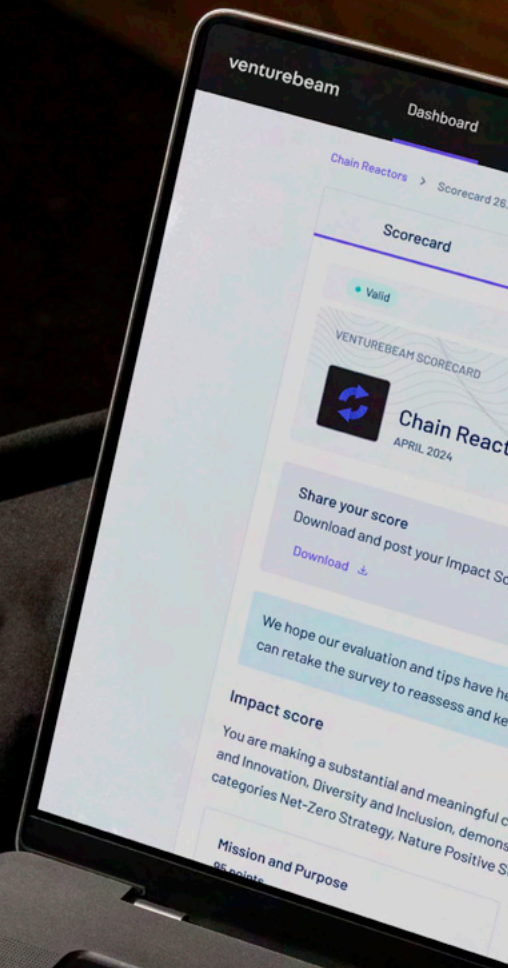# The Venture Impact Score

Quantifying Purpose, Performance and Scalable Potential in Private Markets

V venturebeam

A standardised, data-driven methodology enabling investors to quantify, compare and benchmark sustainable venture performance.

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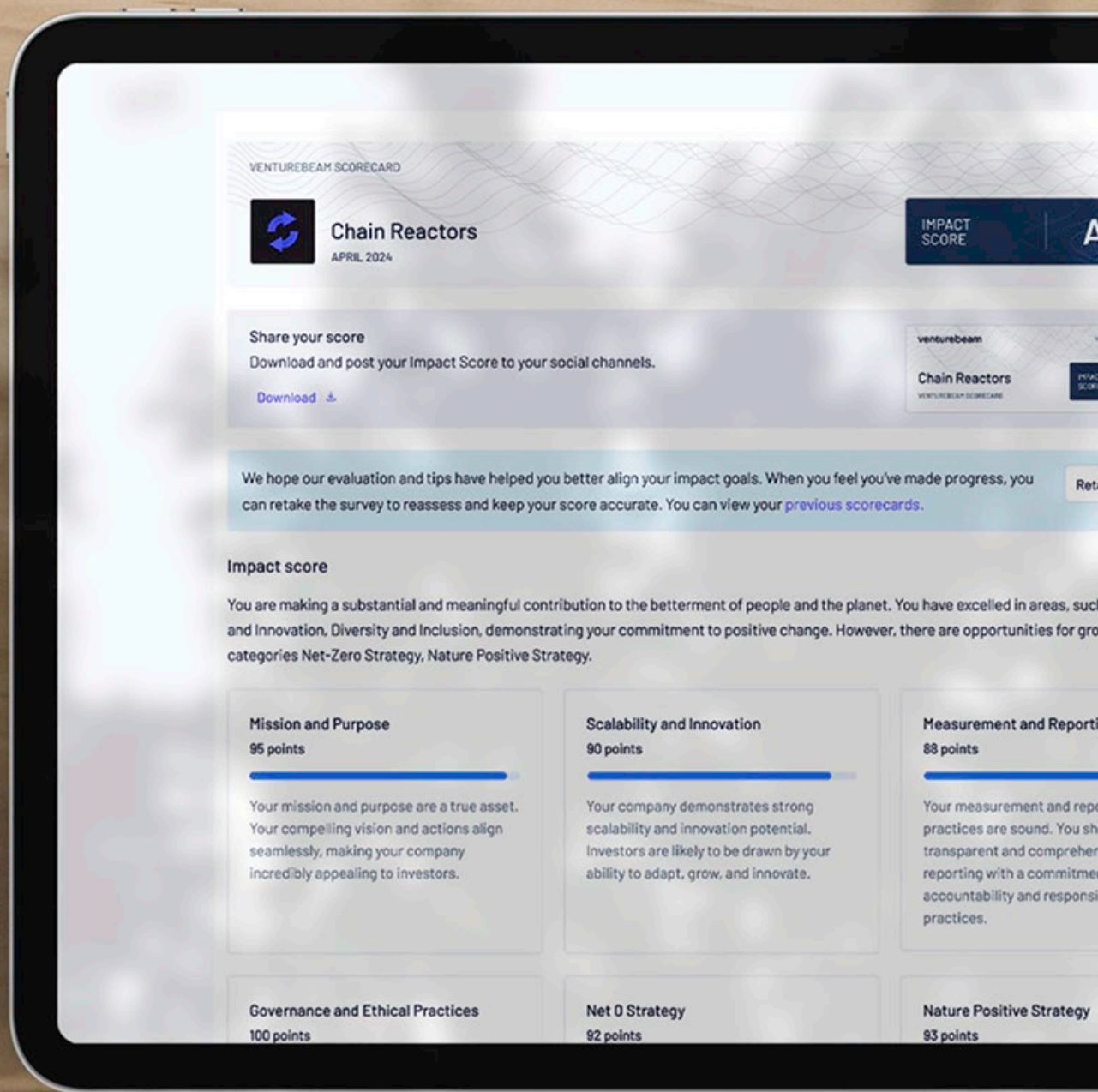
Impact investing has moved from the margins of finance to the mainstream. More than a trillion dollars is now committed to strategies that promise both financial returns and measurable environmental or social outcomes. Yet, for all the capital deployed, one question still hangs over the market:

How Do We Really Know What Works?

Most of the tools used to answer that question were **built for listed corporates**, not for early- and growth-stage ventures where the next generation of climate, health, education and inclusion solutions is being built. Frameworks proliferate, data is **inconsistent**, and verification is **costly**. For many investors, impact measurement has become a patchwork of spreadsheets, surveys, and **self-reported claims, resulting in manually intensive processes, limited interoperability, and an inability to withstand the scrutiny** applied to financial analysis. At the same time, **expectations are rising**: LPs, regulators and the public now demand **credible proof** that capital is delivering tangible outcomes, not just aligning with high-level principles. Funds reporting under SFDR, CSRD and emerging ISSB standards must show how impact is measured, monitored and managed – not simply asserted.

the need for a single source of truth and is designed to give investors and founders a common, **evidence-driven language** for impact in venture capital.

At its core, VIS transforms disparate, self-reported information into a **normalised 0–100 score** and an accompanying **rating (AAA–F)** that mirrors the interpretability of a credit rating – but applied to **impact performance and sustainability maturity**, rather than credit risk.

By combining structured venture submitted data, contextual benchmarks and Venturebeam's internal assessment methodology, VIS produces a normalised, comparable indication of both current impact performance and future potential. Unlike traditional ESG or SDG mapping frameworks that emphasise intentions, VIS quantifies **evidence-based outcomes.**

> **"**
>
> Investors are demanding greater confidence that their capital is creating measurable, lasting impact. The Venture Impact Score empowers them to quantify that value – turning good intentions into verified, comparable outcomes." — **Kevin Holliday, CEO EMEA, Venturebeam**

The gap is particularly acute in venture. Early-stage companies are often where impact is most disruptive and scalable, yet they typically lack the systems, people and time to produce **institutional -grade reporting**. As a result, a large share of the impact that matters most is the hardest to see and compare.

The Venture Impact Score (VIS) is Venturebeam's answer to this accountability gap and critical industry void: **a proprietary impact intelligence framework** that brings **investment grade structure, comparability and verification** to how private market investors assess the performance, purpose and scalability of emerging ventures. VIS addresses

Crucially, VIS does not operate in isolation. Venturebeam integrates VIS with a structured commercial and investment readiness assessment, enabling a **dual lens view** that evaluates both verified impact
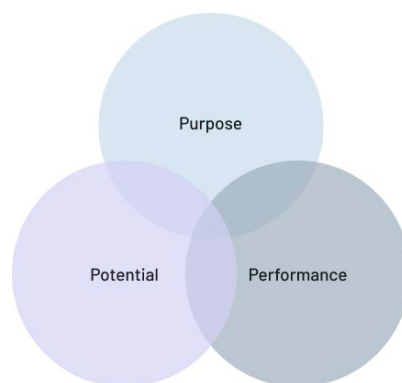
and business fundamentals. This combined filter highlights ventures that demonstrate strong governance, measurable outcomes and credible commercial scalability, creating a curated pipeline of high-quality, **high-impact, investment-ready opportunities.**

VIS empowers investors to benchmark ventures and portfolios with the same precision they apply to financial analysis. By providing structured data, VIS transforms LPs' increasing volume of bespoke, off-cycle, and custom data requests from an operational challenge into a streamlined source of strategic insight, while giving founders and management teams a clear, credible way to demonstrate their impact maturity. In doing so, VIS bridges the gap between stated purpose and demonstrated performance, turning impact measurement from a compliance exercise into **decision-ready intelligence**. Venturebeam has developed VIS to turn impact from aspiration into a **quantified, investable signal** that institutions can price, compare and act on.

1. The Measurement Challenge

The global impact investing market is estimated to exceed USD 1.3 trillion[1], yet reliable, decision-useful measurement remains a critical obstacle.

Despite the proliferation of largely unaligned frameworks – from the *Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN) to IRIS+, GRI, and the Impact Management Project (IMP)* – investors continue to struggle with comparability, verification, and data consistency[2].

Fragmentation

There are over 200 active sustainability frameworks worldwide[3], most designed for corporate ESG reporting rather than early-stage ventures.

This has led to a fragmented landscape where investors must interpret inconsistent data and early-stage ventures face reporting demands that are disproportionately time-consuming and resource-intensive.

Data Gaps

According to *BCG* and *GIIN's State of Impact Measurement Report (2023)*, **80% of start-ups** lack structured systems for tracking and verifying impact outcomes[4]. This creates material challenges for investors seeking to validate whether claimed outcomes correspond to real-world, measurable results.

Verification Burden

A 2024 *OECD survey* found that **seven in ten impact investors** face challenges in verifying data provided by investee companies[5]. As a result, due diligence cycles are longer, reporting remains largely qualitative, and the risk of "impact washing" continues to erode market confidence.

The Venture Impact Score (VIS) was developed to address these systemic issues. It introduces a data-driven standard that quantifies impact and operational maturity with the same rigour as financial due diligence – giving investors a reliable basis for comparison and founders a path to demonstrate credibility.

Problem
Fragmentation
Data Gaps
Verification Burden

→

Solution
Venture Impact Score (VIS)
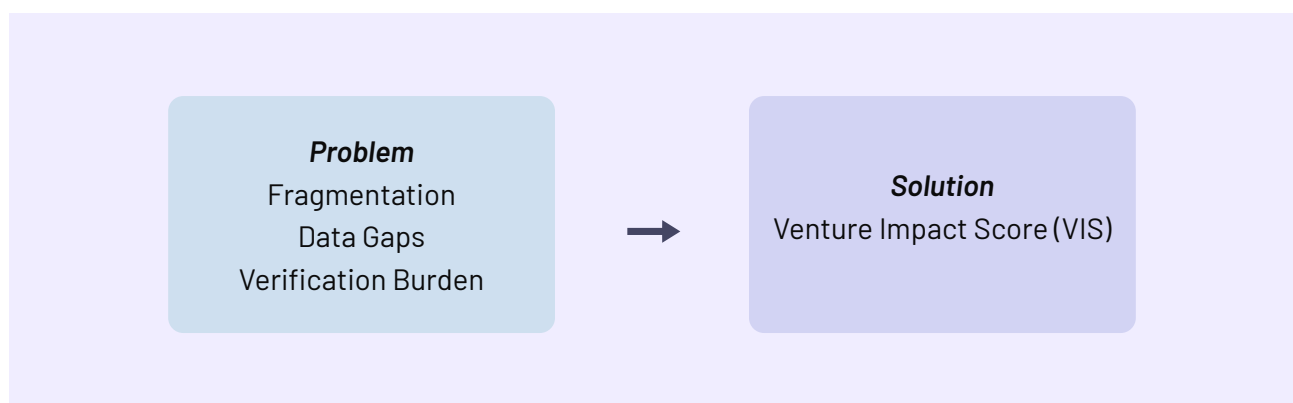
2. The Venture Impact Score Framework

The VIS provides a holistic evaluation, covering a wide spectrum of essential categories that range from core governance and business models to climate action and human rights. The core scoring is fundamentally structured around a venture's global impact on the two foundational pillars: people and the planet. It evaluates ventures across **eight key dimensions**, each weighted according to sector dynamics, venture maturity, geography, and evidence quality.

into three groups: Direct Impact, Indirect Impact, or Without Specific Impact Goals.

Each venture's data is analysed through a proprietary framework that integrates both **quantitative** and **qualitative** variables.

The model adjusts for contextual factors – such as regional policy frameworks, sector benchmarks, and market maturity – producing a normalised score that enables meaningful comparison across diverse industries.

Dimension	Focus	Illustrative Metric
Mission & Purpose	Fit with SDGs and local impact priorities	Clarity and commitment level of mission; relevance to target beneficiaries
Scalability & Innovation	Ability to grow impact sustainably	Business model strength; unit economics; traction; scale by reach and methodology
Measurement & Reporting	Quality, frequency and robustness of impact measurement and maturity	Existence of an impact framework; frequency of reporting; third-party verification; % of KPIs with audited data
Governance & Ethics	Strength of governance, inclusivity, and transparency; formal policies and team experience	Board diversity, stakeholder policies
Planet: Net Zero Strategy	Clarity and credibility of pathways to decarbonisation; waste reduction quantification	Science-based targets; emissions baseline; annual GHG reduction (% YoY)
Planet: Nature Positive Strategy	Contribution to biodiversity protection and sustainable resource use; operational sustainability	% reduction in harmful inputs; nature-positive initiatives; biodiversity impact score
People: Human Rights	Protection of human rights across operations and supply chain	Human-rights policy; grievance mechanisms; compliance incidents
People: Diversity & Inclusion	Inclusivity of workforce, leadership and internal policies	Gender and diversity representation in leadership; pay-equity metrics; employee inclusion surveys

Together, these dimensions generate a **composite (0–100) score** supported by a transparent **tier classification** ranging from Transformative to Nascent. The scoring methodology is dynamically adjusted based on the company's mission and vision, classifying companies

Tier Classifications

The VIS is not a static score; it evolves dynamically as ventures report new data or achieve milestones, providing an ongoing, evidence-based picture of impact performance.

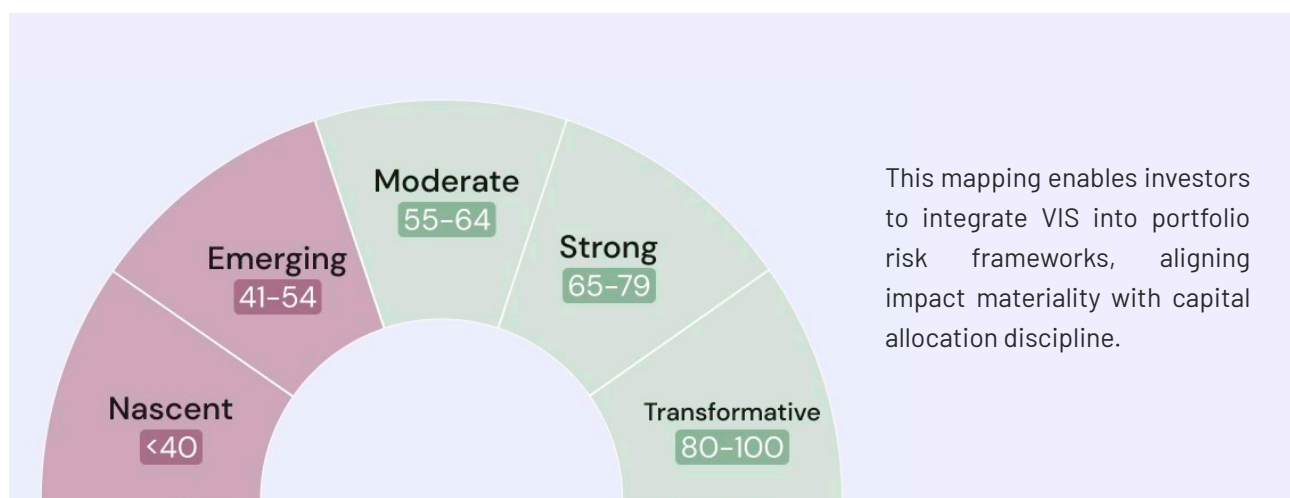| Tier	Score Range	Definition
Transformative	85–100	Systemic impact with proven scalability
Strong	70-84	Consistent, measurable impact with strong practices
Moderate	55-69	Solid foundational practices; growing evidence base and maturing reporting systems
Emerging	41-54	Early-stage models with credible intent but limited data availability or verification
Nascent	<40	Minimal demonstrated integration of impact

2.1 VIS Rating Scale – The Venturebeam System

To harmonise impact quality with financial-grade analysis, Venturebeam applies its proprietary **Rating System**, mapping VIS scores to a rating structure that mirrors the interpretability and discipline of institutional credit ratings.

The methodology parallels the logic of Moody's, S&P, and Fitch credit ratings, but measures **impact performance and sustainability maturity** rather than credit risk.

The **green zone (AAA–BBB)** represents *investment-grade impact quality*, indicating measurable results, verified governance, and transparent data aligned with measurable outcomes, evidence integrity and governance maturity.

The **red zone (BB and below)** denotes ventures at early maturity levels or those lacking sufficient evidence to demonstrate reliable, repeatable impact performance.

Tier	VIS Range	Venturebeam Rating System	Interpretation	Comparative Band
Transformative	90-100	AAA	Exceptional systemic impact; sector leader in sustainability and scalability	Aaa/AAA
	85-89	AA+	Transformative impact with verifiable outcomes	AA+
	80-84	AA	Strong, mature impact integration and scalability	AA
Strong	75-79	A+	Consistent performance, solid governance and reporting	A+
	70-74	A	Reliable, measurable impact; strong ESG alignment	A
Moderate	65-69	BBB+	Moderately strong evidence; improving governance systems	BBB+
	55-64	BBB/BBB-	Early-stage or moderate data maturity; credible path to improvement	BBB/BBB-
Emerging	41-54	BB to B	Emerging models with potential but limited verification	Non- investment grade
Nascent	<40	CCC to F	Nascent or unverified impact; insufficient data integrity	Default/ Non-compliant

This mapping enables investors to integrate VIS into portfolio risk frameworks, aligning impact materiality with capital allocation discipline.

3. Quantifying What Matters

Unlike conventional ESG metrics, the VIS is purpose-built for **early and growth-stage ventures,** where impact often scales faster than financial returns. It integrates both quantitative data and crucial qualitative insights to build a comprehensive picture, acknowledging that investment research benefits most from a hybrid approach. Quantitative analysis provides objective data for screening, while qualitative analysis captures the "why", enabling the ability to assess conviction, alignment, and team dynamics critical for novel or niche strategies.

The model can draw on a range of inputs – audited statements, impact reports, operational data, and other verifiable public or third-party sources – to build a rounded view of each venture's impact.

This approach allows Venturebeam to:

- Identify evidence gaps, inconsistencies or unsupported claims.
- Benchmark ventures against peers with a similar stage and sector focus.
- Generate a normalised, comparable score calibrated to sector, stage and evidence quality that is designed to be intuitive for investors and consistent with emerging reporting practices.

Integration of Impact Risk Diligence and Management

The VIS methodology functions as a digital analysis of Impact Risk Diligence, necessary to inform investors about risks and opportunities beyond the financial and legal assessment. This Impact Risk Diligence process includes a critical review of the impact strategy in relation to the business model and governance alongside quantified impact measurement.

The assessment quantifies key impact risks identified by the Impact Management Project (IMP):

- **Evidence Risk:** The probability that there is not enough data to know what impact is occurring.

- **External Risk:** The probability that external factors affect the ability to achieve the desired impact.

- **Execution Risk:** The probability that the venture fails to deliver the activities necessary to create impact.

- **Endurance Risk:** The probability that activities are not delivered for a sufficiently long time period.

- **Unexpected Impact Risk:** The probability that a significant unanticipated impact outcome would occur.

Integrating these explicit risk factors into the scoring directly addresses investor concerns about risk management and verification. Taken together, this turns VIS from a simple compliance tool into a **practical decision-support lens for both investors and founders**.
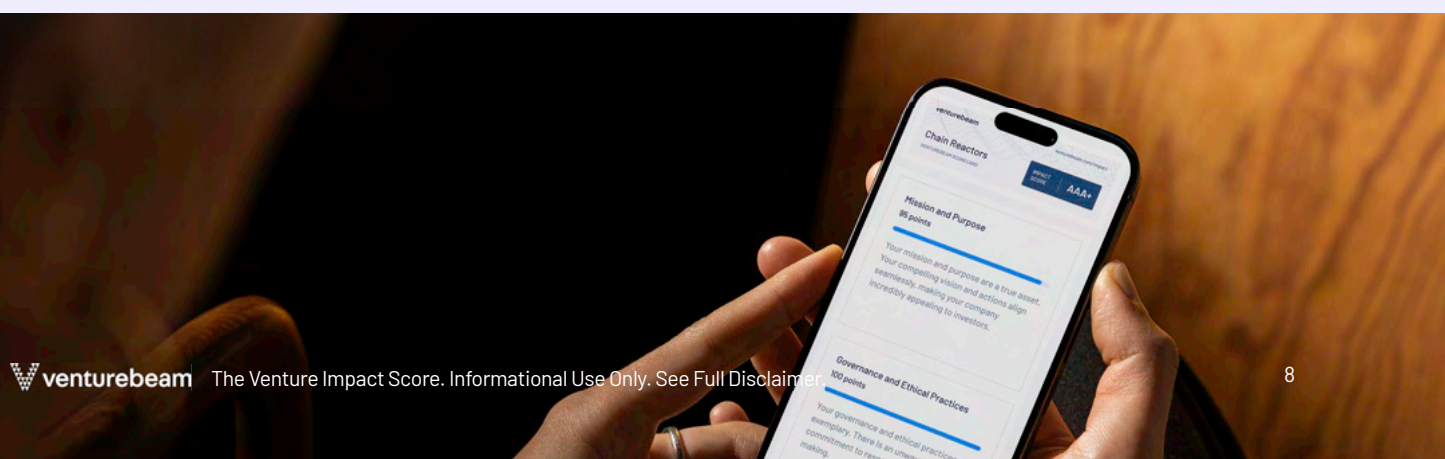
4. From Data to Decisions

**For Investors,** the VIS offers:

- A unified lens for comparing diverse impact themes (climate, education, digital inclusion).
- It helps investors organise information that can be used in SFDR, CSRD, and ISSB-related reporting.
- Portfolio-level analytics, including mean VIS score and variance.
- It reduces due-diligence friction by structuring impact, governance, and business-model evidence in a format optimised for investor worflows, presenting key information in a structured, comparable way.
- It helps protect the bottom line and exit value by embedding Impact Risk Diligence to proactively mitigate long-term, amorphous risks that can crystallise into significant financial liabilities at the point of exit, whether it be IPO or M&A.

For Founders, the VIS acts as a diagnostic tool:

- It highlights operational gaps in impact reporting or governance
- It enhaces credibility in fundraising by presenting verified, normalised impact evidence alongside commercial performance.
- It enables benchmarking against peer ventures in similar sectors or markets.

Ultimately, VIS transforms **impact measurement** from a compliance exercise into a **strategic advantage**.
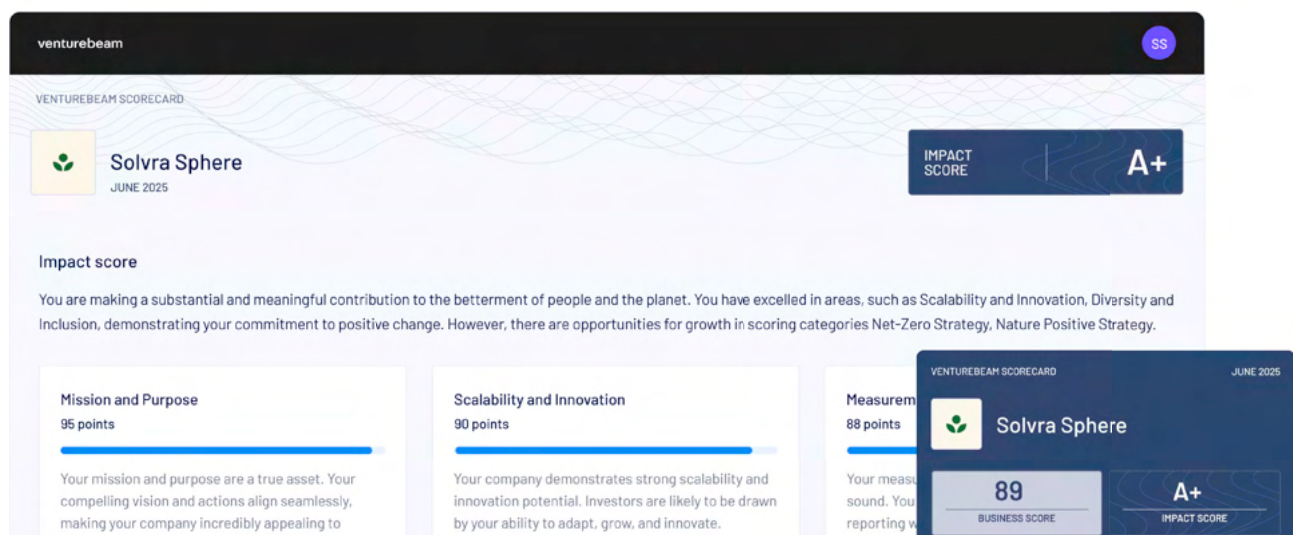
4.1 Integrating VIS with Venturebeam's Business Assessment

While the VIS provides a rigorous view of a venture's impact performance, Venturebeam combines this with a structured **business-readiness and commercial-quality assessment** to identify ventures that demonstrate both *impact integrity* and *investment-grade scalability.*

Every venture on the platform is evaluated across two parallel tracks:

Impact Quality (VIS)

- Evidence-based scoring across eight VIS dimensions.
- Verification of claims and supporting documentation.
- Normalisation by sector, geography and maturity.
- Rating-mapped outputs (AAA to B) to support investor interpretation.

Commercial & Investment Readiness

- Business model resilience and unit economics.
- Market size, competitive position and sector tailwinds.
- Traction, revenue quality and customer concentration.
- Governance maturity, team capability and fundraising preparedness.
- Risks, constraints and scalability indicators.
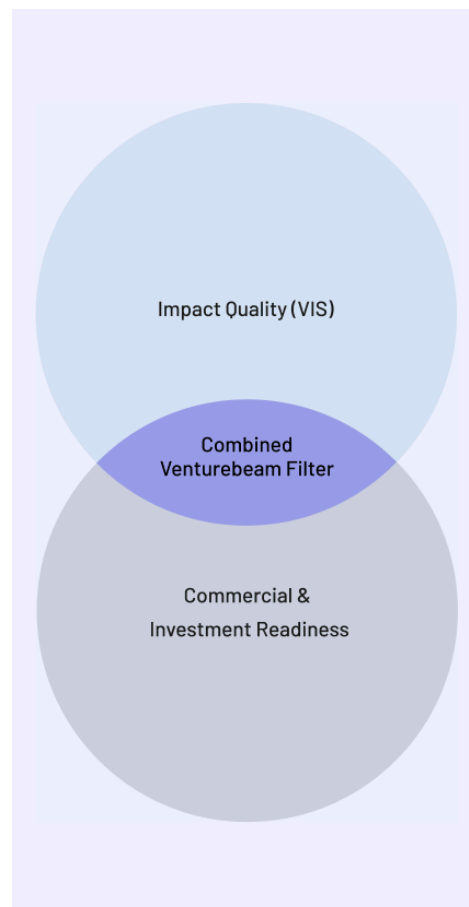
Combined Venturebeam Filter

These two assessments are then integrated into a **single decision lens** used for platform selection, prioritisation and investor targeting:

- Ventures with **high VIS + high commercial readiness** are fast-tracked for platform onboarding and investor campaign support.

- Ventures with **high VIS but moderate commercial readiness** receive diagnostic feedback on operational and market-readiness gaps.

- Ventures with **strong commercial performance but weak evidence of impact** are assessed for alignment with investor mandates, with clear recommendations for strengthening measurement and verification before onboarding.

5. Methodology and Data Model

The **Venture Impact Score (VIS)** is based on a structured assessment that combines both quantitative and qualitative information. It is designed to balance practicality for founders with clarity and consistency for investors.

Step 1 – Data Collection

Each participating venture completes a structured questionnaire supported by additional documentary evidence uploads within 24 hours of the request. The founder must be ready to provide clear evidence to justify their answers. The focus is on core elements such as reach, business model, governance and key environmental or social outcomes.

Step 2 – Normalisation

To improve comparability, information is reviewed considering sector and stage context, recognising that ventures differ in maturity and available evidence. The VIS framework is able to dynamically focus the assessment on the founding team and their strategic intent, recognising that early-stage companies often lack extensive historical data. Normalisation also adjusts for variations in baseline market conditions and commonly inflated claims in nascent sectors.

Step 3 – Validation

Venturebeam reviews this information for internal consistency and may cross-check it against other available sources, with the aim of strengthening the reliability of the overall assessment[6]. Automated anomaly detection and confidence-scoring tools support human review.

Where outliers appear (for example, unusually high impact claims relative to the size of the business), these can be flagged for further review.

This rigorous validation process is crucial for identifying evidence gaps and unsupported claims, directly mitigating the risk of self-reported "impact-washing".
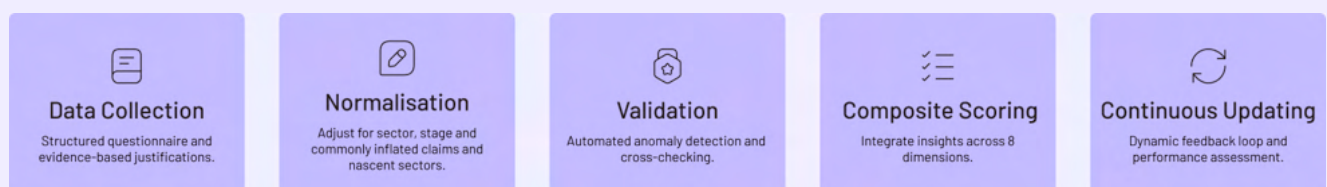
Step 4 – Composite Scoring

After the review process, insights from each of the eight VIS dimensions are integrated into a composite score. Each dimension is weighted, producing both a dimension-level score and an overall VIS rating. This approach provides a clear, structured view of a venture's impact performance, taking into account both the quality of evidence provided and the context in which the business operates. The resulting score offers an accessible and comparable indicator for investors.
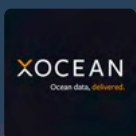
Step 5 – Continuous Updating

VIS is designed to be updated over time as ventures share new information, allowing the score to evolve with their maturity. This continuous performance assessment embeds feedback loops directly into the investment cycle.

6. Applications and Case Studies

The Venture Impact Score has already been applied to multiple ventures across education, sustainability, and deep-tech infrastructure. These examples illustrate how VIS translates narrative impact into quantifiable, comparable outcomes.

Data Collection
Structured questionnaire and evidence-based justifications.

Normalisation
Adjust for sector, stage and commonly inflated claims and nascent sectors.

Validation
Automated anomaly detection and cross-checking.

Composite Scoring
Integrate insights across 8 dimensions.

Continuous Updating
Dynamic feedback loop and performance assessment.

Case 1: XOCEAN AA+

Autonomous Ocean Data & Decarbonised Marine Intelligence

Ireland-based **XOCEAN** provides ocean-data collection services using **uncrewed surface vessels (USVs)** that replace traditional, fuel-intensive survey ships. Each USV **emits approximately 0.1% of the emissions** of a conventional crewed survey vessel[7], delivering high-resolution seabed mapping with near-zero emissions. Operating across **20+ jurisdictions**, XOCEAN supports global offshore-wind and marine-monitoring projects, avoiding more than **1,000 tonnes of CO$_2$ annually** [7] while improving crew safety and efficiency.

VIS identified strong SDG alignment – particularly **SDG 13 (Climate Action)** through large-scale emissions avoidance and **SDG 14 (Life Below Water)** through enhanced marine-ecosystem monitoring. Secondary alignment was noted with **SDG 7 (Clean Energy)** due to direct support for offshore-wind deployment, and **SDG 9 (Industry & Innovation)** given its pioneering autonomous-vessel technology. Verified emissions data and inclusive governance – including **31% female representation compared with an industry norm of ~1%**[8] - underpin XOCEAN's classification as a Transformative performer (VIS AA+), demonstrating how autonomy and data innovation deliver measurable climate and biodiversity outcomes.

Case 2: iSchool AA

Education Technology

iSchool delivers STEM and coding education to more than **130,000 learners** across the MENA region. Using proprietary data verified through Venturebeam's methodology, VIS quantified the company's reach, gender inclusion, and curriculum adaptability for low-income students.

The analysis found that students from marginalised backgrounds achieved an average **40% improvement in digital-literacy scores within six months[9]**, confirming iSchool's contribution to **SDG 4 (Quality Education)** through equitable access to future-skills training. The company's strong participation of girls in STEM supports **SDG 5 (Gender Equality)**, while its focus on employability and digital-economy preparation strengthens **SDG 8 (Decent Work)** and **SDG 9 (Industry & Innovation)**. These verified outcomes underpin iSchool's Strong VIS rating (AA), demonstrating clear, measurable advancement of education equity and digital-skills development across emerging markets.

Case 3: Archireef   A

Marine Restoration

Archireef, a Hong Kong- and UAE-based marine restoration company, uses 3D-printed reef tiles to regenerate coral ecosystems. Its coral survival rate of **over 95 percent**, compared with natural averages below 5 percent [10], provided empirical evidence of ecological ROI.

VIS captured Archireef's multidimensional impact: direct ecosystem regeneration aligned with **SDG 14 (Life Below Water)**, climate-resilience benefits under **SDG 13 (Climate Action)**, and circular-design innovation contributing to **SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption & Production)** and **SDG 9 (Industry & Innovation)**. In addition, its deep collaboration with major public and private stakeholders – including ADQ, Swire, and NEOM – demonstrates strong alignment with **SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)**. These combined factors underpin the venture's Strong VIS rating (A), confirming both measurable biodiversity outcomes and systemic potential at scale.

7. Alignment with Global Frameworks

The VIS framework has been designed to support investors who report under these frameworks by helping them organise relevant venture-level information.
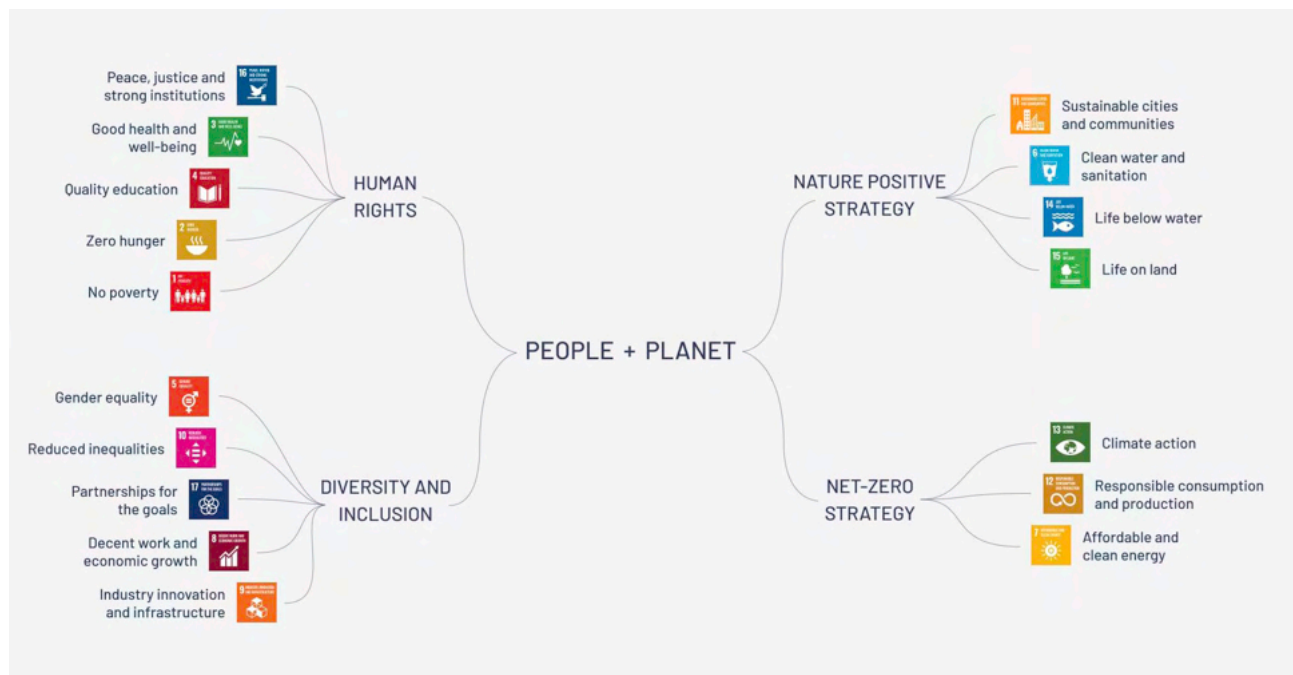
UN SDGs and National Visions

Each VIS score references specific **UN Sustainable Development Goals**, identifying which targets a venture materially advances. The model also maps against national sustainability strategies – such as the *UAE's Net Zero 2050* and *Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030* – aligning ventures to local impact priorities.

SFDR (Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation)

By standardising metrics like renewable energy share and waste reduction progress, VIS provides the precise, quantifiable data that forms the foundation of SFDR compliance – bridging the gap between company operations and investors mandatory Principal Adverse Impact (PAI) disclosures.

## CSRD (Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive)

For investors reporting under CSRD, VIS can support the process by structuring venture-level information in a way that can be aggregated and considered alongside both financial and non-financial factors.

ISSB (International Sustainability Standards Board)

VIS has been designed with the ISSB's emerging approach to data structure and comparability in mind, to make future alignment with IFRS S1 and S2 easier for investors who adopt those standards.

VIS does not replace regulatory reporting but structures venture-level inputs to make compliance significantly more efficient.
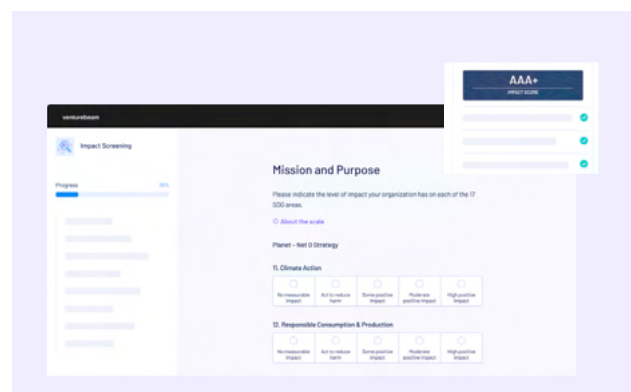
8. The Future of Impact Intelligence

Venturebeam sees the Venture Impact Score as the foundation for a new generation of intelligent impact infrastructure. As more ventures are assessed and the evidence base grows, advanced analytics – particularly AI – will play an increasingly central role in strengthening verification, comparability and predictive insight.

While AI will accelerate efficiency and scalability across the venture ecosystem, the VIS framework is designed to carefully avoid biases and proactively mitigate risks of purely data-driven AI system pitfalls, favouring ventures that mirror past successes and potentially overlooking genuinely disruptive ventures or high-alpha ideas[11,12]. By integrating robust qualitative sections like Innovation and focusing on forward-looking Impact Pathways, VIS ensures the quantitative rigour of backward-looking data models, while still crucial, does not lead to algorithmic myopia against breakthrough, impact-focused innovation.
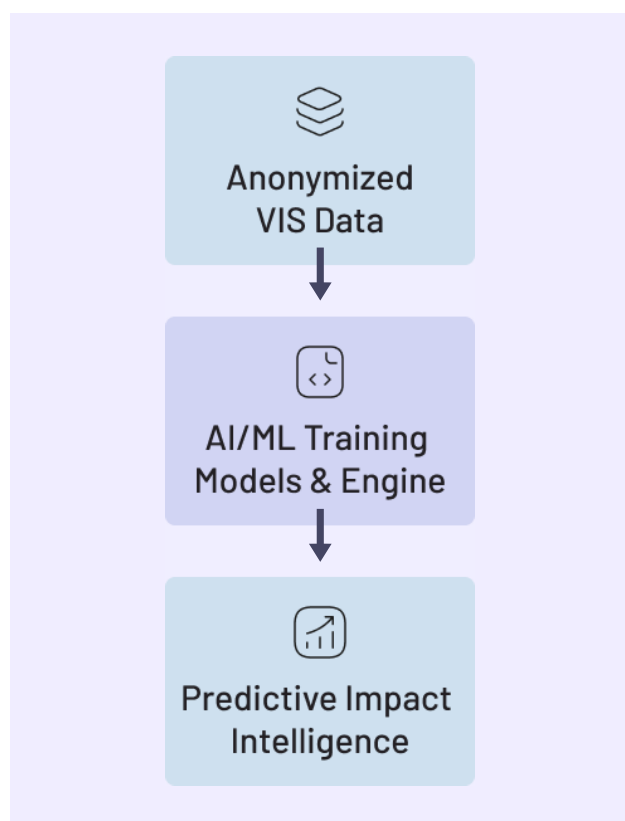
Roadmap 2026 – 2027

1. AI-Enhanced Data Ingestion & Verification

- Deployment of machine-learning models to extract, classify and validate evidence from uploaded documents, third-party reports and public datasets.
- AI-driven anomaly detection to flag inconsistencies in emissions, reach, diversity or governance claims.
- Confidence scoring to assess the reliability of each data point and automatically tier evidence quality.

2. Automated Benchmark Generation

- AI models trained on sector data to create dynamic "impact ranges" for climate, education, inclusion and health sectors.
- Automated peer grouping to contextualise each venture's VIS performance relative to similar stage, geography and sector cohorts.
- Predictive benchmark evolution, enabling investors to anticipate how impact norms may shift over time.

3. Predictive Impact Modelling

- Machine-learning algorithms estimating the forward trajectory of a venture's impact performance, based on historical inputs, operational indicators and sector growth patterns.
- Early-warning indicators for declining governance, measurement gaps or environmental performance risks.
- Scenario-based simulations to test how changes in funding, product strategy or geography may influence impact outcomes.

4. LP Dashboard API & Intelligent Reporting

- A programmatic interface enabling institutional investors to integrate VIS data directly into fund-level reporting, enhanced with AI-generated summaries and variance diagnostics.
- Auto-generated CSRD-, SFDR- and ISSB-

aligned impact commentary, reducing reporting burdens.
- Portfolio heat-maps powered by AI to identify concentration risks, strengths and gaps across dimensions.

5. Impact–Financial Correlation Engine
- Research partnerships to train models on anonymised portfolio data, exploring correlations between VIS indicators and financial performance (revenue growth, resilience, churn reduction).
- Identification of "high-materiality indicators" that statistically predict outperformance in specific sectors.Tools that allow investors to overlay VIS scores with financial and operational metrics to support decision-making.

6. Intelligent Founder Feedback Loop
- AI-generated diagnostic reports showing founders where to improve governance, measurement systems or environmental performance to increase their VIS score.
- Auto-suggested actions, templates and guidance tailored to maturity level.
- Dynamic scoring updates as founders upload new evidence.

9. Conclusion

The Venture Impact Score represents a significant progression in the evolution of impact measurement – moving the field beyond fragmented reporting and unverified claims toward structured, comparable, evidence-driven intelligence.

By merging advanced analytics with practical usability, VIS **enables investors to allocate capital with greater confidence, clarity, and accountability**. For founders, it **provides a framework that strengthens credibility, highlights operational gaps** and demonstrates progress through verified, normalised data.

With the integration of VIS into Venturebeam's broader business and investment-readiness assessment, ventures are evaluated not only for their impact maturity but also for the resilience, scalability, and investability of their commercial models. This combined lens ensures that investors accessing Venturebeam's platform see only ventures that meet rigorous standards across both dimensions – strengthening deal quality, reducing due-diligence friction and elevating market trust.

As sustainable finance enters a new era of accountability, **VIS stands as both a measurement tool and a decision-support system**: transforming intent into intelligence, and intelligence into investable, impactful opportunities.

From intention to intelligence, the Venture Impact Score defines the future of impact investing.

Endnotes (Sequential Sources)

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3. UNDP & OECD, *Catalogue of Sustainability Frameworks 2024*.

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6. Venturebeam Internal Methodology Brief 2025.

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Venturebeam connects capital with purpose - uniting investors and founders to back high-growth, impact-driven ventures that deliver strong financial returns and measurable positive outcomes.

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