



Sonepar's CBAM Compliance Journey with CleanCarbon.ai

Case Study



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Client Overview

Sonepar is one of the world's leading independent B2B distributors of electrical products, solutions, and related services. With a global footprint spanning over 40 countries and thousands of branches, the company supplies a wide range of products — including steel conduits, cable trays, mounting systems, enclosures, and structural metal components — many of which fall under the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) scope (iron & steel, aluminium).

As a major importer and distributor in Europe, Sonepar must ensure full CBAM compliance for products sourced from non-EU countries, including India. When a critical 203-tonne shipment of steel-based electrical infrastructure products was held at EU customs due to missing CBAM documentation, Sonepar turned to CleanCarbon.ai to rapidly resolve the issue and establish long-term, scalable CBAM compliance across their supply chain.



Business Challenges



- 1. Urgent shipment blockage** — A 200-tonne shipment of CBAM-covered steel products was detained at EU border clearance, creating supply chain disruption and commercial risk.
- 2. Complex multi-supplier data collection** — Aggregating accurate Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions data from numerous Indian manufacturers supplying different product categories was time-consuming and prone to inconsistencies.
- 3. Supplier engagement & trust** — Many suppliers were unfamiliar with CBAM requirements and hesitant to share detailed emissions data.
- 4. High reporting volume** — The large number of SKUs, suppliers, and quarterly reporting obligations created significant administrative pressure.
- 5. Tight deadlines & carbon cost exposure** — Missing reporting deadlines risked penalties, while inaccurate emissions data could lead to higher effective carbon costs.

Solutions Provided by Cleancarbon.ai

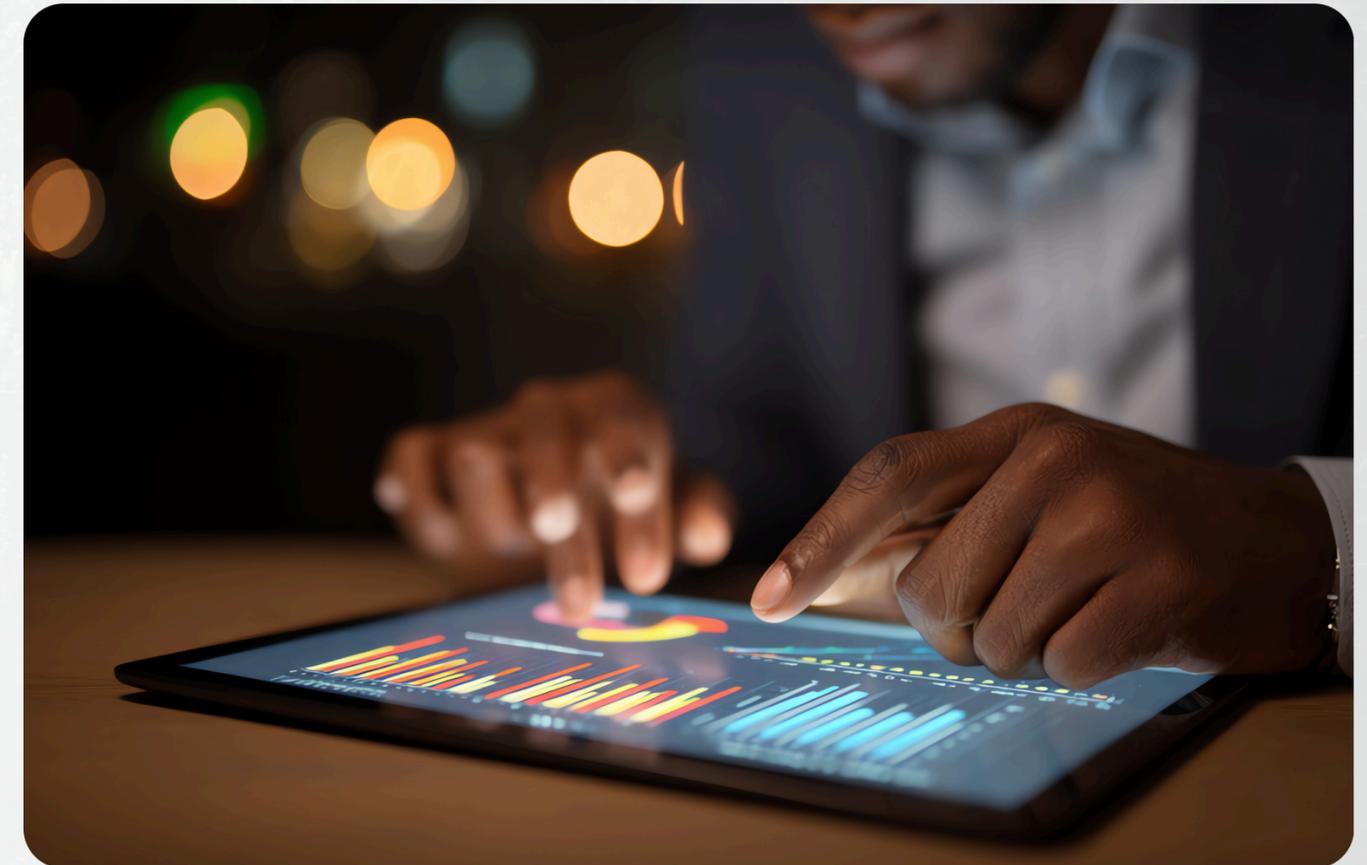
CleanCarbon.ai delivered a fast-response and future-proof CBAM compliance program tailored to Sonepar's scale and complexity:

- **Emergency shipment unlock** — Quickly processed existing data to produce a validated quarterly CBAM report and enabled customs release of the 200-tonne shipment within days.
- **Supplier onboarding & capacity building** — Ran structured CBAM awareness sessions and live tool demonstrations for key Indian suppliers, significantly improving data submission rates.
- **Centralized, supplier-friendly portal** — Provided a secure, multilingual data collection platform that allowed suppliers to enter emissions data quickly and accurately.
- **Automated CBAM report generation** — Built end-to-end automation (from supplier data → embedded emissions calculation → XML/Excel CBAM report), drastically reducing manual effort.
- **Real-time emissions visibility** — Delivered live compliance dashboards giving Sonepar full transparency across suppliers, products, and carbon cost exposure.
- **Audit-ready documentation** — Ensured all reports were third-party verifiable and GDPR-compliant.



Implementation

1. **Crisis response (Week 1)** — Generated and submitted missing CBAM report → 203-tonne shipment released
2. **Supplier acceleration (Weeks 2-6)** — Onboarded priority suppliers, conducted training & demos, achieved >90% data coverage
3. **Full automation & scaling (Months 2-3)** — Connected ERP & supplier portal, automated quarterly reporting, activated real-time dashboards



Result



- **Shipment released** — 200-tonne consignment cleared within days, avoiding major supply disruption
- **Supplier data coverage** — Increased from <40% to >92% within two months
- **Reporting time reduction** — Quarterly reporting effort reduced by ~65–70%
- **Cost avoidance** — Avoided late-submission penalties and minimized over-declaration of emissions
- **Improved visibility** — Real-time carbon exposure dashboard now used by category managers and sustainability team
- **Audit confidence** — Full audit trail and third-party validated reports delivered

Conclusion

By partnering with CleanCarbon.ai, Sonepar transformed a critical CBAM compliance crisis into a strategic advantage — ensuring reliable EU market access, reducing administrative burden, gaining better carbon cost visibility, and strengthening supplier relationships.

CleanCarbon.ai continues to support Sonepar with quarterly reporting automation, regulatory watch, and expanding supplier coverage.



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