



How Architectural Firms Can Win More Work Through ESG, Data & Responsible Design

2026 EDITION

Context

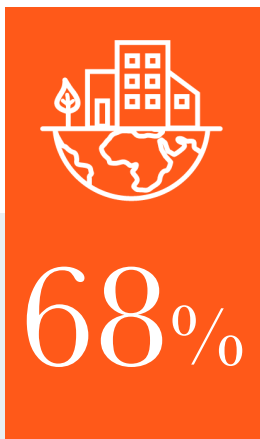
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Why ESG Now Determines Who Wins Work

The built environment is undergoing the biggest shift since the introduction of BREEAM. ESG has moved from a “sustainability add-on” to a commercial filter, defining eligibility, scoring and value in tenders across the UK.

Architectural practices are now expected not only to design low-carbon buildings but to evidence sustainability performance through transparent ESG data, credible carbon reporting, and demonstrable supply chain accountability.



of procurement leaders now factor sustainability into most sourcing decisions.

About SMR

SMR Architects is the largest architectural practice in the North of England and an award-winning leader in logistics, retail, commercial and residential design, underpinned by a collaborative, delivery-focused culture and high-performing, commercially astute design.

Simon Rispin is Principal Architect and Director at SMR Architects, championing ESG and carbon-conscious, evidence-based design as a core part of modern architecture, competitive bids and long-term client value.

About Flotilla

Flotilla is a sustainability tech and advisory firm helping businesses across the built environment embed ESG into core business and value creation strategies. Combining an award-winning technology platform with science-led expertise, Flotilla enables organisations to move beyond compliance—reducing risk, strengthening tender positions and remaining competitive while driving long-term value.



Simon Rispin
Director/Principal Architect
at SMR Architects

"The industry has finally moved past talking about sustainability and into proving it. Clients and investors now expect hard evidence, data and outcomes. Working with Contractors, and understanding how to evidence the decisions we make around the choices of materials etc is what will set practices apart"

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Commercial Shift:

Why ESG = Business Advantage

Public and private clients alike are raising the bar. ESG has become:

- › A minimum requirement in tenders
- › A scoring mechanism for competitive bids
- › A risk filter for investors and developers
- › A cultural indicator for attracting top talent

Simon explains: "Every tender we see now includes some form of ESG or carbon requirement. It's no longer a side question, it's becoming fundamental to scoring. Strong ESG evidence has genuinely changed the way we frame our bids. We now lead with our own ESG principles, data and impact, not boilerplate business credentials."

Why this matters for architects

Architectural practices with mature ESG and carbon reporting now:

- ✓ Win more RFPs
- ✓ Move faster through pre-qualification
- ✓ Score higher in tender responses
- ✓ Deliver more persuasive project narratives
- ✓ Build stronger long-term client relationships

Simon highlights the impact of verifiable data:

"Having credible carbon and ESG data from Flotilla has become a differentiator. It demonstrates our own commitment, action and impact. It gives our clients confidence that we're not just promising we'll ensure their projects hit the sustainability markers, but we're on the same carbon reduction journey. We know the struggles, cost and pitfalls they may face in reducing carbon"

*ESG isn't extra work anymore.
It's the new pre-qualification
scorecard.*



2 What's Changing for 2026

By 2026, several major frameworks and regulations will reshape how architecture practices design, specify and bid for work:

Carbon & Design Regulation

- › RICS Whole Life Carbon Assessment (2nd Edition, 2024)
- › UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard (NZCBS)
- › Future Homes & Future Buildings Standards\

These require deeper carbon analysis earlier in design.

Disclosure & Evidence Requirements

- › CSRD (large firms)
- › SDR / UK-SRS
- › SECR & ESOS renewals

Verified, decision-useful data becomes essential, meaning consistency matters more than ever.

Procurement & Tendering

- › PPN 006 (CRPs mandatory for public-sector bids)
- › NABERS UK (performance-based energy ratings)
- › BREEAM
- › Local authority tender scoring linked to social value + ESG

Simon notes:

"We'll reach a point where carbon modelling is required at blueprint stage, not construction stage. It is fundamentally changing how architects think and design. At SMR we're already building carbon data into some of our earliest feasibility work"

He adds how this is influencing real client

work: *"ESG should make us all think differently and rightly so. For some of our long-term repeat clients, we've delivered over 50 similar buildings. Embedding ESG into that building template means every new iteration reduces carbon and improves wellbeing. That same template isn't just used by us, but Architects Europe wide, which means repeatedly choosing the right materials, introducing daylight, considering operational energy, everything really - becomes part of the carbon story."*

Key takeaway:

Architects must be able to evidence low-carbon performance, demonstrate ESG outcomes, and report data quickly and accurately to stay competitive.



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The New Rules of Engagement:

Frameworks You Can't Ignore

SECR & ESOS: Mandatory energy and emissions disclosure.

PPN 006: Carbon Reduction Plans required for central government tenders over £5m.

NABERS UK: Performance-based energy ratings now influencing specification and design.

RIBA Sustainable Outcomes Guide & RIBA 2030 Challenge: RIBA now sets out 8 sustainability outcomes that define what "good" looks like in modern practice:

net zero, whole-life carbon, sustainable land use, good health, circular economy, community benefit, social value and climate resilience.

Simon comments: "The RIBA Sustainable Outcomes framework has set the bar for the whole profession. Several practices will already be going far beyond the benchmark, but more clients are now ask how we're aligning to it. As a Chartered Practice, it's key we sign up to it.."

These frameworks aren't optional anymore. They're becoming the new currency of credibility.

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Where Architectural Practices Are Struggling

Most firms face similar challenges:

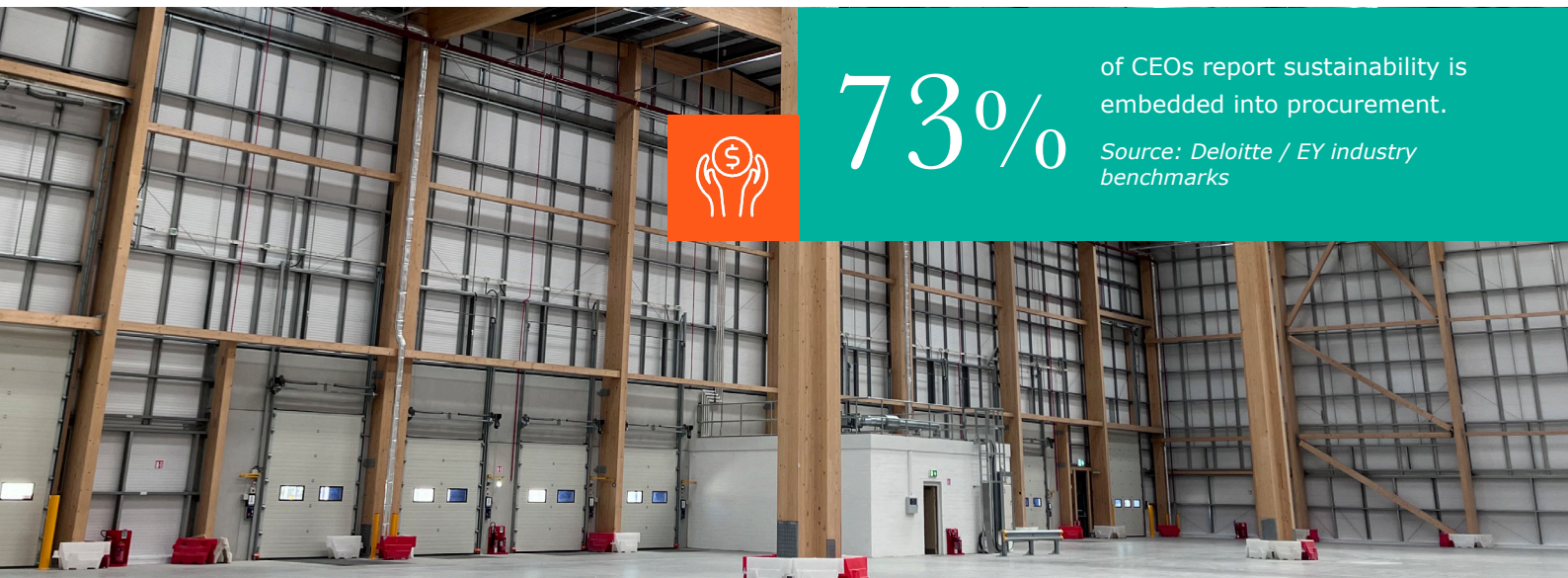
- Fragmented carbon and supplier data: Inconsistent sources, formats and methodologies.
- Different LCA tools = different results: Causing confusion and rework.
- A growing admin burden: Maintaining up-to-date CRPs, project emissions data, and ESG metrics is consuming.
- Inconsistent ESG metrics across bids: Leading to lost points and weaker narratives.
- Shifting reporting frameworks: CSRD, SDR, UK-SRS all changing rapidly.

The impact?

Architects waste time recreating the same data for every tender - a major productivity drain.

Simon reflects on the before/after difference:

"Before Flotilla, ESG reporting was incredibly time-consuming. Every tender asked for something different, and we were constantly reworking the same information. Now the data on how we're doing as a practice is there instantly - reports, dashboards, evidence, and the confidence that it's right."



73%

of CEOs report sustainability is embedded into procurement.

Source: Deloitte / EY industry benchmarks

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The Opportunity: Turning ESG Into a Competitive Edge

When approached strategically, ESG becomes a genuine differentiator:

- ✓ Early carbon analysis reduces redesign and cost risk
- ✓ Quick access to CRPs and WLCA summaries improves bid speed
- ✓ Verified ESG data strengthens client trust
- ✓ Firms win more work with transparent evidence
- ✓ Helps attract and retain top talent
- ✓ Unlocks higher-value, performance-based contracts (e.g., NABERS DfP)
- ✓ Enables alignment with investor expectations

Simon explains: "We're now leading bids with our own ESG evidence, not just practice background. It's become a differentiator for SMR. We can show we walk the walk"

Data maturity isn't admin. It's commercial readiness.

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How Flotilla Helps: From Compliance to Competitive Advantage

Flotilla provides a simple, scalable way for architecture practices and built environment firms to gather, manage and use ESG and carbon data.



How the platform supports built environment firms:

- Converts raw data into verified SECR and CRP outputs
- Bid-ready appendices in one click
- Provides data to respond to RICS WLCA, NZCBS and RIBA Sustainable Outcomes
- Automates data collection with smart prompts
- Integrates with accounting, utility and travel systems
- Provides audit-ready dashboards and metrics
- Supports WLCA-ready carbon data for early design

From compliance to competitive advantage - data you can design with.

54%

of construction professionals say ESG is critical for winning work.

Source: CIOB / UK Construction Online

"Companies are winning tenders based on lowest carbon emissions, not price."

BDO UK Construction Roundtable



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The Road Ahead for Architectural Practices

Between 2025 and 2030, ESG reporting will become as fundamental to architectural practices as when CAD, REVIT and, BIM made their mark.

Firms that systemise sustainability data now will:

- ✓ Win more bids
- ✓ Reduce risk
- ✓ Run more efficient bid processes
- ✓ Attract stronger clients
- ✓ Strengthen resilience against regulatory pressure
- ✓ Build long-term commercial value

Simon describes the direction of travel: "Going forward, investors will expect early-stage carbon data as part of their go/no-go decision making. ESG will shape investment as much as design."

"In line with the RIBA targets, by 2030, the practices that stand out will be the ones that inherently design with carbon in mind. Sustainability can't be a bolt-on, it needs to be embedded. Those who embrace that shift will reduce risk, differentiate themselves and build resilience into their business."



What This Means for Your Practice

ESG isn't just a sustainability requirement, it's a commercial advantage for architecture and built environment firms aiming to win in an increasingly competitive market.

With procurement standards tightening and client expectations rising, practices that deliver fast, credible ESG and carbon data will secure more work, build resilience and future-proof their growth.

If you're an architecture or built environment firm looking to strengthen ESG performance, win more tenders and future-proof your business, get in touch for a free 30-minute personalised consultation and demo.

We'd love to show you how simple, and commercially powerful, ESG can be.

Quick Win Checklist

Does your practice have...

- A compliant Carbon Reduction Plan for tenders?
- WLCA or NABERS evidence available in <24 hours?
- Consistent ESG metrics across all bids?
- Verified data for investor or contractor queries?
- A way to track Scope 3 emissions across your supply chain?

"ESG is now a business-critical requirement affecting everything from project approvals to contracts with Tier 1 and Tier 2 contractors."



Saint Financial Group

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