



PAN-EUROPEAN CASE STUDY: DECARBONISING THE DIGITAL ADVERTISING SUPPLY CHAIN



Country

Denmark

About the Initiative

The Carbon Footprint Initiative (CFI), launched in summer 2023, is a collaborative effort uniting 17 leading stakeholders across Denmark's media sector. Established by the Danish Media Association and KREAKOM (associations representing media companies and agencies), CFI brings together prominent players, including JP/Politikens Hus, Berlingske Media, TV2, and key agencies such as GroupM, Omnicom, and Dentsu.

Objective

CFI's primary objective is to implement standardised methodologies for measuring and reducing CO₂ emissions across advertising channels. This approach provides a framework for consistent carbon tracking, reporting, and accountability within the industry. By harmonising data collection and methodologies, CFI enables transparency and accountability, enhancing the media and advertising sector's commitment to sustainability.

Relevance

CFI directly addresses the media and advertising sector's environmental impact by providing tools to measure and reduce emissions, aligning with global sustainability efforts. This initiative is crucial as it provides a targeted approach for a complex, multi-actor industry.

Quantifiable Results

- **Unified Metrics:** CFI ensures the industry has a single set of emission metrics. Without this standardisation, inconsistencies in emission calculations across campaigns would lead to confusion, making it difficult for consumers and industry professionals alike to gauge the true carbon impact.
- **Efficient Data Collection:** By centralising data collection, CFI reduces duplication, allowing media agencies to access reliable emissions data without individually sourcing it from each media entity. This streamlines the process and conserves resources across the industry.
- **Validated Reporting:** CFI establishes the groundwork for credible emissions reporting by developing a standardised methodology based on existing international standards. Where standards are absent, CFI actively participates in international forums to contribute to their development—ensuring a consistent framework that would otherwise be challenging for individual organisations to create.

Innovation

CFI has introduced a beta methodology and emissions calculator, launched on 28th October 2024, covering several advertising channels (newspapers, magazines, cinema, radio, and out-of-home). This initial phase provides members with a concrete, standardised measure for assessing direct emissions in advertising distribution. By centralising emissions data collection, CFI reduces data redundancy, ensuring consistent, reliable data across media channels. CFI's proactive involvement in developing international standards ensures the adoption of best practices where guidelines do not yet exist. Through its standardised emissions metrics, CFI supported sustainable practices across Denmark's media sector. By promoting emissions tracking, CFI encouraged reduction strategies aligned with environmental goals, benefiting industry professionals, stakeholders, and consumers alike.

Scalability

Currently in beta, CFI plans to expand coverage to digital and TV channels by collaborating with IAB Europe and Ad Net Zero. By gradually including additional media channels, CFI aims to establish a comprehensive, scalable emissions measurement framework.

Stakeholder Collaboration

CFI is an example of industry-wide cooperation, integrating media companies and agencies to drive environmental accountability. The initiative also extends partnerships with scientific institutions, including the Technical University of Denmark, to refine emissions calculations for digital domains, adding a scientific foundation to its methodology.

Sustainability Beyond Decarbonisation

The Carbon Footprint Initiative exemplifies the power of collaboration within the industry, showcasing what can be achieved when stakeholders unite toward a common goal. It sets a precedent for future sustainable cross-industry initiatives by offering a clear roadmap to success, including effective methods for incorporation, governance, and execution.

Continuous Adaptation

The beta methodology is designed to evolve into an end-to-end lifecycle measurement tool, which will capture emissions across the advertising production process. This approach ensures CFI's tool remains relevant as the industry and standards evolve. Furthermore, data need to be regularly updated to provide adequate emission figures.

Adherence to Standards

CFI's methodology aligns with existing international standards, where applicable. By participating in international forums, CFI helps develop guidelines for emission tracking in areas currently lacking standards, ensuring alignment with global best practices.

Conclusion

CFI's priorities include expanding its emissions coverage to digital and TV channels, enhancing measurement accuracy within digital advertising, and evolving the beta into a complete lifecycle measurement tool. These steps aim to establish an industry-wide standard that comprehensively addresses carbon emissions in advertising, positioning CFI as a cornerstone of Denmark's sustainability efforts in media.

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If you would like to know more about [IAB Europe's Pan-European Case Study Programme](#) or how you can participate in our work, please contact Colombe at michaud@iabeurope.eu.