



## WHY IS ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY RELEVANT TO THE UK PUBLISHERS?

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The PPA commissioned Innventia to undertake a high-level desk-based review in response to better understand the **strategic risks and opportunities** that some of the current and emerging sustainability challenges present for publishers and their supply chains. The findings of this study provide a platform for bringing the sustainability agenda to a wider audience within the business by presenting clearly the business implications of the various challenges being faced and opportunities presented.

The implications of the big environmental sustainability challenges such as climate change, energy, water, resources and forests can seem abstract and remote when considered from the perspective of the day-to-day business of a publisher. However, the report shows that these challenges have the potential to impact to a greater or lesser extent directly on the activities of publishers and their supply chains.

There are of course many uncertainties when considering future impacts, but a review of the best available information identified through a literature search suggests that the most significant risks faced by publishers and their supply chain are:

- **Increased energy costs** – leading to increased publisher overheads, increased paper and print prices, increased data storage costs and increased venue costs
- **Disruption to energy availability** – potentially leading to lost working time, disruptions to print runs and subsequent missed deadlines for printed publications; down time for digital products; and affecting successful delivery of events
- **Public perceptions of forest management** – to an extent, misperceptions of paper as a source of deforestation and declining European forest extent persist. This could manifest itself as a threat to the “licence to operate” for publishers of printed publications. The advent of social media and the speed and ease with which campaigns can now be managed and spread increases this risk
- **Disruption to food production patterns** – leading to increased catering costs for events
- **Increased occurrence and severity of flood events** – leading to disrupted production and supply and subsequently missed deadlines, and cancellation of, reduced quality of or reduced attendance at events
- **Increased taxation and regulation** – leading to increased compliance costs
- **A specific product carbon tax** – leading to increased product costs
- **Pressure to recover and recycle covermounts and packaging from unsolds** – leading to increased supply chain costs for newsstand magazines which include covermounts as part of the product offering.

In response to these risks, the following opportunities should be considered:

### Energy related opportunities:

- Implement internal energy efficiency programmes – PPA has highlighted a number of free services which members can utilise to identify energy efficiency opportunities
- Purchase green electricity – through PPA’s collaboration with the Bafta-led Albert initiative, PPA members have the opportunity to participate in the Creative Energy renewable electricity sourcing initiative for the creative industries (see <http://wearealbert.org/inspiration/case-studies/creative-energy> for more details)
- Challenge suppliers on energy efficiency, energy sources and carbon emissions
- UK publishing sector to proactively lobby government for policy and investments in renewable and low carbon energy
- Seek out low carbon data management providers and cloud-based solutions
- Offer digital content which is efficient to access from a user perspective (as part of the carbon calculator initiative, PPA has published guidelines on specific actions publishers of digital content can take).

### Opportunities to improve public awareness of the sustainability credentials of paper:

- Continued commitment within the sector to certified papers – already there is a high level of commitment to certified papers in the sector; this should be maintained. Publishers should continue to support the PPA in their efforts to demonstrate this by supplying data in response to the annual request regarding papers used

- Challenge the scope of sustainable forestry and engage with FSC/PEFC – to ensure that these continue to challenge forest owners and fully address the concerns of the public and critics of the schemes
- Communicate the benefits of forests and sustainable forest management – continued co-operation with the Two Sides campaign should be one aspect of this, but other opportunities should also be considered.

**Opportunities to limit the impacts of changing food production and costs:**

This topic should hold a watching brief for all publishers involved in events delivery. Specific actions they may consider to mitigate any impacts are:

- Careful menu planning
- Careful portion planning and quantity ordering
- Considering local food and/or local suppliers in order to reduce food transportation costs and impacts

**Opportunities to limit the impacts of increased flood and other extreme weather impacts:**

Contingency planning is the key:

- Challenge suppliers about their flood risk and contingency plans
- Establish effective production and distribution contingency strategies
- Challenge venues regarding their flood risk and contingency plans

**Opportunities to limit the potential impacts of future environmental policy, regulations and taxation, including any potential product carbon tax:**

- Generally, publishers to continue to support PPA in the delivery of the Responsibility Deal – participation in the Sustainability Action Group and responding to the information needs in the frame of the deal are good starting points
- Continue to work with carbon calculator case studies – this will allow members to understand where they are exposed to carbon-related risks in their supply chains, which could ultimately result in increased costs through regulation and taxation in the future
- Promotion and adoption of the scheme to recover and reuse unsolds – the scheme, organised by The Finishing Line, was presented at the PPA’s Sustainability Forum 2016. It has been successfully trialled and implemented and numerous relevant publishers have expressed interest in working with the approach
- Continued work on unsolds management (e.g. SBR)
- PPA to continue to monitor developments in circular economy and lobby policy makers for appropriate interventions
- PPA, publishers and supply chain stakeholders to publicise widely the circular economy successes of the industry (e.g. 100% recycling of unsolds, initiative to recover and reuse unsold covermounts, etc)
- Challenge paper suppliers and printers on their efforts to reduce the carbon impact of their processes – this can be approached as an action for individual publishers or as a collective through the PPA’s Sustainability Action Group
- Continue close working relationship with distributor/ papermakers to ensure 100% recycling of unsolds.

Pursuing these activities does not completely eliminate risks from the publishing supply chain, but it will certainly ensure that publishers are as well placed as they can be to anticipate and mitigate risks and take advantage of opportunities as and when they arise

Reassuringly, many of the activities already being pursued by the PPA’s Sustainability Action Group (SAG) address a good number of these risks. However, there is more that can be done by the PPA, by publishers themselves, and by the supply chain partners. The report identifies these actions and details the benefits of taking action. PPA members are encouraged to support the activities so as to ensure a more sustainable future for publishing in the UK.