

## Venue Impact Advisory

# The Venue Impact Index

## Sustainable Venue Score (SVS) — Scoring Methodology

*An independent, evidence-based benchmark of environmental sustainability performance across UK venues and attractions.*

### **Version 1.4 (calibrated + small-venue floor + SECR expectation + carbon-data provenance)**

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Classification: Methodology reference — for assessor, partner and press scrutiny

# Contents

## 1. Purpose and principles

The Venue Impact Index (VII) is an independent benchmark of environmental sustainability performance across UK venues and attractions, published by Venue Impact Advisory (VIA). Each assessed venue receives a Sustainable Venue Score (SVS): a single 0–100 rating derived from documented evidence.

The Index exists to make sustainability performance legible. Venues, their customers, event bookers, sponsors and procurement teams currently have no consistent way to compare environmental performance across very different sites — a 200-cover restaurant, a regional theatre and a 20,000-seat arena. The SVS provides one comparable currency while recognising that those venues operate at different scales.

### Design principles

The methodology is built on five principles, each of which constrains how criteria are written and scored:

- Evidence-based — every point is awarded against documented evidence, never against intention, pledges or marketing claims.
- Comparable — the same 100-point scale applies to every venue type, so a score means the same thing everywhere, while league tables are segmented by venue type for fair like-for-like ranking.
- Transparent — the full criteria, thresholds and weightings are published. A venue can see exactly why it scored what it scored, and a third party can audit the result.
- Repeatable — two assessors working from the same evidence should reach the same score. Criteria are expressed as numeric thresholds or defined lists, not subjective judgement.
- Proportionate — the SVS is a structured desk assessment of documented performance, not a full ISO-style audit. It is rigorous but achievable at scale and at reasonable cost.

The Index is deliberately modelled on a financial index rather than an awards scheme: a consistent, rules-based measurement that is updated on a fixed cadence, not a curated list of favourites.

## 2. How the Sustainable Venue Score works

The SVS is the sum of points awarded across five weighted categories. The weights reflect each category's materiality to a venue's real-world environmental impact — energy and carbon carry the most weight because they represent the largest share of most venues' footprint and the area where action is most consequential.

### 2.1 Category weightings

Category	Weight	What it measures
Energy & Carbon	30	Measurement, absolute emissions reduction, renewable and low-carbon energy, and the quality of net-zero commitments.
Waste & Circularity	20	Waste measurement, landfill diversion, single-use reduction, food waste and material reuse.
Supply Chain & Sourcing	20	Procurement policy, food and beverage sourcing, non-food materials and supplier engagement.
Governance & Transparency	20	Strategy and targets, public reporting, accountability and stakeholder engagement.
Certifications & Recognition	10	Independently verified certifications, validated targets and

Category	Weight	What it measures
		external benchmarks.
<b>Total</b>	100	

## 2.2 Tier classification

A venue's total SVS places it in one of three tiers. Tier boundaries were calibrated in v1.1 against the first 200-venue cohort: Leader sits on a natural gap in the score distribution (68) and Certified is anchored to the cohort median (50). The category weights and the Minimum Threshold Rule are unchanged.

Tier	Score	Meaning
<b>Listed</b>	0–49	On the journey — early or partial action, limited documented performance.
<b>Certified</b>	50–67	Meaningful action — credible, evidenced performance across most categories.
<b>Leader</b>	68+	Best in class — comprehensive, independently verifiable performance.

Tier names are used publicly (“VII Certified”, “VII Leader”). The numeric score underneath each tier is also published, so the Index never collapses into a simple badge.

## 2.3 Segmentation and league tables

Scores are calculated identically and are directly comparable across all venues. For publication, however, venues are ranked within their own segment so that like is compared with like:

- Stadium / Arena
- Theatre / Concert Hall
- Museum / Attraction
- Hotel / Hospitality
- Conference / Events

A venue that operates across types is assigned to its primary use by floor area and revenue, and noted as cross-type in its record.

## 2.4 Rising Star designation

To avoid the Index simply rewarding the largest, best-resourced venues, any venue with annual turnover under £5 million that achieves a score of 40 or above (and meets the minimum thresholds in Section 3.1) receives a Rising Star designation alongside its tier. This recognises smaller and community venues that achieve strong performance with limited resources.

# 3. Design rules

Three rules apply across every category. They exist to keep the score honest and resistant to gaming.

## 3.1 Minimum Threshold Rule

A venue cannot be classified Certified or Leader on its total score alone. It must also clear two floors:

- Energy & Carbon: at least 15 of 30 points.
- Governance & Transparency: at least 10 of 20 points.

A venue that reaches 50+ overall but fails the floor is held at Listed and flagged accordingly. This prevents a venue from buying its way up the table through, for example, strong sourcing and certifications while doing little on its actual carbon footprint or refusing to report transparently. Energy and governance are the two areas most predictive of genuine, durable performance, so they are made non-negotiable. Proportionate route (v1.2): a venue with annual turnover under £5 million may instead satisfy the Minimum Threshold by holding a recognised whole-operation environmental certification — Michelin Green Star, Food Made Good 3-star, B Corp, or Green Tourism Gold — provided Governance is at least 10 of 20 and Waste & Circularity at least 12 of 20. This recognises that a small, independently certified venue genuinely manages its environmental impact even without corporate greenhouse-gas reporting; it is an alternative route to the floor only and never increases the score. SECR / transparency expectation (v1.3): venues that are stock-market listed, or large enough to fall under the UK Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR) regulations, are legally required to publish their Scope 1 and 2 emissions with a prior-year comparison. Where such a venue does not publish comparable year-on-year emissions data, this is treated as a transparency failure rather than a neutral absence: the venue cannot rank above Certified, and the gap is flagged on its record. Each venue carries an indicative reporting-obligation tag (Listed, Mandatory-SECR, Voluntary, or Unlikely).

### 3.2 Offsetting exclusion

Carbon offsets and “carbon neutral” or “carbon removed” claims do not earn points on their own. Offsetting is recognised only where it accompanies documented absolute reductions in the venue’s own emissions. A venue that offsets a rising or static footprint scores no higher for it than a venue that does nothing. Points in Energy & Carbon flow from measured, absolute reductions and from low-carbon energy — not from purchased neutrality.

### 3.3 Evidence and specificity rule

Every criterion is scored against a number or a defined list. There are no vague qualifiers such as “strong”, “good” or “committed” anywhere in the scoring. Where a criterion uses a percentage threshold, the assessor records the figure and its source. Where it uses a defined list, the assessor records which items are met. If evidence is absent or cannot be verified, the criterion scores zero — the burden of proof sits with the evidence, not the assessor’s goodwill.

## 4. The five categories in detail

Each category below lists its sub-criteria, the points available, and the exact rule used to award them. Points within a sub-criterion are cumulative unless the rule states otherwise; where a rule lists thresholds (e.g.  $\geq 10\%$  /  $\geq 25\%$  /  $\geq 40\%$ ), the highest threshold met determines the score.

### 4.1 Energy & Carbon — 30 points

The largest category, and the one governed by the Minimum Threshold Rule (floor: 15/30). It rewards measurement first, then real-world absolute reduction and low-carbon energy, then the credibility of forward commitments.

ID	Sub-criterion	Pts	Scoring rule — numeric thresholds / defined list
E1	Energy Measurement & Reporting	6	0 — no documented energy or emissions measurement. 2 — annual energy consumption (kWh) measured and recorded internally. 4 — Scope 1 & 2 emissions calculated to the GHG Protocol for the most recent 12-month period. 6 — Scope 1 & 2 reported publicly AND at least one material Scope 3 category (e.g. waste, water, business or audience travel) quantified, with year-on-year comparison against a stated baseline year.
E2	Absolute Emissions Reduction	8	0 — no reduction, or emissions rising. 2 — intensity reduction only (per visitor / m <sup>2</sup> / £) demonstrated. 4 — absolute Scope 1 & 2 reduction $\geq 10\%$ vs a baseline of at least two years. 6 — absolute Scope 1 & 2 reduction $\geq 25\%$ . 8 — absolute Scope 1 & 2 reduction $\geq 40\%$ , OR a verified science-based trajectory with $\geq 25\%$ already achieved. Offsets are excluded unless paired with documented absolute reductions (Rule 3.2).
E3	Renewable & Low-Carbon Energy	8	Electricity (max 5): 2 = 100% renewable electricity on a REGO-backed tariff; +1 = on-site generation supplying $\geq 5\%$ of annual electricity; +2 = on-site generation $\geq 20\%$ OR an additional power purchase agreement with demonstrable additionality. Heat / thermal (max 3): 2 = low-carbon heat (heat pump, geothermal, certified green gas) meeting $\geq 50\%$ of heat demand; +1 = fossil-fuel heating effectively eliminated or low-carbon heat $\geq 90\%$ .
E4	Net Zero Target Quality	8	0 — no target. 2 — a public net-zero or carbon-neutral target with a stated date. 4 — target plus an interim milestone (e.g. 2030) and defined scope coverage (1, 2, 3). 6 — target validated against or aligned to a science-based 1.5°C pathway, with interim milestones. 8 — SBTi-validated near-term targets covering Scopes 1, 2 & 3 AND on or ahead of trajectory at the most recent reported year. Targets reliant on offsetting without an absolute-reduction plan are capped at 2.

### 4.2 Waste & Circularity — 20 points

ID	Sub-criterion	Pts	Scoring rule — numeric thresholds / defined list
W1	Waste Measurement	4	0 — not measured. 2 — total waste tonnage and recycling rate measured annually. 4 — waste measured by stream (general, recycling, food, etc.) AND landfill-diversion rate reported against a baseline.
W2	Landfill Diversion & Recycling Rate	6	0 — below 50% diversion, or unknown. 2 — $\geq 70\%$ of waste diverted from landfill. 4 — $\geq 90\%$ diverted from landfill. 6 — zero waste to landfill ( $\geq 99\%$ ) verified AND recycling rate $\geq 60\%$ .
W3	Single-Use Reduction	5	1 point for each of the following, to a maximum of 5:

ID	Sub-criterion	Pts	Scoring rule — numeric thresholds / defined list
	<b>&amp; Reuse Systems</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a reusable or returnable cup / vessel system in operation;</li> <li>• single-use plastic food packaging and cutlery eliminated across food and beverage;</li> <li>• free drinking-water refill points provided for visitors;</li> <li>• reusable or compostable serviceware used as the default;</li> <li>• a procurement policy requiring reduced or recyclable packaging from suppliers.</li> </ul>
<b>W4</b>	<b>Food Waste &amp; Material Circularity</b>	<b>5</b>	2 — food waste segregated and measured; +1 — ≥90% of food waste diverted to composting or anaerobic digestion; +1 — documented surplus-food redistribution (charity or staff) with recorded volume; +1 — a circular-procurement or reuse programme for non-food materials (e.g. furniture, staging/set, refurbished IT).

### 4.3 Supply Chain & Sourcing — 20 points

Food & beverage sourcing (S2) is assessed proportionately for venues with little or no in-house catering — see Section 5.

ID	Sub-criterion	Pts	Scoring rule — numeric thresholds / defined list
<b>S1</b>	<b>Sustainable Procurement Policy</b>	<b>5</b>	0 — none. 2 — a documented responsible-procurement policy covering environmental criteria. 4 — policy with measurable supplier requirements applying to the majority of spend. 5 — suppliers' environmental performance assessed or scored, with the percentage of suppliers engaged or onboarded disclosed.
<b>S2</b>	<b>Food &amp; Beverage Sourcing</b>	<b>6</b>	1 point for each of the following, to a maximum of 6: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ≥50% of food spend sourced UK / regional (defined radius or national);</li> <li>• certified sustainable seafood (MSC / ASC) where seafood is served;</li> <li>• higher-welfare or certified meat &amp; dairy (RSPCA Assured, organic, pasture-fed) OR a documented reduction in carbon-intensive proteins;</li> <li>• plant-forward menu: ≥50% of the menu plant-based / vegetarian OR a documented menu-carbon reduction;</li> <li>• certified commodities (Fairtrade / Rainforest Alliance) for coffee, tea and cocoa;</li> <li>• a documented seasonal-menu policy.</li> </ul>
<b>S3</b>	<b>Non-Food Material Sourcing</b>	<b>4</b>	0 — none. 2 — certified sourcing standards for at least one key material category (e.g. FSC paper and print, certified cleaning products, sustainable merchandise). 4 — documented standards across three or more material categories.
<b>S4</b>	<b>Supplier Engagement &amp; Scope 3</b>	<b>5</b>	0 — none. 2 — key suppliers asked to provide environmental or emissions data. 4 — Scope 3 supply-chain emissions quantified for material categories. 5 — an active supplier-reduction programme with documented engagement and targets.

### 4.4 Governance & Transparency — 20 points

The second category governed by the Minimum Threshold Rule (floor: 10/20). Governance is treated as a leading indicator: venues that report transparently and resource the work are far more likely to sustain performance.

ID	Sub-criterion	Pts	Scoring rule — numeric thresholds / defined list
<b>G1</b>	<b>Strategy &amp; Targets</b>	<b>5</b>	0 — none.

ID	Sub-criterion	Pts	Scoring rule — numeric thresholds / defined list
			2 — a published environmental or sustainability policy. 4 — a published strategy with time-bound, quantified targets. 5 — strategy board-approved or with named executive accountability AND reviewed within the last 24 months.
<b>G2</b>	<b>Public Reporting &amp; Disclosure</b>	<b>6</b>	0 — no public reporting. 2 — sustainability information published on the venue's website. 4 — an annual sustainability report or update containing quantified performance data. 6 — annual report with year-on-year data against a baseline and stated methodology, AND third-party assured or aligned to a recognised framework (GRI, TCFD, SECR, or an ISO 14001 EMS).
<b>G3</b>	<b>Accountability &amp; Resourcing</b>	<b>4</b>	1 — a named individual responsible for sustainability; +1 — a dedicated role / team or board-level oversight; +1 — sustainability linked to management objectives / KPIs, or a dedicated budget allocated; +1 — a documented staff training or engagement programme.
<b>G4</b>	<b>Stakeholder &amp; Community Engagement</b>	<b>5</b>	1 point for each of the following, to a maximum of 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a visitor / audience sustainability communication or behaviour-change programme;</li> <li>• a supplier code of conduct shared with suppliers;</li> <li>• a community or local environmental initiative with documented activity;</li> <li>• a staff green team or equivalent engagement mechanism;</li> <li>• membership of a recognised sector initiative (e.g. Vision 2025, BASIS, LIVE Green, NMDC, UN Sports for Climate Action, Race to Zero).</li> </ul>

### 4.5 Certifications & Recognition — 10 points

Independent verification is rewarded but capped at 10% of the total. Certifications cannot substitute for performance, and the Minimum Threshold Rule prevents any venue from reaching Certified or Leader on badges alone.

ID	Sub-criterion	Pts	Scoring rule — numeric thresholds / defined list
<b>C1</b>	<b>Management System / Headline Certification</b>	<b>6</b>	A recognised current certification scores 4: ISO 14001, ISO 20121, B Corp (with environmental sub-score), Green Tourism Gold, Food Made Good 3-star, A Greener Future / Greener Festival, or Creative Green. Lower certification tiers: Green Tourism Silver = 3 / Bronze = 2; Food Made Good 2-star = 3 / 1-star = 2. A second, independent recognised certification adds +2 (category capped at 6).
<b>C2</b>	<b>Verified Targets &amp; External Benchmarks</b>	<b>4</b>	2 — SBTi-validated targets; +1 — Carbon Trust Standard or equivalent independent verification; +1 — a disclosed score in a recognised sector benchmark (e.g. Sport Positive Leagues); +1 — a named, credible sustainability award received within the last 24 months (category capped at 4).

## 5. Proportionality and venue-type adjustments

The same 100-point framework applies to every venue, but two mechanisms keep it fair across very different operations.

### Food & beverage proportionality

For venue types with little or no in-house catering — for example museums or stadiums where food and beverage is fully concessioned — the Food & Beverage Sourcing sub-criterion (S2, 6 points) is assessed on the sustainability requirements the venue contractually places on its

caterers. Where the venue has no meaningful catering at all, S2's 6 points are redistributed pro-rata across the other three Supply Chain sub-criteria. The chosen treatment is recorded in the venue's assessment so the basis of the score is always visible.

**Scale-neutral thresholds**

Criteria are written as percentages, ratios and defined lists rather than absolute volumes, so a small venue is never penalised for being small. The Rising Star designation (Section 2.4) provides additional recognition for high-performing venues under £5m turnover.

**6. Evidence and verification standards**

The credibility of the Index rests on the quality of evidence behind each score. Three evidence levels are recognised, and each scored criterion is tagged with the level relied upon:

Evidence level	What it means	Counts towards score?
<b>Verified</b>	Independently certified, third-party assured, or in audited / regulatory filings (e.g. SECR, ISO certificate, B Corp).	Yes — full points.
<b>Documented</b>	Published by the venue in a dated, specific form (sustainability report, policy, website data with figures).	Yes — full points.
<b>Asserted</b>	Claimed without supporting figures or sources (e.g. "we use renewable energy" with no tariff or REGO evidence).	No — scores zero for that criterion.

Each published venue record carries an overall Data Confidence rating (High / Medium / Low) reflecting the proportion of its score supported by Verified or Documented evidence. A venue may supply additional primary evidence to raise its confidence rating and, where warranted, its score; all such evidence is logged with its source and date.

Where a venue's score rests materially on its own published figures rather than independently verified data, this is disclosed. The Index does not present asserted claims as fact.

**6.1 Carbon-data provenance and assurance tiers**

From v1.4, every venue record carries a structured carbon field that captures — where published — the venue's Scope 1 and 2 emissions figure, base year, latest reporting year, trend, and an assurance tier. This separates what a venue claims from how trustworthy the underlying number is, and is the Index's primary safeguard against taking marketing claims at face value.

Each venue's carbon data is graded into one of four assurance tiers:

Independently assured — Scope 1 & 2 verified by a credible third party (for example an SBTi-validated target, Planet Mark or GRESB). The strongest class of evidence.

Self-reported figure — a published Scope 1 & 2 tonnage with a year-on-year comparison, but not independently assured.

Self-reported qualitative — documented renewable-energy, heat or efficiency action, but no published tonnage.

No public figure — no comparable Scope 1 & 2 disclosure was found; the venue is scored on qualitative evidence only and flagged Low confidence.

Assurance quality informs the Data Confidence rating and the published evidence note. For SECR-obligated venues it interacts with the transparency expectation above: a weak or absent disclosure from a company legally required to report is treated as a finding, not a neutral. Offset-based 'carbon neutral / carbon removed' claims and REGO-backed 'renewable electricity' are recorded as such, so they remain visibly distinct from absolute, independently assured reductions.

## 7. Assessment process and cadence

The Index is refreshed monthly. Each cycle follows the same sequence so results are repeatable and defensible:

- Sourcing — public information is gathered for each venue: sustainability reports, policies, certification registers, regulatory filings, sector benchmarks and credible press.
- Scoring — each criterion is scored against its rule using the assessor tool, with the figure or list and its source recorded in the evidence column.
- Threshold and tier checks — the Minimum Threshold Rule, tier and Rising Star designation are applied automatically.
- Right of reply — assessed venues may review their record and submit corrections or additional verified evidence before or after publication; updates are reflected in the next cycle.
- Publication — segmented league tables and individual records are published, each carrying its score, tier, evidence basis and assessment date.

Scores are point-in-time: each record states the month of assessment. A venue's score can move up or down as evidence changes, exactly as a financial index re-rates its constituents.

## 8. Governance, versioning and disclaimer

### Version control

This is methodology version 1.4. The tier boundaries were calibrated against the first 200-venue cohort (June 2026); v1.1 recalibrated the tier boundaries and v1.2 added a proportionate Minimum Threshold route for venues under £5m; category weights and sub-criteria are unchanged from v1.0. Material changes are version-numbered and published with a changelog, and the version under which each venue was scored is recorded so historical results remain interpretable. Version 1.4 adds a carbon-data provenance layer — a structured Scope 1 & 2 record (figure, base year, latest year, trend) and a four-level assurance tier on every venue — without changing the scoring rules; it also documents the figure-driven re-scores logged for v1.4 (e.g. Anfield, Business Design Centre, The Newt, Stamford Bridge).

### Independence

VIA publishes the Index independently. A venue's commercial relationship with VIA, if any, has no bearing on its score; scoring and any consulting engagement are kept separate, and this separation is stated publicly.

### Disclaimer

The Sustainable Venue Score is an assessment of documented environmental sustainability performance based on information available at the time of assessment. It is not a financial, safety or legal rating, not a guarantee of any venue's practices, and not a substitute for due diligence. Scores derived substantially from a venue's own published information are identified as such. The Index reflects VIA's methodology and judgement applied consistently across all assessed venues.

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