

# SOUTH SBTi SUPPLY CHAIN WORKSHOP

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# Wates Construction London and South hosts the first Supply Chain Science Based Targets workshop

We recently hosted the London & South SBTis (Science-Based Targets) Supply Chain Workshop, bringing together subcontractors, partners, and industry leaders to discuss the critical role of Science-based targets. These targets provide companies with a clearly-defined pathway to reduce carbon emissions in line with the Paris Agreement goals. Mark Craig, Managing Director for the South, and Steve Holbrook, Managing Director for London, opened the session by emphasising the industry's responsibility to lead on sustainability and meet client demands for innovative, low-carbon solutions. Mark noted, *"Twenty years ago, this wasn't a priority. Today, our clients are investing heavily and looking to us to lead the way."*



## Overview – Michela

Michela Ravaglia, Sustainability Business Partner, provided an overview of the impact of current pledges and targets, and the effect of policies and actions on national emissions, and how they measure against the COP21 Paris Agreement 2015.



She shared Wates Environmental Sustainability commitments, which are centred around three main pillars: resource efficiency, Greenhouse Gases reduction and improvement of the natural environment. She framed this in the wider construction industry context, upcoming standards and regulations and clients' aspirations, with a focus on supporting our supply chain partners joining our sustainability journey and improving their own sustainability. She highlighted that sustainability is not only an industry responsibility, with the construction industry being responsible for around 40% of national emissions, but an incredible opportunity to develop competitive products and services within the growing sustainability market.

## Building confidence in SBTs

Wates has a commitment that 89% of its suppliers by emissions covering purchased goods and services, will have science-based targets by 2027.

Maria Gkonou, Sustainability Manager for South provided an insightful introduction to the SBTis and the criteria for SMEs, explaining the difference between near-term and long-term targets and the importance of setting goals aligned with the 2050 decarbonizations pathways. She conducted a poll asking attendees how confident they feel about setting SBTs, with an average





score of 3.6 out of 5, reflecting moderate confidence. Maria clarified that the process begins with registration via the SBTi services validation portal, and followed with clear guidelines for implementation.

She also introduced the SBTi SME Climate Hub Tool, which provides free tools and resources to help smaller organisations measure and reduce their emissions.

Maria highlighted the benefits of adopting SBTis for SMEs, including improved reputation, alignment with client expectations, and increased competitiveness and innovation.

## Lessons from Industry Leaders

Peter Jones, Sustainability Manager for London, shared insights into the process for large organisations, that do not fall under the SMEs criteria. Large organisations have 24-months to submit their targets after committing to SBTi. Subcontractors Lee Marley (SME) and Keltbray, who both have validated SBTis, showcased their sustainability journeys, sharing practical steps and challenges they faced in setting their targets. These real-world examples underscored the importance of collaboration, transparency, and tangible actions in reducing emissions.



We followed this first part of the day with a further poll to have a feel on how the level of confidence changed after hearing practical advice on how to set a target. It was encouraging to see that our supply chain partners felt more confident that they could embark on the process.

This sparked an interesting debate on the challenges and opportunities of setting SBTi.

## Resources for the Supply Chain

Following the break, we heard from the Supply Chain Sustainability School, a virtual learning platform around sustainability within the supply chains. Wates has been a Partner of the Supply Chain Sustainability School since 2013 and has played an active part in the development of the School. They highlighted the importance of collaboration in achieving sustainability goals and introduced a range of resources available to the supply chain.

These included:

- E-learning modules, training videos, and sustainability short animations.
- Tools and templates designed to simplify sustainability practices.
- A carbon calculator specifically created to help the supply chain calculate and report their carbon emissions.



## Practical Solutions and Opportunities

The workshop closed with discussions on practical steps the construction industry can take to meet sustainability goals. Suggestions included:

- Simple behavioural changes include turning off lights at night and reducing idle machinery use.
- Design innovations, like redesigning piles for efficiency.
- Early collaboration in project design to ensure sustainability is prioritised from the outset.
- Developing a Sustainability Glossary in layman's terms to improve understanding and accessibility.

Mark Craig concluded the session with a summary, reiterating the importance of Wates' collaborative approach and the support available through the Wates WIN Portal. He also referenced the expertise of Dr Zainab Dangana, a leader in sustainability efforts, as a critical asset in driving the company's targets forward.

## Inspiring the Next Generation

The younger generation is more engaged in sustainability than ever before, and the workshop concluded with a commitment to simplify the sustainability message, make tangible changes, and embed these practices across the organisation. As one attendee summarised, *"It starts with small steps at the top, and it starts now."* Wates Construction remains dedicated to driving industry-wide sustainability, supporting its partners in supporting its partners in setting their SBTs, and meeting its own ambitious carbon-reduction targets. This workshop, one of a series, was another step forward in ensuring a sustainable future for the construction industry.



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