



**GREEN  
CROSS**  
United  
Kingdom

# Sustainable Infrastructure

## Programme Framework

# SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK

The Sustainable Infrastructure Programme Framework (hereafter SI $\pi$ ) establishes a clear objective:

Sustainable Infrastructure is defined as projects planned, designed, built, and dismantled in a manner that ensures economic, financial, social, environmental (including climate resilience), and institutional sustainability throughout their entire life cycle, with the ultimate purpose of generating a verified Positive Impact ( $\pi$ ) that regenerates natural and social capital.

SI $\pi$  enables developers, owners, and financial institutions to achieve this through rigorous methodology developed with:



SI $\pi$  integrates complementary standards as stakeholder requirements demand:



**Certification serves as evidence of performance, not the objective itself.**

SI $\pi$  is engineered for measurable value, moving beyond static certification to dynamic performance management.

# IMPLEMENTATION BARRIERS IN INFRASTRUCTURE SUSTAINABILITY

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## 1. THE GAP BETWEEN COMMITMENT AND CREDIBLE DELIVERY

- Your **£500M infrastructure project** has sustainability commitments.
- The **community still opposes it**. **Investors** question the **ESG claims**.
- **The result: Project Finance that is both complex and expensive.**

### WHY?

- Because sustainability ratings without **independent verification** are promises, not performance.
- Because community engagement without **technical accountability** is consultation, not consent.
- Because green finance requires **demonstrated positive impact**, not reported intentions.



"If major infrastructure projects are not sustainable, they should not get the green light."

António Guterres, UN Secretary-General

## 2. THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP

This **isn't isolated failure**—it's systemic. **80%** of global corporations have **sustainability strategies**. Only **16%** are **genuinely on track to deliver**<sup>1</sup>.

The 84% fail not from lack of commitment, but from lacking measurable frameworks, independent verification, and technical accountability.

Slπ closes this gap by providing what's systematically missing:

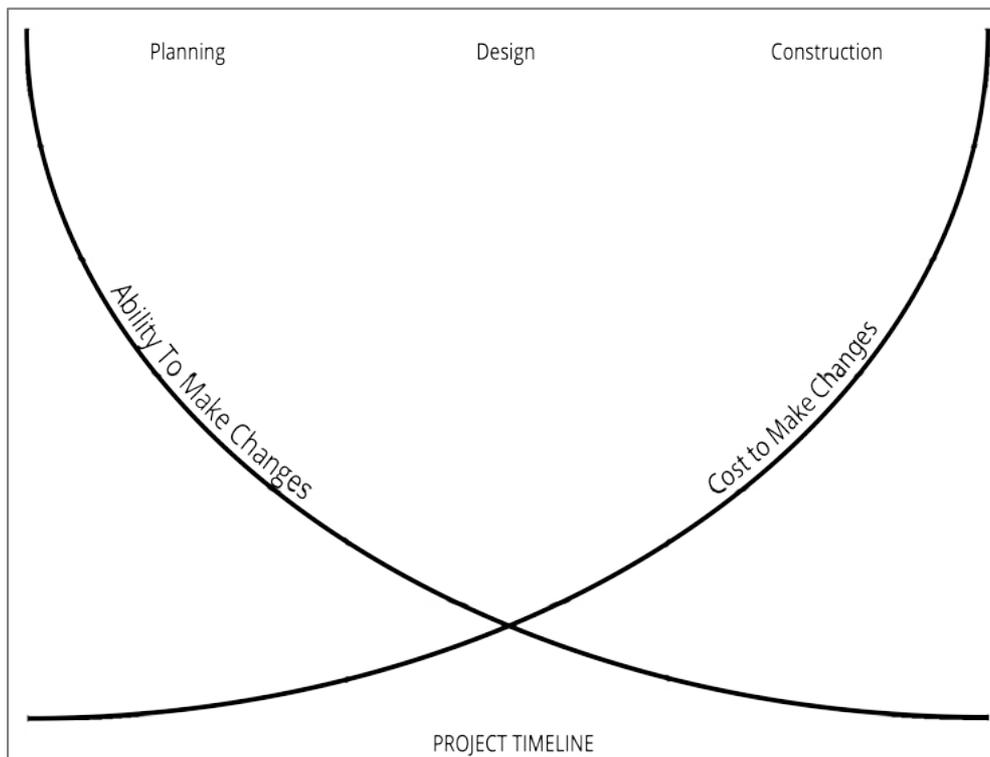
- **A measurable roadmap:** 73 standardised credits to guide from aspiration to performance.
- **Independent validation:** Independent verification and Third-party certification that stakeholders trust.
- **Traceable accountability:** Castling<sup>2</sup> methodology transforming promises into auditable reality.

## SIP OVERVIEW: APPROACH, APPLICATION & LIFECYCLE

### 3. STRUCTURED FRAMEWORK: COMPLEX DECISIONS

Measuring the full range of social, environmental, and economic impacts is challenging amidst complex and changing variables. SIP provides a structured framework to **assess progress, identify trade-offs, and align priorities** against a common goal.

What constitutes the best solution is often project-specific; the framework offers guiding questions for decisions at both **project and system-wide levels**.



Whether using **self-assessment or pursuing third-party verification**, SIP delivers:

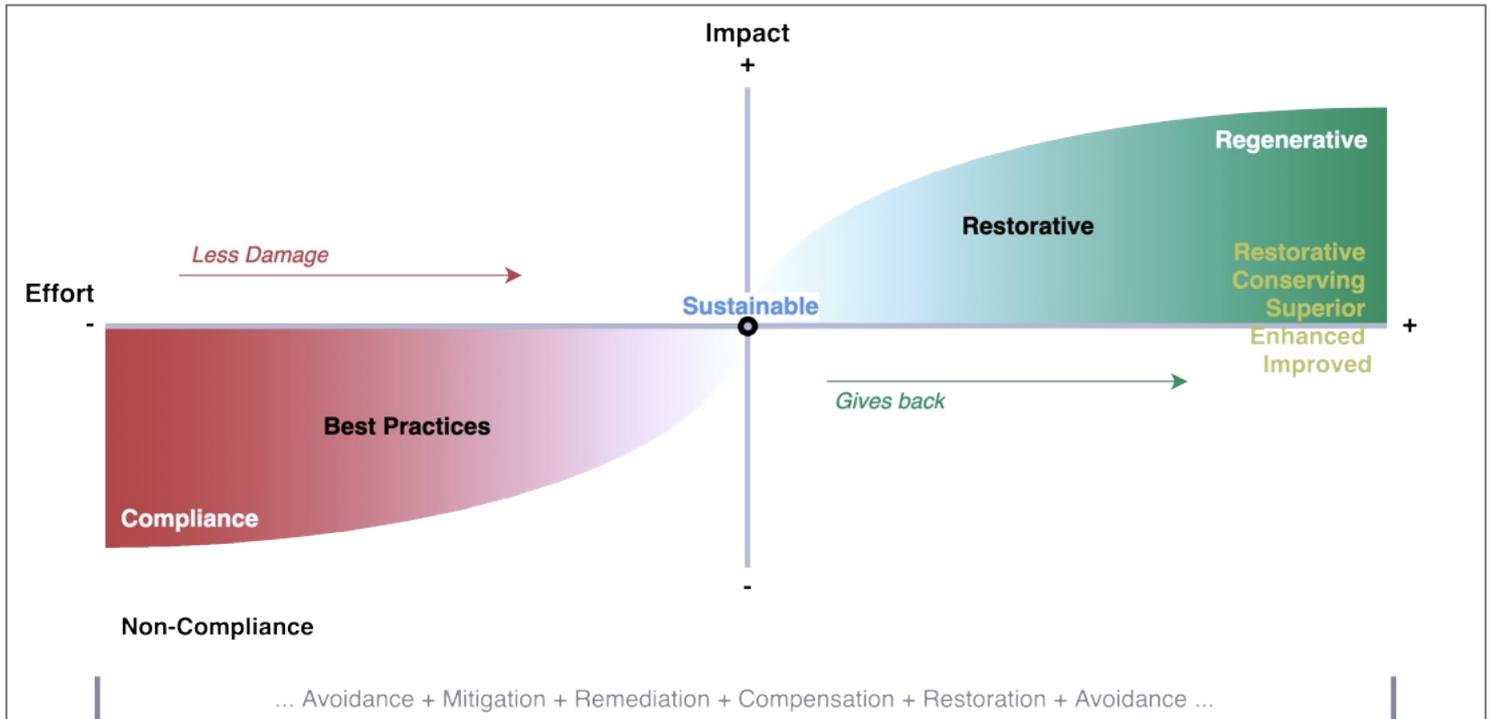
- **Accountability** against consistent sustainability criteria.
- **Incentivisation** of higher achievement in project performance.
- **Recognition** of organisational commitment through procurement.
- **Public attention** to positive infrastructure outcomes.
- **Strengthened** collaboration amongst project teams and agencies.
- **Demonstration** of good governance to voters, taxpayers, and stakeholders.

The framework applies across six core sectors and integrates across the complete project lifecycle: **Planning, Design, Construction, Operation, and End-of-Life**.

## THREE AXES OF VERIFIED PERFORMANCE

### 4. HOW SIπ TRANSFORMS INFRASTRUCTURE PERFORMANCE

The SIπ is a voluntary framework guides infrastructure assets from conventional practice, through sustainability, to restorative impact—where projects actively regenerate natural and social capital. **This is what we call Positive Impact (π).**



### 5. THE THREE VALUE AXES

- I. **Proactive Risk Management:** Systematic identification and mitigation of social and environmental risks from planning phase. Reduces conflict probability, increases execution predictability, prevents budget overruns.
- II. **Favorable Financing Profile:** Projects with managed risks and verified credentials align with institutional investor and development bank criteria for climate adaptation and mitigation. This contributes to more competitive financing conditions.
- III. **Independent Certification:** Green Cross UK guides dossier preparation and verifies submission readiness. Independent accredited certifier (ISI, etc.) performs conflict-of-interest check and awards formal certification. This provides verifiable evidence base facilitating dialogue with authorities, communities, and investors. Final coherence between performance and communication is independently certified.

## FRAMEWORK ARCHITECTURE & SECTOR SCOPE

### 6. SECTORS, CATEGORIES, CREDITS, AND POINTS

The SIπ framework integrates 64 Envision credits developed by ISI (Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure) and Harvard with 9 additional Castling credits created by Green Cross UK, **totaling 73 credits across 6 categories** worth 1,100 points.

Where stakeholder needs require, this programme connects seamlessly with established standards including **GRI, LEED, SBTi, TNFD, and relevant ISO protocols**. Independent third-party certification includes **conflict-of-interest** verification to ensure assessment integrity.

 <b>Energy</b>	 <b>Water</b>	 <b>Waste</b>	 <b>Transportation</b>	 <b>Landscape</b>	 <b>Information</b>
Distribution	Treatment	Solid waste	Airports	Public Realm	Telecom
Hydroelectric	Distribution	Recycling	Roads / Highways	Parks	Cables
Coal	Capture / Storage	Hazardous	Bikes / Pedestrians	Ecosystem Services	Internet
Natural Gas	Stormwater	Waste	Railways	Natural Infrastructure	Phones
Wind	Flood Control	Collection & Transfer	Transit	Environmental Remediation	Data Centers
Solar	Nutrient Management		Ports	Urbanisation	Sensors
Biomass			Waterways		

SIπ defines **what to measure and why it matters**. When paired with digital infrastructure – like digital twins - , this framework validates that positive impact is **continuous rather than static**—transforming certification from a one-time achievement into ongoing performance verification.

**Cross-sector comparison** becomes possible when different infrastructure types are evaluated against identical rigorous criteria. An energy generation project and a transport hub, despite different operational profiles, face the same sustainability benchmarks.

**This standardization allows stakeholders to assess relative commitment and achievement across sectors**, facilitating informed capital allocation and identifying transferable best practices across infrastructure domains.

## IMPACT CATEGORY STRUCTURE AND METRICS

### 7. SIX IMPACT CATEGORIES · EACH WITH SPECIFIC INTENT AND METRICS

The framework's 73 credits cover six sustainability dimensions.



#### QUALITY OF LIFE (14 credits):

- Subcategories: Wellbeing, Mobility, Community.
- Addresses community health, safety, and wellbeing, including mobility, pollution, and equity. Proactive social impact management reduces community conflict risk.



#### LEADERSHIP (12 credits):

- Subcategories: Collaboration, Planning, Economy.
- Evaluates collaboration approaches, planning quality, and governance structures that enable sustainable management throughout the project lifecycle. Strong performance here facilitates productive dialogue with third parties including regulators and communities.



#### RESOURCE ALLOCATION (14 credits):

- Subcategories: Materials, Energy, Water.
- Measures efficiency in materials, energy, and water consumption. Credits assess recycled content percentages, consumption reduction targets, and renewable energy adoption. Improved resource efficiency directly strengthens project economics.



#### NATURAL WORLD (14 credits):

- Subcategories: Siting, Conservation, Ecology.
- Focuses on ecosystem protection and biodiversity enhancement. Credits cover preserved land percentages, water management approaches, and habitat restoration. Proactive environmental risk management prevents regulatory conflicts and costly remediation.



#### CLIMATE & RESILIENCE (10 credits):

- Subcategories: Emissions, Resilience.
- Addresses both emissions reduction and adaptation to climate-related risks. Carbon & Envir. footprints and climate vulnerability assessments align projects with climate finance criteria increasingly required by institutional investors and development banks.



#### CASTLING<sup>1</sup> (9 credits):

- Subcategories: Communication, Compliance Pledges.
- Verifies coherence between public communications and technical evidence, ensuring reports and stakeholder dialogue align with verified credits while managing colour-washing risk.

# HOW CREDITS WORK: THE ANATOMY OF A CRITERION

## 8. RENEWABLE ENERGY EXAMPLE – FROM INTENT TO VERIFICATION

Each of the 73 credits follows a structured evaluation methodology ensuring consistency across diverse infrastructure types.

The renewable energy credit (LR 2.3) exemplifies this approach:

RESOURCE ALLOCATION: ENERGY

**RA2.3 Use Renewable Energy**

24

POINTS

**INTENT**  
Meet operational energy needs through renewable energy sources.

**METRIC**  
Extent to which renewable energy sources are incorporated.

**LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT**

IMPROVED	ENHANCED	SUPERIOR	CONSERVING	RESTORATIVE
A	A	A	A	A
(5) At Least 5%	(10) At Least 15%	(15) At Least 30%	(20) At Least 50%	(24) Net Positive
(A) The project meets: 5% of energy needs (electricity and fuel) from renewable sources.	(A) The project meets: 15% of energy needs (electricity and fuel) from renewable sources.	(A) The project meets: 30% of energy needs (electricity and fuel) from renewable sources.	(A) The project meets: 50% of energy needs (electricity and fuel) from renewable sources.	(A) The project generates a net positive amount of renewable energy.

**DESCRIPTION**

While reducing energy use is the primary goal, a net-zero energy society will require significant investment in renewable energy sources. When appropriate, renewable energy can be generated on site to help reduce the need for fossil fuel sources. However, it is important to note that large-scale off-site renewable energy sources, such as wind farms, large hydroelectric facilities, or solar arrays, are often more efficient. It can be challenging to demonstrate a direct connection to these sources and ensure that their energy generation is not double-counted by other projects. Project teams should evaluate the feasibility of renewable energy, including nontraditional energy sources, to effectively increase the portion of operational energy that comes from renewable sources.

Projects may only count Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) purchased or under contract at the time of assessment. Nonbinding commitments for future REC purchases cannot be counted toward achievement in this credit. Purchased RECs must be annualized over the life of the project. For example, if a project with a 20-year life purchases RECs for 100% of its energy consumption for one year, this would translate to 5% of its overall energy consumption.

On-site generation put back onto the grid is accounted for in determining percentage of electricity used. For example, in a case with 100 kWh of electricity used on site, 20 kWh of renewables purchased from the grid, 10 kWh of renewables generated and used on site, and 5 kWh of renewables returned to the grid, the result is a level of 35% renewables attained.

**PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT**

*Improved - Conserving:* Levels in this credit are distinguished by the percentage of total energy use from renewable sources. Unlike energy consumption in buildings, which are almost always dominated by electricity, infrastructure operational energy use can include both electricity and fuel consumption. For this credit, project teams should consider both electricity and fuel consumption in their calculations.

Renewable energy can be sourced from on-site generation, purchased in fuels, or purchased from the grid through a direct purchase agreement (e.g., renewable energy power purchase agreement). For purchased renewable energy from the grid, the electricity service provider sources power from a renewable energy source and sells that power directly to the project. Renewable energy sources must be in the same power grid as the project in this type of transaction. Project teams cannot attribute latent renewable energy within the grid to the project without a purchase agreement.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA AND DOCUMENTATION GUIDANCE**

A. To what extent does the project meet electricity or fuel needs from renewable sources?

1. Documentation of the anticipated annual output of all renewable sources, direct renewable electricity purchases, or exports to the grid, and the resulting overall percentage of renewable energy

- **Intent:** Meet operational energy needs through renewable sources
- **Metric:** Extent to which renewable energy sources are incorporated
- **Levels of Achievement:** Five progressive thresholds from Improved (demonstrating consideration of renewables in design) through Enhanced (5% renewable energy), Superior (30%), Conserving (50%), to Restorative (achieving net positive renewable energy generation)
- **Evaluation Criteria:** Specific documentation requirements at each level—from procurement strategy evidence to operational percentage calculations

The **Description** section details implementation pathways, distinguishing between direct purchase agreements, unbundled renewable energy certificates, and on-site generation. **Performance Improvement** guidance establishes documentation standards. Evaluation Criteria specify exactly what evidence reviewers require to award points.

This rigorous structure applies universally—whether assessing stakeholder collaboration, water conservation, or climate resilience—creating comparable, verifiable performance metrics across all infrastructure sectors.

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**Applicability:** This credit is applicable to all projects that consume energy (fuel or electricity) during their operation. Projects that do not include operational energy may apply to have this credit deemed not applicable with supporting documentation. In rare cases, where the amount of operational energy use is insignificant in comparison to the scale of the project, teams may apply to have this credit deemed not applicable with supporting documentation. However, the reviewer may exercise his/her discretion in determining what constitutes an insignificant quantity of operational energy use in the context of the project.

#### EVALUATION CRITERIA AND DOCUMENTATION GUIDANCE

##### A. To what extent does the project meet electricity or fuel needs from renewable sources?

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## DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND CARBON CREDIT INTEGRATION

### 9. DIGITAL INTEGRATION & KPI | OKR MONITORING

The SIπ establishes Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and Objectives and Key Results (OKR) monitorable through digital infrastructure layers including IoT sensors, AI analytics, real-time dashboards, among others.

This integration enables:

- **Continuous** performance validation against established baselines.
- **Predictive** maintenance aligned with sustainability targets.
- **Transparent** reporting to investors and regulators.
- **Automated verification** of Castling credit coherence, as communication claims can be cross-referenced against real-time operational data.

Digitalisation transforms static certification into dynamic performance management, where achievement is continuously demonstrated rather than periodically claimed.



### 10. CARBON CREDIT INSETTING WITH VERIFIED INTEGRITY

The verified baseline and continuous monitoring architecture enable development of carbon credit inseting programmes with rigorous accountability—both Nature-Based Solutions (**NBS**) and Technology-Based Solutions (**TBS**) for carbon removal and emissions reduction

Unlike voluntary offset markets prone to over-crediting, SIπ-based inseting ties credit generation directly to measured, independently audited performance improvements within infrastructure operations.

This approach ensures credits represent real, additional emissions reductions traceable to specific infrastructure interventions rather than baseline projections or avoided theoretical emissions.

## RECOGNITION, VERIFICATION & CERTIFICATION

### 11. FROM SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT TO POSITIVE IMPACT (π)

The SIπ framework establishes a progressive recognition structure with distinct milestones. Every process begins with a **Sustainability Assessment** conducted by Green Cross UK. Projects can participate at different stages of their lifecycle through two complementary, non-exclusive pathways.



#### a. Commitment to the Roadmap – The Pledge Seal

Projects that adopt the SIπ framework and achieve a score of 20% or more on the Sustainability Assessment receive the Green Cross UK Pledge Seal. This represents a formal, documented commitment to a structured roadmap aimed at improving sustainability performance.

#### b. Verified by Green Cross UK

As projects progress along their roadmap and exceed their baseline score by at least 5 percentage points, they obtain Green Cross UK Verification. This confirms their conformity with the program’s methodological rigor and ethical governance principles.

#### c. Positive Impact (π)

This is the highest recognition from Green Cross UK. It is awarded to Verified projects that also compensate—partially or totally—for their carbon, water, or ecological footprint through verified insetting programmes. This confirms that the project is actively regenerating natural and social capital.

#### d. Dual Pathway: Envision Verification – ISI

Green Cross UK assesses eligibility, trains the team, and guides the preparation of the application file. The independent verification is conducted by the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure (ISI). Levels are awarded based on total score: Verified (20%), Silver (30%), Gold (40%), and Platinum (50%+).

## VERIFIED IMPACT: HOW WE DELIVER IT

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### 12. A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY MODEL

To deliver Positive Impact ( $\pi$ ), we operate through a model of shared responsibility involving project owners, suppliers, and Green Cross UK. Green Cross UK acts as an independent strategic partner managing technical integrity and potential conflicts of interest, ensuring sustainability represents verified performance rather than static promise.

#### a. Roles and Responsibilities

- Project Owners: Define sustainability objectives, allocate resources, and implement framework requirements.
- Suppliers and Contractors: Execute work to specified standards and provide technical documentation.
- Green Cross UK: Advise, integrate, mediate, and verify — the specific role varies by project, pathway, and stage.

#### b. Five-Stage Process

1. Sustainability Assessment. Green Cross UK establishes the sustainability baseline across all applicable credits, following the Green Cross Framework and ASV<sup>1</sup> model estimation. Determines the pathway — or combination of pathways — appropriate for the project.
2. Training. Project team and supplier training across all six framework categories.
3. Execution and Dossier Preparation. Whilst the project team executes work, required technical evidence is collected by credit — plans, calculations, contracts, communications.
4. Internal Verification. Green Cross UK conducts a comprehensive dossier review, verifying completeness and internal consistency before any external submission.
5. External Verification / Certification. For the Envision pathway, Green Cross UK coordinates dossier delivery to ISI for independent verification at  $\geq 95\%$  design or construction completion. For the Green Cross UK pathway, Green Cross UK conducts the verification review directly.

#### c. Commitment Model

Our funding derives from verified Positive Impact ( $\pi$ ), measured through transparent, auditable processes. Outcome-based, not time-based.

## PROJECT PORTFOLIO

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### **La Guardia (USA)** **Sustainable Architecture**

Envision Platinum + LEED v4 Gold



### **Qingdao Metro (CHN)** **Sustainable Transport**

25% reduction in embodied carbon through recycled materials and optimized design



### **Hidalgo State (MEX)** **Energy Transition**

A master-planned development of 7,500 off-grid single-family residences



### **500 MW (PER)** **Energy Storage System**

70% renewable penetration: peak shaving load shifting for projected annual savings of \$10m



### **FDN (GTM)** **Natural Capital**

2.5 million Verified Carbon Units (VCUs) delivering verified local community impacts and biodiversity conservation



### **IPSE (COL)** **Hybrid Microgrids**

Replacing diesel generation with 70% renewables for 150,000 off-grid users

## VERIFIED PERFORMANCE: LAGUARDIA AIRPORT TERMINAL B

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"These infrastructures are essential for our decarbonisation objectives."

Rick Cotton, Executive Director, Port Authority of New York & New Jersey.

- Site: Terminal B, LaGuardia Airport, New York City, USA.
- Project Type: Redevelopment.
- Investment: **\$4 billion.**
- Certifications: **Envision Platinum + LEED v4 Gold**

### Axis 1: Socioenvironmental Risk Management

- Local hiring programmes addressed community priorities. Result: no significant conflicts during construction.
- Waste management: nearly 100% debris recycled. Water efficiency: 43% potable water savings.

### Axis 2: Third-party credibility

- First project completing Envision v3 post-construction review while maintaining Platinum.
- Additional LEED v4 Gold certification. Collaborative dossier preparation followed by independent ISI audit verifying all claims against evidence.

### Axis 3: Sustainable financing profile

- 18% reduction in energy costs. Baggage system consumes 37% less energy.
- Reflective roofing, natural light controls, and solar water heaters. Contributes to Port Authority's Net Zero 2050 commitment.
- Prix Versailles UNESCO and 5-star Skytrax rating.

## ADAPTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY

### 13. ADAPTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY

The SIπ framework recognises that **public sector, private sector, and alliance-delivered infrastructure** pursue distinct objectives. SIπ tailors its approach to each delivery model—from public accountability and community engagement through private efficiency and investor requirements to collaborative risk-sharing in alliances.

Scope	Public sector	Private sector	Alliance
<b>Collaboration and Cooperation:</b>			
Practices, Tools and Standards: Climate Change, Energy Transition, Water, Waste, Carbon Credits, Green Jobs, and Sustainability.	Y	Y	---
Volunteering, Commitment and Community Participation Programme.	---	Y	Y
Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Committees (NACs) Initiatives.	Y	---	---
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Initiatives.	---	Y	---
ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) Reports.	Y	Y	---
<b>Shared value:</b>			
Community Wellness and Environmental Resilience.	Y	---	---
Business benefits. Leadership and competitiveness.	---	Y	---
Risk Governance.	Y	Y	---
Management and Approach to Social and Environmental Footprints.	Y	Y	---
Institutional Capacity Building.	---	---	Y
Ecosystem for Growth and Development.	---	---	Y
<b>Sustainability:</b>			
G+UK Verification Shielded.	Y	Y	---
Open Innovation: Customized Solutions.	---	---	Y
Project Development and Reclamation: Carbon Credits (Nature-Based and Technology-Based Solutions), Biodiversity, and Ecosystem Services.	Y	Y	---
Green, Climate and Sustainability Funds.	Y	Y	---
Public-Private Dialogue.	---	---	Y

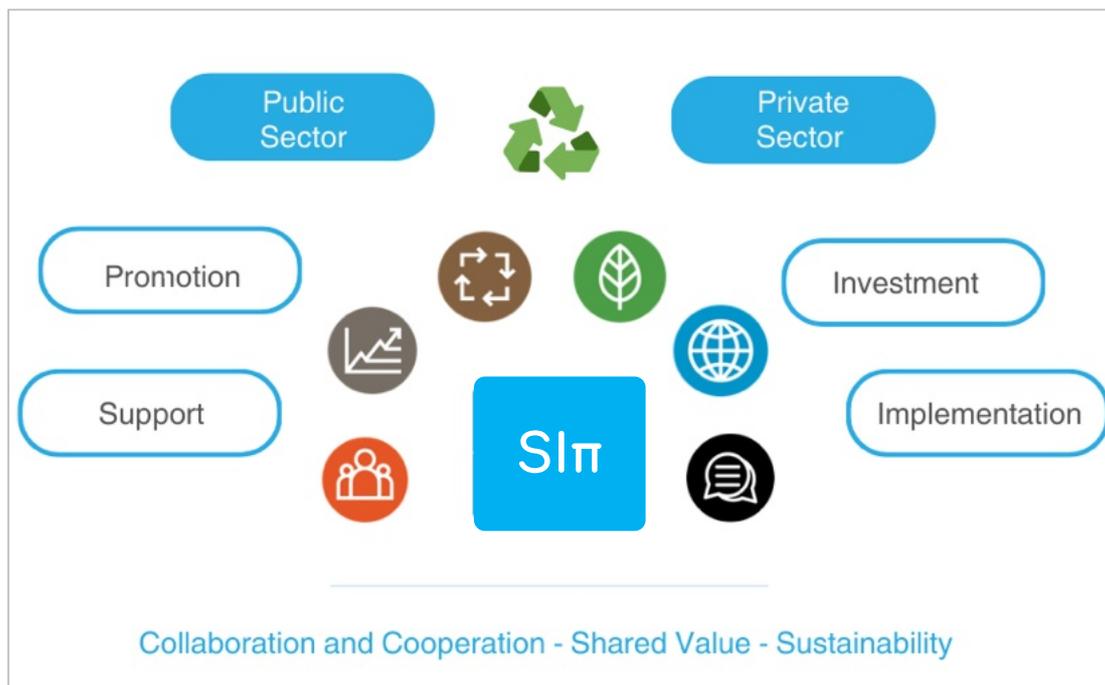
Y: YES.

G+UK: GREEN CROSS UK

## FRAMEWORK DISTINCTIVENESS

### 14. STRATEGIC VALUE

- The framework converts sustainability from aspirational narrative into measurable, certifiable asset value under globally recognized standards. The Castling methodology verifies that project communication is substantiated by technical evidence, providing a solid foundation for dialogue with regulatory authorities and community stakeholders.
- Project alignment with global frameworks including Envision, LEED, SBTi, and TNFD demonstrates commitment to internationally recognized best practices.



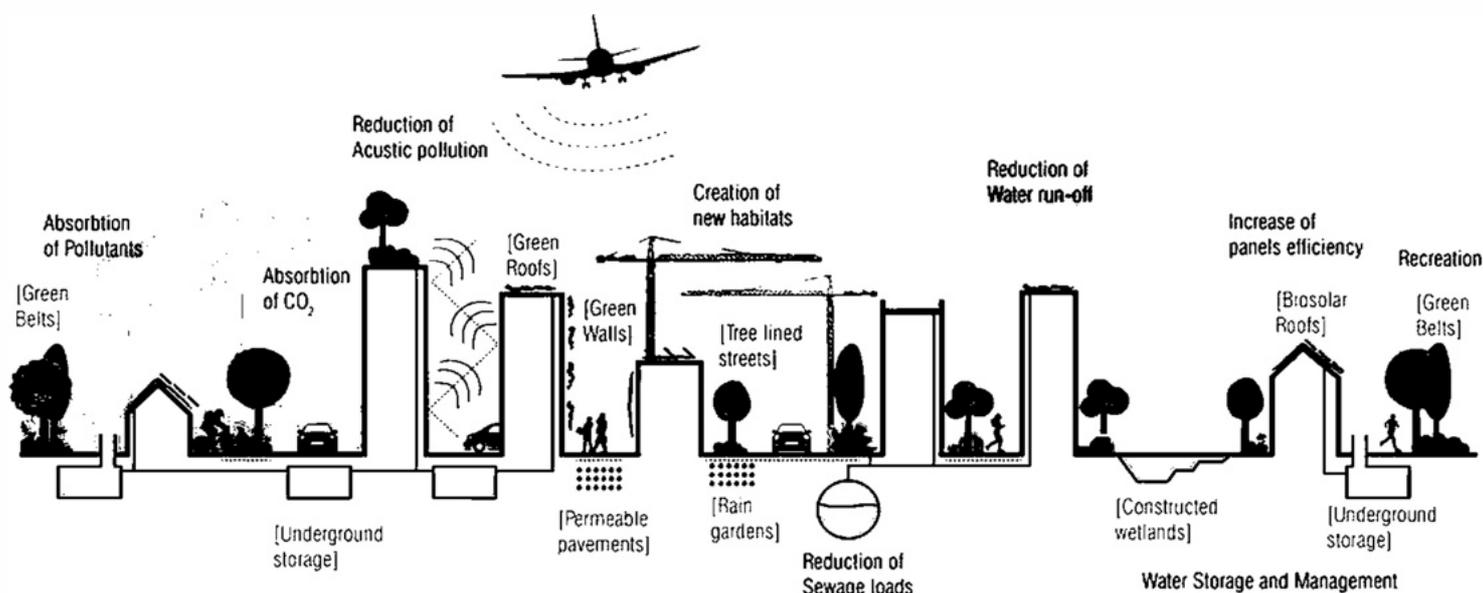
### 15. NPO-TO-NPO COLLABORATION<sup>1</sup>

- SIπ represents a distinctive collaboration model: two independent not-for-profit organizations (Green Cross from UK and Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure from USA) working in coordination rather than competition.
- This NGO-to-NGO Anglo-American collaboration (UK and USA) ensures framework integrity since neither party profits from certification volume, eliminating commercial pressure to dilute standards or accelerate approvals.

### 16. ABOUT GREEN CROSS UK

- Green Cross UK is the national organization of Green Cross International, founded by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1993. With consultative status at the United Nations, our mission facilitates dialogue between today's decision-makers and those without direct representation—future communities and ecosystems whose interests are affected by infrastructure decisions made now.

## GETTING STARTED



Slπ not only asks, 'Are we doing the project right?' but also, 'Are we doing the right project?'

## 17. TAKE THE FIRST STEP: PRE-ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

Request our confidential, no-obligation toolkit to:

- Benchmark your project against the 6 Slπ categories
- Identify gaps and opportunities for improvement
- Gain clear insights to inform your sustainability strategy

Contact for Technical Teams:

We evaluate your project, establish baseline conditions, and identify achievable certification level.

E: [joinus@green-cross.org.uk](mailto:joinus@green-cross.org.uk) (subject: Slπ)

W: [green-cross.org.uk/sustainable-infrastructure-programme](http://green-cross.org.uk/sustainable-infrastructure-programme)

C: [Virtual Calendar](#)

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Member of Green Cross International | Founded by Mikhail Gorbachev, 1993



**GREEN  
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LET'S DO SOMETHING INCREDIBLE TOGETHER FOR SOCIETY  
AND THE PLANET, STARTING BY STAYING IN TOUCH:

**[JOINUS@GREEN-CROSS.ORG.UK](mailto:JOINUS@GREEN-CROSS.ORG.UK)**

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Green Cross International Network: We invite you to verify whether a Green Cross National Organization (GCNO) exists in your country. Should one exist, we encourage you to contact them to express your interest in participating in this programme or initiative. If Green Cross United Kingdom identifies a GCNO in the vicinity of an interested party, it will reach out to facilitate a coordinated and joint response.

You can find more information at <https://www.gcint.org/who-we-are#OurNetwork>