



Firetail Impact Report

2023-24

Firetail



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Welcome to our first Impact Report



I am delighted to introduce the first Firetail Impact Report.

Firetail was founded to help clients working on the world's most challenging problems. I have always believed it is possible to run a business that is led by its values, that can try to make a difference and also be a good place to work. These things have always been implicit. As we've grown and built deeper relationships with our clients, we are becoming more explicit about these values, our commitments and how we hold ourselves to account.

Becoming a B Corp

In 2023, Firetail became a [B Corp](#). This certification is central to codifying many of the things we have always believed about purpose-driven business. This Impact Report is part of that commitment to the B Corp movement. It creates a point of reflection: to look back on the year that was, to assess our own financial, environmental, and social performance, and to report back.

Joining 1% for the planet

We have also become members of [1% for the Planet](#) - the global network of businesses and environmental organisations committed to supporting people and planet. This is another significant step. Members of 1% for the Planet pledge to donate at least 1% of their annual revenue from approved environmental non-profits and related causes. I am really proud to announce that we have just nominated [Thames21](#) as our first charity of choice, as decided by an open staff vote.

Recognising the impact of our clients

Firetail's purpose has always been **to help impact-driven organisations realise their ambitions for society.**

We have the biggest impact through the work we do with our clients. They are all mission and purpose driven. This is why we are considered a "mission-locked" business by B Corp. Our clients are diverse - from large, complex networks and communities to start-up social enterprises. From climate and humanitarian organisations to learned societies and philanthropies. Over the years we have worked with over 150+ organisations and networks, in the UK and around the world. This report shares some of the highlights from our year, including case studies about our work and our clients experience of working with us.

Looking forward

Becoming a B Corp and joining 1% for the Planet formalised a commitment to social and environmental impact. Although these are both significant milestones for us, these commitments have always been part of our work. Everyone in the team will continue to live up to the values and principles that they represent.

Our clients are our partners. We solve problems together and build long term relationships. This report helps us to show our commitment to making a difference and making a positive impact. I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thanks to all of them for their trust in us, our work together and their support through the year. You are the people that inspire us to move forward.

Andy Martin, CEO

A snapshot of the last 12 months

Launched 22 new projects to deliver social and environmental impact in over 20 countries

Partnered with 6 global networks, foundations and coalitions to support their work across 6 continents

Recruited and welcomed 2 new team members

3 team members celebrated 5 and 10+ year work anniversaries

Joined 1% for the Planet

Committed to giving 1% of our annual sales directly to environmental charities and groups

Our office building is powered 100% by renewable energy

Changed our Articles of Association which means we are legally committed to use business as a force for good

Refreshed and relaunched the Firetail website

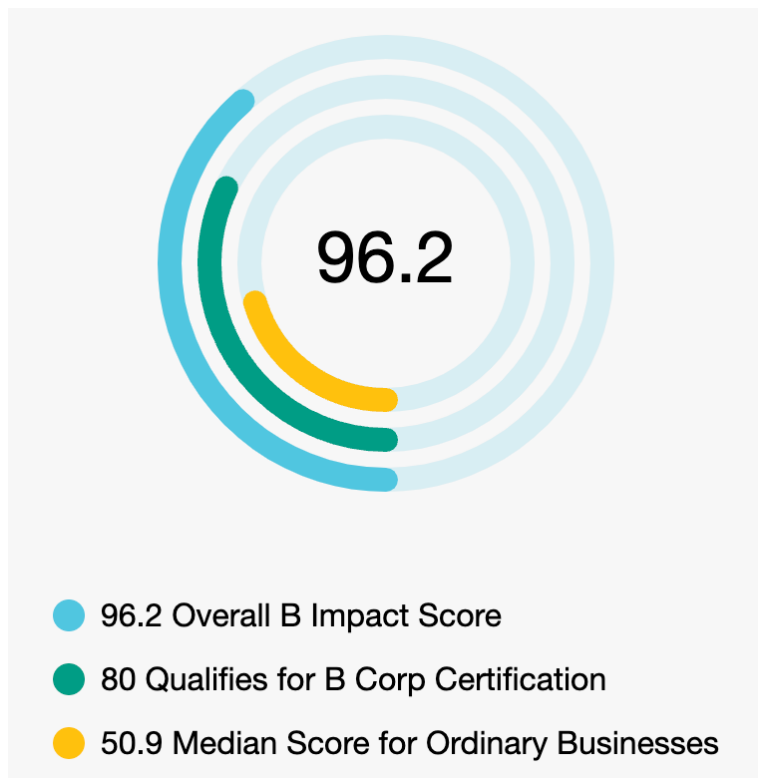
Gave 150+ hours of volunteering time and community support to local charities and campaigning organisations

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Our journey to B Corp certification

Becoming a B Corp

In 2023, we completed our first B Corp certification process and were awarded a score of 96.2. The threshold for certification is 80 points and the median score across all businesses that complete the assessment is 50.9.



Our B Corp scores

The application process is rigorous and we had to go through a lengthy assessment that looked at every aspect of our business – from our relationships with our clients and our team, our governance, environmental performance and community engagement.

This was followed by a detailed review and assessment by B Lab staff, with requests for documentation for all key points. We've changed our Articles of Association and invested time and effort in new policies and processes. It has been a huge team effort.

Our B Corp scores by category

Governance:	15.7
Team:	34.5
Community:	14.7
Environment:	10.4
Clients:	20.7

Firetail Impact Report

Our Impact

Who we are

Firetail is a strategy consultancy working to achieve social progress. We ensure our clients have the advice, evidence and insight they need to make the right choices in an uncertain world.

Our purpose is to help impact-driven clients realise their ambitions for society.

Our work falls into two categories:

- **Strategy**: Helping our clients with Futures thinking, strategy development and organisational and change questions
- **Impact**: Helping our clients set up their impact measurement systems, evaluate their impact and gather lessons and insight.

Our clients work around the world on the greatest challenges facing society, from global health to climate change, from science and innovation to human rights, to democracy and beyond. They are united by the scale of their ambition and their desire for positive social impact.

Demonstrating our impact

Our biggest opportunity to create positive change is through the work we do with our clients. In this report, we have highlighted just a few of the projects that we have been involved with this year, but there are many more.

We are very proud of our longstanding relationships with many of our clients. This allows us to take the role of trusted advisor and critical friend. We have worked with many for over a decade. In the last year, over 70% of our clients were existing partners or were referred from partners that we had worked with before.

Every question in the B Impact Assessment is also aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (**SDGs**) so it's important to that we can track how we are helping to address the targets that sit behind the 17 goals. All of the work that we do with our clients delivers impact against each of the 17 SDGs in different ways. This year we will do more work on new ways to track our impact, including how we align this to the SDGs. We will update on that in our next Impact Report.

But for now, we focus on the key indicators of our impact - our relationships with clients and partners; the ways that we work together as a team; and the decisions we make about how we function and operate. We have included reflections on these areas in this report as well.

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Impact for our clients

We have the biggest impact through the work we do with our clients. All of our work is purpose driven. All of our clients are social progress organisations. We are incredibly proud of them and the work we have done together in the past 12 months.



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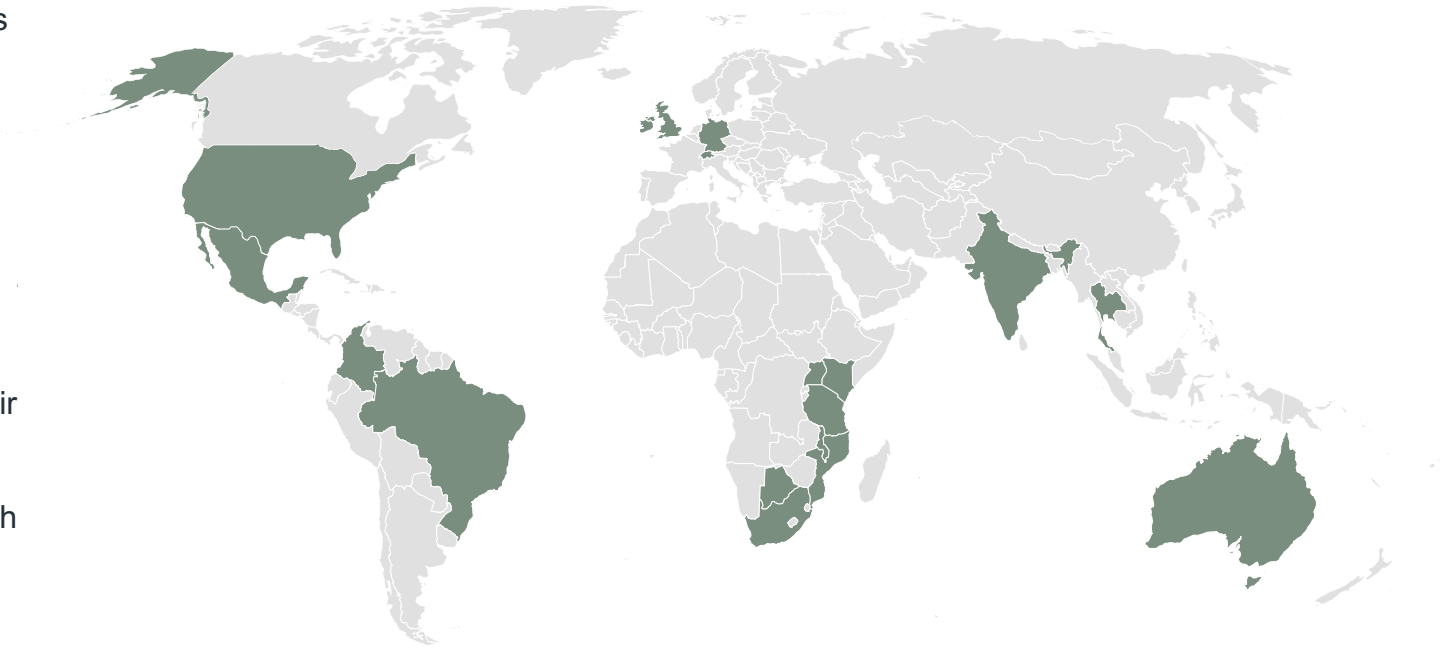
To date, Firetail has worked with over 150 clients worldwide

In 2023, we've supported over 20 partners around the world across 6 continents and 20 countries.

We have worked with diverse clients from climate and humanitarian organisations to learned societies and philanthropies.

All of our clients work on urgent, global challenges. They are united by their values, the scale of their ambition and their desire for tangible, sustainable impact.

This year we have been proud to work with many global networks, foundations and federated organisations creating further impact through their international teams and communities.



Case Study: Impact for our clients

How do we close the gender gap in eye health?

At the [2023 Women Deliver Conference](#) in Rwanda, **The Fred Hollows Foundation** launched its new report, “Women Deliver Eye Health: Let’s Reframe Who Leads It”.

It shows that the global health sector will continue to lose out on women’s talent and perspectives unless measures are taken to accelerate towards equal representation in senior leadership positions.

Firetail is really proud to have supported The Foundation in this work. Firetail designed and conducted the research and analysis, and worked closely with the project team to develop the final recommendations.

Women are 70 percent of health and care workers but hold 25 percent senior leadership positions in international health institutions and governing bodies. There are structural and intersecting hurdles on their path to becoming leaders. Among these are discrimination in the workplace, gender norms and stereotypes, less investment in mentoring and skills development for women, the ongoing gender pay gap and workplace harassment.

The report finds that equal representation in leadership matters. It supports diverse voices making key decisions in resource spending and policy change, which promotes health systems that are more representative of the population they seek to serve.

The Fred Hollows Foundation has since launched a [partnership with UN Women](#) to elevate gender equity in eye health and achieving the SDGs.

The full report [here](#), and our reflections on it [here](#).



Case Study: Impact for our clients

How can we keep at-risk communities safe in digital spaces?

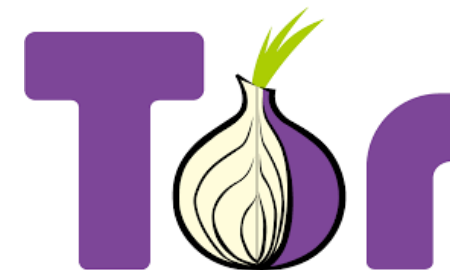
The **Tor Project** is a global human rights non-profit organisation working to protect people's online privacy and bypass censorship on the Internet. Tor creates and deploys free, open-source technologies and tools that help to advance human rights and digital freedoms around the world.

We worked with the Tor Project to evaluate its Global South Strategy (GSS), which was developed to establish closer ties and build better relationships with at-risk communities in the Global South, and to empower people to be more secure on the internet by prioritising a user-centric approach for the development of Tor products.

Through the GSS, Tor was able to shift external perceptions of it from an academic / hacker organisation to one that is more community-focused. It has become the connective tissue between developers and users on the ground, enabling it to better support at-risk and persecuted online communities.

The GSS connects Tor with its Global South users, particularly those in regions with increasing challenges to digital rights. Findings from the evaluation report will help Tor better tailor products and teach the use of more technical tools to non-technical audiences

The full report is available [here](#).



What opportunities do advanced wireless networks offer for Northern Ireland?

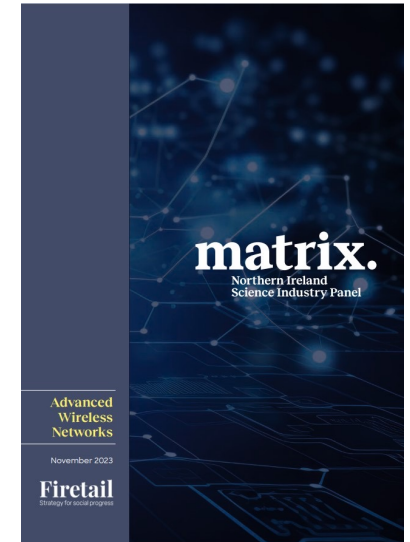
Matrix, Northern Ireland's science industry panel, alongside the Department for the Economy (DfE), sought to unlock the potential of future advanced wireless networks for Northern Ireland and unlock transformative benefits for citizens, businesses, and public services.

Their goal was to explore the opportunities these technologies could bring to sectors of the Northern Ireland economy, and identify proactive measures that could position Northern Ireland to benefit from these opportunities.

We used a mix of a mix of desk-based research and structured stakeholder engagement, including consultation with a diverse range of national and international stakeholders, to generate both deep and broad insight. The report identifies a range of potential use cases for advanced connectivity within the context of the NI economy, and specific barriers which need to be overcome to create transformative change.

The significance of our work was underscored through the report's launch by the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service at the UK Space Conference. They emphasised the report's role in providing a robust evidence-base, crucial for shaping future investment. The recommendations from the report are now playing a key role in guiding Northern Ireland's connectivity strategy and investments.

The full report is available [here](#).



What our clients say about us

“The evaluation report from Firetail allowed us to understand the impact of our Global South Strategy not only at Tor but with our partners. It became a great tool for us to talk about this work internally and externally [...] It was the first time that we had such an evaluation about our work so we were not sure what to expect, however the final result became an extremely important tool for us.”

**Isabela Fernandes, Executive Director
The Tor Project**

“This was a challenging brief, requiring a tight turnaround. Firetail did an excellent job getting to grips with the technically ambiguous landscape of advanced wireless networks and identifying the salient issues, within the specific context of Northern Ireland. The research involved gathering input from a wide range of experts and stakeholders, which they managed effectively. As the teams’ understanding of the topic deepened, Firetail’s contribution developed to the point that they contributed valuable insights into the topic and pertinent suggestions regarding policy implications and recommendations.

In summary, the Firetail team effectively addressed the brief and delivered a quality report on time, exceeding expectations. They were responsive, helpful and a pleasure to work with.”

Patricia O’Hagan, Matrix Steering Group chair

What our clients say about us

“Our aim was to create a strategy that would bring the whole organisation together to unite around closing the gender gap in eye health. Firetail played a key role in helping to make that happen. We needed an approach that would bring people with us and provide fresh perspectives on how we could tackle the challenges of closing the gap.

Firetail has been a great partner. They provided high quality research and evidence-based insights that enriched our discussions and guided us to more informed decision-making. They have also challenged us to explore new avenues and think differently about our partnerships and approaches.

My goal is to ensure gender equity is embedded across the eye health sector. The Foundation has a leadership voice but we know the power comes through partnerships. This work is directly helping us to extend our reach and amplify our work to close the gender gap in eye health.”

**Dr Jennifer Gersbeck, Executive Director - Global Advocacy
The Fred Hollows Foundation**

“Thank you for your strategic guidance and wisdom. Working with you has been true collaboration, it was true co-design. You were open to solving problems together and stretched us out of our comfort zone to explore new territories and new ways of doing things. The result was a bold strategy and a clear road map for the next 5 years which everyone has embraced because they felt part of the journey. We are excited to see how this strategy will propel us towards our vision of Zero Deaths from breast cancer.”

**Cleola Anderiesz, CEO
National Breast Cancer Foundation**

What our clients say about us

The Firetail Briefing is our fortnightly newsletter. It is a collaborative editorial effort from the whole team and provides everyone with an opportunity to research and write about stories that they are passionate about.

It is also the way we share our emerging insight and thinking with our audience of clients, partners and beyond. In each edition we focus on a handful of stories that have caught our attention across strategy, evaluation, policy, sustainability, technology, and more.

The Briefing aims to provide people in senior roles in charities and civil society, who are often largely focussed on their internal challenges through the week, some carefully curated insight and inspiration with a few links, research and perspectives on trends in the outside world that they can use in their day-to-day work.

"I've only recently subscribed but I'm really enjoying the unconventional thinking and global perspective"

"Lovely piece in the Firetail briefing today on strategic thinking with some intellectual challenges to what it is and what it definitely isn't"

Firetail Briefing

Friday 12th January

Firetail Two difficult strategy questions for 2024

Firetail Chief Executive Andy Martin begins the new year by reflecting on the two themes that consistently emerged across our work in 2023. These questions arose in our projects across various sectors, including climate change, humanitarianism, and scientific research. The first question, 'how can networks deliver?', focusses on the inherent trade-offs that arise when organisations collaborate. Whilst the second question, 'does strategic transformation need personal transformation?', deals with the relationship between personal beliefs and strategic outcomes. The article concludes by posing what this all means for 2024.

[Read more](#)

Development Social progress receded in 2023 for the first time on record

The latest edition of the Social Progress Index shows that the world has declined overall on social progress for the first time since its inception in 2011. Of the 170 countries analysed using 57 distinct indicators, 61 countries saw a significant decline in social progress in 2023, and a further 77 stagnated. This group of countries represents 80% of the world's population, and includes all of the G7 countries. The report also features a spotlight on UK social progress, highlighting its precipitous decline since 2011. The UK ranked 52nd on the 'Nutritional and Medical Care' metric (worse than Cuba and Tunisia), and 95th on 'Discrimination and violence against minorities' - a plummet of 58 places in 12 years.

[Read more](#)

Our Team

What we're already doing

- Our purpose - to help impact-driven organisations realise their ambitions for society - sets the highest standards in everything we do as a team. Being a B Corp helps us to live our values, and is an important step forward on our own journey to working with purpose. We want all of the team to feel like they are thriving at work and are proud of how we do business.
- Since we became a certified B Corp, we have welcomed two new members to our team and have improved our induction processes.
- We have developed new project management processes that ensures alignment across the team, improves efficiency and ensure that everyone is able to learn and develop from each project they work on.
- We have invested time in developing a more structured approach to learning and development. We have regular team sessions where people share the work they have been doing, and provide peer-to-peer training on issues ranging from workshop facilitation to knowledge management systems.
- We organise regular team away days and socials; such as lunch and learn sessions with internal and external speakers where we can share work we have been doing.
- Firetail operates a hybrid and flexible working model with regular in-office days and opportunities for remote work.

What we're working on

- Continue to invest in the team and create a working environment that supports, challenges and inspires.
- Continue to ensure that all team are actively involved and engaged in internal governance and decision making about the business.
- Developing our approach to team recognition including trialing a new staff engagement platform to measure engagement and wellbeing at work.
- Improving our team wellbeing including a full refresh of our mental health at work processes.
- Piloting new online coaching schemes with the team.
- Reworking our appraisal process, setting fewer, more specific goals and sharing them with each other.
- Creating and sharing a 'Manual of Me' across the team to improve working together.

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Our Environment

What we're already doing

- As a small team, based in an office in central London providing professional services, our carbon footprint is relatively small. Our choice of office space provider is an important part of this: we have chosen a supplier for our serviced office which offers the highest level of environmental stewardship.
- Our provider is aiming to become carbon neutral (net zero greenhouse gas emissions) by 2030 by signing up to the Better Building Partnership (BBP) Climate Change Commitment.
- They have made significant efforts in sustainability this year, including:
 - All energy is 100% REGO certified renewable
 - 13% decrease in energy intensity
 - 38% decrease in water intensity
 - The latest recycling rate was 92%, and 76% on average throughout the year. 27.1 tonnes of waste were produced in the last year – enough to fill 2.3 double decker buses.
- We ran an all team away day volunteering for TCV. The Firetail team helped to clear woodland and build new footpaths in South London.
- We have hybrid working policies in place and green guidelines for working remotely. All of the team use public transport, cycles and/or walk to work. We also have cycle to work scheme in place to incentivise this.

What we're working on

- Following our certification as a B Corp, we have also joined the 1% for the Planet movement. This means that from October 2023 onwards, we pledge 1% of our annual sales to environmental organisations. We are also looking at new ways to donate volunteering time to support local and national environmental organisations as part of the 1% movement.
- Continue to support environment groups through our social and team activities.
- Focus on finding better processes and improved results for recycling, plastics, food waste, and lighting in building through our provider, Workspace.
- Embed good environmental standards into our office ways of working, including developing our green guidance for remote working and travel policies.
- We have signed up for sustainability tracking with our bank (HSBC)
 - in the long-run, this should contribute to better ongoing monitoring and learning for our sustainability efforts.



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Our Community

What we're already doing

- We have reviewed our approach to inclusion and diversity in our policies and recruitment practices.
- All of the team have up to 3 days paid time off each year to volunteer and many of our team sit on or chair boards – this year we gave 150+ volunteering hours to support charities and local community groups.
- Beyond this our team volunteer and participate in other local community organisations and regularly give time outside of working hours - this year we've estimated a further 130 hours of time has been given by the team in mentoring, working with local charities and other not-for-profit community organisations.
- Every year Firetail gives to our Christmas charity of choice. Each member of the team gets the opportunity to nominate a charity, and the winner is decided by a vote among the team. This year, we chose Thames 21 - the voice for London's waterways, working with communities to improve rivers and canals for people and wildlife.

What we're working on

- Developing and rolling out a new set of equity, diversity and inclusion strategic priorities, including our partner and supplier networks.
- Keep making an impact through regular volunteering days and charitable donations - we will continue to commit to charity events and engagement throughout the year. We will also look for ways to increase our team volunteering time with environmental groups and charities as part of our membership of 1% for the Planet.
- Our support for this year includes a sponsored team half marathon in March 2024 for Access Sport – a national charity working to directly combat exclusion, hardship and poor health faced by millions of children in the UK.
- From 2024/2025, every member of the team will get a personal allowance on their birthday to nominate and donate to a 1% for the Planet charity of their choice.



Firetail Impact Report

Our Community



Firetail Half Marathon training team - running for Access Sport



Firetail Team Away Day - volunteering with TCV in Dulwich Wood

B-Corp Impact Area

Our Governance

What we're already doing

- We are a small team with few management levels. This structure means that all staff are actively engaged and involved in company decision-making processes. We have regular team meetings to plan strategy and make operational decisions together.
- We are proud to have worked on organisational competency frameworks, job descriptions and role profiles that set out expectations and a clear career development pathway for all members of the team.
- We changed our Articles of Association to make a commitment to consider our impact on our stakeholders, now and in the future, and build it into our legal structure. This means we are legally committed to use business as a force for good.
- Being transparent about financials across the business – we believe that being open about our finances is key to team engagement. It's crucial to the success of our business that all the team know the financial goals we're working towards and how they can contribute to them. We introduced reporting against wider environmental and community metrics, which are shared monthly with the Leadership Team.
- We have regular meetings and surveys with clients and other partners to ask how we're doing and see what we can do differently to meet their needs.

What we're working on

- We regularly review all of our policies and continue to integrate social and environmental performance into our decision making. This includes staff training, updating job descriptions that include roles and responsibilities for this in them, and report back on key issues through our Leadership Team and all Team meetings.
- Developing new policies to shape and guide our work, including new Ethics and Anti-bias in research policy and ESG.
- Improving our client feedback processes - we have regular surveys and check-in calls with clients to build on and will look for new ways to develop these approaches in the coming year.
- Build on what we're doing well – we'll continue to deliver regular weekly and monthly full team meetings, monthly financial reporting, and quarterly management team meetings. We'll continue to share a schedule of this activity, so staff know what to expect and when.
- We plan to engage further with the B Corp UK community including B Corp month in March and through other events, consultation initiatives and social programmes.

Firetail Impact Report

What's next?

Thank you for reading our first Impact report. We're proud of what we've achieved in the year since we became B Corp certified, but we're also mindful of what we need to do next.

There are things we need to do more of, and there are things we need to do better. This report holds us accountable for these commitments and we look forward to sharing our progress against them in 2024-2025.

If you would like to find out more about this report and the work that we do, please get in touch:

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www.firetail.co.uk

Sign up for the fortnightly Firetail Briefing [here](#)

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