

# Environmental, Social, Governance Report 2021

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**“Preparing for our future  
is a necessity, not a luxury.”**

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum  
Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai







# Note from our CEO

Our name Houbara is inspired by the Houbara bustard, a bird that was brought back from near extinction due to widespread conservation efforts in the region as it is essential to the art of falconry that is so intrinsic to Arabic culture.

When I started Houbara in 2020, our name inspired us to help brands communicate authentically, and with purpose. Authenticity is at the very heart of what we do to drive impact, whether it is in our honest consulting to our clients or in the way we run our business. Our goal is to achieve growth that is sustainable, equitable and all encompassing.

The market tells us it's no longer about being small or big but that it's time for us all to step up our ESG efforts because it is the right thing to do to achieve balance after the consequences of climate change and the exploitation of natural resources, as well as the human rights and inequity issues laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the last two years brought about the biggest disruption, it also gave us innumerable opportunities to learn and evolve. As part of our Impact Programme in 2021, we match funded our client, Aurora50's budget dollar for dollar to drive awareness and understanding of the vital work they are doing in the area of gender balance at board level.

I am also delighted to share that we also completed our first carbon footprint report, for the year 2021, which gives us a comprehensive overview of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as characterised by the GHG Protocol. This report will serve as a benchmark upon which to measure our future impact, performance and improvement.

Quantifying our organisation's emission was made possible with the help of our friends at elementsix, who not only made the whole process simple but also an engaging and thought-provoking one.

Our staff are fully on board in now tracking our progress, and all of it feeds directly back to not only reducing our impact on the planet but also on our bottom line.

I am confident that having fulsome ESG measures and policies in place will be central to our success and key in making us truly resilient and fostering the culture within our business that our name continues to inspire in us all every day of every week.

**Loretta Ahmed**  
**Founder and CEO**  
**Houbara Communications**



# Our environmental efforts

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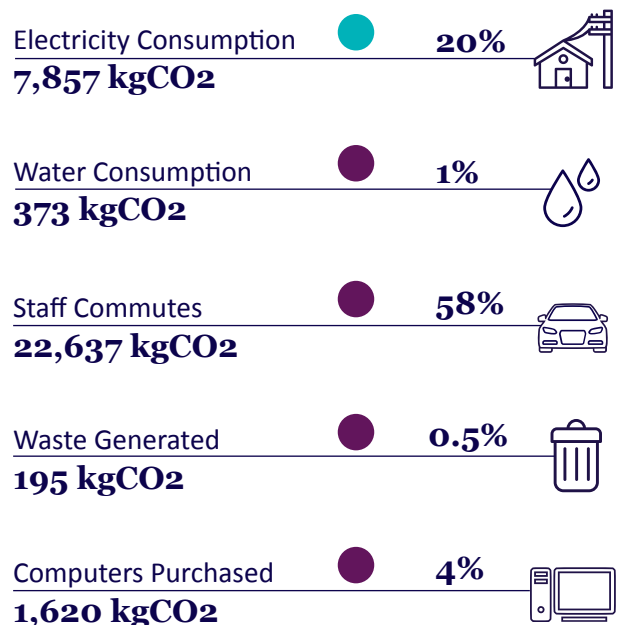
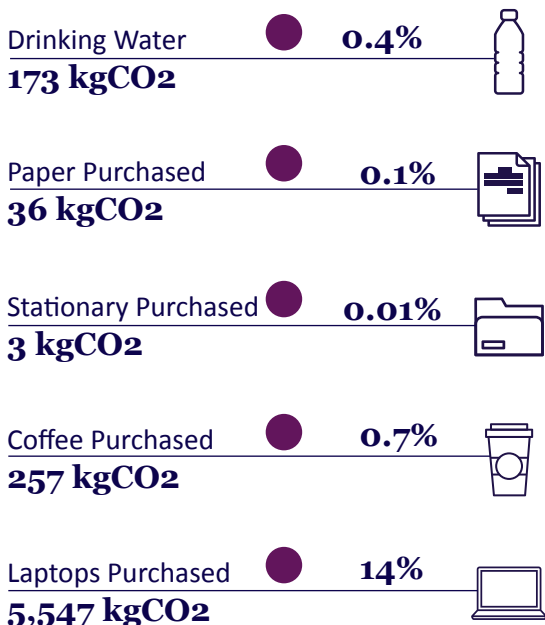
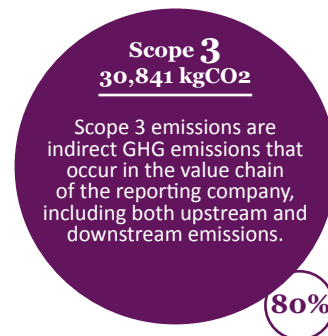
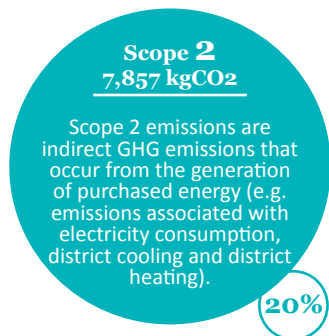
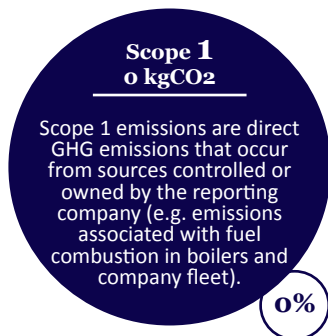
Carbon footprint report  
Recommendations



# Houbara's carbon footprint report

After successfully accounting for our total GHG emission for the year 2021 by elementsix, the carbon footprint was found to be 34,737 kgCO<sub>2</sub>. The highest levels of emissions were noted from scope 3 indirect emissions which included staff commutes that accounted for 54% of the company's emissions and purchase of laptops and computers that accounted for nearly 20% of the company's emissions.

## TOTAL 2021 CARBON FOOTPRINT 38,697 KGC02





# Environmental Impact

Thanks to this work, we've begun to decouple business growth from emissions. In line with recommendations received from elementsix, we are making a series of small changes to cut down on our emissions by:



## Providing a fully flexible work policy

We are encouraging our staff to adopt a hybrid work model whereby staff can work remotely – we expect most staff will choose to work two days/week from the office.



## Encouraging carpooling

We have started to urge our teams to carpool where staff stay in the same vicinity as it helps to reduce traffic congestion during peak travel hours, and contributes to lower levels of air pollution.



## Going Paperless

Our paper use has traditionally been low as we encourage our clients to adopt digital press kits and subscribe to digital editions of media where possible. However, in 2022, we are motivated to bring this down further.

# What makes us thrive

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Our company culture  
Inclusive and diverse hiring  
Workforce development  
Community is at the core of our purpose





**At Houbara, creating an inclusive, safe, and supportive environment for all our team members is our priority. We provide comprehensive benefits and competitive compensation. We believe we're a more authentic company when our people have the support and opportunity to be their best selves.**

### Our Company Culture

Our culture is based on mutual respect, trust and a shared passion for what we do.

We see mistakes as learning opportunities and whether we win or lose we do it together with a focus on always seeking out ways to improve and be even better. We don't strive for work/life balance – we strive for work/life harmony, knowing that we can only do our best work if we bring our best selves to work. This is why we are committed to our work from anywhere, anytime approach to flexible working and why all staff from account manager upwards have a personal coach. Coaching is private and between the coach and the staff members so they can focus on individual needs – be they professional or personal development challenges.

We live by our values – we are agile, inventive and committed. We want to bring about real change – for our clients and by the role we play in the community we serve. We really care about the work we do for our clients – we want to make a tangible difference.

### Workforce Development

We're always finding new ways to invest in our team's development and to encourage collaboration and creativity.

From new-hire orientation and quarterly hatchery (performance review) for team members with their line managers, to developing progress pathways and mentorship, we're always finding new ways to help team members continue to learn, thrive, and advance in their careers in an inclusive environment.

Further, we support our senior team with career development by working closely with Dawn Metcalfe, workplace culture advisor, to drive behavioural and cultural enrichment.

### Wellbeing

We marked our first anniversary as Houbara by treating every member of the team with a box of wellness as we were right in the middle of the pandemic. It included a fitbit to help track activity levels and make sure the team kept moving, resistance loop bands to help increase strength and a whole load of other wellness goodies.

### Inclusive and Diverse Hiring

We are committed to building a more equitable and inclusive world by increasing diverse representation at every level, fostering an inclusive culture that brings everybody in, and ensuring equitable pay and access to opportunity for all.



## Community is at the core of our purpose

### Our Impact Programme

In 2021, we supported Aurora50, a UAE-based social enterprise, to drive meaningful and sustainable change in gender balance in the boardroom by match funding their budget dollar for dollar.



### Global Women in PR

Our CEO founded the Middle East chapter of Global Women in PR and has sat on its board since 2019.

She hosts webinars, supports members and actively promotes the benefits of gender balance in business.





# We don't strive for work/life balance – we strive for work/life harmony, knowing that we can only do our best work if we bring our best selves to work.



“As a frequent commuter of the Metro who lives over an hour away from the workplace, the ‘Work from Wherever, Whenever’ policy has been really beneficial for me. It provides me with the flexibility to work from home and skip the long commute and work during my preferred hours whenever needed which helps me maintain a healthy work-life balance.”

***Shehla Momin, 24, Houbara Account Manager***

“Switching to a remote working role with Houbara has been seamless, and I still feel completely part of the team. Together we make the time difference work really well, and it’s a testament to the Houbara culture that I feel so involved with everything. As a parent of two young boys, the approach to flexibility is really important to me. It really is a model for how contemporary, forward-looking agencies should approach working culture and flex policies.”

***James Mitchell, Houbara Digital Director, dad to 4-year old twin boys, living in Cheshire, UK.***



“Houbara’s flexibility, particularly to moms and a new mom as myself, is highly commendable and makes a big difference to my wellbeing as an employee. Balancing work commitments and being a mom can be challenging and being part of an organization that’s made provisions for this supports me in ensuring that I can get to everything.”

***Raaziqa Hassen, Houbara Account Director and mum to a one year old boy.***

# Our commitment to authenticity

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Boardroom diversity

Reporting

Following industry best practices with PRCA MENA

Data security

Third-party compliance



**Houbara conducts business ethically, honestly, and in compliance with applicable UAE and international laws. Our corporate governance structure is designed to foster principled actions, informed and effective decision-making, and appropriate monitoring of compliance and performance, so that the long-term interests of our stakeholders are honoured.**

### Boardroom diversity

Our legal board is small comprising two males (chairman and FD) and one female (CEO). They range in age from early 30s to early 80s.

Additionally, our senior management team extends to one female director and one female account director as well as the FD and CEO.

### Reporting

We report back to clients in various ways that we adapt to each client, but we always share our hours, budgets, and scope updates transparently once a month in one document. This gives each client visibility on every hour spent on their account, how that compares to budget and any actions arising. Evaluation reports are presented monthly and at the close of each campaign as well as an annual round-up report and metrics cover outputs, outcomes and impact.

### Following Industry Best Practices with PRCA MENA

Our CEO was the founding Chair of PRCA MENA when it launched in 2016 and has been on the board of PRCA ever since. Her roles have included being a judge at the annual awards through to running various best practice working groups. As a member of the PRCA, Houbara honours and adheres to its **code of conduct** and **client-consultancy charter**.

PRCA MENA are also members of the International Communications Consultancy Organisation (ICCO). Members work together to raise standards of quality, address ethical issues, harmonise professional PR consultancy practice, and share knowledge.

### Data Security

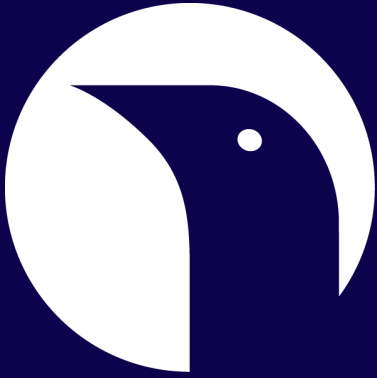
Our Company Data Protection Policy refers to our commitment to treat information of employees, customers, stakeholders and other interested parties with the utmost care and confidentiality. With this policy, we ensure that we gather, store and handle data fairly, transparently and with respect towards individual rights.

### Third-party compliance

As part of our responsibility to have a positive impact on overall society, we actively seek to work with partners and suppliers who share our ambition and who demonstrate they are working together with us in a transparent way to ensure sustainability is at the forefront of their operations.

The company's intention is to create long-lasting relationships with our suppliers and partners and continue to utilise services from those who share these ethos.





# THANK YOU

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