



UK Atomic  
Energy  
Authority

# Sustainability Strategy

## 2026-2030



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## Introduction

### Embedding the Greening Government Commitments and TCFD principles in UKAEA's sustainability journey

The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) exists to lead the UK's development of sustainable fusion energy – an endeavour central to the nation's net zero ambitions. As we advance the science and technology of fusion, we are equally committed to conducting our operations in a way that protects the environment, uses resources efficiently, and supports the transition to a low-carbon future.

This Sustainability Strategy 2026–2030 is driven by two overarching government frameworks that define how public sector organisations must approach sustainability:

- the Greening Government Commitments (GGCs) 2025–2030, which set binding targets for carbon, water, waste, and nature recovery across the UK government estate; and
- the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) framework, which establishes how organisations identify, govern, and disclose climate-related risks and opportunities.

Together, these frameworks provide the foundation for how UKAEA will plan, act, and report on sustainability over the next five years.

Through this strategy, UKAEA commits to embedding GGC performance targets within all operations and applying TCFD principles to our governance, risk management, and disclosure processes.

The result is a sustainability programme that is transparent, accountable, and aligned with national expectations for responsible public sector leadership.

## Strategic Context

### UKAEA's Role in Delivering National Policy

As an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), UKAEA supports the UK's broader environmental and climate policy goals.

Our work aligns directly with DESNZ's mission to:

- achieve national net zero emissions by 2050;
- accelerate the adoption of clean energy technologies; and
- ensure the resilience and sustainability of the public estate.

UKAEA reports quarterly against the GGCs through DESNZ, and aligns its annual disclosures with HM Treasury's TCFD guidance for the public sector.

This dual alignment ensures that our sustainability commitments are both quantifiable and strategically governed — with data integrity, climate risk assessment, and performance transparency at their core.

## Our Framework for Delivery

The GGCs define *what* we must achieve.

The TCFD framework defines *how* we will govern, assess, and disclose progress.

FRAMEWORK	FOCUS	UKAEA APPLICATION
Greening Government Commitments (GGCs).	Operational performance – reducing emissions, water, waste, and improving biodiversity.	UKAEA's measurable sustainability targets and quarterly reporting.
Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD).	Governance, strategy, risk management, metrics, and targets.	UKAEA's sustainability governance structure, risk register, and annual disclosures.

To ensure all new buildings, refurbishments, and operational activities align with the sustainability outcomes required under GGC and TCFD, UKAEA will use its internal implementation guidance (hereafter referred to as the Sustainability Design Standards) to help deliver these frameworks, with particular respect to Goal 1 and Goal 2. Additionally, UKAEA has internal annual Sustainability Delivery Plans which define annual metrics and targets that support the achievement of the GGC and TCFD outcomes over time.

*At the time of publication, the GGC framework for 2026-2030 has been circulated to government bodies in draft form. It has not yet been published for public disclosure. As such, some targets and metrics may change. This strategy will be updated once the GGC Framework has been released to include the finalised target metrics.*

## Scope of this Strategy

This strategy applies to all UKAEA activities that have a direct or indirect environmental impact, including:

- management and operation of UKAEA's estates and research facilities;
- design and construction of new buildings and infrastructure;
- travel, logistics, and fleet management; and
- procurement and supply chain activities.

Excluded from scope are:

- activities and emissions exempted from the GGC Framework;
- operations under UK Industrial Fusion Solutions Ltd (UKIFS) and UKAEA's leased assets such as Harwell estate, which manage sustainability independently.

Running fusion experiments is a highly energy-intensive activity which represents a short-term emissions cost as an investment in a much longer-term sustainable future. For this

reason, fusion related emissions are excluded from our sustainability strategy so as not to impact the development of fusion energy. Similarly, UKAEA has been granted an exemption in relation to the targets of the GGC Framework for *Activities where decarbonisation is not technically feasible*.

## Strategic Goals 2026–2030

UKAEA's sustainability programme is structured around three strategic goals, each directly linked to the Greening Government Commitments and supported by TCFD-aligned governance.

Energy used for the running of buildings, as well as energy used in the making of the products and services purchased, represent the most significant sources of greenhouse emissions for UKAEA. Therefore, the sustainability strategy is primarily focused on reducing the impacts from buildings and supply chain (as reflected in the three goals below).



### GOAL 1 - SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

**Deliver new buildings and infrastructure that meet GGC performance standards and embed TCFD principles from design to operation.**

All new developments will be designed in line with the sustainability requirements of the UKAEA Sustainability Design Standards, which provides the technical framework for GGC-aligned performance and TCFD-aligned governance.

## Key Commitments

### Carbon and Energy:

- Achieve net zero operational carbon for all new UKAEA buildings solely through energy reduction and renewable technology measures without carbon offsetting, unless justified by exception.
- Apply RICS Whole Life Carbon (WLC) assessment, targeting  $<750 \text{ kgCO}_2\text{e/m}^2$  in line with RIBA 2030 embodied carbon (WLC) targets.
- Ensure all new developments are 100% electricity powered, unless there is a specific operational requirement for using gas strictly for fusion-related experiments.

### Water and Waste:

- Design to achieve BREEAM Excellent (target Outstanding where feasible) for the WAT 01 Water Consumption Target.
- Aim for  $\geq 95\%$  waste diversion from landfill during construction.

### Nature and Biodiversity:

- Deliver minimum 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) across all new projects.

### **Standards and Certification:**

- Achieve BREEAM Excellent (target Outstanding where feasible).
- Align with Government Buying Standards and UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard (NZCBS).

### **Governance:**

- Align procedures to integrate TCFD principles at every RIBA stage, ensuring early assessment of climate risk and adaptation measures.



## **GOAL 2 – RESILIENT AND EFFICIENT ESTATE**

**Reduce emissions, improve efficiency, and enhance climate resilience across the existing UKAEA estate.**

UKAEA will improve the operational performance of its buildings and infrastructure in line with GGC targets (which use 2025-2026 as a Baseline) and PAS 2038 retrofit standards, while applying TCFD risk assessment to estate management.

## **Key Commitments**

### **Carbon and Energy:**

- Align to the GGC Target to reduce Scope 1 emissions by 2030 (baseline 2025-26).
- Align to the GGC Target to reduce overall emissions (Scope 1, 2, and Business Travel Scope 3) by 2030 (baseline 2025–26).
- Where possible, decarbonise the estate to reduce Scope 1 emissions by transitioning remaining gas systems to be 100% electricity powered, unless there is a specific operational requirement for using gas.
- Where possible, reduce Scope 2 emissions via energy efficiency measures and self-generation of electricity from renewable energy sources.
- Where possible, reduce Scope 1 & 2 emissions by improving thermal efficiency and energy performance of the estate through façade refurbishments.

### **Water and Waste:**

- Align to the GGC Target to reduce potable water usage by 2030. (The UKAEA Sustainable Water Management Plan will be included as an Annex to this Strategy in early 2026).
- Align to the GGC Targets for waste, including overall reduction of waste produced (excluding major mineral wastes), increasing recycling of waste, and reducing municipal waste to landfill. (The UKAEA Sustainable Waste Management Plan will be included as an Annex to this Strategy in early 2026)



## **Adaptation and Resilience**

- Regularly review and update organisational climate risk assessment using the Estates Adaptation Framework provided by the Government's Property Function, and integrate outcomes into estate planning.
- Regularly review and update Divisional and Programme enterprise risk registers to ensure climate aspects are captured, tracked, and reported through UKAEA Governance structures.
- Apply modelling, including CIBSE TM54, to improve thermal comfort and energy efficiency.

## **Digital and ICT Sustainability:**

- Align to the GGC Target to reduce ICT lifecycle emissions by 2030.
- Align to the GGC Target to ensure no ICT devices will be sent to landfill or incineration by 2030.

## **Governance:**

- Report on emissions and performance through GGC metrics (quarterly to DESNZ) and integrate results into UKAEA's TCFD disclosures (annually in the UKAEA Annual Reports and Accounts).



## **GOAL 3 – SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY CHAIN**

**Ensure UKAEA's procurement and partnerships deliver measurable sustainability outcomes consistent with GGC and TCFD principles.**

Supply chain sustainability is critical to reducing UKAEA's indirect (Scope 3) emissions and achieving whole-life performance improvements.

## **Key Commitments**

### **Policy Alignment:**

- Apply PPN 06/20 (Social Value Model) and PPN 06/21 (Carbon Reduction Plans) to all major contracts.
- Align to the GGC Targets for procurement, including compliance with the upcoming new Government Buying Standards, and integration of appropriate and proportionate sustainability measures into highest tier and second highest tier contracts (The UKAEA Sustainable Procurement Plan will be included as an Annex to this Strategy in early 2026)
- Reduce procurement of single use items.

### **Supplier Governance:**

- Continue to participate in the Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) programme with key suppliers, to set and report sustainability metrics, and drive strategic suppliers to deliver on sustainability objectives, increase initiatives to drive social value, and diversify their workforce.

**Data and Reporting:**

- Capture and report relevant Scope 3 emissions annually within UKAEA’s TCFD metrics and disclosures.
- Expand Scope 3 emissions reporting coverage to align strongly with the GHG Protocol.
- Capture and report procurement metrics within GGC submissions to DESNZ including adoption of sustainability measures by tiered contracts, and supplier maturity assessments.

**Circular Economy:**

- Embed whole-life and circular procurement principles into all framework agreements.

**Capacity Building:**

- Work collaboratively with suppliers, including SMEs, to share tools and build sustainability capability, through supplier engagement events and the SRM framework.

**Governance and Reporting**

**Governance under TCFD**

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is the selected Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for Sustainability, and coordinates with the Environment and Sustainability Manager to oversee implementation of this strategy.

UKAEA’s governance framework reflects the four pillars of TCFD:

TCFD PILLAR	UKAEA APPLICATION
Governance	Oversight by the Board, Executive Committee, and SRO; quarterly progress reports to DESNZ.
Strategy	Sustainability integrated into corporate planning, risk registers, and programmes.
Risk Management	Climate risks identified, assessed, and embedded into the UKAEA Enterprise Risk Framework.
Metrics and Targets	Annual monitoring and public disclosure of GGC-aligned metrics and TCFD indicators.

**Reporting under GGC**

UKAEA will report quarterly to DESNZ through the Greening Government Commitments system, publishing verified data in relation to emissions, and progress against GGC Targets (excluding those out of scope by way of the Exemption for Activities where decarbonisation is not technically feasible).



Progress will be disclosed in UKAEA's Annual Report and Accounts, including data collected for exempted activities. This is in keeping with the historic process for UKAEA's disclosures, whereby total electricity consumption figures in the Annual Report and Accounts have always included fusion experiment figures.

## **Continuous Improvement and Next Steps**

This strategy will evolve as GGC and TCFD requirements develop. UKAEA will:

- review and update targets in response to revised government policy, including publication of the GGC Framework for 2026-2030;
- refresh the strategy in 2030, aligning with the next GGC cycle.

By embedding GGC performance metrics and TCFD governance principles into every part of our organisation, UKAEA will demonstrate how science-led innovation can coexist with environmental responsibility – paving the way for a truly sustainable energy future.

## **Annexes**

Annexes will be published early 2026.