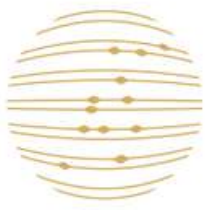


V 1.0 / 2024



BT4Europe
European Network of Business Travel Associations

**TRANSFORMATION
PATHWAY**
for Sustainable
Business Travel





BT4Europe, the European Network of Business Travel Associations, unites leading National Business Travel Associations across Europe. As the voice of the business travel industry, BT4Europe represents the interests of business travel buyers and users, with a focus on enhancing the customer journey through digital transformation and fostering sustainability. Let's take off together for a sustainable future! Join us in making a difference today - every action counts. Be part of the change!

Foreword



ANGELA LILLE

Lead Sustainability Working Group
BT4Europe

As the global focus on sustainability intensifies, the business travel sector is under increasing pressure to align its practices with environmental goals. This paper presents a roadmap for sustainable corporate travel, addressing the critical intersection of business efficiency and environmental responsibility. From the growing regulatory landscape to the urgent call for reduced carbon emissions, it's clear that sustainable business travel is no longer optional – it's essential for the future of both businesses and the planet.

Sustainable business travel holds immense potential for innovation. Far from being a constraint, it serves as a driving force for developing cutting-edge solutions in mobility, technology, and energy use.

The transition to greener practices opens up opportunities for advancements like electric vehicles, renewable energy integration, multi-modal transportation, and smarter travel management systems – all key to reshaping the future of corporate travel.

We have a common goal: to make business travel more sustainable. A collaborative approach helps us progress faster and better, leveraging shared knowledge and resources across industries to drive meaningful change. By working together, we can develop solutions that benefit both the environment and business operations.

This document outlines actionable strategies and key focus areas for achieving sustainable travel, offering insights into the role of eco-friendly solutions, stakeholder collaboration, and the integration of technology in reducing the environmental impact of corporate travel. BT4Europe's Climate Action Plan serves as a foundation for these efforts, emphasizing the importance of industry-wide cooperation to drive lasting change.

Through materiality analysis and a comprehensive implementation framework, businesses can prioritize the areas of greatest impact and foster a culture that supports sustainability at all levels. By adopting these strategies, companies can not only meet regulatory demands but also lead the way in shaping a more sustainable – and innovative – future for business travel.

Angela Lille

Summary

Transformation Pathway for Sustainable Business Travel

This paper outlines a comprehensive strategy for transforming corporate travel into a sustainable practice. It draws on insights from industry leaders and provides actionable steps to reduce the environmental impact of business travel.

05 1. The Crucial Role of Travel in Business and Sustainability

The paper addresses the urgent need for sustainable business travel, driven by stakeholder, governmental, and regulatory pressures to curb carbon emissions. Aligning travel practices with environmental goals ensures long-term viability and regulatory compliance.

12 2. Designing Sustainable Products and Services

Actionable solutions for sustainable business travel include integrating eco-friendly policies and options. By promoting greener transportation and fostering employee awareness, companies can create a culture that prioritizes sustainability and drives meaningful change.

17 3. Key Focus Areas of BT4Europe's Climate Action Plan

BT4Europe's Climate Action Plan highlights essential areas for reforming corporate travel to address climate change. It focuses on reducing carbon emissions, adopting sustainable technologies, and collaborating with industry peers to align travel strategies with sustainability objectives.

19 4. Materiality Analysis for Business Travel

Materiality analysis helps businesses identify the most significant environmental and social impacts of their travel activities. It encourages companies to assess current practices, identify improvement areas, and prioritize initiatives with the highest sustainability impact.

23 5. Company View: Key Steps for Implementation

A comprehensive framework for corporate travel sustainability includes technology integration, collaboration with suppliers, and continuous monitoring. Adaptability and innovation are emphasized as essential to staying ahead of regulatory changes and meeting evolving stakeholder expectations.

1. The Crucial Role of Travel in Business and Sustainability

In our highly interconnected world, travel is a fundamental component that drives economic growth, academic advancement, sports, relationships, and humanitarian efforts. Both individuals and organizations depend on travel to build connections, drive progress, and expand opportunities.

The economic significance of travel spans multiple sectors. For businesses, corporate travel is **vital for establishing and nurturing relationships** with clients, suppliers, and partners. These trips are essential for conducting negotiations, finalizing deals, and entering new markets. Without the ability to travel, many companies would struggle to remain competitive on a global scale.

Governments play a crucial role in providing sustainable and efficient travel infrastructure, supporting industries in achieving economic and environmental objectives. Without the ability to travel, many industries and governments would struggle to remain competitive and address global sustainability challenges.

The **green transformation of the global economy also necessitates business travel**, as personal involvement is crucial for driving sustainable practices.

Forward-thinking companies must transition from treating sustainability as an exception to embedding it as a core principle in their operations.





In the realm of academic research, travel is indispensable. It allows scholars to attend conferences, scientists to conduct researches and collaborate with international peers, or access unique resources and facilities unavailable locally. These interactions are critical for fostering innovation and advancing scientific knowledge.

Similarly, travel is integral to the world of sports. Athletes and teams must travel internationally to compete, which not only advances the sport itself but also fosters cultural understanding and cohesion among nations.

Travel is also a cornerstone of international humanitarian efforts. Organizations delivering aid to communities in crisis rely on travel to transport resources, personnel, and support to affected areas.

From an economic perspective...

... tourism, including business travel, is a major driver of global economic activity. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), tourism contributes approximately 10% of global GDP and supports millions of jobs worldwide. Business travel, in particular, has a slightly different seasonality as leisure travel and plays a substantial role in generating revenue for the hospitality industry, restaurants, transportation, and other related services.

The strategic direction outlined by **BT4Europe** emphasizes the importance of **integrating sustainability into business travel practices**. This approach is essential for aligning travel activities with broader goals of environmental responsibility and long-term economic viability.

Environmental perspective

Carbon Emissions

Air travel significantly contributes to global CO₂ emissions. According to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the aviation sector is responsible for **about 2-3% of global CO₂ emissions**. This means that every flight contributes to rising global temperatures and extreme weather events.

Companies can play a key role in reducing these emissions by choosing more sustainable travel options, such as **eco-friendly fuel** – SAF (Sustainable Aviation Fuel) – as rail transport or electric vehicles. Investing in carbon offsetting strategies, such as in reforestation projects or renewable energy can further support sustainability efforts.



Resource Consumption

Beyond carbon emissions, business travel involves high resource consumption, including fuel, paper, and plastic. For instance, the use of disposable materials in airports and airplanes, such as plastic cups and utensils, significantly contributes to waste. Implementing sustainable practices, such as adopting reusable alternatives and promoting recycling, can help minimize these wastes.

Digitalizing procedures, can further reduce the need for paper materials, contributing to resource conservation. **Special attention should also be given to hotels and accommodations**, promoting green certifications and providing simple guides for small hotels to adopt sustainable practices.

Social perspective

Employee expectations on green actions

Studies show that a significant portion of employees expect companies to take concrete actions towards environmental sustainability. This commitment not only meets the expectations of the workforce but can also attract talent, especially among younger generations who place a high value on corporate environmental responsibility. According to Deloitte, **75% of business leaders have increased their sustainability investments over the past year**, indicating a growing focus on these issues. Similarly, a PwC survey found that 70% of investors believe companies should report on the relevance of sustainability to their strategy. **Employees who feel valued and well-supported are more likely to remain loyal to the company**, reducing turnover rates and fostering a positive workplace culture. Additionally, the reduced stress and better work-life balance can enhance creativity and engagement, contributing to better performance and innovation.

Employee Well-being

Adopting sustainable business travel practices is not only about environmental stewardship but also about seizing economic and social opportunities. Companies can achieve significant cost savings by reducing travel-related expenses and improving operational efficiency. **Enhanced employee well-being, driven by reduced travel stress and better work-life balance**, can lead to higher productivity and job satisfaction. Furthermore, a strong commitment to sustainability enhances corporate reputation, building trust and loyalty among customers, investors, and other stakeholders.



Corporate Reputation

Adopting sustainable travel practices enhances a company's reputation, aligning with stakeholder expectations and demonstrating corporate social responsibility. In today's market, consumers, investors, and other stakeholders are increasingly concerned about environmental issues and prefer to engage with companies that prioritize sustainability.

By committing to sustainable travel practices, businesses can position themselves as leaders in environmental stewardship and social responsibility. This commitment can attract environmentally **conscious customers and investors**, enhancing the company's brand image and competitive edge. Transparent communication about the steps taken to reduce travel-related emissions and the overall environmental impact can build trust and loyalty among stakeholders.

Furthermore, a strong reputation for sustainability can help companies forge stronger relationships with partners and communities, opening up new opportunities for collaboration and growth. Demonstrating a **genuine commitment** to sustainability not only improves public perception but also aligns the company with broader societal goals, contributing to long-term success and resilience in an increasingly eco-conscious world.



Strategic Alignment with European Initiatives

Driving the change forward, as European companies, the EU has an immensely important role to play. We welcome the latest strategic developments in preparing for the upcoming mandate 2024–29, and look forward to the path towards realizing a more integrated, sustainable and innovative transport sector.



Enrico Letta's and Mario Draghi's reports emphasize the strategic importance of a competitive Single Market as a catalyst for enhancing the transport sector's role in achieving a green economy. The reports advocates for a comprehensive, pan-European high-speed rail network and investment innovation. BT4E is committed to achieving these strategic goals.

Furthermore, the **Council Strategic Agenda 2024–2029** reinforces this perspective by highlighting the necessity for cross-border infrastructure investment in transport, energy, and communications. The document's emphasis on facilitating green and digital transitions creates a broader context for BT4E's efforts. BT4E's commitment to seamless transport systems aligns with the Council's vision of a prosperous and competitive Europe.

This not only aligns with our goals of reducing carbon footprints but also echoes the broader EU mandate of fostering strategic partnerships and enhancing economic security through sustainable practices.

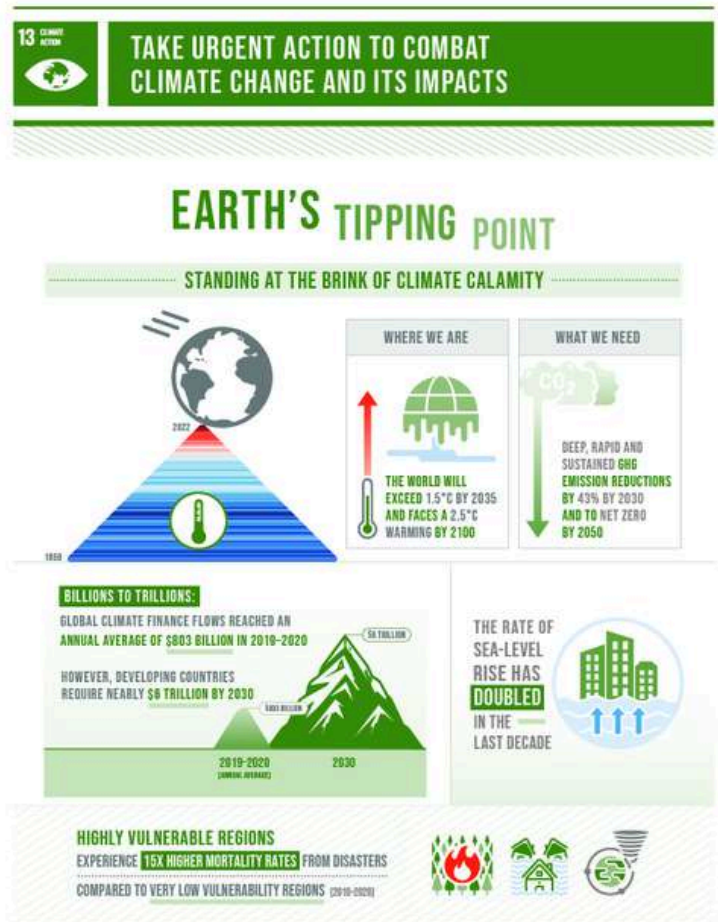
The **Commission's Political Guidelines for 2024–2029**, as articulated by Ursula von der Leyen, propose Single Digital Booking and Ticketing Regulation, aimed at simplifying cross-border train travel, aligning with BT4E's goal of enhancing mobility across Europe. Moreover, the guidelines' focus on reducing administrative burdens and simplifying regulations resonates with BT4E's emphasis on efficiency and integration within the transport sector.

Sustainability is no longer a choice or a response to market demand

The critical climate situation demands that sustainability becomes a non-negotiable aspect of our daily business operations. Due to the United Nations annual report on Climate Change, the goal to reduce CO₂ emissions by 30 giga tons annually by 2030 highlights the scale of the challenge and the necessity for immediate action.

The exact contribution of business travel to CO₂ emissions reduction is difficult to quantify due to the lack of official data. However, from a holistic perspective, **it is less important which industry initiates the change and more crucial that all stakeholders contribute** to creating a future-oriented economy that prioritizes both people and the planet.

To effectively measure the progress of these efforts, **reliable official data and measurable metrics are essential**. This is necessary not only to form a comprehensive understanding but also to enable individuals to make sustainable decisions that collectively drive improvement.



THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS REPORT 2023: SPECIAL EDITION- UNSTATS.UN.ORG/SDGS/REPORT/2023/

2. Designing Sustainable Products and Services

When creating new products or services, it's essential to **think end-to-end**. Early involvement of stakeholders leads to more practical and effective solutions. A **collaborative approach** is crucial to achieving the shared goal of adapting to climate change.

This doesn't mean **competition** becomes irrelevant. However, as long as sustainability isn't as measurable as currency or metrics, managing it remains challenging. To reduce CO2 emissions, the travel sector needs comprehensive data — **CO2 emissions should be a factor as significant as price**. This information must be available at the point of sale and on every invoice. With this framework, our environmental impact becomes clear and measurable, driving competition to reduce carbon footprints.



Each stakeholder's contribution is needed for a successful transition.

GOVERNMENTS

Governments, from local administrations to national leaders, must lead the change with policies that enable and promote sustainable practices. Their responsibility is to create a regulatory framework that makes sustainability not just desirable but inevitable.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society, from NGOs to local action groups to travellers, has the power to raise awareness and mobilize people. Through education and awareness, we can transform individual and collective behaviors. Every school, university, and interest group is guiding to a conscious and mindful travel practices.

COMPANIES

Companies, big and small, are the engine of the economy and must embrace sustainability as a fundamental principle. Adopting sustainable practices is a moral obligation, as well as an opportunity for innovation and leadership. Every business, from freelancers to multinational corporations, can be an example of how business can thrive while respecting the people & planet. Collaboration ahead competition open new perspectives.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The international community must coordinate global efforts to standardize and promote sustainability. Organizations like the United Nations, the European Union and any international organisations have the task of facilitating cooperation between nations and regions, creating a network of shared commitment and responsibility.

TRAVELLERS

Travelers are at the heart of the transformation. Every individual has the power to make choices that impact the planet. From selecting eco-friendly transportation and accommodations to reducing waste and carbon footprints, travelers must embrace their role as active participants in the sustainability movement. Conscious travel decisions can drive demand for low carbon emission options, influencing the market to prioritize sustainability. It's about more than just the destination—it's about how we get there and the footprint we leave behind.

MEDIA

The media plays a critical role in shaping public perception and driving the sustainability narrative. By raising awareness about climate change and sustainable practices, media outlets can inspire action and hold companies, governments, and individuals accountable. Journalists, influencers and content creators have the power to spotlight success stories, expose areas needing improvement, and provide the knowledge needed to make informed decisions. Through responsible reporting and storytelling, media can help create a culture that values sustainability and accelerates the transition to a greener future.

The Future of Sustainable Business Travel - A Catalyst for Innovation

Sustainable business travel often carries the misconception of being a return to outdated practices, characterized by slowness and inefficiency. However, the reality is quite the opposite. It is a driving force for innovation, demanding advancements that redefine how we approach mobility and hospitality.

The Innovation Imperative

The transition to sustainable business travel is not just about reducing carbon footprints; it's about **embracing a new era of technological innovation**. Key developments such as green fuels, renewable energy, electric vehicles, multi-modal transportation systems, low-consumption aircraft, waste reduction strategies and a focus on regionality are at the forefront of this transformation. These advancements represent the challenge of our time — one of that is reshaping the very foundation of business travel.

Cross-Industry Collaboration

Sustainability is not an isolated goal but a collective effort. The true potential of sustainable travel lies in cross-industry collaboration, where diverse sectors come **together to innovate and solve complex challenges**. By leveraging digital solutions, industries can better connect the entire ecosystem of mobility and hospitality, creating a seamless, efficient, and environmentally responsible travel experience.

Far from being a step back, sustainable business travel is a leap forward, propelling innovation across industries. It is an opportunity to harness the power of technology, collaboration, and creativity to redefine how we travel for business. The future of sustainable travel is fast, efficient, and innovative—paving the way for a more connected and sustainable world.

Let's imagine:

What would services and products look like, if a hotel operated a night train?

How would the tickets look like, if an airline and a rail company would act as one entity?



Source: AI generated with bing

From the idea to the practice of cross-Industry Collaboration

Cross-industry collaboration is not a new concept, but it's an idea that deserves ongoing attention. Examples in the market demonstrate that this approach is both feasible.

Rail travel with the comfort of a hotel

The Orient Express, launched in 1883, was a luxurious train service that connected Paris to Istanbul, epitomizing the golden age of rail travel. Today “La Dolce Vita Orient Express” offers a unique travel experience in Italy. Designed with opulent Art Deco interiors and offering first-class amenities, it became synonymous with elegance, adventure, and exclusivity. The idea behind the Orient Express was to create a seamless and lavish travel experience across Europe, blending comfort with the allure of exotic destinations. Designed by decorator René Prou and master glassmaker René Lalique, the new Pullman lounge cars inspired a new art of living on board.



ORIENT  EXPRESS
MEMBER OF **All**



Foto source: History of the train | Orient Express (orient-express.com)

A vision for the future of business travel in Europe includes the development and **expansion of night trains**. This vision encompasses not only the increased availability of these services but also a focus on enhancing comfort and the overall onboard experience. Additionally, a seamless and efficient booking process, fully integrated into online booking engines for business travel, is essential. By making night trains a more viable and attractive option, **this approach aims to combine convenience with sustainability**, offering a compelling alternative to traditional travel methods for business professionals across Europe.

One ticket for Rail and Air

For nearly 30 years, Air France and SNCF French Railways have provided their leisure customers with a service that seamlessly combines train and air travel within a single reservation. Lufthansa Group collaborates with rail operators to offer combined rail and flight tickets for certain routes, providing a seamless travel experience.

Passengers can check in online or via mobile for both the train and the flight, receiving a single boarding pass that serves as both the train ticket and the flight boarding pass. This partnership enhances convenience with a range of integrated services. **Examples of this cross-industry collaboration** between airlines and railways include:

Air France + SNCF
Austrian Airlines + ÖBB
Brussels Airlines + benerail
Emirates + Trenitalia
Finnair + Deutsche Bahn
KLM + Thalys
Lufthansa + Deutsche Bahn
Lufthansa + Trenitalia
ITA Airways + Trenitalia
SWISS + SBB CFF FFS



Multimodality is essential for creating a more connected and efficient transportation system. **For business travel, this means having a booking process** that allows for easy comparison and reservation **of all transportation modes**, along with seamless options for changes and cancellations.

A smart **invoicing and payment** procedure is crucial and also a user-friendly experience before, during, and after the trip. The **traveler experience** consists in a balanced combination of tools and services. Additionally, comprehensive **reporting and analytics** are vital, providing companies with the necessary tools to meet duty of care obligations and analyze travel data from both economic and environmental perspectives. **This approach ensures that business travel is not only efficient but also aligned with sustainability goals.**

3. Key Focus Areas of BT4Europe's Sustainability Working Group

Our working group is **focused on driving sustainable change** in business travel by engaging Travel Managers and their stakeholders to foster meaningful exchanges and progress. We aim to inspire companies to adopt sustainable practices not just through policy, but through **collaboration and active discourse**. By providing **input to regulators and policy makers** and key market players and connecting travelers with the travel industry, we promote sustainability through strategic partnerships, support for relevant policies and regulations, and the advancement of innovative technologies and practices to reduce travel's environmental impact.



INSPIRE

FOSTER
DIALOGUE

CATALYZE
CHANGE

Key Focus Areas for Business Travel

INSPIRE

We aim to inspire and motivate. Companies won't become more sustainable in their travel practices simply because the travel policy mandates it.

Engaging Travel Managers with their internal and external stakeholders fosters meaningful exchange and drives progress.

FOSTER DIALOGUE

Initiating and fostering discourse means articulating companies' demands for sustainable business travel.

We provide concrete input to key market players for product and service improvement.

We act as the hub connecting travelers, their companies, and the travel industry.

CATALYZE CHANGE

With a collaborative approach in promoting sustainability in business travel we set impulses through:

- Strategic Partnerships: collaborating with other organizations to promote sustainability initiatives.
- Policies and Regulations: supporting the development and implementation of policies that encourage sustainable travel.
- Innovation and Research: We support research and development of innovative technologies and practices to reduce the environmental impact of travel.



Through these strategies, we aim to lead by example and create significant, lasting change in the realm of business travel sustainability.

4. Materiality Analysis of Business Travel

Materiality analysis is an essential tool for identifying and evaluating the most relevant issues that can impact an organization and its stakeholders. Although often used in broader corporate sustainability contexts, this methodology can be effectively applied to the management of business travel and mobility in general.

Why Materiality Analysis in Business Travel

Materiality analysis allows organizations to identify and focus on those factors that have the greatest impact on both their operations and the environment. This process not only helps in setting strategic priorities but also facilitates transparency and communication with stakeholders.

Significance and Transparency

Although business travel may represent only a fraction of a company's activities, including it in materiality analysis demonstrates a commitment to transparency and integrity in corporate management. Presenting a comprehensive view of corporate activities, including business travel, fosters stakeholder trust and shows that the company takes its social and environmental responsibilities seriously.

Potential Environmental and Social Impact

Despite business travel seeming less significant compared to other company activities, it can still have a considerable environmental and social impact. Air travel generates greenhouse gas emissions and can contribute to climate change. Including business travel in materiality analysis allows for the evaluation and mitigation of these impacts, even if they represent only a small part of overall footprint of the company. Comparing business travels' footprint of the companies, may be significant for the travel market.

Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation

Examining business travel through the lens of sustainability offers opportunities to identify best practices and promote innovation. For instance, adopting more sustainable travel policies, using virtual technologies to reduce the need for physical travel, and exploring greener transportation alternatives are all strategies that can result from analyzing the materiality of business travel. These initiatives not only reduce environmental impact but can also lead to cost savings and improve employee satisfaction.

Risk Management

Including business travel in materiality analysis also allows for better management of associated risks, such as potential regulatory or reputational violations related to carbon emissions or working conditions of travel service providers. Identifying and addressing these risks in advance can help avoid negative consequences for the company and strengthen its reputation.

Beyond these aspects, it is essential to consider travel security and travel safety.

Travel security involves protecting employees from risks such as theft, terrorist attacks, or natural disasters while traveling. Companies need to develop security policies that include emergency plans, safety training, and continuous monitoring of geopolitical situations in travel destinations. Providing real-time access to information on potential threats and maintaining open communication channels with employees can significantly reduce risks.

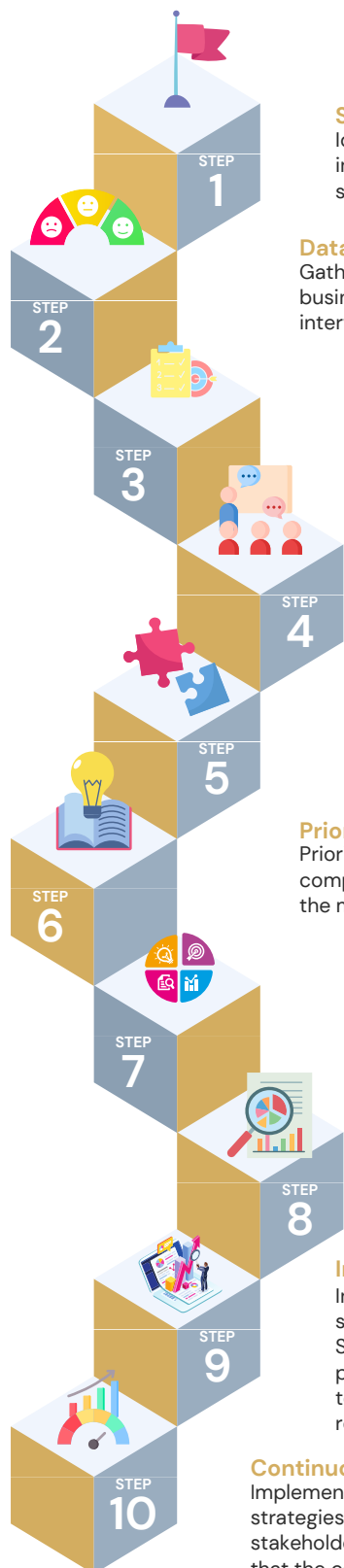
Travel safety, on the other hand, focuses on preventing health and physical safety incidents during travel. This includes ensuring that transportation and accommodation providers meet safety standards, offering adequate health insurance, and providing training on how to handle medical emergencies while traveling. Companies can also promote safe travel practices, such as adopting hygiene measures, preventing fatigue, and raising awareness of local health risks. Addressing these security and safety aspects within materiality analysis not only helps protect employee well-being but also demonstrates a commitment to responsible and comprehensive business travel management.



The goal is to ensure that travel practices are aligned with corporate social responsibility (CSR) objectives and the expectations of those with a direct interest in the company's activities, thereby enhancing the company's reputation and contributing positively to the environment and society.

Materiality Analysis Process of Business Travel

TRANSFORMATION PATHWAY



Stakeholder Identification

Identify relevant stakeholders for the company's business travel. These should include employees traveling for work, executives, travel management staff, travel service providers, investors and other internal and external stakeholders.

Data Collection and Feedback

Gather data and feedback from these stakeholders to understand their perspectives on business travel and its environmental, social and economic impacts. This could involve interviews, surveys, focus groups, or other engagement techniques.

Identification of Relevant Themes

Analyze the collected data to identify key themes related to business travel that are considered most significant by stakeholders. These could include issues such as the environmental impact of travel, traveler health and safety, ethics in dealings with travel service providers, cost management, and operational efficiency.

Impact and Importance Assessment

Evaluate the impact and importance of each identified theme, considering factors such as the extent of its effect on the company and stakeholders, potential for improvement, and public perception.

Take the challenge

To improve, you need time, commitment, and motivation. Experiment with skills and ideas beyond your area of expertise frequently to push yourself out of your comfort zone.

Prioritization of Themes

Prioritize the identified themes based on their relevance and importance to the company and stakeholders. This will help focus resources and efforts on managing the most critical issues.

Development of Strategies and Actions

Develop strategies and actions to address the prioritized themes, integrating sustainability considerations into decision-making processes related to business travel. This could include implementing more sustainable travel policies, initiatives to reduce the environmental impact of travel, employee training programs on responsible travel, and so on.

Monitoring and Reporting

Continuously monitor the effectiveness of implemented strategies and actions and transparently communicate efforts and progress made in addressing the prioritized themes to various stakeholders.

Integration into CSR Reporting

Integrate the outcomes of the materiality analysis and the implemented strategies and actions into the Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting of the company. This involves documenting the prioritized themes, the rationale behind their selection, the strategies devised to address them, and the progress made in achieving sustainability goals related to business travel.

Continuous Improvement

Implement a process of continuous improvement by reviewing and refining the strategies and actions based on feedback, performance metrics, and changes in stakeholder expectations or regulatory requirements. This iterative approach ensures that the company remains responsive to evolving sustainability challenges and opportunities in the realm of business travel.



5. Company View: Key Steps for Implementation

The key steps provide a comprehensive overview of strategies for integrating sustainable practices into corporate travel. From developing and implementing clear policies to leveraging advanced technologies and promoting training and collaboration, all aspects are aimed at minimizing the environmental impact of business travel while maximizing efficiency.

5.1. Policy Development and Implementation:

Establish clear policies that promote travel reduction, sustainable travel options, and eco-friendly practices. Implement guidelines that integrate these policies into business processes.

5.2. Technology Integration: Utilize advanced technologies such as travel management software to monitor and reduce travel-related emissions and encourage the use of sustainable travel options.

5.3. Collaboration and Partnerships: Engage with suppliers, industry peers, and employees to drive collective action and develop partnerships with sustainability-focused providers.

5.4. Training and Engagement: Develop training programs and awareness campaigns to educate employees on sustainable travel practices, offer incentives, and foster a culture of sustainability.

5.5. Monitoring and Reporting: Implement systems to continuously track and report travel activities and emissions. Ensure transparency, accountability, and data-driven adjustments to sustainability strategies.

5.6. Long-Term Vision and Adaptability: Adapt to regulatory changes and technological advancements, foster a culture of sustainability, and prepare for future challenges with flexible and adaptive policies.

5.7. Alignment with SDGs: Align sustainable corporate travel practices with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to enhance social and environmental responsibility and meet stakeholder expectations.

BT4Europe is committed to achieving these goals by working with leading national business travel associations across Europe and guiding the industry towards a more environmentally conscious future.

How can we maintain corporate mobility while supporting climate goals?

This question is answered by the 8-step process model developed by VDR, funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) through the "LIFT Klima" initiative (LIFT Climate, Performance Improvement & Promotion of Innovation in Tourism).



5.1 Policy Development and Implementation

Traveling in a mindful and attentive manner is essential for transforming business travel towards sustainability. **It's not necessarily about reducing travel, but adopting practices that make every trip as sustainable as possible.** Corporate policies should be well-articulated, clearly communicated, and aligned with the company's overall sustainability goals.

Utilizing alternatives when possible

While travel is often vital for business, it is possible to reduce its environmental impact by considering effective alternatives. Companies can establish policies that incentivize alternative methods of communication and collaboration, use advanced digital tools, or define clear and comprehensive guidelines for sustainable travel when travel is unavoidable and important for business.

To support this, companies can:

- **Invest in Technology:** provide employees with access to high-quality virtual meeting platforms and collaboration tools.
- **Promote Remote Work:** encourage a culture where remote work and virtual collaboration are normalized and supported.
- **Monitor and Evaluate:** regularly assess the effectiveness of virtual meeting policies and make adjustments as needed.

Guidelines for Sustainable Travel

In addition, guidelines should outline preferred modes of transportation to reduce ecological footprint, eco-friendly accommodations, and best practices for booking travel. Sustainable travel guidelines can include:

- **Preferred transportation:** in line with the Letta Report's call for reducing regulatory burdens and enhancing cross-border transport, our guidelines recommend prioritizing low-carbon transportation options such as trains and electric vehicles. For unavoidable flights, choosing direct routes and airlines with strong sustainability credentials is advised. Consider using sustainable aviation fuels (SAF).
- **Eco-Friendly accommodations:** promote staying in hotels with green certifications that implement sustainable practices, such as energy efficiency, water conservation, and waste reduction. Provide a list of recommended eco-friendly hotels. Include certifications and regional considerations for small hotels.
- **Booking practices:** collaborate with travel partners that prioritize sustainability and offer tools for tracking and offsetting carbon emissions.

5.2 Technology Integration

Technology and innovation play a crucial role in transforming business travel into a more sustainable practice. By leveraging the latest advancements, companies can significantly reduce their environmental footprint while maintaining productivity and efficiency. Travel management tools are an essential part of the traveler experience.

Travel Management Software

Our recommendation to adopt advanced travel management software aligns with the Commission Guidelines' emphasis on leveraging technology to achieve climate objectives. These tools, which include carbon tracking, sustainability analytics, and policy compliance features, are crucial for monitoring and reducing travel-related emissions.

Key features to include:

- **Carbon Tracking and Reporting:** automatically calculate and report the carbon footprint of each trip, providing transparency and accountability.
- **Sustainability Analytics:** analyze travel data to identify trends and opportunities for reducing emissions. Generate reports that highlight areas for improvement and track progress towards sustainability goals.
- **Sustainable Travel Options:** offer recommendations for sustainable travel options, such as eco-friendly accommodations and low-carbon transportation modes.
- **Policy Compliance:** ensure that travel bookings comply with the company's sustainable travel policies, providing alerts or restrictions when non-compliant options are selected.
- **Traveler Support:** provide travelers with information and resources to make informed decisions about sustainable travel, including tips for reducing their carbon footprint and options for offsetting emissions.

By implementing travel management software with these features, companies can gain better control over their travel-related environmental impact and make data-driven decisions to enhance sustainability.

5.3 Collaboration and Partnerships

Collaboration and partnerships are essential for driving sustainable business travel. By working together with suppliers, industry peers, and employees, companies can amplify their impact and achieve their sustainability goals more effectively.

Supplier Engagement

Working with travel service providers, airlines, rental car companies and hotels to prioritize sustainability in their operations and services is crucial. Companies can engage suppliers in various ways to ensure that their travel needs are met sustainably:

Strategy	Action
Sustainability Criteria in Procurement	Incorporate sustainability criteria into the procurement process when selecting travel service providers, airlines, and hotels. Evaluate suppliers based on their environmental policies, carbon reduction initiatives, and sustainability certifications.
Partnerships with eco-friendly Suppliers	Form long-term partnerships with suppliers that demonstrate a strong commitment to sustainability. Work closely with these partners to develop and promote eco-friendly travel options.
Joint Sustainability Initiatives	Collaborate with suppliers on joint sustainability initiatives, such as carbon offset programs, waste reduction efforts, and energy efficiency projects. Share best practices and learn from each other's experiences.
Performance Monitoring and Reporting	Regularly monitor and assess the sustainability performance of suppliers. Provide feedback and work with them to continuously improve their environmental practices. Establish transparent reporting mechanisms to track progress.

Industry Collaboration

Participating in industry initiatives and alliances focused on sustainable travel is an effective way to share best practices and drive collective action. Companies can benefit from the shared knowledge and resources of industry peers, leading to more innovative and impactful sustainability solutions:

Strategy	Action
Membership in Sustainability Networks	Join sustainability networks and associations that focus on sustainable travel. Participate in events, workshops, and conferences to stay informed about the latest trends, technologies, and regulatory developments.
Collaborative Research and Development	Engage in collaborative research and development projects with other industry players to explore new technologies and practices that can reduce the environmental impact of business travel.
Advocacy and Policy Engagement	Work with industry groups to advocate for policies and regulations that support sustainable travel. Collaborate with governments and regulatory bodies to influence government and regulatory bodies to implement measures that promote sustainable travel options.
Benchmarking and Best Practices Sharing	Participate in benchmarking initiatives to compare sustainability performance with industry peers. Share best practices and success stories to inspire and motivate others to adopt similar measures.



5.4 Training and Engagement

Employee Involvement

Engaging employees in sustainability initiatives is key to fostering a culture of environmental responsibility and encouraging participation in sustainable travel practices.

Every transformation process requires the right mindset to be successful. It is crucial to clearly communicate the "why" behind the vision to ensure understanding and alignment. By articulating the purpose and benefits of the transformation, stakeholders are more likely to embrace and support the changes, fostering a collective commitment to achieving the desired outcomes.

Additionally, to avoid conflicts with general target settings, sustainability actions must be an integral part of the company's internal goals. This integration ensures that sustainability efforts are aligned with overall objectives and drives cohesive progress towards a more sustainable future.

Strategy	Action
Awareness Campaigns and Dialogue	<p>Launch awareness campaigns to educate employees about the importance of sustainable travel and the company's sustainability goals. Use internal communications channels, such as newsletters, intranet, and social media, to disseminate information and updates.</p> <p>Encourage employees to provide feedback on the company's travel policies and sustainability initiatives.</p>
Training and Workshops	<p>Implement incentive programs to reward employees for adopting sustainable travel practices. Offer recognition, awards, or financial incentives for employees who consistently choose green travel options or contribute to the company's sustainability goals.</p>
Target Setting	<p>Build alliances with internal stakeholder to include sustainable actions in the companies' target setting.</p>
Sustainability Champions	<p>Identify and empower sustainability champions within the organization who can lead by example and inspire their colleagues to embrace sustainable travel practices. These champions can help drive the company's sustainability agenda and serve as ambassadors for environmental initiatives.</p>

5.5 Monitoring and Reporting

Implementing sustainable travel practices requires a thorough analysis of data and a clear strategy. By evaluating CO₂ emissions from travel and integrating **sustainability metrics into decision-making processes**, companies can make informed choices that reduce their environmental impact. Introducing a carbon budget for business travel can further guide companies in managing and limiting their carbon footprint. This guide outlines key steps for analyzing travel data, providing CO₂ information to travelers, setting performance indicators, establishing a carbon budget, and benchmarking progress to promote sustainable business travel.



Analyze the Data Sources

When analyzing travel data, both travel booking and expense data sources should be considered. Whether the travel tool covers the entire process from booking to expense or not, it's crucial to assess the availability of CO₂ emissions data. If you're implementing carbon emissions tracking for the first time, start by evaluating the quality of your current data and identify areas for improvement—such as centralizing the booking process, requesting more detailed information during expense reporting, or improving vendor data. Establishing a clear baseline for data accuracy will help you understand the development of CO₂ emissions over time. An increase in emissions may sometimes reflect better data accuracy, especially when introducing low-carbon initiatives.

CO₂ Emissions Information

Ensure that travelers have access to CO₂ emissions data at the point of sale wherever possible, allowing them to factor sustainability into their booking decisions. Implement real-time monitoring tools to continuously track travel-related carbon emissions, which requires either a centralized booking system or a well-integrated reporting tool. Providing travelers with regular individual reports on their carbon consumption can also increase awareness and encourage more sustainable choices.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Establish KPIs to track progress toward sustainability goals. These metrics could include CO2 emission reductions, the percentage of sustainable travel options chosen, and resource savings. Monitoring these KPIs will help assess how well your sustainability measures are performing.

Integrated Reporting and Budgeting

Develop regular, high-level reports on business travel that include environmental data, and incorporate this information into management and internal stakeholder updates to raise awareness about the impact of travel-related CO2 emissions. These reports should highlight both short- and long-term trends, reinforcing the importance of sustainability efforts and securing ongoing management support.

To further drive accountability, consider implementing a carbon budget for business travel. By setting a clear limit on allowable emissions, the company can better manage its carbon footprint. The carbon budget can be tracked and reported alongside financial data, helping stakeholders make informed decisions and prioritize sustainable travel options. Engaging stakeholders with this combined data allows for strategic adjustments, better planning, and stronger sustainability-driven actions.

Benchmarking

Comparing your company's sustainability performance with that of other organizations can provide valuable insights and inspiration. To foster improvement, track and analyze your carbon footprint year-over-year, taking into account travel behaviors such as routes, transportation modes, and trip durations. This comparison will help you identify trends and areas where sustainability efforts can be enhanced.



Examples of Monitoring and Reporting Tools

TRANSFORMATION PATHWAY

Strategy	Action
Travel Management Software	Tools that automatically track carbon emissions and provide detailed reports on travel activities.
Data Analytics Platforms	Platforms that aggregate and analyze travel data to identify trends and evaluate the effectiveness of sustainability policies.
Sustainability Dashboards	Interactive dashboards that display real-time progress towards sustainability goals, enabling quick identification of improvement areas.
Automated Reporting Systems	Systems that automatically generate periodic reports on sustainability performance, reducing manual workload and improving data accuracy.



5.6 Long-Term Vision and Adaptability

As the global landscape continues to evolve, businesses must stay ahead by continuously adapting and improving their sustainability practices. The transition to sustainable business travel is not a one-time effort but an ongoing journey that demands unwavering commitment, continuous innovation, and extensive collaboration.

Strategy	Description	Strategies for the Sustainable Future of Business Travel
Anticipate Regulatory Changes	Monitor legislative developments and adapt company policies to stay compliant and gain a competitive edge by being sustainability leaders.	Governments and international bodies are increasingly implementing stringent regulations aimed at curbing carbon emissions and promoting sustainable practices. Businesses must proactively anticipate and adapt to these regulatory changes. Staying compliant will require continuous monitoring of legislative developments and agile policy adjustments . Companies that lead in regulatory compliance will not only avoid potential penalties but also gain a competitive edge by positioning themselves as industry leaders in sustainability.
Embrace Technological Advancements	Utilize AI, blockchain, IoT, and other emerging technologies to enhance efficiency and reduce environmental impact.	The rapid pace of technological advancement offers numerous opportunities to enhance sustainability in business travel. Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT) can revolutionize how companies plan, monitor, and execute travel activities. AI can optimize travel itineraries for lower emissions, blockchain can ensure transparency in carbon offsetting, and IoT can provide real-time data on travel-related energy consumption. By investing in these technologies, businesses can achieve greater efficiency and reduce their environmental impact.
Foster a Culture of Sustainability	Integrate sustainability into company values, promote continuous education, and recognize sustainable actions.	A sustainable future for business travel hinges on fostering a culture of sustainability within the organization. This involves not only setting policies and providing tools but also nurturing an environment where sustainable practices are valued and encouraged . Leadership must champion these initiatives, and sustainability should be integrated into the core values and everyday practices of the company. Continuous education, transparent communication, and recognition of sustainable actions will be key to embedding this culture.
Collaboration and Industry Partnerships	Form alliances with suppliers, industry peers, and sustainability experts to share best practices and develop sustainable technologies.	The complexity of achieving sustainable business travel goals necessitates collaboration across the industry. Companies must actively seek partnerships with suppliers, industry peers, and sustainability experts. Collaborative efforts such as sharing best practices, co-developing sustainable technologies, and participating in industry alliances can drive significant advancements. Furthermore, engaging in dialogue with governmental and non-governmental organizations can provide additional support and resources for achieving sustainability targets.

Strategy	Description	Strategies for the Sustainable Future of Business Travel
Adapt to Changing Workforce Dynamics	Promote remote work and virtual collaboration to reduce physical travel and improve employee well-being.	The workforce is evolving, with remote work and flexible schedules becoming more prevalent. These changes present an opportunity to rethink traditional business travel models. Companies should embrace these trends by promoting virtual collaboration and reducing the need for physical travel. Flexible work arrangements can also help minimize travel-related stress and improve work-life balance, contributing to overall employee well-being and productivity.
Long-Term Vision and Adaptability	Maintain a long-term perspective, continuously revising strategies in response to new information, technologies, and external pressures.	Sustainable business travel requires a long-term vision that aligns with broader organizational goals. Companies must remain adaptable, continuously revising and refining their strategies in response to new information, technologies, and external pressures. This long-term perspective ensures that sustainability initiatives are not short-lived but are ingrained in the company's operations and growth strategies.
Prepare for Future Challenges	Build flexible travel policies, invest in sustainability-focused R&D, and foster a culture of continuous improvement to navigate future uncertainties.	The future will undoubtedly bring new challenges, including economic fluctuations, technological disruptions, and evolving environmental threats. Companies must be resilient and prepared to face these challenges head-on . Building a flexible and adaptive travel policy, investing in sustainability-focused research and development, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement will equip businesses to navigate future uncertainties successfully.



5.7 Alignment with the SDGs

In the previous chapters, we explored various approaches to integrating sustainable practices into corporate travel, examining flexible work policies, incentives for eco-friendly transportation, rules for emissions offsetting, travel alternatives, sustainable accommodation policies, and collaboration with travel service providers. Each section provided insights into how these initiatives can contribute to improving operational efficiency, reducing costs, and, most importantly, minimizing environmental impact.

This final chapter focuses on aligning sustainable corporate **travel practices with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. Adopting sustainable practices not only promotes corporate social responsibility but also meets the growing expectations of stakeholders, who increasingly evaluate companies based on their commitment to environmental and social sustainability. Additionally, a sustainable approach strengthens corporate reputation, making the company not only more respected and competitive but also more attractive to talents who share these values.

By examining how each initiative relates to the SDGs, **we aim to offer a holistic view that underscores the importance of sustainability in the context of business travel and how alignment represents a crucial step in building a more sustainable future.**



Alignment of Sustainable Corporate Travel Practices with the SDGs

TRANSFORMATION PATHWAY

<p>FLEXIBLE WORK POLICIES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote flexible work policies, such as telecommuting or flexible hours, to reduce the need for non-essential business travel and contribute to SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. • Provide tools and technologies to facilitate collaboration and virtual meetings, thereby reducing dependence on physical travel, in line with SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure. • Implement policies that allow employees to combine business trips with personal travel or vacation time, reducing overall travel frequency and optimizing their impact, supporting SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being.
<p>INCENTIVES FOR ECO-FRIENDLY TRANSPORTATION USAGE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer financial incentives or other benefits for using more sustainable modes of transportation, such as public transport, carpooling, electric vehicle rentals, or cycling, contributing to SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. • Establish policies that promote booking direct flights and choosing airlines with more efficient fleets and lower environmental footprints, aligning with SDG 13: Climate Action. • Implement reward programs for employees who opt for eco-friendly transportation modes during business travel, such as bonus points or public recognition, supporting SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production.
<p>EMISSIONS OFFSET RULES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish clear rules and procedures for offsetting carbon emissions generated by business travel, such as through the purchase of carbon credits or funding emission reduction projects, contributing to SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy and SDG 14: Life Below Water. • Define criteria to identify which types of trips or activities require emissions offsetting and which are considered priorities in terms of environmental impact reduction, aligning with SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production. • Provide tools and resources to facilitate emission calculation and offsetting, educating employees on the importance of these practices and simplifying the adoption process, in line with SDG 4: Quality Education.

Alignment of Sustainable Corporate Travel Practices with the SDGs

TRANSFORMATION PATHWAY	TRAVEL LIMITATIONS AND ALTERNATIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish criteria and procedures to assess whether a business trip is truly necessary or if it can be replaced by virtual alternatives, such as online conferences, webinars, or teleconferences, contributing to SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. • Implement policies that encourage employees to plan business trips more efficiently, reducing the number of required trips and maximizing their impact, supporting SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure.
	SUSTAINABLE ACCOMMODATION POLICIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training and awareness to employees on sustainable travel practices and the benefits of reducing the environmental impact of business travel, supporting SDG 4: Quality Education. • Create educational materials and informative resources on best practices for sustainable travel, which may include guidelines for lightweight packing, tips for waste reduction during travel, and advice for emissions offsetting, aligning with SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production.
	COLLABORATION WITH TRAVEL SERVICE PROVIDERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively collaborate with travel service providers, such as airlines, hotel chains, and car rental agencies, to promote sustainable practices and encourage the adoption of sustainability-focused policies and programs, supporting SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals. • Establish long-term partnerships with providers demonstrating a clear commitment to sustainability, encouraging them to continuously improve their performance and adopt higher standards, aligning with SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals.

Alignment of Sustainable Corporate Travel Practices with the SDGs

TRANSFORMATION PATHWAY

<p>EDUCATION AND AWARENESS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training and awareness to employees on sustainable travel practices and the benefits of reducing the environmental impact of business travel, supporting SDG 4: Quality Education. • Create educational materials and informative resources on best practices for sustainable travel, which may include guidelines for lightweight packing, tips for waste reduction during travel, and advice for emissions offsetting, aligning with SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production.
<p>CONTINUOUS EVALUATION AND MONITORING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a continuous monitoring system of business travel performance and impacts, using key performance indicators and specific metrics to assess progress towards sustainability goals, supporting SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production. • Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of adopted policies and practices, making any necessary adjustments or improvements based on achieved results and received feedback, aligning with SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals.
<p>COLLABORATION WITH TRAVEL SERVICE PROVIDERS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively collaborate with travel service providers, such as airlines, hotel chains, and car rental agencies, to promote sustainable practices and encourage the adoption of sustainability-focused policies and programs, supporting SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals. • Establish long-term partnerships with providers demonstrating a clear commitment to sustainability, encouraging them to continuously improve their performance and adopt higher standards, aligning with SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals.

Alignment of Sustainable Corporate Travel Practices with the SDGs

TRANSFORMATION PATHWAY

<p>GENDER EQUALITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement travel policies that consider gender-specific safety and comfort needs, ensuring equal opportunities and treatment in business travel. This can include selecting safe accommodations, planning travel at times that minimize risks, and providing specific training for personal safety, aligning with SDG 5: Gender Equality.
<p>REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include policies that ensure equity in business travel for all employees, regardless of their corporate level. This can mean offering the same travel standards for all employees and providing additional support for those with specific needs, contributing to SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities.
<p>LIFE ON LAND</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt practices that support the protection of terrestrial biodiversity in business travel and emissions offset programs. This can include choosing transportation and accommodations that have minimal impact on local ecosystems and supporting reforestation or conservation projects as part of emissions offset strategies, aligning with SDG 15: Life on Land.

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BT4Europe, the European Network of Business Travel Associations, unites leading National Business Travel Associations across Europe. As the voice of the business travel industry, BT4Europe represents the interests of business travel buyers and users, with a focus on enhancing the customer journey and fostering sustainability.

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**“Hope is not a strategy.
Luck is not a factor.
Fear is not an option.”**

James Cameron
Regisseur and Discoverer

Our journey toward sustainability continues...

