

How to improve your CDP score



SWEEP

GUIDE

Disclosure coverage

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 **CDP**

Datapoint status



● Validated **31** ● Audited **10**



What you will learn in this guide

- ✓ How the CDP scoring system works
- ✓ How to prepare your reporting efficiently
- ✓ How to improve your score year after year

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01 Introduction

The **CDP (formerly Carbon Disclosure Project)** is the world's most widely used environmental disclosure system. Each year, it collects climate, water, and forest data from companies on behalf of investors, customers, and policymakers. Today, more than **740 institutional investors representing over USD 136 trillion in assets** rely on CDP data to assess environmental risks, resilience, and performance across global value chains.

In 2025, more than 22,000 companies responded to the CDP questionnaire. Among them, 4% achieved the highest rating, an “A” score, in at least one of the three assessed themes: Climate, Water, or Forests.

Achieving a strong CDP score is therefore both a mark of environmental leadership and a strategic advantage. It signals credibility to investors, strengthens customer relationships, and helps organisations structure their sustainability strategy around robust, decision-grade data.

This guide explains how to improve your CDP score and how to move toward the A-List.

Why your CDP score matters

CDP scores are increasingly used to guide **investment decisions, lending conditions, and procurement choices**. A strong score demonstrates not only transparency, but also your organisation's ability to **manage climate and environmental risks proactively**.

Your CDP score is particularly important for:

- **Investors**, who use CDP data to assess climate-related risks and transition readiness
- **Customers**, as many large companies closely review their suppliers' CDP disclosures.

Improving your CDP score is also an opportunity to **strengthen governance, align teams, and embed climate action across the organisation**.





“Transparency drives action at all levels. Within two years of an investor request, companies disclosing through CDP reduce their direct emissions by 7–10%.”

Simon Fischweicher
Chief Delivery Officer



02 Part 1: Understanding the CDP scoring system

The basics

What do CDP scores (A to F) mean?

CDP scores companies from **A to D-**, with an **F** for companies that do not provide sufficient information.

- **A (A List):** Environmental leadership
- **A- (Leadership):** Strong leadership, but not all A-List criteria met
- **B / B- (Management):** Coordinated management of environmental issues
- **C / C- (Awareness):** Awareness of impacts and initial action
- **D / D- (Disclosure):** Data disclosed, but limited evidence of management
- **F:** No response

The three themes assessed by CDP

CDP evaluates companies across three independent themes:

- 1. Climate:** Greenhouse gas emissions, climate risks and opportunities, and reduction strategy
- 2. Water:** Water management practices and exposure to water stress
- 3. Forests:** Deforestation risks and management of high-risk commodities

Most companies begin with **Climate**, as it is the most frequently requested by investors and customers.

The CDP scoring methodology

For each question, CDP assesses:

- **Completeness:** Have you answered all parts of the question?
- **Quality:** Is your response clear, precise, and well supported?
- **Consistency:** Are your responses consistent with one another?
- **Evidence:** Can you demonstrate and substantiate your claims?

Each question earns points

Each question in the CDP questionnaire can earn points across several categories at the same time (Leadership, Management, Awareness, Disclosure).

Example:

Let's take the question: "What are your climate-related risks?"

- If you provide a complete response: **+8 Disclosure points**
- If you identify specific risks: **+3 Awareness points**
- If you explain how you manage them: **+1 Management point**
- If you demonstrate anticipation and innovation: **+1 Leadership point**

Your responses affect the points available

It's important to keep this in mind: the maximum number of points you can earn depends on how you frame your response.

Example: identifying environmental risks and opportunities

Scenario 1

You say: "We do not have an identification process."

- Points earned: 0
- Points available: 7
- Result: 0/7

CDP penalizes you twice here because nothing is disclosed:

- **Penalty 1:** You earn no points
- **Penalty 2:** You are assessed against the maximum number of points (7 instead of 3), which significantly lowers your overall score

Scenario 2

You say: "We have a process to identify risks, but not opportunities."

- Points available: 3
- If answered well: up to 1.5/3

Scenario 3

You say: "We have a process to identify both environmental risks and opportunities."

- Points available: 3
- If answered well: up to 3/3

Key takeaway

The more ambitious and comprehensive your response, the more points you can earn.

How your final score is calculated

Step 1: Points allocation

Points are awarded for each question based on response quality.

Step 2: Percentage calculation

$$\text{Points earned} \div \text{Points available} = \text{Your score per category}$$

Step 3: Final rating

To reach a given level, you must score **at least 80%** in all preceding categories.

- **A (Leadership):** ≥80% in Management, Awareness, and Disclosure, plus essential criteria
- **B (Management):** ≥80% in Awareness and Disclosure
- **C (Awareness):** ≥80% in Disclosure

The “minus” (-)

If your score in your current category is below ~45%, you receive a minus (e.g. B-).

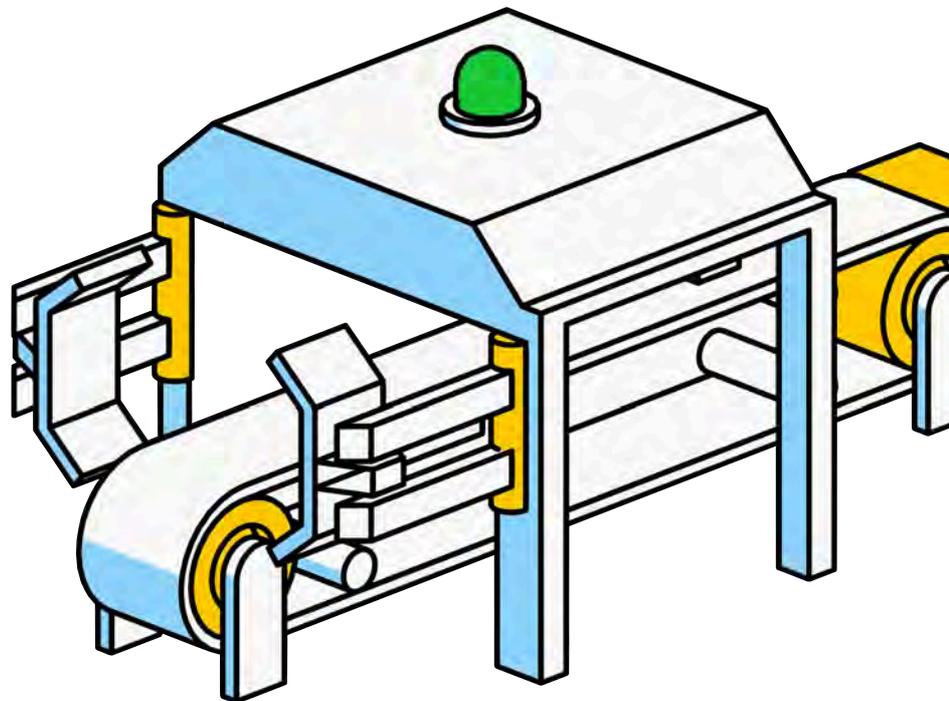
Essential criteria: non-negotiable requirements

Some requirements apply regardless of points scored.

To achieve an **A rating**, you must have:

- Third-party verification of **100% of Scope 1 emissions**
- Third-party verification of **100% of Scope 2 emissions**
- Third-party verification of **at least 70% of Scope 3 emissions**

Without these, the highest possible score is **A-**, even with strong performance elsewhere.





“This second A score from CDP is a strong recognition of Thales’ teams. We continue to leverage technology to reduce our environmental footprint and that of our customers.”

Isabelle Simon
Secretary General

THALES

03 Part 2:

Your roadmap to an A score

Step 1: Register with CDP

Create your account and pay the fees

Go to the CDP portal ([cdp.net](https://www.cdp.net)) and create an account for your company. You will need:

- Your company's legal information
- A primary contact for reporting
- Validation of the administration fees (which vary depending on company size, number of modules selected, status, etc.)

Choose the right modules

Based on investor requests and your industry, CDP will recommend that you respond to one, two, or three of the following modules:

- **Climate:** the most requested by investors and customers
- **Water:** for sectors with high water dependency
- **Forests:** for companies using at-risk raw materials



If this is your first year, start with the Climate module.

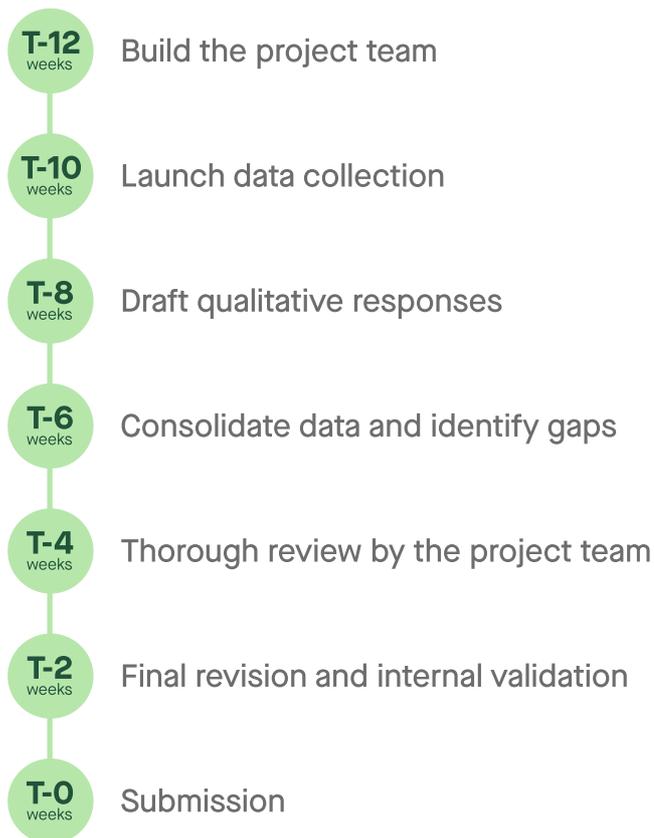
Step 2: Prepare your reporting

Review what's new in the questionnaire

The CDP questionnaire evolves every year. Take the time to:

- Read the updated reporting guidance
- Identify new questions
- Spot changes in scoring criteria
- Review examples of high-quality responses published by CDP

Set up a timeline



Build your project team

Clearly define roles:

- A project lead responsible for the reporting
- Contributors providing the data
- Reviewers validating data quality
- An executive sponsor from senior management

Mobilize the right teams:

- **Sustainability (CSR/ESG)**: overall project leadership
- **Finance**: financial data, budgets, investments
- **Procurement**: supplier data, Scope 3 engagement
- **Operations**: energy consumption, waste
- **Risk**: scenario analysis, materiality
- **Legal**: validation of public commitments
- **Communications**: alignment with other disclosures

Step 3: Identify the data you will need

For the Climate module, you will need:

Quantitative data:

- Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions (in tCO₂e)
- Detailed energy consumption
- Emission factors used
- Organizational boundary and methodology

Qualitative data:

- Climate governance (who, when, how)
- Reduction targets and pathways
- Identified risks and opportunities
- Transition plan and investments
- Supplier engagement actions

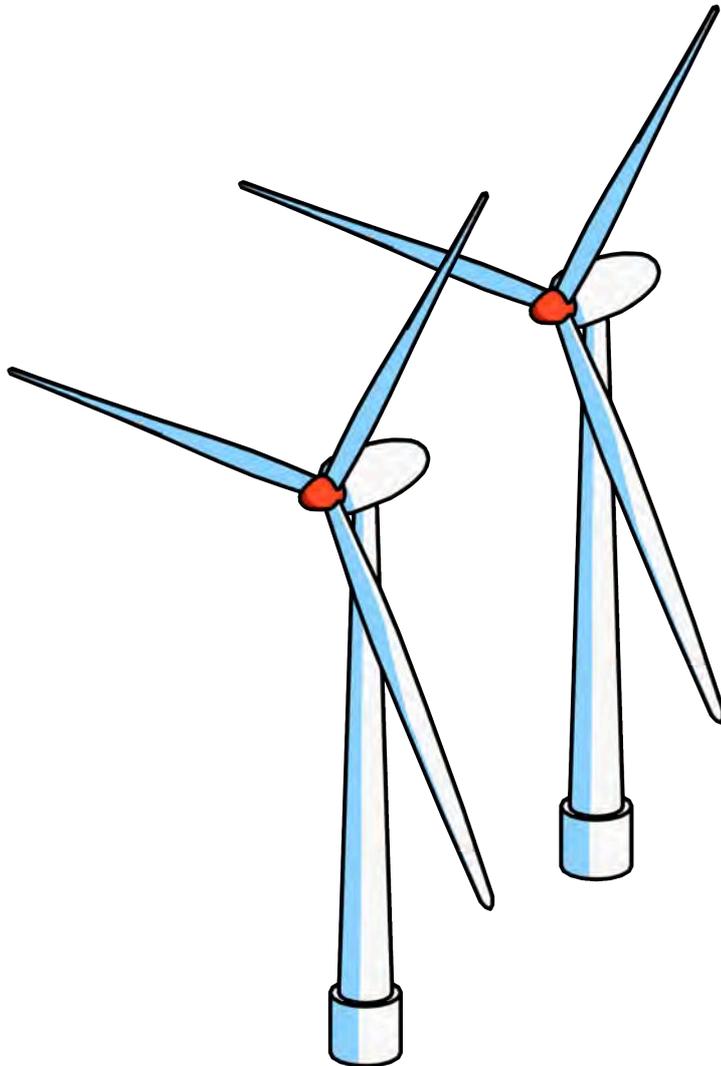


Precisely map your needs using a data matrix.

CDP SECTION	REQUIRED DATA	OWNER	STATUS
C0 - Introduction	Company info, boundaries	Sustainability	✓
C2 - Governance	Roles, responsibilities, remuneration	HR / Legal	In progress
C6 - Emissions	Scope 1, 2, 3 + factors	Ops/Procurement	To be completed
C7 - Scope 3	15 categories, supplier engagement	Procurement	In progress

Common pitfalls to avoid

- **Unclear boundaries:** be precise about what is included or excluded
- **Inappropriate emission factors:** use the most recent and geography-relevant factors
- **Incomplete Scope 3:** CDP expects coverage of all 15 categories
- **Lack of evidence:** every claim must be documented
- **Inconsistencies:** ensure alignment across all responses





“We are honored to be one of only five companies to achieve both a triple “A” ranking from CDP for our leadership in climate action, forest protection and water stewardship and be on the Supplier Engagement Leaderboard.”

Nate Hurst

Chief Sustainability and Social Impact Officer

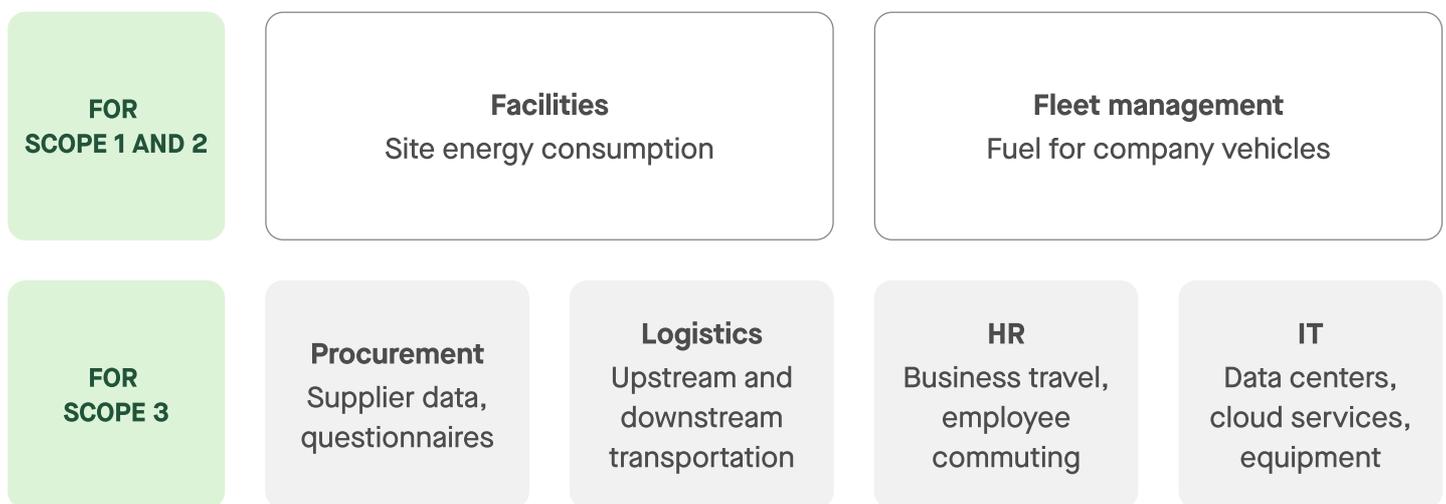


Step 4: Collect the data

Set up an efficient data collection system

- Streamline data collection with a standardized questionnaire sent to all data owners
- Set intermediate deadlines
- Automate reminders to avoid chasing contributors
- Hold regular check-ins to track progress

Involve the right teams in data collection



Automate where possible

Priority tasks to automate:

- Energy invoice imports
- Recurring supplier data collection
- Reuse of data already published in other reports (annual reports, impact studies, etc.)
- Emissions calculations using standard factors
- Alerts for missing data

Step 5: Ensure data quality

Data reliability and traceability are critical to achieving a strong CDP score. Several processes should be implemented.

Put in place human controls:

- Peer review and manager validation
- Internal audit before submission
- Cross-review between teams

Implement automated checks:

- Outliers (e.g. consumption multiplied by 10 compared to the previous year)
- Missing data
- Inconsistencies between sections (e.g. Scope 1+2+3 \neq total emissions)
- Outdated emission factors

Handle missing data transparently

- **Be transparent:** clearly disclose gaps to CDP
- **Estimate with documentation:** use justifiable methods (sector averages, extrapolation)
- **Explain:** state why the data is missing
- **Plan ahead:** describe how you will address the gap next year

CDP values transparency: it is better to acknowledge a gap with an action plan than to say nothing or invent a number.

Overall, for every data point disclosed, you should be able to justify the source, collection method, data owner, and last update date.

Step 6: Demonstrate your climate commitments

Set SBTi targets

Companies with validated SBTi targets consistently achieve higher scores. To do so:

- Submit your targets to the Science Based Targets initiative
- Cover 100% of Scope 1 and 2 emissions and at least 67% of Scope 3
- Define short-term (2030) and long-term (2050) milestones
- Publish your targets transparently

If you do not yet have SBTi targets, start now—the process takes several months.

Demonstrate climate governance

CDP expects concrete governance evidence:

- **Board level:** a board member responsible for climate issues
- **Executive level:** variable compensation linked to climate KPIs
- **Operational level:** dedicated teams, allocated budgets, regular reporting

Present your transition plan

Your transition plan must be credible and actionable:

- **Quantified pathways:** how you will reach your targets year by year
- **Investments:** amounts and projects (CAPEX / OPEX)
- **Levers:** energy efficiency, renewables, supplier engagement, product innovation
- **Monitoring indicators:** clear KPIs to track progress
- **Risk scenarios:** how your strategy and business model adapt to climate change

Step 7: Anticipate complex questions

Scope 3: the key to an A score

Scope 3 often represents more than 70% of total emissions. To earn points:

- **Full coverage:** assess all 15 categories, even if you rely on estimates initially
- **Supplier engagement:** launch data collection campaigns and set engagement targets
- **Primary data:** prioritize actual data over industry averages
- **Concrete actions:** show how you reduce Scope 3 (supplier training, purchasing criteria, product innovation)

Climate scenario analysis

CDP requires scenario analysis in line with TCFD recommendations. You must:

- Test at least two scenarios: an optimistic (1.5°C) and a pessimistic (>4°C) scenario
- Identify impacts: physical risks (floods, droughts) and transition risks (carbon pricing, demand shifts)
- Quantify impacts financially where possible
- Explain adaptation measures to reduce vulnerability

Risk identification and management

CDP assesses the maturity of your climate risk management:

- Identify key physical and transition risks
- Prioritize them by likelihood and financial impact
- Implement concrete mitigation plans
- Integrate them into enterprise risk management (ERM)
- Monitor risk evolution over time

Final step: Submit your reporting

Pre-submission checklist:

- Executive validation**
Have your sponsor approve the content (CSO, CFO, or executive committee member)
- Legal review**
If needed, have public commitments reviewed by legal
- Technical check**
Ensure all attachments are uploaded and readable
- Backup export**
Save a full PDF copy of your responses for communication purposes
- Confirmation**
Verify that you receive a confirmation email from CDP

Score release timeline

CDP publishes scores a few weeks after the submission deadline.

You will receive:

Your overall score (A to F)

A detailed score by section

A feedback report outlining strengths and areas for improvement



What to do after receiving your score?

If your score is strong, communicate it: add it to your website, reports, and investor presentations

If it can be improved, identify where points were lost and build an action plan for the following year



“This ninth consecutive CDP triple ‘A’ reflects the unwavering commitment of our teams to sustainability and the deep integration of these principles into our business model.”

Nicolas Hieronimus
CEO of L'Oréal Group

L'ORÉAL

04 Part 3: The tools to achieve an A score

Collecting, verifying, and consolidating CDP data requires strong organisation and collaboration.

Why spreadsheets are no longer enough

Managing CDP reporting through spreadsheets and emails leads to:

- Significant time loss
- Higher risk of errors
- Limited traceability
- Inefficient collaboration

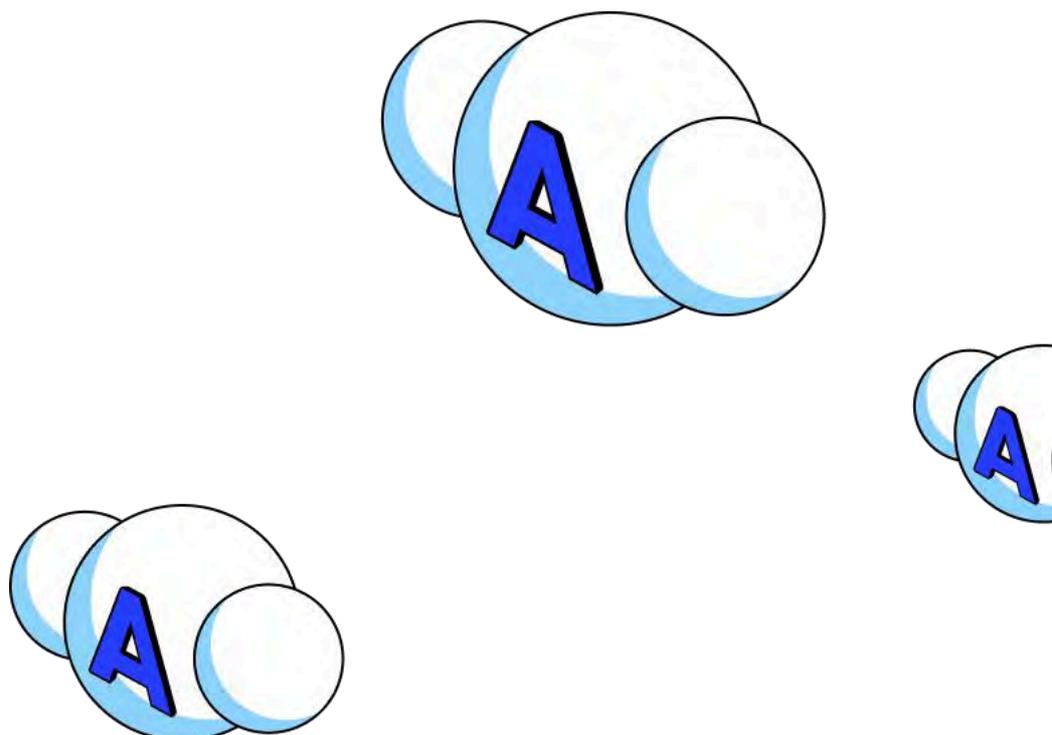


According to Verdantix, companies spend **1,700+ hours per year** on data collection, calculations, and corrections: time that could be spent on decarbonization activity.

The benefits of a dedicated platform

A dedicated sustainability platform enables:

- Centralised data management
- Automated data collection and calculations
- Full audit trails
- Structured workflows and clear ownership



Improve your CDP score with Sweep



Centralize all your data

Sweep connects to your existing systems to automatically import:

- Energy invoices (gas, electricity, fuel)
- Purchases, expenses, and travel data (ERP, accounting systems, etc.)
- Supplier data (automated questionnaires)

No more manual data entry: the data flows directly into Sweep.



Complete your CDP report twice as fast

- Sweep automatically pre-fills CDP responses using your consolidated data.
- AI drafts your narrative responses in just a few minutes.
- Workflows enable you to coordinate your teams efficiently.



Improve your score

Sweep's AI agents help you to:

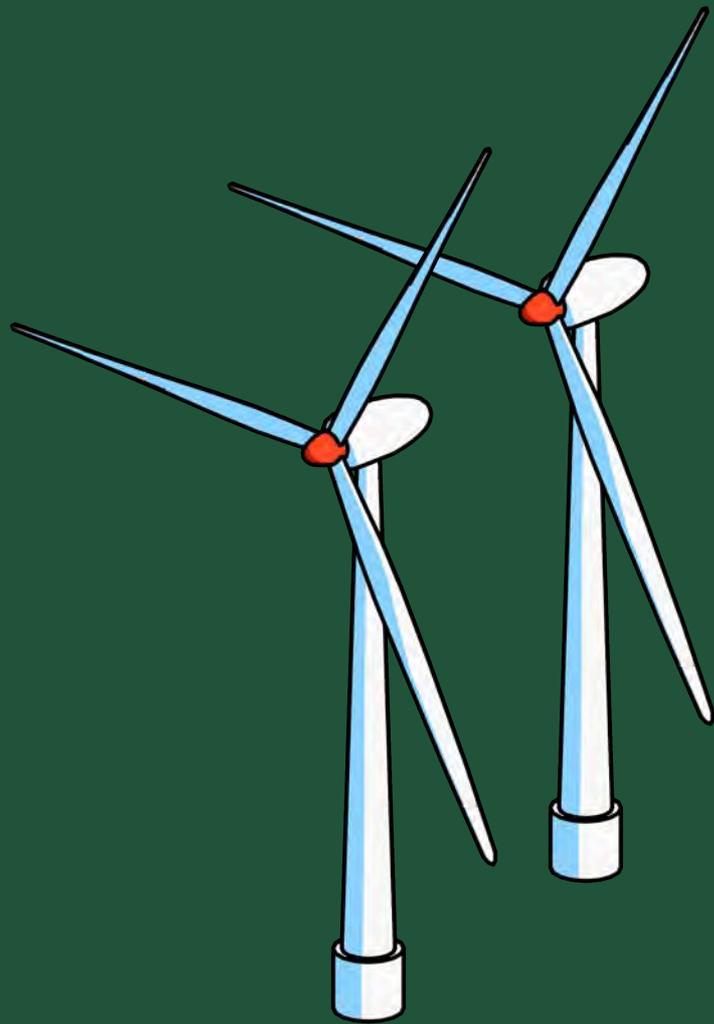
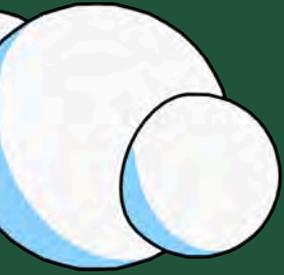
- Detect anomalies: outliers, inconsistent, or missing values
- Select the emission factors best suited to your context
- Boost your CDP score through response analysis and associated recommendations



Be ready for 2026

- CDP module aligned with the 2026 questionnaire
- Services for guidance and submission
- Expert support throughout your entire campaign

[Book a demo →](#)



SWEEP

The leading sustainability data management platform.

sweep.net

Book a demo →