



PARTNERING  
FOR A SUSTAINABLE  
SECTOR


# Annual Report 2023

# Contents

- 2023: In Review ..... 2
  - Research and publications..... 3
  - Forum meetings ..... 4
  - Working groups ..... 8
  - The Media Climate Pact – Gathering Feedback..... 8
  - DIMPACT..... 9
  - Mirrors or Movers XI ..... 10
  - The RMF Hub ..... 10
- Plans for 2024 ..... 11
  - Forum meetings ..... 11
  - Mirrors or Movers XII ..... 11
  - Research ..... 12
- About the Forum..... 12
  - The participants..... 12
  - Objectives ..... 13
  - Participating in the Forum..... 13
  - Income..... 13
  - Governance ..... 13

## 2023: In Review

2023 has been a year of legislation and company action. As a raft of European Union proposals have been announced over the last 12 months, many companies have re-doubled efforts on their roadmaps to compliance: the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and EU Taxonomy have been at the forefront of many people's minds. Many companies have continued to develop their net zero pathways, either setting their targets, validating them with the SBTi or creating their detailed decarbonisation roadmaps. The culmination of this work was reflected in the closing agreement at COP28, signalling "the beginning of the end" of the fossil fuel era. Running parallel to this, politics has dominated the headlines in 2023. Shifts in the political landscape have occurred in many democracies, with political outsiders winning elections as voter dissatisfaction grows. This has to be seen alongside increasing global conflict and a growing mistrust in media in a 'post-truth' world. Yet at the same time, media has continued to showcase its power for good: the recent ITV drama, Mr Bates vs The Post Office, has taken the UK by storm and brought the story back into public discourse and into parliamentary debate. Media continues to unite communities and countries together, and in many ways this super-power has never been more important.

26  
participating  
media  
companies  
in 2023...

3 quarterly  
meetings, 2  
working groups, 1  
specialist session  
and 1  
conference...

Whilst action on operational impacts remains important, content has shone through as a powerful tool for change. Content impacts measurement has been a talking point throughout the year, and it has been the key focus of an RMF research report (due to be published 2024). We have collaborated with other organisations working in this space, including OKRE, CIFF, Nesta, The University of Oxford and the BBC, amongst others. It also remained a core focus at our Mirrors or Movers Conference (held in September), which wove in the question about whether content with a positive brainprint is now also about good business.

Content is clearly still a superpower, and its ability to inspire change and drive consumer action and habits is a powerful force – clearly seen in the participant stories at the conference. For example, BBC's Frozen Planet and ITV's Love Island x Ebay partnership showed how entertainment can be educational or carry positive behavioural messaging. Schibsted, PRH and Channel 4 discussed the power of partnerships to engender community, diversity and inclusion impact, in the news, in schools and in business. These examples only scratch the surface of the work that has been done across the year.

Whilst there is no silver bullet to solving the climate crisis, the RMF continues to showcase the power of the media in helping to create a forward-focused, action-filled narrative that has wide ranging environmental and social impacts. Elsie Roderiques (Common Cause Foundation) was our Q4 speaker, on the idea of extrinsic vs intrinsic values: the “principles or standards that guide and inform our thoughts, attitudes and actions”. Intrinsic values create a stronger connection to community, greater civic participation, higher wellbeing, and deeper support for social and environmental policies. Values are like muscles and the more they are exercised, the stronger they become – a key opportunity for media to continue rebalancing our values landscape and seeding those intrinsic values, which are increasingly at risk of being quashed.

Our quarterly meetings continued virtually, addressing prominent topics such as the gender based violence in the media, upcoming ESG legislation, the Taskforce on Nature Related Financial Disclosure (TNFD), and intrinsic vs extrinsic values in the media. We made progress on content impacts measurement (more on page 3) and have continued to grow the net zero working group (more on page 7).

We held our eleventh edition of Mirrors or Movers in September at Pearson’s offices on The Strand (more on page 9). We heard from a brilliant range of speakers, including Forum Stories from Penguin, Schibsted, Channel 4, BBC Studios, RELX and Pearson, and afternoon sessions from ustwo games, Pearson, Spotify, ITV, Laura Bates, María Mendiluce (We Mean Business Coalition) and Oriane Georgeac (Boston University).

This Report provides a summary of our activities in 2023 and plans for 2024. We hope you enjoy it.

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*Participation in the Forum is open to large media companies operating anywhere in the world and in any media sub-sector(s). We are open to new participants, so if you are interested in joining, please get in touch: [info@responsiblemediaforum.org](mailto:info@responsiblemediaforum.org).*

## Research and publications

### Content Impacts Measurement (due 2024)

Over 2023, we began working on a new report looking at the state of play and current landscape on measuring the impact media content has on society. We kicked off the work by speaking with RMF participant companies who have been developing content with this in mind and working in this space. From those discussions, it became apparent that we needed

to collaborate across the industry, as other organisations (e.g. OKRE) are also working on the same topic.

OKRE and RMF co-hosted a roundtable, inviting a range of organisations who are researching content impacts measurement, and were joined on the day by Nesta, Cliff, the BBC, The University of Oxford, BBC Media Action and Comic Relief. The objective of the session was to identify crossovers in our work, and where different organisations are focusing on specific areas or taking a particular lens.

We are now in the process of drafting the report, incorporating research from the interviews held with participants, the roundtable and from desk-based research. We are planning to publish in 2024.

## Forum meetings

Forum meetings are held on a quarterly basis and focus on issues and topics of interest relevant to the RMF participants. Experts are invited to present their insights, followed by group discussions under the Chatham House rule. These insights and discussions are designed to help support and inspire each participants' own work.

### Q1 | Gender Based Violence in the Media



Main meeting

**Laura Bates**

*Founder of the Everyday Sexism Project, Journalist and Author*

Specialist Session: Emerging ESG Legislation



### Q2 | Nature (TNFD)



Main meeting

**Emily McKenzie**

*Director, Taskforce on Nature Related Financial Disclosure*

<p>Working Group: Net Zero</p>	
<p><b>Q3   Mirrors Or Movers XI Conference</b></p>	
<p><i>A one-day conference with sessions around the theme, 'A Positive Brainprint: a commercial no-brainer?'. We were hosted by Pearson, and Sandra Latner (VP of ESG) opened the conference with her welcome and introduction.</i></p>	
<p><b>Forum Story 1</b></p>	 <p><b>DEI Programmes</b>  <b>Channel 4: Black in Business</b>  <i>Maria St Louis, Equity &amp; Inclusion Lead</i>  <b>Penguin Random House: Lit in Colour</b>  <i>Siena Parker, Social Impact Director &amp; Zaahida Nabagereka, Senior Social Impact Manager</i>  <b>Schibsted: IN/LAB</b>  <i>Sumeet Singh Patpatia, Global Head of Diversity, Inclusion &amp; Belonging</i></p>
<p><b>Forum Story 2</b></p>	 <p><b>Content with Purpose</b>  <b>BBC Studios</b>  <i>Sally Mills, Head of Sustainability</i></p>
<p><b>Forum Story 3</b></p>	 <p><b>Responsible AI</b>  <b>RELX: Responsible AI Principles</b>  <i>Márcia Balisciano, Chief Sustainability Officer</i>  <b>Pearson: AI and Education</b>  <i>Brigid Evans, Director of Government Relations</i></p>

<p><b>Session 1</b></p>	<div style="text-align: center;">    </div> <p style="text-align: center;"> <b>Alternative Content with a Positive Brainprint</b>  <b>Ustwo Games</b>  <i>Jennifer Estaris, Game Director</i>  <b>Pearson</b>  <i>Oliver Latham, VP Strategy &amp; Growth</i>  <b>Spotify</b>  <i>Hanna Grahn, Climate Action Manager</i> </p>
<p><b>Session 2</b></p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;"> <b>Love Island x Ebay: partnering for positive change</b>  <b>ITV</b>  <i>Susie Braun, Director of Social Purpose</i>  <i>Lara Worthington, Head of Creative Partnerships</i> </p>
<p><b>Session 3</b></p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;"> <b>Gender-based Violence in the Media and its Impacts</b>  <b>Laura Bates</b>  <i>Founder of the Everyday Sexism Project, Journalist, Author</i> </p>
<p><b>Session 4</b></p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;"> <b>Science-based Climate Reporting</b>  <b>María Mendiluce</b>  <i>CEO, We Mean Business Coalition</i> </p>
<p><b>Session 5</b></p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;"> <b>Inclusion &amp; Belonging in the Workplace</b>  <b>Oriane Georgeac</b>  <i>Assistant Professor at Boston University</i> </p>



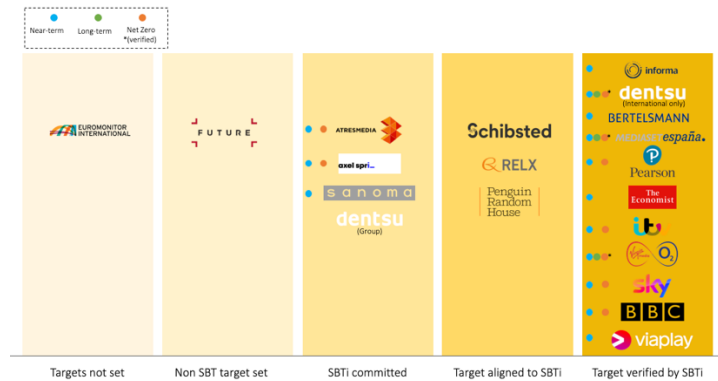
**Elsie Roderiques**  
*Common Cause Foundation*

Working Group: Net Zero



## Working groups

In 2023, we refocused the previous working group on offsetting towards net zero and decarbonisation, with a focus on the supply chain. We had the first working group in Q2, and presented a benchmark of the decarbonisation targets set across the RMF. This progressed into a broader discussion of how companies were tackling net zero, and case studies were shared by Axel Springer, Pearson and Bertelsmann.



The next working group session was in Q4. The purpose was to set the objectives for the working group in 2024, as well as identify the key focus areas. Five suggestions were made including:

- Option 1 - Regular benchmark and sharing on NZ progress, targets and challenges
- Option 2 - Shared supplier expectations & maturity model
- Option 3 - Collaborative decarbonisation initiatives for the media value chain
- Option 4 - Scope 3 boundaries and approach across industry
- Option 5 - Transition Plans – aligning on a blueprint for media

A broad discussion followed on these options, and a quick poll was taken. There was interest in all five, but (2) share supplier expectations and maturity model, (4) scope 3 boundaries and approach, and (5) transition plans were the highest scoring. It was agreed that the working group would happen more regularly (every two months) to enable delivery against the identified focus areas.

## The Media Climate Pact



The [Media Climate Pact](#) is a coalition of media companies committed to tackling climate change through two major commitments: one operational and one focused on content. All signatories have set a net zero target and the majority have met the operational commitment to implement science-based targets on climate.

Whilst the Pact remains a concept in the RMF, it has largely been dormant for two years. Moving into 2024, we will investigate if there should be a continued role for the Pact and if so what this should be.

## DIMPACT

[DIMPACT](#) is a collaborative initiative between leading media, entertainment and technology companies and world-class researchers to measure, understand and ultimately reduce the emissions of serving digital media and entertainment products. It has now grown to 24 organisations.



DIMPACT is part tool and part community. Their web application takes the complexity out of calculating the carbon emissions of delivering digital media and entertainment products by estimating the emissions associated with video streaming, online banner advertising, digital publishing, and audio streaming. In 2023, they have also been working on a number of community initiatives including the recently launched Publisher's Working Group, more in-depth work into advertising emissions, and testing TV energy consumption behaviour using different streaming platforms and setups (using set-top box, gaming consoles). The final report is due to be published imminently.

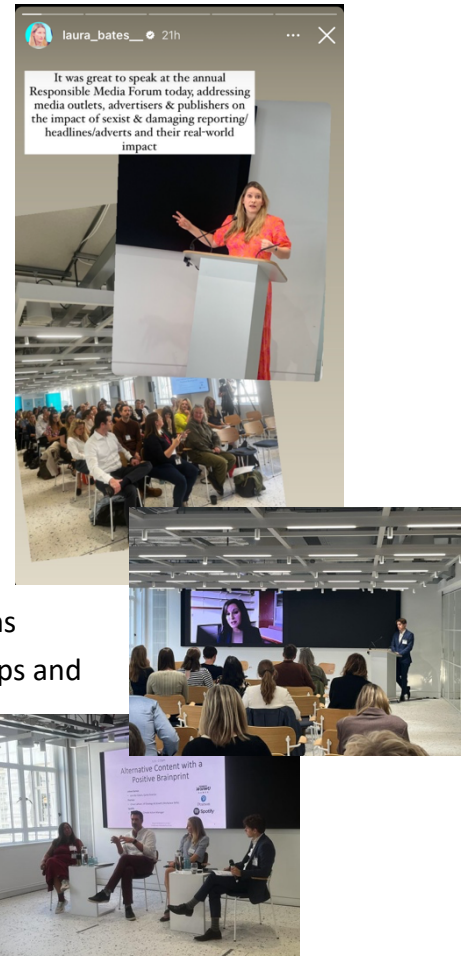
## Mirrors or Movers XI

In 2023 we delivered the eleventh edition of our Mirrors or Movers (MOM) conferences. This conference focused on the question, ‘A Positive Brainprint – a commercial no-brainer?’ with sessions that explored whether content with positive intent is now good business. We were generously hosted by Pearson in their offices on The Strand.

We had a jam-packed agenda with brilliant speakers on a range of topics. On the social side, we explored diversity and inclusion programmes within business and within the community, gender-based violence in the media and its impacts, and the potentially damaging impact of the ‘business case’ for diversity, which has been found to decrease overall sense of belonging. Commercially, we explored business responsibility with AI, alternative content forms (gaming, audio and education), and the positive power of partnerships and advertising (Ebay x Love Island). Lastly, we looked at the business relationship to environment, through climate focused content and its impact, and the need for science-based climate reporting.

The conference was open exclusively to forum participants in the morning, creating space for internal forum discussions and then the afternoon was open to the wider public.

Recordings of each session and the full speaker list are available [here](#).



## The RMF Hub

Following feedback shared in 2022, we have been working on new functionality that allows participants to network online, to replace the face-to-face networking that was lost as more meetings moved online since the Covid-19 pandemic. In Q4, we announced the launch of the new tool: The Hub. Each participant is able to log-in to this space via the website and connect with reach other digitally. The Hub allows users to:

- Tag Interests so that participants can connect based on shared focus areas.
- Write posts (“bulletins”) on the shared newsfeed, which others can like and comment on.
- Add resources (e.g. interesting reports, articles, webinars).
- Ask questions of your peers through polls.

- Find peer contact details.

## Plans for 2024

### Forum meetings

Following our annual consultation, our 2024 programme of activities will reflect priority topics and themes amongst participating companies. The following topics were raised in most of the 1:1 conversations held in Q4, and we have grouped them based on the format we believe they are best suited to. These are open to feedback and discussion.



We anticipate the 2024 programme to include:

- Two quarterly meetings, in Q2 and Q4, centred around the priority issues as listed above.
- One public conference, Mirrors or Movers XII, in Q3.
- One/two specialist sessions focused on reporting/legislation.
- Six Net Zero Working groups (Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, Nov). The breakdown of specific objectives and agendas for these can be seen on pages 7-8.
- Plus, any additional meetings on an extraordinary basis.

### Mirrors or Movers XII

The Forum plans to host its 12<sup>th</sup> conference in 2024. This will be a one-day hybrid event, hosted in London in the Autumn. The conference will further explore how media content influences society and how media companies can adopt effective strategies to manage these impacts.

Based on feedback from the 1:1s we will ensure there is time for Forum networking throughout the day and we hope to host one of the working group sessions in person on that day as well.

As in previous years, we expect to make at least part of the full day's proceedings available freely to the public. Anyone interested in attending can sign up to our mailing list via our [website](#), and follow us on twitter, [@WeareRMF](#).

## Research

Carnstone and the Forum have a track record of producing pieces of original research and analysis and preparing strategic commentary for the sector which are published in the form of reports. Past reports include our recent sequel to Mirrors or Movers; 'The Superpower of Media - Mirrors or Movers II: managing the societal impacts of content' (2020) and '2018 Media Materiality' to name a few.

All publicly available reports by the Forum can be viewed [here](#).

We plan to continue researching the topic of content impacts measurement and publish in 2024 (more details on page 3).

## About the Forum

### The participants

The Responsible Media Forum is a partnership between major media companies to identify and act on the social and environmental challenges facing the sector. The Forum has been going since 2001, starting as a UK initiative but with participants now drawn from around the world.

During 2023, the Forum consisted of 26 participating companies, with two new joiners for 2024 confirmed in Q4: NRK and CME. Participants represent the full breadth of the media spectrum, from public service broadcasters, data analytics providers, advertising agencies and event organisers. Individual representatives include CR and Sustainability Directors, HR Directors, Communications, Marketing, and Investor Relations. Together, we work to define and develop responsible business practices for the media sector.

## Objectives

The Forum provides a platform for participating companies to:

- Learn from each other and leading organisations in other sectors;
- Identify trends and areas for prioritisation based on sound research and robust discussions;
- Engage with stakeholders, be they campaigners, policy makers, academics or peers; and
- Run collaborative projects and events on key issues.

In short, the Responsible Media Forum gives participating companies access to insights and collaboration that few organisations could manage on their own.

## Participating in the Forum

This Report provides an overview of the Forum's activities. In brief, participants enjoy an open environment in which to discuss, under the Chatham House rule, the responsibility issues faced by the sector. The Forum uses its collective size to engage with a range of key stakeholders on pressing issues, both through internal meetings and public events. Lastly, the Forum produces original research.

Participation is restricted to large media companies. Subsidiaries or brands, whether wholly or partially owned, are expected to join the Forum in their own right; however participating companies may occasionally extend invites to their colleagues, who will be admitted on a discretionary basis.

The participation fee for 2024 was held at the 2023 level of £3,600 (+ VAT).

## Income

The Forum budget comes entirely from participation fees:

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
£48,250	£55,200	£58,125	£69,112.50	£85,800	<b>£93,600</b>

## Governance

The Responsible Media Forum is a multi-client project run by Carnstone Partners Ltd, with a project team consisting of Daniel Witte, Imogen Crane, Miriam Davies and Simon Hodgson. We are open to new participating companies, as well as input and enquiries about media sustainability from investors, academics and the third sector, but please note that we are unable to provide funding for projects and research, however interesting and worthwhile they may be.

Carnstone meets on a 1:1 basis with participants at the end of each year to gather feedback on how the Forum is meeting their needs and to discuss potential themes and speakers for the following year. Actions and initiatives arising from this review are then discussed and agreed by participants in a consensual manner.

Daniel Witte leads the project; Daniel Witte and Imogen Crane are the first point of contact for stakeholders and new participant enquiries.

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