

VCMI

Request for Proposals: Research on Barriers to Scope 3 Decarbonization

Introduction

The Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative (VCMI) is seeking proposals from experienced research agencies to conduct a comprehensive study on the barriers companies face in reducing scope 3 emissions across various sectors and regions. This research aims to support the integrity of corporate climate commitments while providing practical insights for stakeholders engaging in scope 3 emissions management and/or assessment.

VCMI is at the forefront of efforts to enhance the integrity and effectiveness of carbon markets in supporting global climate goals. Companies worldwide strive to reduce their carbon footprints, addressing scope 3 emissions - those occurring in a company's value chain – which has emerged as a particularly complex challenge. While organizations are making significant efforts to reduce these emissions, it is widely recognized that many face significant barriers in fully eliminating their scope 3 footprint.

This research project will involve conducting impartial, independent, and comprehensive research to identify and analyze barriers preventing companies across various sectors from fully reducing their scope 3 emissions. The objective is to provide the wider ecosystem with a deep understanding of the challenges companies face in reducing their scope 3 emissions and analyze potential solutions to overcome such barriers, with associated costs and timeline.

Context

About VCMI

The [Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative](#) (VCMI) is an international non-profit working to provide standards and capacity-building to enable high-integrity voluntary carbon markets (VCMs). VCMI's Claims Code of Practice provides guidance for companies and other non-state actors to make voluntary use of carbon credits as part of net-zero transitions. Carbon Integrity Claims recognize companies going above and beyond science-aligned emissions cuts to accelerate global net zero. VCMI's Access Strategies Program supports host-country governments to decide whether, when, and how to channel high-integrity VCMs finance into their national climate plans.

Scope of Work

1. Analyze existing literature and data on scope 3 emissions reduction challenges

The research team will conduct a thorough review of existing academic literature, industry reports, and case studies related to scope 3 emissions reduction. This analysis will help contextualize the primary research findings, develop initial hypotheses around barriers to scope 3 emissions reduction, and identify any gaps in current knowledge that this study can address.

2. Design and conduct a survey with companies across multiple sectors and regions

The selected research team will develop and conduct a comprehensive survey of a diverse range of companies. This survey should cover a representative sample across various industry sectors, company sizes, and geographical regions to ensure diverse perspectives are covered. Additionally, it should cover various stakeholder groups such as corporate sustainability officers, industry experts, policymakers, and NGO representatives. The survey should be designed to gather quantitative and qualitative data on scope 3 emissions reduction efforts, barriers and challenges, and potential solutions that have either been implemented or are being designed.

3. Identify common barriers and sector-specific challenges

Based on the survey results and literature review, the research team will compile and categorize the barriers to scope 3 emissions reduction. This analysis should distinguish between common challenges faced across industries and those specific to particular sectors, providing a nuanced understanding of the obstacles companies face.

4. Assess the impact of these barriers on emissions reduction efforts

The research will quantify and qualify the impact of identified barriers on companies' ability to reduce scope 3 emissions. Analyze the impact of these barriers on companies' (from various sectors and regions) ability to achieve their emissions reduction targets, quantifying where possible the scale of unavoidable emissions. This assessment should consider factors such as the scale of emissions affected, the cost implications of overcoming barriers, and the timeframes involved in addressing these challenges.

5. Provide recommendations for overcoming identified barriers

Drawing on the comprehensive analysis, the research team will develop a set of actionable recommendations for overcoming the identified barriers. The recommendations will explore potential solutions or mitigations for these barriers, including technological, policy, and market-based approaches, which may be implemented directly by companies or assessed by a group of companies or business associations. These recommendations should be practical, scalable, and tailored to different industry contexts and geographical regions where appropriate. Solutions presented may be classified with respect to difficulty of implementation based, among others, on cost, availability, feasibility, and success cases of companies who faced similar barriers and were able to overcome them.

Deliverables

1. Detailed project plan, research methodology and analysis plan

The research team will provide a comprehensive document (in a word file) outlining the overall project plan and methodology used for the study. This should include details on

literature survey process, analytical approaches, survey design, sampling methods, and interview/discussion protocols. The methodology should be sufficiently detailed to allow for potential replication or expansion of the study in the future.

Undertake a thorough literature review, which may include referring to policy papers, case studies, industry reports, blogs, etc. The agency must provide VCMI with a research plan outlining the methodologies, data analysis plan and timelines for this work.

Organize consultations with sector experts to gain insights into barriers and emerging solutions/trends that could potentially impact and inform the rate of scope 3 emission reduction. The relevant sector experts should be identified in partnership with VCMI.

This will aid in filling gaps in secondary data and/or confirm hypothesis based on secondary research.

2. All raw primary and secondary data

All raw data collected during the research process will be provided to VCMI in an organized and accessible format (in excel or word file) along with the analysis and use of this data to draw inferences. This should include data such as - survey responses, interview transcripts, and any other primary data collected during the study, data from the literature review and complete references to secondary data. The data should be presented in a way that facilitates further analysis if needed.

3. Comprehensive report

The main deliverable will be a detailed report (in an editable format e.g., word file) including an executive summary, the research findings, analysis, and recommendations. This report should provide a thorough examination of the barriers to scope 3 emissions reduction, their impacts, potential solutions, and costs. It should include visual representations of data where appropriate and be written in a clear, accessible style suitable for a diverse audience of stakeholders.

An interim report halfway through the project should also be submitted to the VCMI secretariat for tracking progress and checking alignment with the way forward.

4. Presentation of key findings

The research team will prepare and deliver a presentation summarizing the key findings and recommendations to VCMI. This presentation should be engaging, visually appealing, and designed to facilitate discussion and decision-making for all kinds of stakeholders engaging in scope 3 emissions management and/or assessment.

5. Publication

Publish the final report as this study is intended for widespread use. This includes copy editing and design.

To ensure the project's success, the agency will be required to meet regularly with the VCMI secretariat to provide updates on the project plan's progress.

Indicative Timelines

Action	Timeline/Deadline in 2024
RfP (Request for Proposal) published and submissions open	26 th July 2024
Closing date for submissions	13 th August 2024
Successful agency contacted; commence onboarding	Mid-August 2024
Project kick-off meeting	Mid-August 2024
Detailed project plan submission and presentation	30 th August 2024
Conduct desk-based research	2 nd September – 30 th September 2024
Finalize scope for consultations to fill gaps in secondary data and/or confirm hypothesis based on secondary research	13 th September 2024
Questionnaire and analysis plan for consultations	16 th September - 25 th September 2024
Interim report submission and presentation	30 th September 2024
Conduct consultations	1 st October - 31 st October 2024
Final Synthesis	1 st November – 11 th November 2024
Draft of the final report for review - submission and presentation	11 th November 2024
Finalization of the report	22 nd November 2024
Copy editing and design	25 th November – 2 nd December 2024
Report-back call and presentation with VCMI Secretariat	10 th December 2024
Publication of the report	13 th December 2024

Submissions

If your agency is interested in submitting a proposal for this work, please ensure you include the following elements:

- Work Plan
 - Details of how your agency intends to deliver the work in line with the scope of work outlined in this document and any logistics and ways of working.
 - A detailed internal timeline for the project, in-line with the high-level timeline provided in this document.
 - A list of the individuals who would deliver the work: their role, expertise, and qualifications.
- Relevant work experience of the project team

- A quote for the work. Please ensure that quotes have a detailed budgetary breakdown in GBP excl. VAT
- Any questions or concerns about the project should be sent to the email outlined below.

Please submit your finalized proposals no later than **13th August 2024 (COB)** to info@vcminegrity.org. Please use the subject line: 'Research on Barriers to Scope 3 Decarbonization'. We only accept electronic submissions.

Appendices

Useful links to further information

[VCMI Website](#)