Shared Principles for Reducing Air Travel at Tech

Background

As part of AU's Climate Action Plan 2024 and the goal of reducing the carbon footprint from air travel by 30% by 2025 compared to 2018, all centres and departments must now find effective ways to fly less.

Multiple Climate Initiatives

Reducing air travel is just one of several concrete climate initiatives being implemented at Tech. These include installing solar panels at multiple Tech locations, developing solutions to make AU Viborg energy self-sufficient, optimizing energy use and implementing smart technology in buildings, regenerative construction for new buildings and major development projects, a new procurement policy and furniture reuse, phasing out gasoline and diesel vehicles, waste sorting and recycling, reducing agricultural emissions, and increasing biodiversity strips at Tech locations.

Applied Data

A solid data foundation is essential for targeted efforts to reduce air travel. A Power BI tool has been developed to track emissions from air travel, although it is not yet perfect. More accurate data on actual CO_2 emissions from air travel cannot yet be obtained since up to 70% of trips are booked outside AU's travel agency CWT. Increased use of this service through improved functionalities for efficient and flexible travel booking and support for combination trips is necessary for more accurate data.

Shared Main Principles and Additional Principles for Implementation

To reduce air travel at the faculty, Tech has defined three shared main principles. In addition to these, Tech's centres and departments are encouraged to *select and prioritize additional principles* from the list that can particularly contribute to reducing CO_2 emissions from air travel and/or are considered especially effective locally. The increased time spent reducing air travel should always balance work and private life for the individual.

Shared Main Principles at Tech

1. No domestic flights (exceptions may be made under special circumstances) (**Tech priority #1**)

2. Prioritize direct flights, especially within the EU, avoiding layovers as much as possible. Aim for combination travel with bus/train (**Tech priority #2**)

3. Booking of all travel should, to the greatest extent possible, be made through the travel agency CWT via AU's employee page to support CO_2 accounting and provide guidance on 'the best travel route' to the destination in terms of CO_2 emissions (**Tech priority #3**)

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Additional Principles for Local Prioritization

4. No flights under 500 kilometres or where the destination can be reached in under 7 hours by alternative transport

5. A cap on the number of flights or kilometres per employee

6. No overseas study trips for students

Meetings, Networking, and Conferences

7. Attend physical meetings at flying distance only when strictly necessary, always considering the expected benefit versus CO2 emissions

8. Consider participation in overseas research conferences and development trips carefully, always weighing the expected benefit against CO2 emissions

9. Research and representation
   - 9.1. *Group travel for publications/fieldwork/data collection should be consolidated to one or a few individuals who can represent the entire group at conferences and grouped with the fewest possible visits*
   - 9.2. *Include train travel in grant applications, possibly in 1st class, if relevant.*

10. Create a CO_2 budget for conference travel at the centre/department level.