

UKAS and sustainability: our commitment, leadership and systemic impact

1. Introduction: our purpose

The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) is the UK's National Accreditation Body, appointed by government and operating in the public interest. Our fundamental purpose is to enable trust in products and services through the ability to rely on competent and impartial conformity assessment. The role comprises the determination of the competence, independence and impartiality of organisations providing certification, testing, inspection, validation, verification and similar conformity assessment services.

Our strategic principles, expressed through our purpose, vision and mission, include the commitment to “the development of strong partnerships with stakeholders and international counterparts” to “strengthen both the national and global quality infrastructure for the benefit of society and the environment.” This reflects our public interest mission and our commitment to supporting and enabling the demonstration of sustainability credentials. Our approach to being the UK’s National Accreditation Body includes a commitment to supporting and embodying sustainable practices, and one of our ongoing annual strategic priorities is “people and planet”.

This document outlines our deep commitment to sustainability. Therefore, we first detail our own corporate journey and leadership initiatives in embedding sustainability within our strategy, governance and operations. Secondly, we explain our critical role as a cornerstone of the UK’s Quality Infrastructure, providing the trust and confidence that enables government, industry, and society to achieve their collective sustainability and ESG (environmental, social and governance) ambitions.

2. The UKAS “theory of change” for sustainability

Our “theory of change” is founded on a simple but powerful premise: credible action requires credible assurance.

Without an independent, impartial, and technically competent system of assurance, sustainability claims remain unsubstantiated. This lack of trust inhibits investment, slows policy implementation, misleads consumers, and allows for greenwashing. Accreditation builds this verifiable foundation of trust. By ensuring the organisations that verify, test, and certify sustainability claims are themselves competent and impartial, UKAS accreditation transforms claims into credible information. This trusted information is the catalyst that unlocks genuine progress

Part 1: Our corporate sustainability commitment and leadership

At UKAS, we are committed not only to enabling sustainability across the UK economy but also to demonstrating leadership through our own actions.

A. Governance and strategic commitment

Our commitment to sustainability is driven from the highest level of the organisation.

- + **Strategic priority:** our UKAS Strategy, as referred to in our latest Annual Report, explicitly identifies “Supporting the UK’s transition to a net-zero economy and wider ESG

commitments" as a core strategic driver. This ensures sustainability is integrated into our long-term planning and decision-making.

- + **Accountability:** as detailed in our UKAS Annual Report 2025, our board and executive team oversee our sustainability performance. We operate under a Memorandum of Understanding with the UK Government, cementing our duty to act in the public interest.

B. Environmental stewardship in action

We are taking tangible steps to minimise our own environmental footprint:

- + **Net zero commitment:** UKAS is committed to achieving net zero emissions. Our carbon reduction plans detail our emissions baseline, progress and the environmental management measures we are implementing to achieve this target.
- + **Sustainable innovation in operations:** we have strategically embedded remote and hybrid auditing as a permanent feature of our service delivery. This innovation significantly reduces our business travel footprint and enhances operational efficiency, demonstrating a sustainable approach to our core business model.

C. Social responsibility

We are dedicated to our people and our community. Our Annual Report and strategy detail our work in fostering an inclusive culture, investing in employee development and wellbeing, and upholding the highest ethical standards through our strict Code of Conduct.

D. Demonstrating leadership: convening the sector for a sustainable future

Beyond our own operations, UKAS actively embraces its role as a leader and impartial convenor within the UK's quality infrastructure and the global assurance community. A 2025 collaboration between the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP) and UKAS focused on accelerating the transition to net zero within the conformity assessment sector. The report sets out a clear path forward, with key recommendations centred on collaboration. It calls for the collective development of a sector-wide climate action plan, the creation of specific guidance to address shared challenges, and the establishment of networks to share best practice. The next steps hinge on a collaborative effort between UKAS, government, sector bodies, and individual organisations to build capacity and accelerate progress together.

Part 2: Our systemic impact - enabling a credible sustainability ecosystem

Our own commitment provides the foundation for our wider systemic role. UKAS accreditation provides confidence and enables progress across every facet of the sustainability agenda.

A. Underpinning climate action and net zero

Our commitment to sustainability is driven from the highest level of the organisation.

- + **GHG emissions verification:** we accredit bodies against ISO/IEC 17029 and ISO 14065 for regulatory schemes like the UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS) and CORSIA, ensuring the integrity of carbon pricing.
- + **Carbon removals:** we underpin the integrity of the Woodland Carbon Code, providing trust for investors in nature-based solutions.
- + **Environment and energy management:** our accreditation of certification bodies to ISO 14001 and ISO 50001 provides confidence in organisational environmental and energy efficiency efforts.

B. Future proofing policy case study: building trust in sustainable finance and corporate reporting

- + **Informing UK policy:** as a key stakeholder in the UK Government's development of an oversight regime for sustainability assurance, we have advocated for a profession-agnostic market that leverages the expertise of the accredited sector. Our work with government and the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) aims to ensure the future UK assurance regime recognises international standards like ISO/IEC 17029, providing a robust pathway for specialist non-audit assurance providers.

C. Ensuring a credible circular economy and responsible supply chains

- + **Product claims:** we accredit bodies to verify product carbon footprints and Environmental Product Declarations, providing procurers with trusted, comparable data.
- + **Social and ethical audits:** accreditation provides confidence in the bodies that audit complex global supply chains for social compliance, including labour standards and human rights.

3. Conclusion

UKAS occupies a unique position as a leader, convenor and enabler in the sustainability ecosystem. We are progressing on our own corporate journey while providing the foundational layer of trust upon which the UK's green economy is being built.

We believe a credible, internationally recognised infrastructure, based on standards, conformity assessment and accreditation, is indispensable for achieving global sustainability goals. We therefore seek and establish partnerships with global, credible organisations within and outside the global quality infrastructure - to share our expertise, collaborate on developing robust international assurance frameworks, and help build a national, and global, market where sustainability commitments are met with credible and impactful action.

Annex: publicly available resources

1. *UKAS Annual Report and Accounts 2025* (includes strategic objectives and carbon reduction plan summary; see section Directors' Report): [741381 UKAS AnnualReport-website.pdf](#)
2. *ISEP report - [From ambition to action: a new roadmap for net zero in the independent assurance sector](#)*
3. *Environment, energy and sustainability sector accreditation - [Environmental Sector Accreditation | UKAS](#)*