



ACCREDITATION REPORT

**British Small Animals Veterinary
Association (BSAVA)**

February 2025



Executive Summary

The British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) exists to promote excellence in small animal practice through education and science and is the largest specialist division of the British Veterinary Association representing nearly 10,000 members. BSAVA consists of a central office and 12 regions covering Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It provides a variety of CPD for veterinary surgeons and nurses, multiple publications and two journals. A team of around 50 employees work from the organisation's head office, Woodrow House in Quedgeley, and it runs the largest veterinary congress in Europe. BSAVA has a strong commitment to sustainability, demonstrating this in how it runs its head office, support network and its annual conference, as well as the work it does to promote sustainable practice to its members and the small animal veterinary community.

BSAVA continues to demonstrate how it considers its impact on the environment and how it can reduce that impact, but the implementation of the environmental management system which is provided by the iiE programme does not seem, from an external perspective, to be as embedded as it could be. Its effectiveness would be much enhanced by having a member of BSAVA head office staff in the Green Champion role; putting this in place should be an immediate point of focus.

This audit report comments on data from 2023 but some of the projects included in the project section of the audit were completed in 2024. A strong recommendation coming from this report is to hold another audit, before too long, to bring the data submitted for audit in line with activity; without this, it is difficult to correctly analyse performance and can lead to some assumptions having to be made.

As stated in last year's report, BSAVA's annual congress is an important annual event. The carbon footprint of this event held over several days is much higher than the annual footprint of the head office. Continuing to measure and minimise its impact is recommended.

Highlights

- BSAVA continues to make an impressive contribution to 'greening' veterinary practice, often working in conjunction with other veterinary bodies to produce professional guidance, such as the use of parasiticides and antibacterials, and on more general sustainability topics.
- Whilst the use of all resources increased in 2024 when compared to the two previous years, the use of most is still lower than the 2019 baseline; electricity use has increased but this is likely to be due to the installation of EV chargers.



Improvements

- The recording of and analysis of data should become more systematic, and be stored so it is readily available. For example, some data sets for 2022 were not provided at this audit, but they must have been gathered as they were previously submitted to a third party for carbon footprint calculation.
- An internal Green Champion and Green Team should be recruited, or alternatively, every member of staff should be encouraged (through a KPI or by making a personal pledge) to make a contribution to BSAVA's sustainability work.

Score

Investors in the Environment is pleased to confirm that, having recently completed the audit process, BSAVA has achieved the Silver level accreditation with a score of 73%.



To achieve Silver level accreditation, an organisation is required to continue to develop and implement their Environmental Management System, using the framework to put forward a range of projects that will support continual improvement in resource and carbon management or nature protection. The organisation will also need to implement a travel plan, improve upon waste management practices, and manage staff communication and engagement, and introduce performance reporting to key stakeholders.



About the audit

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) accreditation requires an organisation to provide evidence that it has met a range of pre-defined criteria, set targets to reduce its environmental impact and taken action to improve its performance whilst enhancing the community in which it operates. Evidence is presented at an annual audit and this report provides an evaluation of the organisation's performance as well as offers advice on the next steps for continued improvement.

The Investors in the Environment annual audit assesses five key areas of an organisation's Environmental Management System (EMS). These areas include:

- Environmental policy
- Resource management and monitoring
- Progress against targets
- Action planning including social/ environmental projects
- Communication

The purpose of the audit is to evaluate the organisation's EMS and make suggestions relating to its performance. Future opportunities and risks to the organisation's environmental practices may also be identified as a result.

The audit consisted of an examination of documentation evidence, and an interview with key personnel on 12th January 2025, with final evidence submitted on 11th March 2025

Evidence submitted included:

- **Updated EMS Pack**
- **Data measurement sheets**
- **Environmental Policy**
- **Evidence of projects**



Summary Results Table

Audit category	Score
Section 1 - Leadership and Governance (Policy)	86%
Section 2 - Resource Use, Data, & Monitoring	57%
Section 3 - Performance, Action, & Targets	75%
Section 4 - Carbon Management	57%
Section 5 - Waste Management & Materials	63%
Section 6 - Transport & Travel Planning	67%
Section 7 - Environmental & Social Projects	80%
Section 8 - Communication & Engagement	83%
Overall Score	73%

Audit Scoring

Each section of the organisation's Environmental Management System (EMS) is scored as detailed below. Full reference to scoring can be found separately in the organisation's audit sheet upon request, including auditor comments against specific criteria.

Fail	<p>0 Points: A failing score means that this criterion has not been met nor is any progress demonstrated.</p> <p><i>No progress or commitment has been made in this area.</i></p>
Action Needed	<p>1 point: Action is needed to improve and should be considered in alignment with the auditor's comments and an appropriate timeline. These will be discussed during quarterly support calls to help improve.</p> <p><i>The organisation is considering developing this area, but no formal process has been established or meaningful progress has not been made.</i></p>
Pass / Compliant	<p>2 points: The criteria have been met, though there may also be suggestions to improve.</p> <p><i>The organisation is beginning or improving this area, is broadly compliant with the iiE criteria, and may be showing processes that support improvements.</i></p>
Outstanding	<p>3 points: This criterion has been exceeded as measured against the basic iiE criteria and may demonstrate a significant improvement since the previous year or may highlight best practice.</p> <p><i>The organisation is succeeding with supportive target achievement and may be leading or supporting others in their sector or influence to achieve improvements.</i></p>

Leadership & Governance (Environmental Policy)



86%

The process of developing an environmental policy includes a review of the environmental aspects of an organisation and the impacts these have on the wider environment. This should consider material use and consumption, energy use, water management, waste minimisation, etc.

The policy is the main driver for environmental performance improvements and needs to be led by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). It should be reviewed annually, alongside environmental performance updates.

In time, wider strategies and long-term objectives should be considered by the organisation and used to inform the commitments outlined in the policy. The policy should be communicated to staff and made available for all to review, both internally and publicly.

Strengths

- An updated and comprehensive Environmental Policy is on the BSAVA website. This version has been signed more recently than the copy sent as audit evidence.
- There is strong leadership from the Senior Team – this audit was led by BSAVA's outgoing President, who has been very involved in all of BSAVA's sustainability work over the past few years.
- There is evidence of green procurement and wider consideration of environmental impact (i.e. consideration of becoming 'carbon neutral').
- Sustainability is a regular agenda item at team meetings.

Actions for review

- Add the name of the CEO to Environmental Policy where it is signed and the name of the new Green Champion, when appointed, as the person responsible for the management of BSAVA's sustainability performance.
- BSAVA should formally adopt a Green Procurement Policy (available through the e-learning section of the iiE website) if there is not yet one in place.
- If BSAVA sets a net zero carbon target (see the Carbon Management section below), the short, medium and long term planning should then be developed to feed into a strategy to hit its target.
- The current 'Green Champion' will be less involved in the day-to-day running of BSAVA henceforth. A member of the team must be recruited to continue the organisation's excellent work. Perhaps a small salary increase, extra holiday or another incentive can be offered to increase interest.
- Encourage the culture that 'everyone's job is a green job' by asking staff to commit to a quarterly sustainability KPI or pledge to support company performance.

Resource Use & Data Monitoring



57%

Resource use and data monitoring is pivotal for any organisation to ensure good management of performance. Within this section of the EMS, an organisation is required to develop robust data recording procedures and set a process for data revision that aligns with general performance reviews – which could be monthly, quarterly, or even half yearly, depending on the measured resource and planned activity.

To support the monitoring of data, a review of operations and processes across the organisation needs to be carried out to understand how and why resources are used and where opportunities for improvement exist.

As part of resource management, prioritisation is key, to ensure activities and resources focused on efficiency gains are deployed in areas which can have the biggest impact.

Strengths

- How BSAVA uses resources and how it can minimise the impact of their use is considered in decision making.

Actions for review

- The audit pack should be reviewed to ensure that it covers all resources which are being monitored, describing how they are used and what controls are in place to reduce their use. For example, the use of transport should be better described, and how the energy generated by the solar panels is to be used most effectively.
- A short description of how heating is controlled was provided at audit and has been added to audit pack – highlighted in yellow in the copy sent with this report.
- A section about Congress and how the impact of the event is minimised should be added to the audit pack.
- Raw or summarised transport data should be submitted as evidence for the annual audit.
- Data is not being gathered and monitored as regularly as it should. This would be more easily undertaken if there was a Green Champion recruited from the staff team and resource use and sustainability updates were given regularly (perhaps monthly, at team meetings). The resource measurement sheet (which can be downloaded from the iiE website) is a useful resource in which to easily record, calculate and monitor usage. Please ask for a demonstration if helpful.

Performance, Action & Targets



75%

Setting targets provides an opportunity to measure performance against planned activities. Where performance is falling short of achieving targets, future or underway activity or project plans can be refined to ensure set out goals are achieved.

Targets can be set against activity metrics to analyse how annual changes to business activity have affected performance, with the aim to always improve efficiency where absolute reductions are not achievable.

Clear, relevant and well managed action plans should record intended activities and support the review of performance, with the aim to achieving the set targets.

Strengths

- Actions are completed and progress is made, but much more would be achieved if there was a member of the BSAVA office team supporting day-to-day activity.

Actions for review

- Action planning should become more systematic. Plans should include detail about what is going to be done, who is going to be responsible for researching it/making it happen, when they are going to do that by, when progress will be reviewed and any notes relevant to progress.
- Action plans should be reviewed regularly at staff or Green Team meetings and updated as progress occurs.

Carbon Management



57%

With increased focus on working towards Net Zero and the importance of Climate Action, carbon management is a key element of the iiE accreditation process. Organisations are required to calculate their footprint starting at buildings level (energy consumed within the buildings), then water, travel, and finally including additional aspects of business activity, such as waste, etc.

Carbon Management provides an opportunity for an organisation to consider which resources or operations need to be prioritised to decarbonise as quickly as possible, in line with Climate Science. The output from a carbon footprint calculation should be used



to inform these decisions, which is another reason data capture and accurate data reporting is necessary.

In accordance with the [GHG Protocol](#), iiE encourages the dual reporting of an organisation's carbon footprint, which results in the provision of two outputs for those organisations on a renewable energy tariff, a 'location-based' and a 'market-based' carbon footprint.

The 'location-based' method reflects the impact of electricity drawn from the grid, using the UK grid's average emission factor, regardless of the tariff to which an organisation has signed up.

The 'market-based' method uses an emission factor which is either specific to the electricity tariff to which the reporting organisation has signed up or a generic 'UK renewable energy' factor, which allows electricity from renewables or low carbon sources to be reported with lower emissions than those generated through the burning of fossil fuels. An energy provider should be able to provide the emission factor for any of its tariffs.

Any electricity purchased and distributed through the National Grid is generated from a variety of sources and will always have a carbon footprint as a result. Location-based reporting demonstrates the organisation's awareness of the overall impact Grid sourced electricity contributes towards climate change. Direct carbon reduction using location-based reporting can only be achieved through the installation of solar or other renewable technologies. However, the market-based reporting provides an opportunity to demonstrate an organisation's commitment to support the reduction of emissions through its purchasing decisions.

The 2024 location-based carbon footprint was 61.37 tCO₂e, or 32 tCO₂e when market-based factors were used. This is an increase of 16% and 18% respectively on 2023 figures. This included emissions relating to the use of energy (the largest contributors when location-based factors are used), water and its treatment, grey fleet, rail, air and taxi travel as well as an estimate of staff home working emissions. Energy and transport use were the main contributors to the increases.

Strengths

- Significant reductions have been achieved since the 2019 baseline year.

Actions for review

- Emissions have been creeping up over the past few years; whilst the growth can be explained, ensure staff and volunteers are reminded of how they can support BSAVA's environmental intentions. It be good to see reductions across the key contributing categories next year.

- When the solar panels have been installed, ensure that policies around energy use are updated to maximise the use of the electricity which they generate.
- No specific emissions reduction target has been set, although becoming a 'carbon neutral organisation' is mentioned in the Environmental Policy. iiE encourages its members to prioritise working towards a net zero carbon target rather than aiming for carbon neutrality, for reasons which can be discussed with iiE.
- Given its role in the sector, BSAVA should consider setting some form of net zero target – even if that is just across its Scope 1 & 2 emissions. Ideally it would be across all emission categories with a timeline that ties in with or is an improvement on that of the UK government. The short, medium and long term plan provides a good basis from which to develop a strategy to hit its target.
- An estimate of the carbon emissions relating to paper use could be included in next year's carbon footprint (iiE can help with this).
- Continue to consider how the emissions from the annual conference can be minimised – particularly those relating to the use of transport.

Waste Management & Materials



63%

Organisations are required to review and improve upon waste management. This should start with how waste is managed on site and ultimately disposed of to ensure the correct processes are followed.

From Silver level onwards, thought should be given to procurement and how waste is generated on site, from the materials purchased that end up in the waste stream, through to the activities on site that create waste.

Finally, circular economy concepts and thinking should be introduced, with the waste hierarchy leading to decision making, opting for elimination as the priority, followed by choosing products that can be reused or repaired.

Strengths

- The minimisation of waste is considered both in the office (primarily through single use catering equipment and supplies packaging reduction) and at congress (through exhibitor and catering contracts).

Actions for review

- Regular bin checks/waste audits of the office bins should be carried out to ensure that staff are using the waste management system correctly, and reminders sent out to correct noticeable errors.
- Forthcoming [Simpler Recycling](#) legislation requires all businesses employing over 10 people to separate out food waste from their black bag waste (and in some

cases, contractors will demand that paper and card are separated out from mixed recycling). If collecting food waste separately comes at a higher cost, consider something like a [hot bin](#) provides a good solution, as long as staff are informed about what can go into the bin and a use can be found for the resulting compost.

- Obtaining waste and recycling data from the current contractor, so that performance can be measured and monitored from one year to the next, is encouraged.

Transport & Travel Planning



67%

A travel plan must consider the travel needs for an organisation, including access, availability of public services, and safety of travel where relevant. Travel is the single largest contributor to UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and can be a challenging area to manage, given the need for transport within any operation.

The plan should aim to remove barriers for individuals to choose active / shared transport over single car occupancy, and then to consider electrification of vehicles over internal combustion engines.

Surveys are a useful tool to engage with individuals around travel habits and to support identification and implementation of barrier removals, to improve good travel habits.

Strengths

- Recorded grey fleet mileage dropped considerably between 2022 and 2023 and is a quarter of that recorded in the 2019 baseline year.

Actions for review

- A new travel policy should be adopted. Most of the grey fleet travel is undertaken by senior staff and committee members, who are aware of BSAVA's efforts to minimise its environmental impact, but the adoption of a formal policy would ensure that good practice is embedded into the organisation's culture.
- A better system for recording grey fleet mileage should be developed, which makes it easy to identify the fuel type and size of each car being used.
- Staff should be surveyed about their commuting habits, and policies to support them to be able to opt for lower carbon forms of transport considered as part of the revision of the travel policy.
- Now that chargers have been installed at the office, seek ways to encourage staff to switch to an EV when they next purchase a car - perhaps through a salary sacrifice programme - there are a number in the market, such as this: [Used Car Salary Sacrifice: Affordable EVs | The Electric Car Scheme](#).

- Staff who live closer to the office may be interested in an e-bike 'subscription' such as this: [All-inclusive E-bike Subscriptions](#) which is a good way to try e-biking before committing to a purchase.

Environmental & Social Projects



80%

All organisations need to consider their corporate responsibility, both for social, community and wellbeing impacts, and for environmental impacts through biodiversity or conservation efforts.

This section requires organisations to undertake a range of projects that not only aim to achieve impacts, but to also encourage individual participation and engagement – to raise conversation and encourage individuals to consider what they can do outside of the organisation as well.

It is strongly encouraged that organisations undertake projects in all three areas, Resource Efficiency, Biodiversity / Conservation, and Social / Community.

Strengths

- Excellent projects have been undertaken over 2023 and 2024, such as the installation of EV chargers at BSAVA's head office, charity events and volunteering opportunities and most importantly, through BSAVA's contribution to sustainability working groups and practice development and dissemination in the veterinary sector.

Communication & Engagement



83%

The scheme requires that active and engaged communication happens at all levels, as sustainability cannot only happen within the Senior Team or only happen at ground level but requires a collaborative approach. Regular and consistent communication and engagement is therefore pivotal to ensuring objectives are achieved.

In addition, regular reporting is necessary to highlight the success of activities and improvements achieved. These should be produced both for the SLT, but also for wider staff to celebrate success and recognise efforts they have made through participation.

In time, reports should be made available publicly alongside the environmental policy to further demonstrate the commitment and celebrate the achievements of the organisation.

Strengths

- BSAVA communicates its commitment to sustainability by programming relevant items into the agenda of the conference, publishing themed articles in the Companion magazine and contributing to sector practice guidance.

Actions for review

- Provide evidence of internal communications at the next audit.
- To encourage staff knowledge development on sustainability issues, make the most of the iiE's free access to [Stickerbook](#). It should be available to all iiE member's Green Teams from 1st April.

Next steps

To continue to develop sustainability within the organisation, the business should consider and prioritise the following next steps below.

- Recruit a Green Champion from the staff at head office. Ideally, this person would be supported by a Green Team, but BSAVA is a small enough and motivated organisation, such that everyone should see their role as a 'green' role.
- Improve the internal use of the iiE programme so that BSAVA's environmental management becomes more systematic; this should include a review of the audit pack to ensure it reflects all BSAVA activity.
- Adopt a formal travel and a green procurement policy (there are templates for both on the iiE website) and ensure they are both shared with staff.
- Encourage the new Green Champion to access the (free to iiE members) [Green Champion Training](#) and [Stickerbook](#)
- Most of the requirements for iiE's Green level accreditation are already being met; BSAVA should aim to achieve this as the next audit.





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