

Is Your Footprint Stepping on my Policy Toes?

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Summary

Globally, numerous carbon emissions reductions standardization protocols and a plethora of standardization bodies exist, all designed to calculate, account for, and inventory greenhouse gas emissions reductions for the establishment of a carbon footprint. Various organizations, including non-profit, quasi-governmental, governmental, and for-profit, are jockeying for position, advancing standards interests while championing the virtues of one footprint over another. Is the lack of clarity in standards and accounting impeding implementation of climate policy initiatives?

Moving beyond standards, this program evaluation examines the impact adoption of different standards has on the performance of the carbon footprint for various comparative municipalities included in the United States compared to the European Union. The selected municipalities for program evaluation are signatories to the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement and the European Cities Covenant of Mayors Agreement, respectively. Incorporating the results of the standards and classifying them into categories, the program evaluation assesses performance measurement by applying the results to a carbon credit and offset ecosystem tracing the demand side and supply side management initiatives adopted by each municipality. A comprehensive lifecycle assessment traces the carbon emission reductions efforts of demand side and supply side solutions incorporated into the carbon footprint construction, maintenance, and operations from inception to extinguishment.

This research paper addresses whether or not various standards bodies are positively impacting the policy narrative on energy and international climate initiatives in local communities around the world. The overarching purpose is shedding additional insight into the issue of ultimate ownership – who owns the carbon offsets and credits?