



THE CR AND  
SUSTAINABILITY  
SALARY SURVEY  
*2020*

 Carnstone

 Acre **flag**

2020

*Continental Europe (€)*

# Contents



For more information about the CR and Sustainability Salary Survey 2020, please go to [www.crsalarysurvey.com](http://www.crsalarysurvey.com) or email us at: [Catherine.Harris@Acre.com](mailto:Catherine.Harris@Acre.com), [Paul.Burke@Carnstone.com](mailto:Paul.Burke@Carnstone.com) or [Victoria.Taylor@Flag.co.uk](mailto:Victoria.Taylor@Flag.co.uk).

A report by:



# Foreword and introduction



**Megan Hellstedt**

*Vice President Health & Sustainability  
Ahold Delhaize*

***“Diversity of knowledge is not enough. We also have a responsibility to increase overall diversity in the CR&S field.”***

“

***Reflecting on my non-traditional path working in sustainability for international food retailer Ahold Delhaize over the past 15 years, a seismic shift has occurred for sustainability in business.***

When I started my first corporate position, coming from the world of environmental science and land conservation, I observed two primary types of Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability programs: those in manufacturing that had evolved from Environment, Health & Safety departments, and those in the ‘softer industries,’ which evolved from a need to communicate more with stakeholders about what companies did for the broader community and environment. The CR&S approach – and related team of people working on it – has undergone a steady evolution to the strategic position it holds in companies today.

Now, investors, employees and customers are much bolder in their requests for positive company impacts on society, the demands for transparency are exponentially higher and many companies have

responded by staffing up accordingly. The positive impact I have been aiming for over the years – food solutions that are healthy for people and for planet – is now more possible with sustainability more integrated across the business a growing community of internal experts.

Acre’s first salary survey was in 2008, the same year I was working at Delhaize Group to develop the first group-wide Corporate Responsibility strategy. Then, there were only three people working on corporate responsibility centrally, with most of our energy going into pulling enough data together to publish an annual CR Report. In our company, and in the broader industry as reflected in the current survey results, team sizes and average salaries have risen. As far as I can see that upward trend will only continue as CR&S roles catch up to more mature disciplines. In the top ranks, however, the 2020 survey shows there is still a gender disparity, with 57% of survey respondents identifying as women, but the percentages of women in Director/Head roles being lower.

This year has been unusual but also signals a shift in society. The heightened awareness about environmental and social topics – such as climate change, inequality and public health – is holding strong among consumers and businesses. This is different from past periods of crisis, when we’ve seen consumers and businesses often put sustainability

on a back burner. With this rapid growth, the skills needed in our profession will require even more systemic thinking and a greater diversity of knowledge – in science, economics, and cultural change.

But diversity of knowledge is not enough. We also have a responsibility to increase overall diversity in the CR&S field. With a steady historical trend of more women than men in the field, a disparity in the top ranks and a global gender pay gap (10%) still exist. I hope that we are very close to closing these gaps and that our profession will become a model for equity and diversity, not only of gender, in its future leadership.

I believe we’re on the verge of a new era in CR&S, where a much larger and more diverse crop of trained sustainability professionals, those who are now gaining experience, will be poised to magnify and lead CR&S.”



**Ramon Arratia**  
Global Director of Public  
Affairs, Ball Beverage  
Packaging

***“As the effects of climate change become ever more visible, a greater premium is being attached to attracting high-calibre professionals who are prepared to work for businesses that have bigger impacts on global warming”.***

“

I've been lucky enough to have been working on the front line of sustainability since 1999. That year, I joined Ericsson and got involved in corporate social responsibility activities, including the publication of my first CR report. In 2003 I moved to Vodafone, publishing four CR reports back when corporate reporting was linked to setting sustainability targets. The level of ambition was not that great back then, but we introduced the ‘we said, we have, we will’ approach that was revolutionary at the time.

By 2008 I was at the carpet tile manufacturer and sustainability legend Interface, where it was all about leadership and embedding sustainability at product level – for example, through LCAs and Environmental Product Declarations. In 2016 I moved to the aluminium can manufacturer Ball, where the focus is on embedding sustainability into the product itself and, with a public affairs hat on, engaging a wide range of stakeholders to drive the can recycling rate towards 100%.

My move into the realm of public affairs is, I believe, not an uncommon one for sustainability professionals, as it reflects the new realities, sophistication and importance surrounding our

work. Today, sustainability is absolutely critical for the survival and growth of many different sectors. A profession that once dealt with social responsibility or reporting is now concerned much more with the redesign of products, services and business models that can replace older, higher impact incumbents. And context, public acceptance, regulation and influence in the public narrative is key.

I remember filling out the Acre Salary Survey when it first began in 2008. Back then sustainability was a valuable add-on, but these days it is critical for business survival – and that has been reflected over the years in the status and remuneration of our profession. There is further evidence of this in the 2020 survey results, which show that average salaries in the profession have risen since last year by 19% in North America, 14% in the UK and 10% in Continental Europe. As far as I can see, that upward trend will only continue.

If salaries are rising, then that is a consequence of the growing importance of the field in which we work. The bar for us is much higher today than it has ever been, with increasing global urgency around issues such as climate change, plastic pollution and the social injustices raised by the Black Lives Matter movement.

As the effects of climate change become ever more visible, a greater premium is being attached to attracting high-calibre professionals who are prepared to work for businesses that have bigger impacts on global warming. Many sustainability professionals are now being more selective about which companies they work for, eschewing the worst polluters in favour of newer, more sustainable business models. This is reflected in the latest survey, which shows, for instance, that firms in the natural resources sector, which includes oil, gas, coal and mining, are having to pay 25% more than in the previous survey. This is linked with purpose being an increasing consideration when choosing a job.

My view is that these trends will accelerate dramatically in the next few years. Climate change will accelerate the cannibalization of high impact sectors in favour of solution innovators. The sustainability profession will continue to grow in importance and drive commercial strategies, public affairs and the innovation pipelines of companies. The skills needed in our profession will require even more commercial understanding, PR, campaigning, innovation and product development. Are we ready to be in the centre?

# The changing CR&S landscape: then and now

Since the last CR and Sustainability in 2018, environment, social and governance (ESG) issues have risen higher up company agendas, with their need for resolution becoming both more urgent and intense.

Climate change has become a crisis. Worldwide, there have been large-scale and frequent demonstrations involving children ('school strikes') and adults drawing attention to the challenge and need for urgent action. Climate is taking centre stage in the media and, increasingly, the public consciousness as we begin to see its effects in extreme weather events. The World Economic Forum's global risks report now cites environmental issues for each of its top five business risks which, linked together, have the ability to derail business growth.

At the same time, there has been an increase in movements focused on addressing historic and current social injustices – the most notable being Black Lives Matter. The latter, coupled with other, longer-standing efforts to promote diversity in the workplace and social inclusion more broadly, are already commanding widespread interest within board rooms and the C-suite.

Institutional investors, too, have been shifting away from their traditional focus on financial metrics, such as total shareholder return, to take a broader view of risk and how their investees are managing issues such as labour and human rights (including modern slavery) in their supply chains and the gender pay gap.

While the exact scale and nature of the associated impacts – on business strategy and organisational culture, for example – remain to be seen, there is no doubt that existing approaches and behaviours will have to adapt to changing societal and investor expectations.



**Simon Henzell-Thomas**  
Global Head of Public Affairs & Advocacy,  
IKEA

***“The opportunity to ‘build back better’ from the Covid-19 crisis is calling for a revitalized breed; deep subject knowledge, systems thinking, ace leadership, business knowledge and tenacity.”***

So – for now at least – the world still needs dedicated sustainability specialists and leaders. The opportunity to ‘build back better’ from the Covid-19 crisis is calling for a revitalised breed; deep subject knowledge, systems thinking, ace leadership, business knowledge and tenacity.

The CR and Sustainability Salary Survey highlights some areas where the profession is getting it right – for example, the job satisfaction figures remain strong and increasing. But there are others where more work needs to be done to attract, retain and develop the best, most inclusive and diverse talent. I’d like to see, for example, a closing in the gender pay gap, which the survey highlights sadly persists.

Living and working in Europe for a number of years I always felt that the survey was too UK focused, so I am glad to see more respondents from Europe this year – bravo. But, in the future, we need to reflect the true reality of the profession with more participation from Asia and the global South.”

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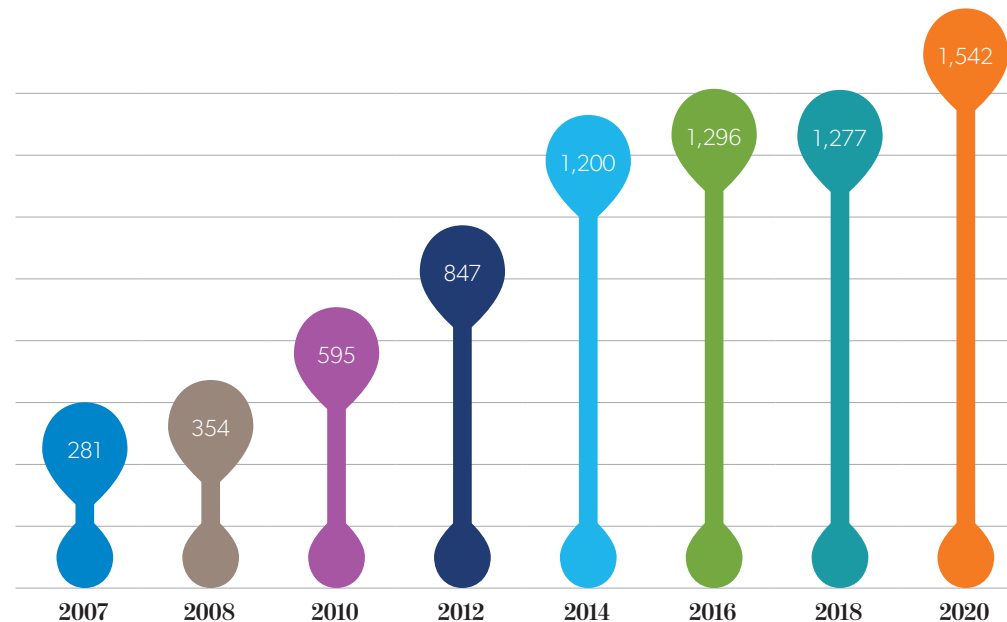
**When I began my career in sustainability, there was always talk that the ideal outcome would be to do the job so damn well, integrating sustainability into the business to such an extent, that the job of a dedicated sustainability professional would no longer be needed. So after many years, is the profession or business community any closer to that vision now?**

Somewhat. There are examples from different sectors where sustainability is increasing ‘baked-in’ to the business – where different functions, such as purchasing, logistics, property management and others lead ambitious sustainability programs as part of their day to day. But I believe there is still much more to be done.

# The sample

*“Given that the window for completion coincided with the outbreak and spread of Coronavirus in many countries, this year’s 21% increase – and the 1,542 people in total – bears powerful testimony to the interest in the subject matter and the growing numbers working in the sector.”*

HISTORY OF NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

**21%**INCREASE IN  
THE NUMBER OF  
RESPONDENTS**1,542**RESPONDENTS  
IN TOTAL

One of the most notable aspects of the survey is that every year has witnessed an increase in the number of respondents. Given that the window for completion coincided with the outbreak and spread of coronavirus in many countries, this year’s 21% increase – and the 1,542 people in total – bears powerful testimony to the interest in the subject matter and the growing numbers working in the sector.

Much of the increase was driven by North America (overwhelmingly US-based) with the actual number of responses more than doubling. We also saw an increase in responses from Europe. The overall impact

was that while UK respondents remain in an absolute majority – just – their preeminence has reduced from 57% to 50%. We still have work to do in what, for want of a better phrase, we term ‘Rest of the World’ and would be keen to hear from potential partners who can help us increase participation in Asia, Africa and South America in future surveys.

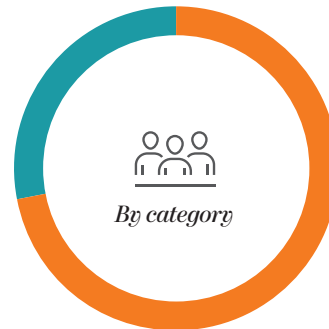
We did wonder as to what extent the pandemic and associated impacts on business and employment affected response rates – people naturally had other more pressing concerns. In particular, while the absolute number of respondents from the UK

increased compared to 2018 our personal experience suggests that the sector has grown over the last two years and we would, perhaps, have expected an even higher number of people to participate. Again, for future surveys, we need to consider whether we are failing to reach a ‘new generation’ and how to bridge the gap either through a different approach to communications or making the survey more appealing and aligned to their interests (without, of course, ignoring the needs of our loyal and long-standing participants!).

For simplicity's sake we divide the respondents into two main categories – in-house employees and consultants. As in previous years, the former predominates and the overall split was the same as 2018 at 72% versus 28%. That this has changed little over the last four surveys is unsurprising given the continued and obvious attractions of corporate life.

With one exception – 2014 – women have always constituted a majority of the respondents. This has continued to be the case although the overall percentage reduced slightly to 57% from 60% in 2018. The number of male respondents was similar to last time (2020: 41%; 2018: 40%), with the remainder preferring not to say or declaring as non-binary.

## 2020: RESPONDENTS



<span style="color: orange;">■</span>	<b>72%</b>	In-house
<span style="color: teal;">■</span>	<b>28%</b>	Consultant

Same as 2018



<span style="color: orange;">■</span>	<b>42%</b>	Public limited company/ incorporated company
<span style="color: teal;">■</span>	<b>35%</b>	Limited company
<span style="color: green;">■</span>	<b>7%</b>	Other
<span style="color: lightblue;">■</span>	<b>5%</b>	Limited liability partnership
<span style="color: darkblue;">■</span>	<b>5%</b>	Charity/NGO
<span style="color: purple;">■</span>	<b>4%</b>	Government body
<span style="color: yellow;">■</span>	<b>1%</b>	Academia
<span style="color: blue;">■</span>	<b>1%</b>	Mutual/cooperative



<span style="color: orange;">■</span>	<b>50%</b>	UK
<span style="color: teal;">■</span>	<b>21%</b>	North America
<span style="color: green;">■</span>	<b>18%</b>	Continental Europe
<span style="color: lightblue;">■</span>	<b>11%</b>	Rest of the World

2018: UK (57%); Continental Europe (22%); North America (11%) and Rest of the World (10%)



### *To survey or not to survey...*

When we began making plans for this survey in September 2019 none of us could have predicted the arrival of Covid-19 and the devastation it would wreak across the globe. As the launch date drew nearer and awareness of the virus and its effects increased, we debated whether to postpone until later in the year.

After careful consideration, we decided to go ahead for two reasons. Firstly, we felt it important to maintain a semblance of normality and, potentially, provide a small distraction from other events. Secondly, and more importantly, we hope that the results of the survey will support and inform the development of the sector and the CR&S profession, which have an even greater role than ever before in addressing the systemic challenges we face.

We accept that not everyone will agree with our decision to proceed and respect their views.



**Francis Sullivan**

*Board Deputy Chair,  
ResponsibleSteel*

***“Sustainability professionals need to understand how their company is financed, and they need to prepare the plans and KPIs that the emerging sustainable capital markets can understand.”***

“

**2020 will be remembered as the year that was dominated by Covid-19, but equally important are a number of fundamental societal changes, including a renewed sense of community, society and the fair treatment of people, a closer bond to nature, a shift from concern to action on climate change, and a better understanding of the need for sustainable development.**

This year's Acre Salary Survey picks up some of these trends; however, the data was collected before the implications of the pandemic were fully understood. The fact that there are more CR and sustainability professionals participating – their influence is growing substantially and so is their remuneration – is evidence that the sector has reached a new level of professionalism, and a maturity that we have not seen before.

For too long CR and sustainability professionals have been the 'Cinderellas' of the corporate world. Far too many people in our world have told me that they want to be 'taken seriously' by management and their corporate peers; however, change is afoot, and the results are starting to be borne out in the data. Total compensation is up 15% since 2018 and senior executive commitment to sustainability is also up 7%, but this is only half the story; we feel less secure in our jobs, we are less satisfied by the work we are doing, and there is still much to do to narrow the gender pay gap.

Over the last couple of years green/sustainable finance has enjoyed explosive growth. Sustainability professionals need to understand how their company is financed, and they need to prepare the plans and KPIs that the emerging sustainable capital markets can understand.

So, looking ahead, I would like to see continued recognition of the strategic nature of the sustainability agenda. Sustainability professionals will need to develop and learn a new language and fresh skills, especially relating to strategy, risk and finance, if they expect to gain access to top management, be recognised as critical to corporate success and be welcomed at the heart of decision-making.”



# Remuneration

Currency	GBP
1.00 CHF	0.84
1.00 AUD	0.51
1.00 EUR	0.89
1.00 USD	0.80

Rates are an average of the mid-market rates prevailing on 16 March and 30 April 2020 (Source: [XE.com](#)).

## Caveats and limitations

- Firstly, data of this type can be affected by a small number of outliers (either very high – or very low – salaries and bonuses) distorting the averages. That's why it's important to look at the median (the 'middle' point in the data set) and the distribution as well as the mean.
- Secondly, the figures quoted take no account of inflation.
- Thirdly, exchange rates vary over time, which obviously makes comparisons difficult. Looking back at the rates that prevailed at the time of the last survey, while the relative value of the pound against the euro has remained broadly the same, its value against the Swiss franc and US dollar has fallen by 14% and 11% respectively; conversely, the pound has risen by 8% against the Australian dollar. Looking back at 2010, when the survey first went global, the pound/euro rate is pretty much unchanged but sterling has fallen by 23% against the US dollar and 42% against the Swiss franc and risen by 8% against the Australian dollar.
- Finally, the headline figures for each region do not reflect cost-of-living variations across different countries. In other words, the purchasing power of sterling in one country or region cannot be reliably compared with its purchasing power in another, further compounding the difficulties of cross-region comparisons. Additional payment arrangements, such as bonus rates and other allowances, which are specific to particular countries further complicate the issue.

\* All figures listed in this report were originally calculated in GBP and translated to EUR using an average of the mid-market rates prevailing on 16 March and 30 April 2020 (1.00 GBP = 1.12 EUR), 21 March and 30 April 2018 (1.00 GBP = 1.14 EUR) & 10 January and 12 February 2016 (1.00 GBP = 1.30 EUR) for data visualisation and presentational purposes.

## Salaries

### AVERAGE GLOBAL SALARY (BOTH CONSULTANTS AND IN-HOUSE)

	2016	2018	2020
<i>Global salary mean</i>	€79,490	€71,722	€85,598
<i>Global salary mode</i>	€40k–€65k	€34k–€57k	€56k–€84k
<i>Global salary median</i>	€68,182	€59,659	€70,225

The main message from the data is that salaries globally have risen substantially: the mean salary has increased by 19%; the mode has moved from €34k–€57k to €56k–€84k; and the global median rose by just over €10,000 to €70,225. North America continues to offer the highest average salaries – at around €125,000 (US\$ 140,000) for in-house roles and €112,000 (US\$ 125,000) for consultants.

While the percentage of in-house respondents receiving salaries between €56,000–€112,000 has remained the same at 47%, the percentage of those earning salaries in excess of €112,000 increased from 16% to 27%. For consultants, those in the €56,000–€112,000 band increased slightly from 39% to 42% while at the upper end, the €112,000+ category more than doubled from 7% to 15%.

The increased participation from North America (especially the USA) has been a major but not the sole contributor to these changes. Thus, while average salaries in North America have risen by 19% since the last survey it's worth highlighting that the UK isn't that far behind with a 14% increase. The average increase in Europe has been slightly lower – at 10% – which possibly reflects more general factors, such as lower economic and wage growth.

We also wondered whether the overall increases in average salaries were driven by disproportionate representation from certain – better paying – sectors and/or more senior and better paid people (at the Director/Head of level). Our analysis suggests neither of these factors were influential and, therefore, the changes are attributable to an increase in salaries across the board.

When you dig a little deeper; however, you see that not everyone is benefiting to the same degree. As we've said many times before, if salary is a major consideration then on average in-house roles beat consultancy positions hands down. While those working in-house enjoyed an average increase of 19%, consultants experienced a 15% uplift, widening the average gap in salary to €18,000 (previously €13,000).

These differentials are even starker in some places – for example, in 2018 the gap in the UK was around €7,000; it's now more than doubled to €16,000. However, not all consultants are in the same boat. Those working in Continental Europe saw the gap grow an eye-watering 36% (compared to 25% in the UK) while those in North America have seen their salaries increase by a third since the last survey.

In the same way that location plays a major part in determining the salary level so does, to an even greater extent, the sector where people work. Natural Resources retains its leading position – as it has done since 2012 – as the most lucrative with an average salary of €136,640 (an increase of 24%). This reflects the overall salary levels of the sector, which are heavily influenced by the competition for suitably qualified people and the risks presented by operating in particularly challenging environments and operational settings. Industrials is not far behind at €133,280, which perhaps demonstrates the increasing emphasis this sector is placing on climate change, responsible procurement and the circular economy. This is followed by Aviation, Health, Technology, Manufacturing and Consumer Goods (Other and Food & Beverages) clustering around €106,000.

# 19%

GLOBAL MEAN  
SALARY INCREASE

# €10,000

GLOBAL MEDIAN  
SALARY INCREASE

# 27%

IN-HOUSE RESPONDENTS  
EARNING IN EXCESS  
OF €112,000

# 15%

CONSULTANT RESPONDENTS  
EARNING IN EXCESS  
OF €112,000

# €136,640

AVERAGE SALARY IN  
NATURAL RESOURCES

# €133,280

AVERAGE SALARY IN  
INDUSTRIALS

# €106,000

AVERAGE SALARY IN AVIATION,  
HEALTH, TECHNOLOGY,  
MANUFACTURING AND  
CONSUMER GOODS

One of the most commented upon (and contentious) issues that the survey has highlighted over the years is the difference between male and female remuneration. The good news – if you regard small incremental improvements as such – is that the gap has narrowed overall to 10% from 13%. Again, there are regional differences: while the gap in the UK fell from 19% to 16%, it rose slightly in the Continental Europe (to 22% from 20%) and whereas there had previously been parity in North America it's now grown to 14%.

This is all the more surprising as women are now in the majority in all of our generic job categories saving only Director/Partner in consultancies. The latter is notable in itself given that many consultants advise their clients on the benefits of diversity and inclusion and the practical steps required to transition to this new paradigm. It would appear from the survey results that consultants are, in this area at least, either failing to heed their own advice or, at least, not focusing as much attention on the issue as is required.

In previous reports, we – and many of our commentators – have highlighted this challenge. We've also sought to provide possible explanations for why the pay gap persists notwithstanding efforts to address it. We don't intend to rehearse those arguments here (for example, around time in role and the gender imbalance in certain higher paying sectors). However, one point we haven't touched on is the extent to which men are seemingly more effective at negotiating their salaries and bonuses.

## AVERAGE SALARY BY REGION AND ORGANISATION TYPE

### 2020

Region	Consultant	In-house	All
Continental Europe	€64,114	€92,184	€85,680
UK	€61,055	€76,910	€72,755
North America	€111,926	€125,879	€122,604
All	€71,718	€89,905	€85,324

### 2018

Region	Consultant	In-house	All
Continental Europe	€62,907	€83,540	€78,058
UK	€58,742	€65,830	€64,003
North America	€85,456	€109,127	€103,164
All	€62,323	€75,422	€71,951

There's been considerable research over the years into why this may be.<sup>4</sup> Some of the more recent studies suggest that reducing it to typical gender stereotypes is a distortion of reality and that other factors – such as organisational culture – play a greater role.<sup>5</sup> There's also research that suggests younger women are as effective as their male counterparts in negotiating salary.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps an even more worrying suggestion is that women would rather move jobs to secure higher remuneration than seek to persuade their current employer to give them a pay rise.<sup>7</sup> If the latter is correct, then this has a doubly adverse impact on women as the individuals concerned are effectively having to rebuild their internal networks within a new employer and re-establish credibility with colleagues and management. It also has an impact on the current employer as they lose knowledge and expertise while incurring the costs of recruitment and, potentially, having to pay more to attract the right person. They also run the risk, given the growth of online platforms where people can rate their employment experiences, of acquiring a reputation for having a less than congenial and supportive working environment.

Whatever the causes of the pay gap, the one indisputable conclusion we can draw from this and previous surveys is that it exists and progress towards eradicating it is proceeding too slowly.

<sup>4</sup> For the UK experience see, for example, <https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/news/articles/men-more-likely-ask-pay-rise-and-get-more-when-they-do>; for the US, <https://www.glassdoor.com/blog/3-5-u-s-employees-negotiate-salary/>

<sup>5</sup> Artz, B., Goodall, A.H. & Oswald, A.J. Do Women Ask? Industrial Relations, volume 57, issue 4 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1111/irel.12214>

<sup>6</sup> Miller, K. & Vagins, D.J. The simple truth about the gender pay gap. (2018). American Association of University Women. Washington DC <https://www.aauw.org/app/uploads/2020/02/AAUW-2018-SimpleTruth-nsa.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> The Randstad 2020 US compensation insights survey (2020). [https://rlc.randstadusa.com/for-business/learning-center/future-workplace-trends/randstad-compensation-insights-1?utm\\_campaign=rusa\\_Salary+Guide+2020\\_client\\_rus\\_all&utm\\_medium=press&utm\\_source=prnewswire](https://rlc.randstadusa.com/for-business/learning-center/future-workplace-trends/randstad-compensation-insights-1?utm_campaign=rusa_Salary+Guide+2020_client_rus_all&utm_medium=press&utm_source=prnewswire)

		Salaries		Bonus	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
<i>In-house</i>	<i>Director/Head</i>	€145,580	€139,469	€37,484	€38,287
	<i>Manager</i>	€81,357	€73,725	€10,464	€8,829
	<i>Adviser/Analyst</i>	€47,769	€45,499	€7,106	€3,997
<i>Consultant</i>	<i>Director/Partner</i>	€108,991	€114,488	€17,949	€12,660
	<i>Senior Consultant</i>	€70,371	€65,791	€9,250	€6,178
	<i>Consultant/Analyst</i>	€42,698	€39,932	€3,469	€4,285

#### AVERAGE SALARY BY REGION AND GENDER

##### 2020

Region	Male	Female	The gap
<i>Continental Europe</i>	€94,881	€73,741	22%
<i>UK</i>	€80,702	€67,445	16%
<i>North America</i>	€136,407	€117,047	14%
<i>All</i>	€90,646	€81,132	10%

##### 2018

Region	Male	Female	The gap
Continental Europe	€88,130	€70,745	20%
UK	€72,572	€58,822	19%
North America	€102,961	€103,289	0%
All	€77,872	€67,931	13%

## AVERAGE SALARY PER SECTOR

Sectors	2020	2018	2016
Natural Resources	€137k	€111k	€104k
Industrials	€133k	€78k	€92k
Aviation	€109k	-	-
Health	€106k	€101k	€82k
Technology	€106k	€80k	€81k
Manufacturing	€106k	-	-
Consumer Goods – Other	€105k	-	-
Consumer Goods – Food and Beverages	€105k	-	-
Life Sciences/Pharmaceuticals	€97k	-	-
Transport & Utilities	€95k	€72k	€63k
Banking & Finance	€92k	€88k	€76k
Leisure	€90k	€59k	€63k

Sectors	2020	2018	2016
Telecoms	€90k	€84k	€106k
Consumer Goods – Apparel	€82k	-	-
Retail – Apparel	€81k	-	-
Retail – Other	€78k	-	-
Legal	€77k	€75k	€68k
Construction/Property/Infrastructure	€75k	€64k	€63k
Professional Services	€73k	-	-
Automotive	€72k	-	-
Retail – Food and Beverages	€72k	-	-
Engineering	€69k	€67k	€66k
Media	€68k	€70k	€68k
Support Services	€56k	€58k	€81k



# €137k

AVERAGE SALARY IN  
NATURAL RESOURCES



# €106k

AVERAGE SALARY IN  
MANUFACTURING



# €90k

AVERAGE SALARY IN  
LEISURE



# €75k

AVERAGE SALARY IN  
CONSTRUCTION



# €68k

AVERAGE SALARY IN  
MEDIA

## OVERALL SALARY DISTRIBUTION



9%	€0 – €34k
22%	€34k – €56k
32%	€56k – €84k
14%	€84k – €112k
14%	€112k – €157k
6%	€157k – €202k
2%	€202k – €246k
1%	€246k+

## SALARY DISTRIBUTION BY ORGANISATION TYPE



13%	€0 – €34k
30%	€34k – €56k
31%	€56k – €84k
11%	€84k – €112k
9%	€112k – €157k
4%	€157k – €202k
2%	€202k – €246k
0%	€246k+

	2020	2018	2016
<i>Global salary mean</i>	€71,718	€62,323	€60,864
<i>Global salary mode</i>	€56k-€84k	€34k-€57k	€34k-€57k
<i>Global salary median</i>	€58,800	€54,150	€53,675



7%	€0 – €34k
19%	€34k – €56k
32%	€56k – €84k
15%	€84k – €112k
16%	€112k – €157k
7%	€157k – €202k
3%	€202k – €246k
1%	€246k+

	2020	2018	2016
<i>Global salary mean</i>	€89,905	€75,422	€72,097
<i>Global salary mode</i>	€56k-€84k	€34k-€57k	€34k-€57k
<i>Global salary median</i>	€75,600	€62,358	€59,325

## BONUS DISTRIBUTION



39.5%	Nil
35%	€0 – 10k
13.5%	€10k – €25k
8%	€25k – €50k
2%	€50k – €75k
0%	€75k – €100k
0.5%	€100k – €145k
1%	€145k – €200k
0.5%	€200k+



62%

OF RESPONDENTS  
RECEIVED A BONUS

52%

OF CONSULTANTS  
RECEIVE NO BONUS

34%

OF IN-HOUSE  
EMPLOYEES RECEIVE  
NO BONUS

## Bonuses

Overall, just below two thirds of respondents received a bonus, which was similar to last time. North American-based respondents were most likely to benefit (69%). There was relatively little difference in the percentages of males and females receiving a bonus (64% versus 61% respectively).

Again, North America respondents were in pole position with 13% receiving over €33,000 compared to 7% in the UK and Continental Europe.

As we've said every year, the perception that consultants' lower salaries are offset by more generous bonus arrangements both in terms of the amount and percentage in receipt is a myth. In fact, over half (52%) of consultants receive no bonus – a slight increase on the last survey – compared to a third of those in-house (34%). Moreover, while average bonus levels have mostly increased – the one notable exception being North America where the average consultant's bonus appears to have fallen by 45% since the last survey – the gap between those working in-house and consultants has increased in the UK and North America to €10,000 and €18,000 (versus €8,000 and €12,000) respectively. In Continental Europe, this gap has decreased ever so slightly to €9,000.

Yet, against what appears to be positive news about bonuses, there is one significant development that requires some comment. As part of our analysis, we calculate what the average bonus received is for different salary bands. As a general rule, you would expect the amount of bonus and the percentage of total remuneration it represents to increase the higher the salary. However, this year something strange has happened.

The data suggests average bonus levels are down on the previous survey, especially in the €56,000 to €112,000 range (10–16%) and, to a lesser extent, in the €112,000 to €246,000 (2–16%) range. The groups that appear to be immune to this phenomenon are consultants and in-house employees earning under €34,000 whose average bonuses increased by 18% and 34% respectively.

Of course, bonuses are heavily dependent on the financial performance of the organisation, so some fluctuation is to be expected. However, the last couple of years have, generally, witnessed booming stock markets, especially in the United States. Clearly, that overall picture might disguise weaker performance in certain sectors or companies but we wondered if something else was afoot?

Given that the overall results of the survey are heavily influenced by the in-house respondents we focused our attention there. One possibility, and this is very much open to further research, is that the increases in salary for in-house employees we highlighted earlier are the result of CR&S roles becoming more integrated within corporate hierarchies and, crucially, job evaluation systems. If this is correct, then it's becoming easier to align the skills, responsibilities and contribution of CR&S practitioners with their colleagues in other functions and pay them commensurately.

However, to offset this increase in base salary employers may be adopting a more stringent approach to the criteria used to determine whether a bonus is triggered and what the amount paid should be. If this hypothesis is correct then it becomes even more pressing that those working in the field should be able to identify clear and tangible objectives and metrics against which their performance (and how it benefits the organisation) can be judged.

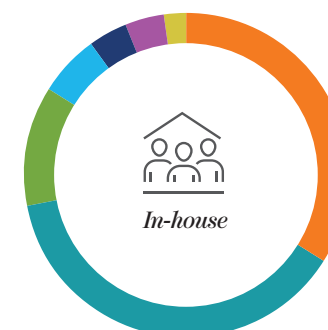
## BONUS DISTRIBUTION



38%	Nil
38%	€0–€11k
11%	€11k–€22k
5%	€22k–€34k
4%	€34k–€56k
3%	€56k–€112k
1%	€112k+



52%	Nil
38%	€0–€11k
6%	€11k–€22k
2%	€22k–€34k
2%	€34k–€56k
0%	€56k–€112k
0%	€112k+



34%	Nil
38%	€0–€11k
12%	€11k–€22k
6%	€22k–€34k
4%	€34k–€56k
4%	€56k–€112k
2%	€112k+

## AVERAGE BONUS LEVEL BY REGION AND ORGANISATION TYPE

2020

Region	Consultants	In-house
Continental Europe	€9,685	€18,717
UK	€8,057	€18,061
North America	€7,476	€23,451

2018

Region	Consultant	In-house
Continental Europe	€7,826	€17,709
UK	€5,985	€13,856
North America	€15,138	€27,109

## AVERAGE BONUS LEVEL BY SALARY BAND

2020

Salary band	Overall	Consultants	In-house
€0–€34k	€4,255	€3,486	€4,695
€34k–€56k	€3,945	€3,601	€7,115
€56k–€84k	€7,372	€8,456	€7,102
€84k–€112k	€15,747	€11,008	€16,687
€112k–€157k	€27,626	€17,559	€28,753
€157k–€202k	€41,221	€15,197	€45,487
€202k–€246k	€76,921	€23,578	€85,456
€246k+	€137,448	–	€137,448

2018

Salary band	Overall	Consultants	In-house
€0–€34k	€3,326	€2,955	€3,515
€34k–€56k	€3,995	€4,409	€3,866
€56k–€84k	€8,294	€6,883	€8,705
€84k–€112k	€19,018	€16,514	€19,743
€112k–€157k	€33,462	€9,210	€34,959
€157k–€202k	€42,754	€17,228	€47,663
€202k–€246k	€85,003	€25,650	€93,482
€246k+	€127,281	–	€127,281

\* Please note that the salary bands presented above were translated from GBP using an exchange rate of 1.12 for data visualisation and presentational purposes.

## Cash remuneration

Taking salary and bonus together, average cash remuneration globally and for in-house employees has increased by 19% since 2018. The latter saw their remuneration rise from €87,000 to €103,000. In line with earlier comments, consultants globally had a slightly lower increase (13%) from €66,000 to €75,000. Thus, what was previously a €21,000 difference has now increased to €28,000 (or 37%).

Unsurprisingly, there's a gender gap here too. Male in-house respondents earned on average €112,000 compared to €96,000 for females (16% difference). For consultants, males earned on average €6,700 and 9% more (€80,000 versus €73,000).

While financial reward is not the sole determinant of employee satisfaction – or happiness more generally – these results raise very significant issues for the senior management of consultants. Given that the latter are often seeking to recruit from the same talent pool and retain employees (who may be tempted by the attractiveness of corporate roles) this growing disparity could, if ignored, undermine their human and intellectual capital. Assuming the research highlighted earlier is correct, this risk is particularly acute in respect of their female employees who, rather than enter into discussions about increasing their remuneration, will simply vote with their feet and move to more lucrative, in-house jobs.

### TOTAL REMUNERATION

	2020	2018	2016
<i>Global</i>			
<i>Global remuneration mean</i>	€96k	€81k	€77k
<i>Consultant remuneration mean</i>	€75k	€66k	€66k
<i>In-house remuneration mean</i>	€103k	€87k	€81k

	2020	2018	2016
<i>Global remuneration mean</i>	€96k	€81k	€77k
<i>Global salary mode</i>	€56k–€84k	€34k–€57k	€34k–€57k
<i>Global salary median</i>	Upper end €56k–€84k	Lower end €56k–€84k	Lower end €56k–€84k

<i>Global 2020</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Consultant</i>	<i>In-house</i>
<i>Male remuneration mean</i>	€103k	€80k	€112k
<i>Female remuneration mean</i>	€91k	€73k	€96k
<i>All</i>	€96k	€75k	€103k

# 19%

INCREASE IN CASH  
REMUNERATION FOR  
IN-HOUSE EMPLOYEES

# 13%

INCREASE IN CASH  
REMUNERATION  
FOR CONSULTANTS

# 9%

HIGHER  
REMUNERATION  
FOR MALE  
CONSULTANTS

## Generic job descriptions

When we first conceived the idea of a salary survey of this type back in 2007, one of our main motivations was to establish benchmark salaries for different roles across the sector and to identify – in broad terms – the type of people who occupied these roles. From the outset we realised that the survey was not – nor could ever be – a medium for capturing detailed and objective job evaluation information for each participant's role (despite publicising this caveat every year that hasn't stopped people asking if they could use this data for that purpose).

We've always stressed that, based on the survey data, it is impossible to say, for example, whether two respondents with the job title 'CR Manager' perform the same or similar roles. It's also the case, that with the information the survey provides, we can't say whether subtle differences in job title signify the naming conventions of different organisations or something more fundamental – for example, is a 'CR Manager' equivalent to a 'Manager, Sustainability'?

However, notwithstanding these methodological challenges, we identified a number of generic roles, based on our own understanding and personal experience of in-house and consultant roles. We then analysed the data to suggest what each would receive by way of salary and bonus. The latter is based on data relating to respondents who received a bonus. What follows are composite descriptions of the educational qualifications, career histories and other personal characteristics that would most likely be attached to these roles. It is important to note that – as with all composite images – they are approximations of reality. Despite the passage of time and developments in both the conception and application of CR&S, we believe these categorisations – subject to the slight change described below – remain relevant and provide a valuable perspective on the 'typical' occupants of these roles.

## In-house (large companies with more than 1,000 staff)



### DIRECTOR/HEAD

We've previously reserved this category for the most senior CR&S person in the organisation who, depending on the conventions and nomenclature in use in different companies and countries, would typically be referred to as a CSO, Director, Head of...or (Executive/Senior) Vice President.

However, it's become apparent that as a result of an expansion in the scope and scale of what falls under CR&S we need to modify our description. Consequently, we've expanded this category to reflect the fact that in some large companies those overseeing particular areas of the agenda – for example, climate change, diversity and inclusion, ethical procurement and so on – now have responsibilities, resources and remuneration that demand their inclusion in this group.

Typically, Directors/Heads have an average salary of €144k and an average bonus of €39k compared to an average salary of €117k and an average bonus of €29k in 2018. Continuing the trend we identified for the first time in 2018, the person concerned is more likely to be female than male and almost certainly have a first degree – though not in a CR&S-related subject. Two thirds will have a master's (fairly evenly split between CR&S-related and non-CR&S-related). They will have been in full-time employment for a minimum of 15 years, and very possibly a lot longer, and around 75% will have previous CR&S experience. The overwhelming majority will control a budget of around €1M.



### MANAGER

Managers may be specialists or generalists. They receive an average salary of €76k and an average bonus of €9k (2018 salary: €65k and bonus: €9k). The global upper quintile receives an average salary of €128k (2018: €112k). Just under half of managers control a budget, typically of around €432k (down from €509k). People in this role report to a more senior individual with overarching responsibility for CR&S. Managers are overwhelmingly female (60%) and, typically, will have been in full-time employment for more than 10 years and this won't be their first CR&S role. Managers will almost certainly have a first degree – but not in a CR&S-related subject – and over 60% will also have a master's degree, with two fifths having studied a CR&S-related subject to this level.



### ADVISER/ANALYST

This person is a member of a larger team reporting to the Manager or Director/Head roles described above. Advisers are likely to be female graduates earning an average salary of €46k (2018: €47k) with an average bonus of €5k (2018: €7k). They've been in full-time employment for less than 10 years. Over 70% of Advisers/Analysts have a first degree (fairly even split 40/30 between non-CR&S-related subjects and CR&S-related subjects). Half have a master's degree with two thirds being in a CR&S-related subject.

## Consultancies



## DIRECTOR/PARTNER

This could be a senior person in a CR&S team at a large consultancy or the owner, founder, director of a smaller consultancy. For the first time, women are approaching parity though men still – slightly – predominate (in 2018 they were twice as likely to be male than female). They earn an average salary of €112k (2018: €95k) and receive an average bonus of €15k (2018: €12k). They typically control a budget of around €774k (up from €369k). Around 70% of directors are graduates (down from 80%) and around 62% have a master's, with over a third of the latter in a CR&S-related subject. He or she will have almost certainly have worked in CR&S before the current role and been in full-time employment for over 20 years.



## SENIOR CONSULTANT

Senior consultants are more likely to be women (55/45). The majority will have been in full-time employment for more than 10 years, most – if not all – of which will have been in the sector. This won't be their first CR&S job. They are almost certainly graduates (approx. 70%) and half of them have a master's in a CR&S-related subject. They earn an average salary of €67k (2018: €63k) and receive an average bonus of €8k (2018: €7k).



## CONSULTANT/ANALYST

This role is usually occupied by someone with less experience of CR&S and who supports more senior colleagues. They are predominantly female (70%), earning an average salary of €41k (2018: €42k) and an average bonus of €4k (2018: €5k). They've almost certainly worked in CR&S prior to their current jobs and have been in full-time employment for between 5–10 years.

**Bukky Bird**

*Group Sustainability Director, Barratt Developments Plc*

***“More balanced senior leadership in sustainability roles will lead to better outcomes overall for business.”***



**The ever-present ambition is for sustainability in corporate organisations to be a key part of the business proposition and to be interwoven with the core aims of the organisation.**

However, the transformational nature of sustainability initiatives often means that sustainability teams can be viewed as change agents rather than core operators.

For sustainability professionals to be able to influence at a systems level, this perception will have to change. Sustainability teams must be able to provide seamless solutions to operational challenges – but to do so they need deep knowledge of their businesses from strategy through to core operations.

One indicator of how effectively sustainability teams are managing this is remuneration relative to core areas within the organisation, and it is heartening to see an increase for both in-house and consultant salaries.

The survey appears to show a continued divergence in remuneration between consultants and in-house teams. Certainly, more organisations are taking greater ownership of their sustainability agenda and building in-house expertise to deliver this, so there is perhaps an increasing opportunity for consultants to develop more flexible partnership models.

Incremental improvements in the gender pay gap in some regions and the alarming decline in others, is disappointing. More organisations globally need to act quickly – words are no longer enough. The data is clear that companies with diverse senior teams are more profitable and better innovators. This is no different for sustainability professionals responsible for ensuring good governance of those activities that connect long-term social, environmental and economic value across businesses. More balanced leadership in sustainability will lead to better outcomes overall for business.”

# Education, qualifications and career history

## Qualifications

Across the UK and overseas more broadly, there has been a consistent increase in the number of full-time students attending both undergraduate and postgraduate courses and degrees (Bolton, 2020).<sup>8</sup>

Despite this general background trend, respondents to our survey have nonetheless consistently achieved above-average higher education qualifications; while in 2017 (the last year for which such data is available), 42% of the UK population aged 21 to 64 had achieved higher education qualifications,<sup>9</sup> almost 90% of respondents this year possessed either an undergraduate degree and/or a postgraduate degree. The number of people undertaking postgraduate courses has also increased over 10%, from 61% in 2018 to 68% this year.

MBAs have also increased in popularity year-on-year among respondents, with 14% of respondents this year having one, versus 11% in 2018 and 9% in 2016. All regions, with the exception of Continental Europe, saw an increase in the percentage of respondents obtaining MBAs, with North America and Rest of the World increasing most notably (18% to 25%, and 19% to 23%, respectively). The UK saw an incremental increase of 1% in respondents with an MBA from 2018, reinforcing the premise that MBAs in the UK are less popular and may carry less prestige than in other regions.

The relatively high number of people doing postgraduate studies may reflect the need to stand out in an increasingly competitive job market. It may also reflect an increasing number of people choosing to pivot career paths and positioning themselves towards a CR&S career. Similarly, while the trend for an uptake in MBAs among CR&S respondents is contrary to background trends in which applications for MBAs have seen recent declines, the increase could reflect an increase in focus as ESG matters become ever more important to business operations and an integral part of corporate strategy. Indeed, following a year in which fires and floods ravaged the planet, a global pandemic ground global trade to a halt, and climate-related risks and warnings dominated economic reports and investment strategies such as those produced by the World Economic Forum and BlackRock, it seems timely that sustainability is finally becoming a managerial imperative within companies.

These percentage increases offset the slight decrease in the proportion of people having studied an undergraduate degree (72% in 2020 versus 74% in 2018).

		Together	Both
First degree non-CR&S	46%	72%	1%
First degree CR&S	26%		
Master's non-CR&S	25%	68%	4%
Master's CR&S	43%		
Professional non-CR&S	18%	36%	6%
Professional CR&S	17%		
Recognised apprenticeship	6%		
MBA	14%		

## 90%

OF RESPONDENTS POSSESS EITHER AN UNDERGRADUATE AND/OR POSTGRADUATE DEGREE

## 14%

OF RESPONDENTS HAVE AN MBA

## 10%+

INCREASE IN RESPONDENTS UNDERTAKING POSTGRADUATE DEGREES

<sup>8</sup> Bolton, P. *Higher education student numbers*. (2020), Briefing paper 7857. House of Commons Library. London

<sup>9</sup> *Graduates in the UK Labour Market: 2017* (2017), ONS <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/graduatesintheuklabourmarket/2017>



## How long in CR&S

On average, the duration of careers within CR&S has lengthened since 2018: there are fewer people having worked for less than two years and for 2–5 years, but more people having worked for more than five years in the sector.

This would suggest a slight stagnation in entrants to the sector and is at odds with the increasing number of respondents being highly qualified, indicating a mismatch in supply and demand of jobs. External factors, such as economic and political uncertainties, may have had an impact on recruitment and caused hiring to slow.

As in 2018, the number of people having worked in CR&S for 10 years or longer continues to grow, rising from 48% in 2010 to 56% in 2020, suggesting a maturing sector, and that more individuals working within the sector will have a greater amount of practical experience.



32%	5–10 years
27%	10–15 years
17%	15–20 years
12%	20 years +
11%	2–5 years
1%	Less than 2 years

# 56%

OF PEOPLE HAVE  
WORKED IN CR&S FOR  
10 YEARS OR LONGER



## Eva Ronhaar

Director of Innovation & Sustainability,  
HEMA

**“From businesses doing sustainability, to sustainable businesses.”**

“

I am motivated and proud to be an active player in this challenging period in which we recognise a transformation is required to achieve a sustainable economy. We are moving away from the traditional economic model, in which sustainability is a stand-alone topic or initiative in a company, towards a model in which sustainability is an integral part of a company and its value propositions.

This goes hand-in-hand with the rapid professionalisation of the sustainability profession. Not only is it recognised that sustainability is an expertise in itself, but also that it requires a place in the highest decision-making levels of a company. The 2020 Salary Survey shows exactly that; that both the sustainability agenda and the profession have made great progress.

All in all, I am content to see the progress that has been made over the last decade. But until we really change structures and systems, there is no room to be satisfied yet. The reality is that there will not be a sustainable economy without sustainable businesses. And the role of sustainability professionals is key in this transformation.

# Companies

## How committed are organisations?

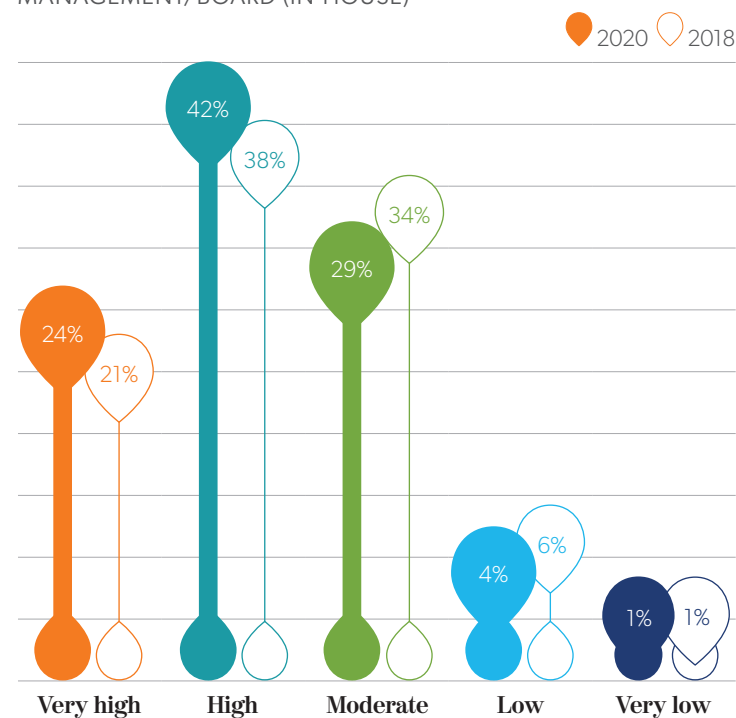
The level of commitment to corporate responsibility among senior executives has risen by 7% since 2018 (from a combination of very high/high 59% to 66%). This chimes with the growing involvement of the Board on a range of issues – for example, climate risk assessment and reporting via mechanisms such as the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures.

These levels of high commitment are mirrored across the regions and are most prominent in the UK and Europe, a probable reflection of the greater level of legislation on CR&S-related issues in these regions.

# 70%

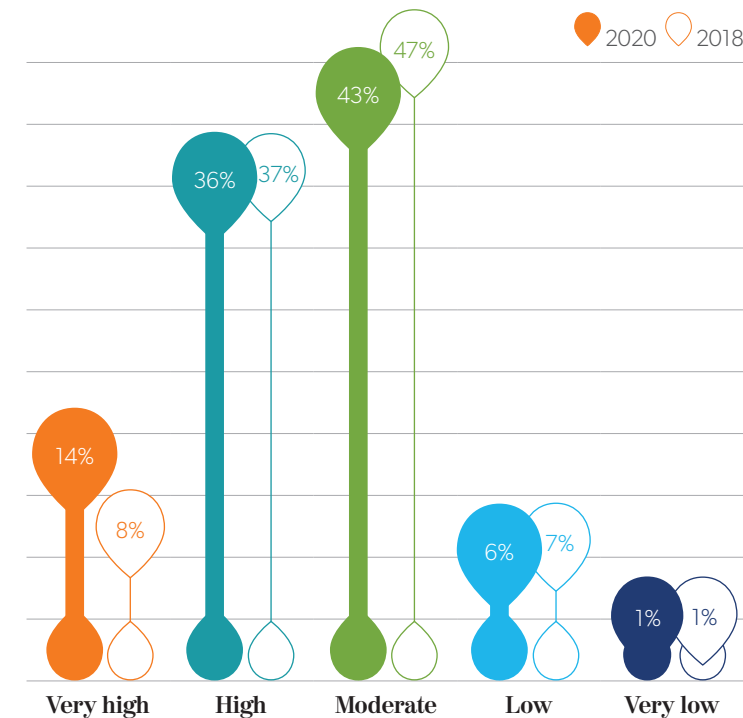
RISE IN LEVEL OF COMMITMENT TO CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY AMONG SENIOR EXECUTIVES

LEVEL OF COMMITMENT AMONG EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT/BOARD (IN-HOUSE)



Level of commitments	UK	North America	Continental Europe	Rest of World
Very high level	23%	23%	27%	20%
High level	48%	36%	40%	35%
Moderate level	24%	35%	28%	39%
Low level	4%	5%	5%	5%
Very low level	0%	1%	0%	1%

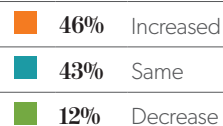
LEVEL OF BUY-IN FROM EMPLOYEES (IN-HOUSE)



## How are CR&S teams transforming?

While the team size bandings remain relatively static across the years, we see strong evidence of CR&S teams growing to-do lists by respondents reporting nearly half their teams (46%) have increased within the last 12 months. Further evidence of this can be seen in the responses to questions we asked for the first time this year: 40% of respondents are reaching out to colleagues across their companies to contribute to the work of the CR&S strategy, with 73% of those reporting that engagement had increased in the last year.

### CR&S TEAM CHANGE GLOBALLY OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS



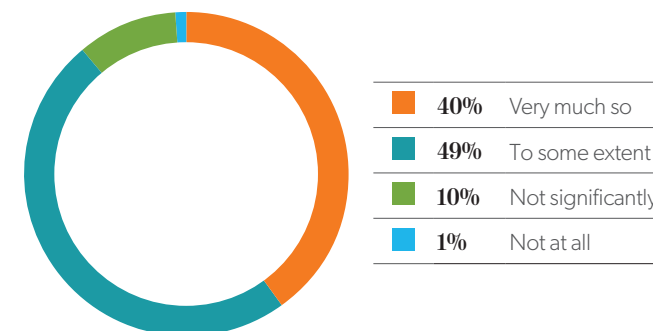
### GLOBAL TEAM SIZE

	2020	2018	2016
1 to 3	28%	30%	28%
4 to 9	25%	24%	27%
10 to 19	18%	18%	16%
20 to 49	14%	13%	14%
50 to 74	5%		
75 to 99	3%	15%	16%
100+	7%		

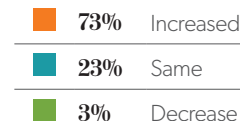
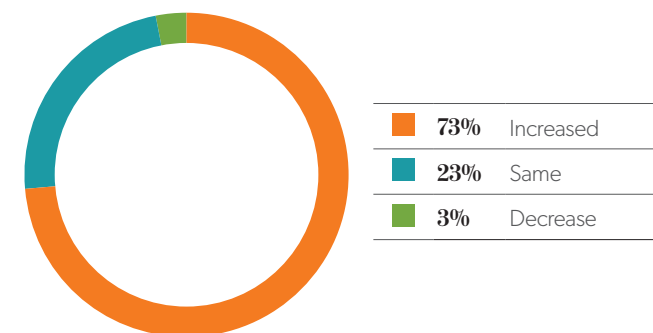
### NUMBER OF DIRECT REPORTS (VERY SIMILAR TO 2018)

Direct reports	All	Consultants	In-house
N/A	41%	47%	42%
1 to 3	37%	35%	38%
4 to 8	15%	12%	15%
9 to 20	4%	4%	4%
21+	2%	2%	1%

### TO WHAT EXTENT DO OTHER BUSINESS FUNCTIONS CONTRIBUTE TO CR&S STRATEGY (NEW)



### CHANGE IN ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN CR&S AND OTHER BUSINESS FUNCTIONS (NEW)



## Public commitment to promoting diversity

While 80% of in-house respondents believe their employers promote diversity, only 59% of consultants shared that view. Notwithstanding that disparity, there was little difference between those working in-house and consultants on how diversity was being promoted with 84% of the former saying these efforts were moderately/highly effective compared to 83% of the latter.

74%

OF RESPONDENTS  
BELIEVE THEIR EMPLOYERS  
PROMOTE DIVERSITY

Promote diversity	All	Consultants	In-house
Yes	74%	59%	80%
No	26%	41%	20%

### EFFECTIVE AT PROMOTING DIVERSITY

Promote diversity	All	Consultants	In-house
Highly effective	23%	30%	20%
Moderately effective	61%	53%	64%
Not very effective	14%	13%	14%
Ineffective	2%	3%	2%



**Tim Habraken**

Director Sustainability,  
CBRE Nederland

*“If the salary report shows one thing it’s that sustainability has become big business.*

*Big business for sustainability professionals, hence the increased salaries reported, but also for organisations - or they wouldn’t be paying those salaries.”*

“

At the same time, the existence of a group of so-called “sustainability professionals” raises the question: “Are there still unsustainable professionals out there?” To a certain extent, it shows that we might have become an industry in itself: the sustainability industry.

An important, but often overlooked question is ‘Where does the sustainability function sit within the organisation?’ In many cases, even in 2020, the sustainability function is a separate silo, not an integrated, strategic driver. Even though time and time again, it has been proven that organisations that can integrate sustainability as a key driver in their strategic approach are more successful in the long run. In many cases, this has become a reality already, with other professionals taking on a strong sustainability mission, or with sustainability being put at the core of the business.

Thus we, as a sustainability industry, shouldn’t be content that there are now more of us, or that our salaries have increased, in general. For real transformation, we should aim to have non-sustainability professionals to take on a sustainability mission. We should aspire to have more sustainability professionals in senior leadership and in boardrooms. We should demand diverse and inclusive teams, and these teams to be remunerated equally. Only then sustainability truly becomes something WE all do, instead of something SOME of us do.

## Budgets

As in 2018, 38% of respondents reported an increase to their budget, while slightly fewer reported a decrease; however, there is little movement between the bandings, which suggests the budget increases and decreases are marginal.

Given the demands of increasingly vocal stakeholders, mandatory environmental reporting, and calls for greater transparency, there has been a rise in companies' to-do lists since 2018, which can be seen in the shifting patterns in team sizes. On the surface, therefore, it is difficult to explain the lack of large shifts in the budget bandings. One explanation may be the greater emphasis on cross-functional working within companies, with potentially other departmental budgets being used to fund projects e.g. community programs funding by marketing budgets or diversity by HR. Alternatively, it may simply be the case that budgets do not include employee costs.

# 38%

OF RESPONDENTS  
REPORTED AN INCREASE  
TO THEIR BUDGET

### GLOBAL

	2020	2018	2016
0	49%	50%	35%
€1–€112k	15%	19%	21%
€112k–€224k	9%	8%	11%
€224k–€560k	8%	8%	11%
€560k–€1.12 million	6%	5%	8%
€1.12 million +	12%	10%	15%

### CONTINENTAL EUROPE

	2020	2018	2016
€0–€50k	15%	-	-
€50–€100k	14%	-	-
€100k–€225k	20%	-	-
€225k–€500k	11%	-	-
€500k–€1 million	16%	-	-
€1m– €1.5 million	4%	-	-
€1.5m– €2 million	6%	-	-
€2 million+	14%	-	-

### BUDGET CHANGE



47%	Same
38%	Increased
15%	Decrease

2018: Increased 38%, Same 45%,  
Decrease 17%

### ORGANISATIONS' APPROACH TO CR&S (NEW)<sup>7</sup>

CR&S approach	All (%)	Consultants (%)	In-house (%)
Proactive	69	76	66
Reactive	25	16	28
Unsure	7	8	6

<sup>7</sup> New question to 2020 survey.

# Job function

Another major driver for the survey was to get a clearer understanding of how respondents spent their time – where do they focus their efforts? Reflecting comments we made earlier about greater stakeholder interest in climate change and environmental issues more generally, this year we introduced more specific categories of activity for this area.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, both in-house and consultants now rank climate change as their second most important priority behind strategy development. In a similar vein, the rise of responsible investment/ESG into the top five activities for consultants demonstrates the increasing demands of institutional investors and, perhaps, the lack of expertise and/or time in-house to deal with these requests.

## TOP 5 ACTIVITIES – IN-HOUSE

2020	2018	Activity
1 =	1	CR&S Strategy Development & Implementation
2 (NEW)		Climate Change/Carbon
3 ↓	2	Reporting/Performance Measurement (NEW)
4 ↓	3	Stakeholder Engagement (NEW)
5 =	5	Community Investment

## TOP 5 ACTIVITIES – CONSULTANTS

2020	2018	Activity
1 =	1	CR&S Strategy Development & Implementation
2 (NEW)		Climate Change/Carbon
3 =	3	Stakeholder Engagement (NEW)
4 ↓	2	Reporting/Performance Measurement (NEW)
5 ↑		Responsible Investment/ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) Investing



**Charlotte Wolff-Bye**

*Vice President Sustainability,  
Equinor*

**“Mainstreaming of ESG – environmental, social and governance – among investors means sustainability is now closely connected to value creation.”**

“

**I’d argue that 2020 is the year when the sustainability profession came of age. The Coronavirus pandemic has shed sunlight on the cracks of our society.**

Sustainability leadership traits will be central to the economic recovery that must follow. Mainstreaming of ESG – environmental, social and governance – among investors means sustainability is now closely connected to value creation. With the future in focus, real and decisive actions need to deliver commercial success and positive value for society and nature. The role of the sustainability professional is a critical and urgent one. New courses must be set, decisions informed, and technical capability improved. There is no time to waste under the rising shadow of climate change. It is of some comfort that there is a growing pool of professionals who are specifically tasked with shaping our respective organisations’ contributions to a better society. As sustainability skills are increasingly becoming business critical, it’s not implausible to expect more of these professionals in the C-suite before long.”



# Job satisfaction and job security

Over a quarter of respondents were very satisfied with their jobs, with a further 52% declaring themselves to be satisfied. These percentages were very similar for in-house employees and consultants. These results reaffirm the findings from previous surveys that people working in the sector enjoy what they do. This is further supported by the fact that 89% would recommend a career in the sector (up from 86% in the last survey). There has been an increase in respondents feeling less secure in their jobs compared to the last survey but this is most likely due to the extraordinary circumstances we find ourselves in with Covid-19.

## JOB SATISFACTION (%)

	2020	2018
<i>Very dissatisfied</i>	3%	3%
<i>Dissatisfied</i>	16%	16%
<i>Satisfied</i>	52%	56%
<i>Very satisfied</i>	29%	25%

## JOB SECURITY (%)

	2020	2018
<i>Less</i>	29%	18%
<i>Same</i>	50%	55%
<i>More</i>	21%	27%

## JOB SECURITY BROKEN DOWN PER REGION (%)

	<i>Less secure (2018 score)</i>	<i>The same (2018 score)</i>	<i>More secure (2018 score)</i>
<i>UK</i>	33% (20%)	56% (55%)	11% (25%)
<i>Continental Europe</i>	35% (17%)	60% (50%)	5% (33%)
<i>North America</i>	35% (14%)	60% (60%)	5% (26%)
<i>Rest of World</i>	28% (20%)	54% (55%)	18% (25%)



**Wouter van Tol**

*Head of Government, Community Affairs & Sustainability, DS Smith*

***“It is not that long ago that our profession consisted mostly of environmental specialists. We were tagged on to Health & Safety departments, perhaps because our work seemed equally compliance-related and difficult to “place” anywhere else in the company.”***

“

**Fast forward to 2020 and the situation is vastly different. No, I’m not referring to Covid-19 or Black Lives Matter; I’m talking about the vastly increased scope of senior CR&S roles.**

Just look at the breadth of skills required. Strategy and carbon are top of the list in this report, but every senior CR&S professional must be good at leadership and change management, understanding the technical aspects of resource efficiency, managing relations with government and other stakeholders, engaging on a wide range of social issues, driving commercial benefits and – more than ever before – linking CR&S and finance. We have to be able to do it all.

In senior business roles – including CR&S roles - it also helps to have breadth in terms of exposure to different industries and geographies. There is no substitute for experiencing how to lead CR&S, say, in a European FMCG compared to an Asian electronics company or a British packaging company. Having the ability to live and work abroad for years is fairly commonplace in the EU, yet it is still a distinct career advantage in multinational companies.

There is evidence in this report that as a profession we do not have enough breadth in the areas of diversity and equality. If our profession consists of “tempered radicals” who want to create change from the inside, this is where we can and should make a difference.

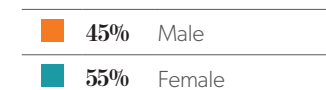
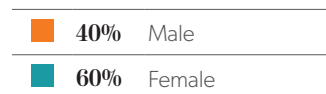
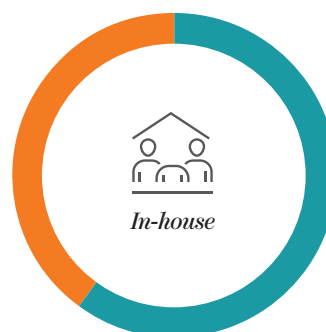
# Gender

The survey continues to highlight disparities in the levels of remuneration and seniority (especially for consultants) between men and women.

The majority of survey respondents continue to be women (2020: 57%), although the proportion has decreased slightly since 2018 (60%). The number of male respondents has remained relatively static since 2018 (41% in 2020 versus 40% in 2018), with 2% preferring not to state their gender or declaring as non-binary.

Women are in the majority both in-house and in consultancies. Among in-house practitioners, they constituted 60% of respondents, while they made up 55% of consultants. These figures have remained relatively static since 2018.

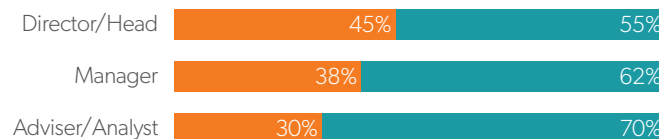
GENDER SPLIT



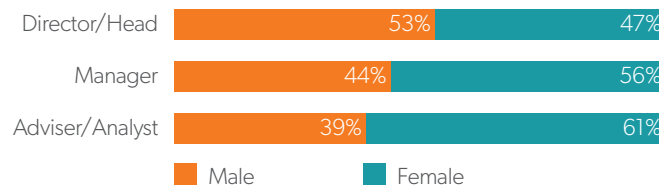
## Job title split by gender

Women made up the majority of all the generic in-house and consultant job roles, save only for Director/Partner roles in consultancies. As noted previously, this is in itself notable given that many consultants advise their clients on the benefits of diversity and inclusion, and thus appear to be failing to heed their own advice. Nonetheless, the disparity in the proportion of men to female at Director/Partner level within consultancies has become less stark since 2018 (53:47 in 2020 versus 61:39 in 2018), indicating that progress has been made relatively rapidly to diversify the top ranks.

### IN-HOUSE



### CONSULTANT



# 57%

OF RESPONDENTS  
ARE WOMEN

# 55%

OF IN-HOUSE  
DIRECTORS/HEADS  
ARE FEMALE

# 53%

OF CONSULTANT  
DIRECTORS/HEADS  
ARE MALE

## Top five activities by gender

The apparent distinction between where men and women working in the sector focused their activities seems to be diminishing a little more each time we run the survey. Both women and men have very similar focused areas with one subtle distinction: men have responsible investment/ ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) investing within their top five activities while women have community investment.

2020	Male	Female
1	CR&S Strategy Development & Implementation	CR&S Strategy Development & Implementation
2	Climate Change/Carbon (NEW)	Reporting/Performance Measurement
3	Reporting/Performance Measurement	Climate Change/Carbon (NEW)
4	Stakeholder Engagement	Stakeholder Engagement
5	Responsible Investment/ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) Investing	Community Investment



### Uzma Hamid-Dizier

Head of Inclusion and Responsible Business,  
Slaughter and May

***“CR&S professionals are needed more than ever to lead businesses to become more resilient, not only to survive but to transform them.”***

“

Is it a good time to be a sustainability professional?

2020 has been a brusque start to the forecasted decade of disruption; the events of the past year have magnified the fragility of our economic and business systems and the widespread experience of inequality. As business deals with the disarray caused by the world health pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement, it shows how major societal risks can materialise quickly and the massive transformations that can be implemented in the short term to meet the challenges of environmental, social and governance issues.

CR&S professionals are needed more than ever to lead businesses to become more resilient, not only to survive but to transform

them to meet the shifting demands of the financial markets, social opinion, regulation and shareholders. This is an opportunity to drive wider organisational change and demonstrate value creation across their business, which will require sharpening skills on business transformation and behaviour change, to translate senior level commitment into action at every level.

To ensure that this opportunity extends to all CR&S professionals, in terms of gender and ethnicity, senior leaders need to take the lead in applying the principles of equality in their own teams to improve diversity at the top of the profession. Having spent 20 years in this field I have witnessed a very slow progression of diverse talent making it to the top and it is incumbent on us to accelerate the pace of change. This means fair remuneration, equally distributed development opportunities, mentoring diverse individuals, better succession planning and of course in recruitment, asking for a diverse slate of candidates.”

## Salary distribution by gender

The global average salaries for men and women were €91,000 (an increase of 16% since 2018) and €81,000 (an increase of 19% increase since 2018) respectively. In Continental Europe, average salaries increased by 8% for men (from €88,000 in 2018 to €96,000 in 2020) and by 4% for women in 2020 (from €71,000 in 2018 to €74,000 in 2020).

Since 2018, the average salaries of both males and females across the regions surveyed increased. Unfortunately, these increases have, in many cases, done little to equalise the disparity in pay between genders that – despite best efforts – remains one of the areas this and previous reports have highlighted.

When looking at global differences in female and male remuneration compared to 2018, it is encouraging to see that the overall pay gap has narrowed from 13% in 2018 to 10% in 2020. Progress, however, is not uniform across regions and indeed, some regions have seen an increase in the gender pay gap: both Continental Europe and North America have moved further away from pay parity since 2018 (Continental Europe: 22% pay gap in 2020 versus 20% in 2018; North America: 14% pay gap in 2020 versus parity in 2018).

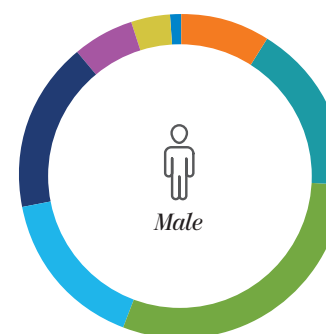
While we do not profess to be able to uncover or fully explore the reasons behind the gender pay gap in this report, it is worth briefly mentioning a few of the reasons that may give rise to variations in the pay gap. For example, women tend to fill more part-time

jobs than men, which have lower hourly median pay than full-time jobs. As we also mention previously (see page 12), the extent to which men seem to be more effective at negotiating their salaries and bonuses, may also play a role. Irrespective of the reasons behind this ongoing inequality between male and female salaries, the onus ultimately still lies with the employer to provide equal opportunities and move quickly to bridge this gap.

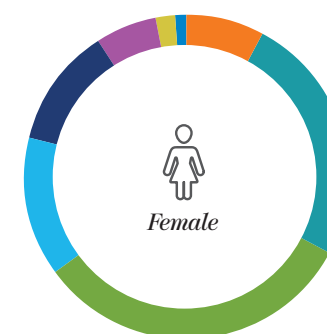
An area that has not been explored in this report, but which may bear mention, is the extent to which the pay gap is uniform across different age groups. In the UK, for example, the overall gender pay gap for full-time employees under 40 is approaching zero, while the pay gap among employees above 40 is still substantial – an indication, perhaps, that incoming employees are less likely to accept differences in pay based solely on gender.<sup>10</sup> Different national approaches may also be a driving force behind changes in the pay gap: we think it not unreasonable to speculate that the introduction of mandatory gender pay gap reporting in 2017 in the UK, which affects all organisations with over 250 employees, may have played some role in slowly pushing employers to strive for more equality within the UK.

Despite a number of complex and sometimes related factors interacting to produce the gender pay gap, one thing does remain crystal clear: there is still a lot of work to do in a sector that proclaims the benefits of diversity and inclusion but which fails to – fully – turn rhetoric into reality.

## SALARY DISTRIBUTION



9%	€0 – €34k
17%	€34k – €56k
30%	€56k – €84k
16%	€84k – €112k
17%	€112k – €157k
6%	€157k – €202k
4%	€202k –
1%	€220k+



8%	€0 – €34k
25%	€34k – €56k
32%	€56k – €84k
14%	€84k – €112k
12%	€112k – €157k
6%	€157k – €202k
2%	€202k –
1%	€220k+

# 16%

INCREASE IN AVERAGE SALARIES FOR MEN GLOBALLY

# 19%

INCREASE IN AVERAGE SALARIES FOR WOMEN GLOBALLY

# 10%

PAY GAP BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

<sup>10</sup> Gender pay gap in the UK 2019. (2019), ONS <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/genderpaygapintheuk/2019>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

### Bonus comparison by gender

The overall percentages of males and females receiving bonuses does not differ substantially (64% versus 61%), although the distribution of bonus amounts shows that men benefit from higher bonuses than women.



36%	Nil
37%	€0–€11k
11%	€11k–€22k
5%	€22k–€34k
5%	€34k–€56k
4%	€56k–€112k
2%	€112k+

39%	Nil
39%	€0–€11k
11%	€11k–€22k
5%	€22k–€34k
3%	€34k–€56k
2%	€56k–€112k
1%	€112k+

**64%**  
OF MEN RECEIVE  
A BONUS

**61%**  
OF WOMEN RECEIVE  
A BONUS

AVERAGE BONUS FIGURES BY GENDER IN 2020

	Consultant		In-house	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
UK	€10,528	€5,484	€20,444	€15,938
Continental Europe	€11,573	€8,132	€21,793	€12,499
North America	€8,538	€8,297	€31,011	€24,543

# Conclusions



**Harco Leertouwer**  
Managing Director (Benelux),  
Acre

“

*2020 has been an incredibly challenging year and despite all of the difficulties we have experienced, it is great to see the CR & Sustainability community's commitment to this year's survey, especially in Continental Europe. With the opening of our Benelux head office in Amsterdam, Acre has further strengthened its position in Mainland Europe and I would like to thank all those who took part and in particular to our Benelux participants, from whom we saw more than double the number of responses this time round.*

The pandemic has provided an opportunity for all of us to reflect and we have experienced, directly or indirectly, how easily our world can be turned upside down in a relatively short time. Obviously, as CR&S practitioners we have been aware of the pressing urgency to accelerate our way to a more sustainable and healthy future – which has been starkly highlighted by the Covid-19 crisis. For several years, Acre has been highlighting in whitepapers the importance of a robust ESG performance and not only because of the fact that this makes good business sense. There is clear evidence that companies with a stronger ESG track record are more effective at anticipating risk and therefore more likely to survive a pandemic and to remain more financially viable, too.

However, we need to do so much more, and this year's salary survey is a clear call to action for an even more fundamental shift in business practice if we want to achieve real change.

Our respondents placed climate change & carbon as their second most important priority in terms of job function – after CR&S strategy development and implementation. Notably, in the last survey, climate change did not even feature. Extratropical cyclone Ciara caused widespread wind and clouding damage across Europe, the Northern Hemisphere had experienced its warmer summer and warmest August on record and the ice caps continue to melt at an alarming rate. As a specialism and focus, climate change remains highly technical and presents vast complexities and challenges to business and to the CR&S practitioner; so, it will be fascinating to see how the function evolves and hopefully sees greater investment and resourcing over the coming years.

This year's survey has seen an increase in the gender pay gap – as high as 22% in Continental Europe and 14% in the USA (compared to 10% in the UK), which is discouraging. While salary negotiation skills and legacy structures have historically held women back when it comes to securing fair and equal pay; we can only hope that with an increased focus on diversity in the workplace and as businesses become subject to even more scrutiny than ever before, this is an

anomaly that will be addressed by the time we release our next survey.

George Floyd's death this summer led many businesses to release statements in varying degrees of authenticity about how black lives matter to them. We know that people of colour are at the greatest risk from exposure to air pollution and the climate crisis; and as such the case has never been stronger to ensure they are better represented within the CR & Sustainability profession. At Acre, we recognise we still have a lot of work to do. We are in a unique position to help drive more proactive and diverse recruitment practices not only for our clients – but for ourselves, too – and we are definitely not where we need to be yet, but both motivated and in action mode to change this.

We know that companies with a diverse and inclusive culture report better business performance. There simply are not enough women in senior executive positions – that is not only clear from this survey – anecdotally we know it to be true, too. There has never been a time where a shake-up in leadership and a move away from the institutional norm has been more necessary. Fresh vision, equality and diverse thinking – challenging the (very much broken) norm is what we need right now, from the ground right up to board level. Leadership from Greta Thunberg and Vanessa Nakate highlights the kind of change we urgently need to see – and we are positive that we will by the time we meet again, in 2022.





**Paul Burke**

Senior Partner, Carnstone

***“Recent events have provided powerful and tangible evidence of the importance of this expertise and the catastrophic consequences of a narrow, single-track focus that ignores wider risks.”***

“

Two years ago, I highlighted how those working in CR&S were uniquely well-placed to provide insights that looked beyond the immediate and short term and examined the impact of social, economic and environmental issues and the interconnections between them. Recent events have provided powerful and tangible evidence of the importance of this expertise and the catastrophic consequences of a narrow, single-track focus that ignores wider risks.

It is, therefore, unsurprising that much of the discussion about how the post-Covid recovery should be structured has emphasised the central role of sustainability. Combined with demands to address racial inequalities, tackle climate change and redefine corporate purpose so it better meets the expectations of stakeholders, you can plainly see how CR&S practitioners are in a prime position to develop responses and lead the transition. At the same time, they and their employers will need to weather the economic fallout from the pandemic. Given the potential scale of the latter, the hope is that any retrenchment in corporate budgets will fall elsewhere and, in the words of the song, at the end of the storm there will be a golden sky.

Turning to the results of this year’s survey several themes previously highlighted remain prominent. In particular, women continue to be a majority both in the number of respondents and across all of the generic job roles (with the exception of Director/Partner in consultancies). At the same time, while the gender pay gap overall has reduced slightly this is not consistent across all countries and in the United States it’s grown from zero to 14%! This disparity remains a major challenge, especially for a sector that champions the benefits of diversity and inclusion.

On the subject of remuneration, the gap between those working in-house and consultants continues to widen. This poses a major risk to the latter as the siren call of a better salary, benefits package and, possibly, greater job security may prove too alluring for both their current employees and those they are seeking to recruit. Combined with the predominance of men in the more senior roles there is a real concern that talented and skilled women will, increasingly, regard corporate life as a much better option.

Another recurring theme – and one that runs counter to claims that the CR&S is being integrated into other functions or roles – is that (human) resource levels in dedicated CR&S teams have remained remarkably stable over the years. In fact, this time round nearly half of the respondents reported an increase in team size.

This is further evidence of, on the one hand, the ever-expanding nature of what constitutes CR&S and, on the other, the willingness of senior management to commit resources to the area. It may also have something to do with the increasing interest from investors and their proxies in aspects of the agenda – particularly as regards climate change, human rights, and diversity and inclusion. That Responsible Investment/ESG featured for the first time in the top five activities for consultants suggests that, currently, the necessary skills and knowledge are not readily available in-house.

Finally, I would like to thank all those participated in the survey notwithstanding the many other pressing calls on their time.”

**Victoria Taylor***Managing Director/CEO, Flag*

***“There is still a gap – which to me, leading a predominantly female company, is unfathomable.”***

“

**Flag has had the privilege to be involved in the CR&S Salary Survey for several years. It is so rewarding to see that the value placed on our sector, and sustainability professionals in the wider business community, continues to grow.**

There are many interesting (and several frustrating) findings in this latest survey. Generally, salaries and bonuses have gone up, and the gap between female and male remuneration has got smaller. However, there is still a gap – which to me, leading a predominantly female company, is unfathomable. What justification can there be in this disparity if companies pay based on skill and capability? There appears to be a lot of work still to do to make remuneration and benefits equal and equitable. There are also some missed opportunities for action, in particular broader diversity measures, which we are already talking about incorporating the next time around.

We are right in the middle of a global pandemic, which is having an impact on all communities, corporates and organisations around the world. This survey already shows some increase in the number of CR&S professionals, but I suspect we will see a dramatic growth in the year ahead.

Increasingly, corporates and government organisations are appreciating how economically critical it is to behave responsibly. It is only by doing so, and having the right advisers and internal teams, that their business will thrive – in the short-term context of the current humanitarian crisis, as well as the long-term dangers of climate change. It will also be interesting, although potentially disheartening, to see the other impacts of Covid-19 – for example, there is significant potential for increases in gender inequalities, as women bear the greater burden of childcare and home schooling.

Covid-19 has also played a role in the recent activities and discussions on social justice, brought to the fore by the Black Lives Matter movement. There are uncomfortable truths that must be recognised everywhere about health inequality, institutional prejudice and the social exclusion of people of colour. We need to learn more about the reality of the CR&S professional community in this context, and what we can do to rectify the inevitable imbalance. It is something that we are actively investigating in my own consultancy, exploring different avenues for recruitment: from the language we use, to the recruiters we work with, to where we find talent. I hope we will see similar efforts, as well as foundation education and services for under-served communities, more broadly in the CR&S world.”

# About the authors



Acre is a specialist sustainability recruitment consultancy connecting companies and people across corporate responsibility, sustainability, environment, energy and health & safety to help build the next generation of sustainable business. The company was founded in 2003 to respond to the growing need for sustainability professionals and offers bespoke solutions for recruitment, executive search and business intelligence.

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Flag is a creative agency specialising in sustainability communications and corporate reporting. We help companies to tell their stories and engage with stakeholders. With stakeholders increasingly demanding trust and transparency, businesses need to develop impactful communications that show performance, encourage dialogue and promote positive change. We're a 60-strong team of creative thinkers who work together with our clients to produce a range of communications solutions. We offer strategic advice, media outreach, and editorial, design and production services – in digital and print.

[www.flag.co.uk](http://www.flag.co.uk)



Carnstone is an independent management consultancy, specialising in corporate responsibility and sustainability. We advise clients on the full range of social, environmental and ethical topics – from supplier management to community investment, from environmental modelling to corporate governance. We have offices in London and Shanghai.

We work mainly for large companies – also for NGOs and charities – and we have known many of our clients for years. We help set strategy, we do research, we run projects and frequently we're just there at the end of the phone for some quick advice.

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