

2023

ACTION PLAN FOR A SUSTAINABLE PLANET

BETTER PLACES

*Better
Places*

info@betterplaces.nl
www.betterplaces.nl



Our action plan for a sustainable planet



OUR ACTION PLAN

After the Climate Summit in Glasgow in 2021, Better Places, along with more than 300 other tourism companies, signed the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism. The declaration forms a global network of companies in the tourism sector, collectively committed to halving total emissions by 2030 and achieving a climate-neutral industry by, or no later than, 2050. **By signing the declaration, we declare a climate emergency and pledge to reduce our carbon emissions by 55% by 2030.**

After the Climate Summit in Glasgow in 2021, Better Places, along with more than 300 other tourism companies, signed the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism. As part of this, we have developed an Action Plan for a Sustainable



BETTER PLACES

Better Places was founded on the idea that we can use tourism to make the world a little more beautiful. We strive to minimize the environmental impact of our trips and maximize our positive contributions to nature, animals, and local communities at our destinations. We are committed to elevating these goals even further. **Our plan is to reduce CO₂-emissions per passenger per day by 5% every year starting in 2020.** By 2030, we aim to be 55% below 2019 levels. This action plan for a sustainable planet outlines the steps we're taking to achieve these targets.

Better places for people to live in, and better places to visit

Our action plan for a sustainable planet

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN 2030

In 2023, The Travel Foundation published the report [Envisioning Tourism by 2030](#): a vision of the future for sustainable tourism. The study looked at the ways in which tourism internationally can meet the Paris climate goals. In a world without greenhouse gas emissions, there are still growth opportunities for tourism. That is the encouraging conclusion from the report. But this requires serious measures to be taken. We draw inspiration for this action plan from the report of The Travel Foundation.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

By signing the Glasgow Declaration, we commit ourselves to the following actions:

- Within 12 months of signing, we will publish a climate action plan.
- At least once a year, we report on the progress and results of our actions in the climate plan.
- The climate plan is aligned with the following chain of actions: measure, reduce, regenerate, collaborate and finance. This ensures that climate actions are consistent across the industry.
- We share information about activities affecting the Glasgow Declaration with our network.
- We collaborate with other signatories of the Glasgow Declaration.



RESPONSIBLE TOURISM AWARD

Better Places won the 2021 [Responsible Tourism Award](#) for Decarbonising Travel & Tourism. Judges were impressed by the wide range of ways we actively reduce the carbon footprint of organized travel, as well as the transparent and easy-to-understand communication about the positive and negative environmental impacts of our trips.

Starting from 2022, we provide comprehensive reports on the social, societal, and climate impact generated by our travels. You can find the detailed results in our [impact report for 2022](#).

Our action plan for a sustainable planet



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

We aim to be as transparent as possible about our climate actions and share new developments on our website and via social media. Here are a few examples of such posts:

- [Sustainable Travel Checklist](#)
- [Traveling with a Positive Impact](#)
- [Why CO₂ Compensation Isn't the Solution](#)
- [Traveling Without Plastic](#)
- [Our Responsible Tourism Policy](#)

CLIMATE GOALS

Our goals in the action plan for a sustainable planet are updated annually. [On this page](#), you can find the climate goals from previous years, offering insight into our ongoing commitment to progress and transparency in our sustainability journey.

Contents

MEASURE



Every year we calculate our company's total CO₂-emissions

REDUCE



We help our travellers make sustainable choices

REGENERATE



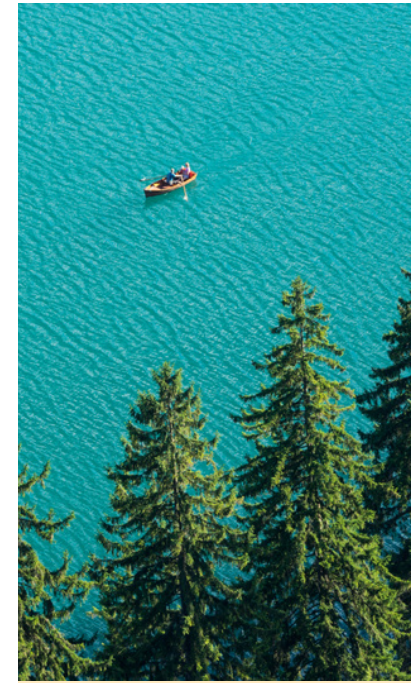
We are exploring how to give substance to regenerative travel

COLLABORATE



We work with various parties to create a sustainable planet

FINANCE



For every traveller, we invest an amount in renewable energy projects and conservation of diversity

2023

MEASURE

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Measure

WHAT DO WE MEASURE?

Every year, we calculate the total CO₂e emissions of our organisation. When making our CO₂e footprint transparent, we measure emissions in the three scopes outlined in the globally recognized [Greenhouse Gas Protocol](#). These three scopes encompass all types of emissions we generate while organizing our trips. This includes direct emissions, such as those in the office and during lunch, as well as indirect emissions, like purchased energy and emissions generated during the execution of our trips, such as air travel.

SCOPE 1

Direct CO₂e emissions, such as the impact of our office and the facilities we use.

SCOPE 2

Indirect CO₂e emissions, for instance, the impact of purchased and consumed electricity and gas.

SCOPE 3

Indirect CO₂e emissions caused by the business activities of another organisation, such as the flight necessary to reach the destination, the impact of accommodations and excursions on-site, as well as the emissions from the train and car that our employees use to commute to the office.



Comparing CO₂e emissions

LONG HAUL VS SHORT HAUL

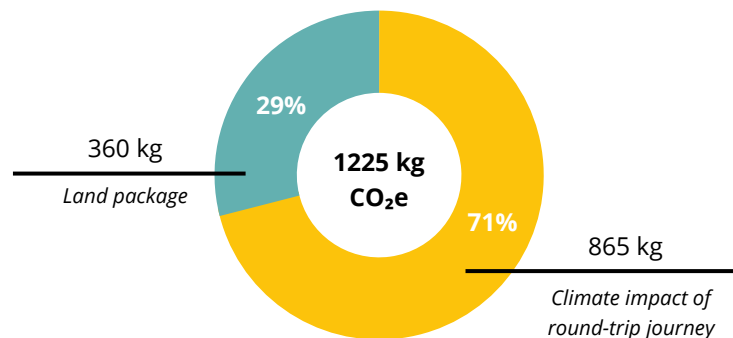
The carbon footprint varies significantly depending on whether you travel to a distant destination or closer to home. A round-trip flight to Slovenia generates 865 kg of CO₂ equivalent. If you fly back and forth to Cuba, the CO₂ equivalent emissions exceed 4,000 kg. In other words, the climate impact of a trip to Cuba is nearly five times greater than that of a journey to Slovenia. When flying for vacation, the destination matters a lot. That's why in the '[Eerlijke reiswijzer](#)', we display [the climate impact of our distant destinations](#) and suggest alternatives that are closer to home.

Up to 95% of total emissions are caused by the flight (scope 3)

Most travel organizations choose not to include the flight to and from a destination in the calculation of their total CO₂e emissions. They argue that they are not selling the flight and are therefore not responsible for it. We believe that the flight is the most relevant for travel organizations. For a long-distance trip, up to 95% of the total CO₂e emissions of a trip are caused by the flight needed to get to the destination. Although customers book the flight themselves, we choose to include those emissions in our calculations. After all, those emissions would not exist if we did not offer the trip.

FLIGHT TO SICILY

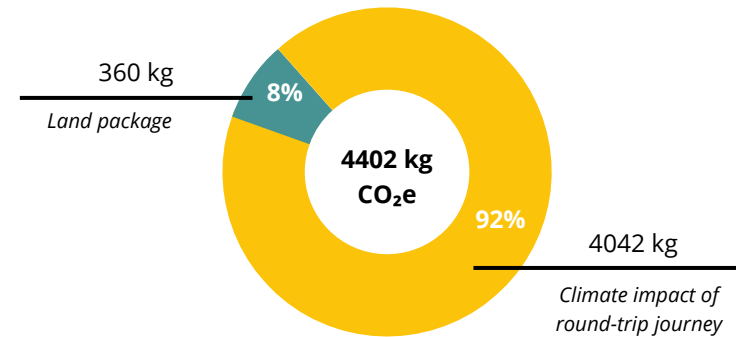
CO₂e-emissions
Based on an 18-day trip



Source: Atmosfair en Greentripper

FLIGHT TO CUBA

CO₂e-emissions
Based on an 18-day trip

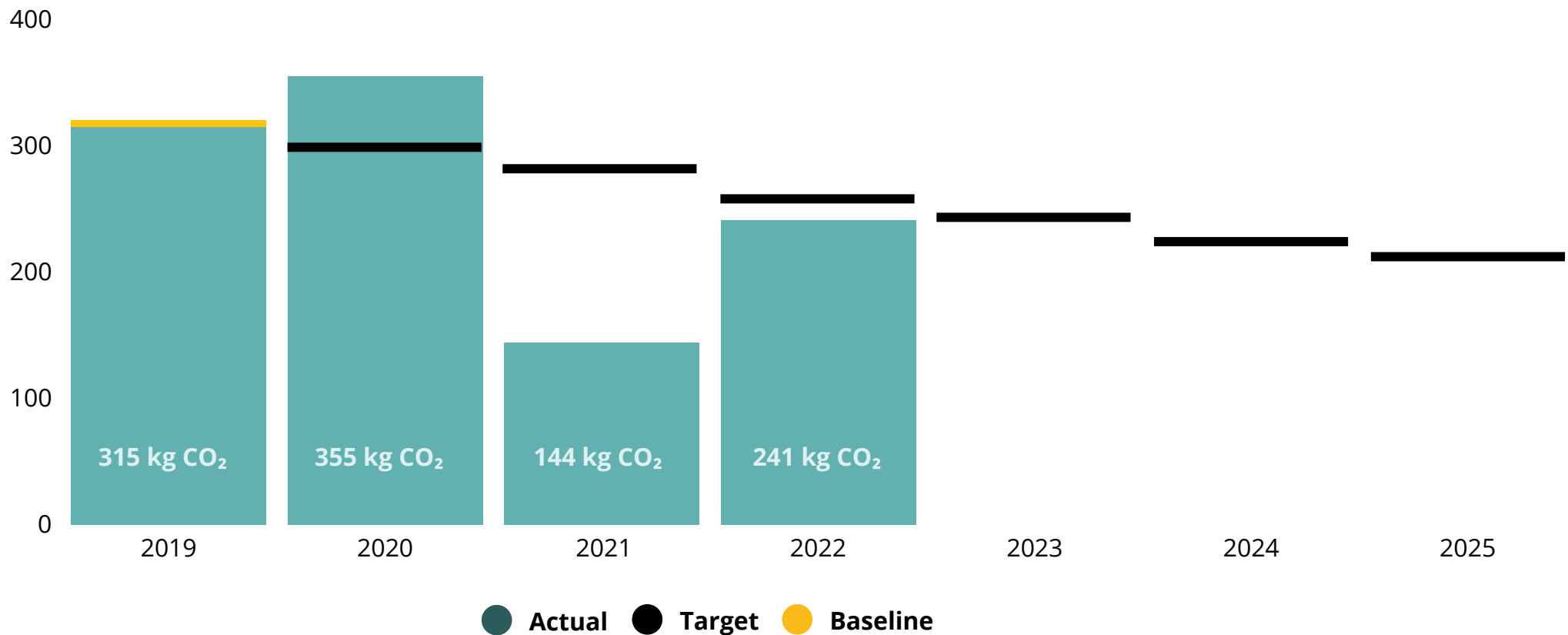


Source: Atmosfair en Greentripper

CO₂e emission target

kilograms per person per day

In 2030, we aim to be 55% below the 2019 level. This graph shows how much CO₂e emission we have caused per traveler per day and whether we have succeeded in staying below the maximum emission for that year.



Target



Our plan is to reduce CO₂e emissions per passenger per day by 5% each year starting in 2020. By 2030, we aim to be 55% below 2019 levels.

CO₂-EMISSIONS TARGET (KG PER PERSON PER DAY)

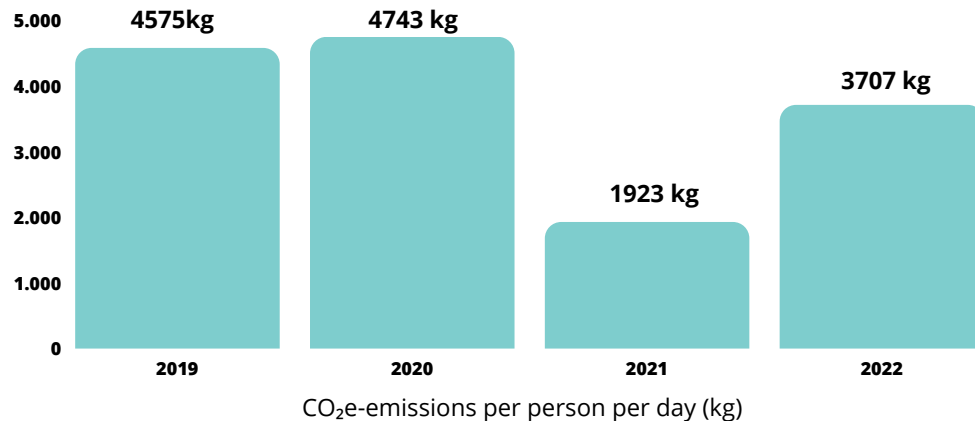
Year	Target	Actual
2019	baseline	315kg
2020	299kg	355kg
2021	284kg	144kg
2022	268kg	241kg

Since 2016, we have been measuring the average CO₂ emissions of all our trips, including the round trip required to get to the destination (although the customer books it themselves). For flight emissions, we use [Atmosfair's](#) calculation tool. This tool looks not only at CO₂ emissions, but also at the climate impact of other greenhouse gases such as nitrogen oxides and soot.

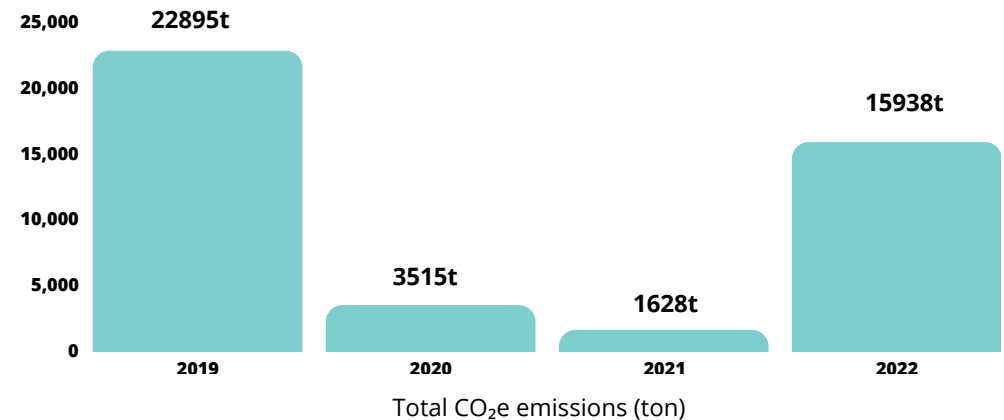
Within Europe, more and more people are traveling to their destinations by private car or train. To calculate the emissions of these means of transport, we use the Greentripper calculation tool. The database of emissions per destination can be found in [this link](#).

CO₂e missions per traveller per day

TOTAL CO₂E EMISSIONS PER TRAVELLER*



TOTAL CO₂E EMISSION*



CO₂E-EMISSIONS PER TRAVELLER

- In 2019, a total of 5043 travellers traveled with Better Places. This resulted in a total emissions of 22,894,744 kg CO₂e, equivalent to **4575 kg** per person
- In 2020, a total of 741 travellers traveled with Better Places. This resulted in a total emissions of 3,514,801 kg CO₂e, equivalent to **4743 kg** per person.
- In 2021, a total of 847 travellers traveled with Better Places. This resulted in total emissions of 1,628,417 kg CO₂e, equivalent to **1913 kg** per person.
- In 2022, a total of 4299 travellers traveled with Better Places. This resulted in a total emission of 15,938,319 kg CO₂e, equivalent to **3707 kg** per person.

*It is important to note with these results that they are biased because of the effects of COVID-19 on the travel industry. The decrease in CO₂e emissions per person is not (only) due to our efforts to reduce our emissions. Due to the corona crisis, in 2021 we mainly operated trips to countries within Europe. Most customers chose to travel to their destinations by car instead of plane.

CO₂ emissions during the trip



The emissions from transportation, accommodation, and entertainment (land arrangement) during your trip constitute only a relatively small part of the total climate impact of a vacation. To measure the CO₂ emissions of the land arrangement, we use averages, as outlined below. The emissions from any domestic flights are accounted for separately.

- 15 kg per person per day for bookings with three or more persons
- 20 kg per person per day for bookings of two persons
- 25 kg per person per day for solo travelers



Emissions depend on the time of the year and the choices you make. For instance, if it's scorching hot, the energy-consuming air conditioning might be on more frequently, and you might take more showers than when traveling in a colder season. If you consume meat daily, your climate impact is greater than if you choose a (more) plant-based diet. It's not possible to precisely know how thousands of travelers behave during their trips. Therefore, we opt for averages.

What we do to measure our positive and negative impact



In 2021, we began mapping the positive and negative impact of our sample trips. In doing so, we take into account the social, economic and climate impact of a trip. Based on these measurements, we give the trips a score so that customers can see at a glance how well a trip scores on our principles for sustainable travel. It also gives us insight into what is going well and where there is room for improvement. Here you can find the [impact scores of travel](#) in different destinations. [These are the criteria we use to measure impact.](#)

The impact measurement is based on the Theory of Change. For measuring the impact, we receive support from [Social Enterprise Netherlands](#) and [Avance Impact Consultancy](#).

When measuring the negative impact of our trips, we measure not only CO₂ emissions, but also other greenhouse gases and pollutants, such as nitrogen and water vapor. For the calculation, we use [Atmosfair's calculator](#). Here you can read more about the methods we use to [measure greenhouse gas emissions](#).

- We have published an overview of the [climate impact of air travel](#) to all our destinations. With that overview, we hope to inspire customers to choose a destination closer to home more often, resulting in lower CO₂e emissions.
- By the end of 2023, we will show the climate impact of the [flight and the land arrangement](#) for all sample trips to long haul destinations.
- For destinations within Europe, we show the climate impact of the [different transport options](#) (plane/car/electric car and train) for all sample trips.

Measure: goals for 2023



Reduce CO₂e-emissions per passenger per day by 20% compared to 2019.



Organize and conduct the annual sustainability questionnaire for our travel experts.



Develop a questionnaire on sustainable travel and have it completed by travellers, so that we can get a better picture of how our customers feel about sustainable travel.



Developing the outcomes of our investigation into the [true cost of transportation](#) to and from our destinations. We do this in collaboration with True Price's [Impact Institute](#).



Review all sample trips and see where we can eliminate domestic flights or replace them with alternative transportation.



2023

REDUCE

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Reduce



CUSTOMERS: GENERAL

We are committed to changing our customers' behavior in a positive way. We share information and tips in blogs and on social media that help them make [sustainable choices](#) when traveling.

CUSTOMERS: TRAVEL & TRANSPORTATION

We encourage our customers not to take a faraway trip every year, and if they do, preferably for as long as possible. All sample trips to distant destinations are a minimum of 18 days.

Our sample trips include no or as few domestic flights as possible. Whenever possible, we travel by train.

We provide our customers with information about the least polluting flight options to their destinations.

In addition to our faraway destinations, we are offering more and more [trips in Europe](#). Our trips within Europe are often at least 14 days and a full-fledged alternative to a long-haul air vacation. In Europe, we also offer [vacations without flying](#).

We promote train travel to European destinations. For each European destination we offer, there is a [special page](#) where we show how to reach that country by train. We work with [The Train Traveller](#), a sustainable travel company specializing in train travel. They help put together the ideal train trip to the destination country.

We map the modes of transportation our customers use to reach their destinations. Our aim is to increase the number of travellers who choose to travel by train. We do this by specifically promoting train travel and by lobbying for a better train network in Europe.

Reduce



In addition, we show the [CO₂ emissions of the various transport options](#) to the relevant destination. We compare the emissions of car, train and plane. The calculation also takes into account emissions of other harmful greenhouse gases.

We promote travel [by \(electric\) car to European destinations](#) as an alternative to air travel. In addition, we show that customers can also make the trip with an electric car, by sharing information about charging stations and accommodations with charging points.

CUSTOMERS: FOOD AND DRINK

We provide our customers with tips and advice on [vegetarian and vegan food while traveling](#) as a means of reducing personal carbon emissions. Working with our local travel experts and bloggers, we advise our customers on the best vegetarian and vegan restaurants in our travel suggestions.

LOCAL PROVIDERS

Our local providers sign a contract with us committing to our sustainability requirements. Part of the contract are the [rules of conduct for responsible tourism](#).

Better Places' local travel experts, together with regional managers, ensure that all sample trips meet our [checklist for sustainable travel](#).

We urge our local partner to also join the Glasgow Declaration. We organize webinars where we offer support in creating an action plan for a sustainable planet.

Reduce



STAFF AND FACILITIES

In 2019, Better Places was one of the first tour operators to join [Climate Perks](#). All our employees receive up to two free vacation days extra if they choose to vacation by train, instead of by plane.

All Better Places employees who have work-related appointments within a 750-kilometer radius will make the trip by train.

We operate a flexible work schedule, allowing Better Places employees to work from home. By doing so, we minimize overall travel time and CO₂ emissions.

We offer our employees the opportunity to join climate strikes or other climate events during work days.

We encourage employees to come to the office by bicycle. The mileage allowance for traveling by bicycle is therefore higher than the mileage allowance by car.

We use as little paper and disposable plastic in the office as possible.

We have agreed that all Better Places employees may participate in research trips outside Europe only if they stay at least two weeks in the destination in question.

A vegetarian lunch is offered daily at the Better Places office.

Reducing: goals for 2023

The total CO₂e emissions per passenger per day are 20% lower than in 2019.



At least 10% of our travellers within Europe choose rail as transportation to their vacation destination.



At least 45% of our travellers within Europe choose car as transportation to their vacation destination.



At least 8% of our travellers within Europe choose the electric car as transport to their vacation destination.



The average length of booked trips is:
Minimum of 12 days for zone 1
Minimum of 14 days for zone 2
Minimum of 16 days for zone 3
Minimum of 18 days for zone 4



Zone	CO ₂ e in kg	Minimum days in example trips	Minimum days per booked trip
● Zone 1	300 - 2.000	9 days	8 days
● Zone 2	2.001 - 4.000	14 days	10 days
● Zone 3	4.001 - 6.000	18 days	12 days
● Zone 4	6.001 - 8.000	22 days	14 days



Reducing: goals for 2023

At least 85% of our travellers flying to a destination within Europe choose the most efficient option: a direct flight.



A maximum of 20% of the trips taken include a domestic flight.



A maximum of 8% of the trips taken include 2 or more domestic flights.



At least 30% of trips booked are to a destination within Europe.



Add a minimum of 5 sample trips where you travel to the destination by electric car.



Include at least 5 sample trips featuring train travel to the destination.



Starting a pilot with travel experts from 10 destinations who add information about the sustainability of hotels and tips for plant-based eating to the travel proposals.



Have a minimum of 15 travel experts send customers concrete, sustainable travel tips via WhatsApp on the day of their arrival.





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REGENERATE

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Regenerate



REGENERATE

By signing the Glasgow Declaration, Better Places committed itself to calling on the entire industry to take action to accelerate the transition to zero-carbon aviation. Here are some examples of actions that we have already taken and plans for the future.

ACTIONS

Better Places has spoken publicly in favor of banning the [expansion of Schiphol Airport](#) and opening a new airport in Lelystad. We will continue to lobby for this.



Better Places has always been transparent about how we calculate CO₂ emissions from our trips, how much we have offset and why. In 2022, we decided to [stop offsetting CO₂ emissions](#) from our trips. Instead, we are fully committed to reducing our emissions. We have shown why we believe [CO₂ offsetting is not a solution](#). We will continue to lobby for more transparency in the travel industry about carbon offsets while investing in innovative alternatives that accelerate the change to a cleaner travel industry.

With every booking, we ask travellers to donate an amount to the [Africa Amini Life Foundation](#) in Tanzania. This organization trains underprivileged youth to become hotel professionals with a strong focus on sustainability.

Regenerate



When possible, our local travel experts choose accommodations that contribute to the preservation and restoration of nature and biodiversity and/or contribute to a better living environment and future prospects for local residents. Some examples are the [Sumba Hospitality Foundation](#) in Indonesia, [Inti Sisa](#) in Ecuador and [Rhotia Valley](#) in Tanzania.



When putting together the tours, we aim to include at least two local excursions in the journey. Where possible, our travel experts opt for excursions that, in addition to being enjoyable activities, also contribute to nature conservation and/or a better quality of life for the local residents. Some examples include the [Bici-Tour](#) in Trinidad, Cuba, the [Coffee Route](#) as an alternative to the Inca Trail in Peru, and the [Swartberg Ecotour](#) in South Africa.

GOAL FOR 2023

Establish guidelines for ethical marketing to promote transparency and prevent greenwashing.





2023

COLLABORATE

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Collaborate



B CORP CERTIFIED

Better Places is the first travel organization in the Netherlands with an international [B Corp certification](#). Companies with a B Corp certificate are successful in generating profit while also achieving social and sustainable goals. To obtain the B Corp certificate, we must meet rigorous sustainability requirements

GOAL FOR 2023

Collaborating with colleges and universities to exchange knowledge and experiences.



Delivering a minimum of six guest lectures on sustainability in the travel industry.



Continuing to work in partnership with the Impact Institute to further assess the true price of transportation to and from our destinations.



Fifteen travel experts achieve the Travelife certificate (partner or certified) or another GSTC certification.



An aerial photograph of a vibrant turquoise lake. In the upper right, a small wooden boat with two people is visible. The bottom right corner features the dark green, needle-covered tops of several evergreen trees. The overall scene is bright and scenic.

2023

FINANCE

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Financing

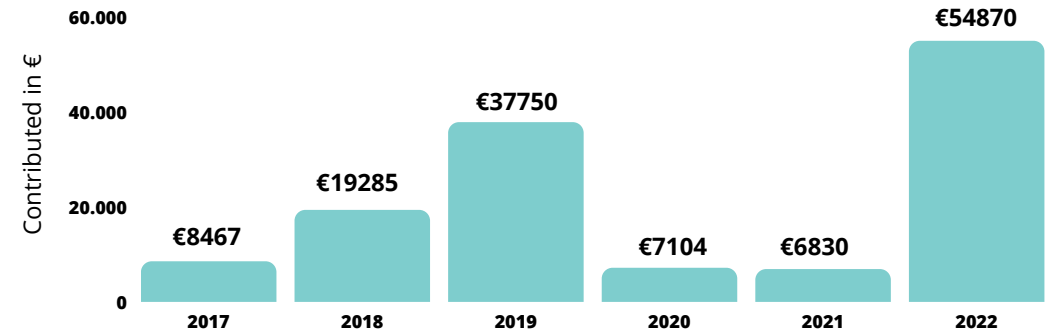


CO₂-COMPENSATIONS

From 2016 until mid-July 2022, we offset the CO₂ emissions of all our trips, including the flights required to reach the destination. For this purpose, we collaborated with the South Pole Group and invested in projects certified under the Gold Standard. Between 2016 and July 2022, we offset 40,000 tons of CO₂ for our customers. The funds were invested by the South Pole Group in clean cooking appliances in Ghana.

In July 2022, we ceased the practice of [offsetting the CO₂-emissions](#) from our trips. Research has indicated that offset projects, such as distributing cooking appliances and planting trees, are of [limited effectiveness](#). Moreover, they divert attention from the real solution, which is reduction.

INNOVATION FUND INVESTMENTS



INVESTING IN INNOVATION AND BIODIVERSITY

For every traveller who books with Better Places, we have been investing an amount in our innovation fund since 2017. Until 2023, we made a distinction between an amount for destinations within and outside Europe. Starting in 2023, the amount will be based on the distance the travellers cover. We distinguish four zones for this purpose. The amount is per person and is increased every year. The traveller doesn't pay anything extra for this. We invest a portion of the amount in sustainable energy projects through the crowdfunding platform [Lendahand](#). Once an investment period is completed, we reinvest the amount, including the earned interest. This way, we contribute to accelerating the energy transition. The remaining amount is invested in the conservation and restoration of biodiversity. Learn more about our [innovation fund](#).

Financing

GOAL FOR 2023

Utilize a portion of the proceeds from the innovation fund to invest in the conservation and restoration of biodiversity.



Until a suitable alternative becomes available, we will continue to invest in sustainable energy projects through [Lendahand](#) and [Duurzaam Investeren](#).



OVERVIEW OF CONTRIBUTION PER ZONE

Zone	CO ₂ e in kg	Amount in 2023
Zone 1	300 - 2.000	€7
Zone 2	2.001 - 4.000	€15
Zone 3	4.001 - 6.000	€20
Zone 4	6.001 - 8.000	€25

CONTRIBUTION TO INNOVATION FUND FROM 2023

Because air travel is far too inexpensive, we deposit an amount into an innovation fund for each traveller. The contribution amount is calculated based on different zones. The farther the destination, the higher the contribution. Every year, we increase the contributions for each zone. In the map below, we have provided a visual representation of the zones. The traveller doesn't pay anything extra for this. We invest the total amount in sustainable energy projects. This way, we contribute to accelerating the energy transition.

