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The Enterprise Guide to Scope 3 Solution RFPs
Making the Right Choice

Executive Summary

For organizations pursuing net zero targets, selecting the right carbon accounting and supply chain decarbonization solution is a critical decision. This guide provides procurement and sustainability leaders with a strategic framework for evaluating and selecting appropriate solutions.

Our framework helps you:

- Match solutions to your supply chain's unique needs
- Evaluate vendors using proven criteria (weighted across technical capability, supplier engagement, implementation, and innovation)
- Structure an effective RFI/P process
- Avoid common pitfalls

This guide emphasizes that success depends on:

- Choosing a solution that fits your supply chain reality
- Getting supplier engagement right from day one
- Future-proofing for upcoming regulations
- Starting focused and scaling smart

This approach helps you select a solution that will effectively support your net zero journey while avoiding costly missteps.

Introduction:

Making The Right Choice Matters

Companies are increasingly turning to technology for support to track and reduce their carbon emissions, meet their net zero commitments, and comply with evolving regulations. Specialist tools that can help companies manage their emissions are mission-critical for most companies navigating the path towards net zero.

Given the complexity of meeting these objectives and the many stakeholders involved, choosing the right carbon accounting and supply chain decarbonization solution is a critical step that requires careful planning.

Procurement and sustainability professionals face unique challenges as they evaluate solutions tailored to their organization's specific supply chain characteristics, data maturity, supplier relationships, and organizational structures.

Selecting the wrong solution can lead to:

- Wasted time and resources on failed implementations
- Incomplete or inaccurate emissions data
- Poor supplier engagement and data collection
- The inability to meet regulatory requirements

While selecting the right solution delivers:

- Accurate data collection and analysis
- Stronger supplier relationships and engagement
- Confidence in auditability and regulatory compliance
- Cost and efficiency savings

While companies often use multiple solutions to meet their sustainability commitments, many solution providers overstate their capabilities, requiring extensive proof of concepts before any long-term commitment (given the time and expense to deploy to large supplier bases).

This guide helps you create an effective RFI/P for selecting a Scope 3-ready carbon accounting and decarbonization solution that fits your needs by providing:

- Essential evaluation criteria and best practices tailored to the unique needs of your business
- A framework for identifying solutions that align with both your business goals and sustainability targets
- Guidance to help ensure a successful selection process

Whether you're just starting your search or evaluating multiple vendors, this guide will help you make an informed decision and avoid common pitfalls in the selection process.

Tailoring your RFP:

Organizational and Supply Chain Assessment Checklist

Assess Your Supply Chain Complexity

Product-heavy organizations

You need a solution that offers comprehensive emissions tracking across their operations. Focus areas include:

- Raw materials, logistics, and energy-intensive production processes
- Tools that provide activity-based emissions data and product carbon footprinting
- Granular supplier tracking to manage complex supply chains

Service-heavy organizations

You have different emission profiles and requirements

- Key emission sources include facilities, data centres, procurement, business travel
- Need tools focused on corporate carbon footprints and carbon intensity methodologies
- Require tools that can handle large-scale supplier engagement for indirect services

Evaluate Your Data Quality and Maturity

Less than 25% of suppliers meet data quality scoring for external reporting, underscoring the need for robust tools, training, and support.

Assess your current data capabilities:

- What calculation methods are you using?
  - Are you using spend-based calculations?
  - Have you progressed to activity-based calculations?
- What percentage of your supplier base reports emissions data?
  - Consider both response rates and data quality

Real Example

CBRE reduced their emissions estimate by 1/3rd by improving their calculation granularity.

Transitioning from broad spend-based calculations to transaction level hybrid models utilizing primary supplier emissions data when available.

(CBRE 2023 CR Report, p. 29).

Review Supplier Relationships

Assess your supplier engagement model

How strong are your current supplier relationships in terms of data sharing and collaboration?

- Companies like AstraZeneca and Siemens excel by aligning long-term supplier goals with their own net zero strategies
- Increasingly companies are including sustainability clauses in supplier contracts.

Evaluate the Supplier Relationship Management tools you have for:

- Maintaining supplier contacts
- Managing supplier KPI scorecards and performance metrics
- Conducting supplier business reviews and governance programs

Identify your operating model

Centralized Teams

- Manufacturing firms often operate centralized procurement teams
- This makes integration more straightforward

Decentralized Teams:

- Service-driven organizations often have distributed procurement activity
- This requires tools that provide clear reporting and decarbonization pathways so the requestor nor the supplier needs to be an expert

Support Requirements:

- Both structures will require education, support, and a focus on user experience
- Consider Organizational Structure

Key Features of a Carbon Accounting and Supplier Decarbonization Solution

Core Technology Requirements

Baseline and Hotspot Analysis

Why it matters: Focus decarbonization efforts on highest-impact areas.

Y N Ability to identify emission hotspots quickly

Integrations

Why it matters: Real-time procurement decisions need current emissions data.

Y N Compatibility with existing ERP, procurement, and sustainability platforms

Supplier Portals

Why it matters: Streamlines data collection and ensures consistent supplier engagement.

Y N Tools for onboarding, training, and collecting supplier data

Advanced Reporting

Why it matters: Enables progress tracking towards targets and data-driven decisions.

Y N Visualizations, dashboards, and scenario modelling

Data in / Data out

Why it matters: Reduces manual effort, maintains data consistency across systems, and is key for a company-wide buy-in.

Y N Ability to take spend data and other inputs as is. And provide data out for integration into internal reporting dashboards.

International Coverage

Why it matters: Ensures global suppliers can easily participate, preventing data gaps in your emissions reporting.

Y N Covering languages and support

Supplier Engagement Tools

Supplier Education and Support

Why it matters: Supplier sustainability maturity varies. It's important to support them no matter where they are.

Y N Ability to track supplier progress and benchmark against industry standards

Progress Tracking

Why it matters: Identifies areas for improvement and drives supplier performance.

Y N Comparability with existing ERP, procurement, and sustainability platforms

Calculation Support

Why it matters: Get suppliers over the initial calculation hurdle while ensuring consistent and accurate emissions data.

Y N Support for suppliers calculating emissions (e.g. Green Project supports suppliers to calculate CCFs and PCFs)

Support for Supplier Decarbonization

Why it matters: Effective programs include both measurement and pathways to reduction.

Y N Access to tools that help suppliers reduce emissions (e.g., target-setting support, recommended strategies, renewable energy certificates)

Compliance and Reporting

Regulatory Alignment

Why it matters: Companies need to act now to build robust data collection and reporting processes ahead of regulatory deadlines.

Y N CSRD: EU's sustainability reporting requirements

Y N CSDDD: Supply chain due diligence obligations

Y N Expertise to support new regulations

Global Scalability

Why it matters: Global companies need one source of truth rather than managing regional solutions and processes.

Y N Compatibility with existing ERP, procurement, and sustainability platforms

Audit Requirements

Why it matters: Strengthens stakeholder confidence in your emissions reporting and is necessary for certain regulations.

Y N End-to-end auditability including SOC 2 Type II

Data Quality & Standards

Why it matters: Reliable data must be consistent with recognized frameworks to ensure compliance and audit readiness.

Y N Verified data aligned with recognized standards (e.g., GHG Protocol, ISO)

Evaluation Criteria for RFPs

Factors And Weighting To Consider

After understanding your needs and required features, it's important to establish clear evaluation criteria for assessing potential solutions.

The following framework provides suggested weightings and key considerations for each category:

Technical Evaluation (40%)

- **Usability:** Ease of use for internal teams and suppliers
    - ***Recommendation:*** *Include supplier feedback in your scoring if a proof of concept (POC) is leveraged*
- **Data Accuracy:** Robustness of spend-based and activity-based methodologies
- **System Compatibility:** Integration capabilities with existing systems
- **Existing Data:** Access to existing emissions databases and public data speeds up the process

Supplier Enablement (40%)

- **Onboarding:** Effectiveness in engaging and educating suppliers
    - ***Recommendation:*** *Look at the quality of supplier training and support materials and the clarity of communication tools*
- **Incentives:** Tools to reward suppliers for emissions reporting and reductions

Implementation and Support (10%)

- **Timeline:** Detailed rollout plans for technology and supplier engagement, resource requirements and risk mitigation strategies
- **Ongoing Support:** Support team availability and expertise, dedicated resources for troubleshooting and continuous improvement

Innovation and Long-Term Value (10%)

- **Product Roadmap:** Development priorities, innovation focus and enhancement plans
- **Adaptability:** Flexibility to meet emerging standards and business needs

Building the RFI/P

Key Considerations

Here are the key considerations when structuring your carbon accounting and supply chain decarbonization solution RFI/P.

Phase 1: Preparation

- Align internal stakeholders across procurement, IT, and sustainability teams
    - ***Recommendation:*** *Given the cross-functional impact of carbon data, establish a governance structure and executive sponsor.*
- Define priorities based on supply chain characteristics and data maturity

Phase 2: Vendor Selection

Critical evaluation areas:

- Technical evaluation criteria
- Current industry alignment and client base
- Supplier engagement capabilities
- Integrations
- Compliance and reporting
- International coverage and support
- Additional features such as providing supply chain transparency
- References

Example Questions:

- *"How does your solution support supplier onboarding and data collection?"*
- *"What tools are available to calculate supplier-specific CCF and PCF?"*
- *"What is the data management process to move from emission factor estimates to primary and activity-based data?"*

Phase 3: Pilot and Rollout

- Conduct a pilot program or proof of concept with priority suppliers
- A pilot can also validate your company's emissions baselines and data accuracy

Phase 4: Continuous Improvement

- Set out and track KPIs such as supplier participation rates, emissions reductions, and carbon reductions
- Regularly review solution performance and adjust strategies as needed

Avoiding Common Pitfalls

Insights from former CPOs highlight the most common challenges organizations face when building supply chain decarbonization programs.

Supplier blind spots:

Don't assume all suppliers are sustainability-ready; many are drowning in complexity, lacking resources and the expertise to handle emissions tracking.

Analysis paralysis:

Perfect is the enemy of good; be bold, start small and iterate as data and engagement improve. Your first step doesn't need to be a marathon – just a meaningful stride.

The temptation of overreach:

According to Miguel Cossio from Gartner, you can go wide or deep but not wide and deep. Attempting to do so may require two or more sustainability solutions.

Choosing a solution for what is needed today:

Ensure clear requirements beyond carbon accounting and reporting, including tracking sustainability initiatives, supplier engagements, and decarbonization pathways.

Conclusion

Selecting the right carbon accounting and supply chain decarbonization solution is one of the first and most critical steps towards achieving your net zero targets.

A well-structured Scope 3 RFI/P process will ensure that your organization chooses a solution that aligns with the needs and characteristics of your supply chain and business, supporting your supplier engagement and your compliance processes.

Take a strategic and informed approach. We often see that companies make the same common pitfalls by opting for misaligned tools, missing supplier blind spots, and being tempted by short-term decision-making. Supplier engagement is a make-or-break factor.

Prioritizing solutions that educate, support, and incentivize suppliers will determine the long-term success of your decarbonization strategy.

Additionally, regulatory compliance should be built in. Easy reporting and auditability features will future-proof you against evolving regulations.

Avoiding analysis paralysis is key. Successful organizations start small, validate their data and engagement strategies through pilots, and scale as supplier participation and data maturity improve.

The right solution doesn't just help meet compliance requirements; it actively drives measurable impact, cements the credibility of sustainability claims, strengthens supplier relationships, and enhances your organization's competitive edge.

This guide equips procurement and sustainability professionals with the tools to craft a focused and effective RFI/P for Scope 3 emissions. It ensures that the chosen solution supports their sustainability ambitions and compliance needs while helping to build a resilient, transparent, and future-ready supply chain.

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Head over to our website to access more insights on supply chain decarbonization

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