



One Million Hours Commitment Text

Preamble Recognising:

- the importance of reducing global greenhouse gas emissions and limiting global warming to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels.
- the conclusion of the IPCC that limiting global warming to 1.5°C requires rapid, far-reaching, and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society.
- the conclusion of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services that biodiversity loss and climate change are driven by human economic activities and mutually reinforce each other.
- the work that lawyers and professionals within the legal sector are already undertaking on a pro bono basis to create new instruments, policies, and tools to accelerate action on climate change, with the support of their law firms, universities, corporates, consultancies, and other relevant private and public sector organisations.
- the important role that organisations such as The Chancery Lane Project and the Net Zero Lawyers Alliance are playing in coordinating and leading on climate and sustainability related work.
- the pro bono commitment that many law firms have signed up to through, for example, the Net Zero Lawyers Alliance to “actively engage in and provide pro bono resources where possible for ‘cooperative legal initiatives to embed decarbonisation goals into private law instruments, with a goal to formulating modern, fair, harmonized rules on commercial transactions, including conventions, model laws and rules”.

Introduction

Purpose

One Million Hours seeks to bring the entire legal industry together to help address climate change and biodiversity loss. We seek to raise one million hours of ‘intellectual capital’ from legal sector organisations to be used to work on projects which share the purpose.

Commitment

Any organisation operating within the legal sector is invited to make a pledge of time which they commit to work on qualifying projects.

Ambition

One Million Hours exists to engage the legal sector and increase the total number of hours each year spent by individuals in the legal sector working on projects which have the purpose of helping to address climate change or biodiversity loss. We also seek to provide recognition and encouragement to those organisations which already commit significant resources to projects which are aligned to the principles set out below.

Collaboration

Donors of time are encouraged to consider how donated time can be used to achieve the greatest impact. Supporting sector specific projects undertaken by an industry body or an NGO and collaborating with another donor such as an in-house legal team is particularly encouraged.

Reporting

Organisations are asked to report on an annual basis as to the total number of hours which have been spent on qualifying projects. These are counted against the organisation's commitment of hours.

Definitions

Individuals in the legal sector

Any person engaged in the practice or study of law; or any business professional affiliated to a Legal Sector Organisation (as defined below).

Intellectual Capital

The value of information, expertise, or knowledge realised in the form of either Pro Bono work or Skilled Volunteering (as defined below).

Legal Sector Organisation

Any entity with a UK presence that provides, or supports the provision of, legal goods or services. Although a UK presence is required to join One Million Hours, Pro Bono work or Skilled Volunteering undertaken anywhere in the world will count towards the donated hours of intellectual capital.

Pro Bono

As per the definition of Qualifying Pro Bono set out in the [TrustLaw Index of Pro Bono](#).

Skilled Volunteering

The practice of using professional, skills based, work-related knowledge and expertise in a volunteering capacity. This includes scoping of collaborative programmes and pre-cursor work with a view to working on qualifying Pro Bono.

Criteria which apply to qualifying projects

Principle 1	The project has the purpose of addressing climate change and/or biodiversity loss.
Principle 2	The project deploys the 'Intellectual Capital' of the donors of hours.
Principle 3	All time spent providing Pro Bono work or Skilled Volunteering will be provided at no cost to the recipient.
Principle 4	Pro Bono work will be for Qualifying Clients as defined in the TrustLaw Index of Pro Bono .

Commitments

Organisations participating in One Million Hours commit to:

- Submit a 1-year pledge and an aspirational 3-year target of qualifying Pro Bono and Skilled Volunteering hours to the initiative, recognising that the level of ambition is expected to rise over time.
- Review progress against the 3-year target at least every year and to adjust the target as appropriate.
- Undertake on an annual basis to share a tally of hours of (a) Pro Bono work and (b) Skilled Volunteering done in the previous calendar year.

Next steps

We encourage all donors to undertake an assessment of the approximate number of Pro Bono and Skilled Volunteering hours worked on over the past 12 months; the donor's capacity to undertake additional pro bono work over the coming 12 months; and the level of commitment that can be credibly achieved over the next 12 months.

Additional Guidelines

- Donors participating in the project must secure their own internal approvals processes before starting work.
- We will publish the names of organisations who are part of One Million Hours on onemillionhours.org. We will not publish details of commitments by individual firms.
- We encourage participants to identify and share details of projects of particular merit with the One Million Hours secretariat.
- If you don't have a method to report on skilled volunteering you can use a simple survey form (e.g. MS Forms, SurveyMonkey) or ask your HR team if your existing system can help with tracking hours.

One Million Hours, October 2023