



ESG IMPACT REPORT

1 January 2023 - 31 December 2023

APEM Group

Photo: Bearded Tit by Jalal Khan

Contents

Introduction from our CEO
 Contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals
 Key 2023 ESG performance highlights
 Introduction to ESG

Environment

Net Zero
 Putting ourselves at the forefront of the renewable energy transition
 Our energy use
 Addressing our transport emissions
 Waste
 Protecting our life force: Water Management
 Biodiversity
 Environmental Stewardship
 Sustainability in the supply chain

3 **Corporate Governance**
 Engaging our stakeholders on ESG
4 Leadership and governance structure 2023
5 Governance
6 Risk management and compliance
 Grievances and whistleblowing
7 Anti-bribery and corruption
7 Digital ethics
10 Digital
 Cyber security
11 Technology innovations
14
16
18
20
23
24

25 **Social**
25 An engaged workforce
26 Belonging at APEM Group
27 Women in Science
27 Bringing out the best in our teams
27 Wellbeing at APEM Group
27 Giving back to our communities
28 APEM Group photo competition
28 Who we are
28

29
29
31
32
33
34
35
37
38

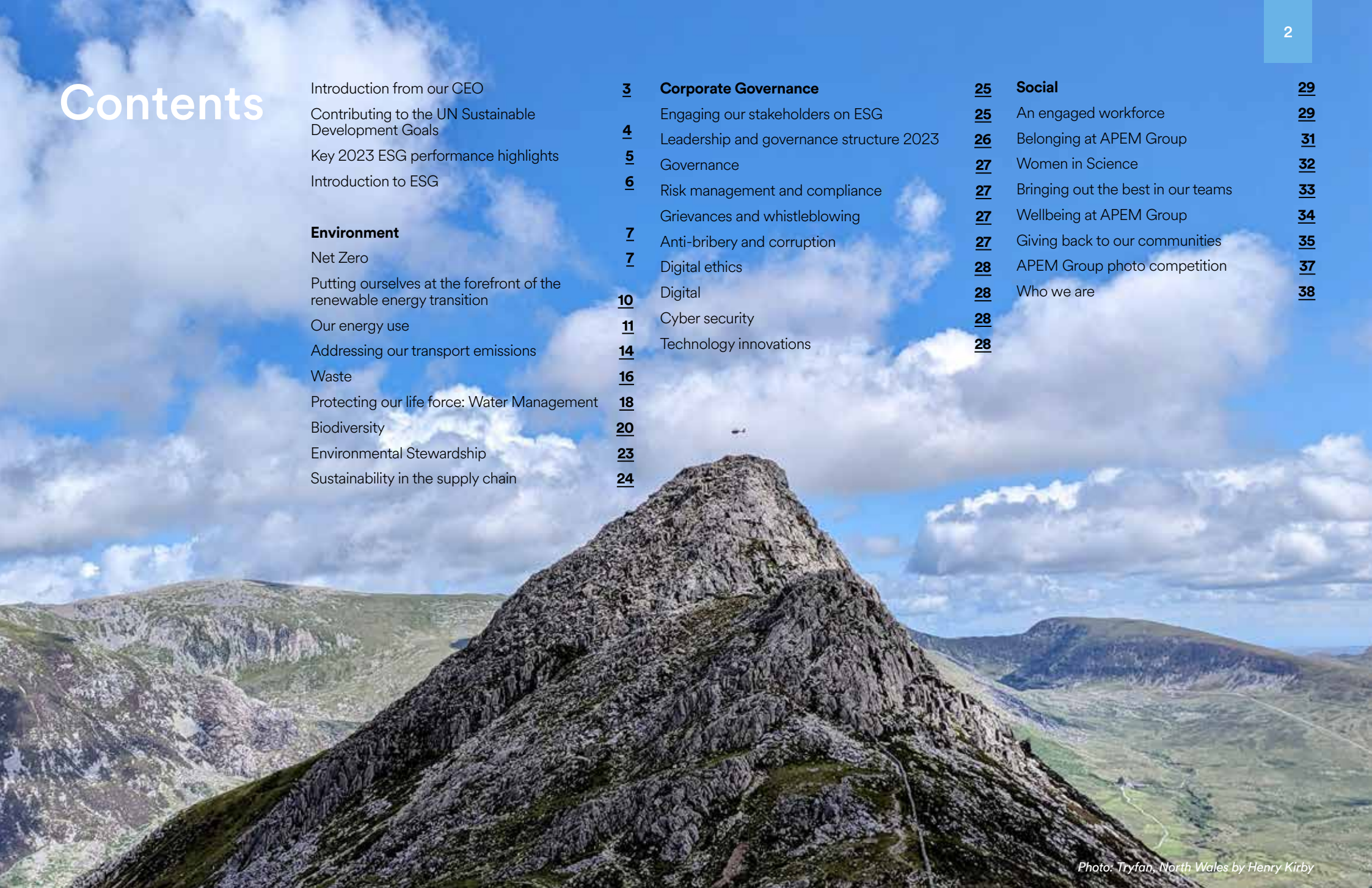


Photo: Tryfan, North Wales by Henry Kirby

Introduction from our CEO

Welcome to the APEM Group 2023 ESG Impact Report.

2023 was a year of growth and success for APEM Group. The work we do as a science and data-led environmental consultancy contributes to a positive future for all and the case studies in this report showcase our pioneering work over the past year. We have supported developers and regulators of renewable energy, provided progressive approaches to projects with the water industry and met and exceeded invasive species management and biodiversity protection goals.

We welcomed three new businesses: Macro Works, NASH Maritime and Aspect Ecology. Each brings diverse expertise and specialist knowledge, reinforcing our position at the forefront of solving the most pressing global environmental challenges through robust data, science and advice. In championing our work, we should also shine a light on our own environmental credentials.

At the core of our responsibilities lies our ESG approach. We're putting environmental considerations, sustainability and governance first in our day-to-day operations as well as in the work we do. Working collaboratively, our teams take time to learn and to develop innovative solutions. This enables them to deliver our values of technical excellence, thought leadership and scientific integrity.

APEM Group recently achieved Leading status for ESG, an uplift that recognises our work to develop and integrate a holistic approach to ESG throughout our operations. As well as making a commitment to minimise our own environmental impact, we are working with our clients towards a greener future, with successful projects that promote clean power, clean water and green infrastructure.

As we look back on our achievements in 2023, we are also building on our successes in 2024.

We're ready to tackle the world's ecological challenges, through our people delivering the best science, enabled by the best data, to the decision makers of the world. We're having meaningful conversations and championing net-positive projects with outcomes that advance sustainable development, drive world-scale environmental impact and contribute to global targets for conservation.

With the power to make waves and to challenge the status quo, we're ready to lead the way to a thriving shared natural environment.

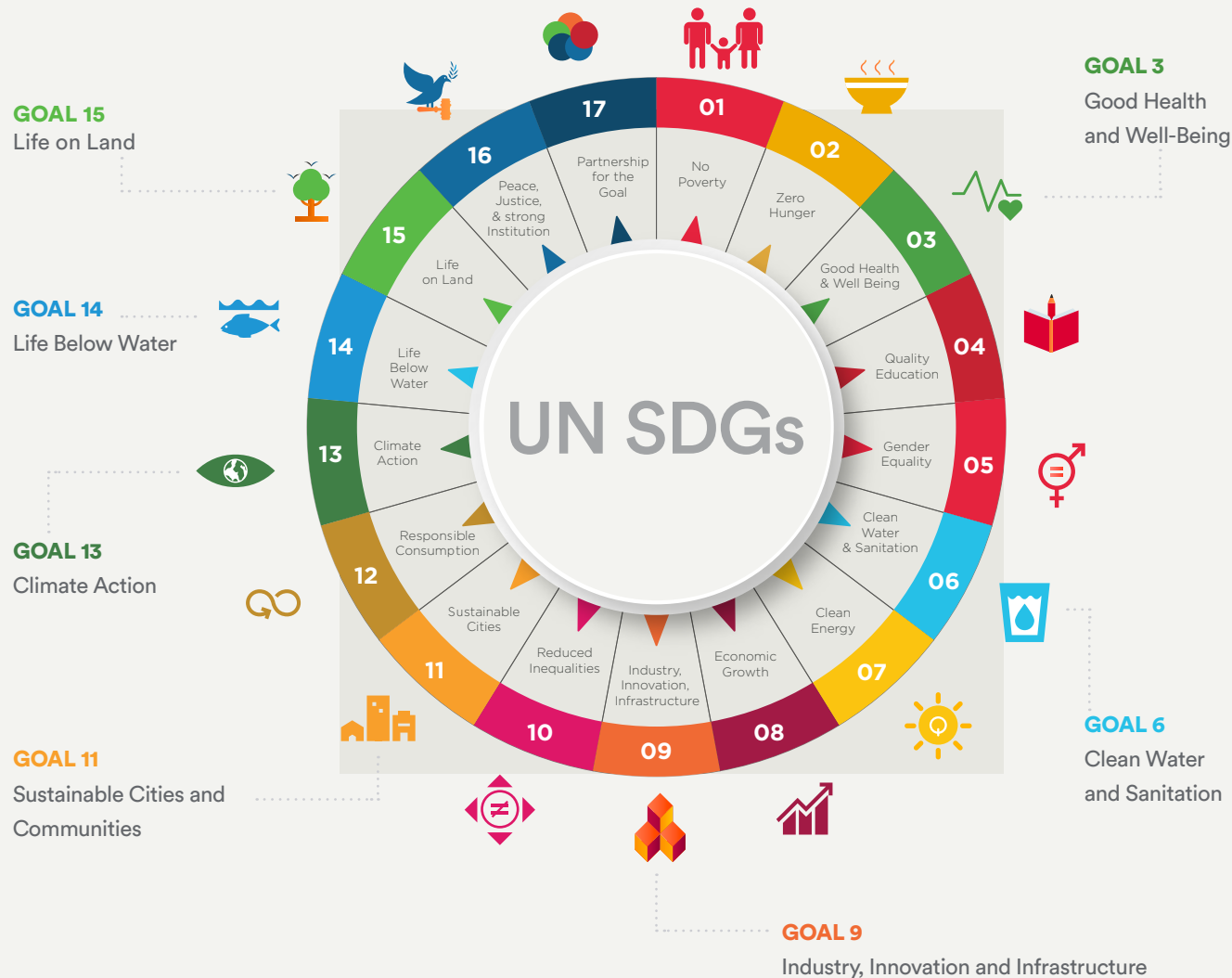


Leah McGimpsey
Chief Executive Officer

Photo: Holywell Bay, Cornwall by Tom Worrall

Contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Established in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outline a set of interlinked goals to tackle some of our biggest global issues - from reducing inequality and improving access to education, to tackling climate change. The goals provide a blueprint for nations, organisations and businesses to establish a more sustainable, peaceful and prosperous world for future generations. APEM Group align with the goals where we feel we are positioned to have the most impact. These include:



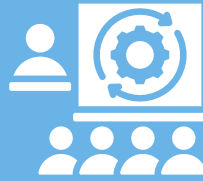
Key 2023 ESG performance highlights

94% of APEM Group staff said that they feel their manager genuinely cares about their wellbeing



Number of training hours delivered:

12,230



Reduced our gross emissions by **5%**



Group Board
55 / 45
male / female

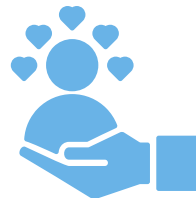


Total spend on training and development:

£817,857



Investment in wellbeing:
£318,750



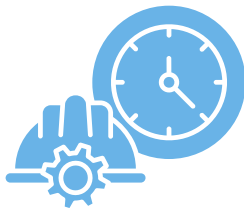
100 supporting documents
created for our policies and processes



Developed **45**
HSEQ standard operating procedures - approved by our IMS and Safety Group



117 hours
of driver training delivered



75 hours of external training delivered for mental health first aiders and

136 hours of internal training



Total number of vetted Group suppliers:
566



Paid Volunteer Leave introduced for all APEM Group staff



Introduction to ESG

Since 2020, APEM Group have partnered with Sustainable Advantage to undertake an annual assessment of our ESG practices across the business. This spans all material areas of our operations - from our approach to social value, to our carbon strategy, right down to our governing policies. From this, we have established key objectives year-on-year to ensure continuous improvement alongside our growing business and we're immensely proud of the scale of progress made, evidencing our leading approach to embed ESG into our strategy.

With a strong set of Environmental, Social and Governance values embedded within our strategy, we strive to make a tangible contribution to our shared environment, for the benefit of society and all of our stakeholders.

As an environmental consultancy, we already make a tangible improvement to global biodiversity, conservation and ecology. Taking our environmental responsibility seriously, we have continued to minimise our impacts, embedding sustainability criteria in our business operations. In 2023, we reviewed our facilities strategy and converted to renewable energy sources across the majority of our facilities. We set up a sustainable transport focus group to look at all business-related mileage, travel arrangements and engaged with our supply chain to identify carbon reduction targets. Additionally, we have retained our carbon-neutral status for our direct emissions impact (Scope 1 and 2), investing in carbon credits to offset our residual emissions. Led by our Environmental Committee,

we've also taken opportunities to consider our waste, energy and water practices to reduce consumption.

The sustainable growth of APEM Group offers increased potential to make a considerable social impact. We are proud that our team are so passionate about environmental and ecological causes and consolidated financial and volunteering support will make a considerable impact to good causes across the world. In 2023, we launched our volunteering scheme, with our teams giving just under 600 hours of volunteering time to community and not for profit organisations. APEM Group also matched funding for 16 separate staff fundraising projects in 2023.

We're making sure that good intentions are turned into impact, through management systems and data that measures progress and improvement. We take our responsibilities seriously, which is reflected in our extensive policies and processes. These standards are maintained through third-party audit, including ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certifications and ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation. A culture of continuous improvement and accountability runs through APEM Group, as we hold ourselves to the highest standards.



Kirsty Strannigan
Health, Safety, Environment, Quality and Sustainability Director, APEM Group

Photo: Loch Ossain, Scotland by Neil Pollington

Net Zero

Transitioning to a Net Zero world remains one of the greatest challenges facing modern society, requiring a complete overhaul of current models and systems. Despite growing concerns from investors, regulators and national bodies worldwide, global emissions are expected to have increased by 1.1% in 2023, underlining the urgent need to reaffirm efforts to stay on track to hit Net Zero targets. APEM Group are proud to join the growing coalition of businesses taking meaningful action to decarbonise and in 2023, we launched our Net Zero plan, setting a Net Zero target date of 2045.

In early 2024, we re-calculated our carbon impact across the full scope of Group business operations for our 2023 financial year. From the direct emissions produced by our fleet (Scope 1) and electricity usage (Scope 2) to our wider activities such as business travel, employee commuting, supplier activity and waste (Scope 3), emissions were assessed by gathering primary data across our sites. Our emissions targets are aligned with the SBTI (Science Based Targets Initiative), which defines and promotes best practice in science-based target setting, with a clearly-defined path to reduce emissions in line with the Paris Agreement goals.

This year, we were pleased to see steady progress towards lowering our overall gross emissions (market

based), with a reduction of 5%. In 2023, we continued to refine our data collection, which led to significant reductions in some areas, such as waste, where we had previously overestimated our consumption, meanwhile, we have seen increases in areas where we had missing or lower quality data, such as our natural gas usage. In 2024, quality, accurate data collection will be a key priority for the Group as we continue to enhance reporting and better assess the impact of our reduction initiatives.

Notably, across the Group we saw a positive uptake in renewable electricity, which helped to lower our emissions by 124 tonnes of CO₂e. Additionally, we reduced our indirect fuel and energy related activities by 11% - around 23 tCO₂e. Our biggest emissions category remains our purchased goods and services - comprising half of our overall emissions. To address this, in 2024, we will be continuing to engage with our suppliers on sustainability issues, including offering them a place on a free workshop to assist them with their own ESG journeys, as well as sending out carbon surveys to understand their direct emissions. Our second largest emissions area is business travel, which is predominantly due to assigning our company car club mileage to our Scope 1 transport emissions in previous years. This has now been rectified and we have moved to a central booking system to capture a comprehensive picture of our business travel impact.

Photo: Bala Woodland, Wales by Chloe Winterbottom

- Scope 1: Gas 0.4%
- Scope 1: Transport 2.1%
- Scope 1: Refrigerants 0%
- Scope 2: Electricity 2.6%
- Scope 3 Cat 1: Purchased goods and services 50.2%
- Scope 3 Cat 2: Capital Goods 13.4%
- Scope 3 Cat 3: Fuel & energy related activities 6.4%
- Scope 3 Cat 4: Upstream Transport 0.6%
- Scope 3 Cat 5: Waste 0.1%
- Scope 3 Cat 6: Business Travel 16.7%
- Scope 3 Cat 7: Employee Commuting 3.2%
- Scope 3 Cat 7: Working from home 5.9%

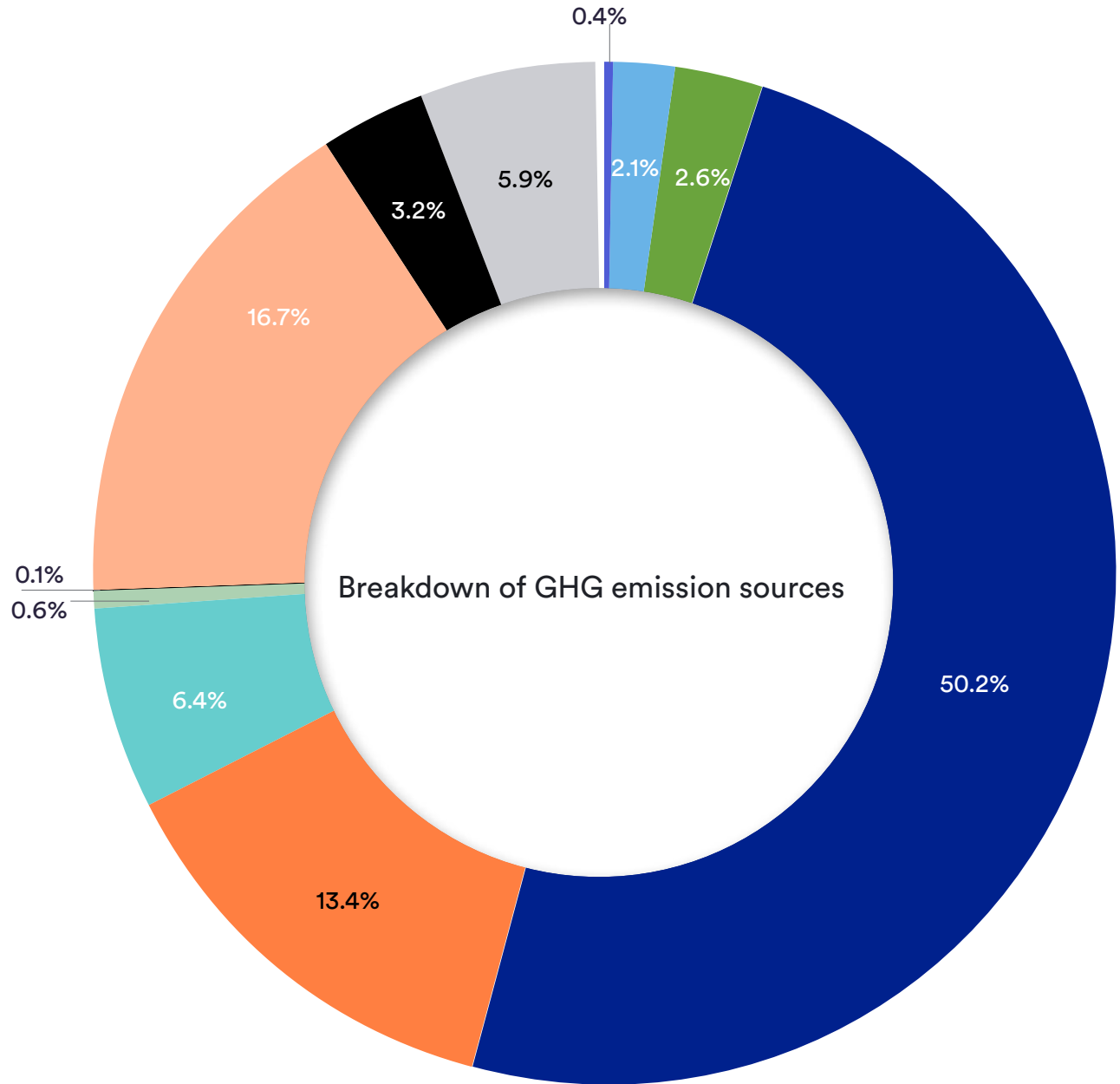


Table 1: APEM Group carbon emissions

Scope / Category	Description	Total 2022 tCO ₂ e	Total 2023 tCO ₂ e	2023 GHG Footprint % make up	% Change between 2022-2023
SCOPE 1					
Stationary combustion (Gas)	Gas consumed	0.05	12.4	0.4	24,760
Transportation	Owned and leased APEM Group vehicles	221.9	63	2.1	-71.6
Refrigerants	Arising from heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems	0	0	0	0
SCOPE 2					
Electricity (Location based) ¹	Purchased electricity, for own use (grid average)	96.9	109.3	N/A	12.8
Electricity (Market based) ²	Purchased electricity, for own use (specific contract)	55.2	77.9	2.6	41.1
SCOPE 3					
Category 1: Purchased goods and services	Goods and services	1,571.8	1,506.9	50.2	-4.1
Category 2: Capital goods	CapEx expenditure	750.5	402.7	13.4	-46.3
Category 3: Fuel and energy related activities	WTT ³ & T&D losses ⁴ from electricity, stationary combustion of fuels and transport	215.5	192.2	6.4	-10.8
Category 4: Upstream transportation	Transport between tier 1 suppliers or paid transport for goods (upstream & downstream) WTW ⁵	17.3	18.7	0.6	8.1
Category 5: Waste generated in operations	Waste	7.1	1.7	0.1	-75.5
Category 6: Business travel	Including business travel not in fleet vehicles, public transport, air travel and accommodation needed for field work and business purposes	86.3	500.3	16.7	479.7
Category 7: Employee commuting	Employees commuting to and back from work	88.4	94.8	3.2	7.2
Category 7: Employee homeworking	Employees working from home	147.1	176.9	5.9	20.3
Total Gross Emissions (Location based)		3,202.8	3,078.8	100%	-3.9
Less emissions avoided by procurement of renewable electricity		(41.8)	(77.9)		
Total Gross Emissions (Market based)		3,161	3,000.9		-5.06
Less carbon offsets		(280)	(107)		
Total Net Emissions		2,881	2,893.9		0.45

¹ Location based represents emissions from electricity consumption based on grid average emissions² Market based represents emissions from electricity consumption based on specific energy contracts³ WTT - Well-to-tank emissions. Emissions associated with the extraction, refinement and transport of fuels before consumption⁴ T&D losses – Transmission and distribution losses. Emissions associated with the energy lost during the transmission of electricity through the network⁵ WTW – Well-to-wheel emissions. Includes emissions associated with the extraction, refinement, transport and consumption of fuels

Spotlight on:**Alistair Davison
Managing Director,
Marine Science & Development**

Through 25 years of working in the marine environmental space, Alistair's focus is on bringing together teams, technology, science and data to maximise positive gains for the environment.

With successful and enduring projects in the UK, Europe and Ireland, offshore wind has made huge strides in decarbonising the electricity industry. Keeping APEM Group at the cutting edge of the market, Alistair is leading teams into new territories and considering new forms of renewable energy, from floating solar between wind farms to wave and tidal developments for island nations.

Putting ourselves at the forefront of the renewable energy transition

Introduction

We are proud to be at the forefront of the renewable energy transition, supporting clients across the globe to deliver robust data and guidance to support environmental government policies and renewable energy development. From biodiversity studies and best practice environmental surveys to aerial and sediment profile imagery, our expert team and technology supports clients across all stages of a renewable project lifecycle. In recent years, our work has increasingly realised the opportunity offered by offshore wind to go beyond mitigation to making biodiversity net gains, as we work sensitively to restore and rehabilitate marine biodiversity.

Environmental Impact Assessments ensure sustainable development. Our EIA teams offer strategic advice and insights, delivering Environmental Statements and

Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, including project management and the preparation of technical assessments, as well as mitigation design and monitoring specification.

We support assessing development risk associated with the EIA and consenting processes, providing site specific and strategic advice to developers on legislative requirements and the associated implications for the development process. Working on multi-disciplinary projects, APEM Group technical experts deliver EIA for the renewable energy sector across a range of specialisms including benthic ecology, terrestrial ecology, fish and shellfish ecology, marine mammals, underwater noise, ornithology, commercial fisheries, water quality, physical processes and a range of other social and economic uses of the environment.

Alistair Davison
Managing Director, Marine Science & Development

“Offshore wind as a success story is showing the possibilities for renewable energy and many countries are looking at ways to deliver it. The United Nations Sustainable Delivery Goals have been a force for change, with new countries committing to Net Zero and changing policy to get there. We're delivering projects that are inspiring and exciting, pushing into new territories and new technologies. There's an opportunity for environmental consultancy to contribute to policy, with articulate and well thought out positions. APEM Group have been a part of offshore wind since the beginning and we continue to bring innovative ideas and new viewpoints to the industry.”

Our energy use

Within our own operations, APEM Group also remain committed to reducing our direct energy emissions impact. This means limiting our energy consumption and looking to transition to low-carbon energy sources wherever feasible.

For the sites where APEM Group is directly responsible for securing energy contracts, we procure 100% renewable electricity. The majority of our sites are landlord owned, which impacts the level of influence we have. However, in 2023, we engaged with our landlords to better understand the sources of energy across our operations and request renewable energy tariffs. Additionally, when sourcing new premises, we now request all landlords procure renewable energy contracts.

Accurate energy consumption data is imperative to establish emissions and set targets for reduction. In 2023, we were pleased to make notable enhancements to our energy reporting. All energy consumption available is now collated via a central database and where not available, we have used office desk numbers as a definable metric to provide an estimated consumption figure.

In 2023, we increased our renewable electricity procurement by 36 tCO₂e - a notable increase from the previous year. We strive to increase this mix further next year through ongoing engagement with building managers to secure renewable contracts. Due to our enhanced data reporting, we were also able to include our gas emissions within our Scope 1 emissions, which will allow us to better assess the impact and reduce our gas emissions going forward.

To further enhance the quality and sustainability of our offices, two APEM Group premises are being relocated to safer, more energy efficient sites and we have planned multiple further refurbishments. Energy audits also formed a part of our ESOS (Energy Saving Opportunities Scheme) preparation, which was completed in late 2023, which will provide us with further recommendations for energy efficiency opportunities

This year, our Environmental Committee has also continued to look at ways to reduce consumption across sites. This included liaising with landlords to introduce improvement initiatives such as LED lighting, motion sensors and insulation. To enhance oversight of consumption across the Group, we will also be providing quarterly usage charts across each office.

Our energy consumption has increased for several reasons, including the fact that a whole year of data has been added for the entities that joined during 2022.

Table showing the increase in our use of renewable energy sources from 19% to 62% in 2023.

Energy supply	2022 kWh	2022 tCO ₂ e	2023 Kwh	2023 tCO ₂ e
Natural Gas	-	0.05	67,903	12.4
Biogas	-	-	19,580	0.004
Electricity (Brown)	405,453	78.4	151,546	31.38
Electricity (Renewable)	95,697	(18.5)	376,228	(77.9)
Total	501,150	96.9	615,257	121.684



Photo: iStock

Isle of Man wind farm

Working with developing legislation

Mooir Vannin offshore windfarm is a pioneering project for the Isle of Man. The Manx government has not previously dealt with consenting an offshore wind project in its own territorial waters and secondary provisions enabling the planning framework to progress have not yet been enacted. This unique situation offered GoBe the opportunity to bring decades of global experience directly to Ørsted and the Manx government, taking in their requirements and making the development unique to the Island's planning system and natural environment.

Despite the lack of specific guidance on how to undertake EIA in the Isle of Man, Mooir Vannin is voluntarily applying the highest assessment standards to make sure potential environmental impacts are considered. With no formal statutory consultation requirements yet enshrined in legislation, Mooir Vannin is actively engaging with the local community and Government and has taken the decision to publish an Environmental Impact Assessment Progress Report in summer 2024, enabling the gathering of opinion from statutory and non-statutory stakeholders and the public. Although a formal consultation may not ultimately be required, the high-quality information gathered will be crucial to planning for mitigation and design as part of the final application.

Potential energy generated will meet the Isle of Man's ambitious energy targets

This is an opportunity for the Isle of Man to realise its ambitious renewable energy, Net Zero and economic growth targets. Power generated by the project could be sold to neighbouring countries, while lease fees will also bring further financial benefit to the island.

“The Isle of Man has the potential to be “a pioneer for other Island nations – demonstrating how to develop and accommodate large scale renewable projects above and beyond local needs, export to neighbouring nations and help make a sizeable contribution to global carbon emissions reduction.”

– John Galloway, Ørsted Development Director for the Isle of Man Offshore Wind Farm

Proportionate approach to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

One key aspect of the ongoing EIA is the proportionate approach. Adapted in this case to an unfolding regulatory position, the process identified issues that are most important to stakeholders (including statutory and non-statutory consultees and members of the public), drawing upon baseline data and professional experience from the project team - including EIA professionals from GoBe and its teams of specialists.

Source: <https://orsted.im/mooirvannin>

A three-stage 'Commit, Consult, Design' ethos was applied to planning, with the identified impacts integrated into development, driving design and minimising adverse environmental effects.

Commit: A Commitments Register is set up with commitments to mitigate LSE (by reducing or eliminating them)

Consult: Wide consultation on the project parameters and associated commitments to reduce or avoid LSE

Design: The earliest stages of the design process relating to route planning and site selection will incorporate a number of commitments to avoid or reduce LSE

A proportionate approach aims to avoid or reduce impacts with an early commitment to avoid the most sensitive, important or valuable features.

Stakeholder engagement

The project has offered the unique possibility for GoBe and Ørsted to speak directly to the Isle of Man government and its advisors, to make sure the Island's rich and varied environment is appropriately assessed. With input from NGOs including Manx Wildlife Trust, Manx Whale and Dolphin Watch, Manx Bird Life and Bangor University, the assessment will be built on robust data about the local environment and takes into account local knowledge.

For an island population, stakeholder engagement and communication are key. Establishing a physical presence with

an office on the Isle of Man was important to the project team. As well as providing visibility, Ørsted has committed to the community through consultation.

Communication and openness have been fundamental to the success of the project. The GoBe team have demonstrated flexibility, adaptability and honesty, with willingness to challenge as well as contribute. With regular in-person engagement with stakeholders on the Isle of Man, GoBe have maintained insight into the project as it develops.



Photo: orsted.im mooirvannin

Helping the Isle of Man meet its ambitious targets for renewable energy, Net Zero and economic growth

GoBe are supporting Ørsted in its consent application for the Isle of Man's first offshore wind farm, Mooir Vannin. This development will help the Isle of Man meet their ambitious targets for renewable energy, Net Zero and economic growth.

- Working within the planning and legislative regime in the Isle of Man, the project team will be working in an emerging and evolving planning framework under MIMA 2016
- With a predicted output in the region of 1.4GW, Mooir Vannin will enable the Isle of Man to meet its own renewable energy needs and become an energy exporter
- Proportionate approach applied: a progressive method that enables a more efficient decision-making process by balancing the need to evaluate all available information with focussing attention on the pathways most likely to result in significant effects
- Proactive and thorough engagement with stakeholders to develop a robust application

Addressing our transport emissions

Our Transport Fuel Usage for APEM Vehicles and Equipment (Part of our Scope 1 Emissions)

Vehicle Type	tCO ₂ e
Car/Van (diesel)	58.3
Electric Vehicles	0
Generator for fishing	0.09
Boat	4.6
Total	63

Employee Commuting Overview (part of our Scope 3 Emissions)

Vehicle Type	Petrol	Diesel	Hybrid	EV	Cycle	Bus	Rail	Motorbike
Mileage	170,083	104,735	1,977.71	1,755	7,697	2,328	13,836	604
tCO ₂ e	44.87	28.63	0.38	0.14	-	0.28	0.51	0.11
Total tCO₂e per year = 74.91								

Producing around a fifth of emissions, road transport poses a significant challenge to the UK's Net Zero target. Decarbonising our roads will require almost every car and van to be zero-emission by 2030, while Ireland's Climate Action Bill will ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030. Achieving this will take significant resource and investment from businesses to aid the transition. APEM Group understand our collective obligation to reduce our transport emissions and in 2023, we have continued to monitor and address our impact.

A new level of rigour in our data capture has allowed us to understand our transport data on a more granular level – right down to the emissions produced by the generators we use for fishing. During our retrospective review for 2023, we discovered we had been over-calculating our direct transport emissions. This is why our transport Scope 1 year-on-year figures indicate a large reduction, but after normalisation we are still seeing a good reduction in our emissions.

We also undertook an assessment of our employee commuting practices to better understand their emissions impact to and from the workplace. While we have limited control over our employee's preferred mode of transport, we aim to do all we can to encourage sustainable commuting practices. We share communications promoting sustainable travel and all staff have access to our Cycle-to-Work scheme. In 2024, we will continue to explore introducing further incentives, such as the financial viability of an EV lease scheme for employees.

Business mileage

To deliver our services requires our employees to undertake travel to client locations, both locally and globally. At the end of 2023, we established a Sustainable Transport Committee, with a remit to review business travel practices. Collating more detailed data has allowed us to better understand vehicle journeys and identify sites with a high number of shorter journeys, where potentially EVs could be used. A series of travel recommendations are to be presented at Board level for advancing in 2024. Again, EV infrastructure remains the biggest challenge, as well as a shortage of 4X4 hybrid and EV options. To reduce business mileage within our current model, APEM Group undertake detailed operational planning of field work to establish opportunities for car-sharing, as well as appointing local staff to local jobs.



APEM Group staff Ellie & Grace surveying at Top Hill reservoir using one of APEM's electric motors.



Ensuring the safety of our drivers on the road

All staff whose role requires them to drive undertake driver awareness training, as well as have access to safe driving procedures. Our Group Travel Hub has a dedicated page for safe driving at work, which covers driving procedure, risk assessments, guidance for driving in other countries and a driver assurance register. Additionally, we undertake regular servicing to ensure that work travel emissions are regulated.

Business Travel Overview for 2023

Transport	
Vehicle Type	Mileage Travelled
Car Hires (e.g. for use by our many home based staff who cannot easily access fleet vehicles)	519,513.50
Personal Car (Grey Fleet)	152,859.86
Bus	625.00
Taxi	11865.49
Aeroplane (Domestic)	248,910.40
Aeroplane (Short haul)	29,420.80
Aeroplane (Long haul)	450,940.80
Accommodation	
Number of overnights away for field work and business travel	3653.50
Total tons CO₂e for travel and accommodation combined.	500.26

All APEM Group staff who drive for work, whether to complete field surveys or to a project meeting, have to complete two compulsory driving training modules – one on safety and a second on driving economically.

In 2023 APEM Group completed:

485

Driver Assurance Checks



Waste

While not a significant part of our operations, APEM Group remains steadfast in our commitment to the principles of the waste hierarchy - prevent, reduce, re-use and recycle. Additionally, we have persevered in our ambition to enhance our overall waste reporting and obtain more accurate waste data across the Group. Improved waste data collection, including applying a more accurate intensity ratio to reflect our flexible working approach, has provided us with greater clarity on our overall output.

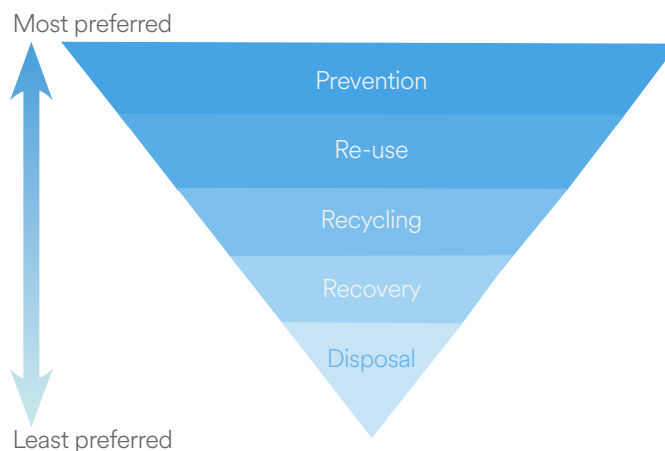
For the APEM Group office sites where we are wholly responsible for the waste we produce, we use a zero-to-landfill waste broker who oversees our recycling and general waste management. At these sites, waste is weighed every time it is collected and the broker provides us with accurate waste reporting, allowing us greater oversight of our waste streams.

For the sites where our landlords manage the collection and disposal of all waste, we have proactively engaged with them to segregate our waste streams appropriately and responsibly. We collate waste data where it is available from the landlords. As a result, we have already retrieved detailed waste data for 40% of our UK sites. To better quantify our waste, the environmental representatives at our Sligo Office also spent a month weighing our waste manually to get a better understanding of our waste streams and total production. At any sites where we are unable to retrieve waste data currently, we apply a relevant business metric (office desk numbers) to estimate total waste production.

Recycling stations are in place across all of our sites and we are particularly proud of our efforts to recycle our electrical waste, using a specialist recycling company for IT equipment at our UK sites. In the UK, we also arrange WEEE waste collections for old phones and computers using licensed waste contractors. At our Ireland sites, all waste is disposed of through zero-waste-to-landfill collectors and sites follow similar procedures to dispose of electrical components responsibly. In 2024, we will be standardising our electrical waste procedure across the Group.

Over the next year, we are committed to continuing to build oversight of our waste streams and contribution to establish an informed and effective waste programme and set meaningful reduction targets.

Waste Hierarchy Pyramid²



² Adapted from DEFRA 2011



Photo: iStock

Zero-waste campaign

When it comes to waste reduction, small habit changes can make a significant impact. In 2023, we launched an internal zero-waste campaign, giving out prizes to employees throughout the week for their innovative waste reduction ideas.

The campaign centred around key waste areas where employees can make an impact, such as office waste, waste generated while out in the field, waste whilst shopping, as well as food waste in kitchens and canteens. In addition to sharing ideas and initiatives, we encouraged employees to come up with their own – from mending their own clothes, to reusing food containers. Our winning ‘waste heroes’ were awarded with vouchers to spend on their chosen sustainable activity.

APEM Group’s waste overview 2023

	2023 total	unit	tCO ₂ e
Waste to landfill	2,251	kg	1.17
Waste to energy	4,020	kg	0.09
Recycled	5,658	kg	21.28
Waste water	1,821	m ³	0.37

2022 waste total (kgs)	2023 waste total (kgs)	% reduction
30,430	13,750	-54.8

Small changes, big impact

Some of our offices across APEM Group have put in place waste reduction initiatives, including:

- Collection of batteries for delivery to recycling centres
- Using stationery that is 100% post-consumer recycled
- Separating and recycling cans and bottles
- Saving paper for printing or converting into scribble pads
- Saving envelopes for re-use
- Donating old or unsuitable furniture to charity
- Saving food and kitchen waste for composting



Our winning ‘waste heroes’ were awarded with vouchers to spend on their sustainable activity.

Photo: iStock



Spotlight on:

Darroch Baker Managing Director, Water and Land Environmental Services



Darroch joined APEM Group in 2022, with previous operational leadership roles in infrastructure, water resources and carbon strategy.

Environmental considerations are at the heart of APEM Group. With data and science at the centre of the decision-making process, Darroch ensures teams within the Group form a cohesive and coordinated response across all sectors, championing net-positive solutions with real impact. Darroch oversees diverse teams of specialists, delivering innovative and ambitious projects for water, infrastructure, renewables and construction. Darroch supports a multi-agency approach to water quality, water security and water infrastructure, with dialogue and coordination with regulators, government, local authorities, water companies, businesses, agriculture and consumers.

Protecting our life force: Water Management

Introduction

Healthy freshwater systems are essential for the survival of life on our planet. Humans rely on clean water for drinking, growing crops, manufacturing, energy and transport. The species that live in freshwater environments depend on and affect, water quality, as they form a network of symbiotic and predatory relationships, while improving and maintaining their surroundings. Preserving and maintaining the fragile balance and biodiversity of aquatic ecosystems is crucial to ensuring a thriving shared natural environment for all.

Clean water and sanitation comprise a large part of our work, helping water bodies and companies implement the Water Framework Directive (WFD) - the EU standard set out to achieve good status in all bodies of surface and groundwater by 2027. And our projects are delivering improved water quality standards through targeted pollution response and monitoring services. This includes wastewater treatment and work spills, combined sewer overflow impacts, sediment runoff and chemical spills.

“These are challenging times: biodiversity is declining at an alarming rate, ecosystems are under threat, water quality and scarcity are a concern and there is a pressing need to transition to sustainable energy. At APEM Group, we have the power, passion and focus to make a positive impact. We’re giving the best to our clients and the environment by connecting and layering services through the natural curiosity of our teams and delivering the best science, enabled by the best data. We’re pleased to support our clients in prioritising investment where it will achieve the greatest benefit and value to the natural environment.”

We also support our clients in the development of long-term strategies to mitigate drought, invasive species management, water abstraction and reservoir management. APEM have extensive experience working on aquatic restoration projects, raising the conservation status of habitats and species within water catchments and facilitate EU funding for habitat restoration projects – bringing benefits to both stakeholders and local communities.

APEM Group’s UKAS accredited methodologies and laboratories put us firmly at the forefront of algal analysis, making us a trusted partner of water companies, government regulators, water sports centres and local authorities. We investigate the causes of and help to manage algal blooms in drinking water reservoirs across the UK and Ireland, ensuring they continue to meet water safety standards for all.

Darroch Baker
Managing Director, Water & Land Environmental Services

Continuous Water Quality Monitoring

CWQM: reassurance, responsibility and rapid response

Continuous water quality monitoring (CWQM) is required under the Environment Act (2021) and is a part of the government 'Plan for Water' for England and Wales. Using innovative technology that provides real-time data, CWQM provides information about changes in river water quality resulting from sewage pollution, agricultural sources, highway runoff, construction works or extreme weather.

In 2023, APEM Group installed CWQM equipment to monitor water quality during repair works to infrastructure at a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). In the section of the river concerned, there were two protected species: bullhead (*Cottus gobio*) and white clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*), both of which would be affected by a change in water quality.

Innovative technology and careful calibration provided regular water quality diagnostic reports from the data, as well as incident notices when any of the pre-set measurement values were exceeded. Real-time access to round-the-clock data meant that the client, regulators and local stakeholders (including an angling club) could all rest assured that river water

quality was being maintained and that a rapid response to site would be available from APEM Group if an alert was issued.

CWQM allows water companies access to the latest technology and innovation in monitoring, combined with specialist expertise in regulations and standards. As regulatory experts in water quality data diagnostics, APEM Group is leading the industry on CWQM and bringing best practice from other projects and sectors.

Starting in 2030, CWQM will be a standard requirement for monitoring storm overflows and sewage disposal works in England, meaning thousands of discharges will need to be monitored.

The CWQM approach has the potential to be delivered during ad-hoc reconstruction works in the future, as well as being required long-term to meet current regulations and 2030 requirements. As part of a comprehensive, integrated approach to the health of waterways, data captured during CWQM can be combined with geospatial data and catchment modelling to create a holistic view of river health and water quality.

APEM Group assessed over 18,000km of water courses in 2023 and identified 1,800 aquatic pollution sources, helping our clients address and prevent serious pollution incidents in those water bodies.



APEM Group scientists carrying out water sampling in the field

APEM Group recognises our shared responsibility to protect water as a finite resource and as such, are taking ownership of water management at our sites. We already have meters installed at two of our sites and we are looking to enhance reporting at sites with higher water usage, such as our labs. At these sites, we will be engaging with the landlords to install water meters and obtain usage measurements to get a better grasp of our consumption.

Biodiversity

To sustain life on earth we need the basics: food, clean water, clean air and climate regulation. Some of these resources are dwindling in the face of biodiversity decline and climate change.

We also need to sustain our growing population and live alongside these vital ecosystems. APEM Group specialise in finding solutions that can help to protect and restore the natural environment and allow industries to continue to provide us with the necessities.

We provide expert advice on biodiversity, with nature-positive solutions, high quality monitoring and management services in relation to rare, protected and specialist species. Working with the construction, transport and infrastructure industries we help to maintain environmental obligations during development and construction with ECoW services, land use mapping and protected species surveys.

By making choices that are suitable to local conditions and connecting habitats to support biodiversity, we can help all species, including humanity, to make progress while adapting to climate change and the changing landscape.

2023 saw the world's first ever Citizen's Assembly Report on Biodiversity Loss published in Ireland. The 99 Assembly Members issued 159 recommendations – calls to action to address the stark biodiversity loss facing Ireland. Likewise, in a landmark report by the UK government, it was reported that UK species have declined by about 19% on average since 1970, while one in six species (of more than ten thousand species assessed) are at risk of being lost.

To address this rapid decline, the UK government's Environmental Act 2021 requires the application of a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) approach, a development approach that aims to leave habitats for wildlife in a better state than they were prior to development. This impacts the majority of Town and Country Planning Act developments and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) granted from November 2023.



Photo: Little Owl by Jalal Khan



Photo: Grey Seal by Callum Nightingale

Our Environmental Committee

Ailish Cobban, Business Services

Aisha O'Connor, Marine Industries Ireland

Alan Cowlshaw, Onshore Ecology

Dana Latkulik, Business Services

Dani Deane, Marine Industries

Ellen Purdue, Biolabs and Surveys

Gillian Sutherland, Marine Wildlife Surveys

Hannah Larraway, Business Services

Jeni Bridgman, Business Services

Jessica Hood, Marine Wildlife Surveys

Kyle Sque, Onshore Ecology

Lauren Holden, Geospatial Insights

Meadhbh Costigan, Onshore Ecology

Nick O'Brien, Marine Industries

Pamela Porter, Business Services

Sam Hayes, Water Environment,

Sharon Eastwood, Business Services

Tim Kasoar, Marine Industries

Our ESG Committee

Kirsty Strannigan, Group Health, Safety, Environment, Quality and Sustainability Director

Rachael Keogh, Head of People Operations

Samuel Anthony Julian, Quality and Environment Systems Manager

Sharon Eastwood, Associate Director, Sustainability and Communities

A new use for Remote Sensing

– mapping invasive plant species for Bridgend County Borough Council

Remote Sensing is a tried-and-tested part of our technical capabilities but this is the first time this specific approach and methodology have been used to map the scale, location and extent of invasive plant species, enabling the council to allocate time, budget and resources for control and treatment measures, protecting biodiversity and avoiding financial penalties.

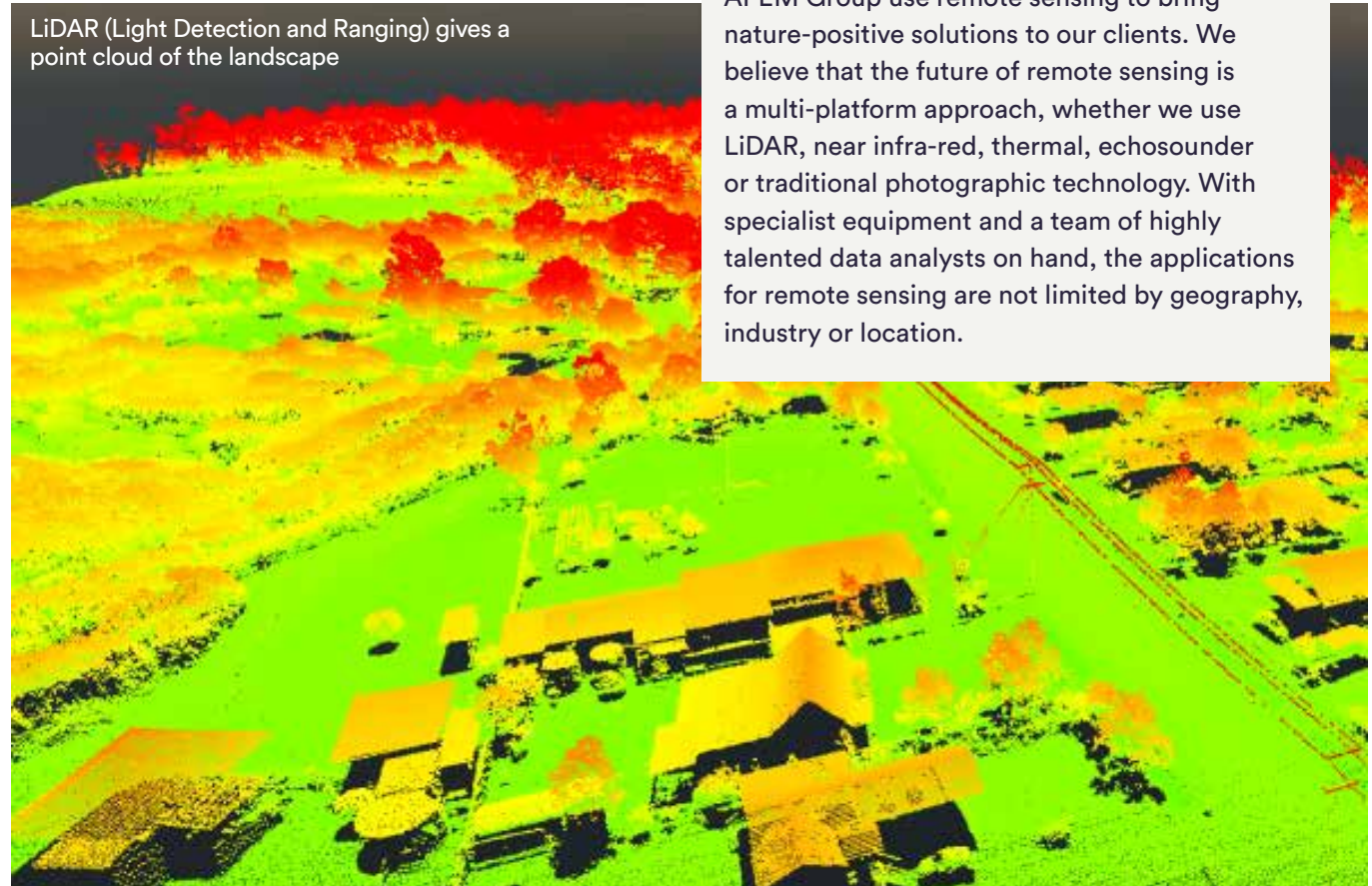
Due to the scale, land type and infrastructure to be mapped, Remote Sensing was the most appropriate surveying method. The total area was an estimated 400km² with land types and infrastructure including roadways, motorways, waterways and railway lines that would be difficult or dangerous to access on foot.

Further informed by the results of the mapping and the prioritisation matrix, Bridgend County Borough Council are now able to target invasive non-native plants at highest risk of spread from council land.

Bridgend Council's proactive approach to Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) mapping on its land holdings will help biodiversity and protect habitats, as well as helping the council avoid financial penalties under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) and potentially mitigate and protect against future civil claims. With accurate baseline data and mapping, the Council can target resources to hotspots of concern.

This approach can be used for catchment mapping and Biodiversity Net Gain for water companies, to provide baseline data for areas where there is little or none available. Read more about the project methodology here.

LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) gives a point cloud of the landscape



Remote sensing is a way to gather data from a distance and is beneficial when surveying hard-to-access or large areas. From marine wildlife surveys to mapping sewer misconconnections, APEM Group use remote sensing to bring nature-positive solutions to our clients. We believe that the future of remote sensing is a multi-platform approach, whether we use LiDAR, near infra-red, thermal, echosounder or traditional photographic technology. With specialist equipment and a team of highly talented data analysts on hand, the applications for remote sensing are not limited by geography, industry or location.

Environmental Stewardship

Employee engagement on environmental issues is vital to achieving our Group sustainability aims. The APEM Group Environmental Committee rolled out environmental awareness campaigns to our wider APEM Group team, including energy saving tips for homeworking and company-wide information on responsible energy and water management. In 2024, we will further involve our wider employee base and give them greater oversight on our environmental initiatives. To provide a better understanding of consumption patterns, we will be creating office usage charts for employees on a quarterly basis - helping teams to identify issues, as well as areas for improvement.

APEM Group employees also get involved in environmental initiatives locally, helping to promote awareness and drive positive impact in the areas in which they live and work. Some of the initiatives in 2023 included:

- **Helping with wetland bird counts**
- **Drafting biodiversity plans for local schools and colleges**
- **Restoring river embankments with Mersey Rivers Trust**
- **A beach clean-up**
- **Crewing the APEM Group Litter Boat on the Manchester Ship Canal to collect litter**
- **Donating to Giving Green in lieu of Christmas cards, an initiative that advances science to tackle climate change**



Parkside Regeneration Interactive Careers Fair

APEM Group were pleased to attend the Parkside Regeneration Interactive Careers Fair and demonstrate key aspects of Terrestrial Ecology as part of a continued commitment to delivering social value in the local region. Our team members did a stellar job on the stand, demonstrating how to use an endoscope to inspect potential roost features in trees, to identify any presence of bats.

Sustainability in the supply chain

Partnering with our suppliers on ESG

As public awareness of the complexities and vulnerabilities of global supply chains has increased over recent years, customers, regulators and investors have placed increasing demands on companies to address these risks. Embedding ESG practices into supply chain management is a challenging and crucial element of our procurement programme and one that is dependent on maintaining our profitability, upholding our reputation and delivering on our sustainability commitments. To this aim, we seek collaborative partnerships with suppliers that share our ESG principles.

Our approach to procurement is based on four guiding principles:

1. We uphold ethical business practices and comply with legislation.
2. We are an intelligent customer. We understand the risks and complexities of the services we procure and are able to respond to performance issues appropriately.
3. We influence the priorities of our key suppliers so that they align with ours and those of our clients, to ensure a sustainable service to our clients.
4. We ensure diversity is embedded within our supply chain.

A vetting system is in place to safeguard our supply chain against potential risk. All suppliers must complete a

pre-qualification form, evidencing the company's policy compliance, certifications and management systems. This form also asks new suppliers about their environmental impacts, initiatives and carbon footprint. This is followed up by an annual renewal form that we issue to all our sub-contractors. This work is supplemented by annual review, whereby we undertake audits of higher-risk suppliers.

APEM Group strives to cultivate a cooperative approach with our supplier base to support them on their ESG performance. In 2023 we issued an ESG materiality assessment survey to all our suppliers. This was to gauge their ESG practices and to identify areas where we can assist them in their own ESG journey. In the survey, 33.9% of respondents stated that they would like more help with ESG on topics raised in the survey, while 11.3% would like to talk to us directly on how we can support them. As such, all suppliers will be invited to a free ESG seminar in Spring 2024.

All practices are underpinned by the APEM Group Supplier Code of Conduct, Procurement and Supply Chain policies, which clearly outline our ethical expectations of supplier behaviours. These are due to be reviewed in 2024, as we integrate practices and apply learnings from our newly acquired companies. This year, we also published our Group Modern Slavery Statement, outlining our zero-tolerance approach to human trafficking and modern slavery in the supply chain, as well as our due diligence approach.

Supply Chain Transparency

Securing transparent oversight of our supply chain is a crucial factor in responsible management and mitigating risk. All approved suppliers are managed through a database, which provides visibility on the location of suppliers to enable local sourcing. This is not only a more agile system, but it also helps to limit carbon emissions through reduced travel, as well as generating financial contributions to the communities we operate in around the world.

Total number of vetted Group suppliers:

566



Engaging our stakeholders on ESG

Our stakeholder partnerships are crucial to delivering on our ESG commitments. Collaborating with our stakeholders not only helps to inform ESG strategic priorities but provides a more solid foundation to achieving them. To this aim, in 2023 we sent ESG surveys to our suppliers, clients and staff to better understand stakeholder priorities and the issues most important to them.

Clients

We pride ourselves in giving our clients the confidence to deliver impactful projects that reflect evolving regulatory requirements and environmental considerations, supported by a suite of policies developed in line with our ESG responsibilities. We offer a range of high-quality aquatic, terrestrial and geospatial services with a responsible, scientific mindset.

Personnel

Everyone in APEM Group proudly delivers innovative, efficient and high-quality work and we are proud to help them pursue their careers and develop their knowledge. The ESG Committee and Environmental Committee ensure we liaise with our employees and understand which aspects of ESG are most important to them.

Communities

We are intrinsically connected to the places in which we work and live, as well as the locations of our clients and suppliers. By engaging with our communities, we can establish where we can create meaningful impact and bring

Investors

Our partners provide capital as we expand our reach and capabilities. As experienced business owners and firm believers in ESG, they offer sound, invaluable advice and guidance to APEM Group.

Photo of offshore wind farm in the sea by Paul Littlefair

Leadership and governance structure 2023

APEM Group's governance framework sets out a clear structure of accountabilities and each group plays a crucial role in both Group decision making, as well as delivering on corporate governance. Members of each governance group and business support teams hold personal responsibility for following good governance behaviours, in addition to the responsibilities set out in their job descriptions.

Governance Boards

Group Board

55 / 45

male / female

Chair (non-exec)

CEO, Finance Director, People Director, Investors (2), Executive Director, Chief Client Officer, Managing Directors (2)

- Responsible for setting overarching strategy and direction, ensuring viability, long term success and managing sustainable growth
 - Delivers annual strategic plan
 - Reviews risk
- Integrates ESG Governance assurance

Internal Business Forums

- Executive Team weekly meeting
- Operational Leadership meeting
 - Quarterly Leadership meeting
- WWYSTA (Business Development)
 - Staff Engagement Group
 - Environmental Committee
 - Integration Working Group
 - Internal Communications
 - H&S Consultation Groups
 - Facilities Working Groups
- Sustainable Transport Committee

Accountable to Group Board

- Remuneration Committee
- Risk Management Committee
 - Audit Committee

APEM Board

60 / 40

male / female

- Responsible for delivering strategic objectives and day to day operations
 - Manages legislative and regulatory obligations
- Oversight of compliance (internal systems and external standards)
 - Directs resource to manage risk
- Monitors health, safety and environmental performance

Accountable to APEM Board

- Policy Development Committee
 - ESG Committee
- IMS & Safety Committee
- Facilities Steering Group
- Strategic Board Plans

Governance

Effective corporate governance demands policies that encompass the breadth of our activities and meet the high standards required of our operations. All policies are accessible to employees via our intranet and they are formally reviewed and updated to ensure they remain current and compliant. Whenever changes are made, we ensure that these modifications are clearly communicated to employees, to ensure they remain cognisant of compliance changes and updates. We also provide training on specific policies as required, which is delivered through our online training portal. All employees are encouraged to report any suspected deviations of policies, as well as opportunities for improvement, as part of our continual improvement programme.

Risk Management and Compliance

Extensive policies and processes are in place to protect the business and guarantee resilience. These are underpinned by multiple respected third-party certifications and accreditations, including ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO/IEC 17025, which require regular internal audit to maintain standards.

We manage risk through a comprehensive company Risk Register, which spans financial, operational and reputational risk factors, which aids in managing and mitigating potential risks. This is updated monthly and reviewed by the Board quarterly.

Additionally, we have a specific HSEQ Risk Register for managing health and safety, environmental and project-related risks and a Business Continuity Plan, which is reviewed annually.

Grievances and Whistleblowing

It is vital to APEM Group that staff feel they are able to raise any grievances or concerns about the business. Our grievance and whistleblowing policies encourage staff to register issues they deem to be a risk to our operations, as well as alert the senior team or, if necessary, the Board of any issues.

Anti-bribery and corruption

Integrity sits at the core of our Group values. To support our ongoing growth and addition of new members to the Group, in 2023 we renewed our commitment to ensure that there are effective systems and processes in place to counter bribery, corruption and corporate criminal offences across the Group. This included the implementation of revised Anti-Bribery and Corruption and Corporate Criminal Offence policies for the Group with associated training programmes. From induction onwards, a comprehensive suite of policies that sets the principles for our business culture is available to all.

HSEQS 2023 highlights

- Established an IMS portal to enhance visibility and access to information
- Implemented and continued to lead consultation groups to ensure engagement across the business on key topics
- Introduced 20 policies, led by the Policy Development Committee
- Engaged the Business Support areas to develop and publish policies and procedures
- Developed circa 45 HSEQ standard operating procedures- approved by our IMS and Safety Group
- 100 supporting documents created
- Introduced Kallidus, a new training and learning platform

Developed and launched key processes including:

- Event Reporting
- Risk Assessment
- Learning Reviews
- Capacity Assessment

Digital ethics

Digital

APEM Group collect and process personal data in alignment with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) in the UK and Ireland and we take our responsibility to protect data very seriously. This process is managed by our Legal and Corporate Compliance team, who oversee the implementation of our Group policy and strategy. Data considerations also form a part APEM's Group risk register, which is managed as part of an ongoing improvement cycle. On occasion, clients may request data access permissions to be granted for specific personnel. In this instance, strict data handling processes are in place to maintain data protection and security.

Data Governance is handled through our Data Breach Procedure, which ensures we take responsibility for the actions of our employees in how they handle the data they receive. This procedure is available on our intranet and we have a documented, staged approach for any incident response. End users can log data breaches or concerns via our intranet, leading to a quick escalation.

Cyber security

APEM Group has robust security measures in place to safeguard our data, systems and network, which are each underpinned by our Cyber Essentials certification. This is further supported by our external software partner, who provides third-party assurance of our policies, training, software and processes.

To ensure consistency across the Group, in 2023, we continued to upgrade and migrate systems and processes to standardise our approach. During this integration period we expanded the Cyber Essentials certification across the Group.

Human error remains one of the biggest threats to cybersecurity, making clear communication and education on cybersecurity extremely important. We regularly send communications out across the Group on cybersecurity issues and reinforce their importance during cascade meetings. Additionally, we undertake security testing annually with penetration testing and phishing attack scenarios to ensure employees remain vigilant.

In 2024, we will be conducting a cyber posture review to further strengthen our cybersecurity position.

Technology innovations

We have adopted a low-carbon approach to our work – in the office, in the field and with clients. APEM Group technology innovations have solved specific problems, helped predict possibilities and allowed our clients to see the big picture. The technical excellence group have championed innovative tools and award-winning solutions and we have researched advances in our field operations to consider where we can use electric unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) where possible, or the use of high-quality satellite imagery. Not only does this allow to pass on cost savings to the clients through such technological advances, it supports our embracing new technology and incorporates a life-cycle approach to identify, assess and manage environmental risks. All these actions dovetail into our ESG Policy and responsibilities.

Human error remains one of the biggest threats to cybersecurity, making clear communication and education on cybersecurity extremely important.

Photo: iStock

An engaged workforce

Spotlight on:

Meriel de Lacey

Chief People Officer, APEM Group



Meriel joined APEM Group in 2022, She navigates diverse stakeholder and business needs, championing APEM Group to an internal and external audience.

Meriel has spearheaded the APEM Group People & Culture strategy: a key component of wider APEM Group strategy with goals that have a natural synergy with the principles of ESG. The focal points are Purpose & Alignment, Skills & Career Development and Connection & Support, all of which run through the Group's ESG policy.

With Meriel at the helm, the People team are ensuring that APEM Group is consistently and widely recognised as the place to develop a rewarding career in environmental consulting. Underpinned by feedback and data-led decision-making, the 2024 plan builds on APEM Group's success, creating a culture of high impact and motivation and the opportunity to work towards shared goals.

Meriel supports the integration and connection of new acquisitions into the APEM Group bringing core values of belonging and inclusivity to new teams.”

Introduction

APEM Group strives to create a workplace environment where our employees want to stay with us for the long haul. To this aim, our dedicated people team are constantly looking at ways to enhance our employee experience to ensure the work they do is meaningful, challenging and rewarding. We are proud to have held the Investors in People Accreditation for 14 years now: an unbiased assessment of our people practices and outcomes that is testament to the breadth of work we do.

Transparent and effective communication is of great importance in all areas of APEM Group.

In order to know what we're doing well and where we can do better, we need to clearly understand the thoughts of our people. We're always listening and finding new ways to gather information.

Anonymous engagement surveys give our teams the opportunity to submit feedback in a safe

environment. In 2023, this was supplemented by regular follow-up surveys to isolate specific issues, as well as interactive staff sessions known as 'The Pulse' which give teams a platform to share additional feedback.

Results from our engagement surveys and Pulse sessions are shared with the Group Board and follow-up actions are identified in response. These findings and action items are also shared with the wider Group to ensure open communication and to hold the leadership team accountable for our commitments.

Our teams are working together and constantly learning from each other, making decisions and exploring new possibilities. With each other's support, we are achieving extraordinary things every day.

Meriel de Lacey
Chief People Officer

“Sustainability is a key component of our mission. We work for a business where everyone genuinely cares for sustainability, with a culture of collaboration, enterprise and expertise. And I find that passion energising and a really exciting environment to be in.”



94% of APEM Group staff said that they feel their manager genuinely cares about their wellbeing



90% of staff surveyed said they felt part of a team



89% of staff said they were able to arrange time out from work when needed



Clockwise from top: Woodrow staff enjoying time out by canoeing to Beezies Island for a picnic; Richard analysing samples in the laboratory; Gareth during an aerial survey; Matt carrying out a water quality survey



Belonging at APEM Group

APEM Group is committed to recruiting and retaining a workforce where every individual feels seen, supported and celebrated. Advocating for diversity in the workplace is not just about establishing a fairer society or being seen to do the 'right thing'.

In 2023, we established new employee Belonging Groups, bringing like-minded individuals together to provide support and bring meaningful change to the business. Each group represents employees with protected characteristics, such as Gender, LGBTQ+, Race and Ethnicity, Working Families and Carers and Neurodiversity. These groups are open to all employees and require individual members to make a commitment to educating themselves on the issues experienced by each group before partaking.

In 2023, APEM Group invested in a new internal talent team to improve talent attraction, who have since overhauled our approach to DE&I in recruitment. We also introduced a new system that collates anonymised DE&I data, with the ability to anonymise CVs and application details. This helps to reduce the risk of unconscious bias, allows for ongoing monitoring of our recruitment process and provides us with a provisional understanding of our employee demographic needs. APEM Group have also taken steps to remove bias from other areas of the process, creating a new, inclusive job description template. Meanwhile all managers undertake mandatory unconscious bias training upon induction.

While there are some GDPR restrictions in Ireland around demographic data collection, where permissible, we will begin to capture and monitor DE&I data collection to better align our DE&I initiatives.

Our Equal Opportunities Policy lays out our commitment to non-discrimination in recruitment, job advertisement and job promotion. To support this stance, we ensure that staff across the Group are well trained on the application of this policy. While we are proud of the foundational work undertaken in the last year to integrate DE&I into the business, we will be taking this a step further in 2024, with the launch of our DE&I strategy across the Group.

In 2023, we established new employee Belonging Groups, bringing like-minded individuals together to provide support and bring meaningful change to the business. Each group represents employees with protected characteristics, such as Gender, LGBTQ+, Race and Ethnicity, Working Families and Carers and Neurodiversity.



The finance team using their volunteer leave at We Are Mud community garden

Women in Science

In celebration of International Women's Day, we spotlighted the pivotal role women play in the environmental sector. From pioneering research in climate change to leading conservation efforts, women scientists have been instrumental in addressing complex environmental challenges. Their contributions underscore the importance of gender diversity in scientific fields, amplifying diverse perspectives and driving progress.

We are delighted to share with you the journeys and roles of two of the women here at APEM Group.

Kate Dey, INNS Consultant

Hi, I'm Kate. I have spent the last four years studying the potential ecological and economic impacts of the non-native Asian date mussel in the UK for my PhD. During this time, I was lucky enough to crew Research Vessel Noctiluca to collect samples, using a dredge and day grab and to carry out surveys on mudflats across different areas of the Solent. I'm excited to apply all that I've learnt about benthic ecology and non-native species in my role as INNS (Invasive Non-native Species) Consultant.



Melissa Costagliola-Ray, Senior Ornithology Consultant

I joined APEM Group as a Senior Ornithology Consultant in 2023. My role entails delivering expert advice and technical ornithology assessments for a variety of clients and projects including offshore wind farm developments.

The Ornithology team works across the full range of project phases from site selection and feasibility, through the EIA and consenting process, post-consent, project execution and decommissioning phases), including large, high-profile and complex projects. I am passionate about the natural environment, in particular marine birds and my favourite place to be is beside a seabird colony taking in the sight, sound and smell of thousands of birds.

Before joining APEM Group, I completed a PhD at the University of Highlands and Islands. My PhD focused on improving

survey techniques used to assess seabird abundance and distribution within nearshore tidal stream areas, particularly the use of land-based vantage point surveys. This work made recommendations to improve both the accuracy and relevance of data collected from vantage point surveys for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of marine renewables.

I did not think that I would be able to follow my dream of undertaking a PhD as I have dyslexia and was particularly worried about the large amounts of writing required. However, the encouragement and support I have received as a woman in science has always pushed me to pursue my goals. I feel extremely lucky to have been able to carry out a PhD which has led to a career where I feel like I am making a difference.

Bringing out the best in our teams

APEM Group is immensely proud of our specialist teams, harbouring expertise across the full scope of environmental consultancy - from survey design and providing recommendations, to data collection, monitoring and analysis. Maintaining our high standards requires ongoing efforts to recruit and retain the top talent in the industry. In 2023, we were proud to hire 32.4% of hires internally. This includes internal promotions, moving to permanent contractors and employees switching to a different part of the company.

Whether a recent graduate, or someone re-entering the workforce after a career break, APEM Group is committed to supporting people across all stages of their career. Launched in 2020, our career development framework 'BeMyBest', provides employees with structured support and guidance for progression. In addition to annual appraisals, this approach establishes clear KPIs and development goals for each individual employee, identifies any skills gaps and ensures employees are supported through ongoing training.

Operating in a fast-moving, complex industry requires constant learning, as well as understanding and addressing knowledge gaps. Led by our Talent Acquisition Team, skills gaps are constantly monitored, with key measures identified. Employees have access to multiple training courses via our on-line training platform (Kallidus) and, across some areas of the business, individual training budget to support specific needs.



Number of training hours delivered: **12,230**

How many employees completed training in the year: **224**

Total spend on training and development: **£817,857**

32.4% of all hires in 2023 were internal

"A look inside one of our Diamond DA42 aircraft on final approach into Stornoway, Scotland after completing an ultrahigh resolution digital aerial survey of marine wildlife in the area."

Wellbeing at APEM Group

Safeguarding the wellbeing of our employees is fundamental to a happy, healthy workplace. The pandemic disrupted our way of working forever and since then, businesses across the board have embraced flexible working and its accompanying benefits. And APEM Group is no different, giving our employees freedom in when and where they want to work through our 'Ways of Working' approach. Additionally, our Overseas Travel Policy allows employees up to 30 days a year to work abroad, accommodating those with overseas family and friends - or those who simply prefer to work in the sunshine!

APEM Group have a dedicated Staff Engagement Group, responsible for driving improvements, facilitating open and constructive conversation and overall, looking at ways to support the wellbeing of our staff. From this forum, we have set clear wellbeing objectives, with additional planned actions, which are communicated to staff via our intranet.

We offer ongoing practical support through our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), which includes access to counselling services. We also provide a range of supportive physical and mental health benefits, including private medical treatment, income protection cover, life assurance, death in service protection and confidential support lines. Furthermore, every employee has access to a trained Mental Health First Aider, providing on the ground support for employees seeking support, or just a confidential chat.

Creating a safe space for employee feedback is a key part of our wellbeing approach, which is why in 2023 we launched our Health and Wellbeing Questionnaire, as well as a Stress Assessor tool to clearly identify needs and address these accordingly. Wellbeing is also incorporated into management discussions to ensure managers create a space for employee wellbeing and check in on employee sentiment throughout the year.

This is supplemented by a calendar of wellbeing events and initiatives across the Group. From financial wellbeing to family-related stress, we provide ongoing educational resources to staff throughout the year. Our communications plan focuses on a different wellbeing topic every three weeks, aligned with wellbeing awareness days and events.

Investment in wellbeing:
£318,750

Time spent on wellbeing modules and initiatives: **400** hours

8 published on wellbeing in 2023

To enhance connection amongst colleagues, in 2024 we introduced our 'Witter and Walk' initiative, a bi-weekly, 20-minute walk, where employees can call up a colleague, get some fresh air and chat about all things non-work-related.

Photo: Team starting botanical surveys at Mourne Mountains, N Ireland, Feb 2023



Giving back to our communities

Community can mean different things:

- the community where we work
- the community where our offices and stores are located
- the bodies that educate and provide Continued Professional Development
- our family and friends

The responses to APEM Group's internal ESG Survey in 2023 highlighted the importance to our team of supporting and working across our various communities.

In 2023, we were delighted to introduce paid Volunteer Leave for all members of APEM Group - whether they were contract, permanent, full-time, or part-time members of staff. This suggestion originated from our Staff Engagement Group and the final concept was valued at around £100,000, signifying a large commitment from the Board. Mechanisms were put in place to support volunteering, providing links to all Volunteer Centres in our local vicinities, meanwhile our Sports & Social Fund application process was updated to support any team events. We were pleased to see a positive take-up, with 85 staff members using 600 hours of Volunteer Leave.

Volunteering is enriching from a personal perspective, but it's also a great way to build teams by making a positive impact, together. We are looking forward to an even greater uptake of this new initiative in 2024.



APEM Group's engineers Mike Redding and Vincent Ly used their Volunteer Leave to soft-engineer new river embankments.

“In 2023, 85 staff across APEM Group took just under 600 hours of paid leave to volunteer for a Not for Profit”

Volunteer Leave taken in 2023 included a wide range of activities including:

- Jack Whittle **taught primary school children about biodiversity**, challenging their observation skills by showing them images of aquatic biodiversity to see what they could identify.
- Charlotte Andrews collated and **delivered food supplies** for **Glasgow Food Train**, to help some of Glasgow's most vulnerable older people, whilst working to prevent malnutrition in the city.
- **A clothes and toy collection** in our Stockport Head Office, taking donations for local distribution to asylum seekers.
- Rob Harrison-Lacey drafted a **Biodiversity Action Plan** for the secondary school where his husband works.
- Mike Redding and Vincent Ly volunteered for the **Mersey Rivers Trust** to install over 20m of willow spiling along the banks of the River Bollin to prevent erosion and sedimentation of the river.
- Alex Cooke **donated blood** and also used his volunteering time to mentor at his local school.
- Gareth Myers-Cann and his Chester-based colleagues spent the day **litter picking at Newborough Beach**, Anglesey, booking free use of the Litter Hub Facilities of Keep Wales Tidy (Caru Cymru).
- Teams from Finance and Legal **supported 'We are Mud'** in their community garden in Manchester with weeding, planting, composting and building bird boxes.

We have also reached into the communities where our offices are located, such as at our Sligo Offices. A local biodiversity group, Ballisodare Tidy Towns, wanted to erect their newly purchased swift boxes in the village. These endangered birds are struggling due to lack of suitable habitats. Our staff in Woodrow got permission from our landlord for the swift nest boxes to be erected outside our

premises at the required height. APEM Group paid for the hire of the scissor lift and were delighted that local electricians from DMAC, Co Sligo, volunteered to install six swift boxes and wire the external speakers. Whilst it may take some time for the nests to be used, the lure calls from the speakers already attracted inquisitive young swifts to check out the new accommodation in the Summer of 2023.



Photo: Unsplash

In 2023, APEM Group were proud to match **£3,560** towards sixteen fantastic causes, including:

- Richard Wells, Associate Director, Environmental Appraisal, helped to organise the Denbigh and District Round Table **Charity beer festival** which raised £8,000 for local charities.
- Members of our AQUAFACT team got up in the middle of the night to **run 5km for the charity 'Darkness into Light'**, helping to raise vital funds for suicide and self-harm prevention.
- One of our team members completed a **750-mile charity cycle ride** departing from Roscoff in Brittany to Santander in Spain. Dewi Jones's journey was in aid of the PSPA (Progressive Surpanuclear Palsy), which is a relatively small charity supporting people with the rare condition.
- Ambar Villanueva-Brackley **shaved off all her hair**, which was used to make wigs for people suffering hair loss due to illness. The money raised went towards making more wigs for The Little Princess Trust, as well as to support a friend of Ambar's in their gender reassignment surgery.
- **Fundraising** during the hectic Christmas week for **'Hope', a UK charity** that provides support to young people when a family member is diagnosed with a life-threatening illness.

APEM Group photo competition

Throughout our ESG Report, you will find photographs taken by the Group's team for our 2023 'Picture of the Year' competition. This incredible imagery is testament to their talent in photography and to their appreciation of the natural world. In 2023, we received 88 entries, each one capturing the diverse beauty of our environment, from the picturesque landscapes of the Peak District to the charming sight of seals basking on a sandy bank. The winning photograph appears on the front cover of this report.



Bearded Tit, Jalal Khan - 1st Place



Grey Seal, Callum Nightingale - 2nd Place



Manta alfredi, Henry Gould - Joint 3rd Place



Puffin, Freddie Leith - Joint 3rd Place



Seals Sunbathing on Sand Bank, David Mullock

Who we are

APEM Group

APEM Group is a leading global environment consultancy providing expert advice to clients in a wide range of industries including renewables, water, infrastructure, marine and ports, transport, construction and development. The company provides digital aerial wildlife surveys, specialist marine, freshwater, terrestrial ecology and geospatial services to organisations across the world.



APEM Inc

With offshore wind in its infancy in the US, the needs of our clients are ever-changing. APEM Inc offer bespoke solutions to our clients to deal with the evolution of technology, providing robust, accurate data and making the best use of it long-term. With a shift in focus to sustainable and conscientious development, our clients need to balance the needs of society with rigorous and evolving regulations.



APEM Ltd

For over three decades, APEM Ltd have offered independent advice and guidance to support government and environmental regulatory guidelines. Our team can be found all around the UK: behind a microscope in our world-renowned laboratories, undertaking innovative desk studies and scoping protected species, grabbing freshwater samples and emergency fish rescue, flying our innovative high-resolution digital aerial surveys, or on the ground with eDNA and terrestrial ecology services. Our work has been cited as the benchmark for aerial survey design in the UK for offshore wind and our labs provide external quality assurance for the analysis of marine biological samples, delivering audit and training services to the highest standard.



Within APEM Group, we obtained the following awards in 2023:

- Winner:** BVCA Vision 2023 Leaders Driving Growth Award
- Winner:** Maritime UK Solent awards – Small Business of the Year – NASH Maritime
- Finalist:** EY Entrepreneur of the Year – Dr Adrian Williams
- Finalist:** Barclays International Expansion Award
- Shortlisted:** CIEEM Awards for Woodrow
- Shortlisted:** Water Industry Award for Groundbreaker Project of the Year and Contractor of the Year
- Shortlisted:** Insider North West Dealmakers Awards 2023 for Macro Works acquisition
- Shortlisted:** NW Rainmaker Awards for GoBe acquisition

Photo: Dolphins by David Mullock

Who we are continued

AQUAFACT

AQUAFACT are an established marine environmental consultancy based in Galway. AQUAFACT are firmly rooted in the scientific community in Ireland with close associations with the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG), Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT), University College Dublin and Trinity College. We deliver professional and clear advice and guidance to clients from the state, semi-state and private sectors with the highest levels of accuracy, specialising in monitoring and managing resources and offering a multi-disciplinary approach to the investigation of problems in marine and freshwater environments.



Aspect Ecology

Aspect Ecology specialise in ecological planning, providing a complete service for projects from pre-purchase due diligence to surveys and assessment to inform planning or EIA including Biodiversity Net Gain, Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRAs) and presenting expert evidence at appeals. Post planning, Aspect Ecology address conditions and implement ecological mitigation schemes including through protected species licensing and monitoring.

Class leading technical advice and a proven track record give our projects an edge, maximising the development opportunities attainable whilst delivering the best possible environmental solutions. We achieve this by our obsession with quality which serves to unlock 'difficult' sites through innovative design and imaginative thinking.



GoBe Consultants

The future of the renewables industry is bright. And GoBe are meeting the demand for strategic solutions and project specific experts to support planning and environmental plans, for projects in offshore wind, marine renewables, marine aggregates, coastal infrastructure and subsea cabling. Working closely with developers in the UK, Europe and the US, we provide informed and accurate advice and technical expertise, sharing our in-depth knowledge and understanding of the consenting process for nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs) and offshore wind developments.



Photo: Dipper, Chee Dale by Jalal Khan

Who we are continued

Macro Works

Macro Works provide a full suite of Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) related tools and skills for a broad spectrum of energy, infrastructure and commercial developments. Macro Works' clients emanate from both the public and private sectors, in Ireland and abroad. Macro Works' expertise primarily covers the stages of development, from initial feasibility studies through to the completion of the planning process. Macro Works constantly undertake R&D and innovation that takes advantage of the latest technologies. This push for constant advancement has ensured that Macro Works have remained at the forefront of LVIA services in Ireland for the past 20 years and will continue to do so into the future.



NASH Maritime

NASH Maritime offers innovative solutions that empower clients to manage shipping and navigation risk, optimise design and enable safe co-existence with other marine users.

NASH Maritime have worked in the maritime environment, understand the commercial value of risk-based decision-making and take an active role in driving new approaches to safety and cost reduction.



Woodrow

Woodrow is a long-standing and well-respected terrestrial ecology consultancy in Ireland. An expert team of ecologists work across a variety of specialist areas including habitats, birds, bats, terrestrial mammals and invertebrates, notably providing services to the renewables industry and recreation/greenways, quarries, roads and other development areas as well as providing specialist input in national species and habitat surveys. By the end of 2023, there are over 30 staff members working with clients and communities across Ireland. With a long and successful history of providing environmental training and education, Woodrow see inclusion and knowledge as the key to positive environmental change.

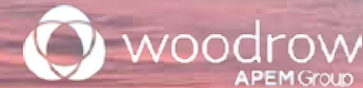


Photo: Sky over Suffolk by Alice Wilkins

Photo: Puffin, Freddie Leith



www.apemgroup.com

APEM Group, Riverview, A17 Embankment Business Park, Stockport, SK4 3GN, United Kingdom

APEM Group