



# Sustainability Report



2012/13



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Acre is a specialist sustainability recruitment firm, working in the heart of the sustainability marketplace. As a result, we are able to experience first-hand the amazing contribution these professionals are making both socially and environmentally within their organisations. Our objective is to connect companies and people by creating networks that promote positive and sustainable environmental and social impact.

As a small but expanding organisation, we aim to embed sustainability into our business practices wherever possible, albeit on a much smaller scale than some of our high profiled clients. This is illustrated through Acre's:

- » environmental policy
- » commitment to the career development of staff
- » creation and encouragement of a positive and healthy working environment,
- » thought provoking thought leadership pieces and the sharing of best practices across the sustainability sector
- » community enrichment objectives, in which both staff and clients are engaged to help support selected charities.

Acre are constantly reviewing new programmes and initiatives that can further impact our community and we strive to impact positively on all those that we work with. The active, transparent promotion of sustainability through the Acre Foundation, which was launched in 2011, represents one of our most gratifying achievements and an initiative we endeavour to invest in as we grow.

Produced annually, this is our second sustainability report which aims to communicate our sustainability progress and initiatives for the period November 2012 - 2013.

## A note from our director



The past year has seen a range of new initiatives being rolled out and I'd like to describe some of our key activities.

### Volunteering

Our team have undertaken an increased amount of pro-bono career coaching through Octavia Foundation's 'Gateway to Work' programme - an affiliation that we're very proud of. We are now in our fourth year of the partnership, having provided mentoring to a range of London residents looking to get back into work.

### Development

Acre attracts professionals from a range of backgrounds but we are unified by a passion for sustainability and a desire for continued improvement. We see a great deal of value in supporting individuals who wish to invest in further education, and to this effect we initiated a study leave policy in 2013. 25% of our team have obtained post graduate degrees or commenced study in the past 18 months, all focussing on sustainability or related topics.

### Transparency

Increased transparency has been an important part of Acre's strategy this year with two notable initiatives being rolled out. The first is the use of third party feedback platform, ([www.feefo.com](http://www.feefo.com)) a website which allows our clients to leave feedback on our performance which is published regardless of the rating.

A second initiative is the launch of our Acre Bench, a platform which publically profiles senior interim professionals in our market place – whilst it is unusual for a recruitment company to make their networks so readily available, we believe that such a service will facilitate the acceleration of growth in the market.

### Creating impact

Acre's greatest opportunity for influence is through the impactful individuals we place within our clients' organisations. Over the past year we've placed individuals in some of the most significant sustainability programmes in the world. An fine example of this includes assembling the leadership team for the Bangladesh Safety Accord, a collaboration between over 150 of the worlds largest retailers alongside global trade unions. The Accord is poised to improve the working conditions for millions of garment workers in Bangladesh.

In this way, Acre is a catalyst for achieving substantial social and environmental improvements and over the forthcoming year, we intend to develop a methodology in order to measure the impact of the candidates we place.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Cartland'.

Andrew Cartland  
Founder  
Acre

# About us

## What we do

Acre is a leading sustainability recruitment consultancy connecting companies and people across corporate responsibility, sustainability, environment, energy and health & safety. Over the last decade, Acre has built a community of the sharpest sustainable business professionals in the world. This unique network can be deployed in a number of ways – through executive search for permanent hires or contract assignments, or direct access to interim sustainability professionals on the Acre Bench, or using Acre's Business Intelligence function to address key challenges and opportunities.

Acre's aim is to help create a better economy by uniting people and businesses bound by strong social and environmental values.

## Specialties:

Sustainability, Corporate Responsibility, Energy, Environment, Health & Safety, Permanent Recruitment, Executive Search, Contract & Interim Recruitment

## Living by our values

We place six values at the heart of our business. They influence how we work on a day-to-day basis and are a critical element of our corporate strategy.



### Entrepreneurship

We value and reward productive work and constantly endeavour to go the extra mile for our clients and the organisation.



### Innovation

We embrace new ideas and technology, as well as the innovation and creativity of our employees and the sector as a whole.



### Business Protocols

We value both company and individual growth and prize financial success. We always seek to achieve positive results for our clients and have confidence and pride in our ability to do so.



### Transparency

We keep our processes simple, transparent and avoid bureaucracy. We deal with people and issues in the most direct manner without hidden agendas. As an organisation we share common goals.



### Ethics

We always do our best to ensure that we are ethical in everything that we do. We are honest with each other, our clients and our suppliers - and expect the same in return. We seek to be an agent of positive change and to deliver the highest quality service available in the sector.



### Collaboration

We are a team and we all strive to make people at Acre feel valued and appreciated. We have a common goal and celebrate each other's successes together. We want Acre to be the best it can be for our clients, our candidates and our employees.

# Our commitment to sustainable development

## Acre's commitment

As a small organisation, we do what we can by embedding our sustainability agenda into everything we do. We are proud to be active members of the UN Global Compact, and through our Acre Foundation, we engage both staff and clients to help support our carefully selected charities with the aim of making a positive impact on the world at large.

Our collaborative and partnership-based approach allows us to add real value to the sustainability landscape through our thought leadership, mentoring and advice to increase knowledge and understanding within the sustainability and recruitment space.

As the wider sustainability landscape builds momentum and evolves, Acre is in a position to have a positive and meaningful impact on the individuals who operate within it. We are constantly looking for ways to maximise our social and environmental impact through various initiatives and the people we place.

## Headway on 2012/2013 sustainability commitments

### 2012/13 Commitments

### Actions

Reduce the environmental impact of our business (per head). We aim to do this through continuing to develop initiatives and promote behavioural changes which have a positive impact

Our partnership with Wiles Greenworld, the green office supplies and recycling company, has been renewed and goods and services continue to be sourced via a sustainable supply chain

Continue to build the Acre Foundation in order to make a difference to causes that represent our passion and values and demonstrate our commitment to the UN Global Compact

Acre matched £480 for team and individual fundraising activities with £1935 being donated to our Ecoscheme charities. We also introduced our "Charity not Cards" drive making an additional £435 donation for Christmas

Continue supporting mentees through the Octavia programme and other volunteering initiatives

10 one-to-one mentoring and coaching sessions for individuals and 26 volunteer hours provided by members of the Acre team

Increase our output of key industry thought leadership to enable our industry, and those specialists within it, to flourish and create a sustainable future

Thought provoking intelligence published and the launch of the WISSE networking support group to grow and build the sustainability sector

# Our sustainable approach

*"Acre really tries to reflect its ethical values in day-to-day business, and it's inspiring to be part of a team that actively 'practises what it preaches' by promoting and encouraging sustainability initiatives every day within the office."*

**Georgia Wall**  
Office manager

*"The ride to work scheme has helped me create a healthy work environment, with employees coming together to regularly exercise and train for various competitions or challenges outside of work hours."*

**Lydia Langford**  
Manager

## a. Environment

Acre's environmental policy covers all aspects of our operations – from good housekeeping measures, partnerships with sustainable suppliers and ensuring that investments made are efficient and environmentally sound.



### Moving from reduction to positive impact:

- Procurement of solely eco-friendly products, right down to our pens, that were once water bottles, to organic and fair trade catering products
- Our partnership with ethical office supplies and recycling company 'Wiles Greenworld' places sustainability as a primary objective in the daily running of our office
- 67% of business supplies is now not only neutral, but generates an environmental benefit – a further improvement on last year's 56%



### Ways of working and local community:

- We continue to invest in a more energy efficient IT infrastructure from conferencing facilities to our thin client IT system
- A virtual interview platform has been introduced to reduce the number of business trips
- Our collaboration with the local Business Improvement District enhances Acre's contribution to the local area, assisting 'inmidtown' with their innovative sustainability projects from 'freecycling' to 'hives on rooftops'



### Water, waste and recycling:

- During the past six months, more than 70kg of plastic and cans have been recycled, and our paper recycling equates to over 340 reams of paper
- The supply chain of office supplies has been coordinated with our delivery of our recycling collection in an effort to minimise our carbon footprint
- We have partnered with the Rainbow Trust; funds raised from the recycling of our ink cartridges will provide support to families affected by the life-threatening or terminal illness of children

Our self-serviced premises and the creation of a new office manager role, allows us to have a greater influence on our environmental impact. We will be closely monitoring our energy and water consumption to ensure further reductions are made.

## Ride to work

Acre continues to be very supportive of individuals who opt for cycling to work, and has seen an elevated and sustained uptake rate within the team. With the Ride to Work scheme, and the addition of shower facilities, approximately 40% of employees regularly cycle in to work as their preferred commute.



## b. Investing in our people

Acre is committed to the career development of the team; our culture is to grow and promote from within whilst encouraging a positive and healthy working environment. We're expanding quickly and there are plenty of opportunities for staff to develop their career.

### Staff development

2012/13 marked a number of achievements within our team:

- Five internal promotions
- Two internships made permanent
- An internal mentoring scheme launched
- Continued investment in internal and external training on a variety of topics
- Quarterly updates on company financial performance by directors to staff

### Support for post graduate study

Acre is committed to employees' personal development, and as such will support study toward post graduate qualifications where the subject is relevant to Acre's business. Support is provided in the form of both financial backing and study leave. In 2012/13, study leave and financial support was offered to five staff members currently undertaking further education.

### Sabbaticals

A long service reward in the form of sabbatical leave is available for employees that have worked at Acre in excess of four years. Following the anniversary, staff are entitled to ten extra days paid holiday, to use for a life-changing experience. This year a member of the team completed the intensive Metropolitan Special Constabulary (MSC) programme during this period, and is now an active member of the part-time volunteer police force.

### Equal opportunities employer

The company aims to be an equal opportunity employer and seeks to satisfy the objectives and intentions of relevant legislation and codes of practice pertaining to equal opportunities in employment. Acre's Equal Opportunities Policy opposes all forms of discrimination. There should be no discrimination against employees, applicants for employment, trainees, persons providing a service to the company or seconded to the company, in line with the equality act of 2010.

*"The career development opportunities offered by Acre are fantastic. I started here as a Research Intern on a three week internship, Acre provided me with excellent support and training including a three day intensive external Permanent Recruitment course. The internship opportunity provided me with a fast way to learn the core business areas, gain commercial insight and has helped me to progress to my current position as a core member of the Research Team."*

**Sophie Luck**  
Researcher

## c. Enriching communities through the Acre Foundation

Acre encompasses a team of skilled and passionate individuals with interests across a range of charities - the Acre Foundation ([acre-foundation.com](http://acre-foundation.com)) was set up as a way to bring together Acre's charitable work under one roof to support a range of good causes. This allows for a strategic and proactive approach to working with our partners in a structured and coherent way.

The Acre Foundation comprises of three core areas:

- Staff volunteering
- Acre's Ecoscheme and other causes
- Fundraising

At the time of publishing, the Acre Foundation has raised £18,566 via the echoscheme and various fundraising initiatives undertaken by the team, along with a total of 48 hours volunteered across various initiatives.

### Staff volunteering

Acre has continued to partner with the Octavia Foundation to develop the 'Gateways to Work' programme - aimed at supporting unemployed people who reside in nearby boroughs who are seeking work. Through this scheme, we provide mentorship to clients of Octavia's employment and training projects, with the aim of helping individuals back into work and therefore helping them achieve greater long term control over their circumstances.

Mentoring includes: enhancing key skills such as engagement and communications, as well as assisting with CV development and interview training through a series of one-to-one sessions. This has led to various successes in terms of securing new opportunities in the work environment and building the confidence of these individuals.

Building on our desire for our staff members to contribute in a positive way to our local community, we recently introduced a scheme that gives each member of our team four volunteering days leave a year and initiated several opportunities for the team to volunteer en masse.

In order to develop our volunteer programme, we surveyed our staff to better understand the motivations behind volunteering and what areas individuals are most passionate about. The data below shows that the main motivator to volunteer is the ability to do something for our community. According to our survey, 88% of Acre employees indicated their preference to volunteer on environmental related projects, therefore we are looking to establish a more environmentally focussed volunteering programme in 2014.

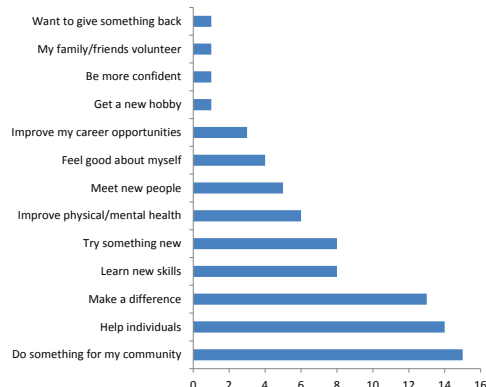
*"Being able to help someone step back and consider a difficult life changing decision was hugely rewarding. Not only was the feedback from Octavia very positive but the whole process was enjoyable and added to my self worth"*

**Mary Dale  
Consultant**

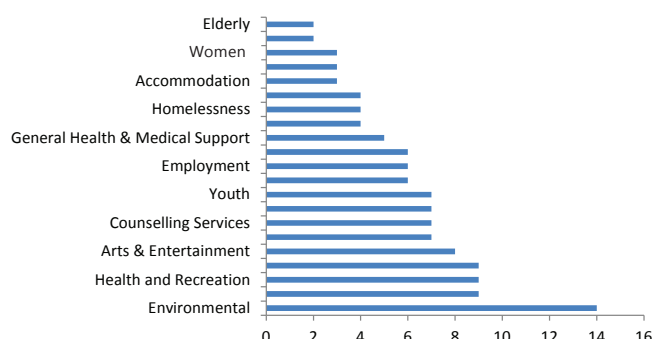
# Our sustainable approach

## Findings from the internal volunteering survey conducted by the Acre team:

Individual motivations for volunteering



Types of volunteering as per individual interests



We are currently exploring various initiatives with the London Wetlands Centre for 2013/14 with the aim of supporting them to conserve London's enriched wetlands.

## Ecoscheme and other causes

Our Ecoscheme makes regular financial donations to carefully selected charities for each job placement we make. We ask clients who've had an individual placed in their businesses to select from one of three preselected charities, to whom we make a donation on their behalf. In 2012/13, £1,935 has been donated on our clients behalf.

Towards the end of last year, we also launched our 'Charity not Cards' initiative; where instead of sending christmas cards to our clients, we asked them to select a charity in the Ecoscheme and made a donation of £5 on their behalf. We raised a total of £835 for the drive in 2013.

The Ecoscheme currently comprises of the following three charities:



The simple idea behind Cool Earth is that rainforests are worth much more to the human race left standing. Cool Earth is a unique charity that is saving the world's most endangered rainforests through working with local communities to secure forests at risk of being destroyed within the next 18 months. Cool Earth works to build local and community capacity to make a difference, ensuring that less than 10% of their supporters' money is spent on administration.



Their vision is to help establish strong and vibrant communities in central London and improve the quality of life for individuals. Octavia Foundation's work is intended to increase the strength and effectiveness of community life; improving local conditions, especially for people in disadvantaged situations, enabling people to take part in public decision-making, and helping them to achieve greater long term control over their circumstances.



The EDGE of existence programme aims to conserve the world's most Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered (EDGE) species by implementing the research and conservation action needed to secure their future. The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) is raising awareness of these species with local communities, supporting in-country experts in research projects and advising governments on sustainable conservation.

*"The Octavia Foundation's partnership with Acre Resources has proved to be beneficial both to us and our clients. Having the opportunity to be mentored by a professional gives a real confidence boost to the unemployed people that we work with. Some of these people have gone on to secure employment having experienced the personalized approach that Acre takes with each person that we've referred to them. Acre's mentoring service is highly valued by the Foundation, particularly as it helps to differentiate our employment support services from others"*

**Employment and Training Project Manager, Octavia Foundation**

# Our sustainable approach

*"It's great that Kiva can provide such a great platform to empower people in the developing world to create the opportunity to prosper for themselves. The great thing about the scheme is that it's ongoing and we can continue to use the money we received back to reinvest in other projects globally."*

**Ben Flint**  
Senior Consultant

*"Acre always matches our fundraising for charities which means that we can raise money for issues that matter to us and know that our company is going to support us – no matter how fed up with all my cake baking my colleagues get! It has created a culture of giving and a feeling of connectedness here at Acre."*

**Simone Awramenko**  
Manager

Kiva



Acre continues to support a number of other causes, like Kiva, a non profit organisation working on the principals of microfinance - connecting people through lending to alleviate poverty. This non-profit organisation empowers budding entrepreneurs in developing countries through loan schemes. Every new employee at Acre is welcomed with a £100 voucher to lend within Kiva.

In this reporting period, we are proud to have contributed a total of £800 to a variety of schemes including a fabric shop in Rawalpindi, Pakistan and a café run by and for teenagers in Colombia. To find out more, visit: [www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org)

## Fundraising initiatives

The Acre team are passionate about a range of charities and support these individual causes through fundraising initiatives and involvement, whether individually or as a team. The Acre Foundation pledges to match staff fundraising up to a total of £100.

Fundraising initiatives over the past year have included:

Charity	Who	What	When
Oxfam	Lydia Langford	2013 Virgin London Marathon	Apr 13
Cancer Research	Lydia Langford	Tough Mudder	May 13
Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY)	Richard Wright	Mount Toubkal Climb	May 13
Cancer Research	Sara Telahoun	Race for Life	Jun 13
Red Cross	Acre Team	Team bake sale	Nov 13

A complete list of our fundraising initiatives can be accessed on the Acre Foundation website: [acre-foundation.com](http://acre-foundation.com)

## d. The broader sustainability marketplace

### Knowledge leadership

Acre is in a strong position to have a positive and meaningful impact on the individuals who operate within the sustainability market. We do so by contributing to the knowledge base of the sector by equipping clients with thought provoking intelligence and the sharing of best practices through a wide range of initiatives. Deliverables include industry benchmarking, thought leadership papers and insights, events, blogs and news alerts. [www.acre.com/news](http://www.acre.com/news)

Acre hosts an annual events programme across a number of interest groups, allowing professionals in the space to network, collaborate and share ideas and best practices.

We launched our Women in Sustainability, Safety and Environment (WISSE) event, aimed at senior female professionals in the space, and so far we have hosted three events. This initiative aims to provide a support network of strong, like-minded individuals to share ideas and explore challenges and best practices for mutual benefit.

#### Our series of WISSE events in 2013 included:

October 2013:	Investor Insight into the Value of Sustainability
June 2013:	Developing CR Strategy in Complex Organisations
March 2013:	Sky's Bigger Picture Gender Strategy

Feedback from our WISSE events has all been extremely positive. From the feedback received thus far, such a network proved extremely valuable for members. Key reasons include:

- ability for members to keep up to date with industry best practices, benchmark and gain inspiration from what others are doing
- opportunities to network, collaborate and learn from others
- meet like-minded senior female professionals working in similar environments, to share experiences and challenges

### Our wider social influence through the roles we place

The core of our commitment to sustainability remains our everyday activity of placing talented professionals in roles where they can effect change within their organisations. As a team, we are currently exploring ways in which we can take this one step further - to be able to acknowledge the great value our candidates are making in the world at large and the ability to share best practices amongst the sector.

*"The Women in sustainability, safety and environment was launched in an effort to create a platform for senior women in the space to network, connect and share best practices. Following the success of the first five events and over 120 leaders in the space in attendance, it is clear there is a strong appetite for this network."*

**James Irwin**  
Manager

*"As the economy improves organisations need to centre their growth around a resource efficient strategy, as well as turning themselves into better corporate citizens; that's where our candidates, be they permanent hires or interims, can make a difference."*

**Andy Cartland**  
Founder

## Sustainability steering committee

2012/2013 has been a year of immense growth for Acre, so to ensure we maintain the momentum of our sustainability initiatives, we have identified a new sustainability steering committee and look forward to a programme of exciting activities in the coming year.

This team will be responsible for encouraging and establishing a sustainable mindset within the company and to strategically manage the development and implementation of such initiatives for the year ahead.

## Commitments for the year ahead

### Environmental

- ✓ Grow our partnership with 'Wiles Greenworld' to ensure our business operations are as efficient and sustainable as possible

### Investing in our people

- ✓ Develop a mission statement that encompasses our sustainability objectives which embodies the environmental and social impacts made by our candidates
- ✓ Continue to provide encouragement and support for career development across the team

### Enriching communities through the Acre Foundation

- ✓ Increase the uptake of donations on behalf of our clients to the Ecoscheme charities through placements, our Christmas drive and other initiatives
- ✓ Develop a comprehensive volunteer strategy for the Acre team with a calendar of activities for the year ahead, undertaking a minimum of 150 hours

We have partnered with inmidtown, an initiative that represents 570 businesses in Bloomsbury, Holborn and St Giles, to formulate a volunteering programme that will enable Acre to support businesses in the local area. We plan to kick-start 2014 with an environmentally focused volunteer programme with the London Wetland's Centre and encourage at least 80% of the team to become actively involved in similar initiatives by contributing four days per year.

### The broader sustainability marketplace

- ✓ Expand our thought-leadership programme, events and network groups in order to provide sustainability professionals with the necessary tools and support to help them flourish in their respective careers

## Memberships and guidelines



### [UN Global Compact and Bribery Act](#)

Acre is a member of the UN Global Compact and actively integrate its universally accepted principles within our strategy and operations. We are strong advocates of human rights and equal opportunities and regularly review our internal policies to address the Bribery Act.  
[www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org)

## Get in touch

To find out more about the work of the Acre Foundation or our sustainability initiatives, please visit our website or contact us on the details below:

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