



Common Data Framework | Data Partner Criteria

2025



With the support of
BCG BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP

Choosing the right data partner is a strategic decision

Foundational and expanded tracking can often be handled in-house or through one-off benchmarking studies

However, as emissions reporting needs become more detailed, **partnering with the right data platform becomes essential**; the right partner enables more consistent data, scalable supplier engagement, and deeper traceability

To guide this evolution, **CGF has defined a clear set of criteria for retailers to evaluate potential data partners** with a focus on **scope 3 category 1 partners with the ability to scale to PCF collection**

These **four essential pillars** help ensure data accuracy, reduce supplier burden, and support long-term progress across the industry

Data partner selection principles | Four pillars for choosing the right data platform provider for the Common Data Framework

Pillar	Description
① Technical foundation	Platform is secure, scalable, and empowers both retailers and suppliers to participate effectively
② Methodology transparency	Methodology is science-based, credible, and aligned to international standards and changing regulatory landscape
③ Reporting & analytics capabilities	Platform converts complex data into clear, actionable insights for compliance and strategic decisions
④ Commercial credentials	Platform is trusted by industry peers, with demonstrated success in real-world implementations

Detailed criteria for each pillar on following pages

1 Technical Foundations | Platform is secure, scalable, and empowers both retailers and suppliers to participate effectively

Criteria	Minimum Requirements	Nice-to-Haves
Data security & privacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SOC 2 or ISO 27001 certification GDPR compliant Restrictions on upstream visibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Real-time threat monitoring Country-specific compliance (e.g., CCPA, APPI)
Usability & interface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-serve dashboards Multi-language support Role-based access control for retailers (by function), suppliers, & external partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customizable dashboards Low/no-code integration for workflow automation
Data collection ease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data ingestion customized to preferred format and fields Direct supplier outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Built-in data collection from common sources (e.g., CDP)
Interoperability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrations with ERP/supply chain systems Supports standard APIs (e.g., REST) and other documentation (e.g., Excel) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plug-and-play with major carbon accounting tools

2 Methodology transparency | Methodology is science-based, credible, and aligned to international standards

Criteria	Minimum Requirements	Nice-to-Haves
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adheres to GHGP standard Provides clear visibility into both calculation logic and scope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports additional emissions frameworks (e.g., ISO 14064, SBTi, CSRD, PCAF)
Emission factors & assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transparent emission factor sources (e.g., IPCC, EPA) Option to integrate supplier-provided values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dynamic factor updates based on new science or geography-specific values
Regulatory & voluntary alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligns to all relevant local regulatory requirements Supports voluntary commitments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alerts users of new or updated requirements that materially impact reporting Tracks suppliers' public climate commitment (e.g., to SBTi targets)
Verification & audit readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automatically flags data gaps and outliers based on internal baseline Supports 3rd-party verification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit trail for every data point Direct integration with certifiers (e.g., SGS, TÜV, DNV)
Deforestation traceability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepts DCF certification data and supplier declarations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satellite imagery, geospatial traceability to land plot-level Integration with traceability service providers

3 Reporting & analytics capabilities | Platform converts complex data into clear, actionable insights for compliance and strategic decisions

Criteria	Minimum Requirements	Nice-to-Haves
Reporting levels supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate, category, supplier & product level reporting Aggregate data aligned to voluntary standards (e.g., FLAG/non-FLAG) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drill-down into product- and plot-level reporting Normalize supplier-submitted data to account for methodological discrepancies
Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope 3 category 1 total emissions and intensity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure additional sustainability metrics including other Scope 3 categories and non-GHG factors
Scenario modeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmark and forecast results against internally-defined baselines and targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmark and forecast against industry standards Calculate tradeoffs of GHG reduction vs. other sustainability metrics
Output flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Export to multiple formats for reporting (e.g., Excel, PDF, CSRD-aligned templates) Update outputs in real-time as new information submitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seamless integration into sustainability reporting tools Automatic submission to global standards (e.g., CDP, CSRD, GRI, SBTi)
Strategic insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Configurable to meet internal KPIs or targets Automatic hotspot identification Supplier scorecarding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AI-driven insights and scenario forecasting based on decarbonization targets Actions recommendations

4 Commercial Credentials | Platform is trusted by industry peers, with demonstrated success in real-world implementations

Criteria	Minimum Requirements	Nice-to-Haves
Market adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used by at least one peer retailer or consumer goods company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Widespread adoption by major retailers or CPGs Active engagement with key standard boards (e.g., SBTi, RSPO) or precompetitive coalitions (e.g., WBCSD)
Client references	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willing to provide references or case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case studies with measurable decarbonization impact
Operational longevity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 2–3 years of continuous platform operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proven support for multiple reports (e.g., CDP, CSRD, EUDR, etc.)
Partnership model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transparent pricing Dedicated account management Supplier education and engagement support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-innovation roadmap access
Support & responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local language support Step-by-step user guides Virtual help center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multilingual, global support teams with 24/7 availability for both retailers and suppliers

Thank you

