

## Embedding Carbon Impact Assessments in Investment Decision-Making

**This session discussed how public bodies can tackle the carbon impacts in their investments and infrastructure projects by integrating carbon-focussed decision making throughout the assets' lifecycle.**

**This workshop was facilitated by:**

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Managing and reducing the whole life carbon emissions associated with buildings and infrastructure projects is critical in order to meet our national Net Zero targets.

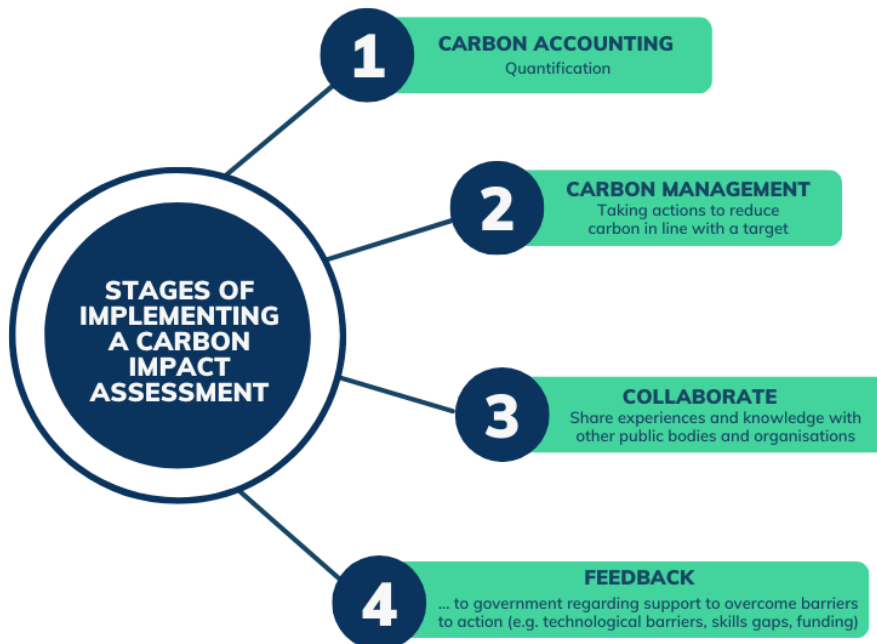
The session touched on the key principles and practices of **PAS 2080** (the world's first specification for decarbonising buildings and infrastructure systems), the related guidance issued by Scottish Government and the **new Climate Change Impact Assessment practitioner guidance** document (created by the SSN CCIA task and finish group).

Attendees also heard practitioners' perspectives on applying carbon impact assessments to public sector decision-making.

### Key Messages:

- There must be a **carbon impact accountability process** for all decisions taken by a public body.
- The **climate impact of a project must be visible and understood** at the point of decision making.
- The **earlier the consideration of carbon**, the greater the potential savings.
- Doing something is better than nothing, even if it cannot be measured. Organisations cannot wait for all possible data before making a decision. Public bodies must **make the best use of the available data, and be prepared to modify their plans over time**.
- **Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA) methodologies** should capture and promote positive action, and not solely the negative impacts of decisions.
- **No one size CIA fits all**. The assessment should be developed in proportion to a public body's level of resources.
- There is an acknowledged **skills gap** in conducting carbon assessments. Public bodies should consider using this as an educational opportunity, and to get greater engagement from their team, by carrying out carbon assessments inhouse.
- Organisations **do not need to reinvent the wheel**, instead, they should consolidate useful existing approaches and frameworks.

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### Next steps:

- CIAs are gaining momentum. Approaches are beginning to harmonise towards a central methodology, which will be mandated at some point in the future, so it is wise to start incorporating CIAs into public bodies' decision-making processes now. This centralised approach will be shaped by forthcoming planning process regulations and economic incentives.
- Implementing a carbon assessment approach to procurement now will help drive and prepare the market.
- Communicating carbon-focussed decision-making ideology to senior leaders within public bodies remains a major challenge.
- Building capacity in monitoring and measuring CIAs to overcome the skills gap.

### Resources mentioned:

- [Scottish City Region and Growth Deal: Carbon Management Guidance](#) (Scottish Government, 2022).
- [Transitional Arrangement for National Planning Framework 4](#) (Feb 2023).
- [PAS 2080 Carbon management in buildings and infrastructure](#) (updated Apr 2023).
- [State of Delivery: Bridging the gap between climate ambition and action in Scotland](#) (May 2023). The Climate Emergency Response Group (CERG) Net Zero Test recommendation for policy, procurement and investment decisions aims to ensure that all decisions are aligned with the transition to net zero
- [Sustainable Energy - without the hot air](#), by Professor David MacKay (2009).
- Examples of geographical boundary approaches used in CIAs: The Ireland Government's [Local Authority Climate Action Plans: technical Annex C](#) and the Swedish Government's Net Zero Plan online interactive visualisation [Panorama](#).



To view the breakout session, click [here](#)