

Methodology and sources

The Greenhouse Gas Protocol Initiative (GHG protocol) is developed by the World Resources Institute (WRI) and World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). Carbon Accounting in CEMAsys is conducted according to A Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard Revised edition, currently one of four GHG Protocol accounting standards explaining how to calculate and report GHG emissions. The reporting considers the following greenhouse gases, all converted into CO₂ equivalents: CO₂, CH₄ (methane), N₂O (laughing gas), SF₆, HFCs and PFCs.

The carbon accounting is based on the operational control aspect that defines what should be included in the carbon inventory, as well as in the different scopes. When using the control approach to consolidate GHG emissions, companies shall choose between either the operational control or financial control criteria. Under the control approach, a company accounts for the GHG emissions from operations over which it has control. It does not account for GHG emissions from operations in which it owns an interest but has no control.

The carbon inventory is divided into three main scopes of direct and indirect emissions.

Scope 1

Mandatory reporting includes all direct emission sources where the organisation has operational control. This includes all use of fossil fuels for stationary combustion or transportation, in owned, leased or rented assets. It also includes any process emissions, from e.g. chemical processes, industrial gases, direct methane emissions etc.

Scope 2

Mandatory reporting includes indirect emissions related to purchased energy; electricity or heating/cooling where the organisation has operational control. The electricity emission factors used in CEMAsys are based on national gross electricity production mixes on 3 years rolling average (IEA Stat). The Nordic electricity mix covers the weighted production in Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark, which reflects the common Nord Pool market area. Emission factors per fuel type are based on assumption in the IEA methodological framework. Factors for district heating/cooling are either based on actual (local) production mixes, or average IEA stat.

In January 2015, the GHG Protocol published new guidelines for calculating emissions from electricity consumption.

Primarily two methods are used to “allocate” the GHG emissions created by electricity generation to the end consumers of a given grid. These are the location-based and the market-based method. The location-based method reflects the average emissions intensity of grids on which energy consumption occurs, while the market-based method reflects emissions from electricity that companies have purposefully chosen (or their lack of choice).

Businesses who report on their GHG emissions will now have to disclose both location-based emissions from the production of electricity and the market-based emissions related to the potential purchase of Guaranties of Origin (GoO).

The purpose of this amendment in the reporting method is on one hand to show the impact of energy efficiency and saving measures, and on the other hand to display how the acquisition of GoOs affect the GHG emissions. Using both methods in the emission reporting highlights the effect of all measures regarding electricity consumption.

The location-based method: The location-based method is based on statistical emissions information and electricity output aggregated and averaged within a defined geographic boundary and during a defined time period. Within this boundary, the different energy producers utilize a mix of energy resources, where the use of fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) result in direct GHG-emissions. These emissions are reflected in the location-based emission factor.

The market-based method: The choice of emission factor using this method is determined by whether the business acquires GoOs or not. When selling GoOs, the supplier certifies that the electricity is produced by only renewable sources, which has an emission factor of 0 grams of CO₂e per kWh. However, for electricity without the guarantee of origin, the emission factor is based on the remaining electricity production after all GoOs for renewable energy are sold. This is called a residual mix, which is normally substantially higher than the location-based factor. As an example, the market-based Norwegian residual mix factor is approximately 7 times higher than the location-based Nordic mix factor. The reason for this high factor is due to Norway's large export of GoOs to foreign consumers. In a market perspective, this implies that Norwegian hydropower is largely substituted with an electricity mix including fossil fuels.

Scope 3

Scope 3 includes indirect emissions resulting from value chain activities. The scope 3 emissions are a result of the company's upstream and downstream activities, which are not controlled by the company, i.e. they are indirect. Examples are business travel, goods transportation, waste handling, consumption of products etc.

In general, the carbon accounting should include information that users, both internal and external to the company, need for their decision making. An important aspect of relevance is the selection of an appropriate inventory boundary which reflects the substance and economic reality of the company's business relationships.

References:

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This list of references may not be complete. Depending on the use of the CEMAsys emission factors database, there are several different local and national sources.