

The Edinburgh Pathway

A collaborative route to a sustainable supply chain

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University of Edinburgh



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The University in numbers

ESTABLISHED

1583

NUMBER OF STUDENTS

49,740

NUMBER OF STAFF

16,900



SUPPLIERS

Many 1,000s

ANNUAL NON-PAY SPEND

£350 - 450m

BUILDINGS ACROSS
OUR ESTATE

600+



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Responsible Procurement is...

“... the act of sourcing goods and services in a way that takes into account ethical and sustainable considerations... while aiming to procure and act in a way that is open, fair and transparent.”





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University of Edinburgh **Procurement Strategy** 2030



Enabling **Research**
and **Teaching**, as well
as our **Operations**



Impact and value

Leverage potential for partnership and collaboration with our suppliers for the benefit of research and innovation



Savings, efficiencies and cost effectiveness

Maximise commercial opportunities to drive financial savings and operational efficiencies through effective collaboration and implementation



Contract performance

Optimise the performance of our suppliers to realise the benefits of our contracts, whilst effectively managing and mitigating supply-related risks



Minimising our impact
on the **Environment**



Supplier emissions

Embed sector-leading sustainable procurement practices with our suppliers, evidencing year-on-year reduction in supply chain emissions to support achieving a 1.5°C pathway



Circular economy

Integrate circular economy principles with our colleagues, communities, and suppliers to enable a more sustainable production and consumption model



Wider environmental impact

Improve our understanding of the impact of our supply chain on biodiversity, water scarcity, and chemical pollution, bringing ambitions in line with our approach to climate change



Delivering positive change
for our **Communities**



Social impact

Deliver social impact through our contracts to drive socio-economic benefits for our communities



Economic growth

Shape our contracts to support sustainable and inclusive growth, leading to improved participation of small and local businesses



Responsible supply chains

Ensure we have a sustained focus on the wellbeing of those that work in our supply chains

Purpose Strategic Themes

Priorities

Performance

Enablers

Values and Principles

Reporting



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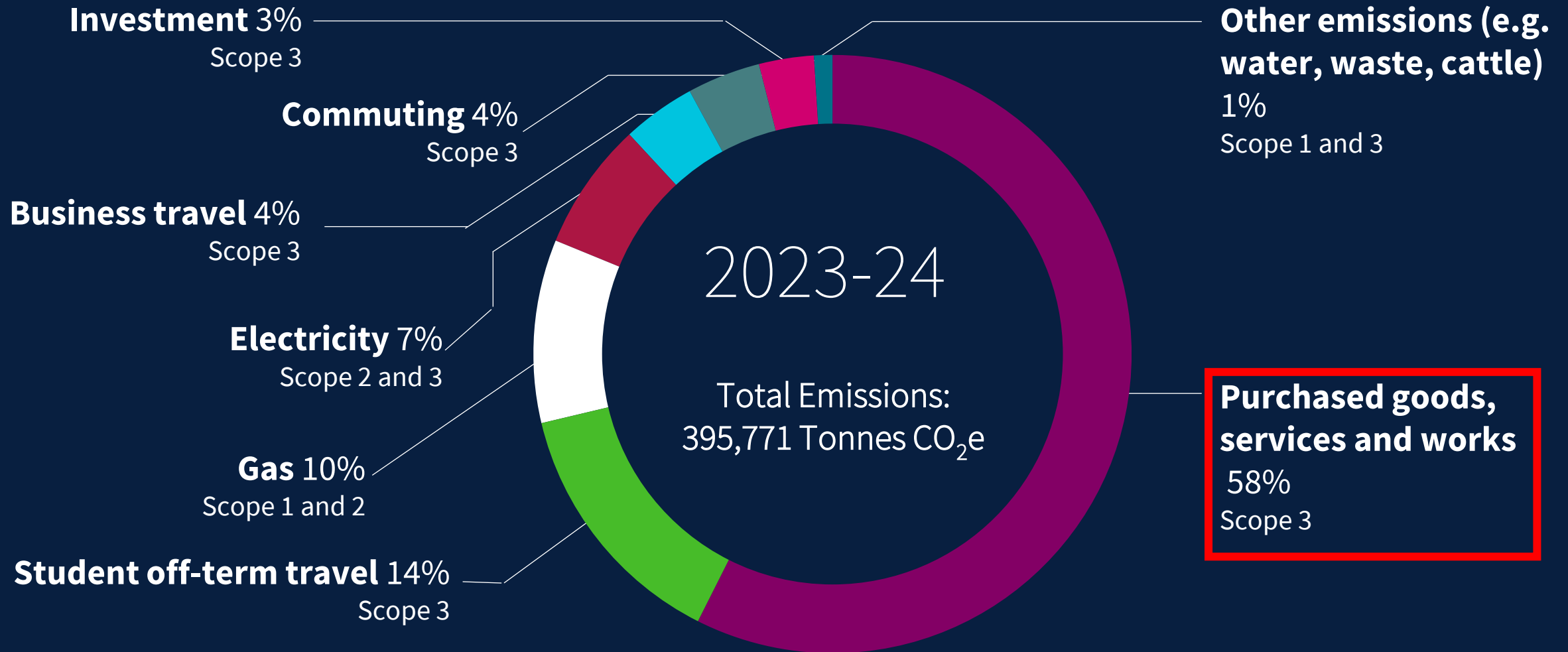


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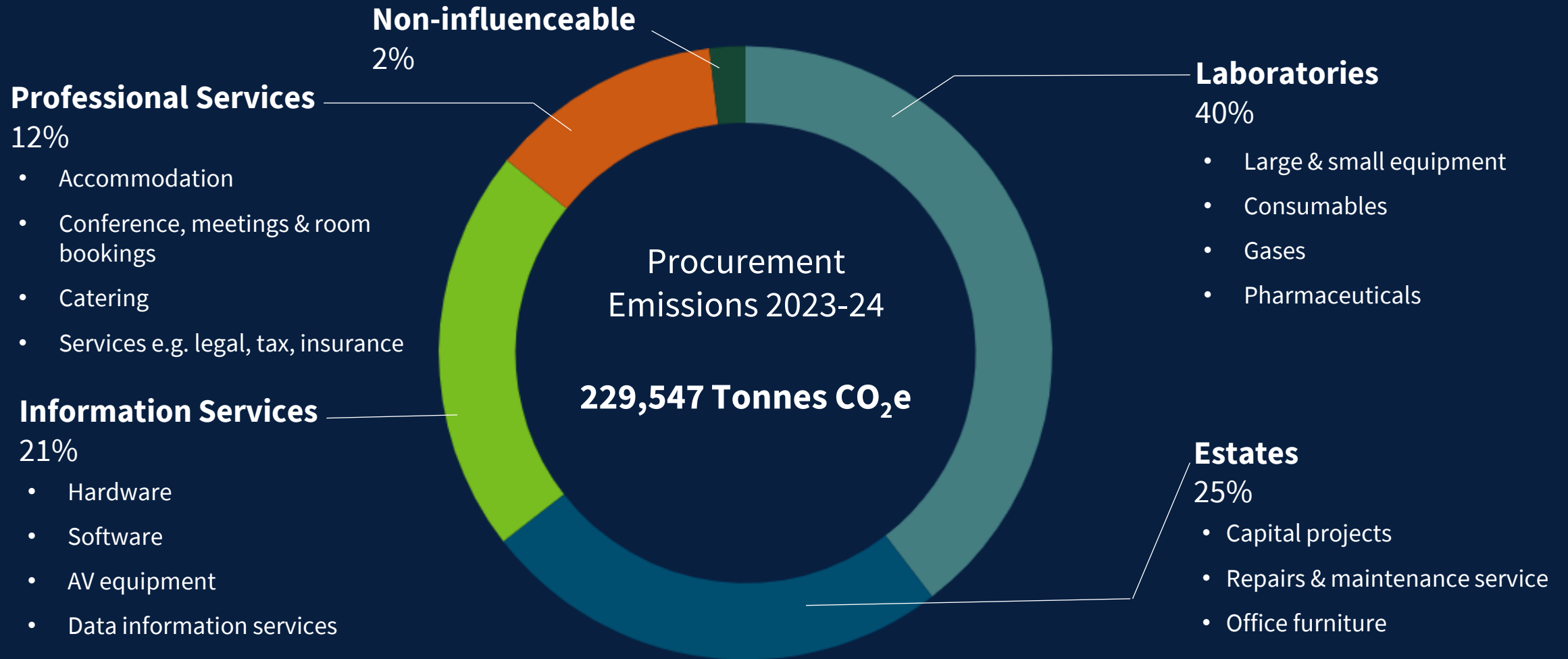


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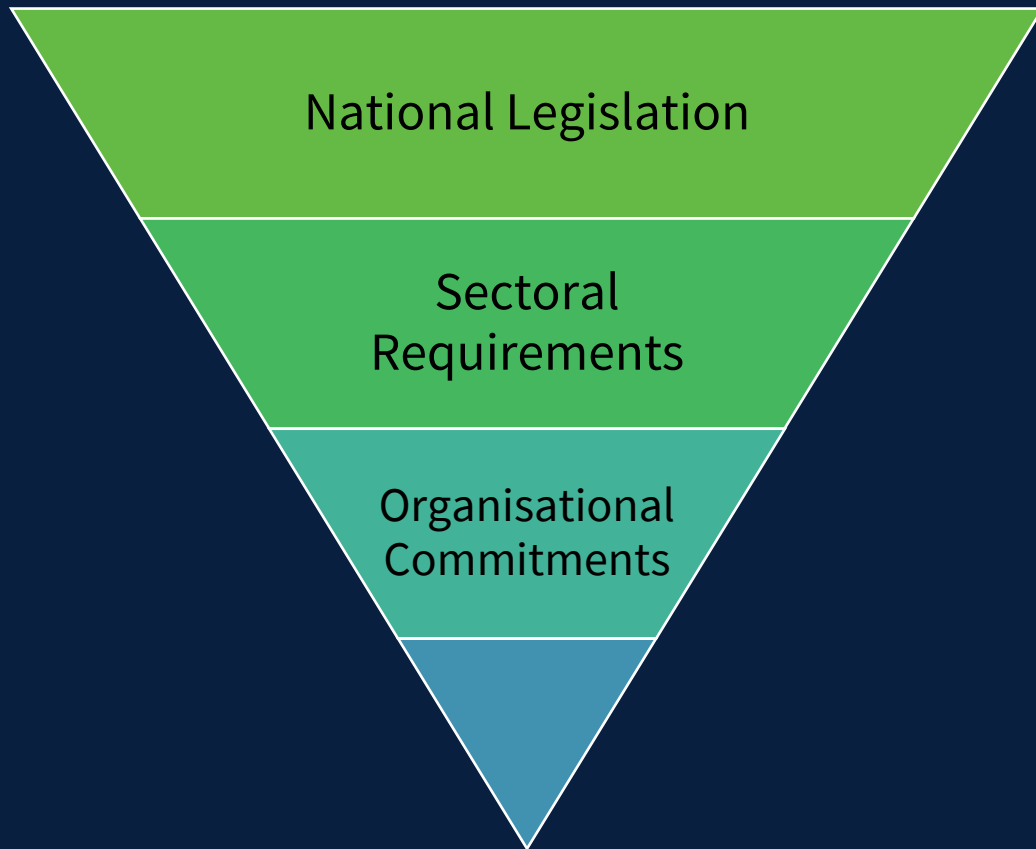
Our emissions



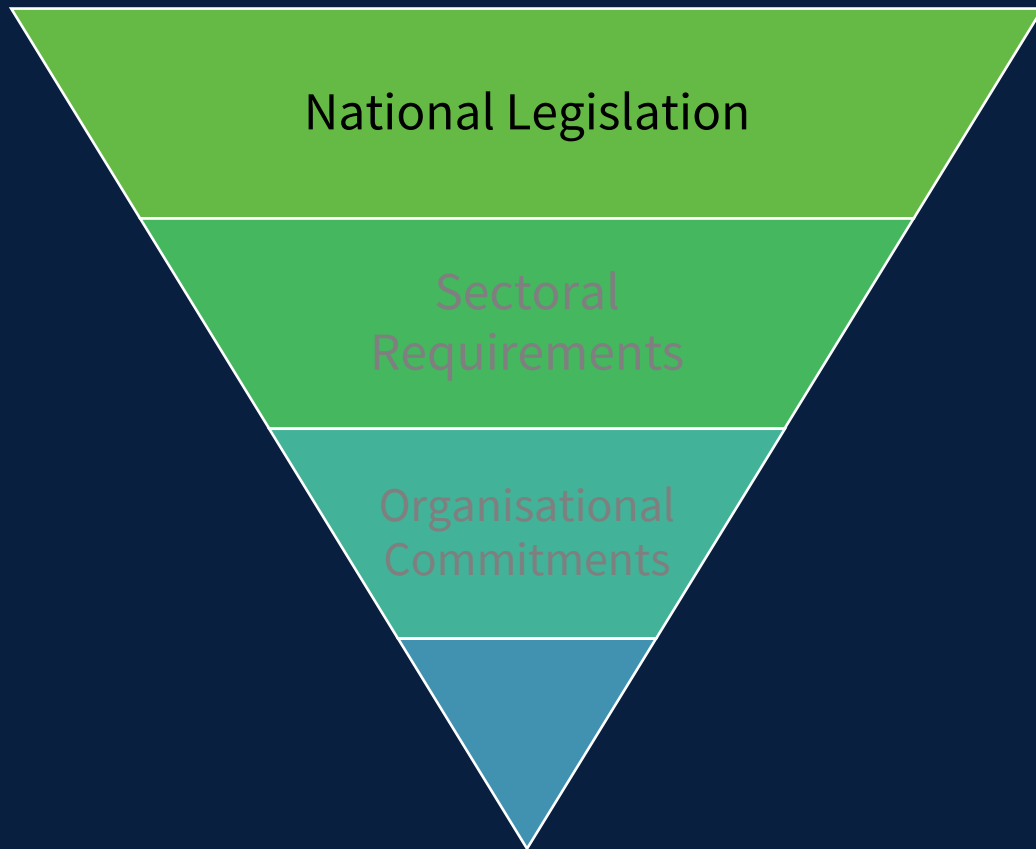
Digging into the emissions from our Procurement



Wider context



Wider context



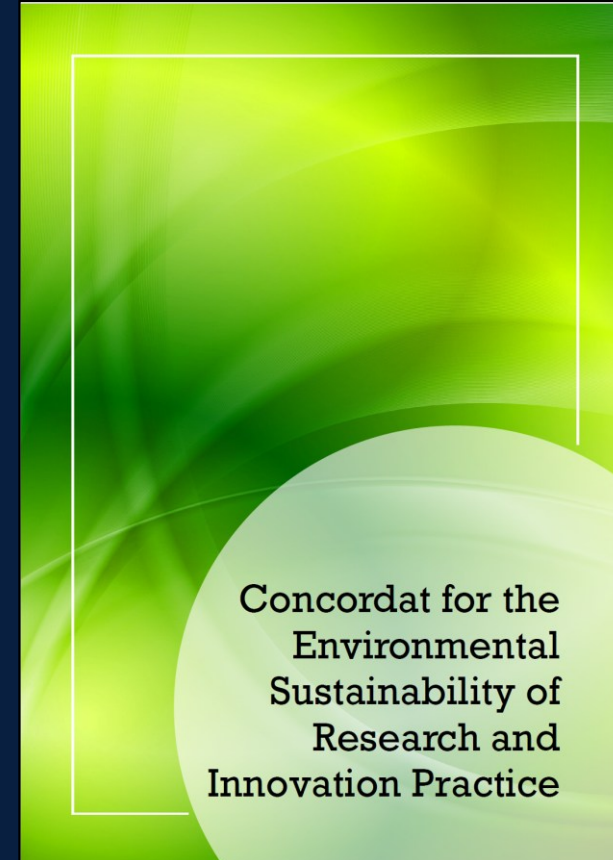
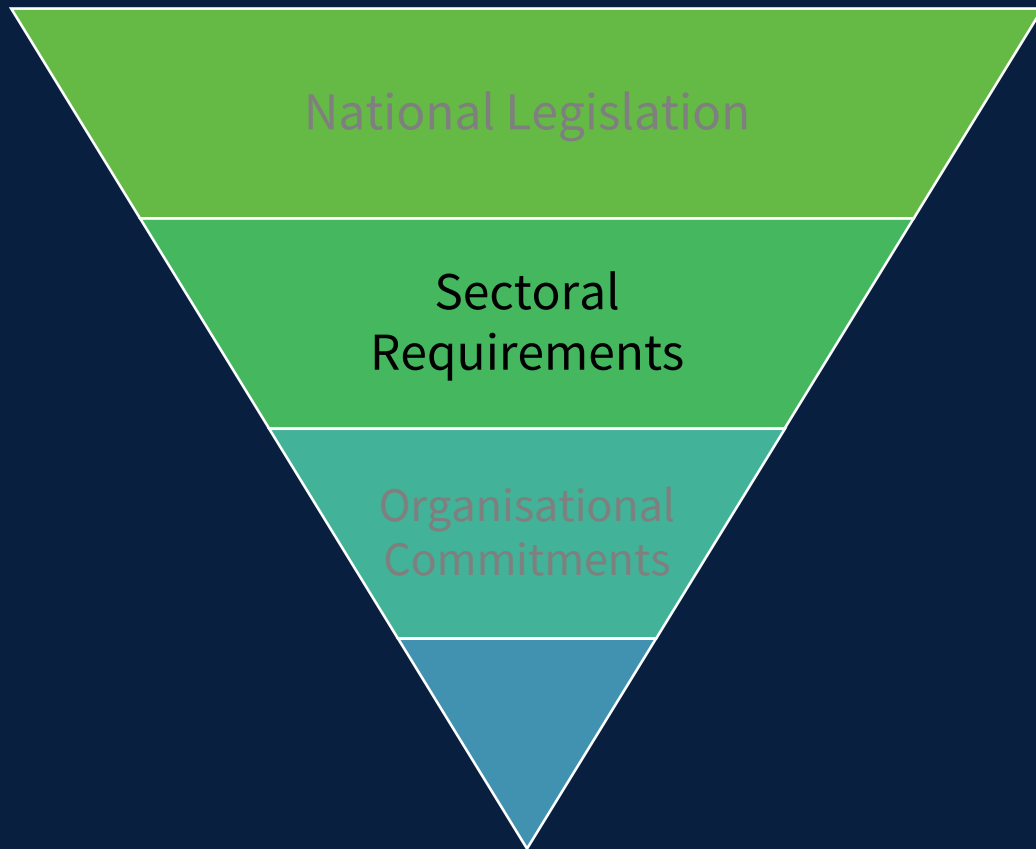
The Climate Change Act / Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland)



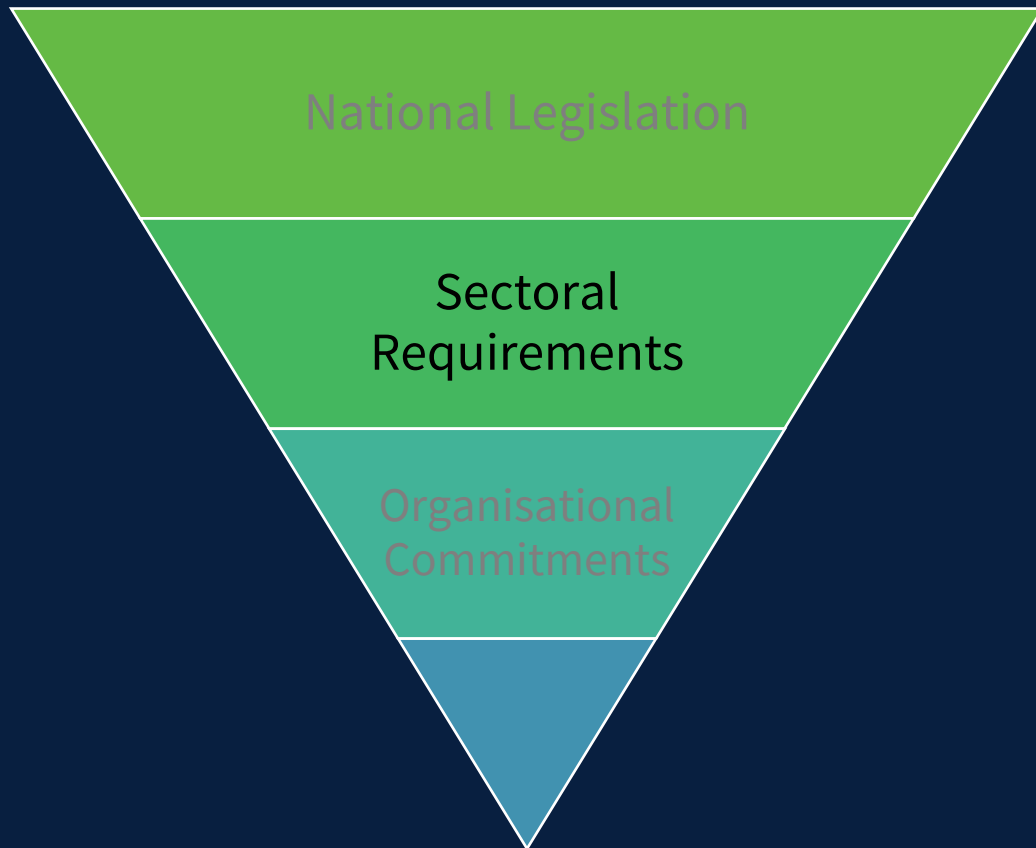
Procurement Act / The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act



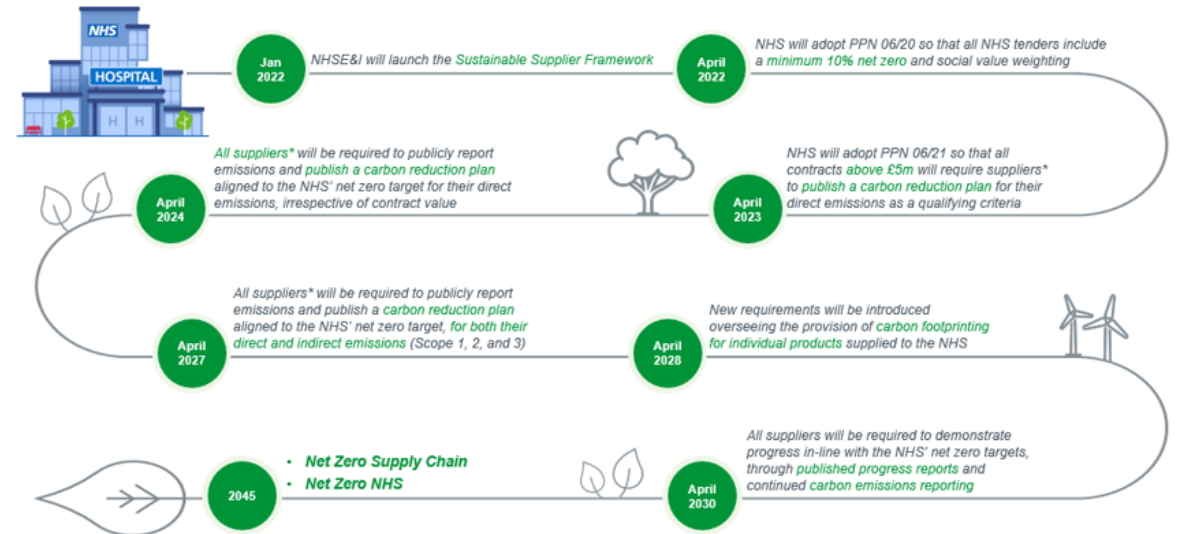
Wider context



Wider context



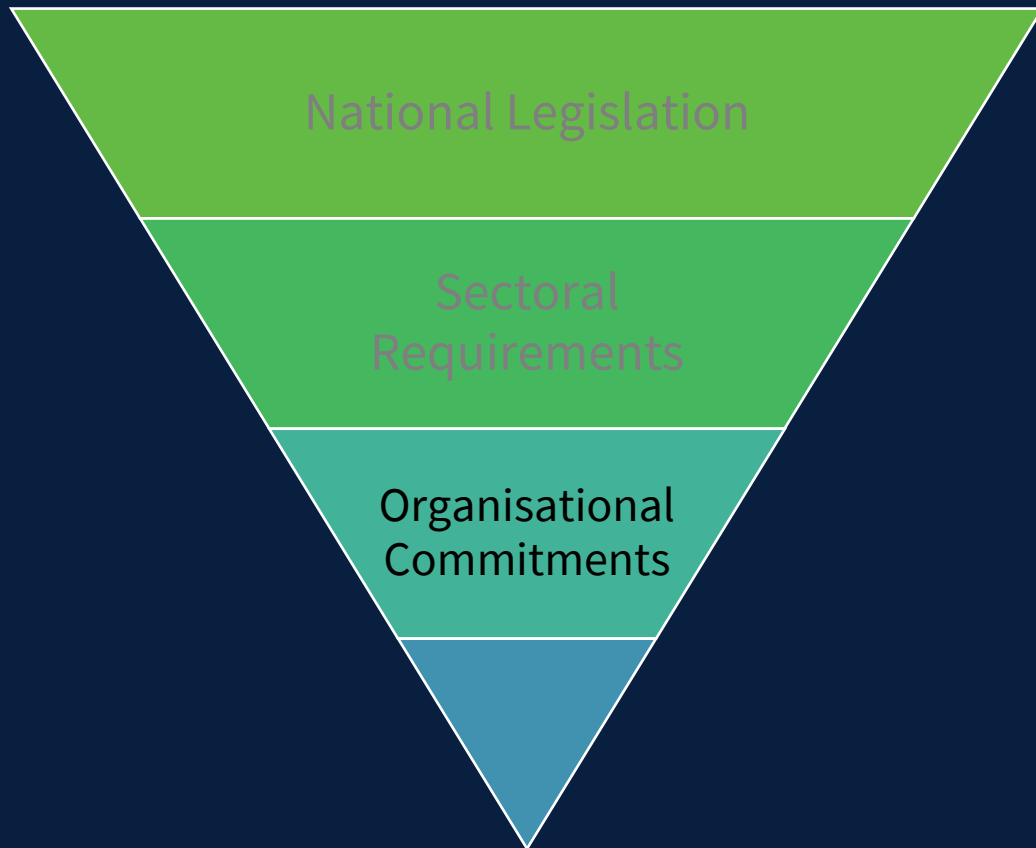
Building net zero into NHS procurement



*To account for the specific barriers that Small & Medium Enterprises and Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprises encounter, a two-year grace period on the requirements leading up to the 2030 deadline, by which point we expect all suppliers to have matched or exceeded our ambition for net zero.



Wider context



Intended outcomes



1. Provides **clear signal of intent** to our supply chain
2. **Increases resource efficiencies** within the University and for suppliers
3. Boosts **mutually-beneficial opportunities** with suppliers
4. **Supports** national, sectoral and organisational **targets**

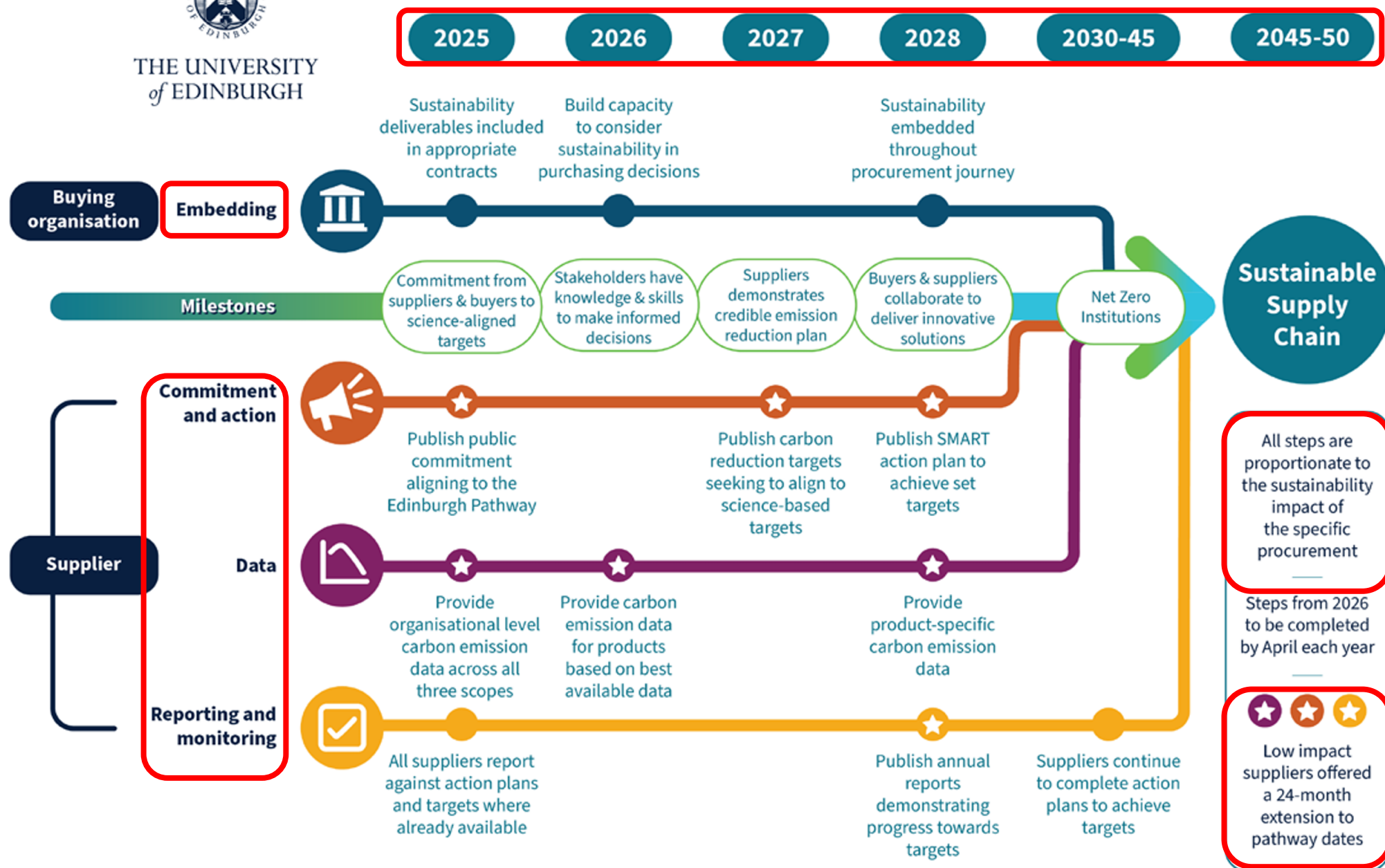
What does the Edinburgh Pathway look like?



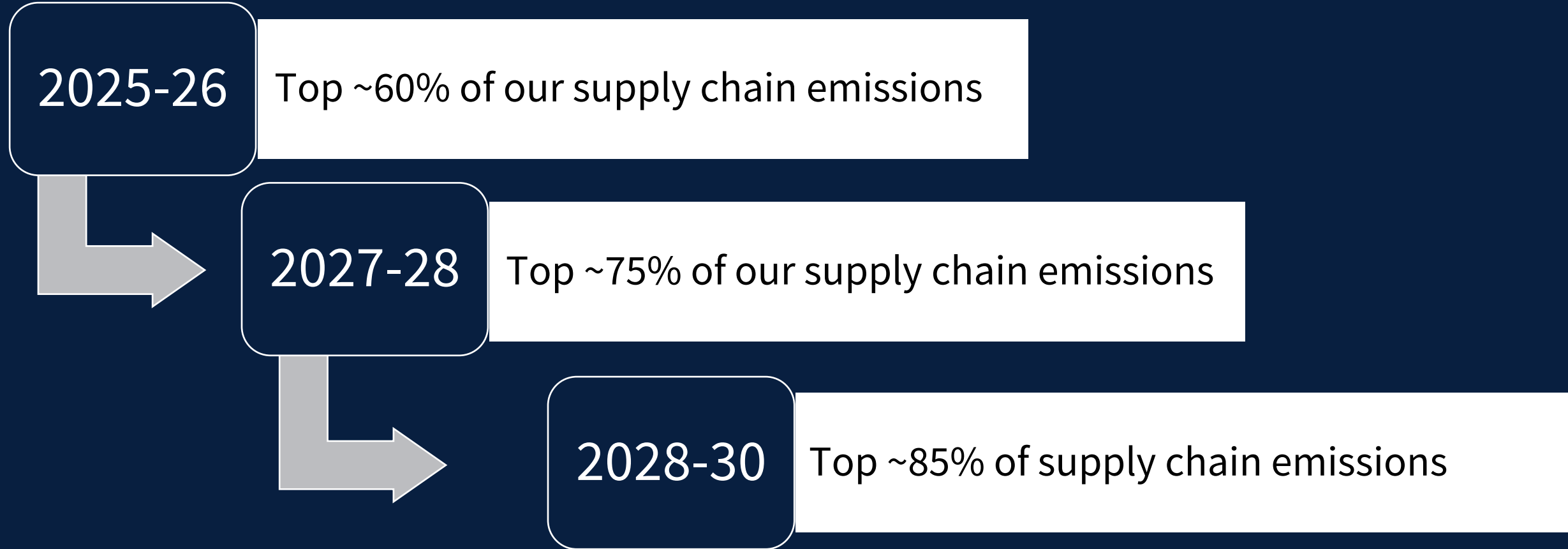


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Edinburgh Pathway: A collaborative route to a sustainable supply chain



Tiered approach



For suppliers



Commitment
& Action



Data



Reporting &
Monitoring





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The Edinburgh Pathway

A collaborative route to a
sustainable supply chain

Implementation guidance
for Suppliers



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Publish public commitment aligning to the Edinburgh Pathway

From December 2025

Pathway milestone supported: Commitment from suppliers & buyers to science-aligned targets

Suppliers will be asked by buyers to publicly commit to undertaking the actions set out in the Edinburgh Pathway before the new contract start date.



Actions overview for this step:

1. Publish a commitment to aligning the actions of the organisation to the steps set out in the Edinburgh Pathway

Publish public commitment aligning to the Edinburgh Pathway

From December 2025

Action 1: Publish a commitment to aligning the actions of the organisation to the steps set out in the Edinburgh Pathway

This must be publicly available on a relevant section of the supplier's website, with endorsement from relevant leadership and link back to the relevant Edinburgh Pathway webpages on the University of Edinburgh website (insert link once known).

Once published, the link to this page must be shared with the buying organisation within three months of the contract start date.

Edinburgh
pathway



adopting
supplier

“ We are proud to adopt the Edinburgh Pathway. We are actively working towards a sustainable, fair and net-zero future by 2050. Committed to reducing our environmental impact, ensuring fair practices, and enhancing community well-being”

Endorsed by [name, title]

Example commitment graphic & accompanying text, developed by the University of Edinburgh Department of Social Responsibility and Sustainability (SRS) Communications team.



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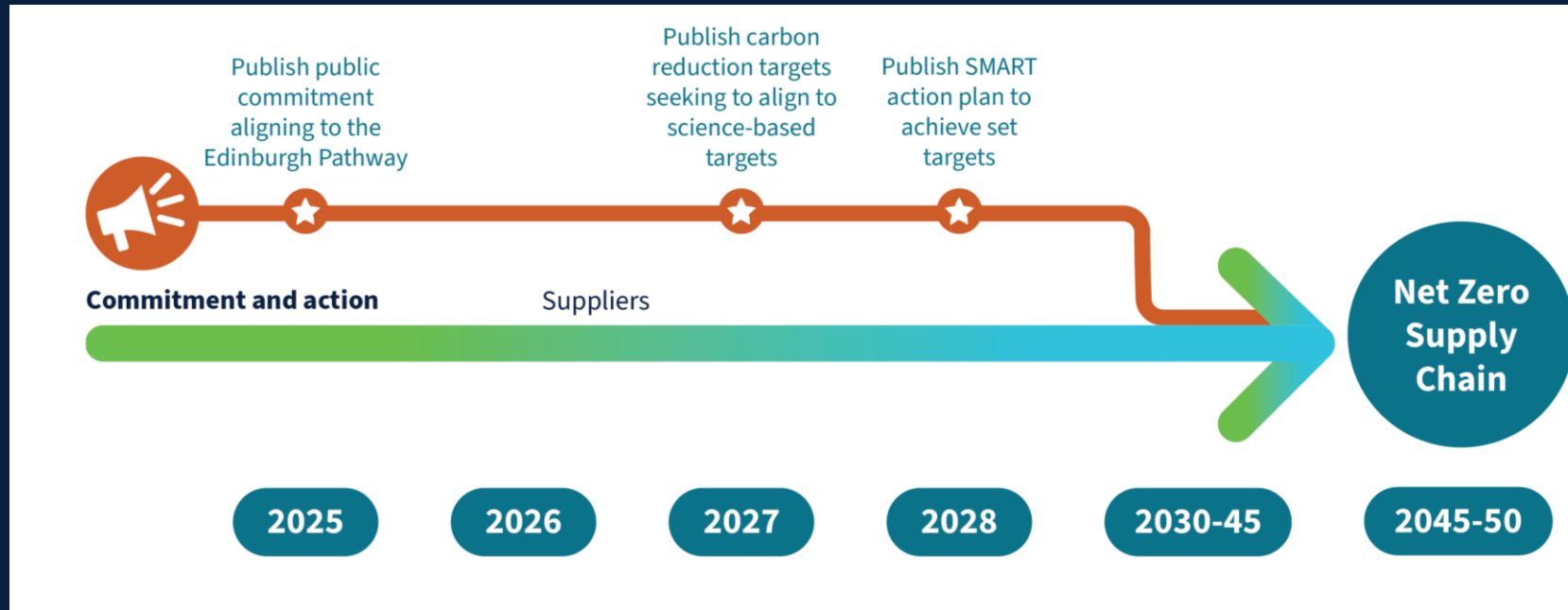
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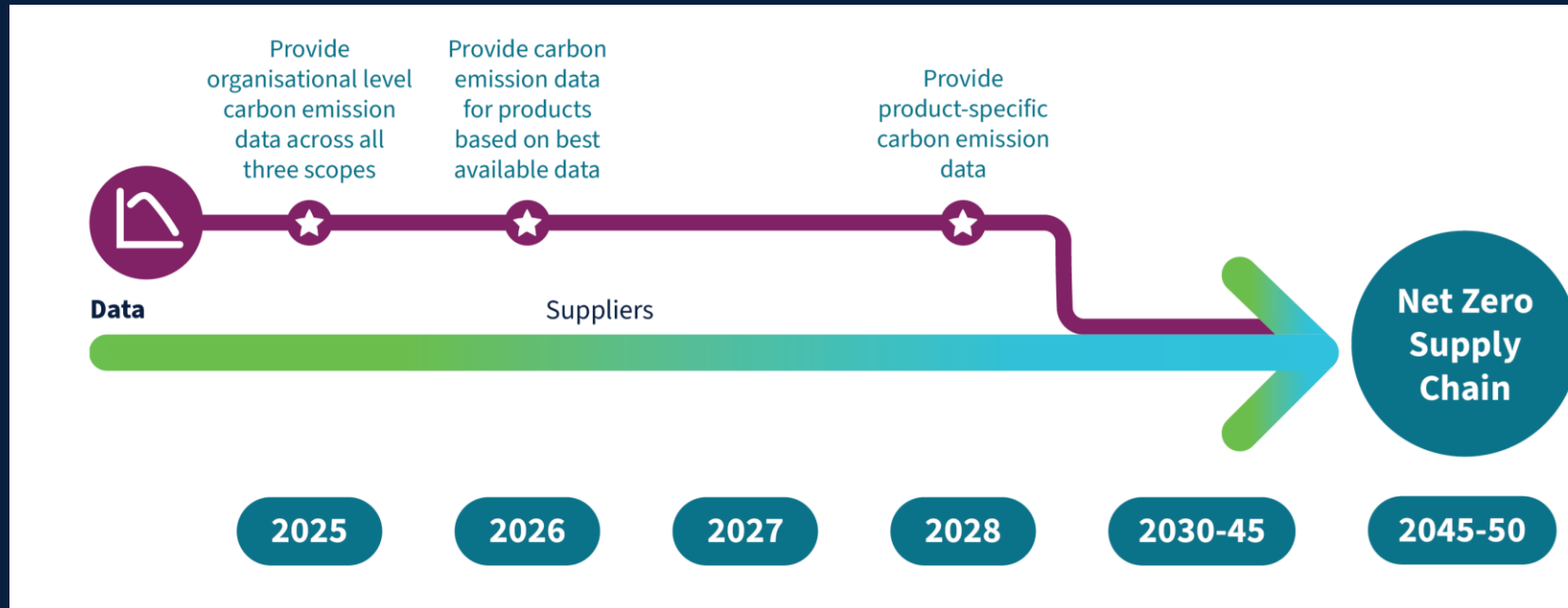
For suppliers

Commitment & Action



For suppliers

Data



For suppliers

Reporting & Monitoring



Steps for the University Embedding



Collaboration in action



Resource Hub



Research Opportunities



Training & Support



Standardised ask



Streamlined Reporting



Sharing best practice

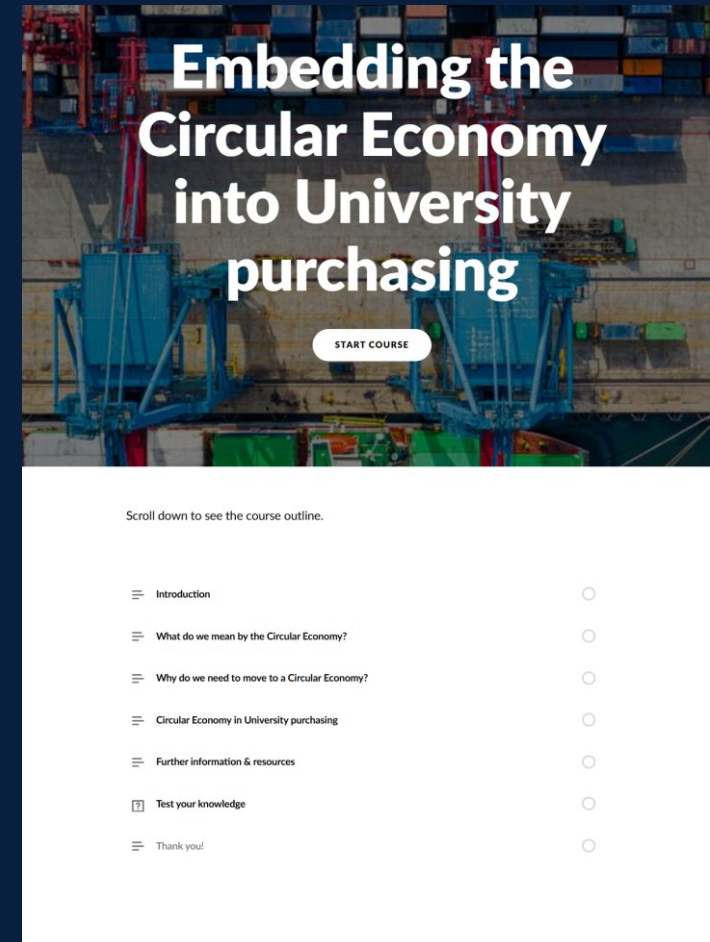


Open dialogue



What this means for our suppliers

- We want to open up dialogue on embedding sustainability and social value into our purchasing
- We see opportunities to work together to tackle our collective impact on climate change
- We must take a tiered approach to make best use of our resources



Key Resources



The Edinburgh Pathway

Responsible Procurement

A collaborative route to a sustainable supply chain

The Edinburgh Pathway is a structured approach that helps both suppliers and the University buying community build a collaborative, fair, sustainable supply chain.

For the University, this means making sustainable decisions when purchasing. To do this, the Pathway ensures that budget holders and requisitioners (our buying community) have the required knowledge, skills and data on carbon emissions and wider responsible procurement themes.

The initial focus for suppliers is the transition to net zero, in line with science-aligned targets. This means completing a timetable of actions to align to a net-zero decarbonisation pathway. These progressive actions sit in the categories of commitment & action, data and reporting & monitoring.

In recognition that not all suppliers will be able to follow a science-aligned pathway entirely, the Edinburgh Pathway is intended as one lever of several to support our carbon emission reduction targets. Other levers available for the University include:

- reducing overall purchasing via demand management and embedding of circular economy principles
- switching to more sustainable suppliers and products where purchases remain necessary and suppliers are unable to meet science-aligned pathways

1 How will University Buyers be impacted?

2 Why was a pathway developed?

3 How was the Edinburgh Pathway developed?

4 What does the Edinburgh Pathway look like?

5 How do I find out more about the Edinburgh Pathway?

Sign up to an introduction session

What this means for budget holders and requisitioners at the University (our buying community)

- ✓ 1. Buyers will see reference to environmental sustainability and social impact within larger procurement projects
- ✓ 2. Buyers will be asked to complete additional training and be signposted to new resources
- ✓ 3. Environmental sustainability and social impact will be discussed directly with relevant suppliers as part of the ongoing contract management process.
- ✓ 4. Our suppliers may change, but our research, learning and teaching are unaffected



edin.ac/pathway



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