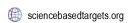# Addressing ongoing emissions and BVCM Expert Working Group Meeting Minutes
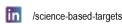
16 April 2025

09:00 - 11:00 BST [Session A]
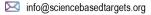
15.00 - 17.00 BST [Session B]

Virtual

DISCLAIMER

The meeting notes provided herein are intended to capture the discussions, decisions, and actions taken during the meeting to the best of the note-taker's ability. While efforts have been made to accurately represent the proceedings, it is essential to acknowledge that these minutes are a summary and may not capture every detail or nuance of the discussions held.

While every effort has been made to respect the confidentiality of sensitive information, please be aware that the meeting minutes may contain references to discussions or materials considered confidential or privileged. The unauthorized disclosure, distribution, or use of such information is strictly prohibited. If you believe any sensitive information has been improperly disclosed, please contact the SBTi.

Meeting minutes are subject to revision and amendment. The content may be updated or modified based on corrections, additions, or clarifications deemed necessary by the SBTi.

Session decisions which are deemed interim, unresolved items or confidential will not be shared publicly to protect the confidentiality of the Standard before publication and to prevent sending premature signals to the market.

As per clause 6 in the EWG Terms of Reference, members serve on the EWG in their individual capacity as technical experts.

"Science Based Targets initiative" and "SBTi" refer to the Science Based Targets initiative, a private company registered in England number 14960097 and registered as a UK Charity number 1205768.

Note on the format of these minutes: This meeting was held twice to accommodate the time zones of the Expert Working Group (EWG) members. The content presented by the SBTi team was consistent across both sessions, and participants in each meeting engaged with the same interactive exercises. To avoid duplication, these meeting minutes present the shared content (presentations and framing) once, followed by separate summaries of participant discussions from the Session A and Session B meetings.

Meeting participants

Expert Working Group Members present:

As per clause 6 in the EWG TOR members serve on the EWG in their individual capacity as technical experts.

[Session A]
Aisha Rodriguez, VCMI
Billie Wilcox Brooke, ISEAL
Gilles Dufrasne, European Commission
Nicolas Kreibich, Wuppertal Institute
Sophie Louise Gladov, Ørsted
Tim Clairs, Forest Integrity

[Session B]
Abigail Paris, As You Sow
Cindy Chiang, Netflix
Melissa Chavana, SIG Combibloc
Omonigho Erigha, Persistent Energy Capital
Robert Höglund, Marginal Carbon AB
Seruni Salsabila, Catalyst of Change ASEAN (CoC ASEAN)
Sunita Purushottam, Mahindra Lifespaces

SBTi:

[Session A]
Alice Farrelly (SME BVCM)
Scarlett Benson (BVCM EWG Lead)
Emma Watson (Head of Corporate Standards) - Observer
Aamir Khan (SME Sector Standards) - Observer

[Session B]
Alice Farrelly (SME BVCM)
Scarlett Benson (BVCM EWG Lead)

Technical Council Observers:

[Session A]
N/A

[Session B]
Doreen Stabinsky
Michael Gillentwater

Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome & introductions
2. SBTi team presentation: context setting
3. Q&A session
4. Defining "what counts"
5. Interactive session on defending "what counts"
6. Closing & next steps

Meeting Objective

The purpose of this meeting was to establish a shared vision and baseline level of understanding of Beyond Value Chain Mitigation (BVCM) and its role in addressing ongoing emissions, begin discussion on what counts as eligible BVCM activities, and engage participants in interactive exercises to shape future criteria and standardization.

1. Welcome & Introductions

The EWG members and SBTi staff introduced themselves.

Participants undertook a group exercise to align on the shared outcomes BVCM should deliver. Examples from the discussion included:

[Session A]

- Integrity
- Pragmatic ambition
- Simplicity
- Mobilizing finance
- Inclusivity
- Transparency
- The need for outcomes that recognize "high-hanging fruits" was raised as equally essential to prioritize long-term transformation over only short-term impact.

[Session B]

Examples from the discussion, that differ from those raised during the Option A session, included:

- Equity

- Co-benefits
- True cost of carbon
- Just transition
- Permanence
- Simplicity

2. Context setting

The SBTi team presented a comprehensive overview of the BVCM framework:

- Originated in SBTi's 2021 Net-Zero Standard as a recommendation, refined in the 2024 "Above & Beyond" and "Raising the Bar" reports.
- Defined as mitigation action or investments that fall outside a company's value chain, including activities that avoid or reduce GHG emissions, or remove and store GHGs from the atmosphere.
- Supports two goals:
    1. Near-term mitigation
    2. Scaling innovative long-term solutions
- Three proposed scale-setting methods:
    1. Ton-for-ton
    2. Money-for-ton
    3. Money-for-money
- Best practice approach proposed in the SBTi's 2024 Above & Beyond report:
  A science-based carbon price is applied to 100% of unabated scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, with a portion of the budget used to deliver ex-post BVCM outcomes equivalent to 50% of unabated scope 1-3 emissions (i.e. 50% ton-for-ton).
- SBTi highlighted significant complexities and tensions in designing the best practice approach — particularly around balancing simplicity, measurability, transformation potential and scalability.

3. Q&A session

Participants asked several questions and points related to the context setting-presentation:

[Session A]

- A participant asked whether SBTi had insights on company uptake of BVCM since the publication of the 2024 "Above and Beyond" report. Since BVCM is a recommendation in the current Corporate Net-Zero Standard, it is not validated by SBTi Services which limits SBTi's ability to comprehensively track uptake at present. However, we have anecdotal evidence that some companies are implementing the recommendations laid out in the SBTi's 2024 "Above and Beyond" report.
- A participant raised concerns about how the SBTi will validate and determine what is a high quality activity when it comes to less-measurable activities (e.g., enabling innovation or financing long-term solutions). SBTi mentioned that establishing criteria for validating less-measurable activities is something that will be discussed in the session and future sessions.

- A participant asked about company approaches to internal carbon pricing. A publicly available spreadsheet resource was referenced and it was noted by a member that many companies use "shadow pricing", which doesn't always translate into real climate finance.
- Several participants asked about plans for BVCM "pledge" terminology, claims and dashboard recognition. SBTi clarified this is being explored as part of the revision and will be discussed in future sessions.
- A question was raised about how well the proposed "best practice" approach—combining money-for-ton with a ton-for-ton minimum—has been received. SBTi noted that while the approach has been generally well accepted among technical and NGO audiences, it may be less clearly understood by companies due to its complexity. The challenge of applying a high carbon price across all unabated emissions was highlighted as potentially unrealistic for some business models, reinforcing the need to balance ambition with practicality.
- A side discussion touched on broader incentives like tax relief.

[Session B]

- Participants asked how widely the current guidance is being used. SBTi shared that uptake is anecdotal at this stage, but data is limited due to lack of formal validation.
- Participants sought clarity on how a science-based carbon price should be calculated. SBTi noted that, according to the SBTi's 2024 Above and Beyond report, companies are recommended to justify the price and include reference to academic literature, acknowledging the wide variance in estimates.
- There was interest in whether BVCM could include sector-specific pathways, especially for digital industries like e-commerce or streaming platforms. SBTi noted this will be discussed in the context of "how much is enough" and ability to pay.
- Questions were raised about the SBTi's plans to validate carbon credits purchased as part of BVCM to address ongoing emissions. SBTi confirmed that quality and verification standards will be addressed in future sessions and may draw on existing third-party frameworks.

4. Defining "what counts"

SBTi introduced key interdependencies affecting what counts for BVCM:

- Scope 3 decarbonization and indirect mitigation
- Claims frameworks (e.g., performance vs commitment claims)
- Quality criteria
- Timelines and validation cycles
- Overlap with removals

The SBTi team highlighted that the transition from BVCM being a recommendation in V1 of the Corporate Net-Zero Standard to something that is formally recognized in V2 of the Standard means that there is a need to develop criteria to standardize and validate what counts for BVCM.

Criteria for standardization must be:

- Measurable, verifiable, auditable
- Clear on eligible interventions, quality thresholds, exclusions, evidence requirements, and claims.

5. Interactive session: defining "what counts"

To support the development of criteria for what counts as eligible BVCM activity, the SBTi team presented eight elements that influence eligibility:

1. Type of activity,
2. Type of outcome delivered,
3. Timing of the outcome,
4. Measurability and certainty,
5. Funding mechanism,
6. Relationship to the value chain,
7. Temporal and spatial boundaries, and
8. Eligibility under other concepts (e.g. claims frameworks).

Given time constraints, the discussion in this session focused on the first five elements. With the other elements to be discussed in subsequent meetings and in overlapping meetings with relevant EWGs (e.g. CDR and Scope 3 EWGs).

Interactive activity 1: Scale and activity definition approaches

SBTi presented how the method used to determine the scale of BVCM activity (ton-for-ton, money-for-ton, money-for-money) influences which activities can count as eligible.

- Participants responded to a Menti poll on whether SBTi should prescribe one method or allow flexibility across methods.

SBTi then introduced three broad options for defining eligible BVCM activities:

- Flexible approach – Companies define their own activities using high-level principles.
- Middle-ground approach – Criteria-based framework outlining minimum thresholds (e.g. additionality, permanence).
- Prescriptive approach – Inclusion list specifying eligible activity types.

A second Menti poll captured initial participant preferences across these approaches, revealing a mix of perspectives and trade-offs between flexibility, clarity, and standardization.

Interactive activity 2: Breakout group discussion

Participants were split into breakout groups to explore the themes of types of outcome, certainty and measurability, timing and funding mechanisms. The activity used illustrative examples provided on a shared Miro board, identifying arguments for and against different scenarios and surfacing key trade-offs across these lenses.

Participants reported back to the plenary on their discussions:

[Session A]

Group 1: What outcomes count?
- The group discussed a range of potential outcomes that could be considered under BVCM, discussing both opportunities and associated challenges.
- Themes included the role of avoided emissions, considerations around adaptation and loss & damage, and the importance of demonstrating additionality for interventions such as forest protection. Participants reflected on how strong criteria could support the credibility of diverse outcome types.

Group 2: How certain/measurable must outcomes be?
- Participants discussed how different types of interventions vary in measurability and certainty. There was broad recognition of the value of many investment areas, while acknowledging that some types of activities may pose greater challenges in terms of measurement or alignment with BVCM.
- Topics raised included how to address potential overlaps with scope 3 accounting, the role of enabling infrastructure, and how to consider advocacy-related activities.

[Session B]

Group 1: How is the activity being supported?
- The group discussed how different funding mechanisms may influence the timing and measurability of outcomes, noting that some mechanisms (e.g., early-stage investments) may have longer time horizons for delivering impact.
- Themes included the importance of follow-up and verification, the implications for operational processes depending on the diversity of funding mechanisms, and the distinction between commitment-based and performance-based claims. Participants also reflected on how clear guidance could help companies direct funding toward effective mechanisms.

Group 2: When do outcomes need to be delivered?
- The group discussed how the timing of outcomes relates to credible claims, particularly in the context of different financing approaches. There was a shared view that distinguishing between financial commitments and delivered outcomes is important.
- Topics included the treatment of mechanisms such as R&D investments and offtake agreements, considerations for verification and transparency, and how to handle time lags between investment and impact in BVCM interventions.

6. Next Steps

The SBTi team clarified the next steps:

- A post-meeting survey will be circulated (including structured and open-text responses).
- Slides and official minutes will be shared by next week.

- Pre-reads for the next session will be sent five working days in advance.
- Future sessions to cover:
  - Scale setting and carbon pricing
  - Cross-group discussions with claims and removals EWG
  - Dats quality and claims