SOFTWARE RECOMMENDATION: GREENHOUSE GAS ACCOUNTING IN POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

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Introduction

Greenhouse gas accounting software can simplify the process of reporting in many ways: software typically includes up to date emissions factors and global warming potentials, there is no need to set up custom excel spreadsheets, and reports can be easily generated. Unfortunately, many options may be financially unsustainable for the majority of post-secondary institutions. Furthermore, added charges for tracking additional campuses, individual buildings, automatic integration with utilities, and technical support are a possibility.

Greenhouse Gas Accounting Software Recommendation

The University of New Hampshire's (UNH) Sustainability Institute has created the Sustainability Indicator Management and Analysis Platform (SIMAP)[1] campus carbon calculator. SIMAP is an online tool that offers institutions a simple, comprehensive, and affordable means for measuring and calculating greenhouse gas inventories[2]. Furthermore, SIMAP is specifically targeted for use by post-secondary institutions within Canada and the United States.

SIMAP user costs are substantially lower versus other greenhouse gas accounting options. Below summarizes the three available pricing options and capabilities (as of 2018).

- A free version that allows importing of data that can be stored for two months.
- **Tier 1** ($350 per campus per year): Allows export of data and import of larger sets from excel, provides customizable emission factors, and allows multiple users, graphics generation, and ability to produce a campus nitrogen footprint.
- **Tier 2** (not released): Estimated price of $1,000 per year per campus. This version includes added templates, campus comparisons and benchmarking capabilities.

The software also includes training through videos to help users navigate the tool, with additional support available directly from UNH.

Potential Challenges

- Overcoming the learning curve of new software.
- Some Scope 3 activities are slightly counter-intuitive to navigate and may require data reorganization.

Conclusion

For post-secondary institutions seeking to invest in a greenhouse gas accounting software, the Campus Carbon Management Initiative recommends the use of SIMAP. The tool provides the basics required to cover all recommended areas of measuring and reporting at a significantly reduced cost versus most alternative software tools.

[1] University of New Hampshire Sustainability Institute. (2019). SIMAP: Simplifying Sustainability Decisions. Accessed from https://unhsimap.org/
[2] University of New Hampshire Sustainability Institute. (2019). Campus Calculator Home. Accessed from https://sustainableunh.unh.edu/calculator