REINVENTIVES
CONSTRUCTION

BRIEFING NOTE 001

# GHG Protocol for construction

Set a clear company boundary before calculating Scopes 1, 2 and 3.

Version 1.0 | Prepared and reviewed: 9 September 2026 | 5-minute read

Status: Voluntary accounting framework; reporting duties depend on the applicable regime.

Audience: Contractors, manufacturers, merchants and developers; finance and sustainability leads.

## Executive summary

A useful company carbon footprint starts with a consistent definition of whose activities are included. The Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol provides the accounting framework for separating direct emissions, purchased energy and the wider value chain.[1][2][3] Construction businesses need particular care with joint ventures, hired equipment and subcontracted work. A project assessment or product declaration cannot simply substitute for the company inventory. Agree the reporting purpose and boundary, then build a traceable record that supports both decisions and the disclosures your business needs.

**Start here.** Bring finance, operations and sustainability together to agree which entities, sites and activities the first inventory will cover.

**In plain terms.** Think of the inventory as an emissions ledger for the business. The boundary defines which operations belong in it; the three scopes organise their emissions. The same construction activity can sit in different scopes for different organisations because each reports from its own position in the value chain.[1]

## Where construction emissions sit

| Scope | Meaning and construction examples |
|---|---|
| 1: Direct | Fuel burned in equipment and vehicles within your boundary, plus process emissions and refrigerant leaks where relevant.[1] |
| 2: Purchased energy | Emissions from generating electricity, heat, steam or cooling acquired for your operations, including site electricity.[2] |
| 3: Other indirect | Value-chain emissions such as purchased materials, subcontracted services, freight, waste and employee travel, allocated to the relevant categories.[3] |

## Set the boundary before collecting data

Choose equity share, financial control or operational control as the consolidation approach. Document how it treats joint ventures, leased premises and hired plant. The invoice alone does not determine the scope.[1] Record uncertain cases for review rather than silently omitting them.

Screen all 15 Scope 3 categories and explain exclusions when applying that standard.[3] A building assessment spanning decades is a different measure. A procurement scheme’s selected disclosures do not define a complete company footprint.

## Show both electricity perspectives

Companies applying the Scope 2 Guidance in markets with contractual product or supplier data must report two totals: location-based, reflecting grid averages, and market-based, reflecting qualifying contracts. Contractual data must meet the Scope 2 Quality Criteria. A green tariff does not remove the location-based result.[2]


construction@reinventives.co.uk | Tel: 01908 023399

## Recommended actions

A practical way to start, with suggested owners and timing:

1. **Agree the reporting brief.** Record entities, period, consolidation method and intended disclosures. Keep a signed boundary note and list any decisions needing specialist review. *Finance and sustainability, before data requests.*
2. **Map evidence owners.** List sites, meters, fuel cards, fleet records, refrigerant logs and procurement systems. Assign owners and coverage checks, including short-lived sites. *Operations, at mobilisation.*
3. **Build the inventory.** Use documented activity data, units and emission factors. Record estimates, factor versions and checks in a workbook another reviewer can follow. *Reporting lead, first calculation cycle.*
4. **Improve the largest gaps.** Prioritise material Scope 3 categories and request better supplier evidence. Keep a dated improvement plan rather than waiting for perfect data. *Procurement, after initial screening.*
5. **Review and approve.** Reconcile coverage and explain changes. Maintain a base-year recalculation policy for significant structural or methodological changes, then approve the report and reduction priorities.[1] *Finance, each reporting close.*

## Example in practice

Illustrative example: a contractor controls a diesel generator, buys site electricity and purchases concrete. Generator combustion is Scope 1, electricity generation is Scope 2, and concrete production is Scope 3. Fuel supply-chain emissions are also considered separately in Scope 3.[1][2][3]

## Common mistakes and what to do instead

- Treating hired plant as automatically Scope 3: assess control and the chosen consolidation method.
- Adding product and project totals to the inventory: reconcile periods, boundaries and duplicates.
- Subtracting purchased offsets: report gross inventory emissions and offset information separately.[1]

## How Reinventives can help

Reinventives can support a boundary workshop, source map and calculation workbook, then establish data ownership and reporting controls. A first deliverable can be an inventory brief showing coverage, gaps and responsibilities. We can coordinate external assurance; preparing an inventory does not itself provide an independent assurance opinion.

**Book a construction reporting conversation: reinventives.co.uk/construction/book**

Related briefing notes: BN002 Scope 3 | BN011 Reliable carbon data

**Standards under development.** GHG Protocol and ISO plan consultation on a consolidated corporate standard in Q2 2027 and publication in Q4 2028. These future changes do not replace the current requirements.[4]

## Sources and review dates

[1] GHG Protocol, Corporate Standard, revised 2004; chapters 3-5 and 9.

[2] GHG Protocol, Scope 2 Guidance, 2015; sections 1.5 and 7.

[3] GHG Protocol, Corporate Value Chain (Scope 3) Standard, 2011; publisher resources.

[4] GHG Protocol, Standard development updates: FAQ, 29 July 2026.

Correct as of and sources accessed 9 September 2026 | Next review 9 December 2026

Review earlier if GHG Protocol changes adopted requirements or the reporting scheme changes its required boundary.





construction@reinventives.co.uk | Tel: 01908 023399