

Top 25 global flyers failing to reduce business travel emissions

The 2023 Travel Smart Ranking¹ measures efforts made by global companies towards reducing corporate air travel emissions, tracking their commitment, emissions and reporting performance. The yearly ranking is published by the Travel Smart Campaign, a global campaign which seeks to get companies to reduce business flying emissions by -50% or more from 2019 levels, by 2025 or sooner. The findings show that:

- **85% of global companies don't have credible plans to reduce corporate flying emissions; and yet businesses have the responsibility and the means to make this necessary reduction happen to protect our planet, our health, and their reputation.**
- **If 10% of companies - the biggest emitters of the ranking - set 50% reduction targets, this would go half the way towards achieving the global target of -50% in corporate air travel emissions by 2025. After a year of inaction, there's no time to lose.**

The biggest flyers have the highest share of responsibility

Only 50 companies out of the 322 companies in the ranking have set targets to reduce business travel. And a small group of well-known companies have a bigger share of emissions than the rest of the companies in the ranking. Our calculation shows that 10% of companies committing to -50% targets can go half the way in achieving the global target of -50% by 2025 compared to 2019. However, too many of these big emitters don't have specific business travel reduction targets.



Companies have innovated to perform while flying less

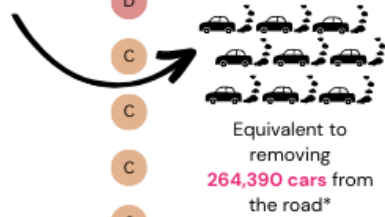
Businesses have found ways to perform while flying less in 2020 and 2021, and have not returned to the same level as overall commercial aviation.² Only by setting targets can they ensure the sustained reduction needed. In 2023, all global businesses should capitalise upon this experience, in order to avoid increases associated with reopening of travel with China, or plans for aviation growth in India, or return to outdated routines in Europe and North America. The means to achieve this are more accessible than ever before: reduce frequent flying, switch from air to rail travel where possible, and privilege virtual collaboration to avoid long-haul flights.

¹ <https://travelsmartcampaign.org/ranking/>

² Roland Berger, Destination unknown: The Future of Long-Distance Travel, February 2023.
https://content.rolandberger.com/hubfs/07_presse/23_2015_WP_Long-haul_mobility-06.pdf

Top 25 global flyers with no credible plans to reduce business travel emissions

Company	Estimated 2019 air travel emissions (tCO2)	Ranking score
 Volkswagen	522,523	D
 KPMG	465,000	C
 Johnson & Johnson	463,088	C
 Accenture	368,711	C
 Siemens	309,838	C
 IBM	302,842	D
 Microsoft	302,156	C
 Alphabet	284,024	D
 Merck & Co.	262,010	C
 SAP	259,795	C
 Thyssenkrupp	256,491	C
 Abbott	255,545	C
 Apple	250,542	C
 Bouygues	244,898	C
 Holcim	225,816	C
 Boeing	223,217	C
 Meta	214,304	C
 Bosch	195,629	D
 Netflix	186,707	D
 Saint-Gobain	186,565	C
 Medtronic	170,895	C
 Shell	166,647	C
 Cisco	159,579	C
 Bayer	154,737	C
 Raytheon	149,686	C



*Using emissions from cars from UNFCCC, and number of car registered from ACEA, both for the year 2019.

Commitments from the biggest flyers can shift the dial

The impacts of climate change are more visible than ever, and the harmful effects of fossil-fueled aviation on the planet are clear. Reducing aviation emissions is now more crucial than ever, if we are to stay within 1.5°C of global warming. For the critical decade until 2030, the best way to reduce aviation emissions is to fly less, as the timing for scale-up of sustainable fuels and zero-emissions aircraft is currently post-2030, and offsetting cannot substitute for reducing emissions.

We pay particular attention to the top emitting companies³ of the ranking, which do not have targets to reduce their business travel emissions.

The ten biggest flyers without a target, i.e. Volkswagen, KPMG International, Johnson & Johnson, Accenture, Siemens, IBM, Microsoft, Alphabet (parent company of Google), Merck & Co. and SAP, collectively accounted for 3.5 MtCO₂ of air travel emissions in 2019, or 20% of emissions from companies in our ranking. Thirteen of top 25 flyers have no plan to reduce Scope 3 emissions whatsoever, while the twelve others only have broad targets including business travel without detailing specific goals to reduce it. And yet major emitting companies have a bigger share of the responsibility, and the resources, to set ambitious travel emissions reduction targets and policies.

The ranking analysis shows that if 10% of companies - the biggest emitters of the ranking - set 50% reduction targets, this would go half the way towards achieving the global target of -50% in corporate air travel emissions by 2025.⁴ Current targets by companies in the ranking correspond to an overall reduction of 9% of business travel emissions by 2025 compared to 2019, far from the -50% target needed and far from sufficient to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with science.

Compared to business-as-usual (i.e. growth), halving business travel traffic compared to 2019 levels would save the equivalent of 125 million barrels of oil per year and the emission of 51 MtCO₂ by 2050. This would both have climate benefits and reduce oil consumption in a context of energy security concerns. In Europe, the kerosene saved corresponds to 9.2% of total crude and refined oil imports from Russia in 2019⁵.

Setting such targets is possible and necessary, as companies of similar size or sector have done so. This includes pharmaceutical giants like Pfizer and AstraZeneca, major consulting companies like PricewaterhouseCoopers and Deloitte, tech companies like Adobe and Salesforce, and others.

³ According to 2019 emissions reporting.

⁴ This calculation takes into account the 262 companies for which baseline (i.e. 2019 or 2018) business travel emissions are available.

⁵ Transport & Environment, *How Russian oil flows to Europe*, (2022).

Governments need to step up their role in ensuring reductions

The legal requirements for companies to define climate transition plans and emissions reduction targets are still in the starting blocks. The UK's Transition Plan Taskforce is the most advanced, with a proposal to disclose policies regarding business travel⁶. Its disclosure framework is expected to be integrated into a regulatory update that could mandate climate transition plans for a set of companies as from 2026. The European Union's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, to be finalised in 2023, similarly contains an obligation for large companies to adopt a transition plan, but with few details⁷.

In light of the minority of companies, and particularly top emitters, defining air travel emissions reduction targets, a faster and more specific deployment of target setting requirements will be necessary. Governments should accelerate and extend mandatory frameworks for corporate climate transition plans to include business flying emissions reduction targets.

A simple choice: put reputation at risk, or reap the rewards

In the meantime, top emitting companies without targets should marshal the will and resources to set ambitious travel emissions reduction targets and policies to lead the way towards reduced corporate flying emissions.

Prioritising sustainability and new ways to perform while flying less will lead to competitive advantage. Consumers, investors and employees are more concerned by the impacts of climate change than ever before. If businesses fall out of step with expectations, their reputation is at risk. Demonstrating a commitment to sustainability, and adopting planet-friendly travel policies, will enhance their image, appeal and overall success.

For further information on the top emitters by country:

[United States](#) - [United Kingdom](#) - [France](#) - [Germany](#) - [Switzerland](#) - [Ireland](#) - [Netherlands](#) - [Spain](#)

⁶ <https://transitiontaskforce.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/TPT-Implementation-Guidance.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.clientearth.org/media/qgcfpgvt/factsheet-environment-climate-csddd-june-2022-final.pdf>