SCHOOL OF GLOBAL STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

SGS Travel Policy for reducing CO2 emissions from airline travels

The University of Gothenburg (GU) has committed to reducing its CO2 emissions 25 percent by 2023 and 50 percent by 2030, compared to the baseline year of 2019. Since the bulk of GU's CO2 emissions in 2019 came from travel by airplane, GU has targeted airline travel.

Like all departments, the School of Global Studies (SGS) is expected to contribute to GU's CO2 emission-reduction goals. Whereas other departments have implemented CO2 quotas or budgets for travel, SGS has chosen a trust-based type of governance, asking staff members to work together to reach the department's CO2 emission reduction goals.

As stipulated by GU, SGS should halve its CO2 emissions from airline travel by 2030. In the baseline year 2019, SGS air travel emitted 182 tons of CO2. This figure includes all airplane travel linked to SGS: inbound trips by guests and colleagues from abroad and outbound trips by staff members. At the end of 2022, SGS' total CO2 emissions from air travel were 203 tons (+21 tons). If SGS is to reach a 50 percent reduction in 2030 – a total CO2 emission of 91 tons – we must reduce emissions by airline travel by 9-10 percent per year. The table below shows approximate annual emission goals 2023-2030.

Year	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Goal for CO2 emissions (tons)	185	168	153	139	125	113	102	91

SGS wants to achieve reductions of CO2 emissions by relying on staff to take measures to reduce airline travel, inbound (guests) and outbound. We adopt a need-sensitive CO2 emissions policy, in which we share overall responsibility for reducing CO2 emissions, while remaining attentive to the fact that our needs for airline travel diverge.

The leadership group (LG), supported by the environmental coordinator, is responsible for keeping track of progress toward CO2 emissions goals. This trust-based governance system will be evaluated annually. Should CO2 emissions not reduce, this policy will be exchanged for a CO2 emissions quota or budget system.

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To support staff in their efforts to reduce CO2 emissions, the LG will provide opportunities for exchanging experiences for climate-smart travelling, raise awareness about travel's climate impacts, and regularly provide data about CO2 emissions from travelling. During the annual development dialogues, the LG will ask staff members to reflect on how their travel plans align with CO2 emissions reduction goals. Finally, the LG will continue applying pressure to GU regarding the university's travel agent and taking steps that ensure GU's travel bookings align with climate goals.

Making decisions for climate-smart travel: questions to consider

Decision one:
- Do the research benefits, financial costs, and climate impact justify this travel?
- Is travel by bus or train feasible?
- Can I participate online in a conference; collaborate with others to collect data; or conduct interviews digitally?
- Instead of flying in a guest, could my planned activity work with an online or hybrid solution?

If airline travel is still necessary, decision two:
- Can I fly direct, avoiding stop-overs and choosing the straightest route, which reduces CO2 emissions?
- Can I climate-compensate or carbon-offset my air travel?

In planning the travel, decision three:
- Could I as an outbound traveller, or my guest as an inbound traveller, complete several tasks during this trip, thus reducing the need for later trips?