

IMPALA Carbon Calculator Report

**Insights from
carbon footprinting
independent labels**

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Foreword

At !K7 Music we believe in a shared responsibility to tackle the climate crisis. Being part of the wider independent community, we believe in the need to act as a responsible member of the music industry. When we founded the IMPALA Sustainability Task Force in 2020 we had ambitious goals and an action plan in place to help support the independents who wanted to make a change with their business. Making a carbon calculator available for free is key and this first report is an important start in mapping the sector's hotspots. We see sustainability as something that should be central to all companies, helping reduce our energy consumption, but also the right business decision as more and more employees look to be part of a responsible working environment.

When it comes to !K7's own sustainability efforts, our primary focus is removing as much CO₂ from our operations as possible. It's great to see that our carbon emission has decreased from 2020, when we had 1,376 tonnes per head to 1,150 tonnes per employee in 2021, seeing a 16% decrease. When we compare the 2021 per head emission with our 2019 baseline emission, we come to a 38% reduction per employee. This was made possible by being able to measure our footprint and make informed decisions based on the carbon hotspots in our operations. We are excited to see how we progress as a sector as more and more music companies across Europe adopt using the bespoke Calculator and start reducing their impact in the coming years.



**Horst Weidenmüller – CEO and
Founder of K7, Chair of
IMPALA's Sustainability Task
Force**

As a Pan-European association representing 6000 members in 31 European countries, we recognise there is no one-size-fits-all solution and companies will move at their own pace. It is important for IMPALA to make sure all of its members are supported on their sustainability journey, regardless of their size or geographical location.



**Helen Smith, Executive Chair,
IMPALA**

The independent music sector has a great potential to act as a catalyst for broader change. The IMPALA Carbon Calculator is testament to this, being fully funded by a group of our members who made the tool available for free to all IMPALA members. We thank all contributors for helping champion this. Rolling it out internationally, as well as collaboration and alignment with the broader industry is key to have common tools and a standard approach.

The first year following the launch of the tool set an exciting precedent, having onboarded more than 100 users on the tool, thanks also to support from the EU for our training project **IMPACTS**. Our expectation is that this number will continue to grow organically, as more and more companies focus on the benefits of green transformation and we are happy to support them, providing climate literacy training and guidance. We look forward to working with all actors in the sector up and down the supply chain to achieve systemic change and promote transparency.

We also count on national and European governments to support this transition and make sustainable energy widely available for everyone, especially when it comes to sources like hydrogen which are needed at scale for manufacturing.

Since 2007, Julie's Bicycle has worked to foster collaboration in the music sector to take action on the climate and ecological crises. We firmly believe that music has the potential to inspire societal change on environmental issues through its creativity, platform and reach. Through our work with partners across the industry, we aim to harness the power of the collective to amplify efforts towards a sustainable future.

In developing the first Carbon Calculator for the recorded music sector, IMPALA has demonstrated how a unified approach to environmental challenges can galvanise support and action from across the industry. It has been a privilege for Julie's Bicycle to work closely with the IMPALA Sustainability Task Force in building the Calculator and equipping independent labels with the tools and knowledge they need to measure their carbon footprint, many of whom are doing so for the first time. Not only is this enormously beneficial for individual labels in understanding their current level of impact and what areas they need to focus on with environmental action, but the project is also a crucial step in the recorded sector accounting for its emissions as a whole.

As this report highlights, significant progress has been made toward that understanding, using the data that has been submitted to the IMPALA Carbon Calculator since its launch in April 2022.



**Alison Tickell, CEO and
Founder of Julie's Bicycle**

We now have a good estimate of the emissions from independent labels, which we have demonstrated in the report on a per physical unit released basis. This helps us build the foundations for us to be able to assess a baseline figure for the overall carbon footprint of the independent recorded sector, which we hope to be able to do in future reports.

In the context of European climate targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 and reach net zero emissions by 2050, the insights from the IMPALA Carbon Calculator will be vital in monitoring progress and informing shared actions to make the urgent emissions cuts we need in the sector and more widely.

Testimonials

"At [PIAS] we are dedicated to reducing our impact on the planet – from within each of our offices around the globe to across our entire distribution network. Working out our current carbon footprint in the UK was the first step to set ourselves a measurable, realistic target to work towards. IMPALA's Carbon Calculator has been essential in helping us do this. The tool was easy to use and we were grateful for the support from the Julie's Bicycle team throughout the process. Now we have our total figure for last year, we've been able to assess each area of the company and use the data to spur staff to action."

Louise Sizer, Sustainability Team [PIAS], UK

"IMPALA's Carbon Calculator is a powerful yet simple to use tool that's quickly become our main source of sustainability analysis. We do yearly reporting, which only takes a couple of hours, and has enabled us to see our performance in reducing emissions and identify areas to improve. We included our footprint in our newsletter as we want to be transparent and share our values with our community. We've had very positive feedback from artists and followers alike."

Kristoffer Rom, Tambourhinoceros, Denmark

"We have been using the Carbon Calculator for a while now, and I must say it has been a game-changer in our sustainability journey. The tool's user-friendly interface made it incredibly easy for us to calculate our carbon footprint accurately. Submitting our footprint not only gave us a clear understanding of our environmental impact but also empowered us to make informed choices and actively reduce our carbon emissions."

Ionut Polexe, Roton Music, Romania

"IMPALA's Carbon Calculator simplifies carbon emissions accounting. It also generates reports, which provide top-line insight as to where to focus reduction efforts. Crucially, the initiative supports increased label industry alignment around our shared sustainability challenges."

Anna Johnson, Anjunabeats, UK

"I tried the Calculator for my small label and found it easy to use. The most interesting aspect was to get an instant summary of your Carbon footprint and I was somewhat surprised that my CD and vinyl print was such a big source of emissions. I had already taken steps to use paper covers instead of plastic jewelcases for CDs but this showed that I need to do more, especially when it comes to vinyl and transports. It also raised some thoughts when I got to the "Beyond Carbon" page where questions appeared that you maybe have not thought of or maybe needed a small reminder. It was also good to easily compare years with each other and how the imprint changes. I found it very inspirational and will use it as a checklist as something to help me make good decisions ahead."

Mats Hammerman, Massproduktion, Sweden

"Big Help Music is fortunate to have its own production facilities. Designed and built by a sustainable buildings team - STRAWHOUSE STUDIO is a unique 'zero carbon' structure that supports the biodiversity of the environment whilst operating at a 'low carbon' level due to its high insulation construction and renewable and off-grid energy supply. We were confident that the IMPALA Calculator would result in a low carbon score, however, we were surprised to discover this was in contrast to higher than expected operating emissions. It demonstrated that some of our assumptions were wrong and has informed and shaped changes in working practice and reinforced our policy to influence client and visitor behaviour."

Dutch Van Spall, Big Help Music, UK

Introduction

This report details the findings from data submitted by independent labels so far to the [IMPALA Carbon Calculator](#). The free tool was launched in April 2022, followed by a short EU supported training programme [IMPACTS](#) from September 2022 to Spring 2023 in key countries.

Using this data, it has been possible to estimate average carbon footprint of the labels using the tool so far, on a per physical unit released basis, as well as to identify the typical emissions hotspots for independent labels.

The findings, outlined in this report, provide valuable insights for IMPALA in working towards its overall ambition to:

- halve greenhouse gas emissions before 2030 and
- achieve net zero emissions before 2050, or sooner if feasible
- measure and disclose greenhouse gas emissions on an annual basis

The IMPALA Carbon Calculator is the first bespoke 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 Corporate Standard (GHG Protocol), the most widely used framework for reporting organisational greenhouse gas emissions.

By measuring their climate impact through the Calculator, labels of all sizes are able to identify their emissions hotspots and monitor environmental progress over time. These insights inform better decision-making to help minimise environmental impacts. We also look at members actions 'Beyond Carbon', which our Calculator collects data on.

Data entered to the Calculator will also help to gain 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 Calculator is part of IMPALA's Sustainability Programme which encompasses a long-term action plan to support members on environmental objectives, [announced](#) in April 2021.

By 2026, we hope that a majority of our members will have adopted 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](#).

The IMPALA Carbon Calculator was built with the support of the IMPALA membership and powered by the Julie's Bicycle Creative Climate Tools platform.

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.

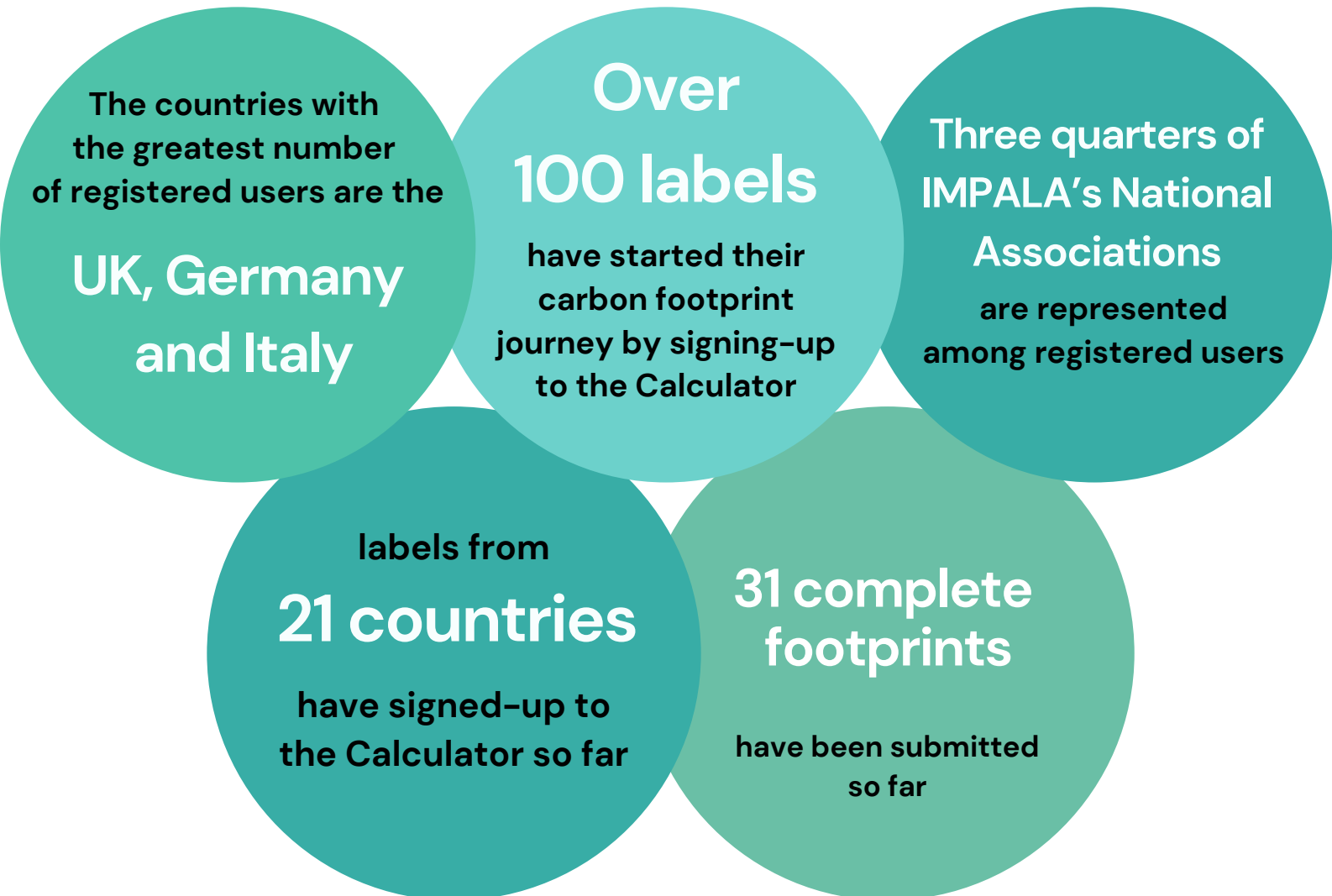


We also thank the EU for supporting our training project, **IMPACTS**, which we put together after the introduction of the Calculator, to assist with training and roll out. Read more about this project [here](#).

Together with Julie's Bicycle, IMPALA was able to deliver free training in several countries thanks to support from the EC programme MusicAIRE. The training focussed how to use the IMPALA Carbon Calculator and develop new capacity and skills at scale. IMPACTS offered customised climate literacy training by international and local experts in 6 territories across Europe between September 2022 and Spring 2023.

The story so far

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



Alongside launching the Carbon Calculator, IMPALA has delivered a number of sessions and resources to ensure the Calculator is shared and used widely among the membership. These include:

- A 'how to' webinar explaining steps to using the Calculator hosted for IMPALA members
- A detailed user guide, a quick guide and other supporting resources
- Bespoke climate literacy training delivered by IMPALA and Julie's Bicycle for labels across 6 European territories between September 2022 and Spring 2023 through the EU-funded [IMPACTS](#) project

Label carbon footprint per physical unit released

Data submitted to the IMPALA Carbon Calculator tells us that on average the independent labels using the tool generate:

3.21 kgCO₂e

per physical unit released.¹

The chart on the right highlights the percentage breakdown of different emission sources from label activities. This represents emissions across all activities, on a per physical unit released basis.

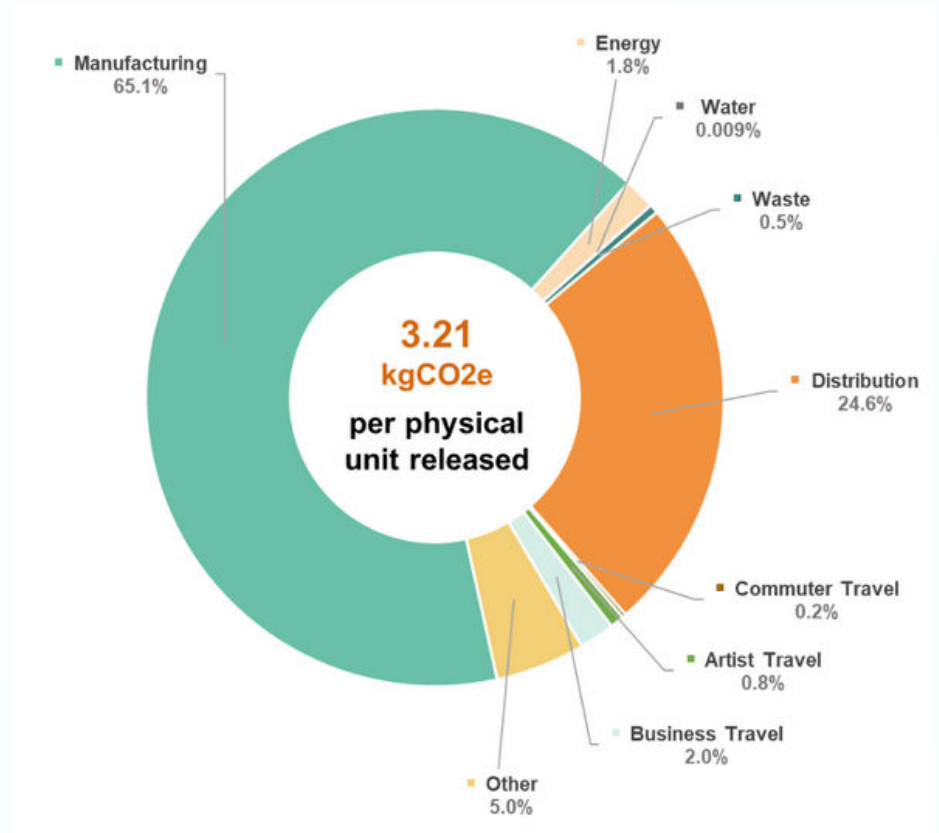


Figure 1: Carbon emission sources, on a per physical unit released basis

This number has been calculated using the data submitted to the Calculator so far and it will evolve over time as more users enter data.

One of the benefits of carbon footprinting is that it helps to identify key sources of emissions for an organisation. This can help inform targeted actions on priority areas.

Based on the average carbon footprint per physical release, the **top 3 impact areas** which typically generate the most emissions for labels are:

1. **Manufacturing**
2. **Distribution**
3. **Operations** (procurement, business travel and office impacts)

¹This figure was calculated using the combined carbon footprint of businesses using the IMPALA Carbon Calculator to report their emissions. It was calculated using all emissions from label activities reported within the submitted data, such as office and business operations (including travel), manufacturing and distributing and other related costs (see more [here](#)). For the sake of illustration, it is represented on a per unit released basis (LP and CD), excluding emissions from digital or physical retailers (as explained [here](#)).

Vinyl records have a higher product manufacturing footprint than CDs, and for example double-LPs or double albums a different carbon footprint than standard releases, so this represents an average of different formats.

From collective to individual footprints

As an average, Figure 1 on the previous page can be used as a guide for labels to understand what is likely to be their greatest areas of environmental impact. However, every business is different and so it is crucial for individual labels to submit and update their carbon footprint on a regular basis. Doing so will help to identify specific organisational challenges and monitor progress over time as environmental interventions are made.

There are many factors which influence an individual label's footprint:

- **Business model:** Each label will have varying levels of vinyl and CD production. This balance can be a factor in the overall size of the carbon footprint and the significance of manufacturing as part of it. While on average manufacturing represents the largest proportion of the carbon footprint per physical release, it can be much lower for individual labels, more geared, more towards CD production and streaming rather than vinyl. Similarly, for most labels energy use will make up a small proportion of their carbon footprint, but for businesses manufacturing fewer physical products but with multiple buildings, warehouses, and own servers, energy use may be proportionally higher.
- **Business decisions:** Specific choices can influence the size of different impact areas in an organisation's carbon footprint. For instance, choices in how to freight products may determine the significance of emissions from distribution. Similarly, the amount of business travel employees do can make this impact area proportionately more significant than the average.
- **Geographic location:** Where your label carries out its operations may also influence your specific carbon footprint, making it different to the average. Emissions from energy can vary between countries owing to the specific energy mix of grid electricity and the source of energy used for heating.
- **Environmental progress made so far:** The final influence on the make-up of an individual carbon footprint is how far along the journey the label is with its sustainability. Labels that have already significantly reduced emissions in one area may mean another area of the footprint becomes proportionally larger. Manufacturing is one of the hardest areas to decarbonise currently, so if action has been taken to reduce emissions in other areas, the percentage manufacturing contributes to your footprint will be higher than average.

Emission hotspots for labels

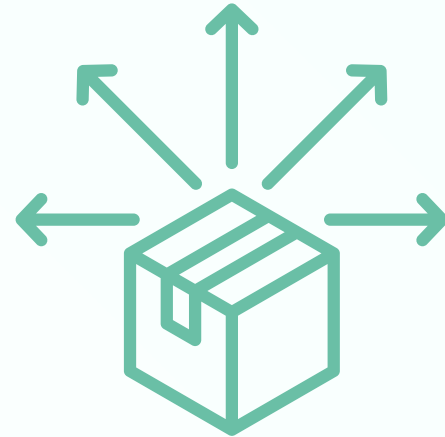
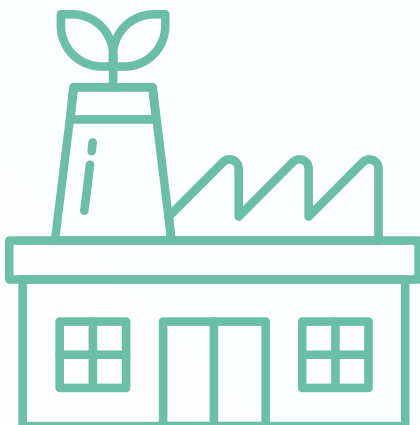
This section looks in more detail at the three activities which typically create the largest source of emissions for labels: manufacturing, distribution and operations.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing of physical products contributes the greatest proportion of emissions for reporting labels, representing **76%** of emissions on average. Over three quarters of this figure is attributed to vinyl production.

Both vinyl and CD production involve carbon-intensive extraction of raw materials. Both are made predominantly from different plastics (polycarbonates and PVC), which are derived from petrochemicals i.e. from oil. Pressing vinyl to create the final product also requires large amounts of energy.

Packaging choice also impacts the final carbon footprint of each product: a plastic jewel-case CD has a much higher carbon footprint than card packaging.



Distribution

The second highest source of emissions highlighted by the IMPALA Carbon Calculator is the distribution of physical products, accounting for **15%** of the carbon footprint for labels on average.

This includes the freighting of vinyl records, CDs and merchandise from manufacturing plants to warehouses or distribution centres and then finally onto the retailers.

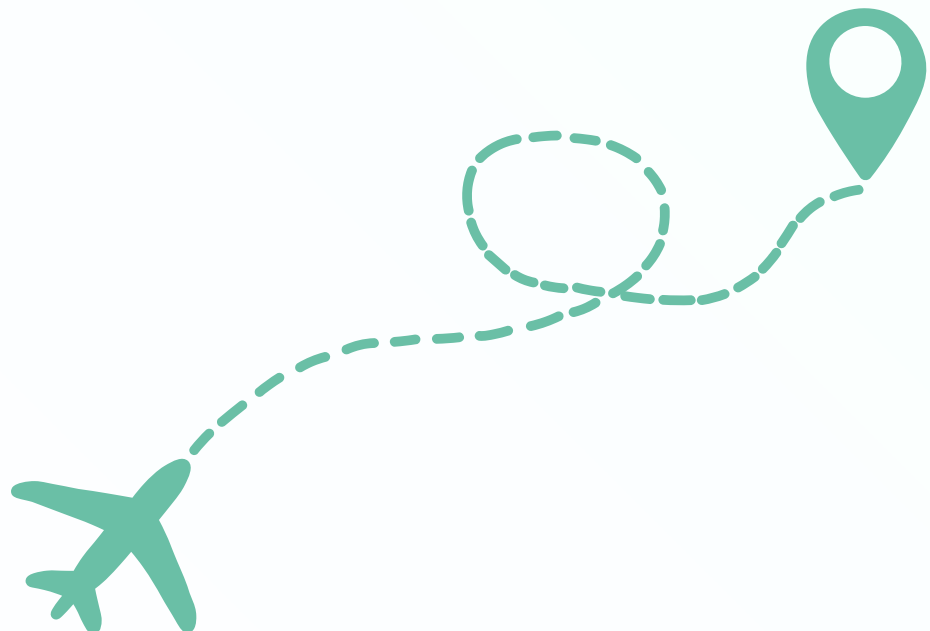
From the carbon reports submitted, air freight accounts for the largest proportion of distribution emissions by far. Air freight is 63 times more carbon intensive than sea freight for every tonne which is transported 1km. Not only is a significant amount of fuel burned to transport cargo by air, but also aircraft release emissions at altitudes in the atmosphere which make impacts even greater (a process called 'radiative forcing').

Operations

The third largest source of emissions for labels on average are operational impacts, including procurement, business travel and office energy, water and waste. Together, this contributes almost **9%** of the average carbon footprint for labels.

Impacts from procurement are the largest in this category, covering emissions from the purchase of office furniture, furnishings, electrical fittings, office equipment, studio and audio equipment and company cars. Labels responding to the Carbon Calculator accounted for these emissions using spend data reported through the 'Other' category. Spend-based calculations should be seen as an indicative measure only.

Business travel emissions account for any work-related travel (e.g. for events, conferences, training or meetings) undertaken by the organisation's employees, excluding commuting. Of the figures reported for business travel emissions calculated, air travel contributed the largest proportion of emissions (**66%**).



Beyond Carbon action

As well as requesting quantitative data for carbon analyses, The IMPALA Carbon Calculator asks labels to report actions they are taking to reduce environmental impacts. Information provided to the 'Beyond Carbon' section is useful to see where labels have focused their decarbonisation efforts so far and where the opportunities exist for future action.

Top 5 most common actions reported by labels:

1. **Speaking to artists signed to our label about climate/environmental actions and commitments.**
2. **Separating recycling waste streams (e.g. paper and cardboard, plastic, cans).**
3. **Publicly supporting campaigns, public letters, political calls to action on climate and environment.**
4. **Taking steps to eliminate single-use plastic.**
5. **Installing energy efficient lighting and/or lighting sensors/timers.**

Among the least common actions currently being taken by labels relate to **internal resource for environmental actions**. These include formally recognising environmental responsibilities in job roles (e.g. job descriptions and performance objectives) and employing full or part-time sustainability managers. Internal campaigns for environmental actions among staff were also a less frequently cited action by reporting labels.

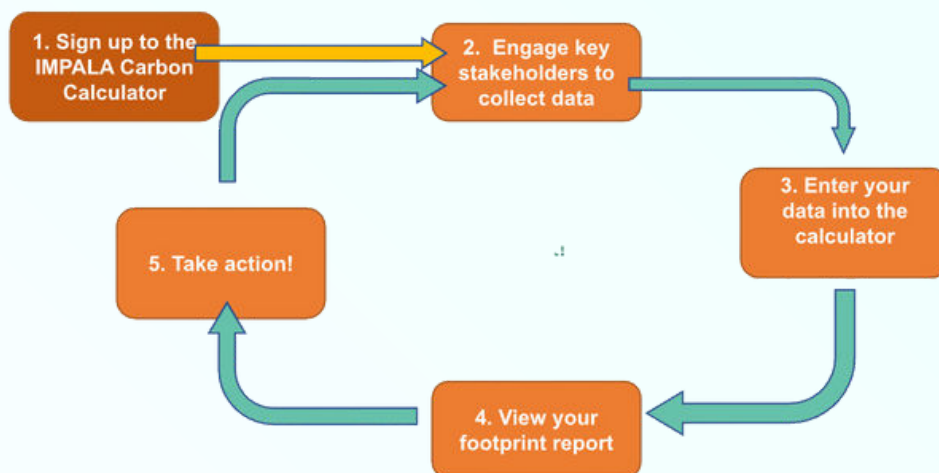
Many labels in the IMPALA community may not be able to employ full or part-time sustainability managers, but officially recognising environmental action as part of every staff member's roles and responsibilities can be a valuable step in building a more environmentally sustainable business. The findings suggest an opportunity for labels to engage more closely with employees on environmental initiatives and identify specific areas where staff members can take action within their own roles. Sharing the results of a carbon footprint from the IMPALA Carbon Calculator is an excellent way to start that conversation with employees.

Getting involved

Labels can play their part by submitting a carbon report annually via the Calculator. This will also help you to highlight changes over time based on actions taken to reduce environmental impacts.

Creating an account on the IMPALA Carbon Calculator and starting to submit data is straightforward and free. See the steps below to guide you as you get started.

Figure 2: Steps to completing a footprint on the IMPALA Carbon Calculator:

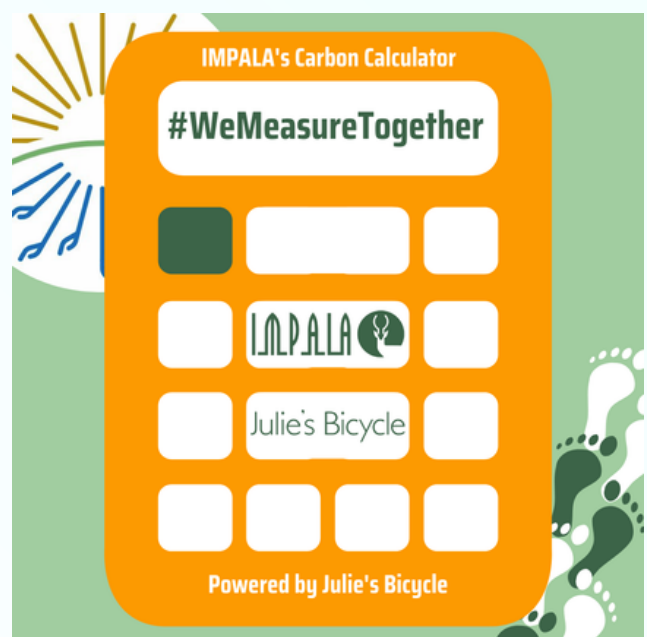


Remember that creating a carbon footprint is not a static exercise. Data should be entered into the Carbon Calculator regularly to monitor progress and identify emerging issues related to environmental impacts.

Members of IMPALA can [sign up](#) to the Calculator for free, to track their footprint and join over 100 users who are already tracking their impact.

Don't know where to start? Consult our [Quick Guide](#) and measure your carbon footprint today!

All interested members can join the #WeMeasureTogether campaign and use the Calculator for free to produce carbon reports. This will allow IMPALA to create an overview of the sector and develop a carbon baseline in the future. IMPALA members can join the campaign by publishing the visual on the right and their carbon report, with the #WeMeasureTogether hashtag.



How labels can take further environmental action

A carbon footprint is a useful tool to understand an organisation's key environmental impacts, but it does not in itself tackle them.

Taking action now is essential to urgently cutting emissions and support IMPALA in reaching its targets of **halving emissions before 2030** and **achieving net zero emissions before 2050**.

Labels can demonstrate their commitment to environmental action by signing the following climate declarations:

- IMPALA's [Climate Declaration](#)
- The [Music Climate Pact](#)
- The [Music Declares Emergency declaration](#)



Many immediate and longer-term actions can be taken to reduce the key emissions sources for 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

Actions can be categorised into things your label can do now and things to think about for the future, as well as things for which labels have ‘direct control’ over or 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 is typically the largest impact on a label's emissions, but to reach climate targets, these emissions will need to be reduced by 90% by 2050. To achieve this, all manufacturing will need to be powered by fossil-fuel-free energy sources in the future. This means investment at factories in renewable energy generation, reducing the energy intensity of product manufacturing (e.g. vinyl pressing), and shifting away from gas use to renewable industrial heat, for example via electrification, or potentially hydrogen.

| ACTION TYPE | IMMEDIATE ACTIONS | LONGER-TERM ACTIONS |
|----------------|--|--|
| Direct control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support start-ups developing lower-impact products and materials that might offer alternatives to oil-based plastics in the future. • Collectively work with others in the recorded music industry to co-invest with the supply chain in making manufacturing powered by 100% fossil-fuel-free energy |
| Influence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you cannot switch suppliers, encourage existing suppliers to source 100% renewable electricity • Encourage suppliers to reduce factory floor waste, improve materials sustainability and energy efficiency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage supply chain, exploring less energy intensive production • Explore alternative materials for vinyl (e.g. bio vinyl) |

b. Packaging

Tackling the impacts of product packaging will mean eradicating all unnecessary packaging and using better, lower-impact materials for any which is essential. Choices can be made over how much packaging is currently used and the materials it is made from. It will be crucial to work closely with suppliers to achieve shared goals on reduced emissions from packaging.

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

2. Greener logistics: Freightling vinyl and CDs:

As highlighted in this report, transport for the freightling of physical products is often the second largest source of emissions for a label's carbon footprint. While the impacts of travel connect to wider challenges around existing infrastructure and cost, there are many actions that can be taken in the immediate-term to minimise emissions. These focus on lower-impact choices of transport mode and better planning to achieve optimal efficiencies.

| ACTION TYPE | IMMEDIATE ACTIONS | LONGER-TERM ACTIONS |
|----------------|--|--|
| Direct control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid air freightling as much as possible • Plan operations to enable sea-freightling for international deliveries as much as possible (rather than last-minute deliveries requiring air freightling) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider banning air freightling |
| Influence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask your distribution partners about their commitments to electric vehicles and fuel-efficiency measures (e.g. fuel-efficient driving and backhauling) • Ensure suppliers are loading vehicles for optimal efficiency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the uptake of electric vehicles for road transport |

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 within organisations.

a. Office

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

b. Business travel

| ACTION TYPE | IMMEDIATE ACTIONS | LONGER-TERM ACTIONS |
|----------------|---|---|
| Direct control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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’ |
| Influence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 | |

Case study : Ninja Tune

Ninja Tune has established itself as 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.

Ninja Tune contribute to industry sustainability groups including the AIM Climate Action Group, IMPALA Sustainability Taskforce and as a founding signatory of the **Music Climate Pact**. Key aims being to encourage pressing plants to reduce their emissions and to engage with streaming services on better understanding of their impacts.

Ninja Tune measure their greenhouse gas emissions using the IMPALA Carbon Calculator. To tackle their Scope 1&2 emissions, the label have replaced their gas central heating with an electric air-source heat pump and installed 22 PV solar panels on their London office. Electricity for all offices (London, Los Angeles & Berlin) is via renewable energy suppliers.

Actions to reduce the carbon footprint of releases:

- Following research from Julie's Bicycle and Arup which determined the relatively high carbon footprint of plastic jewel cases, in 2008 Ninja Tune ceased releasing CDs in plastic jewel cases, switching to card alternatives.
- Pressing on lighter 140 gramme vinyl to reduce manufacture and distribution footprints.
- Sustainably sourced FSC-certified or recycled card and paper sleeves.
- Ninja Tune have been early adopters of lower footprint bio-plastic alternatives for pressing vinyl.

Other sustainability initiatives include:

- Company stakeholder pension scheme moved to one that does not invest in fossil fuels.
- Subsidies for staff holiday train travel to reduce flying.
- Laptops and other IT donated to the local **Community Tech Aid**.

A co-founder of **Music Declares Emergency**, Ninja Tune also supports other climate campaign groups including Greenpeace and Extinction Rebellion, and is a regular investor in nature and biodiversity projects such as **Balance** and Rainforest Trust.

NINJA TUNE

Case study : Beggars Group

Beggars Group is the home of 4AD, Matador, Rough Trade Records, XL Recordings and Young.

Beggars Group in the last decade has gone from strength to strength, not only confirming their position as one of the largest independent groups of labels in the world, but also, by allowing their artists the time to develop, affording them freedom and support, releasing the best the decade had to offer.

Beggars measure their greenhouse gas emissions using the IMPALA Carbon Calculator and are supporting the whole industry to pull in the same direction on climate topics by elevating conversations between industry groups and providing the resources needed to undertake the same work at the same time. They are currently active members of IMPALA's Sustainability Taskforce (and a contributor to IMPALA's Carbon Calculator), Association of Independent Music's Climate Action Group, BPI's Sustainability Working Group and a founding signatory of the Music Climate Pact.

In addition, Beggars give time and resources to support the development of sustainability conversations across the industry. They proudly support **Music Declares Emergency** and have collaborated with Glasgow University to deliver the first piece of research into fan attitudes on climate issues (published **here**).

Beggars have been instrumental in the establishment of **Murmur** – a charity which connects unabated emissions within businesses in the arts with organisations doing high-impact climate mitigation work; financing transformative climate work, investing in initiatives to decarbonise the creative sector and empowering artists to create major societal change.

Some of the steps Beggars have taken to reduce emissions include reduction in office energy consumption, installation of solar panels at offices and reducing the emissions associated with production and distribution by transitioning towards lighter weight vinyl as well as increasing the amount of sea freight used in favour of air freight. To read more, visit **this page**.



Looking ahead

The IMPALA Carbon Calculator already provides valuable insights for independent labels to support improved decision-making on environmental actions. IMPALA is working to further develop the Calculator to provide maximum value to members and help to inform a baseline carbon footprint figure for the independent recorded music sector in Europe.

Uptake of 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. This is why it is available for free to members. It will also help to build a more accurate and representative picture of the overall carbon footprint for the independent recorded music sector. IMPALA members can sign up [here](#).

Developing the tool

The current iteration of the Calculator was made by and for independent music companies and will be periodically reviewed and updated to reflect the needs and suggestions of its users. Some of these updates might include, but are not limited to developing the overall user experience, detailing the manufacturing section, expanding the language options available, to name but a few.

Internationalisation

Rolling it out internationally will be the next step so the sector globally can work together and apply the same approach. The rollout will be done on a scaled basis, depending on the complexity of introducing new conversion rates, as well as ensuring enough helpdesk capacity and being responsive to potential organisational needs that might vary globally.

Industry collaboration

The ultimate goal is for the tool to be recognised as a standard in the sector, by facilitating and uniforming the carbon reporting process. We look forward to continuing our collaboration and alignment within the sector and being able to share the tool with industry partners. One of the next steps will include devising a standard approach to carbon accounting and other sector actions as envisaged under the **Music Climate Pact**.

Other recommendations

Considering the first analysis of the Carbon Calculator data and the conclusions of the **IMPACTS** project, as well as feedback from users of the tool and our discussions with industry partners, we have identified the following items as key needs to further inspire action and achieve meaningful results at the sector level:

- The **reporting requirements** for the cultural and creative industries need to reflect the way these industries are organised, but also need to be clearly defined in order to avoid confusion, double accounting and gaps in reporting.
- When it comes to inspiring European SMEs to act, we see **EU and national funding** as a great way for first movers to be supported and to promote leading by example, particularly when it comes to sector-level initiatives.
- It is crucial for public bodies to continue promoting multilingualism across the sector. In the context of the IMPALA Carbon Calculator, this means having the tool available in all 24 EU languages, as well as climate literacy training and Calculator onboarding.
- Further incentives could also include **tax breaks** for those favouring clean energy and reporting their carbon footprint before this becomes a requirement.
- **Renewable (and sustainable) energy sources** need to be promoted and made accessible at scale to facilitate clean manufacturing, especially including hydrogen.
- More public-funded research and transition support is also recommended to help address the impact of other areas of the business, such as **digital consumption of music, live sector** etc.

Further Resources

[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](#)

About IMPALA

IMPALA was established in 2000 and now represents nearly 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 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 Environmental Sustainability Taskforce, and all the labels reporting through the carbon calculator.

Authors: Richard Phillips, Marina Ivanow, Karla Rogožar

Editors: Chiara Badiali, Helen Smith

Design: Karla Rogožar, Rory Brown

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

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 to make greener choices, and help 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.

Downstream digital distribution

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.

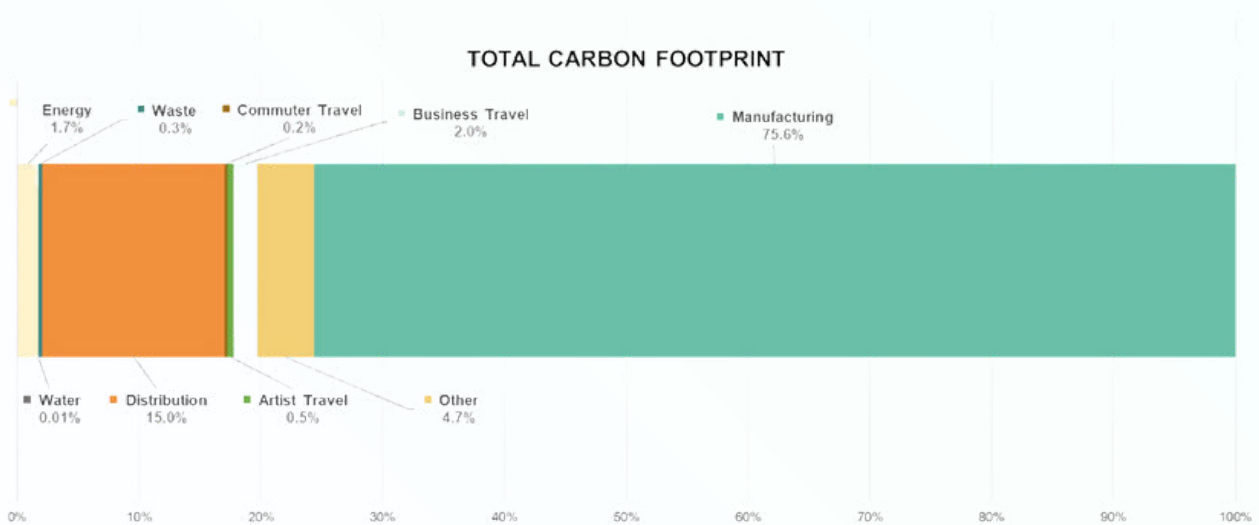
The necessary data is controlled by DSPs and their downstream partners. Some DSPs are working towards gathering data from their operations and are establishing emissions calculation methodologies. We refer to this as availability of data is part of the GHG protocol, but as noted above, scope of responsibility 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 the Music Climate Pact and our own Climate Charter, we call on DSPs to work collaboratively to share data and knowledge on this issue.

Actual emissions submitted to the IMPALA Carbon Calculator

The chart below shows the total carbon footprint breakdown from actual data submitted to the IMPALA Carbon Calculator from labels so far. This information was used to inform estimates of emissions on a per physical unit released basis.

Figure 3: Actual emissions reported to the IMPALA Carbon Calculator



Note on Data

The estimations used for the per physical product calculation 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 data was taken from the most recent reporting year submitted by each organisation and therefore the estimated overall footprint does not reflect one specific year. The data ranges from 2020–2022.

CONTACT US



[@IMPALAMusic](https://twitter.com/IMPALAMusic)



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[IMPALA Independent Music Companies Association](https://www.linkedin.com/company/IMPALA-Independent-Music-Companies-Association)



<https://www.impalamusic.org/>

IMPALA – Independent Music
Companies Association
Rue des Deux Eglises 37-39,
1000, Brussels, Belgium
+32 2 503 31 38
info@impalamusic.org



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