

MRS Climate Pledge Tracker

November 2025





The MRS Climate Pledge

The Climate Pledge has **4 key commitments**:



Tracking

Measure (and improve measurement of) carbon emissions (and energy use) and the associated data collection/quality. Use this as a baseline to understand where emissions come from and so enable reduction.



Reduction

Take tangible actions that lead to year-on-year reductions in emissions (measured per staff member or per unit) and energy use. Focus especially on those emission areas where research/insight organisations can have the most impact.



Transparency

Report on progress: annually disclose a carbon footprint and a summary of reduction actions. Openly share challenges, actions, learnings with staff, partners, clients to embed climate-impact awareness.

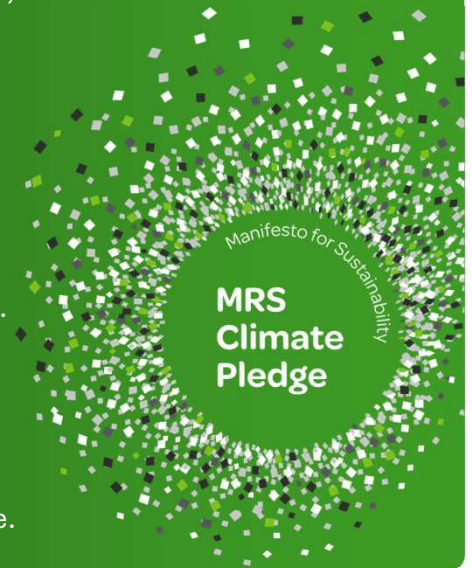


Collaboration

Work across the sector (and beyond) to share best practice, learning and support collective improvement. Recognise that strong progress often comes via shared effort, not just isolated action

Climate Pledge

- **launched in June 2023** to replace the ‘Net Zero Pledge’, to better reflect current best practice in how climate commitments are achieved.
- **Aligned with the recommendations** of the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) in terms of how ‘net zero’ is understood.
- **Designed for organisations** in the insights sector (MRS Company Partners) to take meaningful climate-action steps in a realistic timeframe.





The Pledge in practice



Implementation / Requirements

- **Signatories need to complete** an Annual Climate Pledge Tracker where they provide evidence of progress in each pillar relative to previous years.
- **Tracking includes** carbon footprint disclosure, improvements in data, reduction actions.
- **Organisations are advised to develop** (or align with) a Carbon Reduction Plan especially if they are participating in public-sector procurement.

What this means for organisations in practice

- **They will need to measure their emissions** (Scopes 1, 2, and ideally 3) to whatever level their data allows, and work to improve that measurement over time.
- **Then they must identify key hotspots** (e.g., travel, purchased services, energy use) and take tangible reduction steps each year.
- **They must report their progress**, be transparent about what they are doing, and share best practice — internally (staff/clients) and externally (industry) to help raise the general standard.
- **They must collaborate and learn** from others in the sector – adopting and sharing effective practices rather than working alone.

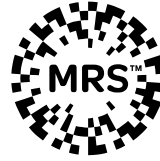


The Climate Pledge Tracker

The first MRS Climate Pledge Tracker was completed in spring–summer 2026. A total of 78 signatories reported their emissions per employee across Scopes 1, 2, and 3 as well as detailing the steps they have taken in line with the Climate Pledge’s 10 recommended actions. The Tracker marks a pivotal step in understanding and benchmarking the environmental impact of the UK’s market research sector. As the first ‘state of the nation’ assessment, it offers an informed perspective of where our industry stands today on emissions.

- **A big ‘thank you’ to the 78 Pledge signees who participated**, providing data on emissions levels and where they have been taking action to help improve these. It can be difficult to make these emission calculations, so participation in this study reflects commitment to the pledge.
- **By sharing transparent benchmarks and real case studies**, the Tracker aims to inspire collaboration, improve accuracy in reporting and help the sector move forward together on the journey to net zero.

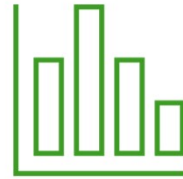




Aims of the Tracker



The inaugural MRS Climate Pledge Tracker marks a pivotal step in understanding and benchmarking the environmental impact of the UK's market research sector.



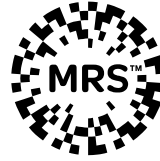
As the first 'state of the nation' assessment, it offers an informed perspective of where our industry stands today.



The Tracker reveals both the progress already being made and the collective challenges that remain, particularly around the measurement and reduction of emissions in our day-to-day operations.



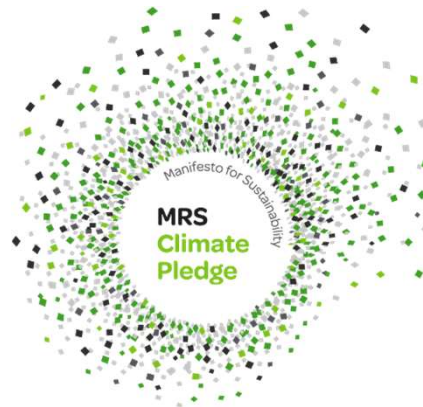
This report is designed as a tool for reflection and action. It highlights tangible quick wins, celebrates best practice, and underscores that every organisation, whether a single person or a corporation of over 200 employees, can take action to reduce its footprint.



How to read the report

We have used the climate action route from the pledge to structure the report findings:

- A.** Office costs (notably gas and electricity)
- B.** Business travel
- C.** Staff commuting
- D.** Computing/data centres



And added 2 new routes of our own, identified by the tracker

- E.** Projects
- F.** Finance

The conclusions then draw on the four pillars of the MRS Climate Pledge:

- Tracking
- Reduction
- Transparency
- Collaboration





Who took part?

N=78

companies in total

We can get an indicative feel for variations around company size by employee numbers, but sample sizes are very low so need to use caution

Number and % of companies represented

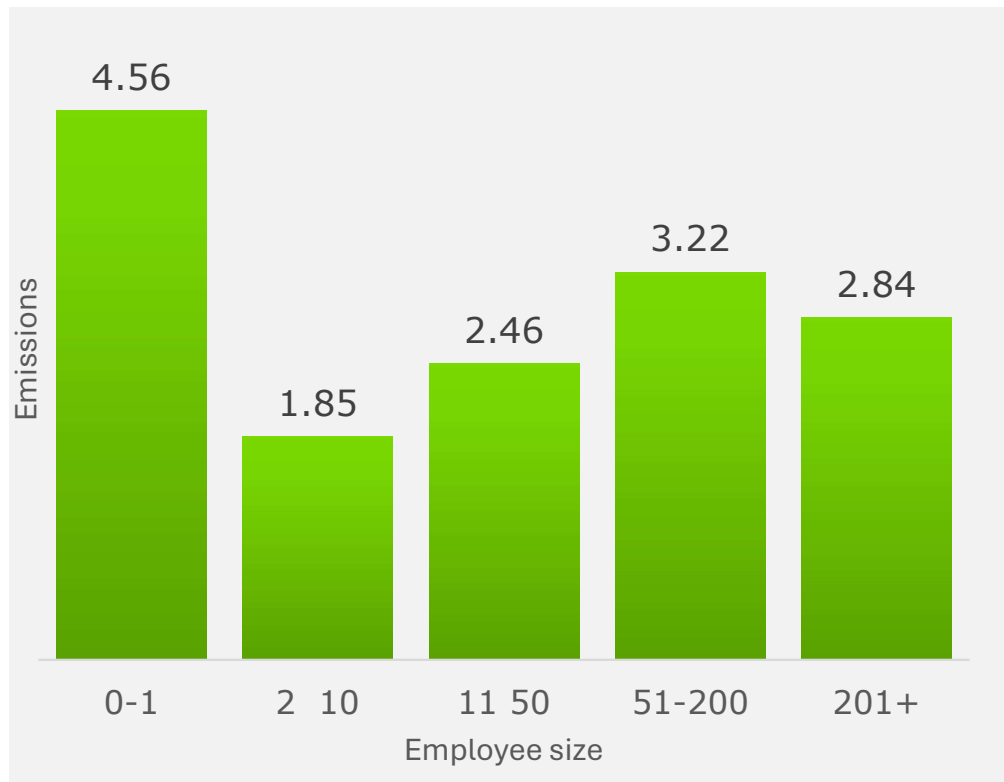
0-1	2-10	11-50	51-200	201+
2	16	32	21	7
3%	20%	41%	27%	9%

% of Company Partners represented

0-1	2-10	11-50	51-200	201+
1%	18%	44%	24%	13%

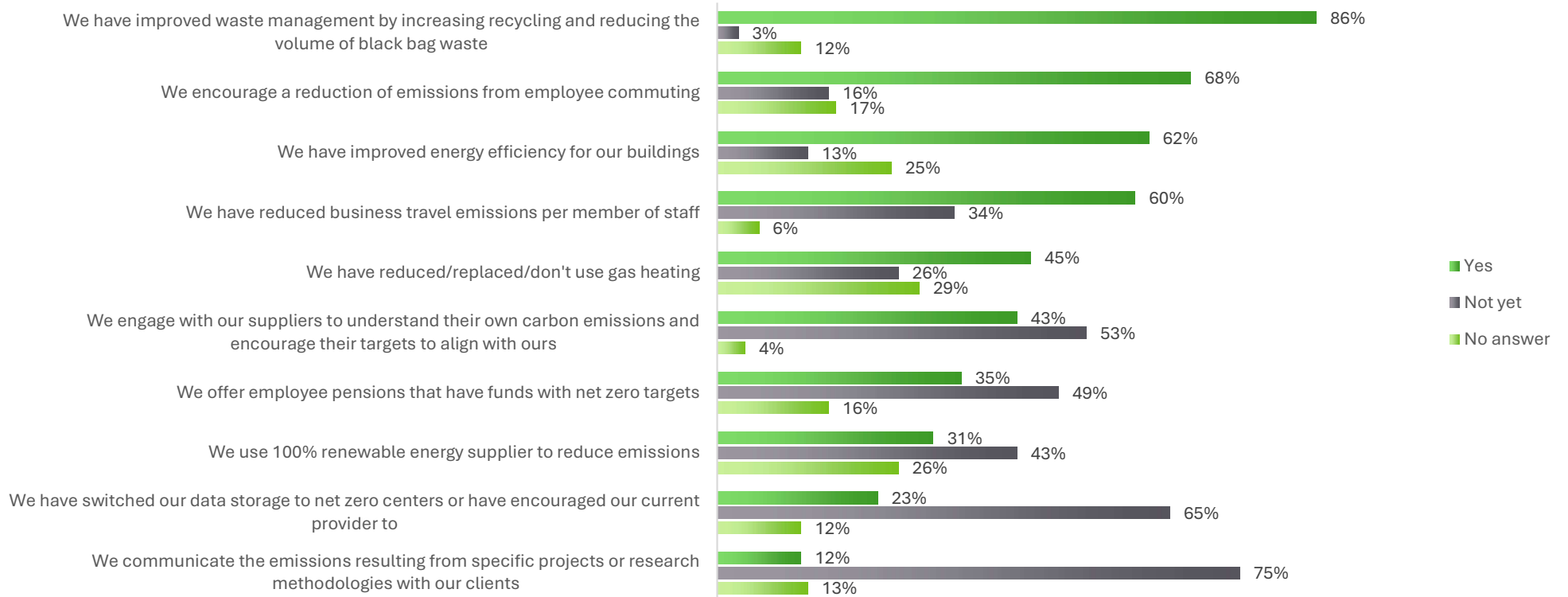
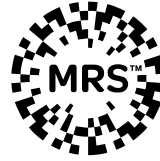


Emissions



- At a Total level, the average across all 68 giving a valid response, was 2.54 tonnes CO2 per FTE (median)
- This ranged from 0.02 (one of the 11-50 employee companies) to 14.06 (one of the 51-200 employee companies)
- This compares to a realistic ballpark for UK services firms of 0.5-5 so right in the middle which is an encouraging sign of likely accuracy
 - For reference, IPSOS reported 2.8 in 2024 and YouGov 4.0 in 2023 vs Mustard 8.66
- Excluding those with 0-1 employees, the results suggest emissions increase in line with employee numbers until, possibly, benefiting from economies of scale at the 201+ size

Actions being taken to reduce emissions





Quick wins like commuting and business travel show results but Scope 3 remains the biggest hurdle

Some actions appear to have more impact than others, with lower emissions reported for:

Commuting:

- Organisations that encourage commuting emission reduction report 2.91 tonnes CO₂ per FTE
- Compared to 3.89 tonnes for those not doing this

Business travel:

- Those reducing travel emissions report 2.41 tonnes CO₂ per FTE
- Compared to 3.84 tonnes for others

For all other action questions, the emissions are higher for the 'yes' group



Scope 3
is the challenge

Scope 1 & 2 emissions:
0.189 tonnes CO₂

Scope 3 emissions:
1.96 tonnes CO₂

Scope 3
accounts for the vast majority of
reported emissions



Let's explore what actions are being taken across the Climate Action Route

We'll break down the data by **six key areas** to understand where organisations are making progress and where challenges remain





A. Office Costs

85%

have improved waste management by increasing recycling and reducing the volume of black bag waste

All 7 of the 201+ group and all but one of the 21 51-200 group reporting they have done this



The easiest action to enable regardless of size

63%

have improved energy efficiency for our buildings

One quarter 'no answer' skewed to the smaller companies (0-50 employees)



Stronger for larger companies





A. Office Costs

46%

have reduced/replaced/don't use gas heating

Largest companies (201+ employees) 4/7 said 'no'.
Smaller companies (0-10 employees) more likely to give 'no answer'.



Stronger for larger companies

31%

use 100% renewable energy supplier to reduce emissions

Indicatively higher for the large (201+ employees) vs. the small (0-10 employees), with about a third in the 11-50 & 51-200 employee categories



Harder for smaller companies to action

“

We saw our total emissions fall from 437.2 to 294.96 tonnes of CO2 equivalent, with the biggest success coming from our Scope 2 emissions (electricity) declining by an impressive 95%. This reduction was driven by a strategic transition to renewable energy sources and embedding greater energy efficiency into our daily practices.

Yonder Consulting



B. Business Travel

60%

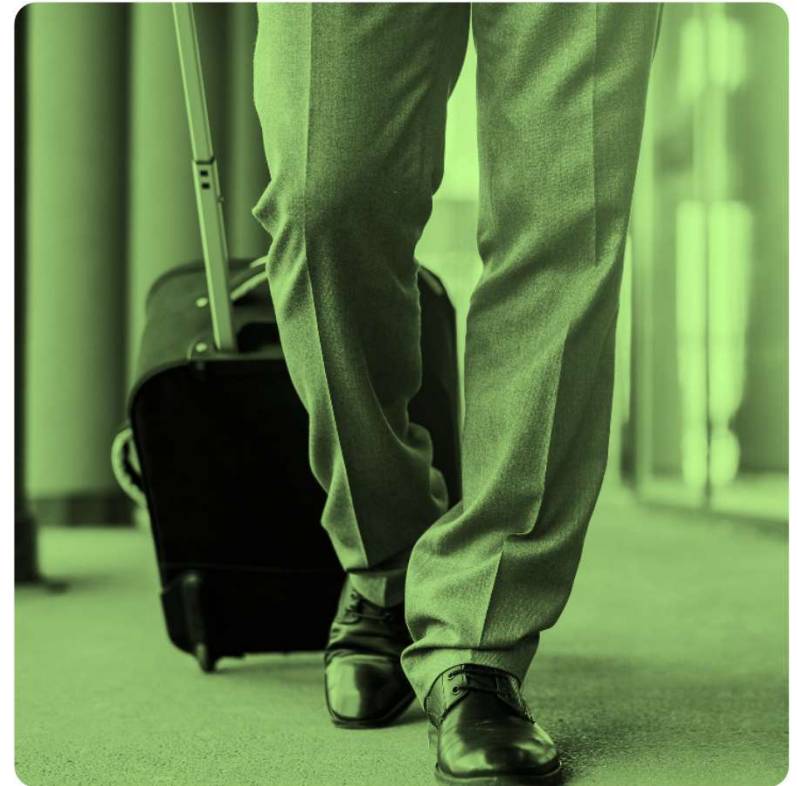
have reduced business travel emissions per member of staff

We found this across all company sizes though weakest for 11-50 and 51-200



A quick win for those that can

In 2024, flying accounted for 723 tCO₂e of our total emissions of 846 tCO₂e, and a reduction on the 956 tCO₂e we recorded from flying alone in 2023. We replaced big in-person events like company or global all-hands, with more regional, local events. We also put more stringent budgeting in place departmentally based on what we considered to be reasonable travel per team. We ensured that our remote meeting technology works, including investing in new pods for the office and better audio-visual equipment so we can connect seamlessly between offices and with distributed workers. We continue to encourage low carbon forms of transport including all team members going economy when we do fly. And lastly for the travel we do take, we offset via our plan with Reforest Action. **Tom Hollis, Zappi**





C. Commuting

67%

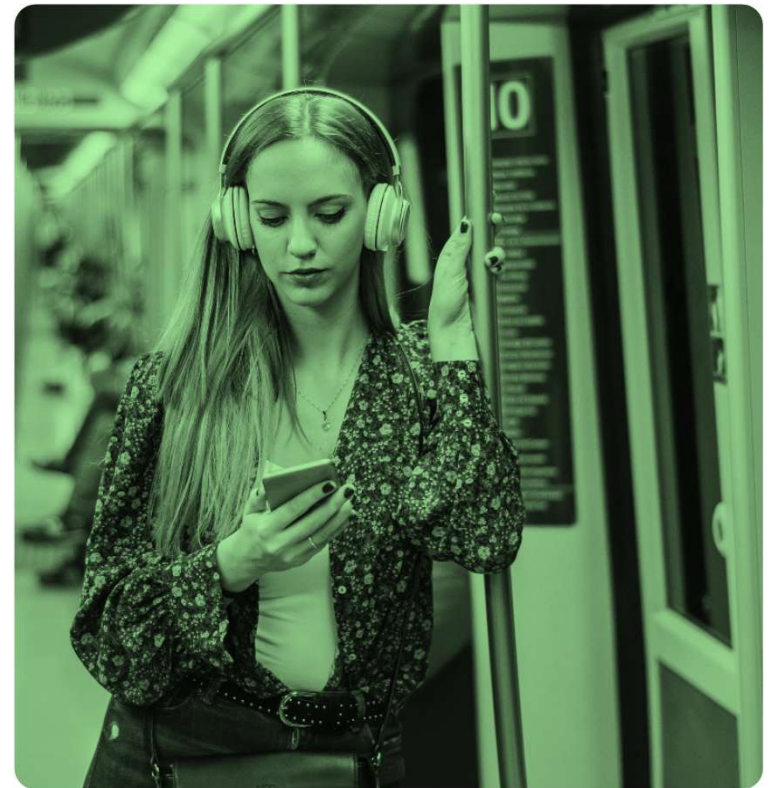
encourage a reduction of emissions from employee commuting

Slightly weaker for 2-10 employee group where 6/16 gave no answer

Evidence of action across all company sizes



Employee awareness and involvement in Corporate Social Responsibility, including environmental protection, is encouraged at all levels and is embedded in our quality systems. All of Savanta's staff undertake hybrid working, with no 'owned' desks in our office locations. Staff are provided with company-owned laptops and they have a budget for facilitating WFH. This has the effect of drastically reducing emissions associated with commuting. **Savanta**



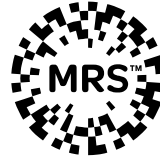
B & C. Business Travel and Commuting



With travel a key lever to reduce our own emissions, the switch to a travel provider able to provide detailed information and offer more responsible travel options at point of purchase was a no brainer and in tune with feedback from our Annual Employee Commuter Survey. While our move to new premises was an opportunity to invest in a low carbon fitout and the latest sustainability standards, that builds on our renewable energy foundation.

The MRS Climate Pledge framework emphasising tracking, transparency and collaboration has been super helpful in formalising our commitment and extending these standards through our Supplier Sustainability Code of Conduct, to ensure our entire value chain is aligned without ambition for people and planet.

Fiona Couper, Group Head of Sustainability & Risk, Watermelon Research



D. Data centres

24%

have switched data storage to net zero centres or have encouraged current provider to



Spread across all company sizes

We evaluated what data we needed to store where and when. We utilise Microsoft 365 services for live projects, but we identified archive and backup storage as candidates for more sustainable options. Many data centres are now striving to achieve better sustainability, and we had this as one of our criteria for choosing a supplier. We found a company that has a sustainability pledge and operates high-efficiency data centres using renewable energy sources.

Potentia Insight is committed to promoting sustainability. Concern for the environment and commitment to our impact on society are encompassed within our broader sustainability agenda. This is integral to our professional activities and management of the organisation. We aim to follow and to promote good sustainability practice, to reduce the environmental impacts of all our activities, and to be a responsible and ethical employer.

Madeleine Davies, Potentia Insight



E. Projects

12%

communicate the emissions resulting from specific projects or research methodologies with clients

Just 9 respondents claim to do this



Clear evidence of the need for the MRS measurement tool

43%

have improved energy efficiency for our buildings

One quarter 'no answer' skewed to the smaller companies (0-50 employees)



Over half are not doing this





F. Finance

36%

offer employee pensions that have funds with net zero targets

Spread across company size but indicatively highest for large organisations (51-200 and 201+)



As 1% for the Planet members and Climate Pledge signatories, we know that where we invest our pensions is one of the most significant areas of impact, not just now but in terms of longer-term strategic influence on climate change. We considered sustainability credentials in setting up our company pension and opted for Nest on this basis, considering which funds would be more climate-conscious. The Climate Pledge helps us to stay true to the commitments we made when we first set out on our sustainability journey and can nudge us to make better choices in the everyday actions of running our business - for example, favouring purchase of second-hand technology, or train travel over flights wherever possible. **Louise McLaren – We Are Love Brands**





Summary

- **Calculating emissions is hard**, and getting it right is even harder
- **Scope 3 is the challenge** (not just in our industry), so what, if anything, can we do to help here?
- **It's not just about large companies** doing things/being able to do things and leaving the smaller ones behind – plenty of action being reported by all those who have signed the pledge, regardless of size.
- **However, where 'power' is important** the larger companies may find it easier to make a difference (e.g. improved energy efficiency for the building, supplier engagement).
- **And there are definitely some quick wins** if not already being done – more recycling and reduction of emissions from commuting (but less impact going to result here as many already doing this).





1

Tracking



2.54 is our benchmark measurement

Although it looks credible, based on industry comparisons, we need to be aware of the difficulty some companies have had with their measurements this year and therefore the possibility of significant variation next year.

Using the median values for comparison should help minimise this and hopefully we will see mean and median converge as measurements become easier and more accurate

2

Reduction



Business travel and commuting action are reporting lower average emissions overall: an area where actions give results.

Waste management is an 'easy win'. Constant management and enhanced enabling likely to help further reduction.

With the knowledge of project footprint now an option, more environmentally friendly project design should help improve things.

Energy related areas are harder to address, particularly for smaller organisations where they are not in direct control of the energy used or building efficiency related issues.

3

Collaboration



Success depends on engaging stakeholders and learning from those already making changes

The new MRS project measurement tool should help shift the dial on the action that is currently done by the fewest members, i.e. communicating project emissions to clients - we hope to see this action improve in the next wave

4

Transparency



Placeholder for comment on comparison pledgee vs MRS company partner profiles?

Greater transparency will come from increased numbers signing up to the pledge and completing the tracker

