



# RISE BEYOND IMPACT REPORT 2023

Working **Together** for  
**Collaborative** Change

# Contents

1. A Note of **Thanks**
2. **Who** We Are
3. 2023 **Highlights** at a Glance
4. Impact: **People**
5. Impact: **Clients**
6. Impact: **Community**
7. Impact: **Planet**
8. Impact: **Carbon**
9. **Evolving** our practice
10. Looking Ahead
11. Thank You

# A Note of Thanks

2023 was a pivotal year of transition for RISE.

We made steady progress on restructuring our leadership, agreeing a new Primary Circle charter and beginning to rebalance roles and responsibilities across the team. We welcomed new colleagues into key roles, strengthened our operations, and laid important groundwork for future growth.

We launched the Impact Leaders Circles, supporting senior leaders in the social sector, and introduced the Curious Practitioner Experience, deepening peer-led learning within our consultant community. We also began shaping the RISE Collaboration Framework, a synthesis of a decade of insight into what enables meaningful change.

2023 also saw us achieve B Corp certification, recognising our commitment to accountability, stakeholder value, and sustainable business practice.

In a year of change and recalibration, what sustained us was our people: the clients who partner with us, the consultants who shape and deliver the work, and the growing community that holds our purpose.

As we look ahead, we remain anchored in our mission and grateful for all who have helped shape this chapter.

# Who We Are

We are a consultancy and community of practice on a mission to enable great leadership and collaboration to more effectively meet the complex challenges facing organisations and society.

Our work focuses on helping individuals, teams, and systems navigate change with clarity, care, and courage.

We partner with values-aligned organisations across sectors to deepen leadership capacity, unlock more generative ways of working, and build the foundations for long-term impact.

# Evolving Who We Are

**In 2023, we laid essential groundwork for the next chapter of RISE:**

- We clarified our leadership structure, co-developing a Primary Circle charter and beginning the shift toward more distributed governance.
- We hired a Head of Marketing and a Head of Operations, strengthening our operational backbone and external presence.
- We launched two new offers: the Impact Leaders Circles for senior social sector leaders, and the Curious Practitioner Experience, a peer-led internal learning programme.
- We progressed our thinking and positioning around the RISE Collaboration Framework, synthesising a decade of insight on what supports meaningful change.
- We achieved B Corp certification, formalising our commitment to being a purpose-driven and accountable business.

These shifts reflect our deepening belief in collective leadership, relational practice, and sustainable growth—values that remain central to how we work and who we are becoming.

# 2024 Highlights at a Glance

12 active client organisations

12 consultants involved across projects

5 employed team members

2 senior hires: Head of Marketing and Head of Operations

1 collaborative leadership charter created for Primary Circle

1 new programme launched: Impact Leaders Circles

Curious Practitioner Experience launched for internal learning

RISE Collaboration Framework developed

1 major external event hosted: Collaboration Manchester

3 new strategic partnerships explored (100x Impact, Ignite, Purpose 9)

B Corp certification achieved (December 2023)

31% reduction in carbon footprint (60,888 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e tracked via Sage Earth)

182 trees planted and 12.25 tCO<sub>2</sub>e emissions prevented via verified carbon projects

# Impact: People

## Leadership Structure Evolution 2023

In 2023, we continued evolving our leadership structure in response to shifting priorities, resource constraints, and the need for clarity around decision-making and governance.

While the Director-level roles were not yet formalised, we made progress in preparing for this change by re-budgeting, clarifying leadership responsibilities, and beginning the restructuring that would shape our Primary Circle.

- We restructured the leadership team by agreeing a Primary Circle charter, including roles and expectations.
- We made the strategic decision to invest in an Integrator role and to free up leadership capacity.
- Simon Preston remained actively involved in both leadership and delivery, with Megan Taylor continuing to lead on business direction and strategy.
- Hires during the year included a new Head of Marketing (March) and Head of Operations (September), both of whom strengthened our delivery and presence.

# Impact: Planet

We continue to integrate environmental responsibility into the fabric of how we work, not just in policy, but in practice. In 2023, this commitment was formally recognised with our certification as a B Corporation in December, a milestone that marks a deeper level of accountability and alignment with our values.

## 2023 Progress:

- 🌍 Achieved B Corp Certification, affirming our commitment to social and environmental responsibility across governance, workers, community, environment, and customers.
- 📊 Tracked 60,888 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e via Sage Earth (Scope 1: 177 kg, Scope 2: 0 kg, Scope 3: 60,711 kg), a 31% reduction on the previous year, on track with our Net Zero 2030 commitment.
- 🌱 Formalised a 1% for People & Planet contribution model, allocating 1% of project revenue (excluding discounted NFP work) to environmental and social initiatives.
- 🌳 Funded the planting of 182 trees and supported 5 verified carbon avoidance projects via Ecologi.
- 🚗 Introduced an Environmental Travel Policy to support low-carbon choices across the team.
- 🏠 Implemented Giki to engage team members in reducing their personal carbon footprints.
- 📄 Updated our Environmental Policy and embedded sustainability considerations into project planning and consultant onboarding.
- 🧠 Began exploring the implications of “de-growth” and what a sustainable pace of business means for people, planet, and profit.



# Impact: Carbon

We continue to track our carbon impact through Sage Earth, ensuring we remain aligned with our goal of reaching Net Zero by 2030.

Based on our 2023 figures, we made strong progress, recording a 31% reduction in total emissions compared to the previous year, keeping us on track to meet our 12% annual reduction target.

Our operational base remained largely carbon-light, with no Scope 2 emissions and only minimal Scope 1 emissions.

## Emissions Profile 2023

- Scope 1: 177 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e
- Scope 2: 0 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e
- Scope 3: 60,711 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e
- Total emissions: 60,888 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e
- Carbon intensity: 0.11 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e/£ (industry average: 0.03 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e/£)

## Top Emitting Activities

- Freelancers: 40,299 kg
- Employee Commuting & Homeworking: 6,978 kg
- Professional Services: 2,879 kg
- Staff Travel (National): 1,970 kg
- Vehicle Fuel (electric, petrol, diesel): 1,404 kg
- Hotels & Accommodation: 1,002 kg
- Expenses: 1,000 kg
- Furniture & Office Equipment: 479 kg
- Staff Welfare: 271 kg
- Staff Training (Education): 45 kg
- Postage & Courier: 15 kg
- Rent & Real Estate Payments: 2 kg
- Telephones: 1 kg
- Printing & Stationery: 0 kg
- Banking: 0 kg
- Marketing, Internet Services & Subscriptions: 0 kg

*Some activity categories, such as banking, marketing, and digital subscriptions, registered 0 kg due to low emissions intensity or use of renewable-based services.*

## Commitment and Progress

2023 marked a meaningful drop in our overall footprint, driven primarily by lower emissions from freelance activity and travel. As a fully remote, distributed team, our Scope 3 emissions remain our primary impact area, particularly through our freelance consultant network and professional services.

While measurement in this area can be complex, we are committed to refining our tracking and reducing emissions year-on-year in pursuit of our 2030 Net Zero goal.

# Impact: Community

Our community remains central to who we are, as practitioners, learners, and stewards of this work. In 2023, this commitment was tested and reaffirmed during a year of transition, reflection, and foundational change.

## **Consultant Community & Participation**

Following a period of revenue contraction and structural change, we experienced some natural attrition within our consultant community. While difficult, this phase helped clarify our future direction and the kind of participation and contribution we're inviting into the space.

We continued to invest in community infrastructure, evolving our Curious Practitioner Experience, re-launching the Primary Circle, and supporting peer-led learning through gatherings and waves of experimentation.

The RISE Community of Practice remained active, albeit smaller, and the foundations were laid for more accessible and structured ways to get involved.

# Impact: Clients

We continued to partner with values-aligned organisations across a diverse set of sectors, supporting leaders and teams to work more collaboratively and lead more effectively in complexity. In 2023, our client base included privately owned companies, family businesses, charities, and public organisations.

## Client Distribution

While our client portfolio remained varied, we noted a concentration of revenue from a small number of clients, particularly in construction, which accounted for over a third of our revenue.

This reflected strong, ongoing partnerships, but also signalled a vulnerability we are addressing through a broader pipeline strategy in 2024 and beyond.

in 2023, but Construction was clearly the dominant revenue source. We also tracked the makeup of our client ownership and sectors:

Sector	% of Clients
Construction	32%
Professional Services	13%
Food & Retail	10%
Hospitality	16%
Technology	3%
Sports	3%
Engineering	3%
Education	3%
Charities	3%

- 63% of clients were private companies
- 36% were family-owned businesses
- 36% were publicly listed
- 3% were charities

# Shifts in Business Development

2023 was a year of rebalancing. We recognised an over-reliance on work connected to Simon's network (63% of clients), and began developing a more distributed business development strategy. While growth was slower than anticipated, we laid the groundwork for future diversification through:

- The launch of the Impact Leaders Initiative
- Strengthened partnerships and referrals outside our founding network

## **Commitment to Purpose-Led Clients**

While we served a smaller number of charity and non-profit clients in 2023, this group remained a key focus of our work. Initiatives like the Impact Leaders Circles were purpose-built to deepen our contribution to this sector, offering high-trust, reflective development spaces at subsidised rates.

# Evolving Our Practice: The Rise Collaboration Framework

Throughout 2023, we continued to deepen and sharpen our thinking about what it truly takes to work well together in complexity. Years of delivery experience and practitioner reflection had already revealed consistent patterns—what enables meaningful collaboration, and what gets in the way. This work culminated in the development of the RISE Collaboration Framework: an early articulation of the human and systemic factors that shape collaborative leadership.

The framework offered a scaffold for practice, not a set of answers, but a map of the terrain.

It began to clarify how we think about leadership in complexity, integrating ideas around presence, reflexivity, relational dynamics, and sustainable action.

## **We applied the framework actively in 2023:**

- As a lens in coaching, team development, and strategy work
- As a shared language in our internal learning spaces
- As a foundation for proposal development and client diagnostics

# Launching the Curious Practitioner Experience

2023 also saw the launch of the Curious Practitioner Experience, a bold step in deepening the reflective and developmental culture within our community.

Open to freelance consultants across RISE, the programme supported individuals to explore the edges of their own practice through a structured learning journey, peer dialogue, and optional provocations.

**Rooted in curiosity and co-creation, this experience invited participants to:**

- Design and host their own inquiry on a topic that mattered to them
- Join reflective spaces to share learning with fellow practitioners
- Surface insights that would influence both personal development and wider practice at RISE

This initiative reflected our commitment to walking our own talk, investing in the ongoing development of our consulting community, not just for delivery excellence but for collective resilience and innovation.

# Looking Ahead

2024 will be a pivotal year for RISE as we focus on implementation across our consultancy and community.

- Formalise our Director-level leadership structure, bringing greater clarity, accountability, and capacity to the way we lead the business
- Initiate an ownership transition, beginning the process of transferring shares to long-standing Catalysts and members of the Operations team
- Strengthen our 1% for People & Planet model, embedding it more systematically into our financial processes and impact reporting
- Expand our Impact Leaders Circles, supporting senior charity leaders with trusted spaces for peer inquiry and strategic development
- Refine our client experience, from proposals to delivery, improving the quality and consistency of how we show up in the market
- Grow our external presence, through events, content, partnerships and strategic outreach aligned with our values and ambition
- Continue tightening up core systems, including carbon tracking, consultant development, and project management infrastructure



# Thank You

To our clients, collaborators, consultants, and friends for shaping  
RISE in 2023

**We'd love to hear your feedback or ideas:**

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