

Clifford Chance

# Responsible Business report 2025



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# Introduction

Our commitment to being a responsible business is embedded in our Code and our operations. In the financial year ending 30 April 2025 (FY25), amid evolving global dynamics, we focused on strengthening our capabilities to remain adaptable and resilient – guided by the needs of our clients, our people and the long-term sustainability of our firm.



**Charles Adams**  
Global Managing Partner



**Adrian Cartwright**  
Senior Partner

## Enhancing our decision-making process

We have enhanced our decision-making processes to reinforce the firm's resilience and ensure that we are well-positioned to navigate the evolving risks and uncertainties of today's geopolitical landscape. A key development was the establishment of our Executive Risk Committee (ERC), which enhances governance by providing oversight of the firm's risk infrastructure, including climate-related risks. We also introduced a Global Issues Response Framework, guided by our Code and aligned with our approach to responsible business, as a structured approach for assessing and responding to emerging global issues.

## Driving accountability through data

This year, we undertook a comprehensive refresh of our responsible business key performance indicators (KPIs) to ensure that they reflect our strategic priorities and support a more consistent, data-driven approach to tracking progress. This evolution strengthens our ability to drive accountability across the firm, support our people, and deliver on the expectations of our clients and communities.

## Nurturing high-performing talent

Our strength lies in our global mindset and inclusive, collaborative culture – one that enables us to deliver high-quality legal services to our clients. This culture is brought to life through the way we develop and support our people, ensuring that they have equal access to opportunities to thrive and succeed. We want everyone at the firm to feel they belong and are empowered to perform at their best. In FY25, we expanded our investment in training, with a particular focus on future-oriented capabilities such as AI adoption. This helps ensure that our work continues to meet the highest standards and remains grounded in our values-based Code. Inclusion principles are embedded throughout our people processes, and we continue to create space for colleagues to connect, share experiences and celebrate the diversity that strengthens our firm.

## Making a difference in our communities

Our global community and pro bono initiatives, inspired by SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), are built on long-term collaborations with leading NGOs, civil society organisations, and private sector partners. In FY25, we witnessed how our people contributed to these shared goals through legal expertise, volunteering, partnerships and advocacy. This year, we dedicated over 64,000 hours to pro bono legal advice and community outreach. Strengthened by growing collaborations with our clients, this work demonstrates how both pro bono and community engagement efforts can enrich and inform our broader legal practice.

### Looking ahead

As we look to the future, we remain focused on embedding our responsible business commitment across the firm's operations. We act responsibly and collaboratively as one global team, cutting through complexity and anticipating the needs of our clients, people and communities. We do this because it's the right thing to do and because it enables us to continue building a strong and resilient business for the future.

# FY25 highlights

## Progress at a glance

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**77%**

renewable electricity used

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**64,742**

pro bono and volunteering hours

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IJ Global ESG Awards 2024  
**ESG Governance Award**

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**#3**

**The Vault Survey**  
Overall Best Law Firm to Work For,  
Work Culture, Quality of Work

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**79%**

recommend Clifford Chance as  
a "great place to work"

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Latin America Bond Awards  
2025 Latin American **ESG Deal  
of the Year** The Bahamas debt  
conversion project for marine  
conservation

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**903**

total pro bono mandates

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**3,973**

colleagues participated in our  
voluntary Code training since its  
launch in FY21

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**Graduate Employer of Choice**  
in Law (4th consecutive year)  
by Times Top 100

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**£42M**

total value of pro bono  
mandates and Clifford Chance  
Foundation grants

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**124**

**Chambers**  
Chambers Global 2025 –  
Global-wide Band 1 Rankings

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Environmental Finance's  
Sustainable Debt Awards 2025  
**Award for Innovation** bond  
structure (green bond): Ecuador  
debt-for-nature swap

# Responsible business governance

The Responsible Business Board plays a central role in overseeing the firm's approach to responsible business, as set by our Executive Leadership Group. It ensures that the strategy is effectively implemented, aligned with the firm's values, and responsive to emerging issues and stakeholder expectations.

The Responsible Business Board's responsibilities include:

- **Strategic oversight and performance monitoring:** Reviewing the firm's approach to responsible business and its impact, setting objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs), ensuring that appropriate resources and structures are in place and reporting outcomes to the Executive Leadership Group.
- **Policy and commitment governance:** Overseeing the implementation of responsible business-related policies and approving external commitments such as charters and pledges.
- **Regulatory and disclosure oversight:** Monitoring regulatory developments and reporting requirements, guiding the firm's response to new global responsible business regulations, and overseeing the development of the annual responsible business report and related disclosures.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Driving engagement with clients and other stakeholders through transparent reporting and communication.
- **Expert input:** Drawing on a cross-functional expert group to inform decision-making on key responsible business areas such as human rights, climate change, and social impact.

In FY25, the membership and focus of the Responsible Business Board was refreshed to enhance its effectiveness and alignment with the firm's strategic priorities. The updated structure provides clearer accountability, streamlined decision-making and improved integration of expert input across key responsible business areas. This ensures that our governance remains fit for purpose in a rapidly evolving landscape.

The Responsible Business Board comprises the following members, with additional key individuals engaged as required:

1 Executive Partner & General Counsel

2 Global Clients, Markets and Products Partner

3 Global Chief Operating Officer

4 Chief Risk and Compliance Officer

5 Chief Financial Officer

6 Chief People Officer

7 Global Head of Brand, Communications & Public Affairs

8 Global Pro Bono and Community Director

Our Senior Partner also attends meetings of our Responsible Business Board.

## Responsible business approach and performance

Our approach to responsible business is embedded within the firm's broader governance framework, ensuring accountability, transparency and alignment with our global commitments. Each year, we report on our progress through the UN Global Compact Communication on Progress.

Each pillar is supported by dedicated leads and delegates who set annual objectives and strategies and communicate progress.

In FY25, we undertook a comprehensive refresh of our KPIs to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. Originally introduced in FY20 and updated annually, the KPIs have now been streamlined into a more targeted and consistent set of high-impact indicators. This refined approach is designed to better reflect the outcomes we seek to achieve through our responsible business practices and to enhance clarity and comparability over time.

As part of this evolution, we have moved away from setting specific targets within the People pillar. Our focus will be on embedding equal opportunity for all through our People and Talent Strategy, which is designed to implement career enrichment and development programmes and initiatives. This global approach complies with local regulations while continuing to drive equal access to opportunities across our people policies and processes. We are focused on the responsible use of data, where legally permissible, to assess and improve outcomes, reinforce accountability, and ensure that individuals are considered based on their abilities, contributions and the needs of the firm. A key part of our approach will be the ongoing support for our people through affinity and faith groups, and embedding our Code, particularly its Be Inclusive principle.

### The approach is structured around four pillars:

1

#### Doing Business

Upholding ethics, professional standards, and risk management.

2

#### People

Creating a safe, healthy, and inclusive workplace that provides equal opportunity for all, developing the skills, experiences, and potential of our people to grow and perform at their best.

3

#### Community & Pro Bono

Supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals, with a focus on widening access to justice, sustainable economic opportunity, education, and a healthy environment.

4

#### Environment

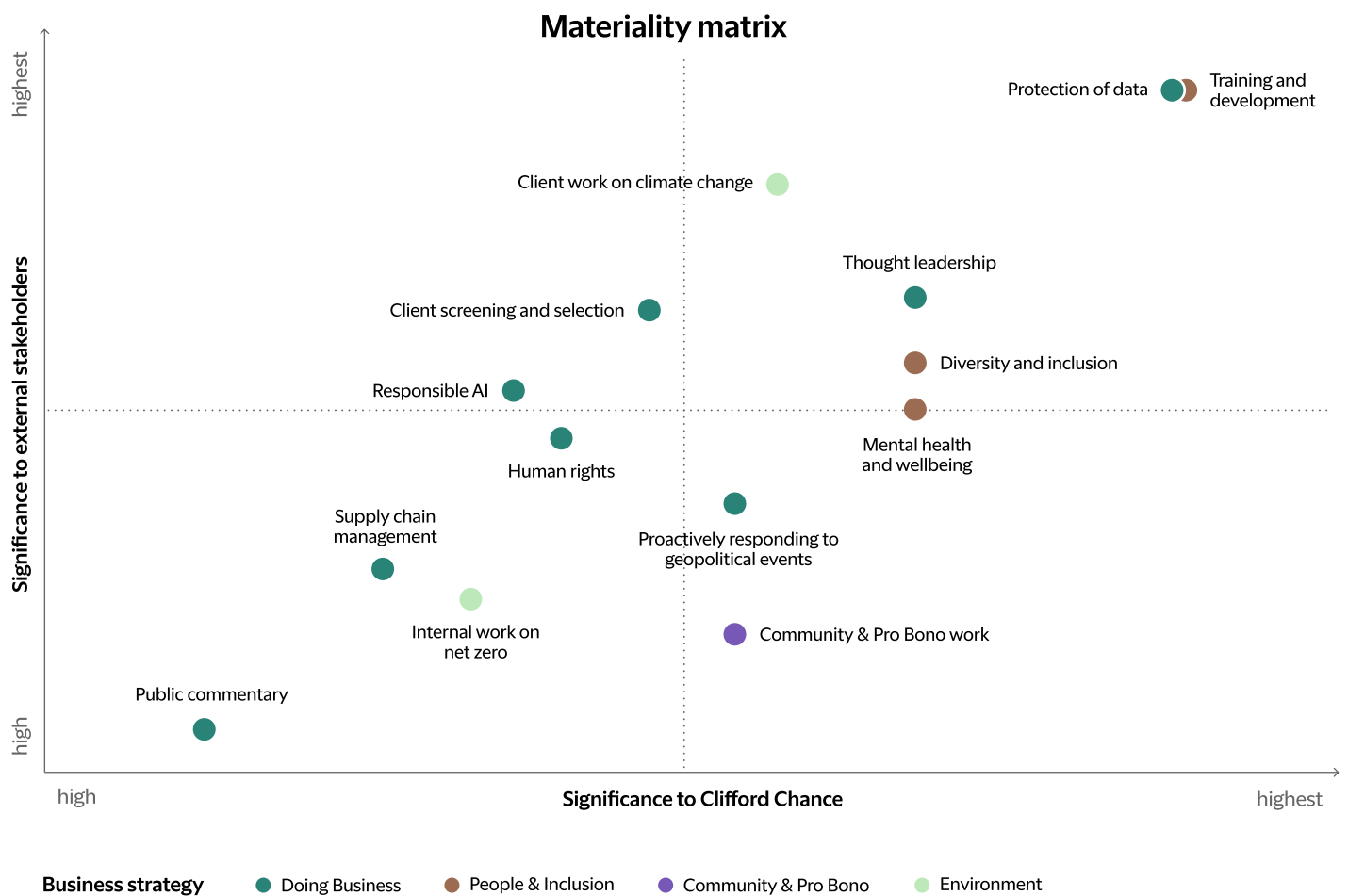
Contributing to a more sustainable world through a robust climate-related client offering and ongoing efforts to reduce our own environmental footprint.

# Approach to materiality

## Prioritising the expectations of our stakeholders

To strengthen our continued commitment to being a responsible business and to prioritise material issues, in FY23 we launched our second materiality assessment. This high-level assessment, described in our Responsible Business Report 2023 and outlined below, adopted a standard methodology. We worked alongside a third-party consultancy to understand the material issues that our clients, our people and the NGOs with which we work prioritise. The assessment does not equate to the assessments of materiality for statutory reporting purposes.

Our FY25 Responsible Business Report outlines our approach to some of these priority issues.





# The Sustainable Development Goals

Clifford Chance signed the UN Global Compact in 2009 and in our Responsible Business Report 2025 we provide insights into our efforts to help achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG symbols adjacent to case studies within this report signpost alignment.



The Responsible Business Board seeks to encourage the engagement of the firm with the SDGs, integrating them into our work and initiatives. Specific examples of our engagement with these objectives include:

## SDG 4: Quality education

For over 30 years, our London office has partnered with local schools to support literacy, mentoring and enrichment. Initiatives include a weekly reading programme, letter-writing with primary students, mentoring for secondary and university students and career-readiness activities – helping young people build confidence, skills and aspirations regardless of background (see page 22).

## SDG 13: Climate action

Our environmental training supports everyday sustainable choices – equipping colleagues with the knowledge to reduce emissions and contribute to our broader environmental goals. From bespoke e-learning in London to global real estate training, we're building awareness and accountability across the firm (see page 26).

## SDG 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions

Our Code was cited by the UNGC UK Chapter's SDG Showcase as an exemplary approach towards SDG 16.

## SDG 17: Partnership for the goals

We work closely in collaboration with our pro bono clients, uniting to build capacity on joint initiatives that are helping drive the SDGs in communities the world over. Our theory of change provides a template for ensuring that we maximise the contribution that the investment of our time and money achieves (as described in our Responsible Business Report 2022).

# Thought leadership

As part of our client offering, we provide guidance on a wide range of ESG and sustainability issues. Each year, we develop a suite of insights to help our clients navigate the evolving landscape. Below is a selection of thought leadership pieces published in FY25.

## FY25 ESG & sustainability-related publications



### Sustainability & ESG trends 2025

We look ahead and assess the challenges and opportunities on a range of strategic issues.



### Forecasting the impacts of Trump's second administration on the energy sector

A second Trump administration could reshape U.S. energy policy. This briefing explores likely impacts on key subsectors, from renewables to nuclear, and the role of market and state-level forces in shaping the energy transition.



### Will downstream scope 3 emissions have to be considered for all major projects? / The UK Supreme Court decision in Finch

This briefing considers the court's decision in Finch and its potential implications for business.



### Energy Transition – Meeting the demands of EV globalisation: What role can geothermal lithium from brine extraction play?

In this briefing we look to outline important considerations for financiers, investors, and developers looking at lithium from geothermal brine extraction projects.



### What's new in APAC's energy transition? The latest energy & infrastructure updates

The latest energy and infrastructure updates across APAC.



### A responsible approach to secure generative AI tool adoption

How Clifford Chance is responsibly adopting generative AI tools firmwide, guided by clear principles, robust governance, and comprehensive training, to ensure secure, ethical and effective use of AI across all roles.



### What happened at COP29?

The 29th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties, Baku, Azerbaijan, 11 – 24 November 2024 provided an announcement of a New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance and agreement on the operationalisation of the global carbon market.



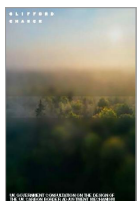
### Focus on hydrogen: State of the market 2025

2025 is a critical year for project bankability, subsidy alignment, and infrastructure build-out. Explore how shifting policy, pricing pressures, and maturing use cases are reshaping the clean hydrogen investment landscape.



### The Environmental Crime Directive: A game-changer for ecosystem protection?

Explore how the EU's Environmental Crime Directive strengthens legal tools to combat serious environmental harm and introduces tougher penalties for ecocide-level offences across Member States.



### UK Government consultation on the design of the UK Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism

The UK's proposed Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism aims to level the playing field for domestic industry by pricing carbon on imports from 2027. This consultation outlines key design features, sector coverage, and how it diverges from the EU model.



### Cybersecurity handbook

Aims to help organisations understand and comply with the diverse and evolving cybersecurity regulations that affect their activities.



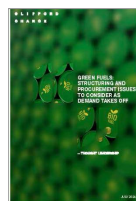
### What does the EU AI Act mean for employers?

The EU AI Act introduces sweeping obligations for employers using AI in recruitment, performance management, and workplace monitoring. This briefing outlines key risks, compliance steps, and the global implications for HR and legal teams.



### ESG and compliance challenges for the healthcare sector

Healthcare faces rising ESG and compliance risks. This briefing explores how sector leaders can respond with integrated, risk-based strategies across jurisdictions.



### Green fuels structuring and procurement issues to consider as demand takes off

As global demand for green fuels accelerates, project structuring and procurement strategies are under pressure. This briefing explores key legal and commercial considerations – from IP licensing and EPC contracting to managing fast-track delivery and technology risk.



### Scaling the global carbon markets: a way forward for the VCM and Paris mechanisms

As carbon markets mature, integrity and interoperability are critical. This report outlines how the Voluntary Carbon Market and Paris mechanisms can co-exist to unlock climate finance and scale high-quality credit markets globally.

# Doing Business

The Doing Business pillar of our responsible business approach prioritises ethics, professional standards and risk management, including regulatory compliance and business continuity to ensure the sustainability and resilience of our operations.

Strong leadership and effective governance are central to how we operate as a responsible business. Our Executive Leadership Group (ELG), chaired by Global Managing Partner Charles Adams, sets the firm's strategy and oversees its implementation. Comprising senior leaders from across the firm, including legal, risk, talent, finance, and operations, the ELG guides our direction, performance, and long-term planning.

Oversight is provided by the Partnership Council, chaired by Senior Partner Adrian Cartwright. This elected body ensures leadership accountability and includes an external non-executive member to bring an independent perspective. It also oversees partner appointments and performance through the Partner Selection Group and maintains financial and risk oversight via the firm's Audit & Risk Committee.

## Our Code

Our Code is the foundation of our culture and conduct. It guides how we run our business, how we work together, and how we work with the world around us. Centred on five principles, it reflects the firm's commitment to fostering a respectful, inclusive, and responsible culture.

Embedding the Code has been a firm-wide effort. Thousands of colleagues have participated in voluntary, interactive workshops that bring together people from across offices, roles, and regions to discuss how the principles of the Code should become part of day-to-day interactions. The workshops create space for open dialogue, shared learning, and cross-functional connection, reinforcing the Code as a unifying force across the firm.

Our Code reflects the firm's aspiration to foster a culture where values are lived. It connects directly to the firm's approach to responsible business, particularly through the principle of acting responsibly, which underpins commitments to people, the environment, and ethical business practices.

## Doing Business KPIs

Number of our people who have attended one of the 203 voluntary our Code workshops since programme launch in FY21:	3,973
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Percent completion rate of Anti-Bribery and Corruption training programme (across all staff):	94%
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Number of confirmed incidents of corruption and bribery:	0
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Percent of key suppliers that acknowledged the principles of our Supplier Code of Conduct:	100%
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## Our values-based Code:

1 Act with integrity

2 Embrace challenge

3 Be inclusive

4 Act responsibly

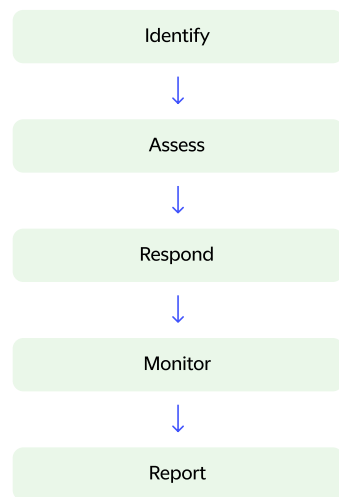
5 Speak up

## Risk governance

The Executive Risk Committee (ERC) was established in FY24 and operates under the authority of the ELG. Chaired by the Chief Risk and Compliance Officer, the ERC includes members of the ELG and other senior leaders. It oversees the firm's risk infrastructure, ensuring that appropriate policies, systems and insights are in place to manage risk effectively.

### We implement an enterprise-wide approach to risk management and follow a structured risk life cycle:

Emerging risks are tracked through a dedicated process and are escalated as needed. Regular horizon scanning and collaboration with different teams help us stay ahead of regulatory and market developments.



Our Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Framework provides a consistent, firm-wide approach to identifying, assessing, and managing risks across all regions, functions, and practice areas. Aligned with ISO 31000 and reviewed annually, it supports informed decision-making, enhances operational resilience, and enables the firm to respond proactively to change. The ERM process ensures that risks are assessed at the appropriate level, supported by dedicated information flows and Key Risk Indicators that drive effective decision-making. Risks are captured across global, regional, functional, and emerging categories.

To manage operational risks and build resilience, the firm maintains robust business continuity practices, including tailored crisis management plans, dedicated response teams, and regular scenario-based training across all offices. Day-to-day operations are led by the Chief Risk and Compliance Officer, with clearly defined ownership at global, regional, and functional levels – supporting both resilience and responsible growth.

## Global Issues Response Framework

As a global law firm, we operate in a complex and rapidly evolving landscape. In this environment, we are sometimes called upon to respond to external events that may affect our people, clients, and operations. These situations require careful consideration to ensure that our actions are consistent with our values, support the firm's strategy, and reflect our commitment to inclusion and integrity.

To support this, we have developed a structured Global Issues Response Framework. Grounded in our Code and aligned with our approach to responsible business, the framework provides a clear process for assessing when and how to use the firm's voice, skills, and resources in response to emerging issues.

Developed by a diverse group of colleagues with input from external consultants, the framework empowers an agile response team to monitor developments, evaluate potential impacts, and advise firm leadership. It ensures that decisions are made thoughtfully, with a consistent approach that balances operational, reputational, and cultural considerations.

## Regulatory compliance

The Compliance function is responsible for ensuring that the firm operates responsibly and in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and internal standards, supporting our commitment to the Code and fostering a firm-wide culture of integrity.

Our approach is guided by the Compliance Framework, introduced in 2020, which provides a structured methodology for consistently monitoring regulatory developments. To manage this increasingly complex landscape, we also leverage technology to streamline oversight, ensuring that our compliance programme remains agile, effective and aligned with our strategic priorities.

We maintain a robust control framework, including monitoring, audits, and policy reviews. Regular risk assessments, control testing, and incident reporting help us identify and address issues early. This is supported by our Professional Standards and Practice Guide, which provides colleagues with clear, regularly updated guidance on key policies and best practices.

Key enhancements in the last reporting period include:

- Strengthened financial crime controls with the appointment of a dedicated Financial Crime Manager specialising in Anti-Money Laundering (AML), enhancing oversight and risk mitigation across the firm.
- Expanded compliance coverage focused on AI, whistleblowing, and fraud prevention.
- Improved data management via a strengthened data loss prevention programme and a formalised approvals process for third-party platform access.
- Independent compliance oversight established across all offices, with dedicated compliance managers and direct reporting lines.

Our training and awareness efforts remain central to our approach. Over the past year, we delivered more than 60 training sessions globally, launched three new e-learning courses (completed by over 93% of the firm), and achieved 98% participation in our Annual Compliance Declaration.

## Information technology

Protecting our data, and that of our clients, is a top priority. Our information security programme is designed to prevent, detect, and respond to cyber threats, supported by a resilient IT infrastructure and continuous investment in advanced technologies.

We conduct regular penetration testing and security assessments, and maintain a 24/7 cyber incident response team. Clear protocols guide our response to threats, ensuring rapid containment and recovery.

Education is a key pillar of our approach. All colleagues receive training on secure data handling, with additional modules for client-specific requirements. We also collaborate with cybersecurity experts, legal sector groups, and national bodies to ensure that our defences remain strong in a fast-changing threat landscape.

First of two global law firms to be awarded ISO27001

**'Advanced'** rating from independent cybersecurity organisation Bitsight

SOC2 Type 2 assured

Hold the **UK Cyber Essentials Plus** certification for work related to the UK Government



# Embedding AI responsibly, strategically and firm-wide

We are taking steps to achieve our ambition of embedding AI across our firm through a clear, responsible and future-focused strategy. Guided by our global AI Policy and Principles, we strive to ensure that all AI use is safe, compliant and aligned with client expectations – including our clients' requirements for confidentiality and security.

Only firm-approved AI systems are permitted to be used by our people, and over 75% of our people now typically use AI tools daily – up from 40% at the start of the year. Our people-first approach includes a training programme that equips colleagues with the skills to use AI confidently and responsibly, supported by a global AI & Innovation Board and over 350 colleagues in practice- and business-led AI steering groups.

## Five AI Principles

These principles outline the standards we encourage our people to uphold when engaging with AI.

75% of our people use AI tools daily.

1

### Act with Integrity

- We align our AI use with best practice and professional conduct rules that govern our work.
- We are accountable for our use of AI tools, think critically about benefits, risks, and whether and how they should be used, and ensure appropriate oversight

2

### Build Securely

- We seek to address safety and security risks throughout the AI life cycle.
- We critically assess data and confirm that its use aligns with our policies and guidance.

3

### Use AI Responsibly

- We respect individuals' rights and the diversity of the clients and people we serve.
- We carefully consider the impact of our AI use.

4

### Design for Confidentiality and Privacy

- We implement AI tools in ways that protect confidentiality and privacy.
- We apply enhanced security and checks when AI is used to process client and personal information.
- We provide clients and our people with appropriate information about how their information is being used when implementing AI.

5

### Engage Openly

- We engage openly with our clients and people regarding our use of AI.
- We proactively contribute to (and carefully consider) thought leadership and tools to help ensure responsible AI.

We apply a firm-wide risk assessment framework to identify and mitigate potential harms before deploying AI tools, designed to achieve alignment with regulatory expectations and ethical standards. All AI solutions are evaluated against criteria including transparency, security, legal compliance and operational impact.

Our Risk and Compliance teams, as well as our Tech Digital Group, monitor evolving legal standards and regulations with a view to ensuring compliance across jurisdictions. We also contribute to legal AI innovation networks and regulatory consultations, helping shape the future of responsible AI in the legal profession.

Our AI programme is built on continuous improvement, informed by feedback from our people, clients, and oversight boards. We have also established AI Principles for Suppliers, reinforcing our expectations for responsible AI use across our value chain.

## Sustainable Procurement Programme

Our Sustainable Procurement Programme ensures that the way we purchase goods and services, and the suppliers we work with, support ethical business practices, reduce environmental impact, and contribute to sustainable economic development. By integrating sustainability into procurement, we are strengthening the resilience and transparency of our supply chain while reducing exposure to climate and governance-related risks.

A significant share of our carbon footprint lies within our supply chain, making supplier engagement on decarbonisation a priority. We've identified our top 100 highest-emitting suppliers and are working closely with them to improve environmental performance. Insights from EcoVadis assessments guide improvement efforts and support corrective actions. In the past year, we hosted Transition to Net Zero webinars and invited suppliers to complete a Carbon Maturity Questionnaire to assess progress and identify opportunities for collaboration.

To learn how we manage risks in our supply chain, please visit the Supplier Management section of the Clifford Chance website, and refer to our Modern Slavery Act Transparency Statement in the Policies section.

### Progress in FY25 includes:

100%

of our key\* suppliers acknowledged the principles of our Supplier Code of Conduct

96.5%

of our key suppliers are taking actions to prevent discrimination and/or harassment

698

procurement risk questionnaires executed and 386 supplier assessment questionnaires completed

13%

reduction in purchased goods and services emissions against our base year (FY20)

91.8%

of our key suppliers are taking action on energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions

98.8%

of our key suppliers have measures on working conditions

Recognition on CDP's Supplier Engagement Assessment **'A List'** for FY24

\*Key suppliers are defined as our Tier 1 and Tier 2 suppliers, prioritised based on strategic importance, value risk, and role in service delivery

# People and inclusion

## Overview of the pillar and its scope

As a global firm, building a high-performing, globally minded team is essential. We draw strength from the deep expertise and diverse experiences of our people, and we are committed to fostering a safe, healthy and inclusive workplace where everyone has an equal opportunity to thrive.

Inclusion is deeply embedded in our culture and reflected in our Code, particularly through the Be Inclusive principle, which guides how we collaborate, support one another, and deliver for our clients. It is not only beneficial for our people and valued by our clients, but also central to our comprehensive People and Talent strategy. This strategy, aligned with our growth ambitions, shapes how we attract, develop, and retain talent across the firm.

As part of this, we offer fair, competitive rewards and benefits that reflect individual contributions and promote wellbeing, underpinned by consistent global standards and regular market benchmarking.

We are proud of the progress we have made and remain committed to building on it – reinforcing accountability and driving outcomes that promote equality of experience and opportunity for all.

## People and Inclusion KPIs

Percentage of our people that recommend Clifford Chance as a great place to work: **79%**

Percentage of our people that participated in performance and career development reviews: **95%**

Average number of learning hours per FTE\*, by job type:

Lawyers/Fee earners:	<b>14.8 hours</b>
Business professionals:	<b>6.6 hours</b>

Distribution of employees by age group:

Under 30:	<b>27.01%</b>
30-50:	<b>56.81%</b>
Over 50:	<b>16.14%</b>
Not declared:	<b>0.04%</b>

### Gender representation by grade (%) globally

Job Family	Female	Male
Partner	25.52%	74.48%
Counsel	37.64%	62.36%
Associate	51.82%	48.08%
Junior Associate	56.19%	43.81%
Other Fee Earner	60.36%	39.64%
Business Professional	64.45%	35.55%
Overall**	56.22%	43.77%

\*FTE denotes full-time employee

\*\*Some gender data is unavailable, resulting in a total that does not sum to 100%

## Attracting and developing our talent

Attracting exceptional people and supporting their growth is essential to delivering our strategy, driving performance and building a strong pipeline of future leaders.

Over the past year, we strengthened our global talent pipeline by expanding our reach across campuses and experienced hire markets, analysing trends across regions and practice areas, and identifying emerging talent needs. These efforts contributed to a 91% offer acceptance rate, reflecting the strength of our employer proposition and the effectiveness of our recruitment process.

Once people join the firm, we focus on enabling their development through structured feedback, career planning, and leadership support. We measure progress through key indicators such as the quality of objectives set and engagement survey results. This data-driven approach helps us refine our strategy and ensure that we are building a high-performing, globally minded workforce aligned with our long-term goals.

### 5\*

rating in the Azur 100 Top Employers Ranking 2025

### 3<sup>rd</sup>

in the Vault survey of the best US law firms to work for

Employer of Choice  
**Graduate Employer of Choice in Law** (4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year) by Times Top 100

### 14<sup>th</sup>

in the Times Top 100 Graduate Employers List (highest-ever ranking by a law firm)

### Top 50

Employer in Germany

## RISE Affinity Group in India

Our affinity groups and support groups are open to all and help foster a collaborative and inclusive culture across the firm. Our groups provide visibility, support, and a space for colleagues to connect, share perspectives, learn from each other, and celebrate diversity. Our networks also provide insights that help us to understand and address structural and cultural barriers to opportunity. They bring people together around shared experiences and inclusive dialogue through events and initiatives hosted throughout the year.

This year, we launched RISE in our India offices, our newest affinity group focused on social mobility and a platform to share first experiences along career and professional development journeys. Originally established in the UK in FY24, RISE expanded to our offices in Delhi and Hyderabad in FY25.

Through its activities, RISE raises awareness of the unique journeys of individuals from a wide range of social backgrounds, and demonstrates the value we assign to the different perspectives and experiences of the people that make up our global firm.

## Upskilling, learning and leadership development

Our People and Talent strategy is centred on high performance and meaningful support for our colleagues. We are committed to equipping individuals with the skills, capabilities, and mindsets they need to thrive and contribute to the firm's long-term success.

In FY25, we focused on strengthening both technical expertise and people management capabilities, particularly through our signature development programmes for lawyers. A key milestone was the launch of our Client Skills Programme, designed to align our people's capabilities with the firm's growth strategy. To date, the first phase has been delivered to 1,100 partners and lawyers through a series of off-site sessions. We also introduced foundational AI training to support our people in building confidence and capability in this rapidly evolving area.

We relaunched our Senior Associate Programme, refining its alignment with the firm's strategic goals. This programme offers targeted development through a blend of coaching, self-directed learning, and structured support, helping associates step confidently into more senior roles. More than 200 senior associates have participated so far.

In addition, we delivered a series of leadership masterclasses for partners, focused on developing impactful communication skills – an essential capability for effective leadership. Around half of our career development partners have already taken part, enhancing their ability to support and guide their teams.

## Global mobility

As a global law firm, we are committed to bringing our offices closer together while supporting the development of our people. Our secondment programme plays a key role in achieving this, offering career-enhancing secondments that also meet business needs across regions.

Each year, we second approximately 230 colleagues globally. This includes, but is not limited to, a Europe-wide programme for junior to mid-level associates, which runs twice a year and places around 30 individuals in different offices for up to four months. We also offer six-month secondments in our global Tech and Antitrust practice areas, as well as a transatlantic secondment programme in our Private Equity and Funds groups. In addition, trainees benefit from mobility opportunities during their first two years.

We gather feedback from every secondee to assess the experience and improve our support. 97% of participants say their secondment has contributed to their professional development, helping them build confidence, gain practical skills, and strengthen cross-office collaboration.

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# 230

colleagues annually seconded

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# 97%

say it boosted their professional development





## Case study: Partner leadership programme

We know that shaping a positive, collaborative culture starts with our leaders. Our approach is fully aligned with our business strategy, and we support our people to be a high-performing, globally minded team.

That's why we launched the Partner Leadership Programme in FY25. The programme is an 18-month initiative designed to build the confidence and capability of our partners to lead effectively and inclusively. The aim is for all partners to complete the programme by the end of 2025.

This initiative supports our ambition to be an elite global law firm built on collaboration across borders and backgrounds. It equips partners with practical tools to foster fairness, remove barriers and create an inclusive and collaborative environment where everyone can thrive.

## Wellbeing

We are focused on making wellbeing a core part of our commitment to providing a healthy and safe working environment and enabling our people to optimise their wellbeing. Guided by our global wellbeing strategy and with an eye to the evolving expectations of our people, we continue to make progress in this area by actively investing in our people's health, resilience and their overall experience at work.

To ensure that wellbeing is truly integrated across the firm, we are embedding it into our systems, processes, and everyday practices. This includes a dedicated wellbeing curriculum within our learning Academy and close collaboration with our Rewards and Benefits programme to ensure that wellbeing is central to our employee offering. We also continue to deliver our quarterly Health IQ series, which explores topics relevant to our working environment to enhance people's health knowledge and capability.

During this reporting period, we introduced several initiatives to support mental health, wellbeing, and healthy performance across the firm:

- **Expanded our Mental Health Champion network** to 237 colleagues across 12 countries, supported by the appointment of a partner sponsor to enhance visibility and advocacy.
- **Invested in mental health support** through Unmind, our evidence-based platform, which now has over 2,100 registered users. We also launched Unmind Talk, a 12-month global pilot offering online mental health coaching and therapy to partners, aimed at providing equitable, barrier-free access across our global offices.

- **Built wellbeing and healthy performance capability** through quarterly expert-led sessions hosted by partners and open to all colleagues globally. Four sessions were held in FY25, attracting 528 attendees.
- **Enhanced support for new parents** by standardising parental leave for partners and introducing professional coaching for new parents and their colleagues.
- **Improved access to wellbeing resources** by developing country-specific health and wellbeing benefits guides.

These efforts reflect our belief that wellbeing is not a standalone initiative, but a core part of how we support our people and build a resilient, high-performing firm.



## Case study: Interactive client sessions

We regularly collaborate with clients to co-create inclusion-focused learning experiences that support high-performing teams.

In FY25, we continued our Dos and Donuts series – monthly interactive sessions held both in-person and virtually across multiple offices.

Each session begins with donuts and a discussion on the importance of proactive culture-building, followed by real-world scenarios that prompt reflection on inclusive, respectful, and collaborative behaviours. With over 30 clients participating, the sessions have fostered shared learning, encouraged cross-regional dialogue, and empowered individuals to take ownership of shaping positive workplace cultures.

# Community and pro bono

## Overview of the pillar and its scope

Clifford Chance runs a comprehensive programme of pro bono and community outreach activities, often leveraging the firm's giving to make meaningful contributions towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Our approach focuses on widening access to justice, sustainable economic opportunity, education, and a healthy environment. It aims to maximise impact by enabling our people to contribute their time and expertise to causes that matter to them, while also supporting skills development, fostering collaboration with clients and NGOs, and advancing the firm's broader responsible business priorities.

## Community and Pro Bono KPIs

Total value of pro bono mandates and Clifford Chance Foundation (CCF) grants:

- Total value of pro bono mandates and Clifford Chance Foundation grants: **£42,059,946**
- Value of pro bono mandates: **£40,359,946**
- Value of CCF grants: **£1,700,000**

The number of pro bono mandates, volunteering programmes and Clifford Chance Foundation (CCF) grants:

- Number of pro bono mandates: **903**
- Number of volunteering activities: **234**
- Number of CCF grants: **92**

Total hours of pro bono legal advice and community outreach:

- Total hours of pro bono legal advice and community outreach: **64,742**
- Lawyers giving pro bono legal advice: **55,226 hours**
- Lawyers doing community work: **6,600 hours**
- Business professionals doing community work: **2,916 hours**

The number of people directly and indirectly helped by the NGOs we work with, as a result of our support for them\*:

- Directly: **109,922**
- Indirectly: **3,057,718**

The number of pro bono and community collaborations with our clients:

- **101** collaborations with clients

The proportion of lawyers who report skills enhancement as one of the benefits of doing pro bono work:

- **100%**

\*'Directly' helped refers to individuals who have received support through Clifford Chance-led volunteering or pro bono programmes, or through NGO initiatives funded by the CCF. 'Indirectly' helped refers to people who are dependent on, or supported by, those directly helped, as well as individuals who access publicly available resources created by our NGO partners with our assistance.

Our approach focuses on seven key SDGs where we believe we can make the greatest impact:



**SDG 4:**  
Widening access to quality education



**SDG 8:**  
Widening access to sustainable economic opportunity



**SDGs 11 & 13-15:**  
Widening access to a healthy environment



**SDG 16:**  
Widening access to justice

At the heart of our approach is the belief that our most effective contribution to the SDGs comes through long-term partnerships with NGOs whose missions align with our focus areas. By combining legal and technical support, flexible grant funding, access to our networks and collaboration with clients, we aim to strengthen the institutional capacity of our partners, enabling them to deliver greater impact in their communities.

This partnership-driven model reflects our commitment to SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and ensures that our in-kind and financial investments are targeted, measurable and sustainable over time.



## Collaborating with clients on pro bono and community impact

Our community and pro bono work is strengthened through collaboration with our clients. By partnering with clients, we are able to extend our reach, share expertise, and deliver greater impact for the communities we serve. These joint initiatives also deepen our relationships, offering meaningful opportunities to work together on causes that matter to us all. Highlights include:

### ING sports day

In Amsterdam, we have partnered with ING in recent years to host an annual sports day for more than 60 primary school children. Organised with Stichting NL Cares, the event gives children from disadvantaged backgrounds the chance to try new sports and enjoy a day outside their usual routine. The event is a true collaboration – Stichting NL Cares manages logistics, while volunteers from Clifford Chance and ING facilitate the activities. The day concludes with an awards ceremony and a celebratory lunch or dinner.

What began as a shared idea between our lawyers and ING's legal team has become a much-anticipated tradition. It's not only a joyful experience for the children, but also a valuable team-building opportunity that strengthens our relationship with ING.

### Box of Hope

For the past two years, our Hong Kong office has joined forces with clients HSBC and Morgan Stanley to support Box of Hope, a charity that delivers educational gifts to underprivileged children across Hong Kong and Southeast Asia.

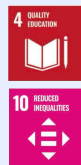
Our collaboration with Box of Hope began in 2010. Since then, we have provided financial support and participated in 'box checking' events to ensure that donated items meet the charity's standards. In 2024, we strengthened our engagement by encouraging our clients' legal teams to create their own boxes, making the experience even more meaningful. In 2024 alone, Box of Hope distributed over 34,600 gifts. The initiative also helps educate school children in Hong Kong about poverty, inclusion and kindness – values that align with our approach to responsible business and SDG 4.

# Advancing the SDGs through community and pro bono work

In the following sections, we highlight examples of how our people have contributed to each of our strategic SDGs through legal expertise, volunteering, partnerships, and advocacy. These stories reflect the power of our global firm to drive substantive change in the communities where we live and work.

## SDG 4: Access to education

### Local learning partnerships in London



For over 30 years, our London office has partnered with local schools to support access to education through literacy, mentoring and enrichment activities. Our longest-running initiative is a weekly reading programme with St Saviour's Primary School in Tower Hamlets, where volunteers help children improve literacy skills while building confidence through one-on-one interaction.

During the pandemic, we launched a letterwriting initiative that continues today with three primary schools – pairing around 40 volunteers with students for 12 weeks of correspondence to support writing, storytelling, and motor skills, while

offering a chance to learn about the legal profession. We also mentor students from local secondary schools, including Mulberry School for Girls, as well as from Birkbeck University. In addition, we run mock interview sessions to help young people build confidence and develop their communication skills. Beyond the classroom, schools are invited to events and concerts at our Canary Wharf office and support school maintenance projects through staff and client volunteering.

These initiatives help bridge social divides and show children early on that the idea of a professional career is open to all, regardless of background.

### Supporting education and opportunity in Malawi



Over the past three years, a Clifford Chance Foundation grant has helped expand the impact of The Sparkle Foundation in Malawi, transforming over 30,000 lives through access to education, healthcare and sustainable development.

Sparkle Malawi works to ensure that every community it serves can live a healthy, self-sufficient life. Its programmes include early childhood education, vocational training, agricultural and skills-based learning, a certified health clinic, and a nutrition programme integrated into school delivery.

Since 2022, we have contributed over £273,000 in funding, alongside pro bono and professional skills support from lawyers and business professionals. Our teams have advised on governance, IT systems, marketing, training, and the establishment of a charitable foundation.

This long-term partnership has strengthened Sparkle Malawi's operational capacity and strategic direction, thereby enhancing its ability to deliver lasting change in the communities it supports.

### Our support this year has enabled Sparkle Malawi to:

- Scale across **two new communities**, including in a remote, rural area
- Establish vital **early childhood development** services
- Support an additional **5,000** children
- Secure **formal recognition** of their programmes from the Malawian government



## SDG 8: Access to sustainable economic opportunities

### Raising Aspirations



Since 2008, our Raising Aspirations programme in London has helped widen access to careers in the legal industry by introducing students aged 14–18 to the world of work at Clifford Chance. Each week during term time, we host in-person and online events where students from state schools across the UK meet our lawyers and business professionals, explore career paths and gain insight into life at an international law firm.

In the past financial year, 1,856 students attended the 46 events we ran – 18 of which included participation from our clients – creating valuable exposure for students who may not otherwise have access to these opportunities.

The programme is already having an impact. Many students who attend go on to apply for Access, our early talent social mobility programme, and some now work at the firm. We are proud to be helping build a more diverse pipeline of future talent and showing that a career in law is within reach for everyone.

### Expanding access to capital in Rwanda



Access to affordable capital remains a major barrier for start-ups in Rwanda – particularly those focused on social impact. In partnership with Save the Children, we supported the Kumwe Hub, a three-year initiative aimed at strengthening access to finance for child-focused enterprises.

Kumwe Hub supports businesses tackling issues such as child mortality, malnutrition and poor sanitation. Our contribution included helping establish a revolving loan fund, alongside strategic advice on business growth, mentoring and peer support.

The project, which concluded in June 2025, has already delivered tangible results – funding 20 businesses and enabling them to scale their impact. One company expanded its supply of low-cost porridge to schools, while another invested in aquaponic infrastructure and farmer training.

By supporting Kumwe Hub, we have helped unlock sustainable economic opportunities for entrepreneurs and improved outcomes for children in local communities.

## SDGs 11 & 13-15: Access to a healthy environment

### Payment for ecosystems in Rwanda



We are supporting a pioneering project in Rwanda to develop a scalable Payment for Ecosystems (PES) model that delivers climate, biodiversity and community benefits. Led by the Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association (RWCA) in partnership with the UK-based Lifescape Project, the initiative involves restoring a 25-hectare plot of land and launching a carbon capture programme.

The RWCA will shortly secure accreditation through Plan Vivo to sell carbon credits, creating a sustainable revenue stream to fund ongoing ecosystem restoration. The project aims to demonstrate how ecosystem markets can support environmental protection, economic development, and poverty alleviation.

By helping to build a model that channels international climate finance into local livelihoods, this initiative offers long-term benefits for communities and nature.

## Supporting communities displaced by climate change



Over the past financial year, we have continued our long-standing pro bono partnership with International Center for Advocates Against Discrimination (ICAAD), an international human rights organisation, to support its emerging work on climate-related displacement.

As climate change accelerates, many island and coastal communities face the loss of their homes, cultures, and identities – often without adequate legal protections. In response, we have supported ICAAD with legal expertise to help advance climate justice for displaced populations.

Building on earlier work to develop a proposed legal standard for climate-displaced people, a team from our Brussels office recently helped ICAAD draft a submission to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, contributing to its study on climate justice, sustainability, and the right to development.

- The Clifford Chance Foundation has also provided two grants to support its broader work on **gender justice and anti-discrimination**.
- More than 200 Clifford Chance lawyers across 20 offices have contributed over **7,000 pro bono** hours to ICAAD.

## SDG 16: Access to justice

### Global assistance to refugees and asylum seekers



We are working with local NGO partners across several of our offices to support asylum seekers and refugees through pro bono legal advice. In the UK, where cuts to publicly funded legal support have created significant barriers to access to justice, our London office has developed initiatives such as the Refugee Support Scheme and the Refugee Law Clinic – providing vital legal support to refugee-supporting organisations and their clients.

Since 2015, we have partnered with Refugee Action to assist over 20 organisations across the UK through the Refugee Support Scheme. Our work includes preparing Country of Origin Information (COI) reports, which provide detailed context on legal, political, social, cultural and religious conditions in applicants' home countries – often cited by judges in asylum decisions.

We also helped establish the Refugee Law Clinic with the University of London and its member institutions. The clinic focuses on “fresh claims” for asylum – cases involving individuals who have previously been refused asylum, but with the support of a lawyer, under supervision of specialist barristers, applicants have a realistic prospect of success based on evidence they did not previously submit.

By establishing long-term strategic pro bono relationships with asylum organisations, we utilise the skills and passions of our lawyers to offer legal expertise, research and support to asylum seekers. Our sustained commitment enables NGO partners to scale their reach and deliver vital services to those most in need.

### Refugee Support Scheme

# 24

partner charities involved

# 120+

in-house lawyers from 14 clients

# 1,900+

pro bono hours recorded in FY25

The initiative enables lawyers to support vulnerable individuals while developing new skills, which is particularly valuable for junior counsel. As client expectations around pro bono continue to grow, the scheme offers a meaningful way to collaborate while broadening access to justice.



## Case study: Cornerstone: A multi- year investment in community wellbeing

The past financial year marked the conclusion of Cornerstone, our five-year initiative to improve the wellbeing of some of the poorest communities in Kigali, Rwanda.

Through a £5 million investment and extensive pro bono and in-kind support, we co-designed and delivered nine projects in partnership with Rwandan and international NGOs, including the Kumwe Hub and PES model support highlighted earlier in this report. Each project targeted one or more of six key “domains of wellbeing” identified through community-led focus groups: livelihoods, education, health, family relationships, food security and housing.

While some projects are still being finalised, the initiative has already directly impacted 108,228 people, with over 5 million people benefiting indirectly. Beyond these numbers, Cornerstone has strengthened the capacity of local organisations and catalysed new partnerships that continue to deliver impact beyond the programme’s original scope. We delivered a specific theory of change in our implementation of Cornerstone – and by focusing on co-designing projects in partnership with NGOs embedded in the communities we sought to impact, we delivered sustainable and systemic change.

You can read more about this work by visiting the [Community & Pro Bono](#) section of our website.

# Environment

## Our approach to environmental sustainability

We recognise that embedding sustainability and climate risk management into our operations is essential – not only for the health of our planet, but for the long-term resilience of our firm. The Environment pillar of our approach to responsible business reflects this commitment, underpinned by a clear climate framework designed to enhance the resilience of our business model and support the global transition to a low-carbon economy.

We are guided by two key policies: our Global Environment Policy, which governs our internal and external efforts to reduce environmental impact and advance decarbonisation efforts; and our Climate Change Policy, which integrates climate considerations into our matter acceptance procedure and aligns with the aims of the Paris Agreement and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

## Environment KPIs

\* FTE denotes full-time employees. Market-based emissions figures are used to calculate the KPIs in this table.

Total emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e), including: Scope 1, Scope 2, and Scope 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope 1: 998 tCO<sub>2</sub>e</li> <li>• Scope 2: 2,995 tCO<sub>2</sub>e</li> <li>• Scope 3: 58,868 tCO<sub>2</sub>e</li> <li>• Total: 62,861 tCO<sub>2</sub>e</li> </ul>
Energy consumption (million kWh)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 29 million kWh</li> </ul>
CO <sub>2</sub> emissions (Scope 1, 2) intensity per FTE* and revenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.51 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per FTE</li> <li>• 1.65 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per £1 million in revenue</li> </ul>
Business travel emissions intensity (tCO <sub>2</sub> e per FTE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.42 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per FTE</li> </ul>
Percentage of energy from renewable sources (including electricity purchased under renewable tariffs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 61%</li> </ul>
GHG emissions reduction for Scope 1, 2 and 3 (absolute and % reduction)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From FY20: -10,021 tCO<sub>2</sub>e; 14% reduction</li> <li>• From FY24: +3,932 tCO<sub>2</sub>e; 7% increase</li> </ul>

This past year, we expanded our efforts across three key areas: deepening climate-related training and awareness for our people, supporting supplier decarbonisation through targeted engagement and continuing to strengthen our climate-related client offering. These initiatives are helping us embed sustainability into the way we operate, advise and collaborate.

We also made further progress in reducing our operational emissions, enhancing the sustainability of our global office portfolio and refining how climate risk is integrated into our Enterprise Risk Management framework. The Net Zero Delivery Group (NZDG) continues to play a central role in driving our emissions reduction plan, with a focus on supplier emissions and firm-wide engagement.

## Learning and development

Achieving our environmental goals demands continuous learning, shared responsibility, and practical action across the firm. By equipping our people with the knowledge and tools they need, we are embedding sustainability into everyday decision-making and building a culture of accountability.

### Launch of sustainability e-learning in London

In March 2025, we launched a bespoke e-learning module for all colleagues in our London office to support our net zero target and raise awareness of sustainable practices. Hosted on our Academy learning platform, the module shares our greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, explains their importance and outlines the local initiatives in place to help achieve them. It also offers practical guidance on how individuals can contribute – such as reducing waste, conserving energy and making more environmentally conscious travel choices.

Originally developed to support compliance with ISO 14001, an international standard for effective environmental management systems, the module also plays a broader role in communicating our Global Environment Policy and encouraging behavioural change across the firm. Created in collaboration with an external software specialist, it has been tailored to reflect our specific goals and our Code. With global rollout planned, the content is designed to be easily adapted for different regions and audiences.

### Emissions training for real estate team

To ensure transparency, regulatory compliance, and informed progress towards our net zero targets, we need accurate, consistent emissions data and that starts with ensuring that our people understand how to collect and report it effectively.

In January 2025, we delivered online training sessions for our global real estate and facilities teams. These sessions explained the importance of real estate emissions data in meeting our environmental and regulatory commitments, including identifying opportunities to reduce our environmental footprint.

The training focused on our real estate emissions, data sources, reporting time frames, and the platform used for real estate data capture in FY25. Follow-up drop-in sessions allowed office managers to ask questions and clarify the process.

Since then, we've worked closely with each office and our external consultants to review and analyse the data. This training has played a key role in maintaining high standards of accuracy and efficiency across our operations, ensuring that we have the insights needed to make informed decisions in support of reducing greenhouse gas emissions across our real estate portfolio.

## Leveraging legal expertise for a more sustainable future

Our climate-related practice continues to support clients as they navigate the complex and rapidly evolving landscape of climate regulation, energy transition, and sustainability-driven innovation. This includes not only responding to the challenges climate change presents, but also helping clients seize new opportunities.

Across our global firm, our lawyers advise on a wide range of climate-related matters, from wind, solar, and hydrogen infrastructure projects to carbon capture, storage, and trading. We provide expert guidance on financing, regulatory compliance, and policy developments, while also supporting clients on their own net zero and energy transition journeys.

### Carbon markets

Carbon markets are a growing area of focus for our climate-related practice, reflecting both the increasing regulatory pressure on companies to reduce emissions and the rising demand for credible carbon credit solutions. While still relatively small compared to other financial or commodities markets, carbon trading is expected to play a pivotal role in global decarbonisation efforts. Our role is to help clients unlock that potential – balancing commercial goals with climate commitments and navigating the challenges and opportunities that come with it.

Our cross-practice, cross-border team advises on the full spectrum of carbon market activity:

- Structuring transactions for the purchase and sale of carbon credits
- Supporting the development of carbon credit projects
- Advising secondary market participants
- Helping corporates understand how carbon credits can support their broader net zero strategies

The transactions we are advising on are complex and high impact. A standout example is our work with Brazilian project developer ReGreen, which committed to sell approximately 6.5 million carbon credits to Microsoft. Our involvement across all aspects of the market, and our local presence near project sites, enable us to understand both buyer and seller perspectives and deliver commercially and environmentally successful outcomes.

### Impact and energy transition funds

Impact and energy transition funds are investment vehicles designed to generate both financial returns and measurable environmental or social outcomes. In the context of climate action, these funds typically invest in renewable energy, companies that drive the energy transition, sustainable infrastructure, and nature-based solutions – contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation while delivering value to investors.

At Clifford Chance, our work in this space spans renewables, sustainable private equity, sustainable infrastructure, and increasingly, natural capital strategies. These include investments in forestry and agricultural land that are designed to generate carbon credits or biodiversity units as part of the return to investors. Our work has been instrumental in shaping some of the most innovative fund structures in this market.

One of our most significant mandates this year involved advising a major infrastructure client on the launch of a green energy fund with a natural climate solutions component. The fund allows for traditional renewable energy investments,

with a meaningful allocation to natural climate solutions projects. We advised on fund setup, regulatory permissions, and alignment with the client's broader investment strategy.

We have also supported the development of carbon credit-linked impact funds, where managers must meet specific environmental targets to unlock full financial returns – an approach that aligns incentives with climate outcomes.

### **Debt-for-nature swaps**

Debt-for-nature swaps are innovative financial transactions in which a portion of a developing country's foreign debt is cancelled or restructured in exchange for commitments to invest in environmental conservation. These deals offer a dual benefit: easing sovereign debt burdens while funding biodiversity protection and sustainable development.

In the past financial year, our team has continued to lead the market, advising the arranging banks on four significant swaps for the Bahamas, Barbados, Ecuador and El Salvador. The first two were tied to marine conservation, while the latter two focused respectively on protecting the Ecuadorian Amazon and the Rio Lempa – a vital water source for El Salvador and neighbouring countries.

Our lawyers play a critical role in shaping these transactions. We help structure the financing, credit enhancements, conservation commitments and governance as needed by the credit support providers, rating agencies, and investor expectations. We also support policy development in the sovereign debt space, raising awareness of debt-for-nature swaps among the G7, the G20, multilateral development banks (MDBs), development finance institutions (DFIs), the non-governmental organisation (NGO) community and the Paris Club – a group of major creditor countries that co-ordinate sustainable debt solutions for developing nations.



This publication does not necessarily deal with every important topic or cover every aspect of the topics with which it deals. It is not designed to provide legal or other advice.

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