Suppliers Symposium Summary Report
September 2026

1. SUMMARY

The South Ken ZEN+ Suppliers Symposium took place on 10th September 2026 at Imperial College London. Developed by a project team from the South Ken ZEN+ Procurement Working Group, the event supported SME and Tier 2 suppliers at the early stages of their decarbonisation journey.

The Symposium welcomed 48 attendees representing 31 different SMEs serving 19 SKCQ members. Its programme combined introductory presentations, practical workshops, networking and a closing panel discussion, covering emissions reporting, carbon footprint calculations and energy efficiency.

The event was exceptionally well received, with the lowest feedback score for any component reaching 4.5 out of 5. SKCQ member institutions also recognised that this was an initiative they would have struggled to deliver individually, highlighting the value of South Ken ZEN+ coordinating this sort of activity on behalf of the network.

In addition to support from Imperial and the South Ken ZEN+ budget, 6 SKCQ members - the Royal College of Art, the Royal Albert Hall, the Royal College of Music, the Natural History Museum, the V&A and the Design Museum - contributed £200 to the event costs. This further highlights the economies of scale to be had when South Ken ZEN+ drive collective activities.

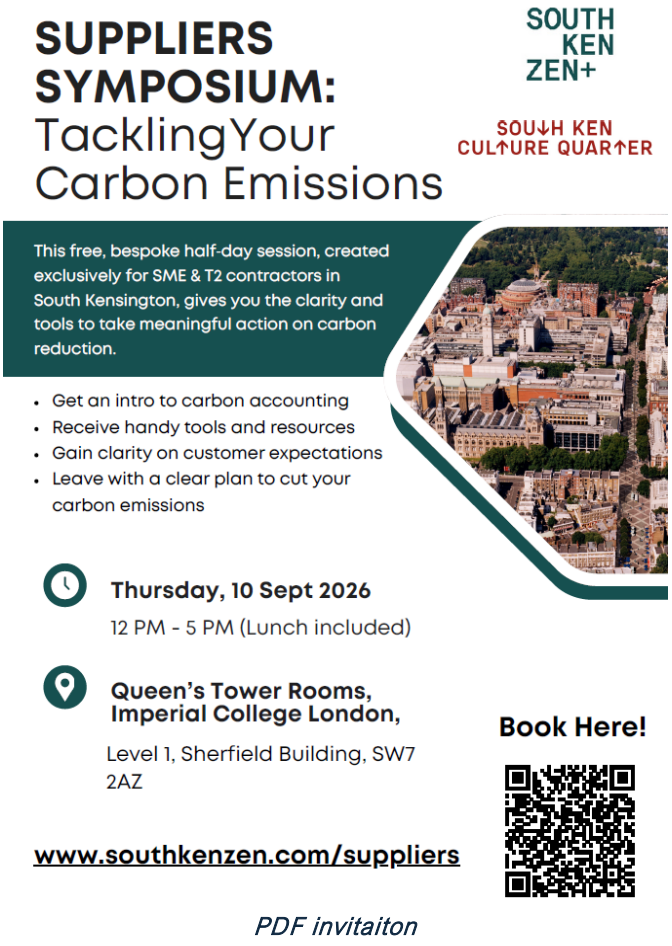
This report outlines the rationale, planning process and event format, capturing lessons that could help other organisations develop similar collaborative initiatives.

2. PROJECT ORIGINS

South Ken ZEN+ brings together 22 members of the South Ken Culture Quarter to accelerate progress towards a zero-emissions and nature-positive neighbourhood. Since Purchased Goods & Services account for 60% of our total neighbourhood Carbon footprint, sustainable procurement is a key part of this work, including the shared commitment to encourage suppliers to reduce their environmental impact through the South Ken ZEN+ Supply Chain Charter.

As a result of research conducted in 2025, we knew that the majority of our collective SME and T2 suppliers were relatively immature when it comes to understanding and acting on their GHG emissions. Smaller businesses may have limited resources or expertise to understand their carbon footprint, collect the necessary data and respond to clients' requirements.

The SKZ+ Procurement Working Group identified an opportunity to support suppliers facing growing expectations around emissions reporting and sustainability. The half-day Supplier's Symposium was developed to address these challenges by providing accessible guidance, practical advice and opportunities for suppliers to ask questions. It also offered SKCQ members a way to communicate shared expectations and pool their expertise.



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A dedicated sub-group within the SKZ+ Procurement Working Group was established to coordinate the project and reported progress to the wider group. This structure gave the team a clear forum for developing the ideas, sourcing speakers and sharing responsibilities.

3. PREPARATION & AUDIENCE INSIGHTS

Planning the Event

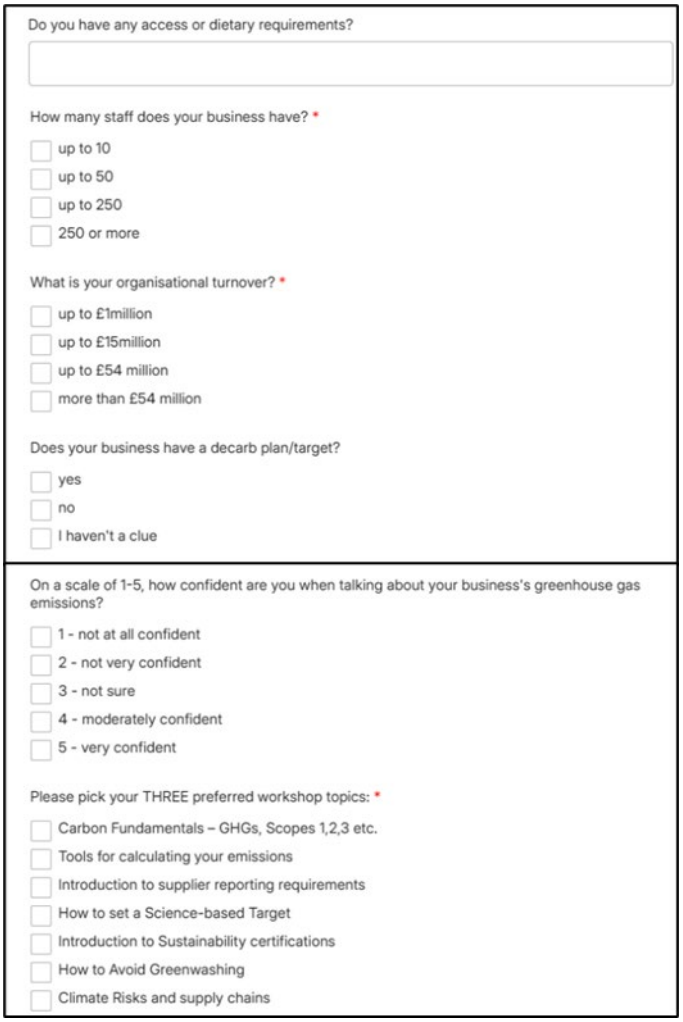
The project team brought together expertise from SKCQ members and external partners to develop the agenda, identify speakers and facilitators, organise the venue and coordinate event-day responsibilities.

The team aimed to accommodate businesses with different levels of sustainability knowledge, but the Symposium was primarily intended for those at the lower end of the expertise spectrum. The programme therefore included introductory sessions alongside more practical workshops on reporting requirements, emissions data and energy efficiency.

The Procurement Working Group also made a point of revising the South Ken ZEN+ Supply Chain Charter in the run-up to the Symposium, in order to promote it at the event itself.

Invitation and Registration: Understanding the Audience

Invitations were circulated through South Ken ZEN+ newsletters and SKCQ LinkedIn to raise awareness of the Symposium and reach suppliers across the network. Alongside these wider communications, Heads of Procurement and Sustainability Leads from participating SKCQ members sent direct email invitations to selected suppliers they particularly wanted to engage, with the event invitation attached.



Questions posed in the Registration form

This targeted approach helped the team reach businesses whose involvement was considered valuable, while wider communications ensured the opportunity was visible to a broader audience. Combining direct outreach with network-wide promotion supported registration and helped bring together suppliers serving different SKCQ members. In total 60 people registered for the event, with 48 actually attending on the day.

The registration form also contained a survey which served two purposes: to build a picture of the businesses attending and to understand what suppliers wanted to learn. This was instrumental in helping the team to shape the Agenda for the day.

In the registration form, attendees were asked about their job roles, organisations, the SKCQ members they supplied, staff headcount and organisational turnover. The form also explored their existing emissions footprint, environmental reporting systems and relative levels of confidence discussing greenhouse gas emissions. Alongside this, attendees were also invited to select their preferred sessions from a list of possible workshop topics.

These responses helped the team understand suppliers' existing needs, knowledge gaps and priorities.

The resulting agenda combined introductory sessions with practical guidance on reporting and energy reduction, giving suppliers at different stages of their sustainability journey relevant ways to engage. The registration questions also provided a useful starting point for identifying areas where people could be signposted to for further training and support.

Understanding the Businesses Attending

Registration data highlighted the range of business sizes and sustainability experience represented at the event. Most responding businesses were relatively small: 55% of registration entries indicated a workforce of up to 50 employees. Turnover was predominantly on the SME side – with more than 60% of registered attendees coming for organisations with turnover of £15million or less.

Existing Emissions Reporting Practices

The registration survey highlighted gaps in suppliers' readiness to measure and report their greenhouse gas emissions – with only 18 reporting that they had an established Carbon Footprint.

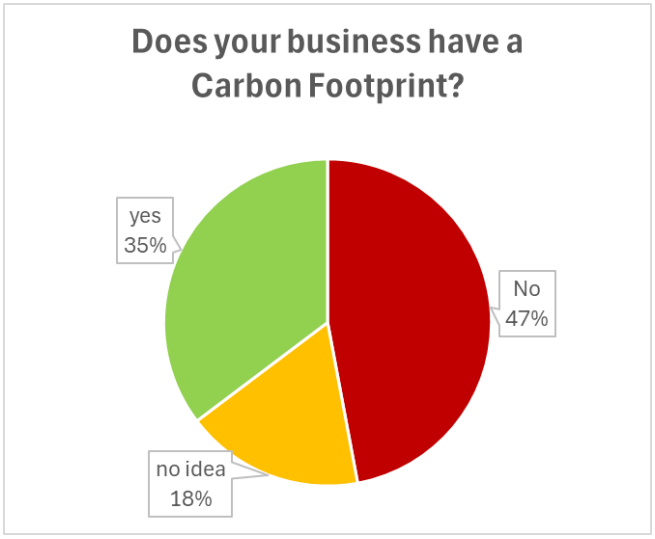
SOUTH KEN ZEN+ **SUPPLIERS SYMPOSIUM AGENDA**

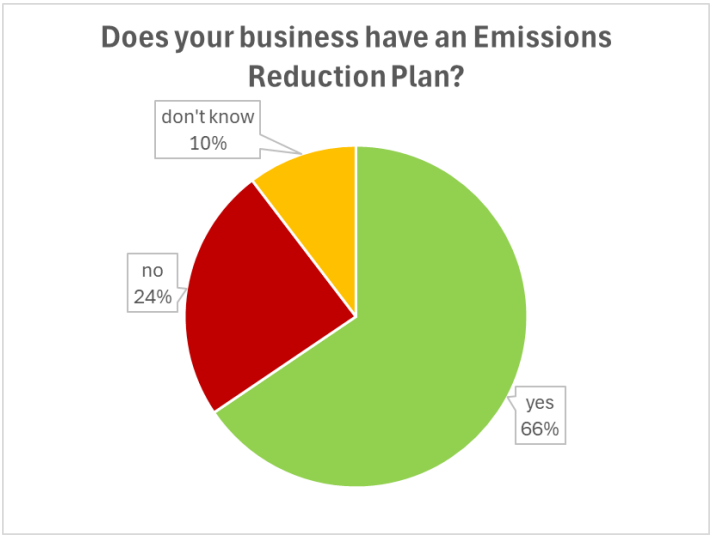
Thursday, 10 Sept 2026 (12 PM - 5 PM)
Level 1, Sherfield Building, Imperial College London, SW7
What3words: lunch.pints.shovels

12:00	Arrive, lunch & networking		
12:30	Welcome, introductions & keynote speech		
13:30	Move around (choose one of the following workshops):		
13:40	**Workshop 1A** Elements of a Carbon Footprint - Intro to GHG and Scopes	**Workshop 1B** Introduction to supplier reporting requirements	**Workshop 1C** Energy Reductions - to save Carbon and Costs
14:40	Break (and move to the next workshop):		
15:10	**Workshop 2A** Tools for calculating your emissions	**Workshop 2B** Introduction to supplier reporting requirements	**Workshop 2C** Energy Reductions - to save Carbon and Costs
16:10	Move around		
16:20	Panel discussion, feedback, wrap-up & close		
17:00	Depart (optional site visits available)		

Final Symposium Agenda

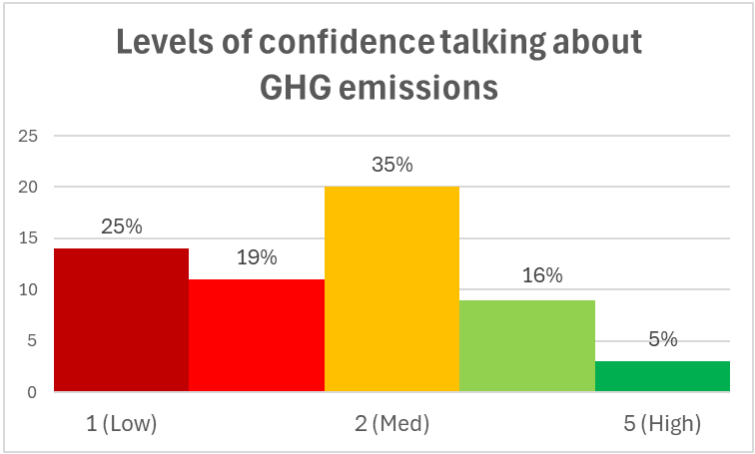
Despite this, a much larger proportion (38) appear to have an Emissions Reduction Plan in place. This suggests that suppliers are having to demonstrate action on emissions with clients (in the form or ERPs) without necessarily understanding their baselines (Carbon Footprints).





Self-reported confidence in discussing greenhouse gas emissions was generally modest, with 79% of respondents responding that their confidence levels were Low to Medium.

Taken together, these findings supported the case for an event that combined foundational knowledge with practical advice. Suppliers needed to understand the basics of greenhouse gas emissions and carbon footprints, as well as the data, tools and processes that could help them respond to client requests.



4. EVENT FORMAT AND WORKSHOPS

The afternoon began with lunch and networking, followed by a welcome presentation from Imperial and a keynote speech from Seacourt Printing, an exemplary B-Corp and SME who set the scene and inspired delegates with the 'art of the possible' when it comes to innovating and running a sustainable business.

Two rounds of workshops followed, with a 30-minute break in between. A closing panel discussion and audience Q&A brought the event to a close at 5 pm.

Three rooms hosted parallel sessions, allowing attendees to choose topics relevant to their businesses. Repeating two of the workshops in the second round gave more delegates access to these sessions:

	ROOM C (Capacity ±25)	ROOM B (Capacity ±35)	ROOM A (Capacity ±20)
13:40 (60 mins)	Workshop 1A **Energy Reductions – to save Carbon and Costs** Top tips and quick wins for how to make sustainability and efficiency changes in your organisation from an energy perspective.	Workshop 1B **Introduction to supplier reporting requirements** A session focussed on clarifying what your company's emissions reporting requirements might be, based on your size, turnover etc. We will also go into customer expectations, sustainability weightings across the South Ken ZEN+ network and how this might inform your future tenders.	Workshop 1A **The Elements of a Carbon Footprint - Intro to GHGs and Scopes** This is a quick introduction to climate change, Greenhouse gasses and Scope 1,2, and 3 emissions. Join this workshop if you're starting from scratch.
14:40 (30 mins)	Coffee break & move around		
15:10 (60 mins)	Workshop 2C **Energy Reductions – to save Carbon and Costs** Top tips and quick wins for how to make sustainability and efficiency changes in your organisation from an energy perspective.	Workshop 2B **Introduction to supplier reporting requirements** A session focussed on clarifying what your company's emissions reporting requirements might be, based on your size, turnover etc. We will also go into customer expectations, sustainability weightings across the South Ken ZEN+ network and how this might inform your future tenders.	Workshop 2A **Tools for calculating your emissions** A recap of emissions scopes and a run-down of the data types you will need to gather to produce a decent emissions report. We'll introduce you to a couple of different monitoring tools you could use too.

Closing Panel

The event concluded with a panel featuring supplier and client perspectives, followed by audience questions and horizon-scanning. Mentimeter was used to encourage audience participation, and the team captured useful links and resources which were shared with attendees in a follow-up email after the event, along with all the slide decks.

The combination of workshops, networking and open discussion gave suppliers opportunities to build their knowledge, exchange experiences and engage directly with clients and sustainability practitioners.

5. ATTENDANCE AND REACH

The Symposium welcomed 48 attendees representing 34 different SMEs and serving 19 SKCQ members. The audience brought together businesses from across the supply chain, alongside SKCQ representatives and external sustainability partners, creating opportunities for suppliers to learn from one another and engage directly with their clients.

SKCQ members in attendance (19 people):

SKZ+ members were instrumental in the successful execution of the Symposium. They all pitched-in with various aspects of the day, from taking names at reception, to networking, delivering workshops and directing people to the right room. They should be commended for their contributions.

Natural History Museum
Science Museum
V&A South Kensington
Royal Albert Hall
Imperial College London
Royal College of Music
Historic Royal Palaces
The Ismaili Centre
Japan House London
Royal College of Art

External organisations represented:

LSI projects	Omni Colour Presentations Ltd	Quest interiors	Seacourt Ltd
Avison Young	Cultureshock Media Ltd	Greenway Associates	MCD Heritage
Displayways	ADEX Asbestos Consultants Ltd	Loop Engineering	MCo Group
BrandArt Limited	Faithorn Farrell Timms LLP	Lamp & Pencil Ltd	HUB Build
Uncle Beef	Focus Lighting & Productions	Solved Workshop	setWorks Ltd
Cafeology	Plowden & Smith Ltd	The Hub Limited	
CJC Design	Russell Cawberry Ltd.	KitMapper Limited	
Crown Fine Art	BASSE Solutions Limited	Cadogan Tate Group	

External partners in attendance (7 people):

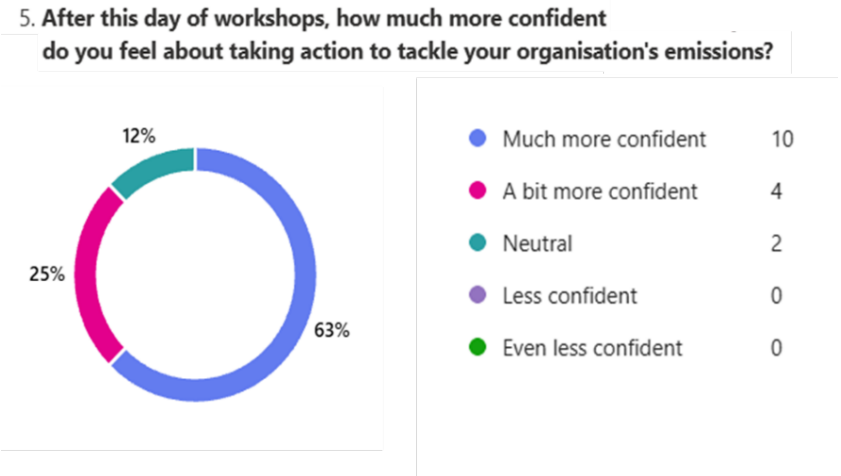
Special thanks must also go to our colleagues and consultants from beyond the SKZ+ network who gave of their time freely and generously, helping to deliver the workshops, taking part in the panel discussion and generally 'mucking-in'.

Action Sustainability
Brite Green Limited
Seacourt Printers
PECT
Royal Ballet and Opera House, London
The Roman Baths & Pumproom, Baths

6. FEEDBACK

Feedback was exceptionally positive, with no component of the event scoring below 4.5 out of 5.

100% survey respondents said they would recommend this type of event to colleagues or contacts, with 87% feeling more confident about taking action to tackle their organisation's emissions as a direct result of the Symposium.



Attendees praised the practical guidance, accessible presentations and opportunities to learn. One described the event as an "*efficient crash course*", while another called it "*a brilliant springboard*" for developing meaningful climate action.

> *"It was inspiring to spend the day with such a positive group of people who really understood the subject. I have been trying to get my head around carbon reporting and the day was extremely helpful for me to understand what I need to do"*

Suggestions for future events included more interactive workshops, supplier-procurement networking and further training on waste and the circular economy, emissions measurement and sector-specific challenges.

7. LESSONS FOR FUTURE EVENTS

The Symposium offers several practical lessons for other networks planning similar events:

- **Start with a clear need.** Identify the challenges facing the intended audience and shape the programme around them.
- **Use registration questions purposefully.** Gather information about attendees' experience and needs to inform content and future training.
- **Pool expertise and resources.** A dedicated project team, contributions from partners and shared funding can make an event achievable for the wider network.
- **Keep sessions practical and accessible**. Combine introductory material with actionable advice and consider repeating popular sessions.
- **Plan responsibilities carefully.** Allocate tasks for registration, room changes, facilitation, audience questions and resource collection in advance.
- **Capture feedback and follow-up.** Use attendee responses to improve future events and identify where additional support would be useful.

8. NEXT STEPS

The Procurement Working Group and SKZ+ Programme Manager will consider the feedback and suggestions gathered through the Symposium and identify appropriate follow-up activity, including future training and networking opportunities.

The event has established a strong foundation for continued engagement with suppliers and demonstrated the value of collective action across the South Ken ZEN+ network.

This approach offers a practical model for other networks seeking to support shared suppliers in reducing emissions and responding to sustainable procurement expectations.