



# GREENPRINT 2023

Rating law firms' responsible business  
reporting



# ABOUT RSGI GREENPRINT 2023

The RSGI Sustainable Lawyers programme is designed to drive responsible business commitments across the legal industry and enable lawyers to better reflect their clients' sustainability goals. The GreenPrint research has been conducted on a pro bono basis by RSGI, to shine a light on law firms' current commitment to responsible business and highlight role models.

RSGI's GreenPrint is a rating system for the maturity of responsible business reporting by major international law firms. It looks at publicly available information from law firm websites, reports and third-party organisations to which the firms have submitted. It assesses the transparency, accountability and ambition of firms' commitment to being responsible and sustainable organisations. It also provides a foundation to standardise and simplify law firm reporting.

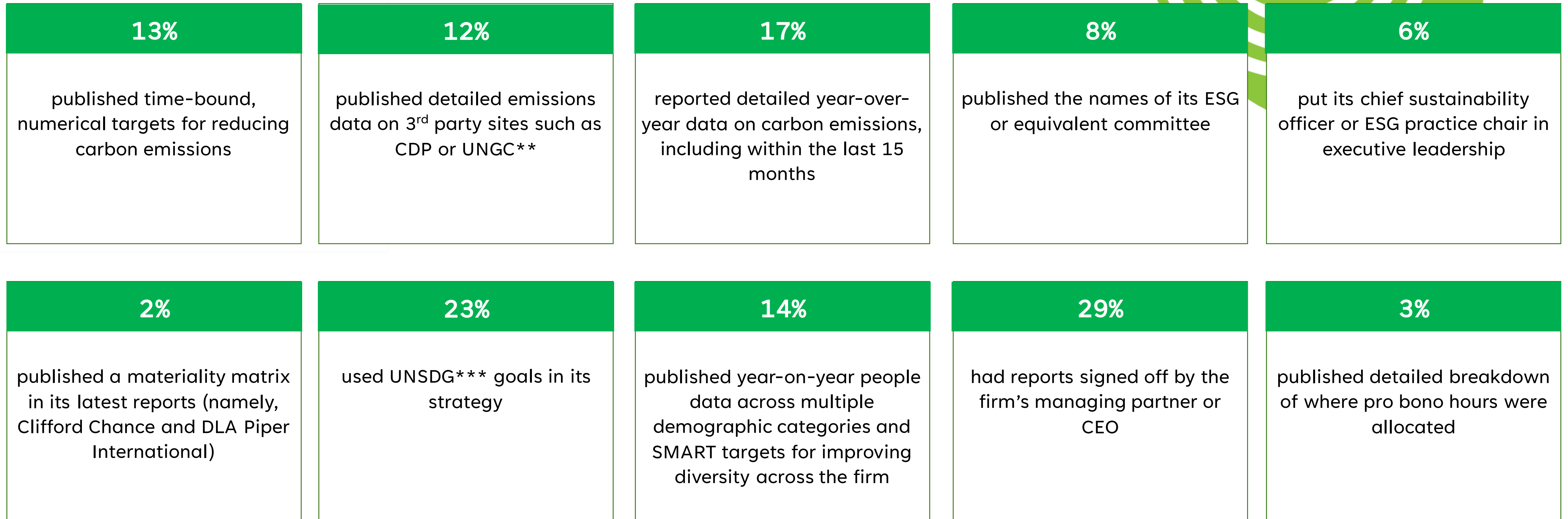
## WHY GreenPrint?

1. It provides a standardised set of criteria against which every major law firm in the world can report.
2. It provides legal purchasers with a universally wide accreditation for their law firms, cutting time and friction out of the Request For Proposal and law firm selection process.
3. It is based on robust methodology and research, looking at globally accepted reporting practices AND what constitutes best-in-class in the profession. It is specifically tailored to law firms.
4. It looks at what the law firms say publicly on key indicators and compares 180 of them so it sets a standard for the industry on *what matters* in assessing whether a firm is a responsible business.
5. It can reduce the time, effort and resources firms spend on reporting, to help them focus on what matters to clients and the relevant elements of different global frameworks on reporting.
6. It reveals the willingness of law firms to be held accountable through examining its public reporting on different channels.
7. It sets a way for law firms to go from being 'good' responsible businesses to 'great' ones.



# How committed are the AM Law Global 100?

Using 10 indicators that reveal a law firm's commitment to sustainable development and transparent reporting, RSGI looked at how the Am Law Global 100\* law firms stacked up. Indicators show good governance and leadership that give a law firm the resilience and organisation to become a **responsible business**.



\*2022 AmLaw Global 100, published by American Lawyer Magazine. \*\*Must be publicly available on CDP (Climate Disclosure Project) or UNGC (United Nations Global Compact). \*\*\*UNSDG – United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

## GREENPRINT RATING 2023



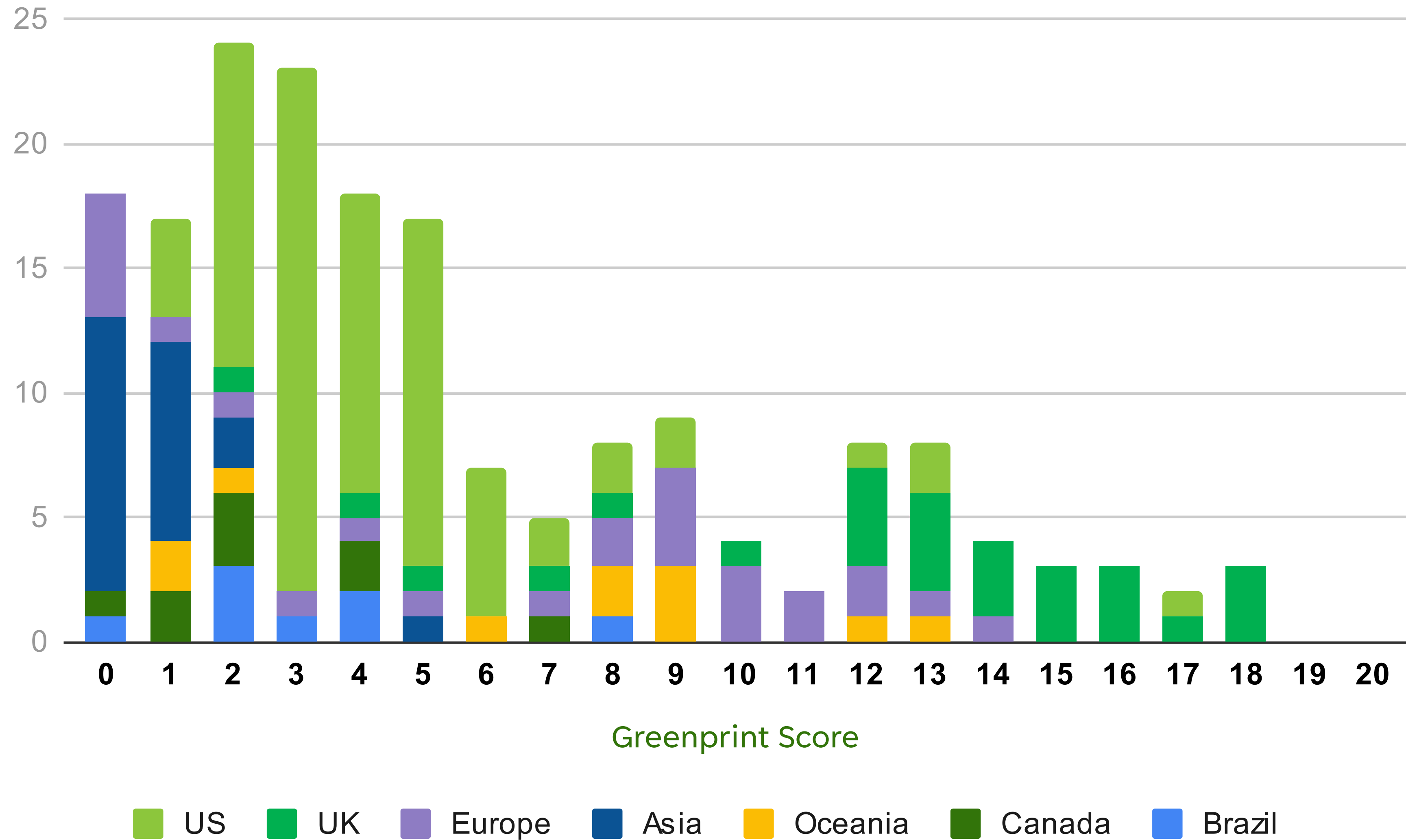
RSGI compared reports and data published by 180 major law firms. The aim was to identify best practice in strategy, targets and reporting.

Out of the 180, only 23 law firms made it onto this leader board, scoring 13 + points out of a possible 20. The majority, nearly 82% of the law firms studied, scored under 10 points. However, 65% state they advise clients on ESG obligations, energy transition and other related issues. In effect, they advise clients to do what they themselves do not do. They talk the talk but do not walk their advice.

## The Leaderboard 2023

GreenPrint Rating	AmLaw Global 100 Ranking	Law Firm Name	HQ Country	Score / 20
5-star	9	Clifford Chance	UK	18
	3	DLA Piper International	UK	18
	119	DWF	UK	18
4-star	71	Clyde & Co.	UK	17
	12	Hogan Lovells	USA	17
	--	Burges Salmon	UK	16
	33	Herbert Smith Freehills	UK	16
	78	Slaughter and May	UK	16
	17	Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer	UK	15
	15	Linklaters	UK	15
	80	Pinsent Masons	UK	15
3-star	11	Allen & Overy	UK	14
	116	Garrigues	Spain	14
	142	Kennedys	UK	14
	121	Osborne Clarke (UK only)	UK	14
	110	Addleshaw Goddard	UK	13
	155	Allens	Australia	13
	4	Baker McKenzie	USA	13
	--	Charles Russell Speechlys	UK	13
	34	Eversheds Sutherland	UK	13
	2	Latham & Watkins	USA	13
	--	NautaDutilh	Netherlands	13
	102	Taylor Wessing	UK	13

## DISTRIBUTION OF LAW FIRM GREENPRINT SCORES BY REGION



# KEY OBSERVATIONS



## On the rating

Only 11 firms score a 4\* or 5\* star rating in RSGI GreenPrint for exceptional reporting and transparent governance. Nine of them are in the AmLaw Global 100. Some firms report regionally but not globally; for example, DLA Piper's international business reports in Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe and the Middle East but the firm does not report in the US.

Overall, 30 law firms in the AmLaw Global 100 have published pdf or interactive ESG reports (including 4 firms who only report regionally). Of these 30 reports, 18 did not score enough to be on the GreenPrint leaderboard.

## Not walking the talk

80% of firms out of the AmLaw Global 100 promote or claim to have an ESG or equivalent practice. Of these firms, only 11% publish Responsible Business reports of a sufficient standard to get a 3-star or higher GreenPrint 2023 rating. There is often a separation in

the marketing of law firms between their client-facing services and their internal responsible business efforts. A way to get over this is to adopt the approach Clifford Chance, one of the best-performing firms in GreenPrint, has taken. Have two internal boards with the same chair: an internal-facing responsible business board and a client-facing ESG board.

## Global divide

The UK is the leading jurisdiction in terms of responsible business reporting practices, followed by Europe and then the US. Over 80% of the 27 UK law firms assessed had reports (22) and one fifth (15) of the 77 US firms reviewed. Of the 23 Asian law firms reviewed, none had any form of responsible business reporting. Key Asian jurisdictions included China, India, Japan, South Korea and Singapore. By comparison, most major Brazilian law firms published reports, six out of eight law firms reviewed.

## Governance: Leadership

Twenty-two of the AmLaw Global 100 publicly named their chief sustainability officer (CSO) or equivalent leadership such as an ESG practice chair with internal ESG responsibilities. Overall, out of the 180 firms reviewed by RSGI, 32 had CSOs or equivalent. Nine of these sat on the executive leadership team.

## Exceptional reporting

The best reporting shows transparency, solid and sustainable data reporting and robust governance structures. Some committed firms had delayed the publication of their reports, exceeding the 24-month threshold set by RSGI, showing the challenge responsible business reporting is for law firms. Weaker law firm reports focus on trivial details, are too long and miss hard data. However, the reporting of the 4\* and 5\* law firms does show more maturity since the first RSGI GreenPrint was published in 2022. These are now more in line with the reports from major multinationals and larger professional service firms.

# RATING METHODOLOGY

## Environment (Today)

This indicator looks at a firm's actual emissions, assessing how transparent and detailed firms are in their reporting regarding its direct (scope 1) and indirect (scope 2 and 3) emissions. Firms that broke down their scopes into sub-indicators, year-on-year, and submitted the data to the Carbon Disclosure Project or UN Global Compact were awarded extra points.

## Environment (Tomorrow)

This indicator covers the targets a firm sets to reduce its emissions. Specifically, it assesses whether a firm has net zero or alternative commitments to reduce its direct (scope 1), indirect energy (scope 2) and, ideally, its broader indirect (scope 3) emissions. Firms that have more ambitious or shorter-term targets score higher.

## Social (DE&I)

Points were given for annual and overall reporting for an international law firm against targets, overall achievement benchmarked against the industry average for diversity and length of commitment to the Mansfield Rule.

## Social (Pro Bono)

Points were given for publishing pro-bono hours per fee-earner. These were benchmarked against the top 10% of hours among the AM Law 100 firms and assessed on the level of detail reported.

## Reporting Quality

This is a stand-alone metric to evaluate the overall quality of a firm's reporting and the mapping of its responsible business strategy to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It looks at the specificity of the firm's current actions, its degree of transparency and the extent to which a firm sets out targets for continuous improvement.

## Governance

This metric looked at three indicators: leadership buy-in, the amount of resource dedicated to responsible business practices and internal stakeholder engagement across the firm. This could include whether a firm had published a materiality matrix and/or had a named ESG or equivalent committee.

## Wide-Lens View

This metric took a step back from the granularity of the other indicators to look at outstanding leadership in reporting, ambition and responsible commitment business approaches. For example, in 2023, extra points were given to signatories of the Legal Charter 1.5 for advised emissions and other stand-out initiatives.



# THE RESEARCH

## Sample Group

RSGI looked at the top 100 global law firms by revenue (according to the American Lawyer Global 200, 2022). Researchers identified and examined a further 80 law firms who met one of the following criteria: one of the top five largest firms in a major jurisdiction; company signatory to the Net Zero Lawyers Alliance or the Legal Charter 1.5; inclusion in the 2021 Greenprint; strong media presence relating to ESG or sustainability matters.

## Time frame

Research was conducted between September and November 2023.

## Research approach

RSGI researchers used only publicly available material including law firm websites and specific websites to test the transparency of the firms'

disclosures: [UN Global Compact Participants list](#); [Climate Disclosure Project](#); [Net Zero Lawyers Alliance](#); [Legal Sustainability Alliance](#); [The Chancery Lane Project](#); [Legal Charter 1.5](#); [Sustainable Markets Initiative's Legal Task Force](#); [Thomson Reuters Index of Pro Bono](#); [Diversity Lab's Mansfield Certification](#); [Vault Law Diversity Database](#). Researchers used Google Translate to read reports in Estonian, Portuguese and Swedish. The research includes only data published in the last 24 months.

## Philosophy behind the methodology:

The approach holds law firms to high maturity standards along two philosophical dimensions: 1) what, quantitatively, is a firm doing today? and, 2) how is a firm holding itself accountable tomorrow? Grading prioritized transparency and accountability rather than critiquing a firm's particular strategy.





**RSGI Limited** is a global think-tank for the legal industry that focuses on relevance, sustainability, growth and innovation for law firms, in-house legal teams and law companies.

The team is known for creating globally significant rankings of lawyers from creating the Chambers & Partners ranking methodology in the mid-nineties (Reena SenGupta) to the FT Innovative Lawyers programme in 2006. Its Sustainable Lawyers programme is based on three core principles: to clarify what the legal industry is doing and best practice; to connect the industry together in more fruitful and accretive ways and to encourage it to collaborate with impact.

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