

Some questions on carbon accounting

In order to close the gap with net zero ambitions governments and companies pursuing this agenda need to revise the way they account for it. Here are some questions they need to answer.

1. As China, Russia, India produce more than 40% of the world's CO₂ output and their output is still growing, how do we get to the 2030 and 2035 targets? What actions are being taken to get the largest and fastest growing outputs by these countries to be reined in?

2. Why does the system assume electric vehicles are a win for less CO₂? Will the figures include the fact that many EVs are being recharged with electricity that may come from more fossil fuel than renewable generation? What allowance is made for all the CO₂ produced in mining and smelting the raw materials for an EV and its battery? And for total assembly and delivery? How many miles does an EV have to travel before it generates less CO₂ than carrying on with an older ICE vehicle, assuming it can get 100% renewable electricity or putting in accurate figures for the CO₂ content of the electricity likely to be used.

3. Why does the accounting system credit a country with lower CO₂ because it has closed down fossil fuel based activities, only to import the products needed? This will usually raise world CO₂ by the amount of extra transport involved.

4. When attributing success to more renewables shouldn't you need to also factor in the extra costs and extra CO₂ from the standby fossil fuel generation needed to prevent black out when the wind drops?

5. What will be the CO₂ impact of needing to put in so much more grid capacity and cable to allow a major switch from gas to electricity?

6. When calculating the CO₂ impact of rail travel it is important to include connecting travel by road vehicle and do a whole journey calculation. It is also important to use a realistic mix of electric and diesel trains and allow for times in stations with engines running.