

TCR's Voluntary Reporting Program

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1. The Climate Registry's (TCR) Voluntary Reporting Program

1a. My organization is new to TCR's reporting program. Where should I start?

The Climate Registry has a number of tools and resources in the [Reporting Toolkit](#) to help you get started with greenhouse gas (GHG) reporting and oriented to TCR's reporting program.

You will need to register on TCR's website for access to members-only tools and resources. Once you register, TCR staff will grant you access.

- The [Carbon Footprinting 101](#) recorded training and slide deck helps new members understand our reporting policies and procedures, as well as the basics of greenhouse gas accounting.
- TCR's [Draft Small Business Guidance](#) summarizes the reporting process with the aim of making GHG reporting accessible to the small business community. This guidance is also applicable to other types of organizations (especially office-based organizations).
- Along with the Carbon Footprinting 101 training, we suggest downloading and familiarizing yourself with the [General Reporting Protocol \(GRP\)](#). The GRP describes how you will quantify your greenhouse gas emissions and set your geographic, organizational and operational boundaries. While the GRP is the "rule book" for TCR's reporting program, many of the quantification methods outlined in the document are performed automatically for you in CRIS (Climate Registry Information System), TCR's online emissions calculation and reporting platform.

Ready to begin reporting emissions? Familiarize yourself with CRIS through the "[Measure, Report, and Verify a Carbon Footprint in CRIS](#)" video, available in the Reporting Toolkit.

1b. What are the program deadlines for reporting and verification?

The voluntary reporting program does not have strict deadlines. However, TCR strongly recommends adherence to our timeline in order to complete annual reporting and verification in a timely fashion. Emissions data from the previous calendar year should be entered into CRIS by **June 30th**, on an annual basis. For example, emissions data from calendar year 2018 will be entered into CRIS by June 30th, 2019.

A complete submission to TCR includes the following:

- An emissions inventory in CRIS;
- Indirect Emissions Disclosure Form (completed in CRIS);
- Self-defined Boundary Form (completed in CRIS)*;
- Exclusion of Miniscule Sources Form (completed in CRIS)*;
- Sector-specific forms (e.g. Standard Inventory Report)*.

(*Items marked with an asterisk may not be applicable to your inventory.)

Verification should be completed by **December 15th**.

We recommend following the steps laid out in the [Reporting and Verification Timeline](#).

1c. Is my organization required to report or verify emissions each year?

No. TCR's voluntary reporting program aims to give member organizations the flexibility they need to meet their needs and sustainability goals. Reporting and verification on an annual basis is recommended, as it can maintain consistency in reported data and allow you to track emissions over time, but it is not required.

1d. What are the benefits of building and reporting an organizational greenhouse gas inventory?

The disclosure of climate risks and environmental performance is rapidly becoming the norm in many sectors. Reporting and verifying a GHG inventory with TCR can help your organization convey your organization's climate efforts to stakeholders. A clear and consistent GHG inventory can:

- Set a baseline and track environmental performance over time in order to set and achieve GHG reduction goals;
- Save money by helping to identify specific areas of opportunity within your organization for emissions reductions and improved efficiency;
- Inform broader sustainability and/or corporate social responsibility (CSR) reporting;
- Provide metrics and performance indicators for other sustainability concerns, like water, energy, and waste management;
- Give your organization a competitive advantage ahead of potential mandatory reporting regulations or carbon pricing systems;
- Establish your organization as a sustainability leader in the eyes of vendors, customers and other key stakeholders.

2. Building Your Organizations Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Inventory

2a. What are Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions? Why do I need to specify Scopes in my organization's inventory?

Scopes of emissions are used to distinguish between GHGs that are emitted directly or indirectly by your organization. Separating emissions into Scopes helps to prevent double counting of any one emissions source.

- **Scope 1 emissions** are direct emissions that your organization physically emits to the atmosphere (for instance, emissions from a company-owned vehicle or HFCs from an air conditioning unit).
- **Scope 2 emissions** are indirect emissions associated with the purchase of electricity, heat, cooling or steam from a third party (like a utility). There is an emissions impact associated with these purchases; however, the emissions are produced outside of your organization's direct control. Complete reporters must report two Scope 2 totals; one calculated using the market-based method and the other using the location-based method.
- **Scope 3 emissions** include all other indirect emissions. Examples of Scope 3 emissions categories include employee commuting, business travel and supply chains. Reporting Scope 3 emissions is *optional* in TCR's reporting program.

Note: Direct or indirect CO₂ emissions from the combustion of biomass fuels (wood, landfill gas, crop residues, etc.) are reported independently from the Scopes. This is because the carbon in biomass was recently contained in living organic matter, whereas the carbon in fossil fuels has been trapped in geologic formations for millennia.

Please see Chapter 5 of the General Reporting Protocol for more information on Scopes.

2b. What are the differences between complete, transitional, basic and historical GHG emissions inventories in TCR's reporting program?

TCR members report a number of different inventory types in TCR's reporting program. These can be thought of as different "levels" of GHG reporting, with complete inventories serving as a comprehensive look at an

organization's emissions and basic reporting serving as an introduction to TCR's program. Complete and transitional inventories that are verified will be labeled as such on the public CRIS report.

<p>Complete Inventory</p>	<p>The most comprehensive inventory type that can be reported to TCR. Complete reports include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions of the seven internationally-recognized greenhouse gases, as well as direct or indirect emissions of CO₂ from biomass combustion. • Emissions from operations in Canada, Mexico and the United States are required to be reported (worldwide reporting is optional). • Two separate Scope 2 totals, which are measured according to the location-based and market- based methods. <p>Members who report a complete inventory and undergo third-party verification earn Climate Registered™ status. Their TCR-approved inventory reports are then made publicly available on CRIS.</p>
<p>Transitional Inventory</p>	<p>Intended to ease members into the GHG emissions reporting process. Members reporting transitional inventories <u>specify their own inventory boundaries</u>. These boundaries are made publicly available alongside a verified, public emissions report. Transitional inventories must still adhere to GRP quantification methods and may still be third-party verified.</p> <p>Members who report a transitional inventory and undergo third-party verification earn Climate Registered™ status. Their TCR-approved inventory reports are then made publicly available on CRIS. Please see question 2e for further information.</p>
<p>Basic Inventory</p>	<p>Intended to be an introduction to TCR's reporting program, and does not prescribe any requirements for reporting. Instead, members reporting basic inventories aim to report as much information as they can while also becoming familiar with entering data into CRIS. Basic inventories are not publicly available on CRIS.</p>
<p>Historical Inventory</p>	<p>GHG inventories or carbon footprints that were previously reported to another program, or self-reported, and third-party verified (e.g. not reported through TCR). Entering historical data in CRIS allows members to centralize previously measured GHG inventories and to track emissions trends over time without requiring modification of previous reports or re-verification.</p>

2c. How do I know which types of emissions to include in my organization's inventory?

Before you begin reporting your organization's emissions, you will define three separate boundaries that determine the emissions sources that should be included in your organization's inventory:

1. **Geographic:** If your business has offices or facilities in more than one location, you will need to define your geographic boundary. Are you going to report your organization's worldwide emissions, only emissions that occur in North America, or emissions within some other geographical boundary (state or province, etc.)? Remember that worldwide emissions reporting is optional even for a complete inventory.

2. **Organizational:** Second, define which operations, facilities, and sources should be included in your organization's inventory by applying either an operational or financial control approach. An equity share approach can also be used in conjunction with an operational or financial control approach.
3. **Operational:** Third, define which Scopes and greenhouse gases should be included in your organization's inventory.

Based on those boundaries, you will determine which facilities you will report for (facilities can be stationary locations, like an office building, or a group of mobile sources, like a vehicle fleet). After you determine your facilities, you will determine which sources of emissions are present at each of these facilities.

This process of determining the emissions to include in your organization's inventory is explained in greater detail in the [Carbon Footprinting 101](#) training, as well as in Chapters 2-5 of the [General Reporting Protocol](#).

2d. What is the difference between operational control and financial control when setting an organizational boundary?

An organizational boundary draws a box around the operations, facilities and sources that will be included in your inventory. You will choose either the Operational or Financial Control Approaches and report 100% of the emissions that your organization is able to impact based on that approach.

Operational Control Approach: This approach includes all facilities, assets, and resources for which your organization has full authority to introduce and implement operating policies (e.g. you hold an operating license or determine EHS policies).

Financial Control Approach: This approach includes all facilities, assets, and resources for which your organization has the ability to direct the financial policies of the operations with an interest in gaining economic benefits from its activities. In other words, it includes operations and facilities in which your organization either: a) wholly owns, b) considers a subsidiary, c) governs the financial policies of a joint venture, or d) owns the majority of the risks and rewards.

You should select the control approach that you feel most accurately reflects your organization's emissions. For instance, a company with significant investments in high-emitting facilities (like power plants) might choose to include these emissions in their inventory to more accurately reflect the financial and climate risks associated with the investments. Thus, they would use the financial control approach to establish their organizational boundary.

Most TCR members choose to report using the operational control approach.

If you choose to do so, you may also report using the **equity share consolidation approach**. This approach includes emissions data from facilities or business units that your organization holds equity in, in addition to the control approach that you choose, according to the percentage of your equity ownership.

Please see Chapter 4.1-4.3 of the General Reporting Protocol for more information on operational/financial control and the equity share consolidation approach.

2e. If my organization decides to report on a transitional basis for our first year, do we need to report a complete inventory in the future?

TCR's reporting program is designed to give organizations the tools they need to meet their sustainability goals. While we encourage organizations to report complete inventories, your organization is not required to do so. TCR members commonly begin by reporting several basic or transitional inventories before submitting a complete report for the first time.

TCR also recognizes that it can take a significant amount of time to gather documentation and establish the appropriate data management practices necessary to report a complete GHG inventory. We allow up to five years of transitional reporting before your organization submits a complete inventory. If you need additional time, you can request a waiver from The Climate Registry's help desk by contacting help@theclimateregistry.org.

Please see Chapter 8 of the General Reporting Protocol for more information on a transitional inventory.

2f. Can I report my organization's emissions on a fiscal year basis?

In order to provide consistency and comparability across the emissions inventories reported to us, TCR does not allow fiscal year reporting. All reporting should be done on an annual, calendar year basis (Jan 1 – Dec 31). Each emissions year must correspond with one calendar year of data.

In practicality, many utility bills will not adhere perfectly to this time schedule. TCR requires that these utility bills be prorated, and our Scope 2 Calculation Tools contain a pro-rating tool to members to accommodate that process. This tool is located in the [Reporting Toolkit](#).

2g. Is it possible to aggregate emissions from separate facilities? What types of facilities can be aggregated?

If you would like to report your organization's emissions at the entity level, you may aggregate all of your emissions into a single facility in CRIS (reported per activity type and in terms of metric tons of GHG). When reporting at the entity level, you must mark your inventory as an entity-level report in CRIS on the Manage Entity page (further instructions can be found in the [CRIS user guide](#)).

Most TCR members choose to report either at the source or the facility level instead, and we highly encourage the tracking of emissions at this disaggregated level. To streamline the reporting process for members reporting at the facility-level, TCR allows for the aggregation of emissions from like facilities for the purposes of reporting in CRIS. Please note that only the following facility categories may be aggregated:

- Commercial Buildings in a single state, province or territory (please see Chapter 6 of the GRP for the definition of a commercial building);
- Mobile sources (vehicles, marine vessels and aircraft) may be aggregated within a state/province/territory. If they travel across state boundaries, they may be aggregated at the national level;
- Other Special Facilities like oil and gas wells, pipelines, parking lots, transit systems, traffic lights, distribution (T&D) systems;
- Emissions that your organization estimates using simplified estimation methods (SEMs, see the [question](#) below for more information) can also be defined as a single facility for the purposes of reporting. This SEMs facility may include any variety of sources.

Emissions from all other types of facilities must be reported separately. Please see Chapter 6.4 of the General Reporting Protocol for more information on aggregating emissions.

2h. My organization would like to report non-North American emissions. What emission factors should I use to quantify emissions that occur in other countries?

If you are quantifying emissions that occurred outside North America, you should use country-specific emission factors developed for the location where your emissions occurred. This might include public and peer-reviewed emission factors from government agencies, academic institutions or non-governmental organizations specific to a country or region. Other sources for country-specific emission factors might be the [International Energy Agency \(IEA\)](#), the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#), or the [Greenhouse Gas Protocol](#). If country-specific emission factors are not available, it is permissible to use IPCC international default emission factors.

Note: International electricity emission factors were previously provided by TCR and are available in CRIS up until EY 2011, at which point the emission factors were removed from IEA’s list of publicly available resources. If your organization is reporting non-North American emissions for an emissions year after EY 2011, you may use other country-specific emission factors or IPCC default factors (or choose to purchase the IEA data set) that can be obtained in the resources linked above.

3. Quantifying and Reporting Your Organization’s Emissions

3a. I am having trouble gathering data for a number of small emissions sources, are there any emissions that I can exclude from our inventory?

TCR allows for the exclusion of some miniscule sources of GHG emissions from an inventory. Miniscule sources are insignificant sources of emissions that present a high reporting burden (for instance, refrigerants in office water coolers). Instead of measuring and reporting these emissions, you may simply identify and disclose them through TCR’s Miniscule Sources Form in CRIS. The form contains a set of pre-defined minuscule sources that are eligible for exclusion. If you feel that a source in your inventory merits consideration for exclusion but has not been previously approved, please complete the Request for Excluding a New Miniscule Source Form found in the [Reporting Toolkit](#).

3b. What are Simplified Estimation Methods (SEMs)?

You may use rough, upper-bound estimations, otherwise known as Simplified Estimation Methods (SEMs), to report up to 5% of your total emissions inventory. SEMs are intended to streamline the reporting process for small sources where data is either unavailable or unobtainable. You must indicate that emissions have been quantified with a Simplified Estimation Method in CRIS.

The 5% SEMs threshold must be evaluated separately against entity emissions totals as calculated with both Scope 2 methods (location-based and market-based). In general, CRIS will complete this evaluation for you, and will not permit you to submit your organization’s inventory if SEMs exceed 5% of the inventory for either entity total (using the location-based method or the market-based method).

3c. My organization leases space in a building. How should I report emissions from purchased heating?

How you will report for emissions from leased spaces largely depends on:

- Your operational and organizational boundaries;
- The type of utilities that your building purchases;
- How you are billed for utilities (directly or through the landlord).

In general, organizations reporting a complete inventory under an operational control approach will be required to report all emissions associated with leased spaces (including purchased heating or steam). Emissions from purchased electricity in leased spaces should always be reported as Scope 2 – Purchased Electricity with both the market- and location-based methods– even if you are billed directly by a utility provider.

The table below outlines common reporting scenarios associated with purchased heating or steam in leased spaces.

If your organization contracts directly with a utility to purchase natural gas or another fuel used for heating (i.e., your organization pays the bill directly to the utility, rather than to a landlord):

You should report emissions associated with these purchases as Scope 1. You should also report your organization’s heating emissions as Scope 1 if there are heating units (e.g. natural gas boilers) located on

<p>the physical premise of the leased space.</p>
<p>If your organization does not contract directly with a utility to purchase natural gas, and your organization does not have heating units within its boundaries:</p> <p>Emissions associated with heating should be reported as Scope 2 Purchased Heating using the area method (see GRP Chapter 14) where possible. This is <i>not</i> considered district heating, and you should not apply an efficiency factor in emissions calculations.</p>
<p>If your organization is individually metered and contracts directly with another entity to purchase district heating (i.e., your organization purchases steam or hot water directly from a utility or from your building manager):</p> <p>You should report emissions associated with these purchases as Scope 2 and apply an efficiency factor in your emissions calculations to account for boiler efficiency and transportation losses (additional guidance provided in GRP Chapter 15). If you are reporting with the CRIS emissions calculator, CRIS will include this efficiency factor in calculations when you indicate that you are reporting for district heating emissions.</p>
<p>If your building manager purchases district heating (steam or hot water) for the building you occupy but is not able to provide you with consumption totals specific to your leased space:</p> <p>You should use the area method to determine your annual steam or hot water consumption (details in GRP Chapter 14), and then use the guidance in GRP Chapter 15 to determine your Scope 2 emissions from purchased heating.</p>
<p>If you are unable to obtain any consumption data from your building manager (natural gas, steam, hot water or otherwise):</p> <p>You may rely on CBECS defaults to report emissions from purchased heating, and should <i>not</i> apply an efficiency factor in emissions calculations (more information in below).</p>

3d. How can I report for Scope 2 emissions associated with electricity and heating in a leased space if I cannot obtain the building’s energy consumption information from the landlord?

If you do not have overall consumption data for the building in which your organization leases space, you should calculate electricity or natural gas consumption using the Average Intensity Method (see GRP Chapter 14). If you are reporting for emissions in the United States, use electricity or natural gas intensity factors from the [U.S. Energy Information Administration Commercial Building Energy Consumption Survey](#) (known as CBECS). For Canadian emissions, use intensity factors from the [Natural Resources Canada Commercial and Institutional Building Energy Use Survey](#). These intensity factors can also be found in TCR’s Default Emission Factor document, located on the [General Reporting Protocol page](#).

TCR’s Scope 2 Calculation Tools, found in the [Reporting Resources](#) section of the Reporting Toolkit, include a calculator to perform these Average Intensity Method calculations for you.

3e. When should the emissions associated with my organization’s fire suppression systems be reported?

Fugitive emissions (CO₂, HFCs, and PFCs) from fire suppression equipment should be reported only if the fire protection equipment has been tested or deployed during the year. If this is the case, you should quantify emissions according to Chapter 16 of the General Reporting Protocol.

3f. Where can I find resources to help me quantify and report my organization’s Scope 3 emissions?

Reporting Scope 3 emissions is *optional* in TCR's reporting program. Thus, TCR does not provide approved calculation methodologies or tools for the calculation of Scope 3 emissions. Members interested in quantifying their Scope 3 emissions are encouraged to consult TCR's [Draft GHG Reporting Guidance for Small Businesses](#) and resources published by the [Greenhouse Gas Protocol](#), including the [Corporate Value Chain \(Scope 3\) Accounting and Reporting Standard](#) and the [Scope 3 Evaluator tool](#). The US EPA provides a number of Scope 3 emission factors (notably those for business travel and/or commuting) via their [Emission Factor Hub](#). The Smart Freight Centre has developed the [GLEC Framework](#), which may be helpful for members looking to quantify Scope 3 emissions from freight and shipping in supply chains.

TCR's [webinar library](#) also includes presentations on measuring and managing Scope 3 emissions.

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4. Sector-Specific Guidance

4a. What types of sector-specific guidance are available under TCR's program?

TCR offers the following sector-specific protocols that members should use when applicable. Applicability details are provided in the early chapters of each sector-specific protocol. Keep in mind that these protocols are to be used *in addition to* the General Reporting Protocol.

- [Electric Power Sector Protocol \(EPS Protocol\)](#),
- [Local Government Operations Protocol \(LGO Protocol\)](#)
- [Oil & Gas Production Protocol](#)
- [Water-Energy GHG Guidance \(optional\)](#)
- [Performance Metrics for Transit Agencies \(optional\)](#)
- [Draft GHG Reporting Guidance for Small Business](#)

4b. Is my organization required to use the Electric Power Sector (EPS) Protocol to quantify and report our emissions?

You must use the EPS Protocol if your organization owns or controls:

- Electric power generating facilities;
- Transmission systems that convey electricity from a generation facility to a distribution system;
- Distribution systems that convey electric power received from a generation facility or a transmission system to the final consumer.

In practice, utilities are the most common organizations that use the EPS Protocol.

Using the EPS Protocol and completing optional deliveries metrics will allow you to derive a verifiable utility-specific emission factor, which you can then share with your customers. Your customers can use this factor to more accurately reflect their emissions from purchased electricity under the market-based method for measuring Scope 2 emissions.

4c. My organization is a local government. When do we use the Local Government Operations (LGO) Protocol to report our emissions?

Local governments at the city or county level must calculate and report their GHG emissions according to the [Local Government Operations \(LGO\) Protocol](#), with special attention to the requirements that are intended for



TCR's members found in Appendix D. The LGO Protocol provides important supplemental reporting guidance and sector specific calculations for local governments (e.g. wastewater, solid waste, etc.) to assist them in reporting emissions from their operations. Note that the LGO Protocol does not provide guidance on reporting a community-wide inventory.

By categorizing an inventory according to the sectors outlined in the LGOP, local governments may be able to more easily communicate inventory results to the public and identify opportunities for reductions. Local governments that report to the LGOP must upload a [Standard Inventory Report](#) alongside their inventory in CRIS.

If your local government controls a municipal utility, then you may also need to use the Electric Power Sector Protocol to report emissions from electricity generation.

5. Using TCR's GHG Reporting Software, CRIS

5a. What is CRIS and where can I learn how to use it?

CRIS, or Climate Registry Information System, is the online reporting tool that members can use to quantify and report credible GHG emissions inventories. CRIS is located on a separate website from TCR's homepage and can be accessed here: <https://www.cris4.org>.

Members submit their GHG inventories to their verification body through CRIS. After a successful verification, TCR-approved inventories are published to the Climate Registered™ Reports section of CRIS.

TCR members receive information on how to register for a CRIS account when they join TCR. If you do not have access to your organization's entity in CRIS, please contact the help desk at help@theclimateregistry.org.

To get started working in CRIS, watch the "[Measure, Report, and Verify a Carbon Footprint in CRIS.](#)" We also suggest that you read and bookmark [CRIS User Guide](#), which will walk you through how to set up your inventory and report emissions in CRIS with step-by-step instructions and screen shots.

5b. Do I need to submit supporting documentation such as utility bills, fuel purchase records, or calculation spreadsheets in CRIS?

In general, you are not required to upload supporting documentation like utility bills, fuel records or calculation spreadsheets. Rather, these records should be saved offline with your Inventory Management Plan (found on the [Reporting Forms](#) page), as they most likely will be required for verification purposes.

If you are reporting for market-based Scope 2 emissions with an emission factor conveyed by a contract (like a power purchase agreement) or an energy attribute certificate (like a REC), you will need to upload documentation that these emission factors meet the TCR Eligibility Criteria. For more information on required disclosures, please see the [Scope 2 FAQ](#) document.

6. Verifying Your Organization's GHG Inventory

6a. What is verification and is it required?

Verification is a third-party audit of your organization's greenhouse gas inventory by a TCR-approved verification body. It ensures that your inventory is free from misstatements and conforms to TCR's protocols. **Verification is not required for members of The Climate Registry.** However, only verified inventories are made publicly



available on the CRIS Climate Registered™ Reports page to ensure that only credible, high quality data is put into the public domain.

Publishing your organization's GHG inventory can help to improve your credibility with internal and external stakeholders by instilling confidence that your organization's inventory is accurate. Stakeholders can then make informed decisions based on the data that you report. Internally, verification can improve your data management and other processes, helping your organization to operate more efficiently and competitively.

Find a list of TCR-approved verification bodies, as well as more information on the verification process, on the [Verification section](#) of the website.

6b. How much does verification cost?

The cost of verification is not included in your organization's TCR membership fee. Due to the variability of factors behind verification costs, TCR cannot provide estimates for the cost of verification. We recommend you consult directly with a [TCR-approved verification body](#) for estimates and reference the [Verification Forms and Resources](#) page of our website for factors that affect the cost of verification (reference the document titled "TCR Guidance on Verification Cost Factors").

6c. Are there options to reduce verification costs for small organizations?

TCR offers a standardized, streamlined and low-cost verification option for small organizations emitting less than 1000 metric tons of CO₂e annually. This verification option is known as Batch Verification. Please find eligibility criteria and more information on the [Batch Verification](#) page of our website.