

CASE STUDY

LONDON'S 'SUPER SEWER': USING THE GLOBAL GOALS

Tideway is building a 25km tunnel to intercept millions of tonnes of sewage that spill into the River Thames each year. The company is also tracking delivery of 54 wider environmental, social and economic commitments to benefit London. Tideway's overall vision is to 'reconnect London with the River Thames.'



The Tideway project

London's victorian sewers were designed to serve 4 million people. The current population is around 9 million and by 2160 London's population is expected to increase to 16 million. Even a light drizzle of rain causes untreated sewage to spill into the River Thames, reducing oxygen levels in the river and harming fish and other species..

The Thames Tideway Tunnel is being built to tackle the problem. It is the largest ever project in the UK water sector and will protect the River Thames for at least the next hundred years.

The issue

Tideway wanted its wider social, economic and environmental ambitions for London to mirror the scale of ambition of the engineering feat itself. In 2017 it became the largest issuer of green bonds in sterling and it also needed to demonstrate to investors how the financing of the project supports its legacy and vision.

The use of mapping against Global Goals

Tideway's legacy strategy, measured by 54 commitments, is set out in the project's [Legacy Statement](#). These commitments were embedded in its main works contracts and Tideway collaborated with programme manager Jacobs on its legacy plan development, in particular its Skills and Employment strategy.

Tideway mapped all 54 commitments against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Global Goals) through a research project with University College London, South Bank University and the Nathan Puru Institute for Engineering and Enterprise.

Additional partners include the Institute of Civil Engineers (ICE), the Environment Agency and the Cabinet Office.



Tideway used its mapping to first describe its wider benefits and then to frame its progress, highlighting how one of the largest infrastructure projects in the UK is supporting global sustainability efforts.

The mapping was extended to Global Goal target level, to show in more detail where the project expects to make a significant contribution. For example, Tideway supports the charitable organisation Women Into Construction, mentors individual women and funds a self-assessment tool to further gender diversity in smaller organisations. These measures are bringing more women into construction and engineering in support of Global Goal 5: Gender Equality, targets 5.1 (discrimination against women) and 5.5 (equal opportunities for leadership).

The strategy to use the river to transport as much material as possible (what Tideway calls 'More by River') has to date avoided 275,000 HGV loads to support Global Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, target 11.2 (transport systems).

The project has also provided sustainable employment for more than 4,000 people, including jobs for apprentices and those in excluded groups such as people with convictions. This, among many other good work practices on the project, supports a number of targets under Global Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth.

Full and transparent reporting

The project has also been an exemplar of openness in its reporting. This includes voluntarily reporting on its Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gaps.

In 2020-21, Tideway used its third [Sustainable Finance Report](#) to report on both its positive and negative impacts on the Global Goals. With total

transparency, the report acknowledges where the project has a negative impact and actions it is taking to minimise these. For example under Goal 13, Climate Action, the company has sought to minimise and mitigate its carbon footprint by reducing the thickness of the secondary lining of the main tunnel.

It continues to share its experience on measuring its performance with the Environment Agency and government departments.

Tideway has also published its first [Climate-Related Financial Disclosure Report](#), one of the first projects of its kind to do so.

In 2022 it will publish the results of an external study on the social return on investment of its legacy programme, to give assurance on its own reporting.

Sustainable financing

Sustainable financing is at the heart of delivering the Global Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement and Tideway's financing is aligned with the company's sustainability commitments. It has issued £1.8 billion of sustainable debt so far and this includes a sustainability-linked loan with a KPI tracked to the delivery of the 54 commitments. Aligning reporting with the relevant global goals has become a key part of its communication strategy with investors.

DESCRIBING THE PROGRESS OF OUR LEGACY PROGRAMME THROUGH THE GLOBAL GOALS HAS INCREASED UNDERSTANDING AND TRUST FROM INVESTORS AND OPENED UP CONVERSATIONS WITH INDUSTRY ABOUT THE NEED FOR FUTURE PROJECTS TO RESPOND TO GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Samantha Freelove, Legacy and Sustainability Manager, Tideway

Lasting impact

When it is completed, the Thames Tideway Tunnel will help stop tens of millions of tonnes of sewage polluting the River Thames each year.

This, in itself, will be a remarkable achievement. But so too, will be the legacy the project leaves through the additional social, environmental and economic benefits it is creating for now and the future.

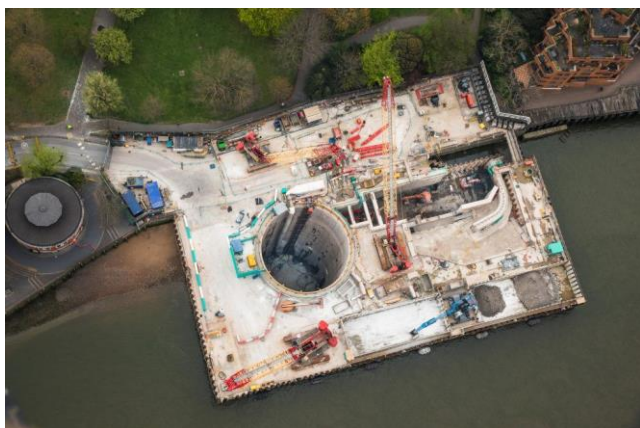
Tideway has aligned itself to the global goals in a systematic and meaningful way involving collaboration and reaching across its supply chain. It has not shied away from reporting on the negative impacts of the project and has held itself

up to the highest levels of scrutiny and accountability.

IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES

- Increasing the number of women in engineering and construction
- Creating apprenticeships and employment opportunities for excluded groups
- £1.8 billion of sustainable debt
- 99-100% of procured materials from certified responsible sources
- 180 innovations shared on the Infrastructure Industry Innovation Partnership (i3P) website
- 90% of construction and excavation material transported by river, not road
- 3,000 young people engaged through on-line STEM programme during the pandemic
- 4,295 sustained jobs
- Accredited Living Wage Employer
- Introduction of a biofuel for barge tugs offers a 90% reduction in greenhouse emissions compared with traditional diesel

Aerial view of Tideway's King Edward Memorial Park site, Wapping





A section of the tunnel in Wandsworth

AWARDS

- Global Good Awards 2020: Company of the Year
- Business In The Community Responsible Business Awards 2020 – Responsible Business Champion for Outstanding Employment.
- edie Sustainable Business Leaders' Awards 2021: Building/Infrastructure Project of the Year
- Top Corporate Treasury Team of the Year for CSR/ESG 2020 in the Treasury4Good Awards

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