Personal Climate Pledge to Reduce Work-Related Flying

Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies

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comments welcome directly in Google doc or to @KA_Nicholas on Twitter,

feel free to adapt/use, please share user experiences!

Motivation:

- At LUCSUS we are committed to being leaders in sustainability through our research, teaching, and engagement with society, and through our shared goal to achieve our mission while operating within sustainability limits.
- We work together and individually to maximize the positive impact of our work, and minimize our harmful climate emissions, in the context of also supporting broader system and social changes towards sustainability.
- We celebrate our international identity both in our professional expertise and our countries of origin, while working hard to minimize the emissions this may entail.
- We do all of this in a supportive spirit of learning by doing, with the aim of leading to mutual motivation and joint engagement rather than blame.
- In 2019 at LUCSUS, we are undertaking a pilot project for individual staff members to set their own targets for emissions reductions from travel, within the context of an institutional commitment to reducing flights at LUCSUS. Individual pledges will be reviewed with LUCSUS Director at staff development reviews in early 2019 to experiment with this format.
- Reducing flights are the focus because they are a very large part of University emissions[1]. Flights make up 94% of the travel-related greenhouse gas emissions reported by Lund University[2]. One hour of flying emits about 10 times more greenhouse gases than an hour of driving a car, 20 times more than an hour of travel by diesel train, and 35 times more than an hour of travel by electric train[3].

Goal:

- LUCSUS staff will make "serious and significant efforts to reduce work-related emissions. Starting from everyone's own capacity and opportunities, we expect all staff members to challenge themselves, and to set concrete, personal reduction targets that go substantially beyond what each individual would otherwise have done."[5]
- LUCSUS also commits to making institutional changes to support staff in low-carbon travel and supporting broader institutional and systemic change; see Appendix 3.

Action:

To support our goals, LUCSUS staff are asked to:

1. Agree to the individual actions set out in the LUCSUS travel policy *(additions to the published version shown in red below)*.
2. Declare a personal baseline against which 2019 travel will be compared.
3. Commit to a personal goal for work-related travel emissions, to be reviewed at the January 2019 annual review with LUCSUS Director Emily Boyd.

Personal Commitment to Reduce Work-Related Climate Emissions from Flying

Step 1

As a staff member of LUCSUS, I agree to follow the individual actions set out in the LUCSUS travel policy adopted December 2018[4], including:

1. Follow the decision tree before making a travel decision (see LUCSUS travel policy).

2. Monitor individual, work-related emissions, and set progressively ambitious objectives to reduce them.

3. Prioritize, wherever possible, travel-free meetings and telephone/video conferences over physical travel, and collective ground (train, boat or bus) travel over air travel.

4. Prioritize ground travel for all trips within Sweden.

5. Prioritize ground travel for all international destinations within 12 hours from Lund, and seriously consider this for all trips within Europe. Always ask Egencia or other travel bookers to provide a non-flight alternative for any travel booking within Europe.

6. Justify (for oneself) any travel made, taking into account: the location and purpose of the event, benefit to LUCSUS of participating, benefit to individual career, own level of seniority and responsibility, and the alternative options available. (See Appendix 1 for a suggested template for one-paragraph justification).

7. Prioritize low-carbon opportunities for any activities and events that are organized. This means: fewer participants travelling long distances by air and ensuring key roles for those that do travel; giving high priority to locations that can be reached with low-carbon travel options; encouraging and facilitating train travel for event participants; and encouraging, incorporating and technically supporting online speakers and webcasts.

Step 2: Declare Your Baseline for Comparison

Declare a baseline from which you will measure your progress. LUCSUS has established an account with Carbon Tracker- please fill out your data for 2018 to establish your baseline in tons of emissions. Remember to make use of existing travel data from economic reporting (e.g., Primula), airline mileage reports, or travel agent bookings. (We ask for 2018, but recognize that no baseline is perfectly representative; see Appendix 4 for alternative formulations of baselines.)

Baseline: In 2018, I flew _____ hours for work travel and emitted _____ tons of CO_2.

(Alternative: In 2018, I traveled for _____ hours by _____ means and emitted _____ tons of CO_2 for work travel).

Step 3: Make Your Commitment to Reduce Travel Emissions

When setting their ambitious personal targets, we encourage staff to keep in mind:

- The need to reduce emissions to net zero to stabilize temperatures;
- The Climate Law that Sweden will reach net zero emissions by 2045 via at least 85% reduction in emissions[6]; and
- The IPCC 1.5°C Report noting that CO_2 must be cut in half globally by 2030 to successfully limit warming to 1.5°C and reduce risks to many vulnerable people and ecosystems.[7] (Equity arguments imply reductions should be even faster in rich and high-emitting countries like Sweden, e.g. the call by Swedish researchers that Swedish universities should cut our emissions in half in the next 5 years)[8].

Check all that apply and fill out as needed. *Example:* My goal for 2019 is to reduce my work-related emissions by reducing my long-distance flights outside Europe **to one flight per year; by 50% from 2018.**

My goal for 2019 is to reduce my work-related emissions by (check all that apply):

☐	Take no flights for work.
☐	Take no flights for work within Europe.
☐	Cut my total number of work flights in half (or by _____%), compared with my baseline.
☐	Reduce my long-distance flights outside Europe (highest GHG emissions) to/by _____(flights) (%), compared with my baseline.
☐	Reduce my medium-distance flights (e.g., southern Europe) to/by ___ (%/#), compared with my baseline.
☐	Take no flights for work within Sweden or a 12-hour ground travel radius in Europe (*this is LUCSUS baseline policy*).
☐	Reduce my work travel (by any mode) to/by ___ (number of trips or % of baseline)
☐	Other: _____

Signed: _____(Name)

Date: _____

Appendix 1: Priorities for justifying different types of travel

Priorities take into consideration the benefit to LUCSUS mission, and to individual staff development, particularly at earlier research career stages (see Table 1).

If flights are chosen, this is the place to briefly describe the strategy followed to maximize the positive impact of the trip, and minimize emissions (see Appendix 2 for more ideas).

If the trip is not taken, this can serve as a way to track invitations declined and emissions avoided.

Example paragraph to write for well-justified flights:

Fieldwork:

In 2019, I plan to fly to (Kiribati) to conduct one month of fieldwork for (XXX project) where I have the role of (PI/PhD student/etc). I have minimized my emissions for this trip via deciding to conduct one longer fieldwork rather than two shorter trips. We will collect data in collaboration with local partners (xxx), providing both intellectual exchange and capacity development, and minimizing the number of people flying from Sweden to conduct the work. I will contribute to teaching in local school (xxx with xxx partners) while there. The results will go into a peer-reviewed publication targeted at (xxx journal), and I will also write a blog post for (xxx target) for public communication.

Conferences:

In 2019, I plan to attend (two) international research conferences. I am organizing a session on (topic) at (name of conference) in (location), which is relevant because it is (the subject of my PhD dissertation/to convene stakeholders in the xxx project/…). I will minimize emissions for this session through (selecting a central, train-friendly conference location for majority of attendees; reducing participants who travel long distances and ensuring key role for those who do travel long distances; offering online streaming for virtual participation; …). I will share the results of the conference (with my LUCSUS colleagues at a Monday meeting). I have decided not to fly to conferences (held outside of Europe this year).

Example paragraph to justify declining to travel for poorly justified flights:

I was invited to participate in a delegation of (xxx people) from (Lund University) to (xxx location) for (xxx purpose). The invitation was made with one week advance notice, with the timing related to travel funds that would otherwise expire. While they do interesting work, I have not had previous contact with staff at the host institution, and there is no ongoing support for this collaboration and it is not a priority area for LUCSUS. The plan for my visit was to network in informal meetings, with no presentation of LUCSUS or own research. I declined the invitation.

Table 1: Priorities and justification for work-related flights by career stage.

Modified from Tyndall Centre travel strategy[2].

Research career stages:

Stage 1: Early Stage Researchers (for example, PhD students, postdocs, others in non-permanent positions, or up to 2 years after PhD);

Stage 2: Intermediate Stage Researchers (for example, those starting permanent positions (lectureships), up to about 10 years after PhD);

Stage 3: Established Researchers (for example, in permanent positions with over 10 years since PhD).

Priority: 1 = high priority; 4 = low priority

Priority	Justification
1	**Well justified emissions** **Examples:** • Conduct field work. • Travel directly informs policy on climate change and global sustainability (e.g. IPCC, IPBES). • Travelling to meet contractual engagement (e.g. mandated by research grant rules), with no alternative options available. • Risk of job loss with refusal to travel. **And for Stage 1:** • Present and promote own research. • Establish contacts. • Attend and present work at project meetings.
2	**Useful, but with potential for using alternative options.** **Stage 1:** Attend a workshop not directly related to own research. **Stage 2:** Travel to present own work and promote own research. **Stage 3:** Travel that could lead to important research or funding for own or group/institute research. Travel acts to move projects or significant, prioritized, long-term collaborations forward.

3	**Less well justified, with high potential for using alternative options.** Good value mainly for low-emissions travel. **Stage 3:** • Travel to present own work and promote own research. • Travel to establish or maintain own collaborations. • Invited guest lectures.
4	**Poorly justified emissions. Good value only for low-emissions travel.** • Travel to keep up to date or renew connections with colleagues. • No results presented. • Little pre-travel arrangements made to optimize the usefulness of the meeting.

Appendix 2: Potential ways to maximize positive impact of travel and minimize emissions

List in progress, please add here!

Note: It can be helpful to first articulate the positive sustainability impact you want your work to achieve, and the audience where relevant, e.g., "Keep carbon out of the atmosphere", "Give girls and boys in Tanzania equal access to good-quality schooling."

Research:

- Plan fewer, longer research stays and field work to deepen relationships.
- Plan trips that combine several job functions (e.g., field work + teaching or capacity development).
- Co-design research in collaboration with local partners to meet their needs and empower them, especially vulnerable groups.

Conferences are the largest source of flight emissions for many academics.[1]

When planning conferences, consider these best practices (from [9] among others)

- Reduce participants traveling long distances
- Ensure key role in conference for those who do travel long distances
- Consider desired attendees and select central conference location for them
- Select location with good train/transit connectivity
- Do not reward selecting exotic/remote conference locales
- Promote conference attendance by low-carbon travel: Facilitate booking train tickets, offer discount vouchers from train companies, include a reminder in conference flyers and website that attendees consider traveling by ground transport, or attend virtually
- At the conference, inform participants about their carbon footprint and ways to reduce it
- Facilitate virtual participation, including video recording or livestreaming sessions, and use a conference hashtag to encourage online conversations
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When attending conferences:

- Consider participating virtually
- Ensure conference travel is high-value both for LUCSUS and for all participating staff.
- Staff flying to a conference should make a substantial intellectual contribution there, and conference presentations should be of the highest quality.
- Staff should actively share what they have learned at conferences with colleagues at LUCSUS, and through other societal engagement channels.

Teaching:

- Consider audience and central location when offering courses (e.g., PhD summer schools). One person flying to teach a course of many students is better than many students flying to a new location.
- Discuss low-carbon culture of LUCSUS in teaching students.

Societal engagement:

- Consider ways to expand the benefit of work done with flight, such as contributing to films, blog posts, or op-eds, or using social media to share what you learn while traveling and/or participate virtually.
- Share my commitment to reduce my work-related emissions as I choose (e.g., with colleagues, family, on social media) to share my journey with others.)

Strategies to Minimize emissions:

If flights are chosen, their emissions can be minimized by:

- planning direct flights
- minimizing the number of people flying
- minimizing the total number of flights (e.g., train there and fly back)

For train bookings, note that traditional rail is lower emission than high-speed rail.

Appendix 3

As part of the December 2018 travel policy [4], LUCSUS makes institutional commitments, including to:

1. Pursue a long-term strategy to reduce emissions from academic travel, and facilitate staff needs in choosing low-carbon travel.

2. Investigate opportunities for an internal fund, from which to finance potentially increased costs of international low-carbon travel, or other ways to facilitate (and push for) a reduction in academic travel emissions.

3. Systematically collect travel-related emissions via the university's travel agency and through an individual carbon tracker.

4. Utilize emissions data as an awareness-raising tool, to evaluate progress, and gradually increase the ambition towards a low-carbon teaching and research environment.

5. Actively give voice to the academic flying issue in fora within and outside the university, as a way to raise awareness of the problem.

6. Help to address institutional barriers to change, and to advocate for, and develop structural solutions.

Appendix 4: Baseline formulation

For those not using Carbon Tracker, you can choose one of the baselines below, or formulate your own. Remember to make use of existing travel data from economic reporting, airline mileage reports, or travel agents. A free, peer-reviewed carbon calculator is available from Cool Climate Network[1].

If you make your own baseline, be sure to specify (1) mode of travel (flight, car, train), (2) a number indicating frequency (number of flights, hours or km flown, …), and (3) time period (per year, for the average year, in the last year).

In 2018, I took _____ flights for work. (Count each flight as one, e.g., a return flight from Copenhagen to London with a layover in Frankfurt both ways is 4 flights.)
In 2018, I flew for _____ hours for work.
In 2018, I flew _____ km for work.
On average in the last 5 years, I have flown _____ (times)/(hours)/(km) per year for work.
In my peak flying year, (2010), I flew _____ (times) (hours) (km).
Other:

[1] https://coolclimate.berkeley.edu/calculator

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Feedback of what to add (work in progress to incorporate above):

DONE

- Reconfiguring meeting location to minimize overall travel
- Count # miles/km flown (if that's easy to get from preferred airline).
- Optional for simplifying. (1) If your baseline options are either/or, consider choosing just the 2018 baseline alone. I see why you wanted others, but it would be fine just to reassure reader "Though we ask about 2018, we recognize no single year is representative."2) Alternatively, if you are quite sure that all 3 either/or baseline options are needed, consider having lower half of the form match precisely the upper half in strict parallel structure, to reduce cognitive burden in matching future goals to past baseline.
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TO DO - questions still to address

- How do we handle offsets?
- Do you have any institutional support to compensate staff for extra time and extra travel costs? "make it clear even on this form whatever actual financial / logistical support or other incentives the department is providing."
- What about adding an open-ended pledge on reducing non-work travel?(just thinking of rebound here)

References

[1] https://www.slideshare.net/kimberlynicholas/academic-flying

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[3] https://tyndall.ac.uk/sites/default/files/tyndall_travel_strategy_2015_v1.pdf

[4] https://www.lucsus.lu.se/sites/lucsus.lu.se/files/lucsus_travel_policy.pdf

[5] https://www.lucsus.lu.se/sites/lucsus.lu.se/files/lucsus_travel_policy.pdf

[6] https://www.government.se/articles/2017/06/the-climate-policy-framework/

[7]https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2018/07/sr15_headline_statements.pdf

[8] https://www.dn.se/debatt/universiteten-maste-sjalva-borja-klimatomstallningen/

[9] DOI: 10.1111/1746-692X.12106