

INSIDE TRAVEL GROUP

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN SEPTEMBER 2021



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INSIDE TRAVEL GROUP

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	1
1 Foreword.....	2
2 Introduction	2
3 Measure	5
3.1 What we've done	5
3.2 What we need to do	8
4 Reduce	9
4.1 What we've done	9
4.2 What we need to do	10
5 Mitigate (carbon offset).....	11
5.1 Defining carbon offsets.....	11
5.2 What we've done.....	11
5.3 What we need to do	13
6 Engage.....	13
6.1 What we've done	13
6.2 What we need to do	14
7 Goals Summary	14
8 Your thoughts.....	15
9 References	0

1 Foreword

At Inside Travel Group (ITG) we recognise the negative impacts of greenhouse gases and the damage being done to the environment, natural habitats and peoples' lives as a result of global warming now and the significant risks it poses in the future.

We believe that when done right, travel can be a force for good. But we're also aware of the potential impacts it can have, including its role in the climate crisis. That's why we're committed to maximising the positive benefits that our trips have, minimising the environmental impact and encouraging longer, deeper and more meaningful travel that works in harmony with the people and destinations we care about.

However, we know that alone that isn't enough. We wish there was a cleaner alternative to flying available now, but there isn't, which is why we are taking action in the following ways:

- measuring and reducing our operational and trip emissions,
- committing to offsetting the carbon footprint that we cannot reduce,
- joining Tourism Declares and having a strong presence on the AITO Sustainability Committee to work with other like-minded travel companies to find solutions,
- pledging to be a fully carbon neutral business by 2025

Our Climate Action Plan will lay out these actions in further detail, and provide a roadmap for us to achieve carbon neutrality by 2025.

2 Introduction

According to The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), it is now "unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land".

Due to rising greenhouse gas levels (carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane referred to as CO₂e from here onwards) there will be significant climate-related impacts from increasing global temperatures until at least the mid-century, including:

- The frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as heatwaves, heavy precipitation, droughts and cyclones;
- Reductions in Arctic sea ice, snow cover and permafrost;
- Sea level rise causing severe flooding;
- Impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems, including species loss and extinction;
- Ocean temperature increasing including ocean acidity and risks to marine biodiversity and ecosystems.

While the 2015 Paris Agreement pledged to limit global warming to 1.5C, the latest IPCC report shows that we have already seen about 1.1 degrees warming compared to 1850-1900 levels, and that many changes to the ocean, ice sheets and global sea level are now irreversible.

Global warming of 1.5°C and 2°C will be exceeded during the 21st century unless deep reductions in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions occur in the coming decades.

IPCC Sixth Assessment Report(2021)

Climate change is already affecting every inhabited region across the globe, and already having local effects on the destinations that we work with and care deeply about:

ITG Climate Action Plan (2021)

- In **Japan**, Typhoon Hagibis (2019) was the costliest typhoon disaster on record at ¥1.8 trillion, closely followed by those in 2018. Annual instances of extreme precipitation in Japan have increased by 50% since the 1970s, while at the same time the country gets an extra day of “heat wave” weather once every five years.
- In **Southeast Asia**, 54.5 million people were displaced by weather-related natural disasters across the region between 2008-2018. By 2050, daily high tides will flood the areas where over 48 million people in Southeast Asia now live.

Therefore, we must do what we can to limit warming to less than 1.5°C. Global warming is likely to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate (IPCC, 2021). The World Meteorological Organization predicts that if the current warming trends continue, temperature could rise between 3°C to 5°C by the end of this century.

On the other hand, scientists are more hopeful that if we can cut global emissions in half by 2030 and reach net zero by the middle of this century, we can halt and possibly reverse the rise in temperatures.

Pre-Covid-19, the travel sector accounts for 8% of global carbon emissions (Nature, 2018) and aviation will be the single largest emitter of CO₂e by 2050, estimates the Committee on Climate Change (CCC, 2019). Although new flight technologies may solve this in the mid-term future (50 years), long-haul international flights will remain a large source of emission for at least the next 30 years.

This Action Plan therefore outlines a number of climate actions we are already taking at ITG, as well as our action plan for the year to come as we work towards being carbon neutral by 2025.

ITG believes that travel can be an incredible force for good. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, travel and tourism was a significant part of the global economy contributing to more than 10% of global GDP and employing more than 200 million people worldwide. For many developing countries, tourism provides an important source of income and contributes to social and economic developments. Tourism also supports intercultural understanding and can support wider economic investment and developments. However, we acknowledge that tourism can lead to negative impacts and we need to support our destinations in making them resilient against the impacts of climate change. We are therefore committed to playing our part in reducing CO₂e emission and in maximising the good that travel can do.

It is also the right thing to do. We have always believed that businesses should be run in an ethical way and be a force for good. We want to be proud of the work we are doing at ITG to manage our climate impact and for our clients to choose to travel with us because of our positive approach to the carbon question.

This plan gives an overview of how we have been managing our climate impact and also how we will further **measure, reduce and mitigate (carbon offset)** our carbon emissions from 2022 onwards.

ITG Climate Action Plan (2021)

Definitions

Carbon

Carbon is used as shorthand for all the different global-warming greenhouse gases.

1000 grams (g) = 1 kilogram (kg)

1000 kilograms (kg) = 1 tonne (t)

Carbon management

Carbon management is the strategic management of emissions in one's business.

Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e)

"Carbon dioxide equivalent" or "CO₂e" is a term for describing different greenhouse gases (including methane, nitrous oxide and F-gases) in a common unit. For any quantity and type of greenhouse gas, CO₂e signifies the amount of CO₂ which would have the equivalent global warming impact.

Radiative Forcing Index (RFI)

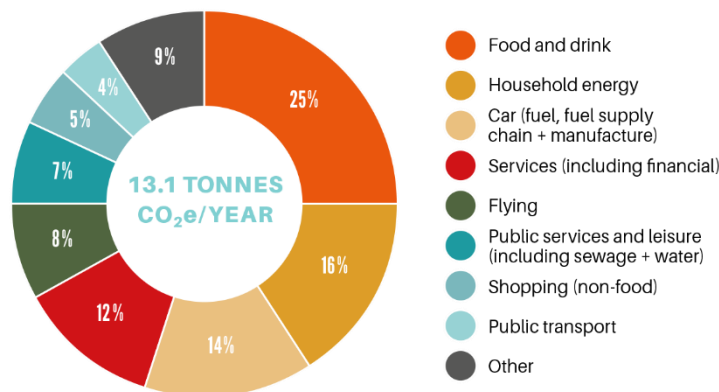
Radiative Forcing Index (RFI) is a multiplier that takes account of the extra gases emitted to the atmosphere when you fly at altitude – which are greater than burning fossil fuels at ground level. Scientists estimate the impact is between 1 and 4 times greater and it is considered best practice by DEFRA/DECC to include a multiplier of 1.9 to take account of these impacts. ClimateCare includes an RFI multiplier in all flight calculations and the RFI has been included in all carbon emissions in this document.

Carbon footprint

A carbon footprint measures the total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions caused directly and indirectly by a person. It's measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e).

Figure 1 shows that flying is a significant part of the average carbon footprint of someone in the UK (8% of 13.1 tonnes of CO₂e/year) (New Internationalist, 2019).

AVERAGE CARBON FOOTPRINT IN THE UK*



3 Measure

Before we can look to reduce and mitigate our impacts, we need to know exactly what these are. As a tour operator providing trips in multiple destinations in Asia, as well as offices in four different continents, measuring our climate impact is no small feat. Here we outline what we already measure, and what we plan to measure in the future to ensure we have the best understanding possible of our CO2e emissions.

3.1 What we've done

3.1.1 Our internal carbon footprint

3.1.1.1 Staff Travel

At Inside Travel Group we have been measuring CO2e generated from business-related flights since 2012.

In 2019 our staff flight volume (including domestic and international flights taken for business reasons) was 289 tonnes. Figure 1 shows that carbon emissions decreased from 1.75 tonnes per staff member in 2016 to 1.55 tonnes per staff member in 2019. With a global pandemic on our hands, the figures for 2020 have dropped considerably, as we had very few staff flights in the beginning of the year before we stopped travelling altogether.

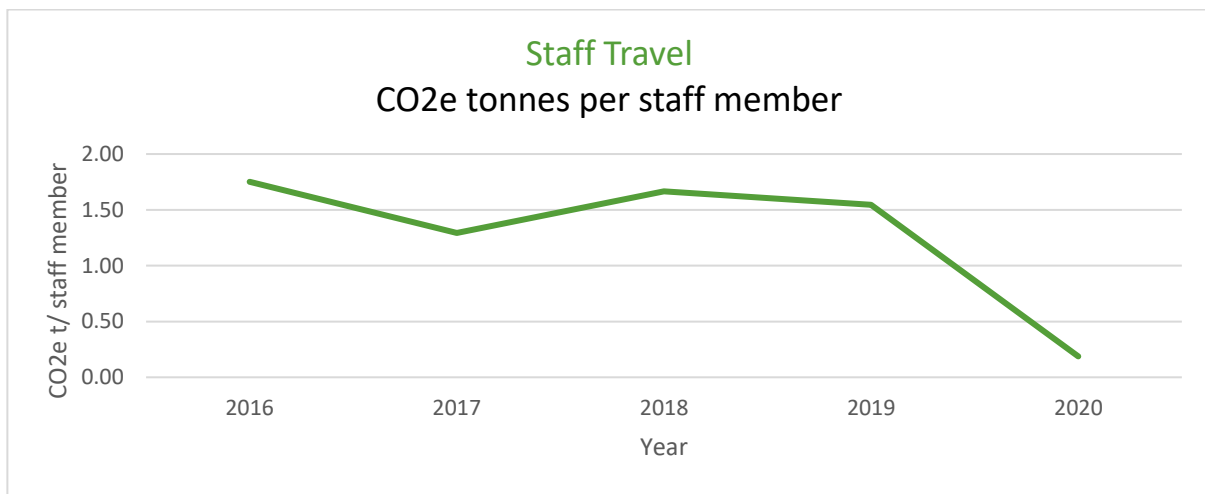


Figure 1 ITG Business flights per year, per staff member

As our staff numbers change, so too will our resulting emissions from staff travel, and therefore to keep a more consistent approach to reduction targets, we currently measure our CO2e per staff member as well as total amount of CO2e per year.

We keep detailed records of our staff flight records including where they've flown from and to, what class, and for what reason. We submit our flight records to our partners ClimateCare, a carbon management company, who calculate the total amount of CO2e for the year.

Year	Total amount of CO2e	CO2e/ staff member
2016	98.07	1.75
2017	155.19	1.29
2018	249.82	1.67
2019	289	1.55
2020	31.68	0.19

Up until 2019, our CO2e per staff member had been falling, however our overall carbon emissions had been increasing from 2019-2020 (Figure 2).

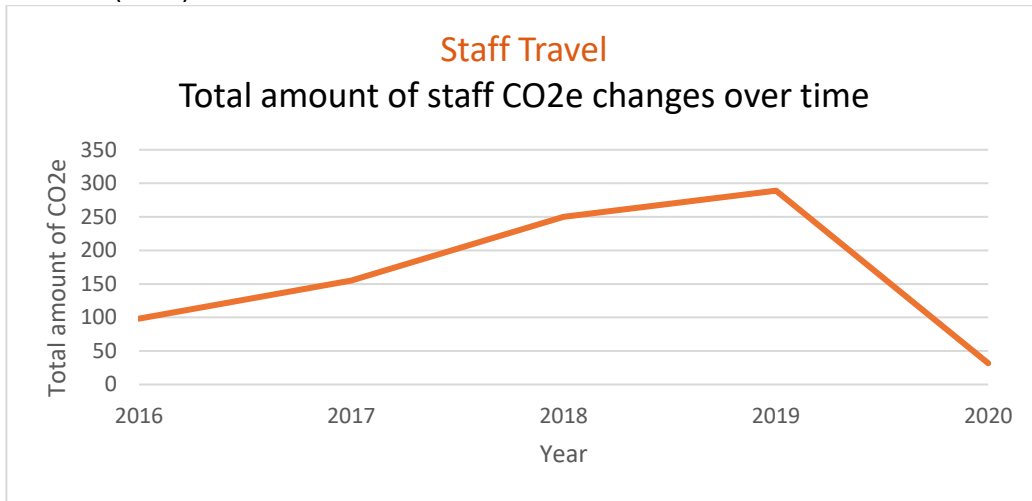


Figure 2 Total amount of CO2e from business flights

There are valid reasons why our staff need to travel for their jobs which include:

- Research and familiarisation trips for the sales team, product and marketing teams; Management visits to different branches for training and collaboration. In our Reductions section, we go into further detail about how we are working to reduce the amount of business-related travel our staff need to take.

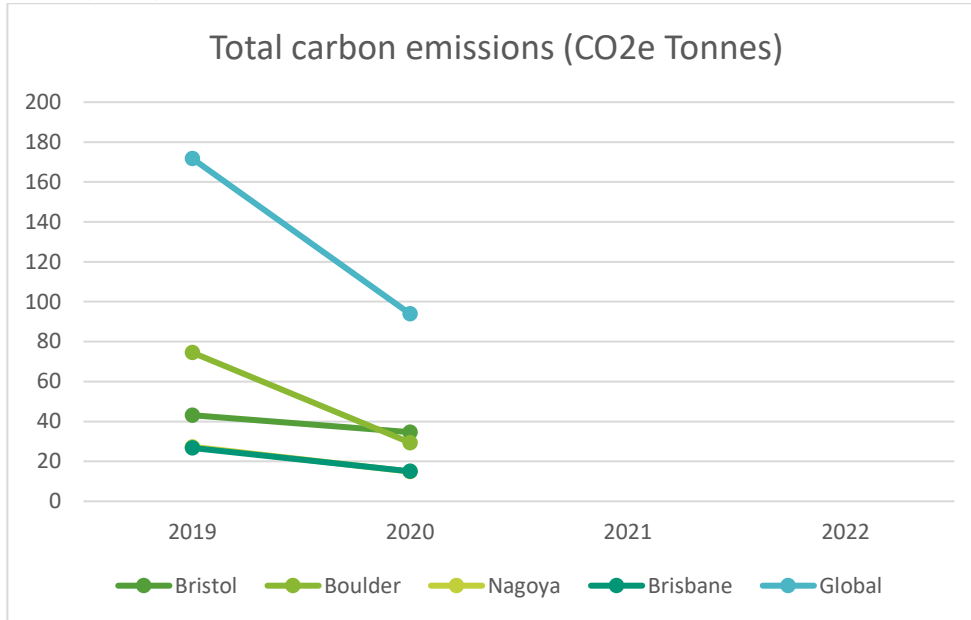
3.1.1.2 Office operations

We have been measuring the emissions from our office emissions since 2019. This includes measuring our energy usage, water usage and waste to landfill. We ensure that our energy usage also includes an emissions factor specific to each country our branch operates in. This means that we take into account the CO2 emissions associated with each unit of electricity provided by the electricity system in each country (depending on how each area *makes* that electricity in the first place, e.g. fossil fuels or renewable energy).

We have dedicated Sustainability Branch Coordinators in each of our offices who monitor these variables, and we report them to our partners ClimateCare at the end of each year (we offset the full amount).

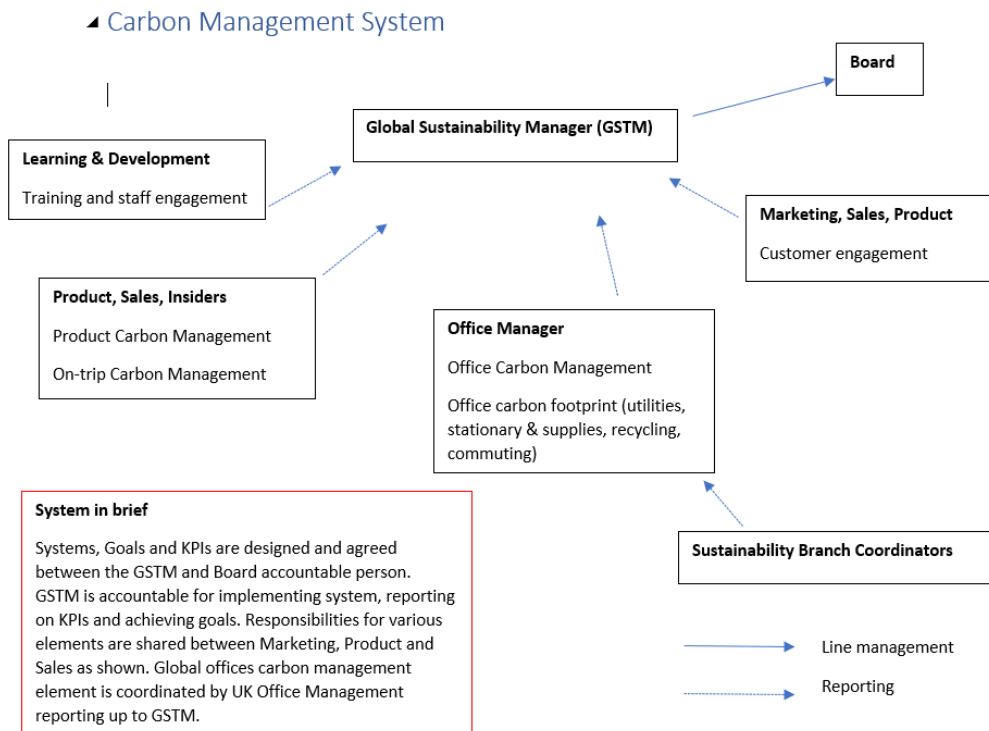
In 2020, due to the global pandemic, we spent a lot less time in our offices, and that's why we've seen a big drop in emissions from our offices compared to 2019. However, as we start returning to our offices around the globe, we have targets to ensure we reduce our emissions from 2019 levels.

ITG Climate Action Plan (2021)



3.1.1.3 How do we manage our carbon emissions reporting?

Our Global Sustainability Manager (GSTM) writes an annual report on our global internal emissions with input from Sustainability Branch Coordinators from the other branches and the Office Manager in the UK. The reporting diagram is below:



The Global Sustainability Manager will set goals for how to reduce carbon internally, as seen in our Action Plan in this document.

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3.1.2 Client carbon footprint

By far the largest contributor to our overall carbon emissions are the trips we operate for our clients. In order to know how and where to make emissions reductions, first we needed to be able to measure the current carbon footprint of our trips, both in terms of flights to get to our destination and the ground arrangements.

Together with our partners ClimateCare, we calculated the carbon volume for our clients' domestic and international flights booked by ITG in 2019, which came to 15,011 tonnes. This is the first time we have measured this, so there is no previous data to compare this to, although we know that we had the most passengers travel in 2019 compared to other years. We have clients flying from different parts of the world to multiple destinations, so we worked out an average for the flight emissions from the countries our clients most often fly from to our most popular destinations.

We know that our climate impact extends beyond just travelling to and from our destinations though. The accommodation, internal transport and activities that make our trips so special also have an impact of their own. As we operate both small group tours (SGTs) and fully independent travel (FIT) – where every itinerary is tailor made and unique – calculating the exact emissions for each individual trip is extremely challenging and something we don't have the resources for at the moment. So we did the next best thing – calculating the emissions of our most popular SGT and FIT itineraries using a carbon emissions calculator specific to tour operators (CARMACAL) and working out an average from these figures. These average figures are a great indicator of how we can reduce the footprint of our itineraries moving forwards, and were also vital (together with our average flight emissions) in calculating our trip carbon offset, which we'll talk more about in the Mitigation section.

In doing this measurement audit, we found some interesting statistics, such as that our trips to Southeast Asia are on average a third more carbon-intensive than our Japan itineraries. This is mainly because our Japan itineraries rely on public transport rather than short-haul flights or private transfers to move between destinations. While this is a result of the transport infrastructure available in each country, it has given us a better understanding of how we can potentially reduce the climate impact of our itineraries.

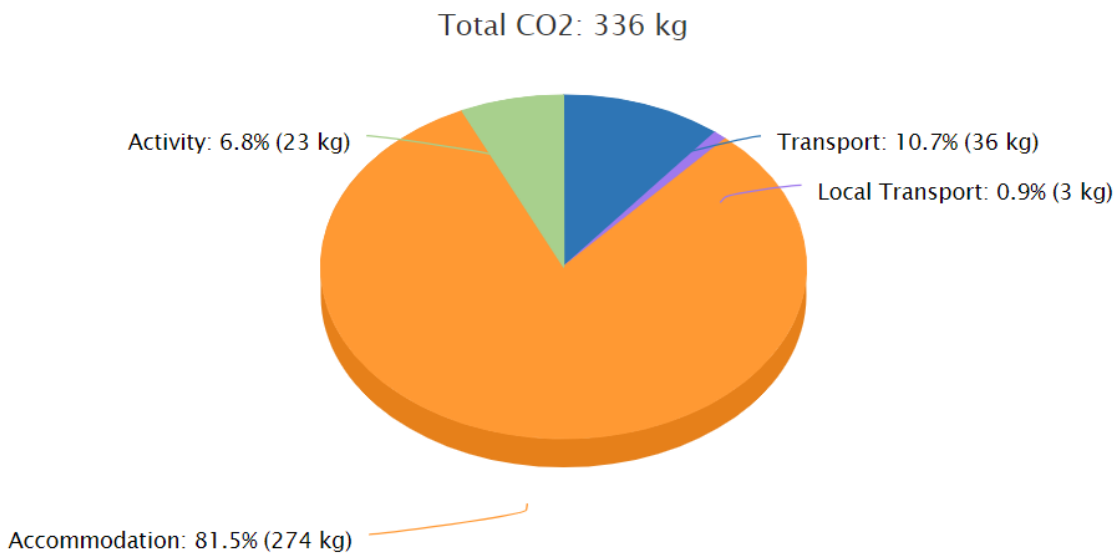


Figure 3: The breakdown in emissions for one of our most popular itineraries, Classic Japan

3.2 What we need to do

While we have come a long way in the last two years in measuring our emissions, we know that more still needs to be done.

Goal 1 : Measure CO2e emissions from home-working from 2022

The global pandemic has reinforced to us that we can get a great deal of work done from home as well as our offices. While lots of us will be returning to offices, we want to offer a more flexible approach to our employees about when and where they work, and this will have an impact on our internal operations emissions. If all of our staff work from home, this may look great for our reduced office emissions, but in reality we are just emitting elsewhere.

That's why from 2022 we want to calculate our home-working emissions. Current estimations for calculating this are very general and vague, and don't take into account the people who work for us and where they work. We want to use real company data to work out our home-working emissions – this will take a lot of time and effort, but we know that it will give us a much more accurate picture of our climate impact moving forwards.

3.2.2 Client Trips

Goal 2: To audit all InsideJapan fully independent travel (FIT) and small group tour (SGT) itineraries on our website in order to find ways to replace high-carbon activities and transport with lower-carbon options.

While we've audited our most popular SGT and FIT trips for our Japan and Southeast Asia destinations, we want to go further and eventually have a figure for all of the itineraries that we offer on our website. There are 63 FIT itineraries and 12 SGT itineraries on our InsideJapan website alone, so that is where we will make a start first!

In the process of doing this, we would look carefully at the itineraries and see if there are any other changes that we can make to reduce the CO2e of our trips. These changes could be including more vegetarian meals, changing short-haul flights to other means of local transport and promoting shared transport rather than private transport where possible.

4 Reduce

Measuring our emissions is just the first step. We need to make serious inroads into reducing our emissions if we are to have a positive impact on the climate. This section outlines what reductions we've already made to our emissions, and our goals for reducing this further in 2022.

4.1 What we've done

4.1.1 Internal Operations

Staff Travel

As a tour operator with offices in four different continents, business travel is still vital to allow us to provide high-quality trips. However, we've learned so many other ways to adapt during a time when hardly anyone has been able to travel at all. We've trained our staff to consider the following points when thinking about the need for business travel:

- Carefully consider if the trip is necessary or if there is a digital equivalent such as video conferencing
- Make sure that every staff trip counts – that is has a clear purpose and that we get the expected output.
- Travel overland when possible
- Choose the most sustainable transport option and route.
- When flying, to choose more direct routes, in economy class as a default option.
- To consider less frequent, but longer trips (if required).

Offices

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We have dedicated Sustainability Branch Coordinators in each of our offices, who together with the Global Sustainability Manager and other staff follow a plan to reduce our office-related emissions. Achieving Travelife Partner status for our UK office and going through the rigorous process of certification (over 150 sustainability criteria) for all of our other global offices has helped us refine this process and ensure we have the following policies in place:

- Ensure our UK office runs on renewable energy (using the greenest energy provider in the UK)
- Remind staff of the policy to shut-down all unnecessary IT equipment at the end of the day
- We have a policy to print less to save printer energy and use digital files instead
- We buy our paper locally and sustainably and only print (double-sided as default) when we need to
- We've implemented smart heating, cooling and lighting in our offices including switching-off all appliances, lighting and heating after office hours.
- We have a policy to purchase energy-efficient electronic equipment and set our equipment to a default energy-saving mode.
- We train our staff on tips to reduce emissions in the office and working from home
- We buy local and Fairtrade refreshments (where available) for our kitchens

4.1.2 Client Trips

We've always believed that we need to get our own house in order before expecting our suppliers and partners to do the same, and that's why we've focussed heavily on our internal operations first before doing a wider audit of all our itineraries (Goal 1). As we are still in the process of measuring all our itineraries, we therefore haven't made us much progress on reducing the emissions on our trips as we have with our internal operations.

Nonetheless, we have still implemented the following changes to help make emissions reductions for our trips:

- We've trained our Sales teams so that they can offer the best advice to our clients on the most energy-efficient airlines and routes, as well as travel tips on how to fly 'smart' (for example by reducing luggage weight which can save 80kg of CO₂e on a 10-hour flight)
- We promote public transport where possible in destination
- We also support our clients in reducing their own emissions by including tips and advice in our client Info Packs.

4.2 What we need to do

While we've made a great start on reducing our emissions, particularly in our internal operations, we know there is a lot more work that needs to be done.

4.2.1 Internal Operations

Goal 3: Reduce CO₂e per staff member from air travel by 20% in 2022, compared to our 2016-2019 average

We've had almost two years without normal travel operating, so our target will be to reduce CO₂e per staff member from air travel by 20% compared to 2016-2019 levels. This means our target for 2022 is: **1.25 tonnes**

Goal 4: Reduce office emissions by 5-10% in 2022 compared to 2019 levels

While we've already made big changes to our offices, we want to continue to reduce our emissions. This figure varies between 5% and 10% for each office as they operate in different countries with different access to sustainable alternatives and resources. By implementing the measures listed above, we aim to continue to reduce our office emissions after we saw a significant reduction in 2020 levels during the pandemic. The reduction in 2022 won't be as big, and our overall emissions levels will likely be higher than in 2020 as we return to offices, however we are still aiming for significant reductions.

ITG Office carbon emissions (inc. targets) (tonnes CO2e)					
Office	Reduction target	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
		2019	2020*	2021*	2022
Bristol (UK)	10%	43.14	34.63	38.83	34.51
Boulder (US)	10%	74.52	29.41	67.07	59.62
Nagoya (Japan)	5%	27.33	14.85	25.96	24.60
Brisbane (Australia)	10%	26.74	15.02	24.07	21.39
All offices	10%	171.73	93.91	154.56	137.38

*large parts of the year worked from home

4.2.2 Client Trips

As we said earlier – we’ve got work to do to reduce the emissions of our trips, but it’s not something we’re going to shy away from.

While the first step will be to get a better understanding of our individual trips through an audit of all our itineraries ([Goal 2](#)), we do know of ways that we can start to make changes to our trips, including:

- Promoting carbon-efficient accommodation
- Reducing internal domestic flights
- Increasing the number of vegetarian, vegan and locally sourced meals on our group tours

Through our audit, we will be able to highlight the parts of our itineraries where we can make more immediate changes, as well as those which may take a bit longer (but will still be worth it).

5 Mitigate (carbon offset)

We’re fully aware that as a travel business relying on our clients flying and staying in hotels, we can’t reduce our emissions completely with current technology– but what we can’t currently reduce or eliminate we will offset through Gold Standard carbon offset schemes, both for our internal operations and our trips.

5.1 Defining carbon offsets

A carbon offset means the compensation of emissions in situ through an equivalent reduction elsewhere in the world through a carbon certificate-based mechanism.

This provides an income stream for projects which will reduce CO2e emissions elsewhere and will work towards multiple social and economic Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

5.2 What we’ve done

Staff flight offsets

We have been offsetting business flights through Gold Standard Biogas Projects since 2016. In 2020 we changed providers to ensure that all staff emissions (including office and travel emissions) are offset through the Household Biogas Project, Vietnam. This is provided by our partner ClimateCare. In 2019 we offset 289 tonnes CO2e from staff flights.

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Operations (offices) offsets

We have been offsetting our office emissions for all of our global offices since 2019. This includes all of our energy, water and waste for all of our offices around the globe. Our Sustainability Branch Coordinators track these metrics, and we send them over to our partners ClimateCare, who calculate the total and offset the amount on our behalf through the Vietnam Biogas Project. In 2019, we offset 171.73 tonnes from staff flights.

Client offsets

We know that we cannot currently reduce our CO2e emissions significantly from our trips as nearly all of them involve a long-haul flight and there are no other viable options for our clients to get to our destinations from their home countries.

That's why since Jan 2021, all our new bookings are offset and carbon neutral. This means we'll be balancing out the carbon emissions from the flights and ground arrangements of our trips through the Household Biogas Project, Vietnam (one of our most popular destinations).

Using CARMACAL - a carbon emissions calculator specifically designed for tour operators - we've already calculated the average emissions of our trips and are offsetting this amount for each trip. Furthermore, it's already included in our trip prices, so our clients don't have to worry about any additional fees or processes, whether their booking includes flights or not. For the majority of our trips, we will have offset more than the total emissions, so your trip will actually be 'carbon positive' (meaning we've removed more carbon than the trip has emitted).

It's currently quite rare for a tour operator to include a carbon offset as standard (particularly one that includes the emissions from flights). Beyond all the benefits this gives to local people in Vietnam, we hope that having an included carbon offset will help heighten awareness around the carbon emissions taken by a long-haul trip, while at the same time making it easy for our clients to offset these emissions – as with everything we do, we make sure we do the leg work.

Household Biogas Project, Vietnam

We've mentioned it a lot already, and we think it's such a fantastic project that it's worth going into a bit more detail about here.

Through our partners ClimateCare (a recognised Best for the World™ B Corp), we offset all our internal operations and client trips by supporting this award-winning, Gold Standard project. The project helps transform the lives of families in rural Vietnam by using their livestock's waste to produce biogas which is burnt to generate clean, reliable and cost-effective energy for cooking, lighting and hot water.

Beyond just reducing carbon emissions, the project positively affects real people's lives today, improving:

- gender equality
- health
- household incomes
- sustainable consumption

These are all part of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Over 120,000 families have already benefited from a new biogas digester.

ITG Climate Action Plan (2021)



Figure 4: : Sustainable development goals achieved by the Household Biogas Project, Vietnam

5.3 What we need to do

Once we have a better understanding and updated measurements for our internal operations (Goal 1) and client trips (Goal 2) we will ensure that these emissions continue to be offset through the award-winning projects we support.

6 Engage

6.1 What we've done

Industry

We have signed up to **Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency** and written a Climate Emergency Plan (this document).

In doing so, we have joined a group of likeminded travel businesses (now over 300) who have declared a climate emergency and are coming together to find solutions and achieve change within our industries.

This involves developing a Climate Emergency Plan, sharing our commitment publicly and updating our targets each year, cutting our carbon emissions, and working together with our fellow and future partners to advocate for change.

Most recently we have been involved in helping create Climate Action Blueprints for businesses in the industry in the leadup to COP26. These Blueprints will help guide the necessary progress we need to make in order to make enough significant emissions reductions by 2030.

We're also active members of the **AITO** (Association of Independent Tour Operators) **Sustainability Committee** and have been since 2012.

This year we've been developing sustainability toolkits for the over 100 Tour Operator members of AITO, to educate, engage with and encourage wider movement on an industry level towards tackling the climate crisis.

Suppliers

We have developed a Supplier Code of Conduct to share with our core suppliers. We're still working on the accompanying resources (as we believe in working together rather than setting demands), and we hope to roll this out later in 2021.

However, we're already beginning the conversation with our accommodation suppliers by ensuring we request information on sustainable features and initiatives that they offer. We will ensure that we promote suppliers who offer better sustainable practices.

ITG Climate Action Plan (2021)

As part of auditing our trips (Goal 2) we will be seeing what parts of our itineraries have higher footprints and speaking to those specific suppliers to see how we can make positive changes.

Clients

We've already engaged with our clients through a Sustainability Sentiments survey in 2020, which helped guide our decision over a carbon offset (of which the majority of respondents were in favour of).

We already provide information and advice to our clients through our Info Packs and documentation, including green travelling tips and information about our carbon offset scheme.

Our Insiders are trained on sustainability initiatives local to our destinations and can provide tips and advice to our clients while on the ground. They're also experts who have an in-depth knowledge of their destinations, and that includes the sustainability and climate challenges facing the different areas we travel to.

6.2 What we need to do

Industry

We want to continue to establish ourselves as a leader in the industry when it comes to climate action and sustainability. We'll continue to perform an active role on the AITO Sustainability Committee in 2022, and we hope that this Climate Action Plan will help contribute to the Blueprints being developed by our fellow Tourism Declares members. We're making good progress but we know there's a long way to go.

Suppliers

We're still at the beginning of the road when it comes to working with our suppliers to improve the sustainability of our supply chain, but that's what makes it exciting! We hope that our Supplier Code of Conduct and audit will help open up a dialogue with our suppliers, highlight those who are already doing a great job, and know where we need to concentrate our efforts. We've always valued the partnerships that we've taken years to build, and we want to ensure these continue in the future as we work together on climate action.

Clients

We have had lots of great information and material for our staff to educate ourselves and make sure we're all signing from the same hymn sheet. The next step is to provide more information to our clients and prospective clients by updating our Sustainability pages on the website to reflect all the work we've been doing behind the scenes.

7 Goals Summary

Goal 1

Measure CO2e emissions from home-working from 2022

Goal 2

To audit our InsideJapan FIT and SGT itineraries on our website to find ways to replace high-carbon activities and transport with lower-carbon options.

Goal 3

Reduce CO2e per staff member from air travel by 20% in 2022, compared to our 2016-2019 average

Goal 4

Reduce office emissions by 5-10% in 2022 compared to 2019 levels

8 Your thoughts

We're proud of what we've achieved so far, but we know there's a long way to go. As a travel company who encourage people to fly around the world to visit incredible places (and bring a host of benefits too), we know that by publishing this Action Plan we're opening ourselves up to criticisms of greenwashing.

We see it as our responsibility to engage with the challenges we face and we're not going to shy away from them. We also know that it's the right thing to do.

We're not perfect and we don't know all the answers, but that's what gives us the motivation to get up everyday and do better, and we know there's an increasing number of businesses who feel the same way. We're always open to debate, discuss and collaborate with our partners and our competitors. We are stronger together. And we need to act.

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