Environmental Travel Policy 2019

This policy affects all travel paid for by the Right Livelihood Foundation. This includes travel of staff and board members, jury members, Laureates, their accompanying persons, and honorary guests invited to events such as the annual Award presentation.

Transportation, in particular air travel, significantly contributes to the global climate crisis. We are aware of our own emissions as a consequence of our work – a work that, in many ways, is based on bringing people together who fight for systemic change. We want to be fully transparent about our climate impact and open to discussions with other organisations and scientists about it. Against this backdrop, we will continuously strive to reduce our emissions.

Background information on the climate impact of aviation

In order to limit global warming to 1.5°C, the world needs to halve its emissions until 2030 and move towards zero emissions before 2050 (IPCC). On the contrary, aviation is one of the fastest-growing sources of greenhouse gas emissions (EC). In 2018, 4.3 billion passengers travelled by plane. By 2037, IATA predicts 8.2 billion passengers. In addition to contributing around 2% of global CO₂ emissions (EC), airplanes emit climate-wrecking gases like carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides, lead and ultrafine particulate matter. Therefore the relative impact on the climate is much higher (radiative forcing factors usually ranging from 2 to 5; Lee et al.). To summarise the global warming potential of these greenhouse gases, they are combined and referred to as CO₂-eq (equivalent) emissions.

With this travel policy, the Right Livelihood Foundation commits to:

- raising awareness about the climate impact of transport amongst staff, board members, jury members, Laureates, guests, and partner organisations;
- reducing transport-related CO₂-eq emissions, especially by improving the digital meeting culture;
- continuously monitoring and reporting our transport-related CO₂-eq emissions;
- introducing an annual carbon budget for travelling; and,
- compensating our travel-related emissions with an internal carbon price referencing the Swedish carbon tax (currently SEK 1180 per ton CO₂-eq, which is the highest in the world). The funds will be used to support Laureates’ projects that sequester carbon.

We will need to get used to spending both more time and money when carrying out the travelling we consider crucial. More travelling has to be done by trains and other modes of transportation with lower emissions than flying.

Evaluation of CO₂-eq emissions

In preparation of drafting this policy we have accounted CO₂-eq emissions of all flights paid for by the Foundation in 2018. A list of all flights paid for in 2018 was compiled from invoices. The calculation was done by using myclimate.org. This tool quantifies the direct and indirect CO₂-eq emissions per passenger for a given flight distance based on international statistics. Read more about the methodology used by the calculator.

According to this approximate calculation, we emitted:

**223 tons CO₂-eq emissions from flights in 2018**
**Continuously account CO₂-eq emissions of upcoming travelling**

In order to increase awareness around emissions caused by transportation, staff members are asked from now on to calculate emissions themselves and note them down in a shared document. We believe that everyone’s active involvement in this process creates a better understanding of our emissions.

Our calculations will include flights, train rides, car rides, bus rides and ship cruises. We do not include airport transfers and inner-city transport. Staff members’ commutes are not accounted for either. However, we encourage employees to commute as sustainably as possible.

**Reduction of CO₂-eq emissions**

The main goal of this policy is a reduction of our CO₂-eq emissions relative to the size of the Foundation, represented by our annual budget. The latter proviso is important because the Foundation’s work has a highly positive net environmental impact and should thus continue to grow.

From 2019 on, we will introduce an annual carbon budget for travelling, correlated with the size of the Foundation. This budget will be set by the Foundation’s board and reported in its Annual Report. It will be set to reduce our carbon intensity (emissions per SEK) by at least 5% p.a.

To reduce emissions, we agree to:

- improve our digital meeting culture and develop a plan for this;
- avoid flights by choosing other means of transport; and,
- if flying is considered the best option, choose the least unsustainable flight.

Before booking travels, we ask ourselves:

- Do I need to be physically present, or would a digital meeting be sufficient?
- If I need to be physically present, is there a reasonable way to avoid flying?

**Improve the digital meeting culture**

We will further improve our skills when it comes to digital meetings. Besides producing fewer emissions, other benefits of digital meetings include: saving time, money and avoiding discomfort linked to travelling. We agree to:

- build knowledge in the team around digital meetings;
- invest in technology/software needed for good quality digital meetings; and,
- address this issue regularly at board and staff meetings.

While we are promoting digital meetings, we acknowledge that personal meetings facilitate social interaction, team-building and networking in a different way.

**Avoid flights by choosing other means of transport**

We agree to:

- not use flights if a destination can be reached without air travel in less than 10h; and,
- encourage the use of night trains.
Time constraints and exceptional situations might require travel that does not follow these guidelines. This applies especially to the Foundation’s board and jury members, who work for the Foundation in parallel with time-demanding jobs.

Moreover, our work brings us to many regions of the world and we are aware that not all regions have a safe network of railways or bus routes. We will not avoid flying if this implies security risks or the isolation of Laureates in remote regions.

**If flying is considered the best option, choose the least unsustainable flight**

We agree to:

- always use direct flights on routes where direct flights are offered;
- if there are no direct flights available on a specific day, other dates must be considered;
- always avoid stop-overs when travelling within Europe; and,
- use economy-class flights to avoid the higher climate impact of business-class flights.

We reserve the right to book business-class flights due to health, security or privacy reasons.

**Compensating emissions through carbon sequestration**

Climate compensation easily becomes a way to "buy out" from crucial behavioural changes. The only way to impact emissions is to prevent them from being produced in the first place. We therefore emphasise the aforementioned goal of this policy to reduce the carbon intensity of our travels by at least 5% per annum.

Beyond that, we have decided to compensate our travel-related emissions by supporting a carbon sequestration project developed by one of our Laureates. This allows us to further support the ongoing successful work of Right Livelihood Laureates.

For all travels paid by the Foundation, we will contribute:

$$1180 \text{ SEK} / \text{ton of CO}_2\text{-eq emissions}$$

The amount will be transferred twice a year:

- 15 June (for travels 1 Jan to 15 June)
- 15 Jan (for travels 15 June to 31 Dec)

A carbon sequestration project will be selected until the end of 2019.