

ESG Readiness Checklist for UK SMEs

This checklist helps small and medium-sized businesses assess whether they are ready to respond to ESG, sustainability, and supplier questionnaires from customers, procurement teams, or lenders.

Environment

- 1 Electricity and gas usage available (e.g. recent utility bills)
- 2 Basic understanding of business travel (mileage, flights if applicable)
- 3 Awareness of main environmental impacts (even if qualitative)
- 4 Ability to explain how environmental data is estimated

Social

- 1 Current employee headcount confirmed
- 2 Health & safety or employee wellbeing approach documented (formal or informal)
- 3 Awareness of staff-related risks (e.g. turnover, skills, wellbeing)
- 4 Basic HR or people policies available (if applicable)

Governance

- 1 Clear ownership of ESG or sustainability responsibility
- 2 Anti-bribery or ethical conduct policy (or willingness to adopt one)
- 3 Understanding of key operational and compliance risks
- 4 Basic supplier expectations or code of conduct (formal or informal)

General Readiness

- 1 Willingness to use estimates where exact data is not available
- 2 Ability to store documents and evidence in a shared folder
- 3 Understanding that proportional, honest responses are acceptable
- 4 Commitment to keeping information updated periodically

Note: SMEs are not expected to have perfect or complete data. Most questionnaires require proportionate, well-explained information rather than full ESG programmes.