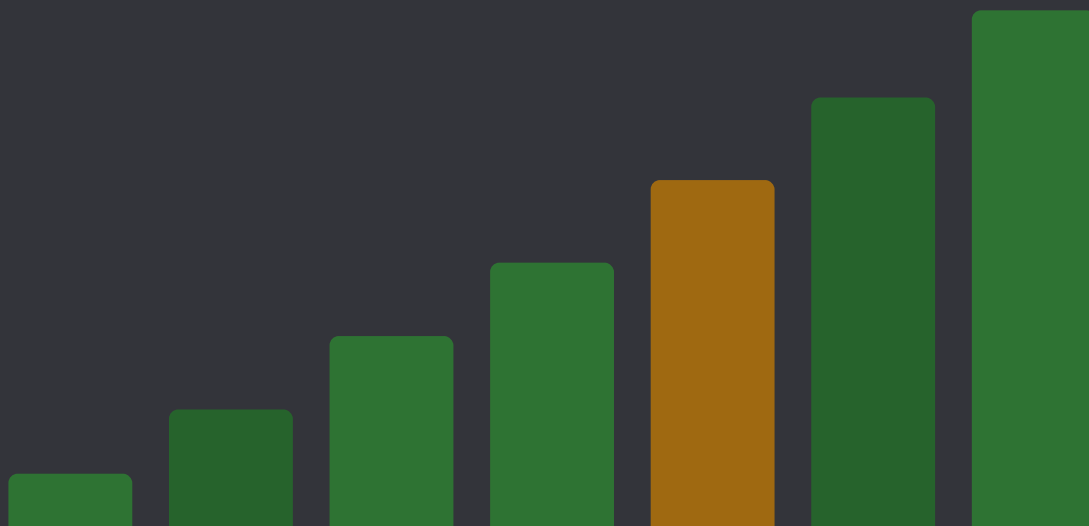


The Tier 1 PQQ Carbon-Section Response Pack

How to score full marks on the carbon questions in a Tier 1 or framework bid — the model answers, the evidence to attach, and where most subs lose points.

For civils, groundworks & structural sub-contractors



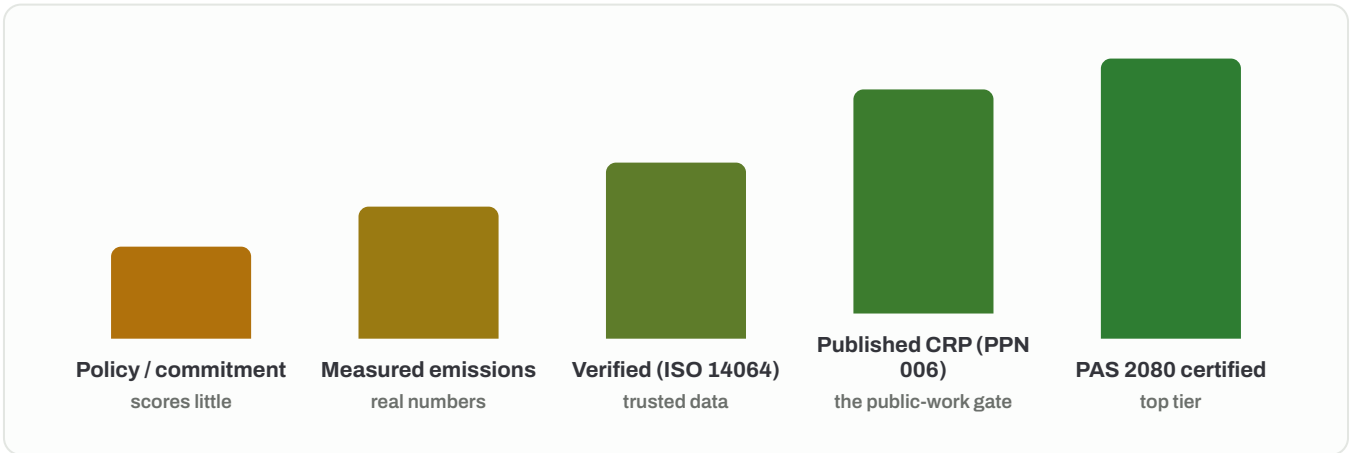
Why the carbon section now decides bids

The sustainability and carbon questions in a Tier 1 PQQ, framework SQ or supply-chain questionnaire are no longer a box-tick. They’re scored, weighted, and – for public and major-contractor work – a condition of even being considered. Tier 1 contractors are bound by carbon requirements from clients like National Highways, Network Rail, HS2 and the water utilities, and they flow those requirements straight down to their supply chain.

A strong package and a sharp price can still lose a place to a competitor who simply evidences their carbon credentials better. Here’s the encouraging part: most sub-contractors don’t under-score because they lack substance – they under-score because they don’t know what the assessor is looking for. This pack shows you, question by question. Use the model answers as templates, populate the brackets with your real data, and attach the evidence listed. **Only ever claim what you can evidence** – unverified claims are the fastest route to a greenwashing flag.

How the carbon questions are scored

Assessors reward evidence, not intent – and there’s a clear hierarchy that climbs. “We’re committed to net zero” scores almost nothing; “here is our verified footprint, our published CRP and our reduction trajectory, with evidence attached” scores full marks.



The seven model answers



Q1 Environmental policy & management system

Does your organisation have an environmental management system (e.g. ISO 14001) and an environmental/sustainability policy? Please provide details.

WHAT THEY'RE ASSESSING

Governance maturity — is environmental management embedded and owned, or ad hoc? Often a pass/fail gate before the scored questions.

A STRONG ANSWER INCLUDES

- ✓ A named system (ISO 14001 certified, or a documented EMS working toward it)
- ✓ A policy signed and dated by a senior leader, reviewed annually
- ✓ Clear scope covering your site and depot operations

MODEL ANSWER

[Company] operates an environmental management system aligned to ISO 14001 ([certified by [body] / under implementation, target [date]]), underpinned by a board-approved Environmental & Sustainability Policy, signed by our Managing Director and reviewed annually.

The system covers all site and depot operations, with documented controls for waste, energy, emissions and materials. Last reviewed [month/year].

EVIDENCE TO ATTACH

ISO 14001 certificate or EMS manual; the signed, dated policy.

- ✗ **WHERE SUBS LOSE POINTS** An undated or unsigned policy, “we intend to...” language, or no named owner all read as immature.



Q2 Carbon footprint measurement

Do you measure your greenhouse gas emissions? State which scopes (1, 2, 3) you measure, the methodology used, and whether the data is independently verified.

WHAT THEY'RE ASSESSING

Do you have real, credible numbers? Assessors weight data quality and independent verification heavily – intent scores little, evidence scores well.

A STRONG ANSWER INCLUDES

- ✓ Scope 1, 2 and material Scope 3, measured to the GHG Protocol
- ✓ A stated baseline year and current figure, updated annually
- ✓ Independent verification (ISO 14064-1), with the verifier named

MODEL ANSWER

[Company] measures Scope 1, 2 and material Scope 3 emissions in line with the GHG Protocol. Our [year] footprint is [X] tCO₂e against a [baseline year] baseline, updated annually.

The data is independently verified to ISO 14064-1 by [verifier], and the verification statement is available on request.

EVIDENCE TO ATTACH

Footprint report; ISO 14064-1 verification statement.

- ✗ **WHERE SUBS LOSE POINTS** Scope 1 & 2 only with no Scope 3, no named methodology, self-declared figures with no verification (a greenwashing red flag), or data over two years old.



Q3 Carbon Reduction Plan (PPN 006)

Do you have a published Carbon Reduction Plan in line with PPN 006 (formerly PPN 06/21), including a commitment to Net Zero by 2050? Please provide a link.

WHAT THEY'RE ASSESSING

The headline gate for public and major-contractor work. They want a published CRP on the government template, with senior sign-off and a Net Zero 2050 commitment.

A STRONG ANSWER INCLUDES

- ✓ A CRP on the government template, published on your website (a link, not a file on request)
- ✓ Scope 1, 2 and the required subset of Scope 3, to the GHG Protocol
- ✓ Net Zero by 2050 (or sooner), interim targets, reduction measures, senior sign-off

MODEL ANSWER

[Company] has a published Carbon Reduction Plan compliant with PPN 006, committing to Net Zero by [2045/2050]. It reports our Scope 1, 2 and relevant Scope 3 emissions to the GHG Protocol, sets interim targets (e.g. [50%] by [2030]), details our reduction measures, and is signed off by our [Director title].

It is published at [URL] and reviewed annually.

EVIDENCE TO ATTACH

A live link to the published CRP (PDF on your website), on the current government template.

- ✗ **WHERE SUBS LOSE POINTS** A CRP held on file but not published does not meet the requirement. Missing the Net Zero 2050 commitment, not using the template, or no senior sign-off fails the gate outright.



Q4 Reduction targets & trajectory

What emissions reduction targets has your organisation set, and are they science-based?

WHAT THEY'RE ASSESSING

Ambition plus credibility. Dated, science-aligned targets with evidence of progress score far above a general commitment.

A STRONG ANSWER INCLUDES

- ✓ Near-term and long-term targets, with dates
- ✓ Science-based alignment (SBTi-validated or aligned to the 1.5°C pathway)
- ✓ Progress to date, evidenced in your footprint trend

MODEL ANSWER

[Company] has committed to a [50%] reduction by [2030] and Net Zero by [year]. Our targets are [SBTi-validated / aligned to the SBTi 1.5°C pathway].

Since our [baseline] baseline we have achieved a [X%] reduction, evidenced in our annual verified footprint.

EVIDENCE TO ATTACH

SBTi validation letter (if held); year-on-year footprint trend.

- ✗ **WHERE SUBS LOSE POINTS** “Committed to reducing our emissions” with no dates, no pathway and no progress data scores close to nothing.



Q5 Project carbon & embodied carbon

How do you manage and reduce carbon on the works you deliver, including embodied carbon in materials?

WHAT THEY'RE ASSESSING

Where civils bids are really won. They want to see you reduce the carbon of the actual works — concrete, steel, aggregates — not just your office and fleet.

A STRONG ANSWER INCLUDES

- ✓ Low-carbon material selection (GGBS/PFA cement replacement, recycled aggregates, EPD-backed products)
- ✓ Measurement of embodied/project carbon, reported to the client
- ✓ Carbon weighed alongside cost, programme and quality, with a worked example

MODEL ANSWER

On our [groundworks/structural] packages we assess and reduce embodied carbon through low-carbon material selection — GGBS/PFA cement replacement, recycled aggregates and EPD-backed products — efficient design and reduced waste.

We measure project carbon and report it to the client, integrating carbon into decisions alongside cost, programme and quality. On [project] we reduced embodied carbon by [X%] through [measure].

EVIDENCE TO ATTACH

A project carbon case study; EPDs; a low-carbon materials register.

- ✗ **WHERE SUBS LOSE POINTS** Answering only with office/fleet (operational) carbon and ignoring materials — the biggest number in civils — leaves the most points on the table.



Q6 PAS 2080 / whole-life carbon

Does your organisation work to PAS 2080 (carbon management in buildings and infrastructure), or hold certification?

WHAT THEY'RE ASSESSING

Maturity for infrastructure supply chains. PAS 2080 is increasingly expected by National Highways, Network Rail and the water utilities, and flowed down by Tier 1s.

A STRONG ANSWER INCLUDES

- ✓ Certification, or clear alignment with a roadmap to it
- ✓ A whole-life carbon approach across the works
- ✓ Collaboration with clients and suppliers to cut carbon at each stage

MODEL ANSWER

[Company] [is certified to / aligns its carbon management with] PAS 2080, applying a whole-life carbon approach across our works and collaborating with clients and suppliers to reduce carbon at every stage.

[Certified by [body], [date] / Gap analysis complete; certification targeted for [date]].

EVIDENCE TO ATTACH

PAS 2080 certificate, or a gap analysis and roadmap.

- ✗ **WHERE SUBS LOSE POINTS** Not recognising PAS 2080, or claiming “alignment” with nothing to evidence it, both undermine credibility with infrastructure clients.



Q7 Supply chain engagement

How do you engage your own supply chain to reduce carbon?

WHAT THEY'RE ASSESSING

Whole-chain influence — central to Scope 3 and to PAS 2080. They want to see you push carbon down, not just manage your own.

A STRONG ANSWER INCLUDES

- ✓ Emissions data collection from key suppliers
- ✓ Lower-carbon and EPD-backed products favoured in procurement
- ✓ Carbon criteria built into your supplier selection

MODEL ANSWER

We engage our supply chain by collecting emissions data from key material suppliers, favouring lower-carbon and EPD-backed products, and building carbon criteria into our procurement decisions.

Example: [on [project] we sourced [lower-carbon product] from [supplier], cutting [X] tCO₂e].

EVIDENCE TO ATTACH

Procurement/sustainable-sourcing policy; supplier carbon questionnaire.

- ✗ **WHERE SUBS LOSE POINTS** No supply-chain answer at all — a common miss that costs points on any Scope 3 or PAS 2080-aligned question.

Your pre-bid carbon evidence pack

Keep these on file and current, and you can answer any carbon section in hours, not days — instead of scrambling each time a PQQ lands.

- ✓ Signed, dated Environmental & Sustainability Policy
- ✓ ISO 14001 certificate or EMS documentation
- ✓ Latest carbon footprint report (Scope 1, 2 & material 3)
- ✓ ISO 14064-1 verification statement
- ✓ Published Carbon Reduction Plan (PPN 006) — with live link
- ✓ Net Zero / interim targets; SBTi validation if held
- ✓ Project carbon case study + EPDs / materials register
- ✓ PAS 2080 certificate or roadmap
- ✓ Supplier carbon questionnaire / sustainable procurement policy

Eight mistakes that quietly cost points

- ✗ Commitments with no dates, data or evidence behind them.
- ✗ A Carbon Reduction Plan held on file but never published (PPN 006 requires it published).
- ✗ Self-declared figures with no independent verification — reads as greenwashing risk.
- ✗ Answering only on office and fleet carbon, ignoring embodied carbon in materials.
- ✗ Out-of-date footprint data (more than ~12–24 months old).
- ✗ Copy-pasted generic answers that don't reflect your actual works or projects.
- ✗ Evidence referenced but not attached, so the assessor can't award the points.
- ✗ No named owner — carbon treated as a side task, not a board priority.

YOUR NEXT STEP

From good answers to real evidence.

This pack shows you what a full-marks answer looks like. The gap most sub-contractors then hit is simple — having the actual evidence to back the words: the verified footprint, the published CRP, the PAS 2080 alignment. That's the work, and it's more achievable than most expect.

Carbon Action helps civils, groundworks and structural sub-contractors get tender-ready on carbon. Recent work includes **Colemans** (demolition sub-contractor — carbon reduction plan), **Project Centre** (PAS 2080) and **Cora** (developer net-zero programme), alongside ISO 14064 and PAS 2080 delivery across the infrastructure supply chain.

Book your free Tender Readiness Call →

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Guidance note: PQQ wording varies by client and framework. Treat these as adaptable templates, complete them with your own verified data, and claim only what you can evidence.