research process. The student attributed the depth of her analysis to access to senior practitioner interviews, noting that without them the project would have been limited to secondary research. The assessed work was later awarded a distinction. This is included here as evidence of her ability to apply her understanding, rather than as an outcome attributable to the interviews alone. As a direct result of her participation and demonstrated capability, the student was subsequently offered employment in a sustainability-related role. These outcomes reflect real change rather than activity completion, consistent with SVI principles and reporting standards.

5. Contribution and proportionality

Contribution by participating organisations was proportionate and deliberately low-burden, consisting primarily of approximately 90 minutes of senior professional time, with no financial contribution required. There was no paid marketing or recruitment requirement attached to participation. The activity was designed around learning, applied research and evidence capture, not promotion. This social value account is intentionally limited to outcomes experienced by participants and does not include organisational or commercial effects. Measurement boundary: this evidence relates to skills development and employability outcomes for the named participant, and reflective learning by participating organisations. Wider societal or economic impacts are out of scope.

6. Framework alignment

The programme aligns with recognised frameworks commonly used by UK and international buyers. It is most directly relevant to the UK Government Social Value Model (PPN 002), supporting policy outcomes relating to skills for growth, fair work and opportunity, and sustainable procurement. Under the National TOMs framework, the activity primarily supports the themes of Work (skills and employability) and Community (knowledge exchange), with indirect economic value through improved SME capability. Within the rail context, the activity is consistent with the intent of the Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT), particularly in relation to employment, skills, educational attainment and stakeholder engagement. It also contributes to relevant UN Sustainable Development Goals, including Quality Education (SDG 4), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9), and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17).

7. Continuity and sector application

The programme worked with the University of Birmingham, building on Contented ESG's participation in the DigiRail accelerator (2020) delivered by the Birmingham Centre for Rail Research and Education (BCRRE), where early work explored progress across the rail sector in embedding sustainability and social value, including decarbonisation and early waste circularity. It builds on Contented ESG's longer-term work in sustainable and smart cities, integrated mobility, transport systems and supply-chain transformation. Since the early 2010s, this work has focused on how infrastructure systems deliver environmental, social and economic outcomes in practice, from urban mobility and energy systems through to rail and national supply chains. The current research programme represents a continuation of that applied systems approach, with a focus on ESG, Social Value and procurement-led change. The research continues with input from the Birmingham Institute of Sustainability and Climate Action (BISCA), enabling further sector engagement and application of findings. Insights from the programme inform a Rail Forum ESG & Social Value workshop scheduled for April 2026 and ongoing peer-to-peer support.

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8. Role and credentials of assurer: Contented ESG

Contented ESG acted as the designer, facilitator and independent author of this document, providing structure, facilitation and assurance rather than promotional delivery. Its role focused on designing proportionate interventions, structuring reflection using Social Value International principles, and capturing outcomes rather than outputs in a form suitable for procurement and audit contexts. Contented ESG operates under an ISO 9001-certified quality management system and is a Pioneer Member of *Social Value International*. The organisation also acts as an auditor of the Responsible Business Standard and is a recognised training and consulting partner of *EcoVadis*. Its wider programme design and leadership experience includes graduation from the EU-supported DigiRail accelerator, based at *Birmingham Centre for Rail Research and Education* and participation in the UNDP-supported Global Leadership for Sustainable Development programme. The student research programme additionally incorporates *Institute of Leadership-approved* professional development.

9. Note on reporting systems, standards and frameworks

This report is designed to support reporting across multiple UK public-sector and rail buyer systems, which differ in how social value is recorded and managed. Some systems require suppliers to create activity records with organisational context, while others retain this context at project or contract level and draw on supplier-provided inputs and evidence. The reporting context above provides neutral record-level information where required. Appendix A provides a practical translation of this activity into the information typically required by buyer reporting systems, supporting consistent, attributable and auditable reporting without duplicating or replacing system-of-record entries.

Contact This report was prepared by Contented ESG. Queries relating to scope, methodology or use may be directed to enquiry@contented.net.

Lead reviewer: Gerard Davies, Director, Contented ESG



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Appendix A: Social Value Measurement Matrix

This matrix aligns activity across common UK rail and public-sector Social Value reporting systems to support entry into portals and schedules as qualitative evidence. It provides a practical translation of this activity into the information typically required by buyer reporting systems (e.g. RSVT, SVP and Network Rail IM templates), where records are maintained by the buyer. Participating organisations may draw on the relevant column when entering their own attributable inputs and evidence.

Field	Social Value Portal (National TOMs)	Rail Social Value Tool	UK Social Value Model (PPN 002)	Network Rail IM / Framework	Thrive (Impact Evaluation Standard)
Theme / Impact area	Work; Community	Skills, training & education	People – Skills for Growth	Social Performance – Skills & Capability	Work / Community
Outcome	Improved employability & skills	Educational attainment; employability	Skills for Growth; Fair Work	Skills development; organisational learning	Skills & employability improvement
Activity	Senior professional engagement in applied research	Applied research support via practitioner interviews	Skills development activity	Non-financial staff contribution	Education & skills intervention
Quantity / input	~1.5 hours senior staff time	~90 minutes senior staff time	Senior staff time	~1.5 hours	Staff time (qualitative)
Beneficiary	Student / early-career professional	Student / early-career professional	People entering or progressing in work	Early-career skills development	Individual skills beneficiary
Outcome evidence	Shift from theoretical to applied capability	Applied sector-relevant insight achieved	Improved employability capability	Demonstrable skills & learning outcome	Qualitative outcome evidence
Attribution	Direct – interview engagement	Direct – practitioner engagement	Attributed to activity	Attributable to supplier contribution	Direct attribution
Additionality	Access to senior decision-makers beyond BAU	Non-routine engagement	Above business-as-usual	Additional to contract delivery	Additional intervention
Evidence reference	Independent assurance record	This document; reflection	Qualitative supporting evidence	Assurance note	Narrative evidence
Monetisation	Not claimed	Not claimed	Not required	Not monetised	Optional / not used

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Appendix B: Reporting systems and standards referenced

How this report is intended to be used

This appendix provides brief context on the reporting systems and standards referenced in this report, as well as related ESG platforms that buyers use. It is included for orientation only and does not constitute guidance on how to use any specific platform. The main body of this report provides assurance-led narrative evidence of social value contribution. Appendix A provides a cross-framework measurement matrix showing how the same activity translates across different buyer systems. Together, these elements support consistent, proportionate and auditable reporting, while respecting the ownership, structure and system-of-record role of each procurement, social value or assurance platform. This report is designed to be used as supporting qualitative evidence, not as a substitute for buyer-managed records or formal ESG disclosures.

B1. Social Value and procurement reporting (the primary purpose of this report)

The following systems and standards are used by public-sector and regulated buyers to record, assure and manage social value contributions and outcomes within procurement, contract management and assurance processes.

Social Value International (SVI): Social Value International provides principles-based guidance for accounting for social value, focusing on outcomes, materiality, proportionality and transparency. These principles underpin the approach taken in this report, ensuring that reported social value reflects real change experienced by people, rather than activity alone. See <https://www.socialvalueint.org/standards-and-guidance/>

Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT): The Rail Social Value Tool is Network Rail's sector-specific system for forecasting, recording and managing social value at project and contract level. RSVT records are owned and maintained by the buyer. Suppliers support RSVT reporting by providing attributable inputs and evidence, rather than creating or owning records themselves. See <https://www.rssb.co.uk/sustainability/maximising-social-value/the-rail-social-value-tool>

Social Value Portal (SVP) / National TOMs: The Social Value Portal is a widely used UK public-procurement reporting platform structured around a framework known as the National TOMs (Themes, Outcomes and Measures). In SVP, suppliers typically create activity records and enter organisational context, alongside inputs, outputs and outcomes, supported by evidence. See <https://www.socialvalueportal.com/measurement>

Network Rail IM templates and framework schedules: Network Rail Information Management (IM) templates and framework schedules are procurement- and contract-specific documents issued directly by the buyer as part of framework agreements, ITTs and contract packs. They are not published. For general information, see <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/industry-and-commercial/supply-chain/procurement/standard-suite-of-contracts>

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B2. ESG and supply-chain due-diligence frameworks (contextual reference only)

The following frameworks and platforms support corporate Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting, responsible sourcing and supply-chain due diligence. They are referenced for context only. This report is **not an ESG or sustainability disclosure** and does not substitute for formal ESG, audit or assurance reporting.

Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). This report is *not a GRI disclosure* but may be used as supporting evidence within an organisation's wider ESG or sustainability reporting, for example to evidence social impacts under GRI 403, 404 and 413 (occupational health and safety; training and education; local communities). See <https://www.globalreporting.org/standards/>

ISSB / IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards: The ISSB standards establish a global baseline for investor-focused sustainability disclosure. This report does *not seek to meet ISSB disclosure requirements* but may provide contextual qualitative evidence relating to social or human-capital matters within wider organisational ESG reporting. See <https://www.ifrs.org/groups/international-sustainability-standards-board/>

Sedex and SMETA (ethical trade and responsible sourcing): Sedex is a data-sharing platform and SMETA a social audit methodology covering labour standards, health & safety, environment and business ethics. These are not ESG reporting frameworks. This report may provide contextual information to support buyer due-diligence discussions but *does not replace audit-based assurance*. See <https://www.sedex.com>

Achilles (supplier assurance and risk management). Achilles is a supplier pre-qualification and risk-management platform used by many OEMs, Tier-1 contractors and infrastructure owners. It supports procurement-led assurance by assessing environmental, social, governance, health-and-safety and financial risks using validated data, questionnaires and audits. This report may support buyer review or assurance discussions but is *not an Achilles submission or assessment*. See <https://www.achilles.com>

Assent (supply-chain due diligence and ESG compliance). Assent supports buyer-led and regulatory reporting through structured supplier requests covering product compliance, human rights due diligence and ESG data. This report is *not an Assent submission* but might be shared off-platform to support buyer reviews. See <https://www.assent.com>

EcoVadis (supplier sustainability ratings). A supplier sustainability assessment and ratings platform used by many OEMs and Tier-1 manufacturers to screen, benchmark and manage supply-chain ESG risk. It scores questionnaire evidence across environmental, labour & human rights, ethics and procurement. This report is *not an EcoVadis submission* but may provide contextual supporting material during buyer review or sustainability discussions. See <https://ecovadis.com>