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Focused on building for good

Post-event report

The Focused on building for good event explored the increasing importance of accurate carbon data across the construction supply chain and the challenges organisations face when reporting on embodied carbon and Scope 3 emissions.

The discussion focused on how better data transparency, improved reporting tools, and stronger collaboration across the supply chain can help organisations meet emerging ESG requirements and sustainability targets, including those linked to net-zero commitments.

A central theme of the event was that the construction industry is moving toward data-driven carbon management, where reliable carbon information becomes part of everyday procurement and project decision-making.

Industry context

The need for improved carbon reporting is being accelerated by several external factors including increasing ESG expectations, sustainability requirements within procurement processes, pressure from developers and investors, and emerging regulatory frameworks.

These changes mean organisations will increasingly need to demonstrate transparency and accuracy in carbon reporting across their supply chains.

One key trend discussed during the session was the shift toward traceability of materials, with some manufacturers already introducing technologies to track products through the supply chain to their final installation point.

Challenges facing the industry

A key barrier to accurate carbon reporting is the limited availability of manufacturer-verified carbon data, particularly at a product level.

Many organisations currently rely on generic carbon databases, industry averages, or estimated calculations based on assumptions. As a result, reported carbon values can vary significantly depending on methodology and data source.

The session highlighted that data quality and consistency are critical for improving the credibility of carbon reporting.

Fragmented Supply Chain Visibility

Another major challenge is the lack of visibility across the construction supply chain. Many contractors and project teams struggle to fully track which products are used on site, where materials originate from, and how products move through the supply chain.

Without this visibility, calculating the true embodied carbon of a project becomes extremely difficult.

Supply chain data as a solution

Participants discussed how supply chain data can play a key role in improving carbon reporting.

By linking operational data with carbon information, organisations can gain better insights into product-level carbon impacts, delivery and logistics emissions, material usage and waste levels, and carbon performance across different project stages.

This type of integration enables organisations to move from high-level estimates toward more accurate project-level carbon reporting.

Customer and industry needs

Discussions highlighted a growing demand from contractors and project teams for better access to sustainability data.

Key requirements include accurate product carbon values, supply chain transparency, reliable delivery and logistics data, access to supporting product documentation, tools for calculating carbon impacts during project planning, and improved reporting for ESG and compliance requirements.

There is also increasing interest in pre-construction carbon assessments, allowing project teams to understand carbon impacts before work begins.

Role of data digitisation

A recurring theme throughout the session was the need to digitise carbon information across the supply chain.

Current challenges include carbon data stored in spreadsheets, inconsistent reporting formats, and difficulty integrating data from different suppliers.

Attendees discussed the potential for digital systems to help capture and manage carbon data more effectively by linking carbon values to product information management systems, integrating sustainability data into operational workflows, and providing dashboards and reporting tools for project teams.

Changing expectations in procurement

Sustainability is increasingly influencing how projects are evaluated and awarded.

Some procurement processes are beginning to include carbon reporting requirements during tender stages, sustainability commitments within contracts, and greater scrutiny of material selection and sourcing.

As a result, organisations that can provide clear and credible carbon data may gain a competitive advantage during bidding and project selection.

Opportunities for UK construction

Better carbon data could unlock several opportunities across the industry including more sustainable product choices, improved waste management through better tracking of materials delivered to site, and more informed decision-making that balances cost, performance and environmental impact.

Strategic importance

The discussions reinforced that carbon transparency will increasingly become a core capability within construction and supply chains.

Rather than being viewed purely as a compliance exercise, carbon reporting is expected to evolve into a decision-making tool that supports sustainable project delivery.

Organisations that invest early in systems and processes to manage carbon data will be better positioned to adapt to future regulatory requirements and market expectations.

Key takeaways

- The construction industry faces significant challenges in accessing reliable carbon data.
- Supply chain transparency will be critical for improving reporting accuracy.
- Digital systems will play an important role in managing sustainability data.
- Sustainability requirements are increasingly influencing procurement decisions.
- Organisations that can provide clear and credible carbon data will be better positioned for future market expectations.