



Climate Action Plan (CAP)

Implementation Update, September 2024

Summary

ETOA is a travel trade association which sells membership, events and other services. The largest driver of our Scope 3 footprint is delegate travel induced by our in-person events.

We are a small business, with 24.8 full-time equivalent team members as of 1st September 2024. We use shared office premises managed by a B-Corp certified company¹, and run a hybrid workplace.

ETOA's most significant impact on decarbonisation will be on its membership and through its policy activity. In 2024, we added a sustainability specialist to the team whose primary focus is climate action. See 'Membership Mapping' below.

This update will be replaced with one featuring 2023 data whose final calculation is pending.

Measurement and mitigation

We focus on Scope 3 footprint only given limited scope for impact on Scopes 1 and 2. This is a proportionate approach, but we will keep it under review. In future, Scope 3 may include a calculation for online events given increased focus on data centre power use.

Mitigation is delivered through financial contribution to projects aligned with science-based goals. Given the range of price per tonne associated with projects, at the current stage of our CAP implementation we have selected projects offered by our climate action partner priced towards lower end of spectrum, €15.50/tonne for 2023.

	2023	2022	Note
tCO2e	TBD	316.62	1. Team travel 10.87% of total in 2022; TBD 2023
EUR contrib.	4,561.96	2,250	2. Excluding Climate action partner fee of €750
Total delegates	1419	875	3. Total delegates attending all measured events

Finance

Part of delegate fee for most in-person workshops is ring-fenced: £5/€6 in 2022 and 2023; €10 in 2024; 2025 under review (we measure footprint of all). In 2022, BIM and GEM contributed.² In 2023, BIM, DEE and GEM. In 2024, BIM, DEE and GEM. Partner events non-contributing. We aim to build revenue to be able to afford projects with higher additional benefit and to increase overall mitigation.

¹ <https://www.bcorporation.net/en-us/find-a-b-corp/company/work-life/>

² BIM = Britain and Ireland Marketplace; GEM = Global European Marketplace: <https://www.etoa.org/events/>

Reduction of tCO2e footprint

We do not have overall reduction goals: our business plan assumes in-person event growth; online events will grow and fall within Scope 3; in-person attendance for conferences not subject to limits, though we encourage team members to arrange other productive in-person activity while in destination. By far the largest driver of ETOA's Scope 3 is delegate travel, so 'double mitigation' increasingly likely and welcome given overall positive impact. This might arise where the travel footprint of delegates attending our events may also be subject to mitigation effort by their own organisation. We do not enquire if this is the case.

Membership Mapping

Thanks to our new sustainability specialist, by end of 2024 every member account in our CRM (c.1,100 organisations) will have been assessed and reviewed for their CAP and other sustainability materials online. This will allow us to benchmark our membership and share that information. Pre-populated fields per account using existing data or URLs we identified are: climate action plan URL; sustainability URL. Other fields will be Glasgow Declaration (and similar) URL; certification URL. ETOA's Advanced Member Search tool offered to members via our website will initially enable search based on the first two fields and give members a chance to add content for the last two fields. Certification remains a vexed topic, especially for EU-based B2C companies, due to the potential impact of the Green Claims Directive.

Collaboration and Regeneration

We attended the EU's European Roundtable on Climate Risk Management in September 2024, and we share topical opportunities for transitional support via newsletters. We support UN Tourism / Oxford University SDG Impact Lab efforts towards harmonisation of ESG metrics, participated in European Roundtable on Climate Risk Management, and are members of the European Commission's expert group Together for EU Tourism - T4T³. In our capacity as chair, we were instrumental in decarbonisation being the top priority of Tourism Manifesto priorities for new Commission mandate.⁴ With partners, we are developing climate action support resources and tools which will be available online in 2025 via our website.⁵

We have appointed a new team member whose focus includes 'destination engagement' to support our continued efforts with partner associations and destinations to find common interest and identify opportunities for productive collaboration between public and private sectors. This complements the work of our sustainability specialist. The visitor economy delivers complementary demand which sustains cultural heritage and much of the service economy (as was demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic). While these are separate goals to decarbonisation, the value of long-haul tourism (for example) is easier to see if it also adds demand to suppliers with credible decarbonisation plans.

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/expert-groups/consult?lang=en&groupID=3886>

⁴ https://tourismmanifesto.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/European-Tourism-Manifesto_Tourism-in-Transition-A-New-Consensus-for-Change-2024-2029.Final_.pdf

⁵ www.etoa.org/climate

Sectoral Decarbonisation: conflicting and converging interests

As a small business, we share similar challenges to many of our members in terms of allocating sufficient priority to decarbonisation, and reconciling the intention and impact of commercial success - more travel to our events - with the knowledge that cumulative emissions across all sectors must reduce. Demand for leisure travel continues to grow.

We do not have a specific reduction target for our Scope 3 emissions. Our sector depends on travel, and in-person events remain popular. Much as online formats grow in utility (we make increasing use of them for outreach among members) the industry depends on relationships which are initiated and nurtured through in-person contact. If ETOA were to vacate its market position it would readily be filled by others. This reflection is shared by our commercial members who are both committed to change and subject to commercial pressure.

Our team travels frequently, often by plane. A significant part of ETOA's membership depends on long-haul travel for its commercial success, and part of our organisational purpose is to argue that inbound tourism to Europe is, on balance, beneficial. But this 'balance' weighs environmental impact against socio-economic benefit, which are not susceptible to easy comparison. Plausible mechanisms to control demand, such as cost increase and/or slot management, are fraught with political challenges to long-term structural change.

We recognise that aviation is a significant contributor to our sector's emissions, that its pre-pandemic rate of growth would be unsustainable until or unless the sector makes more progress towards decarbonisation, and that its path to net-zero is long and contingent on international frameworks, harmonisation on SAF etc. Arguing for voluntary cross-sectoral decarbonisation while supporting long-haul travel allows no room for complacency and attracts challenge. Credibility depends on acknowledging conflicting as well as converging goals.

On balance, we maintain that our support of tourism and our commitment to accelerate decarbonisation is a rational position given the benefits the sector can and should deliver. But we recognise this creates an environmental, social and commercial imperative to maximise positive impact and support the acceleration of decarbonisation across the visitor economy. The interests of climate action and competition should converge more than they do now. Industry effort must be complemented by an enabling framework for change.

Most urgent is rapid harmonisation and convergence of ESG metrics, keeping them as simple as possible to encourage use, and as complex as necessary to ensure verifiable impact. This will require international effort and political will, and a rapid roll-out of decision-support tools for both business and consumers such that the carbon impact of products and services can be clearly and quickly identified. This will require institutional action to ensure that we have the capacity to deliver change, from agreed common metrics to auditing capacity and process.

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