



From plane to train



Checklist

The steps in the checklist starting on the next page will help you make international rail travel possible in your organisation. Get inspired by the tips and practical examples from other businesses. Give international rail travel wings within your organisation too!

Many businesses are working hard to reduce CO₂ emissions on business mobility. A large proportion of those CO₂ emissions are caused by business air travel. Because it will still be a long time before technology and innovation can make flying cleaner, many organisations are exploring how international travel can be done differently and cleaner, or reduced as a whole.

For travel within Europe, trains often provide a good alternative. Travelling by train is more sustainable and it competes with air travel in terms of travel time, comfort and price. In addition, the train has the advantage of a quick check-in, Wi-Fi on board, freedom of movement, and the possibility of using travel time as work time. Both departures and arrivals are in city centres.

[View the checklist from the next page](#)



Step 1

Develop a successful train policy together

Many businesses within the Coalitie Anders Reizen ('Travel Differently Coalition') are showing that it is possible to replace short-haul flights with rail travel. Changing policies and behaviour does not happen without a struggle. Opting for the train can be made the new default setting when drawing up a good and well-thought-out mobility policy. So you can make policies based on travel time, distance or a combination of both.

Checklist

Make sure your travel policy is in line with the purpose of your organisation. That way, you make choices that are understandable and explainable to your employees.

Set the standard in your policy: an effective form is to reverse the usual practice. Travelling by train is the norm, unless... By reversing the logic, flying becomes the exception rather than the norm.

Choose simple criteria: when do you travel by train and when by plane. This can be based on:

- For a travel distance of up to 700 km (from normal place of work), for example, rail travel is the standard;
- Destinations: travel to London, Paris, Frankfurt and Berlin by rail. A new destination can easily be added later.
- Combination of travel distance with travel time: up to 700 km by rail, provided the (train) journey does not exceed 7 hours or 1.5x longer than the door-to-door time for air travel.

Decide how to handle exceptions and who decides on exceptions. At CGI Netherlands, for example, all requests for air travel are submitted to the management. This makes you think even more consciously about your choice.

Explain, and draw up a Q&A. In it, also give a clear description of what you mean by travel time. With clear explanations and clear definitions, you create more support for the policy.

To make the policy implementable, it is important to let HR, the Works Council and the facility co-determine the principles of policy. Get input and involvement from staff who travel a lot to reflect on policies and establish exception situations and principles.

Provide departments and management with a dashboard containing CO₂ reporting and exceptions.



Case study 1

ABN AMRO's honest story

In 2018, ABN AMRO took the decision to reduce the number of flights by 50% by 2025. Its 'train over plane' travel policy was established. This meant that all trips up to 700 km within Europe would be taken by rail as much as possible.

This ambition was incorporated into the strategy and translated into policy. This led, among other things, to modification of the booking system. Although the plans and ambitions were well rolled out, this did not yet prove to be a guarantee of success. Turning plans into actual behaviour required more.

For example, ABN AMRO has developed tools for management and travellers, such as a decision tree, online dashboard and booking system. Other key success factors include managers leading by example and ISO certification.

70% of all trips to London are now by train. This succeeded despite limited availability of seats and railway staff strikes in recent years. The advice?

Create a sense of urgency (2030 and 2050 are closer than we think) and generate support. Have a transparent policy, communicating not only what you are doing, but also why you are doing it. Finally, in addition to internal collaborations, seek collaboration with external parties such as Anders Reizen, clients and cooperation partners.



Lisette Koning



View step 2





Step 2

Achieve sustainable goals together with your travel agent

Good arrangements with the travel agent, aligned with the desired travel policy, ensures good interaction between policy and practice. Combine that with the right tooling, and policy becomes tangible for the employee. More and more business travel agents are getting used to working with carbon-saving measures. By using their experience and expertise, implementing sustainable travel policies becomes easy.

Checklist

- Customise the travel booking tool to fit seamlessly with your policies.
- Make arrangements with your travel agent to offer trains only on routes where the train is a good alternative. Always put train options at the top of search results and include the CO₂ emissions to be saved. Your travel agent can also carry out an extra check on specific routes to see if the train is a better alternative.
- Ask your travel agent to show the actual CO₂ emissions of a flight instead of averages.
- Set or tighten criteria for business class air travel and display them in the booking tool.
- Set up an approval flow for requested exceptions. That way, you avoid a sense of non-commitment.
- Initiate the conversation with your travel agent about the fact that travel agents receive a higher fee from airlines than from train providers. How do you ensure that this incentive does not lead to air travel being promoted over rail travel? How can you help each other?
- Provide departments and management with a dashboard on policy progress that also shows the effect of CO₂ saved.



Case study 2

A case for net zero

Although Deloitte worldwide had already set itself the goal of being climate neutral in housing and mobility by 2030, Deloitte Netherlands had committed to bringing this goal forward to 2025. And they are well on their way: for instance, air travel to London has already decreased by 80% and rail travel increased by five times compared to 2019.

How is Deloitte tackling this? The following questions are asked for each internal and business trip:

1. Is the trip necessary or can it also take place online/hybrid?
2. If travel is necessary, is travel by train possible?

If a journey is necessary and cannot be made by train, guidelines have been established for travel classes for different situations (such as intercontinental or night flights). Within Deloitte, the importance of key people promoting policies is also recognised. For example, a large proportion of Deloitte Netherlands' partners chose to travel by train to an international partner meeting in Italy.

In addition to travel policies focused on the employee, Deloitte is increasingly making agreements with clients to achieve sustainable delivery of services. These include a guide to organising events in a sustainable way, an emissions calculator that predicts travel-related emissions linked to a specific client project, and work on a sustainable supply clause in contracts to engage in dialogue around these issues with clients.



Mark van Rijn
Deloitte.



Step 3

From policy to action: Employee behaviour change.

Behaviour change has four phases: (1) inform people and (2) create awareness, (3) enable sustainable choices, and finally (4) guide behaviour. Targeted incentives in these areas encourage your employees to easily adopt sustainable travel behaviour. This is how you take the first steps.

Checklist

Communicate the policy to employees. Do so honestly and transparently: train travel will not yet be ideal in all areas. Flying will be seen as more comfortable. But the desire is to become more sustainable. So there is a reason why the organisation wants this, which is in line with its purpose.

Create ambassadors. Get a group of employees at all levels of your organisations to become ambassadors by actively communicating their travel choices and their considerations regarding these choices.

Lead by example. Make sure key people within the organisation show that things can be done differently, including the management itself. This can lead to a powerful perspective change in three quarters of the people who know such a role model (KiM, 2020).

Make the choice of train more attractive by offering a reward for achieved CO₂ emission reductions. This can be at the individual or team level.

Make first class the standard for rail travel and economy class the standard for air travel.

Give employees extra travel time so that choosing to take the train is no longer seen as wasted time.

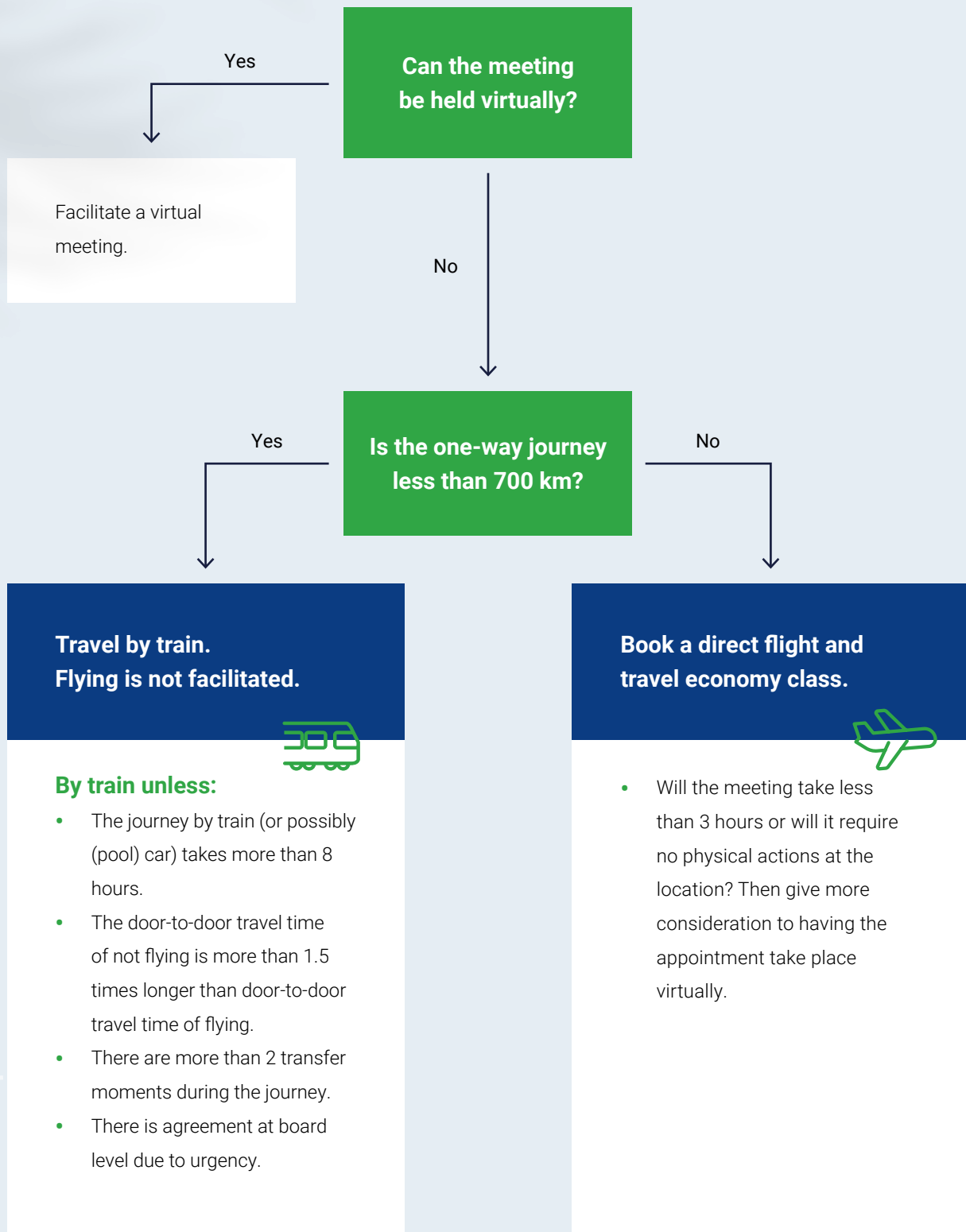
Remove undesirable incentives. Allowing frequent flyer miles encourages more flying. The central government has chosen to ban frequent flier miles for personal use.



[View the decision tree](#)



Use the decision tree and travel for a reason.



**Agree within the organisation how many employees are allowed to attend business appointments abroad.*

View the call



A call for more international trains

Research by CE Delft shows that using the train for distances of up to 700 kilometres can reduce total CO₂ emissions from business air travel by Dutch employers by 8%.

For business rail travel to grow, a number of important system adjustments are needed to make the train a more attractive and fully-fledged alternative to air travel. There are still too many obstacles in the way of the ever-growing group of business travellers.

And that needs to change.

On distances up to 400 km (such as London and Frankfurt), the train is often already an equivalent alternative to the plane in terms of travel time. In addition, to compete with high-frequency flights, a higher frequency of trains - especially in the early morning and late evening - is important to make trains a more attractive alternative. On distances between 400-700 km, train journeys often involve one or more transfers. This often requires the use of multiple carriers. This causes longer journey times and means that passenger rights, such as arrival guarantees and compensation for missed transfers, are difficult to realise. Moreover, this often makes the booking process complicated and time-consuming. So on these travel routes, it is especially important to offer faster, direct connections and arrival guarantees.

For all distances up to 700 km, the certainty of sufficient seats, and the comfort and reliability of the train offer are important conditions for making the train an attractive alternative. The high frequency of scheduled flights means that flights can always be booked that fit well with meeting times, so that (extra) overnight stays are not necessary. When the international train offer and convenience improve, the potential for further growth is huge. It is now down to the carriers and politicians.

Seeing that the need is there, Natuur & Milieu and Anders Reizen are advocating in the European and Dutch context for further scaling up of the offer. And fortunately, there is movement in this area. More and more transport companies are signalling their intention to operate international links. Newcomers such as Flixtrain and European Sleeper have also managed to secure spots on the busy track, while Eurostar has advanced plans to operate an additional train on the Amsterdam-London route from 2025.

Meet Anders Reizen

Enthusiastic about this checklist and sustainable travel? Then meet Coalitie Anders Reizen. Best practices are shared in this business network. We organise knowledge sessions, roundtables and events. And we regularly publish new cases and studies.

Call or email us for an introductory meeting!



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