

# **IMPALA Carbon Calculator Report 2024**

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**Insights from  
carbon footprinting  
independent labels**

**December 2024**

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# Foreword



**Helen Smith, IMPALA**

This is our second carbon calculator report, giving an overview of the emissions of labels using the tool. Thanks to support from Merlin and Murmur, we have made significant updates to the tool. These are also reflected in the way we depict the average footprint of labels measuring, which now includes three different metrics. Since April 2024, members are able to measure and view their footprints in different scopes, which is also reflected in the report this year. Thanks to all of the original contributors, to Merlin and to Murmur for their support so far, helping the sector stay at the top of its game.

As we move forward, we will complete our first internationalisation project with A2IM, again thanks to the support of Merlin. Thanks also to the EU for recognising our work with their four year grant starting in January 2025.

This is IMPALA's fifth year of action in this area and we decided to mark that by putting the spotlight on Horst Weidenmueller and !K7 with IMPALA's Outstanding Contribution Award. Horst's pragmatic approach makes !K7 a model and a driving force for our work.

The IMPALA carbon calculator has become an essential tool for Ninja Tune. We have recently completed our fifth annual report, each year we have been able to add some extra areas gradually building a more detailed picture of our footprint and giving us the information and impetus to address each area.

It's great to see so many record labels support the calculator's creation and development. This is an important part of the record industry addressing the climate emergency and showing that independent labels are serious about this challenge, along with many initiatives that go 'Beyond Carbon'.

Five years on from IMPALA recognising the climate emergency in 2019, we are now able to demonstrate the Business Case for Sustainability, the first study in the music sector assessing the benefits for labels who take action, as well as the importance sustainability has for music fans.

We are excited about the work ahead for IMPALA's task force, thanks to the work done by Horst and the whole team to guide us. I am also looking forward to seeing what we can achieve with the Music Climate Pact and the Music Industry Climate Collective where we will see collaboration across the whole industry deliver key results next year.



**Peter Quicke, Ninja Tune, co-chair of IMPALA's sustainability task force**

At **Murmur** we believe that artists help us make sense of the world around us. Artists and arts organisations have inspired change on many social issues and now they have the power to drive action on climate change. Arts and music industries need to support artists in talking about the scale of the problem. Industry leaders can be the change they want to see, showing the way through innovative solutions in their own fields. To change the conversation on the climate crisis we need to change the industry that we work in. A culture of collaboration is key if we are to make the changes that we need to our industry in the time frame needed to mitigate the worst of the effects of the climate crisis.

To reduce your impact you first need to understand what your impact is – the IMPALA calculator is a key resource to enable record labels to understand their impacts, identify improvements and track their performance in a science-based way. The data within this report is absolutely key to helping the independent record sector transition to a low carbon model.



**Ian Stanton, Murmur  
Sustainability  
Advisor**

The data in this second report confirm that the bulk of impacts are experienced within scope 3 – outside of the emissions that are directly controlled by labels in their own facilities. Supply chains are shared across the industry meaning that actions taken in response to the data within this report will have far reaching beneficial impacts across the industry.

Murmur partners are committed to leading the way with their carbon calculations and reduction efforts. Using the IMPALA calculator is a great way to evidence that labels are taking a best practice approach to quantifying and addressing their impacts. Murmur is proud to be supporting such an important initiative.

**Merlin** is passionate about promoting a more sustainable music industry. Inspired by IMPALA and many of our members, we established a Merlin Green working group to coordinate our sustainability initiatives and integrate environmental responsibility into our organizational goals. In 2023, Merlin was proud to provide financial support for IMPALA to further develop, expand, and promote its Carbon Calculator – a tool that many independents, including Merlin, use to assess their carbon emissions. The path towards a more sustainable future involves all of us working together.



**Jeremy Sirota, Merlin CEO**

# Introduction

This is the second annual update on findings from the **IMPALA Carbon Calculator**, a free-to-use carbon footprinting tool for the recorded music industry, supported by Merlin and Murmur.

Launched in 2022, the IMPALA Carbon Calculator is the first environmental impact measurement tool for the independent recorded music sector. The Calculator helps IMPALA's members measure their carbon footprint with a standardised methodology that is aligned with the Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHG Protocol) Corporate Standard, the most widely used framework for reporting organisational greenhouse gas emissions.

Important updates have been made to the Calculator in a number of areas as well as guidance materials to support new users. This work was facilitated by funding commitments from Merlin and Murmur. The main improvements made this year are summarised in this report.

Labels of every type and size stand to benefit from measuring their carbon footprint with the IMPALA Carbon Calculator. Many of these benefits directly impact the bottom line, explored in depth this year through research into members using the Calculator. You can read a summary in this report on **page 6**.

Data entered to the Calculator also helps to build an understanding of the overall environmental impact of the independent music sector in Europe. We will work towards developing a baseline for the whole sector in future reports.

*The IMPALA Carbon Calculator was built with contributions from the IMPALA membership and is supported by Merlin and Murmur. The tool is powered by the Julie's Bicycle Creative Climate Tools platform.*

## What you'll find in this report

The report opens with the organisational benefits of using the Carbon Calculator and how your label can get involved. This summarises the findings of the **Business Case for Sustainability** report released this year and shares testimonials from labels already benefitting from the tool.

Readers will also find an overview of the updates made to the calculator in 2024, as well as the findings from this year's carbon data return. This includes details of an average carbon footprint for independent labels, highlighting the emissions hotspots that labels should focus on for emissions reductions.

Case studies of labels using the Carbon Calculator to improve their operations and reduce their environmental impacts are also presented, demonstrating the fantastic work happening across IMPALA to achieve an environmentally sustainable independent record sector.

## IMPALA's Sustainability Programme

The Carbon Calculator is a key tool for IMPALA members helping the independent recorded music sector progress towards key environmental objectives. It forms part of IMPALA's Sustainability Programme, which encompasses a long-term action plan to support the sector in:

- halving greenhouse gas emissions before 2030
- achieving net zero emissions before 2050, or sooner if feasible, and:
- measuring and disclosing greenhouse gas emissions on an annual basis

By 2026, we hope that a majority of our members will be acting in line with our Climate Declaration for Individual Companies. So far IMPALA has released a sustainability **charter** of 15 points, practical **guidance for members** and a climate **declaration** for members.

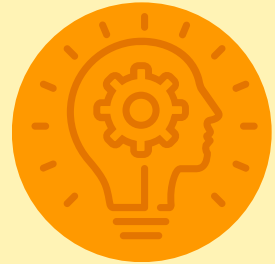
IMPALA also uses its voice to amplify other climate initiatives from the music sector, see more **here**.

# 5 Reasons to Use the IMPALA Carbon Calculator

IMPALA believes that sustainability is more than an environmental obligation—it's a strategic opportunity for independent music businesses and the sector as a whole. In 2024, IMPALA researched the **business benefits** of creating a carbon footprint and taking action. Here are just some of the highlights.

## 1 Reduce costs

A carbon footprint helps identify areas where you can be more efficient in your operations (e.g. energy savings), reducing both carbon emissions and financial costs.



## 2 Better serve music fans

Labels using the IMPALA Carbon Calculator can benefit by demonstrating a commitment to sustainability and improving brand awareness among music fans, who have been shown to be more interested in sustainability than non-music fans.

## 3 Attract and retain top talent

Multiple studies confirm that today's workforce want to apply their skills at businesses that have a positive social and environmental impact. You can prove to employees and artists that your label is taking its impacts seriously by monitoring your carbon footprint with the IMPALA Carbon Calculator.



## 4 Get aligned with legislation

Using the IMPALA Carbon Calculator ensures your label is prepared for future environmental reporting legislations (e.g. the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive - CSRD) as well accessing grants and tax incentives related to environmental actions, which are expected to apply to all companies in the future.

## 5 Drive innovation in your supply chain

In collecting data for your carbon footprint you stand to gain from closer engagement and strengthened relations with your key suppliers, who will also be looking to reduce their environmental impacts. This can create more streamlined business, greater efficiency and even product innovations.



# User testimonials

*The first stage of reducing your carbon emissions is measuring them in a way that is meaningful and aligned to best practice. The IMPALA Carbon Calculator allows users to apply the rigour of greenhouse gas accounting in a straightforward and easy to use way. At Beggars we have just entered our fifth year of data into the calculator which enables us to accurately report our impact and track our performance. The industry insight provided by the annual report is crucial to transitioning the industry to a low carbon future.*

**Ian Stanton - Head of Sustainability, Beggars Group**

*Our company is in a period of substantial growth, but we have the highest priority for reducing the negative climate effects in all areas. Using the Carbon Calculator has helped us better understand where our hotspots are and how to use this data to start making progressive decisions.*

**Torgny Sjöö, COO, Playground Music Scandinavia**

*Getting started was definitely the hardest part. Trying to measure our impacts felt very daunting in the beginning. But if you can get over that mental hurdle and start doing it, it's actually not that difficult. The first year was a little bit challenging, but we took a different approach this year where we're tracking things as we go. It's just a few extra minutes every time we are pressing up a record. So, at the end of the year, we're pretty much ready to go in creating a carbon footprint - we just need to enter the information into the calculator.*

*For anyone who is passionate and cares about our environment - tracking data and using the Calculator is a small thing to do for an important cause.*

**Andy Hsueh, Partisan, US**

*We at EMS have supported the Carbon Calculator project from the very beginning. The user-friendly interface coupled with the meaningful results motivate us year after year to achieve a positive impact on the environment and our entire surroundings. This motivates us to continuously work on multi-layered solutions that holistically reduce our energy consumption.*

**Andrea Radermacher, Encoding Management Service – EMS GmbH, Germany**

# Getting started

Labels not already using the IMPALA Carbon Calculator can do so quickly, easily and at no cost.

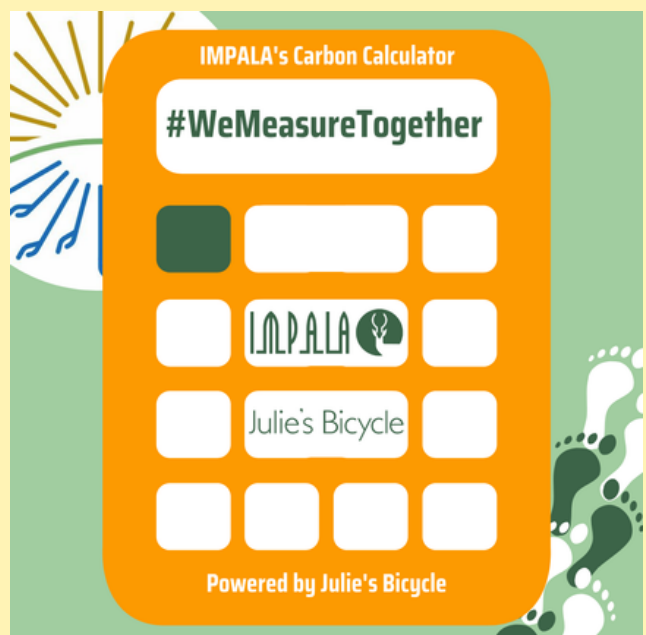
IMPALA members can create their account for free on the [sign up page](#). From there, you can start building your first carbon footprint and take advantage of the business benefits.

## 5 steps to creating a carbon footprint on the IMPALA Carbon Calculator:



*Creating a carbon footprint is not a static exercise. Data should be entered into the Carbon Calculator regularly to monitor progress and identify emerging issues related to environmental impacts.*

For further guidance, see our '5 Steps to Create your Carbon Footprint using the IMPALA Carbon Calculator' document [here](#).



# The story so far

Since its launch in April 2022, the IMPALA Carbon Calculator has been shared widely among the IMPALA membership.

The countries with the greatest number of registered users are:

**UK, Germany, Italy and France**

**Over 150 labels**

have started their carbon footprint journey on the Calculator

**Three quarters of IMPALA's National Associations are represented among registered users**

Labels from **26 countries**

have signed-up to the Calculator so far

**60 complete footprints**

have been submitted so far

Alongside launching the Carbon Calculator, IMPALA has delivered a number of sessions and resources to help labels in their carbon footprint journey:

- [‘How to’ webinars](#) explaining steps to using the Calculator
- [Supporting resources](#), including practical ‘how-to’ guides for labels at every stage of carbon footprinting
- [Business Case for Sustainability](#) report on the importance of sustainability for labels and music fans: according to the University of Glasgow’s [‘Turn Up the Volume’](#) Survey, audience research reveals music fans are more likely to care about climate change (82%) and place a higher priority on tackling the crisis than non-music fans (72%). Similar findings were featured in a survey

by [Key Production](#)

# Updates to the Carbon Calculator

The IMPALA Carbon Calculator was updated in 2024 with a number of new features. This section outlines updates on: **US adaptation; reporting guidance; scopes categorisation.**

## US Adaptation

In 2024, updates were made to enable more accurate reporting for operations in the United States. Organisations who run operations in the US will now have access to **US-specific** emissions calculations for **energy, homeworking** and **distribution**, as well as US units of measurement.

These changes have been implemented ahead of a pilot project in collaboration with A2IM to build an international community of labels reporting their emissions. Read more about the US pilot project [here](#).

## Reporting Guidance

A number of short guidance materials have been created to help labels use the Calculator with confidence. These include:

- **Carbon footprint first timers guide** – a short ‘how-to’ guide for labels starting their carbon footprint journey, explaining where to first focus your efforts. Read more [here](#).
- **5 Steps to creating a carbon footprint** – a one-page summary of actions you need to take to create a carbon footprint using the IMPALA Carbon Calculator. Read [here](#).
- **In-tool guidance** – pop-ups and hints have now been added to guide users through the Calculator. These include carbon footprint fundamental principles and a missing fields table highlighting key data that might be missing from a footprint at a glance.
- **Communications guidance** – new guidance has been shared on how labels can communicate their carbon footprint confidently and transparently.

## Scope categorisation

Best practice carbon footprint reporting categorises emissions into different ‘**Scopes**’, indicating an organisation’s level of control and influence. The IMPALA Carbon Calculator now provides an automatic breakdown of emissions by Scope in the Results pages, ready for reporting in line with carbon footprinting standard the Greenhouse Gas Protocol.

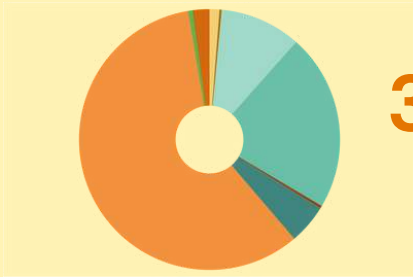
To improve awareness and understanding among labels, the Calculator now indicates the relevant scope of each impact area throughout the tool. For information on Scopes and the average emissions breakdown for labels by Scope, please see the [Average Label Footprint Breakdown – Scopes section](#).

IMPALA would like to thank Merlin and Murmur for their support in funding the tool updates in 2024.

The full list of updates as part of the April 2024 update can be viewed [here](#).

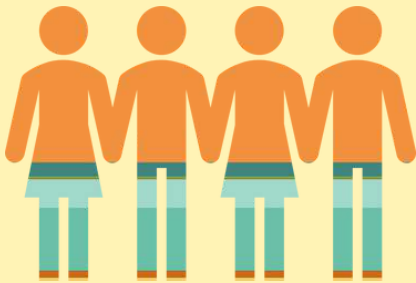
# Average Label Footprint Breakdown

Data submitted to the IMPALA Carbon Calculator tells us that on average across all business activities, independent labels generate:



**3.12 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e**  
per physical unit manufactured

**1.38 t CO<sub>2</sub>e**  
per 10,000 € of revenue

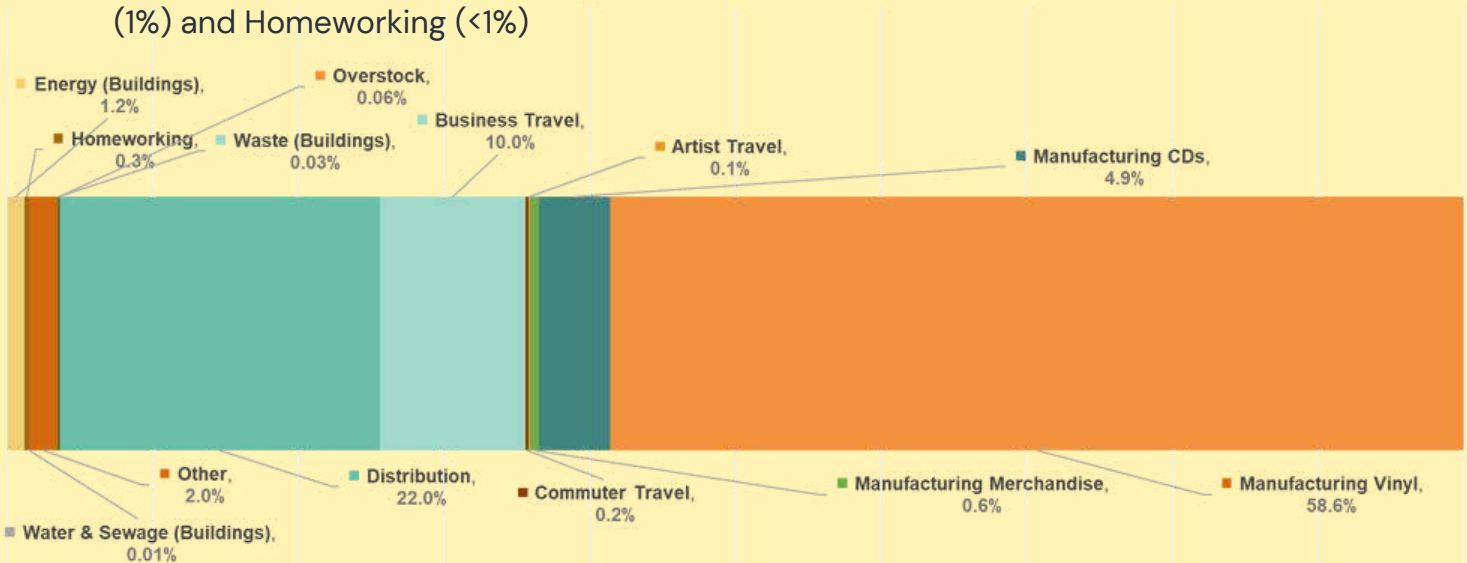


**29.4 t CO<sub>2</sub>e**  
per full-time employee per year

Note - these figures reflect emissions across all label activities. They do not reflect the emissions created by a unit manufactured or an employee.

The chart below highlights the percentage breakdown of different emission sources from label activities within these metrics. Based on this data, the top 3 impact areas which typically generate the most emissions for labels are:

- **Manufacturing - 64%** - including Vinyl (59%), CD (5%) and Merchandise (<1%)
- **Distribution - 22%** - including Air (11%), Sea (5%), Van (4%) and Trucking (1%)
- **Operations - 14%** - including Business Travel (10%), Procurement (2%), Office Impacts (1%) and Homeworking (<1%)



Notes

- Metrics and Average Label Footprint Breakdown figures exclude organisations marked as "Distributors Only".
- Per 10,000 euro of revenue figure derived using proxy data where labels did not submit this information.
- 1% of the Distribution emissions could not be categorised under a specific vehicle type as the emissions were entered under the custom emissions section unlabeled.
- 'Merchandise' currently accounts for t-shirts only.

# Average Label Footprint by Scope

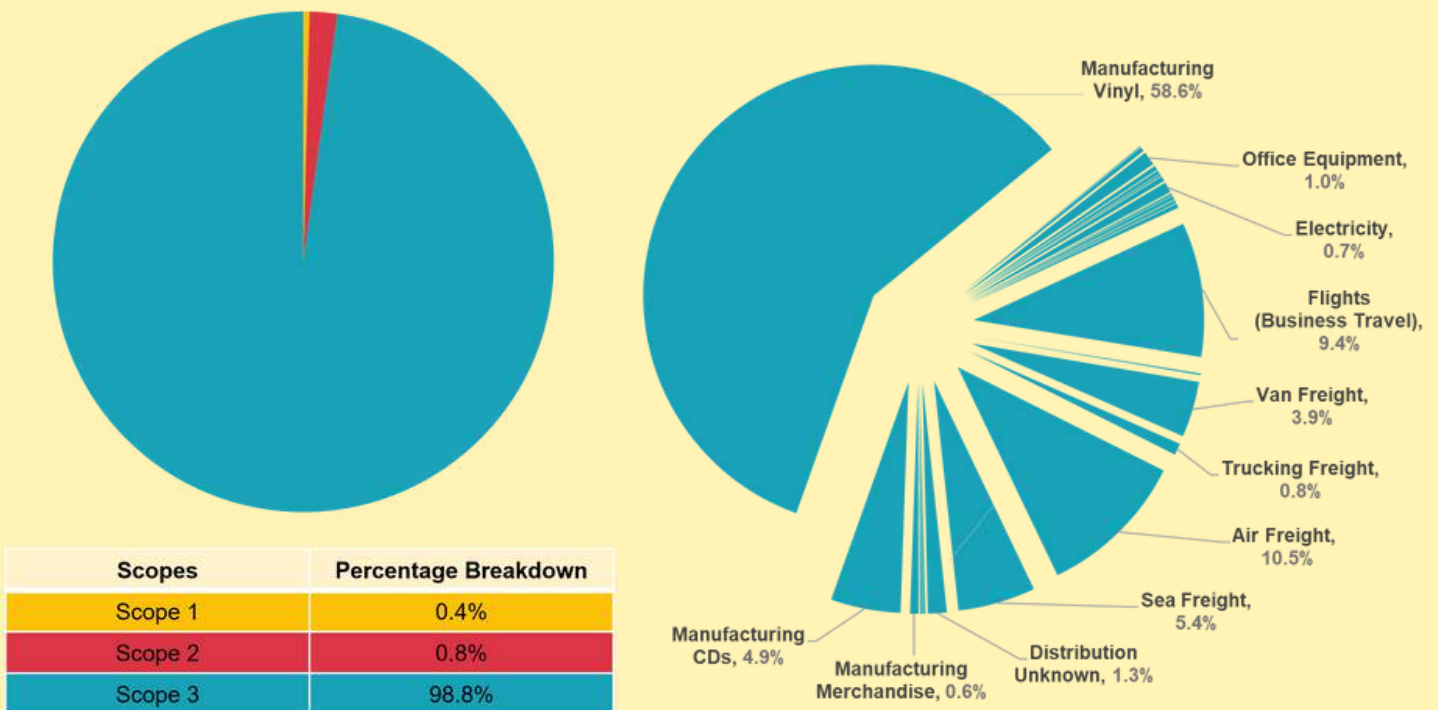
The updates to the IMPALA Carbon Calculator this year have enabled labels to see their emissions by Scope, reflecting best practice in carbon footprint reporting.

## What are Scopes?

In carbon footprinting, 'Scopes' indicate the level of control or influence an organisation has over types of emissions. The GHG Protocol sets out three Scopes:

- **Scope 1** – direct emissions from sources an organisation owns or controls (e.g. boilers in offices, travel in company owned/leased vehicles)
- **Scope 2** – indirect emissions from purchased energy (e.g. electricity used in offices)
- **Scope 3** – all other indirect supply chain impacts (e.g. physical product manufacturing; business and artist travel; employee commuting; physical product distribution etc)

The charts below provide a breakdown of an average label's carbon footprint by Scope.



Emissions from Scope 3 represent the largest portion of an average labels carbon footprint. This is typical among many businesses and sectors who are not engaged in heavy industry.

Manufacturing vinyl accounts for **59%** of the Scope 3 emissions. Other label activities contributing a high proportion of emissions in this Scope include **business travel flights, CD manufacture, air and sea freight.**

See [page 19](#) to learn how your label can support the initiatives aiming to reduce emissions in these areas.

# Emission hotspots for labels

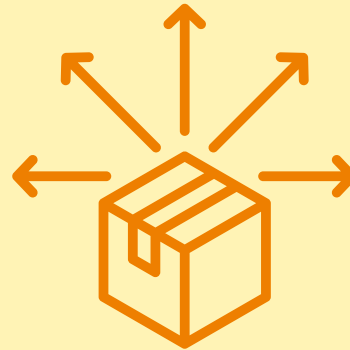
Three activities typically create the largest source of emissions for labels. Read more below.

## Manufacturing



Manufacturing of physical products typically contributes the most emissions for labels, mainly from traditional vinyl production.

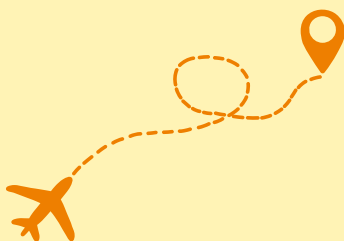
Both traditional vinyl and CD production are made from different plastics (polycarbonates and PVC), which are in part derived from petrochemicals, i.e. oil. The energy required to press vinyl into the final product and packaging choice (e.g. plastic or card) also creates emissions



## Distribution

The second highest source of emissions highlighted by the IMPALA Carbon Calculator is the distribution of physical products.

This includes the freighting of vinyl records, CDs and merchandise from manufacturing plants to warehouses or distribution centres and then finally onto retailers. Air freight is 63 times more carbon intensive than sea freight for every tonne transported.



## Operations

The third largest source of emissions for labels on average are operational impacts, including procurement, business travel and office energy, water and waste.

The purchase of office furniture, office equipment, studio equipment and company cars contribute the most emissions within the operational impacts category.

Business travel (e.g. for events, conferences, training or meetings) via air travel is also a significant contributor to emissions from operations.

# What's in a Footprint

## Case Study: Involved Group



Involved Productions, part of the music business founded by Above & Beyond in 2000, has grown into a leading independent label with over 1,000 releases and two GRAMMY nominations.

### Focus this year:

As part of Earth Day 2024 celebrations, Involved Productions published IMPALA Carbon Calculator generated 'carbon screening reports', incorporating these into dedicated 'Sustainability at Anjuna'; pages for the label websites. This marks the beginning of an ongoing commitment to sustainability, with measurable goals and transparency in actions.

### Steps Taken:

1. **Data Collection:** Led by their Sustainability and Environment Officer, they mapped internal and external stakeholders to access impact data. Different teams gathered information on energy use, water consumption, and travel (business, artist, and commuter). Surveys tracked employee commuting habits, while the Head of Physical Product collected manufacturing and distribution data for CDs, vinyl, and merchandise.
2. **Data Input and Analysis:** All collected data was entered into the IMPALA Carbon Calculator. They used **IMPALA resources** and consulted the Helpdesk team to ensure consistency with industry standards.
3. **Reporting and Review:** The automated calculator provided emissions figures (kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/tCO<sub>2</sub>e), which were reviewed by senior leadership. A detailed report highlighted findings, assumptions, and exclusions. After leadership approval, it was shared with industry peers for feedback.

By demonstrating these steps, Involved Productions hopes to inspire others in the industry to adopt similar sustainable practices. For collaboration or more details, contact Anna Johnson at [anna@anjunabeats.com](mailto:anna@anjunabeats.com).

### Year 1 – Footprinting Essentials

1. Assign someone with responsibility for reporting
2. Sign up to the tools
3. Collect the following data as a minimum:
  - Energy – look at invoices, read your meters or speak to your landlord
  - Manufacturing – speak to your supplier, or use your order log to input number of units manufactured per physical product
  - Distribution – speak to your supplier to get a carbon figure or list of all shipments
  - Business travel
4. Aim to get as much data as possible for all other areas (even if estimated)
5. Review your results and take action

Full guide available under Resources on the Carbon Calculator.

# Incremental Improvements in Reporting: Ninja Tune



Ninja Tune is a leading independent record label, synonymous with diverse, uncompromising releases and visionary artists. From emerging acts to GRAMMY-winning internationally acclaimed artists, including Bicep, Bonobo, Thundercat, Black Country New Road, Roisin Murphy, Young Fathers and more.

## Focus this year:

**Creating the most comprehensive footprint yet for the label**

## Actions taken:

- **Enhanced Data Collection:** Ninja Tune gradually expanded its reporting scope, adding energy use from remote work and commuting data. This aligns with IMPALA's advice to include indirect emissions (Scope 3) for a more complete footprint.
- **Informed Decision-Making:** The detailed annual reports facilitated data-driven decisions, such as identifying energy-intensive processes and setting reduction targets. For example, one option that is being investigated is whether it is possible to stop using gas in one of their offices.

# Beggars Group



Beggars Group is the home of 4AD, Matador, Rough Trade Records, XL Recordings and Young. Beggars Group has continued to make improvements to the data sets associated with their carbon footprint.

## Focus this year:

**Collecting increasingly accurate data for the carbon footprint**

## Actions Taken:

- **Moving from spend-based to actual data:** Data on the distribution of physical products by the US side of the business now utilises primarily supplier specific primary data. This improved accuracy has enabled Beggars to fully understand its emissions associated with their US distribution against a backdrop of increasing production numbers.
- **Reviewing the numbers to understand patterns:** With a clearer picture of emissions, Beggars has been able to see how a move away from air freighting of products has helped to reduce the label's overall carbon impact.

Beggars are working towards more accurate methods of capturing data, particularly for vinyl manufacturing, with a programme launched this year via Murmur that engages suppliers to establish accurate emissions factors, which will help to evidence the reduced environmental impact of new vinyl types.

# Strategic Manufacturing & Distribution Planning

## !K7



Germany label !K7 is B-Corp certified. Known for its DJ-Kicks series, !K7 has expanded to include several sub-labels, such as Strut Records (focusing on funk, soul, and world music), 7K! (for neoclassical releases), and Ever Records (jazz).

### Focus this year:

**Reducing emissions from manufacturing and distribution**

### Actions taken:

- **Manufacturing:** By aligning production schedules to avoid overcapacity, the company minimised unnecessary emissions. Following the advice from last year's Carbon Calculator report, they focused on reducing emissions from high-impact processes like vinyl pressing.
- **Alternative production options:** !K7 began using injection moulding PET for vinyl production, which it is hoped can reduce emissions (although current tracking methods don't fully capture the promised environmental gains of such products).

### Manufacturing tips – direct long-term actions

- Support the development of lower-impact products and materials
- Work with others in the recorded music industry supply chain to co-invest in making manufacturing 100% fossil-fuel-free
- Engage supply chain, exploring less energy intensive production
- Work with suppliers to explore alternative materials for vinyl that offer lower environmental impacts

- **Distribution:** The company reduced reliance on air freight, planning shipments well in advance to use lower-carbon options. This step mirrors the recommendation to avoid air transport wherever possible.

### Distribution tips – direct action & influence

- Avoid air freighting as much as possible
- Choose to sea-freight products for international deliveries (and plan your operations accordingly to avoid last-minute air freighting)
- Ask your distribution partners about their commitments to electric vehicles and fuel-efficiency measures (e.g. fuel-efficient driving and backhauling)
- Check if your distribution partners are loading vehicles for optimal efficiency

# Manufacturing and Travel Solutions

## Massproduktion



Massproduktion is a Swedish label run by Mats Hammerman. The label originally started as a local punk label in 1979 and became an eclectic label over time. Today the label releases a variety of genres, from modern folk to powerpop to gothic metal.

### Focus this year:

**Reducing emissions connected to vinyl production and business travel**

### Actions taken:

- **Manufacturing:** By using the carbon calculator, the company recognised the need to minimise excess production. They focused on producing only as much vinyl as projected sales would cover, reducing waste and incorporating recycled materials—both key recommendations from last year's report.

### Manufacturing tips – direct action

- Choose suppliers that source 100% renewable electricity
- Press vinyl at 140 gramme instead of 180 gramme to minimise use of raw materials
- Avoid overstock if you can to avoid waste products

- **Travel:** In line with the report's advice to minimise high-impact travel, the company replaced air travel with trains and boats, and used electric bicycles for local transport. These steps align with the recommendation to prioritise low-carbon transportation options.

### Travel tips

- Avoid international business travel – use online meetings as much as possible
- Where business travel is necessary, choose the train first (fly economy if you have to fly)
- Develop a travel policy for the organisation to guide less impactful business travel decisions (e.g. 'no flights if a journey can be made in under 8 or 6 hours by train')
- Include 'business-minded travel' within your travel policy, explaining reasons for travel
- Help staff commute better (e.g. through cycle-to-work schemes, public transport cards)
- Join programmes like "Climate Perks" committing to offer paid 'journey days' to staff who travel on holiday by train, coach or boat instead of flying

# Common Actions Labels are Taking

The IMPALA Carbon Calculator also provides a checklist of actions a label can take to reduce emissions.

## Top 5 most popular actions reported by IMPALA members were:

- Specifying 140 g rather than 180 g vinyl, reducing resource use and emissions
- Speaking to artists about climate/environmental actions and commitments
- Choosing sea freight rather than air freight to transport CDs and records
- Assigning a Board member to be responsible for environmental sustainability
- Installing energy efficient lighting and/or lighting sensors/timers

## Reported benefits from labels taking action:

Labels taking action to reduce their environmental impact also indicated the commercial benefits they have experienced in doing so.

The most commonly cited benefits were **profile/reputational benefits** and **employee morale/well-being**.

You can find more information on the benefits of using the IMPALA Carbon Calculator on [page 6](#).

## Looking ahead

The results also highlighted areas where labels can make further progress with emissions reduction going forwards:

- Installing renewable energy at offices and/or label operations
- Serving more plant-based catering at label-run events (e.g. meetings, presentations, marketing events)
- Divesting from fossil fuels by switching to an ethical bank and pension provider

# Environmental Actions for Labels

Many immediate and longer-term actions can be taken to reduce emissions at record labels. These actions can be categorised into the following:

1. **Greener products** – engaging with suppliers on how products are made and packaged
2. **Greener logistics** – making choices about how products are transported
3. **Greener operations** – running your day-to-day operations more sustainably

Within these categories, there are things which your label may have ‘direct control’ over and things your label can ‘influence’.

- **Direct control** – Actions record labels can take themselves to reduce impacts (e.g. procurement decisions, organisational planning)
- **Influence** – Actions which encourage decisions by other stakeholders in the value chain to reduce environmental impacts (e.g. engagement, further research)

The following section provides recommendations for specific actions to reduce the impacts of the key areas. This is not an exhaustive list and further inspiration and examples can be found in the further reading section.

# 1. Greener products:

## a. Manufacturing

Manufacturing physical products typically has the largest impact in a label's carbon footprint, but to reach climate targets, these emissions need to be reduced by 90% by 2050. To get there, all manufacturing will need to be powered by fossil-fuel-free energy sources in future and product manufacturing will need to be more energy efficient. **See the recommendations below for how labels can support this transition.**

ACTION TYPE	IMMEDIATE ACTIONS	LONGER-TERM ACTIONS
Direct control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose suppliers that source 100% renewable electricity</li> <li>Press vinyl at 140 gramme instead of 180 gramme to minimise use of raw materials</li> <li>Avoid overstock if you can to avoid waste products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support start-ups that are developing lower-impact products and materials that offer an alternative to traditional oil-based plastics</li> <li>Work with others in the recorded music industry supply chain to co-invest in making manufacturing 100% fossil-fuel-free</li> </ul>
Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you cannot switch suppliers, encourage existing suppliers to source 100% renewable electricity</li> <li>Encourage suppliers to reduce factory floor waste and improve energy efficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage supply chain, exploring less energy intensive production</li> <li>Work with suppliers to explore alternative materials for vinyl that offer lower environmental impacts</li> </ul>

## b. Packaging

Eradicating all unnecessary packaging and using better, lower-impact materials are essential measures for reducing impacts from packaging. It will be crucial to work closely with suppliers to achieve shared goals on reduced emissions from packaging. **See what labels can do to reduce packaging emissions below.**

ACTION TYPE	IMMEDIATE ACTIONS	LONGER-TERM ACTIONS
Direct control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Switch from plastic jewel cases to 100% card packaging (use recycled card or FSC-certified)</li> <li>• Choose lightweight packaging and minimise overall quantities of packaging (e.g. removing shrink-wrap)</li> <li>• Avoid thick plastic lamination, UV inks and varnishes, and metallised gold, silver, and glitter in packaging design</li> </ul>	
Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage suppliers to minimise packaging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with suppliers to explore innovative new lower-impact packaging materials</li> </ul>

## 2. Greener logistics

While the impacts of travel connect to wider challenges around existing infrastructure and cost, there are many actions that can be taken to minimise emissions from freighting physical products. Lower-impact choices of transport mode and better planning can support achieve optimal efficiencies. **See what labels can do to reduce transport emissions below.**

ACTION TYPE	IMMEDIATE ACTIONS	LONGER-TERM ACTIONS
Direct control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid air freighting as much as possible</li> <li>• Choose to sea-freight products for international deliveries (and plan your operations accordingly to avoid last-minute air freighting)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider banning air freighting</li> </ul>
Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask your distribution partners about their commitments to electric vehicles and fuel-efficiency measures (e.g. fuel-efficient driving and backhauling)</li> <li>• Check your distribution partners are loading vehicles for optimal efficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the uptake of electric vehicles for road transport</li> </ul>

### 3. Greener operations:

There are many actions that labels can take to improve the environmental impact of their operations, both at their own premises and among staff. Such actions are visible to employees and can foster a culture of environmental stewardship. **See what labels can do to reduce operational emissions below.**

#### a. Office

ACTION TYPE	IMMEDIATE ACTIONS	LONGER-TERM ACTIONS
Direct control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Switch to a 100% renewable electricity tariff for your office</li> <li>• Divest your label’s pension fund from fossil fuels and switch to an ethical bank</li> <li>• Keep electronic equipment as long as you can. Recycle it with a registered electrical waste processor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in your own renewable electricity generation where possible, and invest in reducing the carbon footprint of heating (e.g. shifting from gas to heat pumps)</li> <li>• If fitting a new office or studio, buy energy efficient and second-hand equipment where possible</li> </ul>
Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak to your landlord about improvements to the energy efficiency of your building (e.g. install LED and sensor lighting)</li> <li>• Raise awareness among employees and partners how they can help to reduce environmental impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage your landlord to make further improvements to the energy efficiency of your building (e.g. retrofits and installation of a building management system)</li> </ul>

## b. Business travel

ACTION TYPE	IMMEDIATE ACTIONS	LONGER-TERM ACTIONS
Direct control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid international business travel – use online meetings as much as possible</li> <li>Where business travel is necessary, choose the train first (fly economy if you have to fly)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a travel policy for the organisation to guide less impactful business travel decisions (e.g. ‘no flights if a journey can be made in under 8 or 6 hours by train’)</li> </ul>
Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help staff commute better (e.g. through cycle-to-work schemes, public transport cards)</li> <li>Join programmes like "Climate Perks" committing to offer paid ‘journey days’ to staff who travel on holiday by train, coach or boat instead of flying</li> </ul>	

# Sector Efforts

## **Music Climate Pact**

Initiated by the UK's Association of Independent Music (AIM) and the BPI and supported globally, the Music Climate Pact commits signatories to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. The Music Climate Pact aims to provide frameworks for environmental reporting, renewable energy use, and carbon reduction targets. The goal of this pact is to help create a unified front for climate action, promoting responsible practices in the recorded industry.

## **Music Industry Climate Collective (MICC):**

Launched by major labels, with contribution from the rest of the sector, MICC focuses on developing science-based methodologies to standardise carbon accounting across the music industry. It aims to unify efforts towards reducing the industry's global carbon footprint through collaboration and shared metrics. This collective aims to enhance transparency and encourages industry-wide sustainability benchmarks, ensuring meaningful progress.

**The Vinyl Alliance**, in collaboration with the **Vinyl Record Manufacturers Association**, published their first carbon footprint report this year. The report aims to assess and mitigate the environmental impact of vinyl production by tracking emissions across the supply chain. Their focus includes reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and promoting eco-friendly practices within the industry. This effort helps establish industry-wide benchmarks for sustainability, aiding manufacturers in making informed choices.

## **Music Declares Emergency**

Music Declares Emergency is a global movement advocating for climate action within the music sector. They encourage artists, labels, and venues to commit to sustainable practices and raise awareness about the climate crisis. Their "No Music on a Dead Planet" campaign emphasises the cultural sector's role in driving public discourse and behavioural change. This initiative amplifies the music industry's voice, leveraging its influence to promote broader societal action.

## **Murmur**

An initiative bridging art, music, and climate science, Murmur channels funding from industry leaders into impactful environmental projects. It supports innovative sustainability practices and leverages creative industries' influence to inspire broader societal change.

# Climate investment

- **IMPALA's example – Murmur**

Murmur is a strategic climate fund whereby partners finance transformative action within the creative sector, by assigning a monetary value to carbon emissions they cannot yet remove. Partners must take an emissions reduction-first approach to ensure that they are doing all they can to align with science-based commitments in minimising emissions as close to zero as possible. No claims are made by partners in relation to their funds compensating for their emissions.

## Course of action

- **Measure your carbon footprint** annually with the IMPALA Carbon Calculator
- **Reduce emissions** from your business operations and suppliers
- **Allocate funds** for climate investment and environmental projects to take responsibility for unavoidable emissions
- **Repeat**

## What's IMPALA doing?

Representing over 6,000 independent music companies across 33 countries in greater Europe, IMPALA is proud to be a supporter of Murmur alongside key independent labels. Murmur will play a key role in centralising our efforts and producing results on climate investments. For IMPALA, measuring, reducing and providing this support is part of our overall business responsibility as an active voice in the European hemisphere.

## Financing climate action

We recommend businesses set their own internal carbon price per tonne to determine the size of their investments. This should be high enough to incentivise internal emissions reductions and help companies take accountability for their impacts, though we also recognise that the appropriate price level may vary depending on business size and turnover.

IMPALA advises its members to set that price within the range of €60-115 per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>e. More information on climate investment [here](#).

# Looking ahead

## Sustainability work within our EU Network Grant

The EU has recognised IMPALA's work with a four year grant starting in January 2025, with sustainability one of the core work pillars. This will support the continued running of the calculator, as well as our international webinar series, **IMPACTS**, which will include three literacy training sessions per year, helping to onboard more users to the calculator.

The more data that is entered into the Calculator by IMPALA's members, the more powerful it will become as an instrument to support business decisions and manage environmental impacts. IMPALA members can sign up [here](#).

## Industry collaboration

Increased industry collaboration and standardisation is helping to improve the sustainability of the sector, with initiatives such as the **Music Climate Pact** and the **Music Industry Climate Collective**. IMPALA will continue supporting this collaboration and efforts to standardise within environmental sustainability. We're excited to see where we can achieve the greatest positive impact through joint action and collective approaches. Watch this space!

## Internationalisation

Internationalisation work began this year through the commencement of a US pilot project, with members of the US independent trade association, A2IM, in collaboration with Julie's Bicycle and supported by Merlin. This is the first step towards rolling out the tool in the world's biggest music market, so the sector can measure and reduce carbon footprints in the most coordinated way possible. We look forward to reviewing the outcomes of that work and finding pathways for further internationalisation.

## Developing the tool

This year, as explained on [page 10](#), we made significant changes to the tool, responding to the needs and suggestions of its users. Future periodical changes are expected as climate science develops and more information is available through industry collaboration, especially in terms of detailing the manufacturing section.

# Further Resources

[Business Case for Sustainability](#)

[IMPALA Climate Declaration for Individual Companies](#)

[IMPALA's Climate Ambition](#)

[IMPALA Climate Charter](#)

[IMPALA Climate Investment Guidance](#)

[IMPALA Sustainability Guidance for Record Labels](#)

[IMPALA IMPACTS Standards Report](#)

[Music Declares Emergency Climate Pack](#)

[Julie's Bicycle Music Top Tips Guide](#)

[Julie's Bicycle Guide to Reducing Emissions of CD Packaging](#)

[Julie's Bicycle Sustainable Procurement Guide](#)

[IMPALA Carbon Calculator](#)

[IMPALA Climate Repository](#)

Thanks go to all the IMPALA member companies and associations across Europe who helped raise the finances needed to get our Calculator project off the ground and make it available for free to the whole membership (in alphabetical order):

**!K7 Music Group, Altafonte, Anjunabeats, Because Music, Beggars Group, Cherry Red Records, City Slang, Domino Recording Company, Edel, Encoding Management Service – EMS, Epitaph Records, Everlasting Records, FONO, FUGA, HAIL, Hot Action Records, Irascible Music, Las Vegas Records, Lusitanian Music Publishing, Mouthwatering Records, N.E.W.S. Records, Ninja Tune, Partisan Records, [PIAS], Playground Music Scandinavia, PMI, Roton Music, Secretly Group, TAMBOURHINOCEROS, Two Gentlemen, Warp Records, Zebralution.**

Our thanks also go to **Merlin** and **Murmur** for supporting the development and functioning of the calculator.



### HORST WEIDENMÜLLER RECEIVING IMPALA'S OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION AWARD

Horst Weidenmüller, CEO and founder of !K7 Music, received IMPALA's Outstanding Contribution Award for his pioneering work in sustainability within the European independent music sector. As the initiator of IMPALA's Sustainability Task Force, he spearheaded initiatives such as the creation of the first bespoke carbon calculator for music labels, aiming to help the industry reduce its environmental impact. Under his leadership, !K7 Music became a certified B Corporation, reflecting high standards of social and environmental responsibility. His efforts extend to community engagement, notably partnering with a Berlin school to empower underprivileged students through music education. This award honours his transformative contributions, setting a benchmark for sustainable and ethical practices in the music industry. [Read more here.](#)

## About IMPALA

IMPALA was established in 2000 and now represents over 6000 independent music companies. 99% of Europe's music companies are small, micro and medium businesses and self-releasing artists. Known as the independents, they are world leaders in terms of innovation and discovering new music and artists – they produce more than 80% of all new releases and account for 80% of the sector's jobs. IMPALA's mission is to grow the independent music sector sustainably, return more value to artists, promote diversity and entrepreneurship, improve political access, inspire change, and increase access to finance. IMPALA works on a range of **key issues** for its members, runs various **award schemes** and has a programme aimed at businesses who want to develop a strategic relationship with the European independent sector – **Friends of IMPALA**. Sustainability of the sector is one of our key priorities. In 2022 we launched a key European co-funded project **IMPACTS**, and **#WeMeasureTogether**, a campaign to promote the Calculator take-up.

## About Julie's Bicycle

Julie's Bicycle is a pioneering not-for-profit organisation mobilising the arts and culture to take action on the climate and ecological crisis. Founded by the music industry in 2007 and now working across the arts and culture, Julie's Bicycle has partnered with over 2000 organisations in the UK and internationally. Combining cultural and environmental expertise, Julie's Bicycle focuses on high-impact programmes and policy change to meet the climate crisis head-on.

**This report has been prepared by Julie's Bicycle with inputs from IMPALA and the IMPALA Sustainability Taskforce, and all the labels reporting through the carbon calculator.**

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**A big thank you goes to all our Association members across Europe for providing additional market data. Discover all IMPALA trade associations [here](#).**

**We also thank our Sustainability Task Force members for their continuous support and Thema1 for their expertise.**

# Appendix

## What does the IMPALA Carbon Calculator measure?

The IMPALA Carbon Calculator can be used to measure the following impacts across your business:

- Office(s): Energy use, Water, Waste
- Staff commuting
- Business travel
- Manufacturing of key product categories
- Distribution
- Key areas of purchased goods (e.g. IT and studio equipment)

The platform additionally asks for environmental actions 'Beyond Carbon' to support businesses in making greener choices, and helps IMPALA identify priorities across the European independent music sector. What are the measurement boundaries?

The aim of our Tool is to help members measure emissions comprehensively and with a high degree of accuracy. Business activities deemed to be within our 'operational boundary' are included within our carbon calculations and reduction targets. We refer to international best-practice guidelines contained within the GHG Protocol Scope 3 Standard to help us identify all relevant emission sources. Activities included in the tool are listed below. Collectively, these cover an overwhelming majority of total emissions from our sector:

- **Scope 1** – direct emissions from owned sources (e.g. boilers in offices)
- **Scope 2** – indirect emissions from purchased energy (e.g. purchased electricity in offices)
- **Scope 3** – physical product manufacturing; capital goods purchases; business travel; employee commuting; physical product distribution. The Tool does not currently cover some Scope 3 impact areas which record companies do not own or control and which are considered to be the responsibility of third parties who are already taking responsibility for the relevant emissions, such as downstream digital distribution (streaming services), and other retailers, or where there is a lack of readily available data, e.g. consumer use of purchased products

# More information on existing & upcoming legislation

- As mentioned in our [Business case for sustainability](#), there is a clear direction of travel regarding environmental legislation, with businesses increasingly needing to meet requirements around carbon reporting and sustainability practices (see e.g. CSRD, SECR and TCFD). While legislation is focused on the largest companies now, small and medium sized businesses throughout the supply chain will have to comply in the coming years.
- By proactively engaging in sustainability and by using the IMPALA Carbon Calculator to complete a carbon footprint and set targets, companies can prepare for forthcoming regulations, future-proofing their operations and positioning themselves as industry leaders.
- For example, in Europe, a set of new rules in place since 2023 aim to make the EU's climate, energy, transport and taxation policies fit for reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. This includes legislation which will apply to our members, depending on their size.
- **Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD)** – the CSRD requires larger companies to report in detail on their environmental and social impacts, which will also pressure small and medium businesses to improve their own sustainability practices, such as tracking and reducing their carbon emissions, to remain competitive suppliers.
- **Environmental Labeling and Green Claims Directive** – To avoid 'greenwashing' (making false or misleading environmental claims) and ensure fair and accurate reporting on environmental impacts, small and medium businesses are being held more accountable for any environmental claims made about their business or products.

## Why digital emissions are excluded

Emissions from downstream digital distribution (the distribution of digital recordings through Digital Service Providers (DSPs) and consumption by fans through streaming services or digital download) are excluded from the tool for the following reasons:

- **Scope of responsibility** – labels do not own or control DSPs which are the responsibility of third parties who are already taking responsibility for the relevant emissions.
- **Influence** – record companies have no direct control over the distribution of digital files once they have distributed to DSPs, or influence over emission reduction programmes.
- **Size** – due to a lack of available data, it's not possible for the recorded sector to estimate with accuracy the size of emissions from digital distribution.

The necessary data is controlled by DSPs and their downstream partners. Some DSPs are working towards gathering data from their operations and are establishing emissions calculation methodologies. We refer to this as availability of data is part of the GHG protocol, but as noted above, scope of responsibility and lack of influence mean that DSP emissions (including subscriber emissions) are not counted as record company emissions. (This is the same as for other downstream areas of activity in the music market, such as physical retail.)

Digital distribution is a vital part of our industry and makes up a significant portion of income for our members. We're therefore working closely with DSPs to encourage greater transparency and will support efforts towards measuring and reducing the impact of streaming. As part of own Climate Charter as well as the Music Climate Pact, we seek to work collaboratively with DSPs to share data and knowledge on this issue. We still address digital as a sector of course because we want to encourage as much change and transparency in the whole sector as possible, as IMPALA's charter sets out.

## Note on Data

The metrics estimations shown under the Average Label Footprint Breakdown section of this report are based on data submitted by the organisations currently reporting to the IMPALA Carbon Calculator. Only complete reports covering key impact areas were included in the calculation. The time period of the data used includes reports from either calendar year 2023 or financial year 2023-24.

The data in our report should not be used to undermine physical product, which is a fundamental part of the music market, and many actors in the manufacturing sector are making significant progress in the area of sustainability.

However, until there are scaled up clean energy solutions, it will not be possible for manufacturing partners to achieve effective change promptly.

This report is addressed to national and EU decision makers to ask them to support the whole music sector's transition by investing properly in innovative energy solutions for clean manufacturing at scale.

## CONTACT US



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