

Answering your customers' EcoVadis and Scope 3 questions

A playbook for IT resellers, MSPs and integrators

Large customers now score their IT suppliers on sustainability during supplier onboarding and in tenders. This playbook explains what EcoVadis actually assesses, what evidence an IT partner needs for each theme, how your circular services count, how to answer a customer's request for Scope 3 data, and what to do in the next 90 days.

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The Channel Institute is not an EcoVadis partner or accredited consultant, and this playbook is not endorsed by EcoVadis. EcoVadis is a trademark of its owner and is used here descriptively. Facts about EcoVadis are taken from its public help centre and methodology documents, checked October 2026.

1. Why your customers are asking

Omdia's Partner 1000 Sustainability Analysis, published in August 2026, examined how the world's largest IT partners are rated. The pattern is stark.

	Platinum	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Any medal
Top 30 partners	27%	20%	30%	7%	84%
Top 100 partners	20%	17%	18%	11%	66%
Top 1,000 partners	4%	5%	7%	5%	21%

Source: Omdia Partner 1000 Sustainability Analysis, as reported by IT Channel Oxygen, 5 August 2026. Statuses as of mid-July 2026.

The largest partners got rated because their customers made it a condition of doing business. Omdia reports that large customers now expect suppliers to align with SBTi, CDP and EcoVadis. In the UK, the NHS grades suppliers and tender bidders on sustainability maturity and requires its most mature suppliers to hold an EcoVadis or CDP rating.

The requirement is moving down the market. In Omdia's July 2026 survey, 41% of partners said more than 30% of the RFPs they receive include environmental sustainability criteria, up from 31% in 2023.

Where the request comes from

Most partners expect sustainability requirements to arrive through a vendor partner programme. For EcoVadis they mostly don't: we found no vendor partner programme that makes an EcoVadis medal a condition of partnership. The request comes from the customer's procurement team, through a supplier onboarding form, a framework renewal or a tender pack. Customers who use EcoVadis can invite suppliers directly, so the first many partners hear of it is an invitation email with a deadline a few weeks away.

Scorecards are normally published six to eight weeks after you submit the questionnaire. Add the time it takes to gather evidence, and a partner starting from nothing needs most of a quarter. Preparing before the invitation arrives is the difference between answering a tender with a medal and answering it with an apology.

2. What EcoVadis is, and what it isn't

EcoVadis is a sustainability rating. You complete an online questionnaire, upload documents as evidence, and EcoVadis analysts score you from 0 to 100. The result is a scorecard you can share with customers, and, if you rank highly enough, a medal.

People search for "EcoVadis certification", but EcoVadis itself says its medals and badges are not certifications or product labels, do not indicate that a company's products or services are more sustainable than another's, and should not be used for product-level environmental claims. That has a practical consequence for your marketing: say "rated by EcoVadis" or name the medal, never "EcoVadis certified".

Medals

Since 2024, medals are awarded on percentile rank against every company EcoVadis assessed in the previous 12 months, across all industries. There is no published score threshold for each medal, because the thresholds move as other companies improve.

Medal	Percentile rank
Platinum	Top 1%
Gold	Top 5%
Silver	Top 15%
Bronze	Top 35%

Three rules catch partners out. You need at least 30 in each of the four themes to be eligible for any medal, so one neglected theme blocks the lot. Medals and badges last 12 months, the life of the scorecard, so reassessment is an annual job. And only customers on certain paid EcoVadis subscriptions may share their medal externally; since 1 January 2026 any external use must link to the EcoVadis recognition page.

Badges

Companies that don't reach a medal can still earn a badge. A "Committed" badge requires a minimum score of 45. A "Fast Mover" badge recognises a score of 34 to 44 with an improvement of at least six points on the previous assessment within 18 months. A company with a medal can't also hold a badge.

3. How the score is built

EcoVadis assesses 21 criteria grouped into four themes. Not every criterion applies to every company: which ones are "activated", and how much each theme weighs, depends on your size, industry and location. For an IT reseller or MSP the themes look like this.

Theme	What it covers	Where IT partners usually stand
Environment	Your own operations (energy, emissions, waste), product use, product end-of-life, environmental services and advocacy, and supplier environmental practices.	Often strong in substance, weak on paper. Many partners recycle and take back equipment but have no policy, no footprint and no records.
Labour and human rights	Health and safety, working conditions, social dialogue, diversity and inclusion, career development, and human rights.	Usually fine in practice. Gaps are undocumented policies and no annual people data.
Ethics	Corruption and bribery, anti-competitive practices, and responsible information management (data protection and security).	A common weak theme for small firms, despite strong security practice. Anti-bribery policy and reporting channel are often missing.
Sustainable procurement	Supplier environmental and social practices: how you choose, assess and monitor your own suppliers.	The theme IT partners most often leave empty. Your distributor and logistics firms are suppliers too.

Within each theme, analysts look for evidence at three levels: policies (what you have committed to, in writing), actions (what you have done to put those policies into practice) and results (what you measure and report). A policy with no action behind it scores little; actions with no policy behind them score less than they should. The checklist on the next pages is organised so that every item maps to one of those levels.

EcoVadis also runs "360 Watch", which looks for public information about a company, both negative (fines, controversies) and positive. Serious negative findings can make a company ineligible for a medal regardless of its score.

The documentation rule. If it isn't written down, dated and owned by a named person, assume it won't count. Most of the score improvement available to a small IT partner comes from documenting what it already does.

4. Evidence checklist by theme, with IT examples

Use this as a gap list. For each line, ask whether you could upload a document today. If not, that's your task list.

Environment

Evidence	Level	IT partner example
Environmental policy, signed and dated	Policy	Covers energy in your offices and data centre space, vehicle use, e-waste from customer refreshes and your circular services.
Scope 1 and 2 carbon footprint	Result	Office and warehouse energy, company vehicles, any on-premise servers. Use a recognised method and keep the workings.
Reduction targets and actions	Action	Renewable electricity tariff, EV policy for engineers' vans, consolidated deliveries.
E-waste and takeback records	Action / result	Certificates of recycling or data destruction from your ITAD partner, with device counts per year.
Refurbished and asset recovery volumes	Result	Units sold as certified refurbished, devices recovered for reuse, per year.
Product environmental information	Action	Product carbon footprint data and energy labels you pass on to customers with quotes.

Labour and human rights

Evidence	Level	IT partner example
Health and safety policy and risk assessment	Policy / action	Covers field engineers, lifting kit, working at height in comms rooms, lone working on customer sites.
Employment policies	Policy	Working hours, equal opportunity, anti-harassment, grievance procedure, acknowledged by staff.
Training records	Result	Hours per employee per year, including vendor certifications and safety training.
People data	Result	Accident rate, staff turnover, gender balance, tracked annually.

Ethics

Evidence	Level	IT partner example
Anti-bribery and corruption policy	Policy	Covers gifts and hospitality from vendors and distributors, deal registration conduct and public sector tenders.
Information security and data protection policy	Policy	Your existing ISO 27001, Cyber Essentials or GDPR documentation counts here; reference it.
Confidential reporting channel	Action	A named route for staff and outsiders to raise concerns without retaliation.
Training and acknowledgement	Action / result	Annual ethics and data protection training, with completion records.

Sustainable procurement

Evidence	Level	IT partner example
Sustainable procurement policy	Policy	States that you consider suppliers' environmental and social practices when you buy.
Supplier code of conduct	Action	Sent to your distributors, logistics firms, ITAD partner and subcontract engineers; acceptance kept on file.
Supplier assessments	Action / result	A short questionnaire or a check of your key suppliers' own ratings. Your vendors and distributors may already hold EcoVadis medals you can reference.
Coverage	Result	The share of your purchasing spend covered by the code or assessments.

Certifications help. ISO 14001 (environment), ISO 45001 (health and safety), ISO 27001 (information security) and similar certificates are strong evidence. They are not required, and a small partner can score well without them, but where you already hold one, upload it against every theme it supports.

5. Your circular services as evidence

EcoVadis's environment theme includes product end-of-life, and environmental services and advocacy, among its criteria (EcoVadis Sustainability Rating methodology disclosure, September 2026). For an IT partner, that is where takeback, certified refurbished sales and asset recovery services belong.

If you already offer them, document them like any other evidence:

Describe the service in a short written statement: what you take back, where it goes, which certified processors you use. Record annual volumes: devices collected, devices resold or redeployed, devices recycled. Keep the certificates: data destruction, recycling, and refurbishment certification from the vendor programme. Show it reaches customers, with a service description, a proposal template or a customer case study.

Phrase it carefully. These services give you evidence to submit against specific criteria. They do not earn a medal on their own, and EcoVadis is explicit that a medal says nothing about whether your products are more sustainable than anyone else's. Claim what you can document, and no more.

The same actions now pay twice

Several vendors now reward partners for exactly these services. HP pays the same compensation on certified refurbished as on new. Dell pays a rebate on Asset Recovery Services. Cisco pays an additional rebate on eligible Cisco Refresh sales to partners registered in its Refresh Partner Incentive Program. Lenovo announced in July 2026 rebates on certified refurbished for partners of all metal tiers in selected EMEA markets, rolling out during its FY26/27, alongside rebates on Asset Recovery Services.

So a partner that builds a documented circular offer improves its EcoVadis evidence and its margin with one piece of work. The Circular Channel Incentive Guide, at channelinstitute.com/circular-channel, sets out what each vendor pays and how to claim it.

6. Answering a customer's Scope 3 data request

Once a customer has your EcoVadis scorecard, the next question is usually about carbon. The equipment you sell sits in the customer's Scope 3 emissions under Category 1, purchased goods and services, and they need a defensible number for it.

Why your data decides the customer's number

Many buyers estimate Category 1 from spend, multiplying what they paid by an emissions factor per pound or euro. Under that method, a refurbished laptop that costs 35% less than a new one shows as about 35% less carbon, because the calculation only sees the price.

Device-level data tells a different story. A Cranfield University study of one UK remanufacturer put a remanufactured laptop at about 6% of the carbon of a new one, about 316 kg CO2e avoided per device. That is one company's figure and should be treated as a best case, but it shows how much of the saving the spend method hides. Only the partner can close that gap, by supplying product carbon footprint (PCF) data with the quote.

	Spend-based estimate	Device-level data
New laptop	Baseline	About 337 kg CO2e
Refurbished laptop at 35% discount	About 35% lower	About 94% lower (best case)
What the customer can claim	Only what the price implies	The measured saving, with a source

Rules on environmental claims have tightened. EU rules in force since September 2026 ban environmental claims that can't be substantiated. A partner that says "this option is greener" needs data behind it, and a customer repeating your claim needs it even more.

Where to get the data

Ask each vendor for product carbon footprint sheets for your top SKUs; most large PC, server and networking vendors publish them. Rejoose has loaded more than a million HP product carbon footprints for partners (April 2026) and syndicates Lenovo's data. For refurbished units, ask the refurbishment programme for its own figures, or use a published study and say which.

Template answer to a customer's Scope 3 request

Adapt the bracketed parts. Keep the source line: it is what makes the figures usable in the customer's report.

Subject: Carbon data for [order / quote reference]

Dear [name],

Thank you for your request for carbon data on the equipment we supply. Below are the embodied (cradle-to-gate) emissions for each line on [quote / order reference], taken from the manufacturers' published product carbon footprints.

[Table: product, quantity, kg CO₂e per unit, source document and date, total kg CO₂e]

Where we have supplied certified refurbished units, the figures show the carbon attributable to refurbishment and any replacement parts, from [source]. Compared with the equivalent new units, this avoids about [x] tonnes CO₂e across the order.

All figures are manufacturer or third-party estimates with the uncertainty stated in the source documents, which are attached. We are happy to provide the same data in your preferred template for your Scope 3 Category 1 reporting.

Our own sustainability information, including our [EcoVadis scorecard / environmental policy / Scope 1 and 2 footprint], is available on request.

Kind regards,
[name, role, company]

Three habits make this easy to repeat: keep a PCF library for your top 50 SKUs, add a carbon column to your quote template, and record which source and date you used each time.

7. Reducing the Scope 3 emissions customers attribute to you

Customers increasingly ask suppliers not only for data but for a plan to reduce it. For an IT partner the levers are commercial ones you already control.

Lever	What it does	How to offer it
Mixed new and refurbished fleets	Cuts embodied carbon on the refurbished share, and cost.	Price a refurbished lot alongside every refresh. The Circular Channel Bid Calculator at channelinstitute.com/circular-channel runs the numbers.
Longer device life	Spreads embodied carbon over more years of use.	Extended warranties, battery replacement and upgrade services instead of full replacement.
Takeback and asset recovery	Returns devices to reuse instead of recycling or landfill.	Include collection and certified data destruction in the refresh price.
Right-sizing	Avoids buying more capability than the workload needs.	Specification reviews before refresh, especially for servers and storage.
Lower-carbon logistics	Reduces transport emissions in Category 4.	Consolidated deliveries and fewer, fuller shipments.

8. What's coming in 2027 and 2028

Large-company Scope 3 reporting arrives over the next two years: California's SB 253, the second wave of the EU's CSRD, the UK's sustainability reporting standards (UK SRS) for listed companies on a comply-or-explain basis, and rules in Singapore and Japan. More of your customers will need supplier data, and will ask for it in their own templates.

Don't overestimate the EU part. The CSRD Omnibus caps what large companies can demand from value-chain firms with fewer than 1,000 employees, so most resellers will not be forced to supply full CSRD data. Customers will still ask. The pressure that matters most is commercial: tenders and supplier onboarding, where a rating and good data win points.

9. A 90-day action plan

This plan assumes a partner of 20 to 200 people with no EcoVadis rating and little documented. It gets you to submission inside a quarter.

When	What to do	Output
Weeks 1 to 2	Name an owner. Run the readiness check at channelinstitute.com/ecovadis-for-it-partners . List every policy, certificate and record you already hold against the checklist in section 4.	Owner, gap list
Weeks 3 to 4	Write or update the core policies: environmental, health and safety, employment, anti-bribery, data protection, sustainable procurement. Have a director sign and date each.	Six signed policies
Weeks 5 to 6	Calculate your Scope 1 and 2 footprint for the last full year. Set one reduction target.	Footprint and target
Weeks 7 to 8	Issue the supplier code of conduct to your top suppliers, including your distributor and logistics firms. Set up a confidential reporting channel.	Supplier acceptances, reporting channel
Weeks 9 to 10	Document your circular services: statement, volumes, certificates. Build a PCF library for your top SKUs and add a carbon column to your quote template.	Circular evidence pack, PCF library
Weeks 11 to 12	Collect people and training data for the year. Review every document against the checklist. Register on EcoVadis and complete the questionnaire.	Questionnaire submitted
After submission	Expect the scorecard in six to eight weeks. Read the improvement points and schedule the work before next year's reassessment.	Scorecard, improvement plan

If a customer request has already arrived, compress weeks 3 to 8 into the first month and submit what you have. A first scorecard with improvement points is better evidence of progress than no scorecard, and the annual cycle gives you a second attempt.

10. Getting help

Some partners want a second pair of eyes before they submit. Others want the work done for them. The Channel Institute offers both, delivered by Mike Kelly, Chartered Director (CDir), GRI Certified ESRS Sustainability Professional and B.Sc. (Mgmt).

Service	What you get	Price
Quick scan	A review of your current policies and evidence against the EcoVadis criteria that apply to you, with a prioritised list of what to fix before you submit or reassess.	€1,250 to €1,500
Submission support	We prepare the policies and evidence, complete the questionnaire with you and review the scorecard when it comes back. For small and mid-size IT partners.	€3,500 to €5,500

To book a quick scan call, email corporate@channelinstitute.com with the subject "EcoVadis quick scan".

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Sources

Omdia Partner 1000 Sustainability Analysis, reported by IT Channel Oxygen, 5 August 2026. EcoVadis Help Center, "Understanding EcoVadis Medals and Badges". EcoVadis Sustainability Rating methodology disclosure document, September 2026. Cranfield University study of laptop remanufacturing (single remanufacturer; best case). Rejoose product carbon footprint data for partners, April 2026. Omdia, Lenovo 360 Circle Summit 2026. Trellis, HP refurbished partner compensation. Dell Technologies Partner Program 2023. Cisco, Introducing Cisco Refresh.

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