

ESG guidance for contractors and suppliers

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1. INTRODUCTION – UNDERSTANDING ESG IN SCAFFOLDING AND ACCESS SECTOR

Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) refers to the three central factors used to measure the sustainability, ethical impact, and effective management of a business. For NASC members, including scaffolding contractors and access equipment suppliers, ESG represents a framework to manage risks, enhance operational efficiency, attract investment, improve workforce engagement, and win work in an increasingly competitive market.

In the context of the UK scaffolding and access sector, ESG helps companies align with regulatory expectations, improve long-term profitability, and demonstrate responsible business practices to clients, investors, and other stakeholders.

ESG is not simply a reporting requirement; it is a practical, strategic approach to modern business management.

2. SECTION A – ENVIRONMENTAL (E)

Environmental considerations involve how a business minimises its impact on the natural world.

For scaffolding and access companies, this can include resource usage, emissions, waste, and climate resilience.

Steps to Engage with the Environmental Pillar:

Carbon Footprint Measurement:

- Use tools like the Carbon Trust calculator or hire a consultant to calculate Scope 1 (direct), Scope 2 (energy), and Scope 3 (supply chain) emissions.
- Maintain a log of vehicle mileage, electricity and gas usage, and material deliveries.

Energy Efficiency:

- Conduct an energy audit with your utility provider or a certified energy auditor.
- Replace inefficient equipment with A-rated alternatives and use timers or smart plugs for lighting and heating control.

Sustainable Materials:

- Source scaffolding boards and tubes from FSC-certified or recycled suppliers.
- Ask suppliers for Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) and assess their environmental credentials during procurement.

Fleet and Logistics Optimisation:

- Use GPS tracking and telematics systems to optimise driver behaviour and routes.
- Create maintenance schedules for vehicles to reduce fuel inefficiencies.

Waste Reduction and Recycling:

- Label bins clearly on-site and in depots for separation of materials.
- Partner with waste management companies that offer recycling and landfill diversion services.

Environmental Certifications:

- Apply for ISO 14001 through UKAS-accredited bodies. Start by documenting an environmental policy and carrying out an initial environmental review.

Climate Risk Planning:

- Map your operational dependencies (e.g. transport access, supply chains) and consider flood or heat impacts.
- Develop a resilience plan covering supplier delays, extreme weather shutdowns, and on-site emergencies.

Commercial Benefits:

- Lower fuel and utility costs.
- Improved tender prospects with environmentally conscious clients.
- Enhanced company image and reduced regulatory risk.

3. SECTION B – SOCIAL (S)

Governance encompasses the systems, controls, and leadership that guide a business's decision-making and accountability.

*Steps to Engage with the Governance Pillar:***Health, Safety & Wellbeing:**

- Deliver regular toolbox talks and refresher training. Use incident data to inform topics.
- Appoint Mental Health First Aiders and promote open conversations around wellbeing.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI):

- Set measurable DEI targets, such as % of women or ethnic minorities in leadership roles.
- Use inclusive job adverts and offer flexible working where possible.

Community Engagement:

- Offer site visits or scaffold design demonstrations for schools or local groups.
- Partner with local charities or councils to support initiatives such as employment schemes or apprenticeships.

Training & Development:

- Create a training matrix and map each role to relevant CISRS or vocational qualifications.
- Develop progression plans and offer mentoring from senior operatives.

Labour Standards and Supply Chain Responsibility:

- Audit your supply chain to ensure compliance with ethical working conditions.

- Include modern slavery and fair labour clauses in contracts.

Employee Voice and Satisfaction:

- Use anonymous surveys via platforms like SurveyMonkey to collect feedback.
- Act on trends or concerns raised and report back to staff on changes made.

Commercial Benefits:

- Better staff retention and attraction.
- Stronger client and community relationships.
- Positive brand reputation and social licence to operate.

4. SECTION C – GOVERNANCE (G)

The social aspect of ESG refers to how a business manages relationships with employees, suppliers, clients, Governance encompasses the systems, controls, and leadership that guide a business's decision-making and accountability.

Steps to Engage with the Governance Pillar:

Leadership and Ethics:

- Draft a company code of ethics and ensure all staff receive training.
- Embed ethical decision-making into team briefings and appraisals.

Board and Management Structures:

- Create clear organisational charts.
- Assign ESG responsibility at director level.
- Encourage gender and skillset diversity in leadership recruitment.

Data Protection and Cybersecurity:

- Conduct a GDPR audit. Appoint a Data Protection Officer (DPO) or lead.
- Use encrypted communication, antivirus software, and cloud backup solutions.

Anti-Bribery and Corruption Measures:

- Publish an anti-bribery policy and conduct regular risk assessments.
- Introduce a whistleblowing hotline and make it known to staff and subcontractors.

Risk Management Frameworks:

- Use a risk register to record ESG-related risks and mitigation strategies.
- Review risk frameworks annually or after major incidents or changes.

Compliance and Reporting:

- Keep updated with NASC, HSE, and BEIS guidance. Assign a compliance calendar.
- Report ESG progress in board reports, client meetings, and annual reviews.

Stakeholder Engagement:

- Hold annual ESG stakeholder meetings or publish an impact report.
- Use websites and social media to transparently share initiatives and achievements.

Commercial Benefits:

- *Increased investor and client confidence.*
- *Better decision-making and operational resilience.*
- *Competitive edge in high-value procurement frameworks.*

5. IMPLEMENTING ESG IN PRACTICE

To integrate ESG effectively:

- Conduct an internal ESG audit using a checklist across E, S, and G areas.
- Appoint an ESG Lead or create a working group with cross-functional staff.
- Set measurable goals with deadlines (e.g. 10% emissions cut in 2 years).
- Engage with external specialists (e.g., ISO auditors, DEI consultants) as needed.
- Share ESG performance in tenders, annual reviews, and staff updates.
- Join NASC ESG webinars and forums to stay up to date with best practice.

NASC members are encouraged to use this guidance as a starting point for embedding ESG within their businesses. The benefits of proactive ESG engagement are clear: improved efficiency, risk management, commercial competitiveness, and long-term sustainability.

For further support, NASC will provide templates, case studies, and member webinars to support ongoing ESG development.

6. REFERENCES AND FURTHER GUIDANCE

Legislation

- Companies Act 2006.

Government Guidance

- Environmental reporting guidelines: including Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting requirements: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-reporting-guidelines-including-mandatory-greenhouse-gas-emissions-reporting-guidance>
- Future regulatory regime for Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) ratings providers: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-regulatory-regime-for-environmental-social-and-governance-esg-ratings-providers>

Standards

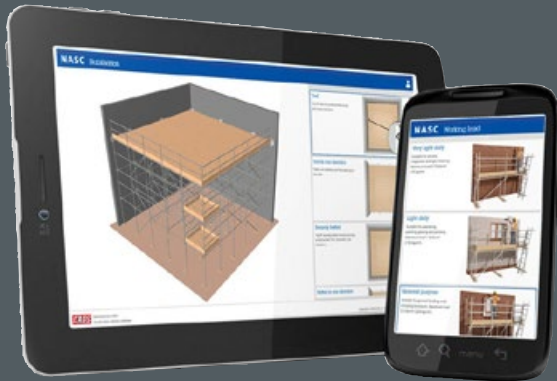
- ISO 14001 Environmental Management System.

NASC Guidance, including:

- SE1 Becoming Net Zero Carbon.

NOTE: NASC guidance is generally updated every five years so consult website for latest version.

Guidance that makes a difference



- Comprehensive industry guidance, recognised by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE)
- Targets all safety and commercial risks, ensuring your business remains safe and profitable
- Meticulously researched and written by experienced professionals, focused on improving the scaffolding industry
- Aimed at the busy general manager with user friendly, step-by-step advice
- Cutting edge technical guidance on best practice, including ePortal and compliance sheets, that could save you thousands of pounds
- Guidance used by the whole industry – but NASC members receive much of it free and the rest at a huge discount of up to 82%.

“Setting the Standard for Scaffolding”

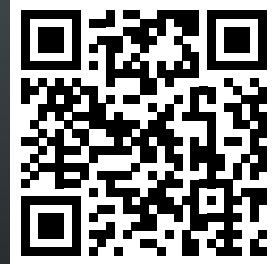


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