

Carbon Offsets of Official Journeys

Since 2009 the City of Gothenburg has a system for carbon offsetting of official journeys undertaken by the municipality. All administrations and companies shall calculate its emissions from official journeys and business travel and compensate those with investments in measures to reduce emissions in the future. For every kilo of fossil carbon dioxide equivalents caused by air travel and car 1.50 SEK is paid in compensation. The money should then be invested in measures that help to increase sustainable travel within the organization. Examples of investments made are cycling pools, electric bikes, video conferencing equipment, low emission cars, change to biofuels, and training such as energy efficient driving.

Carbon offsetting provides a dual-action, given that it provides both investment that can reduce the carbon footprint and that the additional cost of the car and air travel becomes an incentive to change the staff's travel habits. This could revitalize the travel policy, which aims to get employees to choose sustainable travel when possible. Carbon offsets also means that the City of Gothenburg receives travel statistics, making it easier to put the right measures in the future. Other possible side effects could be that employee health is improved through increased share of cycling and public transport trips and that the municipality can serve as a good example for others.

When carbon offsetting was introduced in 2009 the system was not fully developed, but in 2010 the reported carbon emissions from official journeys were 8600 tons and in 2014, they had fallen by 22 per cent to 6700 tonnes. This is partly achieved with the carbon offset system, though mainly thanks to investments in better vehicles and fuels. The offsetting was 10 million SEK (USD 1.6 milj) in 2014.