

2022

IMPACT REPORT

BETTER PLACES

*Better
Places* info@betterplaces.nl
www.betterplaces.nl



A message from our CEO



When I began my career, the realm of long-distance travel appeared noticeably distinct from its present state. I took pride in working for a travel organisation. We ensured individuals gained insights into other cultures and made contributions towards alleviating poverty at the destinations.

In 2013, I initiated Better Places. Since then, I could fully concentrate on offering trips that benefit all. Over the years, climate change began to play an increasingly prominent role. It is precisely in the countries where our travels help people that the ramifications of climate change are felt first.

Now, organising trips presents a dilemma that I grapple with daily. We provide employment opportunities and help protect wildlife, natural reserves, and cultural heritage. Simultaneously, the air travel often necessary for these trips emits substantial quantities of greenhouse gases. This poses a threat to the very same people, animals, natural reserves, and heritage. Should we, therefore, stop travelling?



Absolutely not. However, we do need to travel radically differently – more social. More sustainable, Closer to home. And if we do venture afar, we should aim to stay for as long as possible. This is how we can keep our planet inhabitable—for ourselves, for the people who make our trips so special, and for the generations to come.

It's all hands on deck for a more sustainable travel industry. Together with our employees, local travel experts, and travellers, we are working tirelessly to improve our trips. They enable us to achieve our ambitious climate goals.

In front of you is our first impact report. We share what we have achieved in the past year, the challenges we faced, and where we need to improve. We aim to be as transparent as possible so that we can inspire other travel entrepreneurs. Furthermore, it helps us remain critical and steadfast in pursuing our mission: *to create Better Places for people to live in and Better Places to visit.*

Saskia Griep
Director and founder Better Places

Table of contents

ABOUT US

This is us	04
Our mission and vision	05
Contribution tot the SDG's	06
Nine years of entrepreneurship	07
Recognition of our work	08
2022 in figures	09
Our stakeholders	11
Our travellers	12
Our travel experts	13
Our destinations	14
Our employees	15

OUR APPROACH

Our approach	17
Measuring impact	18
The true price of transportation	19
The Fair Travel Guide	20

POSITIVE IMPACT: APPROACH AND RESULTS

Traveller survey	24
Travel expert survey	25
Overnight stays	26
Excursions	27
Local guides and drivers	28
Natural and cultural heritage	30
Slow travel	31
Tourism dispersion	32
Child-friendly activities	34
Animal-friendly activities	35
What else we do	36
What our travel experts say	37

NEGATIVE IMPACT: APPROACH AND RESULTS

Reducing climate impact	42
Travellers' survey	52
Travel experts'survey	53

Reducing climate impact	54
---	----

WHAT WE DO

Sharing knowledge	59
Investing in innovation	60
Our donations	61
Collaborating for the climate	63

THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT

The role of the government	64
--	----

OBJECTIVES

Objectives for 2023	67
Objectives transportation	68
Objectives entrepreneurship	69
Objectives marketing & communication	70

MORE INFORMATION

More information	72
----------------------------------	----

This is us

We are Better Places. We are a social enterprise with a sustainable mission. Through our trips, we aim to make the world a bit more beautiful for people, wildlife, and nature. **We are travellers.** We love exploring, meeting people, experiencing cultures, and admiring wildlife. We want to share that passion, also with the generations that come after us.

We are dreamers and doers. We want to offer our travellers an unforgettable experience, provide local entrepreneurs with a fair wage, and grant nature peace. That's why we are committed to making the largest possible positive contribution with our trips and reducing the negative consequences. **We feel the urgency.** We do not believe in procrastination and greenwashing but in taking responsibility and making a difference. If we want a livable planet and a thriving travel industry in the future, we must act today.

We are catalysts for change. We think things should be different and show that they can be. We are a B Corp, which means we run a successful business while contributing to a better world. Sustainability isn't an add-on; it's an integral part of quality. We continue to encourage and challenge ourselves and the entire industry to work more sustainably and transparently. This way, we promote a new way of traveling that aligns with the desires of the traveller and the challenges of our times. **That's Better Places.**



**"SUSTAINABILITY ISN'T AN ADD-ON;
IT'S AN INTEGRAL PART OF QUALITY"**



Our mission and vision



MISSION

“

Entrepreneurship in a way that makes the world a better place.

”



VISION

Our [constitution](#) sets out the following vision:

“

Organising responsible trips that contribute to the sustainable development of the regions to be visited, with an effort to maximise the positive effects of tourism and minimise the negative effects of tourism.

”

Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals



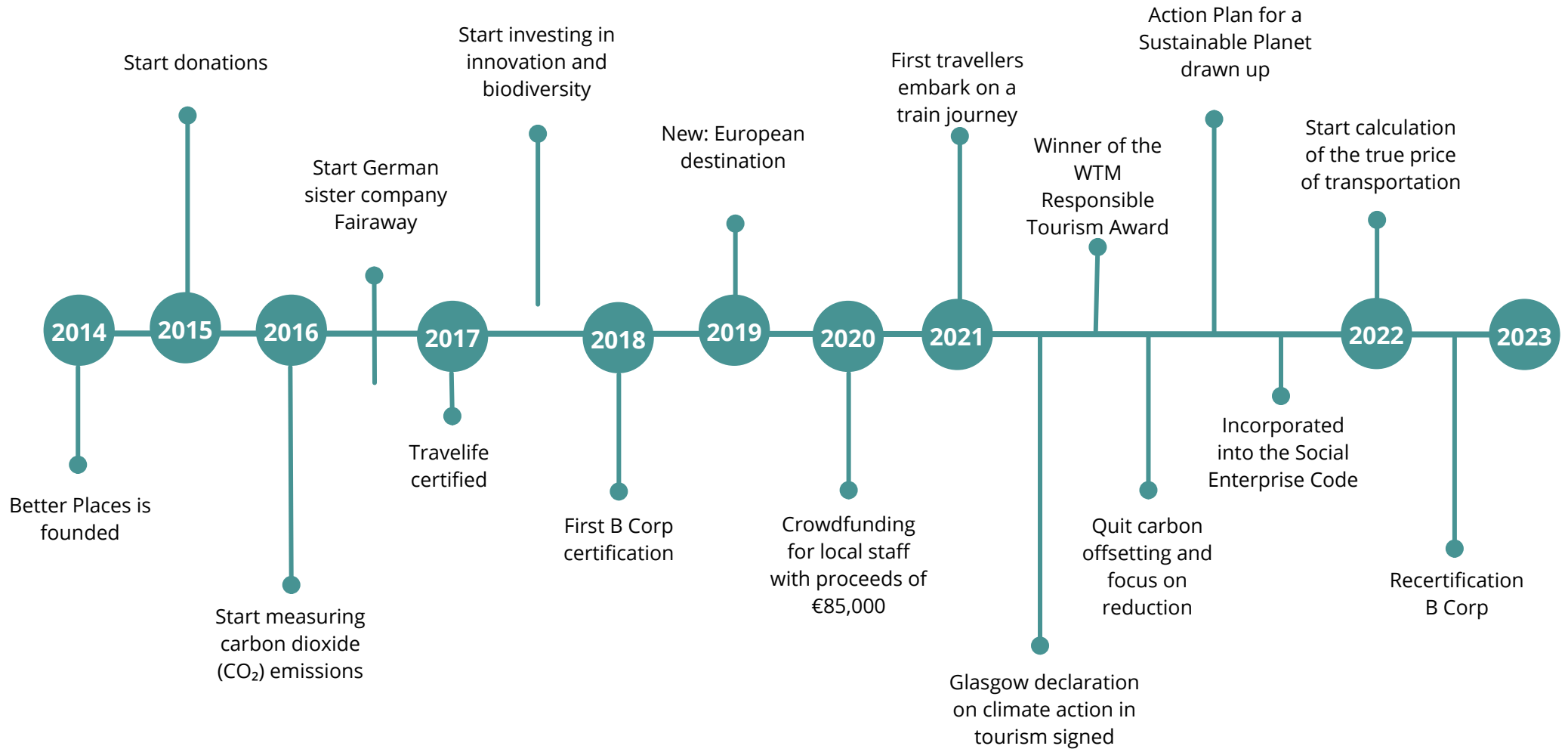
With our mission and vision, we contribute to 10 of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals:

- Goal 1: End extreme poverty
- Goal 2: End hunger and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3: Good health and well-being
- Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy
- Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth
- Goal 12: Sustainable consumption and production
- Goal 13: Urgent climate change
- Goal 14: Healthy oceans, seas and rivers
- Goal 15: Restoring ecosystems and conserving biodiversity
- Goal 17: Partnerships for the goals



THE GLOBAL GOALS

Nine years of entrepreneurship



Recognition of our work



TRAVELIFE

Since 2017, we have been part of the Travelife certification programme. Based on this international tour operator standard, we establish agreements with all our travel experts regarding their business practices. We encourage them to also promote sustainability among local partners, such as hotels and guides.



B CORP

B Corp stands for Benefit Corporation. With this certification, we demonstrate that we have a social and sustainable mission while remaining profitable. We achieve this by setting a good example through our own business practices and by passing on these principles to all the partners we collaborate with. Our local travel experts play an indispensable role in this endeavor.



CODE SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

In December 2021, Better Places was included in the register of [Social Enterprise Code](#). This demonstrates our commitment to prioritising social and societal impact above all else, for everyone to see.

2022 in figures



1.431

Number of departed trips



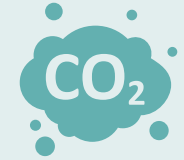
4.299

Number of departed travellers



8.9

Rating given to us by travellers



23%

Reduced CO₂e emissions per person per day compared to 2019



€ 9.387.818

Revenue



€6.300

Donations from travellers to Justdiggit



€ 41.445,74

Amount of donations with 10% of profit



€ 54.615

Investment in innovation fund



Peru, the sustainable way

🔍 Meet travel expert Guido

"Sustainability may not be the easiest thing to sell, but the feeling a truly sustainable trip provides is the reason to travel with us to Peru. Because a guide who gets paid well is grateful for the work the traveller gives him. And grateful families give travellers a more beautiful experience with genuine hospitality."

Our stakeholders

In 2021, we participated in the Expedite Impact workshops by [Avance](#). With the knowledge gained there, we developed a Theory of Change for three key stakeholders: travellers, travel experts, and the destinations where we organize trips. By creating a Theory of Change, we clarify what we aim to achieve and how we intend to do so. This model serves as a guide in our daily operations and assists us in measuring and tracking the impact we create.



OUR TRAVELLERS

We aim to inspire and mobilize our travellers to contribute to our mission. It is in the best interest of our customers that we protect the climate and the destinations.



OUR TRAVEL EXPERTS

Our local travel experts play a crucial role in achieving our impact goals. We discuss progress, local developments, and challenges, working together towards our shared mission of making a positive impact on the destination.



OUR DESTINATIONS

Many local economies have a financial stake in the arrival of tourists. There is also an interest in our contribution to nature conservation and poverty alleviation.



OUR EMPLOYEES

Our employees are informed about and directly or indirectly involved in achieving our impact goals.

Our travellers

After two unusual years, during which we were at times unable to offer trips for months, 2022 marked a year of recovery. Most countries were open again to foreign visitors, and COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. With 4,299 departing travellers, we are back to pre-pandemic levels.



TRAVELLERS

By far, the majority of travellers who went on a vacation with Better Places in 2022 were couples (57%). Nearly one-third of the bookings were from families (31%), followed by friends (10%), and solo travellers (2%).

NEAR AND FAR

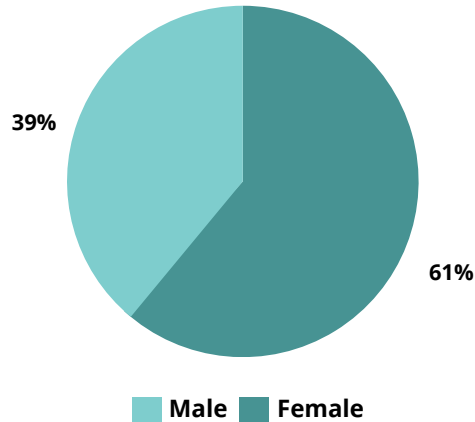
The total number of travellers who embarked on a trip in 2022 was 4,299. These individuals were divided into 1,431 bookings or groups. More than 25% of these travellers took a trip to a destination within Europe.

REPEATERS

180 travel parties departing in 2022 have travelled with Better Places before. This represents 12.6% of the total number of departures. 147 of these so-called repeaters booked a trip outside Europe. The remaining 33 repeaters booked a trip within Europe.

Our travel experts

DISTRIBUTION OF TRAVEL EXPERTS



WHO ARE OUR TRAVEL EXPERTS?

Our local travel experts know the destination like no other and ensure that the travel offer fits both the traveller's needs and our mission. In 2022, we worked with 51 local travel experts, 20 of them for European destinations. We take particular pride in the number of female travel experts with their own business. Because although many women work in the travel industry, they often hold lower-ranking positions. In our case, 44% of travel experts with their own business are female.

REGIONAL EXPERTS

Since 2022, we have been working with regional travel experts in several European countries. This allows us to better shape the principle of slow travel and make even more positive impact with our trips. Some examples are Finnish Lapland, north-western Spain and eastern Sweden.

TRAVELIFE CERTIFICATION

All our travel experts attend Travelife training with the aim of achieving Travelife Partner certification within two years. During the pandemic, many travel experts' status expired. By December 2022, 13 travel experts were certified. The others are in the process of obtaining or renewing their certification.

Our destinations



OUR OFFER

In 2022, we took a closer look at our offerings, including hiking trips, long-haul destinations, family vacations, and train travel. We are increasingly focusing on destinations closer to home and, as a result, significantly expanded our offerings in that category. In 2022, some countries saw very few bookings, primarily due to the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis. Additionally, there are countries we no longer offer in our lineup.

NEW DESTINATIONS

Due to our focus on travel within Europe, we are constantly searching for new destinations. We enter partnerships with local travel experts who organise adventurous trips that are just as exceptional as long-haul vacations. In 2022, we added Portugal, Sardinia, Switzerland, and Finnish Lapland to our offerings. We also organised two group trips: trekking in Austria and the Peaks of the Balkans. Outside Europe, we added one new destination: Malawi. The collaboration had been in the works for a while but was delayed due to the pandemic. In Malawi, we can make a significant positive impact with our trips.

DESTINATIONS WE DISCONTINUED

In 2022, several countries were removed from our offerings. Most of these were countries outside Europe, including China, Ethiopia, Cape Verde, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, as well as Kosovo and Moldova. There are various reasons for this decision. In some places, we are unable to make a positive impact with our trips. In other countries, we don't have suitable local travel experts or it's simply not safe to travel due to conflicts.

Our employees

After a challenging couple of years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to significantly expand our team this year. In 2022, we hired eight new employees. One team member left, and two team members had temporary contracts. We closed the year with eleven permanent employees, six of whom worked part-time. Better Places employees fall under the collective labor agreement (CAO) of Reiswerk.



VOLUNTEERING

As part of the fringe benefits, all employees are allowed to devote 20 hours a year to volunteering. In 2022, the whole team committed to getting a self-harvesting garden in Voorhout ready for spring. This was an initiative of NL Doet.



MONTHLY TEAM LUNCH

All employees working in the office receive a daily vegetarian lunch. Once a month, there is a vegetarian team lunch, which is a comprehensive meal prepared by the employees themselves, courtesy of the company, of course!



INTERNS

In 2022, we had 9 interns from various educational backgrounds. Most of them came from Wageningen University & Research. Collaborating with interns provides us with fresh perspectives, and in return, we offer them a learning environment with the freedom to develop a wide range of skills.



FRINGE BENEFITS

In addition to their salary, our employees receive nice perks, including the following:

- Two extra vacation days for those who go on holiday by train.
- Up to 150 euros per year for sports and physical activity.
- Employees are allowed to spend 500 euros per year on training and courses.



Spain, but different.

🔍 [Meet travel expert Debora](#)

"Northern Spain's Asturias is not yet very well-known among foreign tourists. By promoting regions like this, you can distribute visitors more evenly, ensuring they also reach areas where there is still a genuine need for tourism. As a traveller, this also provides a more pleasant experience."

Our approach

Increasing the positive effects of our travels and reducing the negative effects

At Better Places, we operate with a social and sustainable mission. We address all the links in our chain: from customers to climate. This means, for instance, that we assist travellers with our offerings in making more sustainable choices. At the same time, we invest in the transition from fossil to renewable energy sources. This way, we contribute to making everything related to travel more sustainable.



POSITIVE IMPACT

By positive impact, we mean creating employment, improving living conditions, and enhancing prosperity at the destination. It also includes enriching knowledge and understanding through equal interaction and contributing to the preservation and protection of cultural heritage, nature, and biodiversity.



NEGATIVE IMPACT

By negative impact, we mean the impact on the climate through CO₂ emissions from transportation to, from, and within the destination. It also encompasses the excessive strain on the livability and nature due to over-tourism, as well as a form of interaction between travellers, residents, and wildlife that is not founded on respect and equality.



THEORY OF CHANGE

Our approach is based on the [Theory of Change](#) that we have developed for our three main stakeholders: destinations, local partners, and customers. This allows us to clarify the desired impact and the necessary steps to achieve it.



ACTION PLAN

We have translated the steps from the Theory of Change into our A which was developed after signing the Glasgow Declaration in 2021. This is how we are working towards our commitment to reduce the CO₂e emissions from our trips by 55% by 2030 compared to 2019.

Measuring impact

We measure the positive and negative effects of our trips



WHY WE MEASURE IMPACT

We can claim that our trips create employment, protect natural areas, and enable cultural interaction, but is that really the case? To answer that question, we need to understand the impact of each individual trip. Furthermore, we can only improve our offerings if we know what we are currently achieving. That's why we started measuring the impact of our trips in 2022. It's a significant and ambitious project that is far from perfect. However, with the information we are already gathering, we can work purposefully towards achieving our social and climate goals.

HOW WE DO IT

For measuring the effects of our trips, we have established goals, which you can find as highlighted objectives in this report. With a team of students and staff, we review all individually booked travel plans. We process relevant data into a specially developed program. This allows us to count the number of booked excursions and stays in small-scale accommodations for each travel plan. Additionally, we include transportation to and from the destination, the number of miles travelled, and the associated CO₂ emissions in our measurements. With the collected data, we can precisely identify what works well and what we can improve.

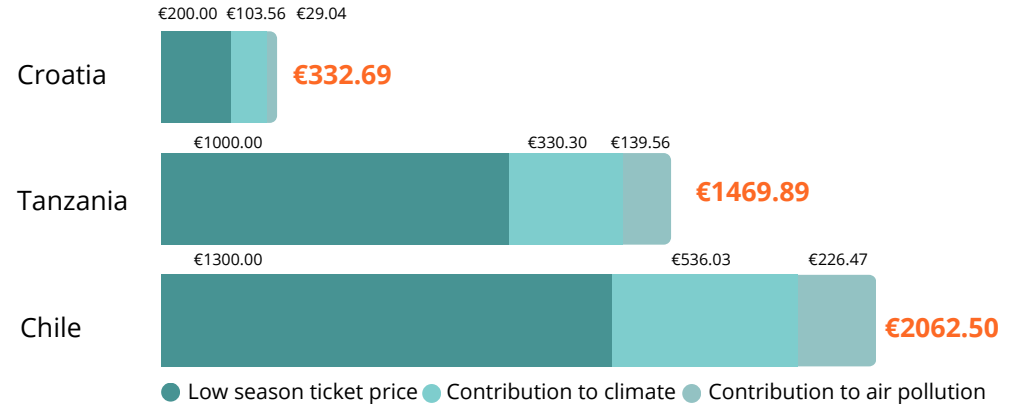
The true price of transportation



THE TRUE PRICE

When going on a vacation, you can choose to travel by bus, train, car, boat, or plane. All these transportation options leave traces. For example, they cause air pollution, noise pollution, and greenhouse gases emissions. Some more than others. The costs of these negative effects are not included in the price you currently pay for a train or plane ticket, even though those costs exist. Think about healthcare costs for people who develop lung problems due to air pollution. Also, consider the costs of restoring nature lost due to nitrogen emissions from airplanes. When you add the price of these negative effects to the price you currently pay, you get the true price.

THE TRUE PRICE OF YOUR FLIGHT



HIDDEN COSTS

In 2022, we, in collaboration with the Impact Institute, calculated the true price of various modes of transportation. We chose to calculate the costs for climate change and air pollution caused by trains, cars, and airplanes. In the figure above, you can see what an airline ticket currently costs and what it should cost when you factor in the hidden costs of climate change and air pollution.

The Fair Travel Guide

To bring about change, you need to understand the problem, identify possible solutions, and determine your role in it. We want to guide our travellers through that change and help them choose a new way of travelling. That's why we came up with the Fair Travel Guide. In this guide, they can see the positive and negative consequences of a vacation in a particular country. This way, we contribute to awareness about the impacts of a trip, and travellers can make more sustainable choices. For example, by traveling to Slovenia by train instead of by plane.

WORK IN PROGRESS

The Fair Travel Guide on this page is an example. The data in the blocks is fictional and is currently only available in Dutch. We are working diligently to gather the correct data and compile a Fair Travel Guide for each country.

POSITIVE IMPACT

In the left column of the Fair Travel Guide, you will find the positive effects of a trip. The scores are determined based on the impact we measure for each destination. You can learn more about this starting from page 25.

NEGATIVE IMPACT

In the right column, you will find the true cost of various modes of transportation. In this example, you can see that an airline ticket to Slovenia should be twice as expensive if you were to account for the damage to the climate and air pollution. Although a train ticket is currently much more expensive, the costs for the damage caused by the trip are significantly lower.

Eerlijke Reiswijzer

Positieve impact Slovenië

Bij al onze reizen streven we naar een zo **positief mogelijke impact op mens en planeet**. Denk hierbij aan duurzame vervoeren, het bevorderen van lokale werkgelegenheid en het actief helpen om cultureel erfgoed en natuurgebieden in stand te houden. **Meer weten over hoe we deze impact meten?** [Klik hier voor meer info.](#)

Overnachting Impact Score 80%

Tijdens je reis verblijf je zoveel mogelijk in kleinschalige, duurzame accommodaties. Zo is er veel ruimte voor persoonlijke aandacht en heb je een minimale voetafdruk.

Excursies Impact Score 60%

De meeste activiteiten en excursies worden georganiseerd door lokale ondernemers en zijn gericht op kennismaken met de bewoners. Zo zorg je voor werkgelegenheid en ontstaat er culturele uitwisseling.

Gidsen en chauffeurs Impact Score 40%

Tijdens je rondreis worden zoveel mogelijk lokale gidsen en chauffeurs ingezet. Zo leer je meer over het lokale leven en zorg je voor een inkomen voor de bewoners.

Natuurbescherming Impact Score 80%

Je bezoekt beschermde natuurgebieden en nationale parken. Zo ontdek je prachtige plekken en draag je bij het behoud van de natuur en biodiversiteit.

Slow Travel Impact Score 60%

We inspireren je om zo lang mogelijk op reis te gaan en zo min mogelijk kilometers af te leggen. Zo leer je een plek echt kennen en veroorzaakt je minder CO2-uitstoot.

Negatieve impact Slovenië

Eerlijk is eerlijk, je reis heeft ook negatieve effecten. Het grootste deel hiervan wordt veroorzaakt door de manier waarop je reist. Het ene vervoerstype is namelijk minder schadelijk dan het andere. Vliegen naar en van je bestemming veroorzaakt bijvoorbeeld tot wel **80%** van de totale CO2-uitstoot van je reis. **Klik hier voor meer info.**

Vliegen Slovenië

Prijs ticket laagseizoen	€ 90
Bijslag klimaat	€ 92,48
Bijslag luchtvervuiling	€ 25,01
Echte prijs*	€ 208,39

Auto Slovenië

Gemiddelde prijs	€ 270,93
Bijslag klimaat	€ 42,31
Bijslag luchtvervuiling	€ 15,92
Echte prijs*	€ 329,16

Trein Slovenië

Prijs ticket laagseizoen	€ 320
Bijslag klimaat	€ 9,32
Bijslag luchtvervuiling	€ 3,16
Echte prijs*	€ 332,48

*Naar de berekening van de Echte prijs heeft Better Places gebruik gemaakt van de True Price methodologie. [Klik hier voor meer informatie.](#)

Op de hoogte blijven

Wil je op de hoogte blijven over hoe jij jouw positieve impact kan vergroten en je negatieve impact verder kan verkleinen? Schrijf je dan voor onze nieuwsbrief en ontvang tips en inspiratie voor jouw eerlijke reis.

Ja, graag!



Electric to Slovenia

🔍 Read the [full story](#) of Erna en Michel

"We read about travelling to Slovenia with an electric car on the Better Places website and thought, 'Why not?' Together with travel expert Ruud, we put together an itinerary, and we discovered that it works very well. We charged along the route and sometimes used a special cable to charge at accommodations. The owners found it quite interesting. Maybe we've planted a seed, and there might be a charging station at their place in the future."

2022

POSITIVE IMPACT

BETTER PLACES

Objectives for positive impact

This is an overview of all positive impact objectives for 2022. Click on the objective to go to the page with explanations and results.



A minimum of 50% of the overnight stays take place in small-scale/sustainable accommodations, homestays, or farmstays.



A minimum of two 'meet the local' excursions in all booked trips.



In 2022, we did not have a specific objective regarding the use of local guides and drivers.



In 2022, we did not have a concrete objective for protecting nature and cultural heritage



- **All sample trips for destinations outside Europe have a minimum travel duration of 17 days**
- **All sample trips for destinations within Europe & the Middle East have a minimum trip duration of 9 days**
- **75% of all trips undertaken outside Europe & the Middle East have a minimum trip duration of 17 days**



70% of our trips take place outside of high season



In none of our trips child-unfriendly activities are included

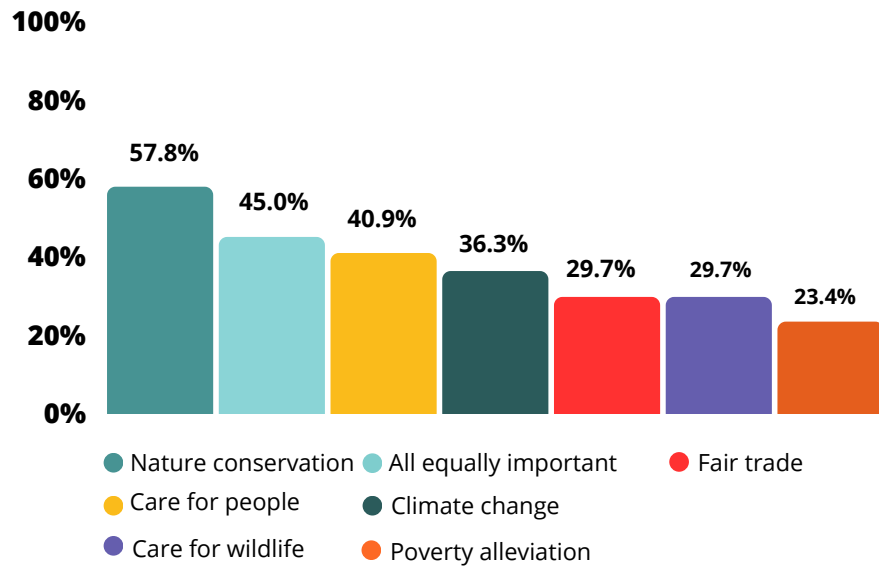


In none of our trips animal-unfriendly activities are included

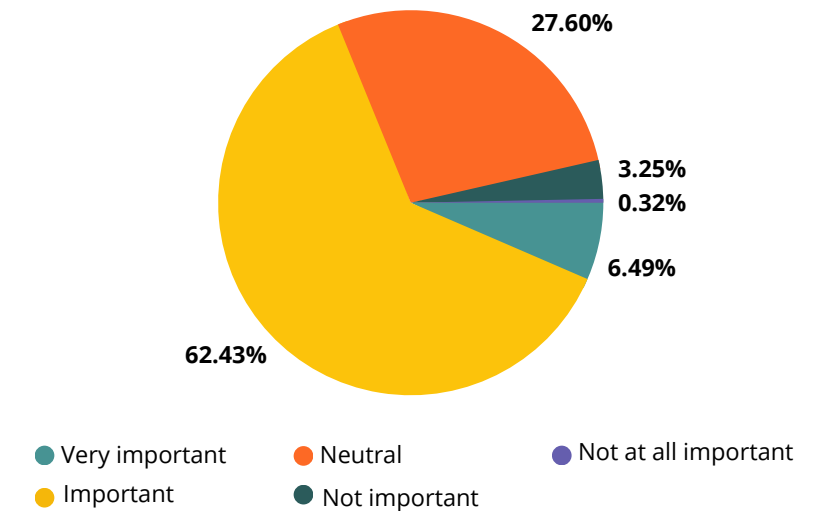
Traveller survey

At the beginning of 2023, we sent a survey to 1,865 individuals who had travelled with us between 2020 and 2022. A total of 324 of them completed the survey. The results help us understand the importance of sustainability to our customers, what sustainability means to them, and how they experienced our efforts during their trip.

WHICH ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABILITY ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?



HOW IMPORTANT IS SUSTAINABILITY WHEN YOU TRAVEL?



“

"In reality, they are all equally important, with different emphases in each country. All topics deserve attention for sustainable travel."

”

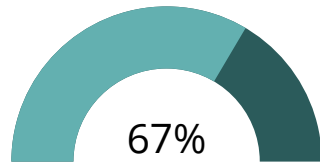
“

"I prioritize choosing a local organisation that takes into account both people and nature. I am willing to sacrifice comfort if it means staying in hotels run by local entrepreneurs, for example."

”

Travel expert survey

At the beginning of 2023, we sent a survey to all our local travel experts. The survey results show us how important sustainability is in making certain choices. It also helps us understand how Better Places' mission contributes to the sustainability of our travel experts' practices.



have changed their business operations due to our sustainability checklist.

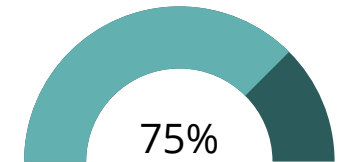
“

"The checklist and active involvement of Better Places have created awareness and turned the vague desire to act more sustainably into practice. This is reflected in more attention to short layovers, clean activities (such as hiking, boating, cycling), and Green Hotels."

— Travel expert Ruud —

SLOVENIA

”



indicate that they have developed new sustainable products.

“

"We are continuously adding more tours to our website, including activities to meet the local population, family-owned wineries, and so on. Right now, I want to publish a tour with overnight stays at campsites owned by local communities in remote locations."

— Travel expert Mari —

GEORGIA

”

Overnight stays

When organising our trips, we use sustainable and small-scale accommodation and homestays as much as possible. This provides a special experience for our travellers. At the same time, we thereby support local entrepreneurs and help improve the living environment and standard of living of the residents. When choosing accommodation, our travel experts use our [sustainable accommodation checklist](#).



OBJECTIVE 2022



A minimum of 50% of the overnight stays take place in small-scale/sustainable accommodations, homestays, or farmstays.

WHAT WE DID

- ✓ Established criteria for selection of small-scale accommodations
- ✓ Encouraged travel experts to include more small-scale and sustainable accommodations, homestays and farmstays in sample trips and travel proposals
- ✓ Provided feedback to travel experts if analysis showed that few of these accommodations were included in the trips
- ✓ Posted blogs on website about these accommodations
- ✓ Highlighted sustainable and small-scale accommodations in sample trips, newsletters and social media posts

RESULTS

To measure how many overnight stays were booked in small-scale and sustainable accommodation, we first had to match all booked accommodation to a category: sustainable, small-scale, homestay/farmstay or other. We therefore compiled a list of criteria that an accommodation must meet to fit into one of these categories. We had to research thousands of accommodation places in more than 50 different countries. That turned out to be unfeasible. We decided to simplify the method. In 2023, we will map the results using new criteria.

Excursions

We believe it is important that the people at the destination benefit as much as possible from tourism. We ensure that in all our trips, there are small-scale excursions organized by local entrepreneurs, with a focus on interacting with the residents. This way, the residents have an income, and travellers have an unforgettable experience.



OBJECTIVE 2022



A minimum of two 'meet the local' excursions in all booked trips.

WHAT WE DID

- ✓ Established criteria for excursions that focus on contact with residents
- ✓ Encouraged our travel experts to include at least two of these excursions in sample trips and travel proposals
- ✓ Provided feedback to travel experts if our research showed that few of these excursions were included in booked trips
Posted blogs on the website for each destination about the excursion offerings
- ✓ Highlighted excursions in sample trips, newsletters and social media posts

RESULTS

While collecting data for impact measurement, we found that there was ambiguity around the definition of 'meet the local excursions'. Moreover, it was not always clear which excursion was actually booked, and which was mentioned as a tip in a travel proposal. Therefore, we decided to stop collecting data on meet-the-local excursions in 2022. We adjusted the criteria and decided to measure the data again from January 2023.

Local guides and drivers

During our tours, local guides and drivers are used as much as possible. By doing so, we contribute to employment at the destination. In many countries, our travel experts work with permanent guides and drivers who are guaranteed a fair and liveable income.



OBJECTIVE 2022



In 2022, we did not have a specific objective regarding the use of local guides and drivers.

WHAT WE DID

- ✓ Established criteria for using local guides and drivers
- ✓ Encouraged travel experts to include more activities with local guides/drivers in sample tours and trip proposals
- ✓ Provided feedback to travel experts if analysis showed that no or few guides/drivers were used when organising a round trip
- ✓ Posted blogs on the added value of hiring local guides and drivers
- ✓ Highlighted excursions with guides and drivers in sample trips, newsletters and social media posts

RESULTS

By hiring local guides and drivers, we increase the social impact of our trips. It is an important part of how we operate. Therefore, we would like to measure how many guides and drivers are hired for our trips. In 2022, we tried different measurement methods. Unfortunately, we have not yet managed to find a way to count the hundreds of employees in dozens of different countries and draw a conclusion.



Local guide José

[read more about guide José Morales](#)

"I love my profession because I love my country. I enjoy sharing that with others; the history, architecture, culture, and nature. What I find most beautiful is when people truly learn about our Mayan culture and appreciate my tour."

Natural and cultural heritage

Visiting natural areas is a significant reason for many people to go on vacation. Tourism can be a means to preserve and protect natural areas and cultural heritage. The proceeds from entrance tickets pay for guides and park rangers and contribute to the maintenance, restoration, and cleanliness of the natural areas and cultural heritage. Additionally, tourism in these areas provides employment opportunities, giving residents a reason to safeguard the environment, wildlife, and heritage.



OBJECTIVE 2022



In 2022, we did not have a concrete objective for protecting nature and cultural heritage

WHAT WE DID

- ✓ Encouraged travel experts to include more activities aimed at protecting nature and cultural heritage in sample trips and trip proposals
- ✓ Provided feedback to travel experts when analysis showed that few such activities were included in trips
- ✓ Highlighted activity in sample trips that contribute to conservation of nature and cultural heritage.

RESULTS

We are still looking for a way to measure our travellers' contribution to protecting nature and cultural heritage. Simply counting the number of tickets sold does not work. There are many countries where natural areas and heritage can be visited for free and maintenance is paid for by subsidies. Tourism then contributes by creating jobs, for example through demand for accommodation, restaurants and guides.

Slow travel

We encourage our travellers to travel longer and slower. By extending the duration of their trips, there is more time to make a positive impact. We also limit the number of kilometers travelled at the destination, keeping carbon emissions low and allowing travellers to stay in an area for a longer period. This leads to more meaningful experiences. Ultimately, it provides more time for authentic encounters with the local population. At the same time, local residents benefit more from tourism when travellers spend an extended period in one place.

OBJECTIVES 2022



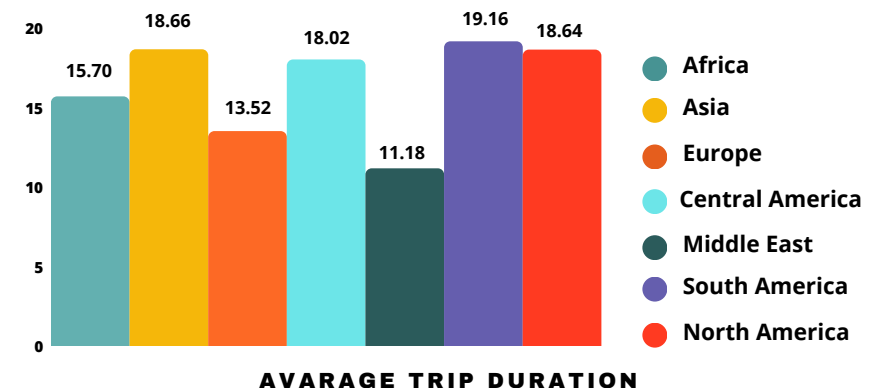
- All sample trips for destinations outside Europe have a minimum travel duration of 17 days
- All sample trips for destinations within Europe & the Middle East have a minimum trip duration of 9 days
- 75% of all trips undertaken outside Europe & the Middle East have a minimum trip duration of 17 days

WHAT WE DID

- ✓ Adjusted most sample trips on the website to a minimum trip length
- ✓ Provided feedback to travel experts when analysis showed that trips fell below the minimum trip duration
- ✓ Posted blogs on the website about the benefits of slow travel
- ✓ Featured slow travel in newsletters and social media posts
- ✓ Provided travel experts with tips on how to motivate travellers to take longer trips
- ✓ Advised travel experts outside Europe not to consider applications for trips shorter than 8 days, or advise travellers to travel longer.

RESULTS

58.7% of trips undertaken outside Europe and the Middle East lasted at least 17 days. We missed the target.



Tourism dispersion

In many places, heavy tourist flows pose a threat to the environment and the livability of a location. To counter overtourism, we encourage travellers to visit during the shoulder and off-peak seasons, namely between August 21st and December 20th, and between January 2nd and July 1st. Additionally, we inspire people to travel to lesser-known destinations. This way, the crowds are dispersed, providing both travellers and residents with a better experience, and also benefiting residents in less touristy regions from tourism.

OBJECTIVE 2022



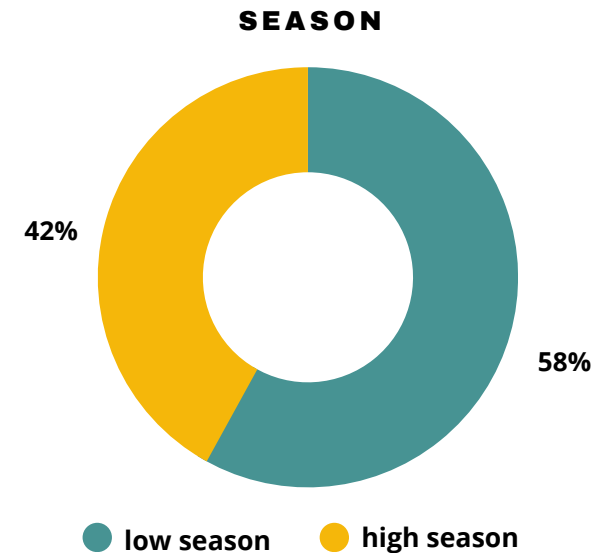
70% of our trips take place outside of high season

WHAT WE DID

- ✓ Encouraged travel experts to recommend alternatives to the busiest places at the destination when departing during the high season
- ✓ Posted blogs about excursions and accommodations off the beaten path
- ✓ Focused on off-season travel in sample trips, newsletters, and social media posts

RESULTS

In 2022, 40% of our travellers were families with school-age children. They are bound by school holidays, making it usually impossible for this group to travel during the low season. Therefore, achieving this goal is challenging. However, we do notice that travellers who do not have school holidays to consider almost always opt for off-season travel.





Alianki's dream

🔍 [Read the story of Alianki](#)

"Before I started this job, I couldn't even dream of providing for my family. With the success of my tours, my life has changed *poco a poco*. Now, I have a piece of land, and I'm building a house. The example I want to set for my daughter is that she can create her own future."

Child-friendly activities

Children are not tourist attractions. It sounds logical, yet there are vacation activities that - often unwittingly - are not in the best interest of children. That's why we have established strict rules for activities involving children. For instance, we do not offer visits to schools and orphanages: these places should be safe havens for children, where they are not disturbed by curious tourists. Additionally, we caution against the effects of giving out candy and money and engaging in volunteer work with vulnerable individuals.

OBJECTIVE 2022



In none of our trips child-unfriendly activities are included

WHAT WE DID

- ✓ "We have posted blogs on our website about the dangers of [distributing pens and candy](#), as well as the risks of volunteering
- ✓ We have also published blogs about [photographing people](#), especially children.
- ✓ We shared tips on [child-friendly travel](#).
- ✓ In our newsletters and social media posts, we emphasise child-friendly travel.
- ✓ In conversations with our local travel experts, we have examined which activities may not meet our guidelines.
- ✓ Where necessary, we have adjusted the travel itinerary and/or looked for alternative excursions."

RESULTS

As part of our impact measurement efforts, we thoroughly reviewed all excursions offered in 2022. There were indeed some visits that did not align with our child welfare policy, such as visits to schools or orphanages. In consultation with the respective travel experts, we adjusted travel itineraries or sought alternatives for these excursions. One of the accommodations we work closely with decided, following discussions with our travel experts, to no longer offer visits to the local orphanage to its guests. When travellers inquire about such excursions, we explain why we do not offer them. Customer feedback indicates that clients are becoming increasingly aware of such activities and do not wish to participate in them.

Animal-friendly activities

Wild animals should be wild. That's why we have a strict 'no touching, no feeding' policy when it comes to activities involving animals. We exclusively offer animal-friendly activities where travellers can observe wild animals from a respectful distance without disturbing them in their natural behavior. This way, we give animals all over the world a chance for a healthy and happy life.

OBJECTIVE 2022



In none of our trips animal-unfriendly activities are included

WHAT WE DID

- ✓ We have collaborated with [World Animal Protection](#) to establish a strict [animal welfare policy](#), which we have published on our website and shared with our travel experts
- ✓ We have posted a blog on our website explaining [why we do not offer fishing and hunting activities](#).
- ✓ In our newsletters and social media posts, we have highlighted animal-friendly travel.
- ✓ In discussions with our local travel experts, we have examined which activities may not meet our guidelines. Where necessary, we have adjusted the travel itinerary and/or sought animal-friendly alternatives.
- ✓ We provided tips for vegetarian and plant-based eating while traveling and discouraged the consumption of wild and endangered animals.

RESULTS

As part of our impact assessment, we thoroughly reviewed all excursions offered in 2022. When we identified activities that did not align with our animal welfare policy, we initiated discussions with the respective travel experts. We had conversations and worked together to find alternative activities. Additionally, we provide our travel experts with informative resources to help explain to customers why we do not offer such activities when they inquire about them. Activities that were sporadically booked in 2022 and were removed from our offerings as a result of the impact assessment include shark cage diving, a fishing excursion, and the release of baby turtles.

What else we do



VEGETARIAN FOOD

Tasting the local cuisine is an important part of experiencing and getting to know another culture. The best way to reduce your personal carbon footprint is by eating plant-based, even while travelling.

WHAT WE DID

- ✓ Requested travel experts to include tips for vegetarian and vegan dishes and restaurants in the pre-departure travel information
- ✓ Posted blogs with tips for vegetarian and vegan food at the destination



TRAVELLING PLASTIC-FREE

At many destinations, plastic waste is a significant issue. That's why we help our travellers in using less single-use plastic while on their journey.

WHAT WE DID

- ✓ Requested travel experts to encourage the use of water taps and filters at all accommodations
- ✓ Posted blogs with tips for plastic-free travel by destination
- ✓ Travellers can order a Water-to-Go bottle



TIPS FOR MORE SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

At every destination, there are steps you can take to travel more sustainably. In warm countries, you can turn off the air conditioning when leaving your hotel. In cold countries, consider the heating.

WHAT WE DID

- ✓ Requested travel experts to share country-specific tips for more sustainable travel in their travel proposals
- ✓ Shared general tips for sustainable travel in newsletters and social media posts

What our travel experts say

How our vision works in practise

OVERNIGHT STAYS



98% say sustainability is a criterion when selecting accommodation.

EXCURSIONS



86% support Community Based Tourism with their travel offer and include excursions in their travel proposal involving interaction with local residents

“

We only work with accommodations that offer fair working conditions and preferably also support projects committed to conservation or community development. We prefer places where they use local products and contribute to raising awareness.

— Travel expert Dilo —

MALAWI

”

“

We always include a few excursions with local residents in our proposals. Even if the budget is low. By including these activities, we can show the traveller what we are all about in our initial proposal. If they have a high budget, we prefer to include more excursions rather than offering hotel upgrades.

— Travel expert Monique —

CUBA

”

What our travel experts say

How our vision works in practise

LOCAL GUIDES AND DRIVERS



offer training for employees and suppliers, including guides and drivers.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE



include excursions that contribute to nature conservation in their travel proposals.

“

We provide our guides with ethics training, with a focus on becoming aware of their own position. For instance, what to do when a customer requests something with which you, as a guide, disagree. We have engaged in conversations about such topics together.

— Travel expert Karin —

TANZANIA

”

“

The contributions to national parks and private reserves in Costa Rica go directly towards conservation efforts. We also strive to offer more projects actively involved in biodiversity restoration and reforestation.

— Travel expert Miranda —

COSTA RICA

”

What our travel experts say

How our vision works in practise

SLOW TRAVEL



You receive a travel request for a 7-day trip, the client plans to take 2 domestic flights. How would you motivate this client to travel more responsibly?

“

For all requests of less than 20 days, I recommend focusing on only the north or only the south of the country and omitting the domestic flight. This way, clients can really enjoy their trip and spend as little time as possible on the road.

— Travel expert Judith —

NAMIBIA/SOUTH-AFRICA

”

KIND- EN DIERVRIENDELIJKE ACTIVITEITEN



supports excluding excursions that are not in the best interests of people, animals and nature.

“

We support ACDB (an NGO taking action to conserve wildlife and their habitats) and partner with them for our wildlife programmes. Clients go hiking with a specialised wildlife guide to learn about flora and fauna, conservation and see wild animals in their natural habitat.

— Travel expert Maria —

ROMANIA

”

2022

NEGATIVE IMPACT

BETTER PLACES



Objectives for negative impact

This is an overview of all negative impact objectives for 2022. Click on the objective to go to the page with explanations and results.



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



We aim to reduce the CO₂ emissions from transport to and from the office, as well as for study trips and trade fairs attended by our staff.



25% of our trips take place within Europe



- **For 5% of all booked trips to a destination within Europe, travellers use the train to reach their destination.**
- **For 5% of all trips within Europe, travellers use an electric car to reach their destination.**



80% of people flying to a destination in Europe opt for a direct flight.



- **Up to 25% of booked trips include a domestic flight.**
- **Up to 10% of booked trips include 2 or more domestic flights.**

Reducing climate impact

The time for offsetting is over. We must fly less if we want to reduce our impact on the climate



WHAT WE STAND FOR

By signing the [Glasgow Declaration](#), we pledge to emit at least 55% less CO₂e by 2030 compared to 2019. If we want to meet the Paris climate targets, we must do everything we can to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. Only then can the travel sector continue to grow. To reach that goal, other forms of transport must be further developed and promoted. Moreover, measures must be taken to reduce the number of long flights. In 2022, [we stopped offsetting](#) carbon emissions from our trips. Since then, we have been fully committed to reducing our overall emissions.



WHAT WE DO

In a world without greenhouse gas emissions, there are still opportunities for tourism to grow in passenger numbers and overnight stays. That is the encouraging message of [The Travel Foundation's](#) report [Envisioning Tourism in 2030 and beyond](#). The main way to reduce our climate impact is to fly less (far). In 2019, we started offering destinations in Europe. We encourage travellers to choose train or car instead of plane. This does not mean the end of long-distance travel; however, we do encourage travellers to take a long-distance trip at most once every three years instead of every year.

Reducing climate impact

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.



Reducing climate impact: scope 1 & 2

Better Places is an online travel organisation. We work with local partners who put together and execute our trips. As a result, our negative impact in scope 1 and 2 is minimal. We choose to focus on scope 3 emissions. Therefore, we have no target for reducing impact in scope 1 and 2.



CO₂ EMISSIONS IN SCOPE 1

Scope 1 refers to the CO₂ emissions we cause directly and over which we have direct control. Think of company cars, machinery and shop premises. Better Places is an online travel organisation and therefore has no significant assets. Emissions in scope 1 are therefore minimal.



CO₂ EMISSIONS IN SCOPE 2

We rent office space in a multi-tenant business building. To calculate CO₂ emissions in scope 2, such as gas and electricity, we look at the total consumption for the entire building. The area of our office and the share of common space amounts to about 10% of the building. Therefore, we include 1/10 of the consumption in scope 2.

Reducing climate impact: scope 3

The travel industry lacks a uniform measurement method for calculating carbon emissions from travel. This creates confusion about what is and is not included, and it is easy to be guilty of greenwashing - consciously or unconsciously. When looking for the right measurement method, we use tools that use the most up-to-date formulas and opt for the least favourable outcome. We would rather be too high, than count less CO₂e emissions than we actually cause. Here we explain *how* we calculate CO₂e emissions from our trips.



CO₂E EMISSIONS FROM AIR TRAVEL

Most travel organisations choose not to include the CO₂e emissions of the flight (scope 3) in their calculation, because - like us - they do not sell the flight themselves. We do choose to include the flight. **Up to 95% of a trip's total CO₂e emissions are caused by the flight needed to get to the destination.** Emissions from accommodation, food and local transport are negligible in the grand scheme of things. Moreover, you can eliminate much of the emissions at destination: you eat, sleep and move around at home too. That does not apply to air travel. Measuring the CO₂e emissions of the flight is most relevant for travel companies.



OTHER EMISSIONS FROM OUR TRIPS

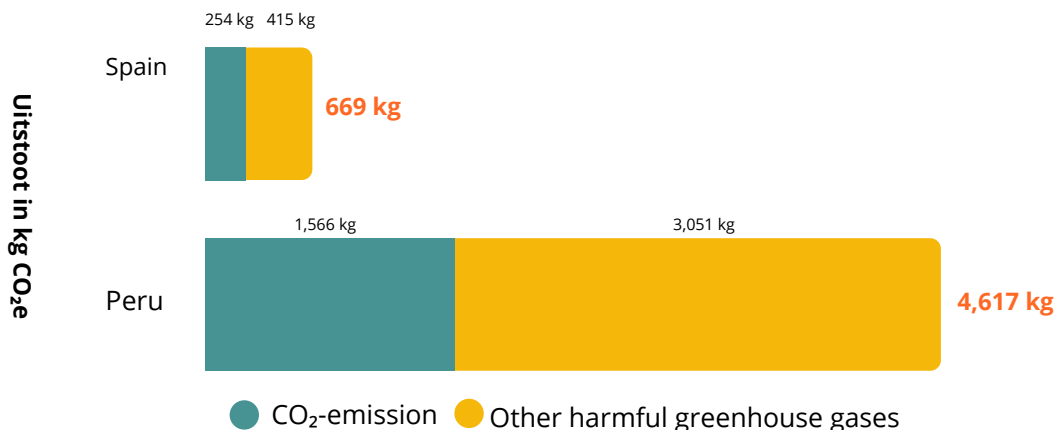
We also measure the pollution caused by other means of transport travellers choose to get to destinations, such as trains and cars. To calculate train and car emissions, we use [Greentripper's](#) calculation tool. Other forms of emissions in scope 3 that we measure are those from lodging, entertainment and transport, excluding domestic flights. For these, we assume 20kg CO₂ pppd for couples, 15kg CO₂ pppd for bookings with more than 3 people and 25kgCO₂ pppd for single travellers. We calculate CO₂e emissions from domestic flights with the help of Atmosfair's calculation tool.

Reducing climate impact: scope 3

OTHER GREENHOUSE GASES

In addition to CO₂, aircraft also produce other greenhouse gases and pollution. Think of nitrogen oxides, soot and water vapour. To avoid greenwashing, it is important that those emissions are also included in the calculation. To arrive at one figure, we convert those other emissions to CO₂ equivalents (CO₂e). One CO₂e equals the effect that the emission of 1 kilogram of CO₂ has. In all our calculations of emissions from flying, we assume CO₂e. It is therefore possible that **the emissions of a flight are much higher with us than with a travel organisation that does not take the other greenhouse gases into account.**

AMSTERDAM-MADRID VS AMSTERDAM-LIMA BY PLANE



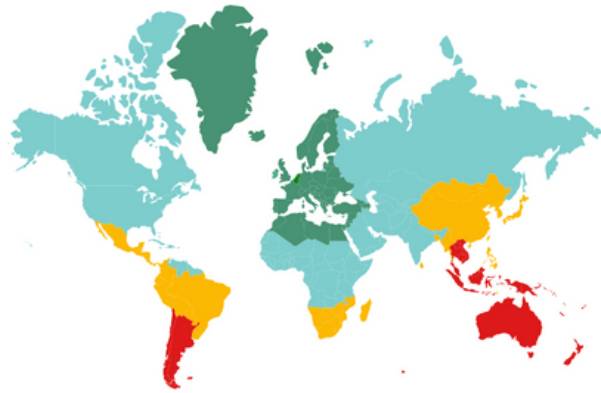
CO₂ EMISSIONS CALCULATION

When calculating CO₂e emissions from domestic and international flights, we use Atmosfair's calculation tool. Unlike many other calculation tools, Atmosfair also includes other pollutants in the calculation (CO₂e).

In addition, [Atmosfair](#) uses a higher RF factor. The RF factor multiplies the total CO₂e emissions and is therefore also called a CO₂ multiplier. This multiplier is needed because the warming effect due to water vapour and nitrogen emissions above 10km is much stronger than when an aircraft flies lower. Therefore, CO₂e emissions from long - and therefore higher - flights must be multiplied to give a fair picture of the climate effects of air travel. Atmosfair uses a CO₂ multiplier of 3 for aircraft flying higher than 9km, making it the highest multiplier for long-haul flights. For shorter-distance flights, the multiplier is lower than for long-haul flights

Reducing climate impact: scope 3

CO₂E EMISSION BY ZONE

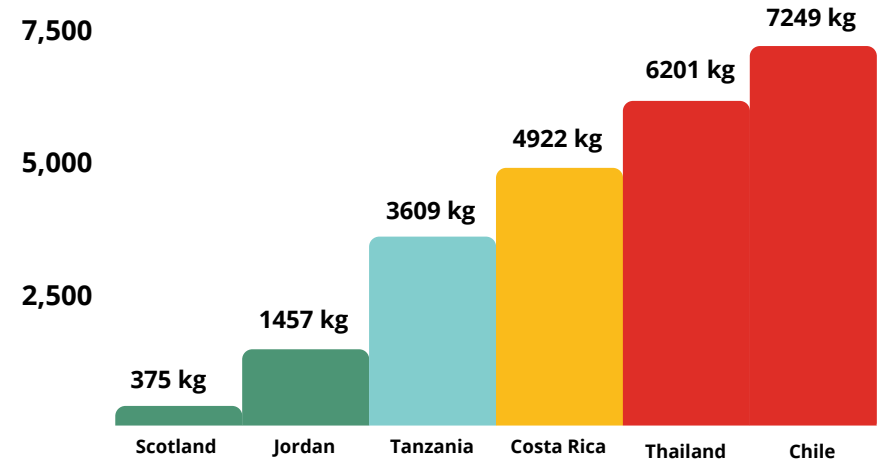


Zone	CO ₂ e in kg
● Zone 1	300 - 2,000
● Zone 2	2,001 - 4,000
● Zone 3	4,001 - 6,000
● Zone 4	6,001 - 8,000

ZONES

If you do choose to fly, the distance and altitude at which you fly do matter significantly. Going for a round trip to Thailand for a summer vacation? That would result in 6,200 kg of CO₂ equivalent emissions. Opting for some sunshine in Croatia? You'd emit 501 kg of CO₂e. That's a substantial difference. To make this difference clear, we have divided the world into zones, as shown in the image. Flights to countries in the green zone cause the least emissions, while flights to destinations in zone 4 generate the most pollution.

CLIMATE IMPACT OF FLIGHT TO DESTINATION



CLOSER TO HOME

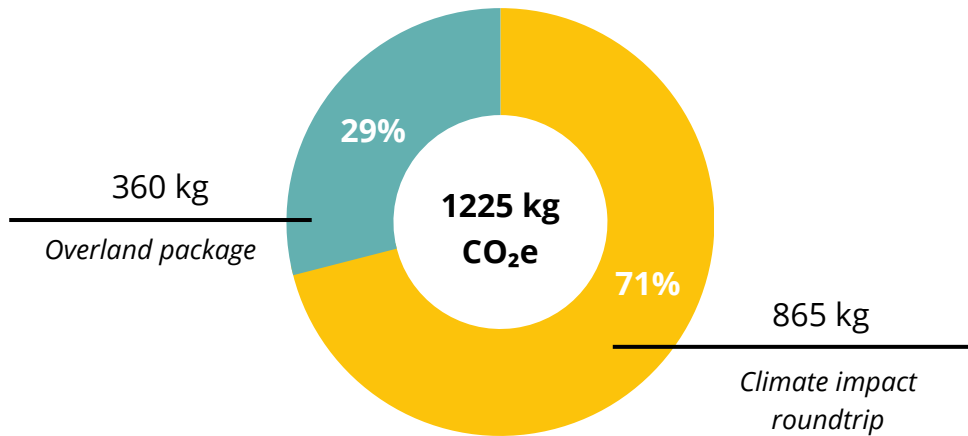
Up to 95% of the CO₂ equivalent emissions from a long-distance vacation come from the flight. That's where the most significant reduction can be achieved: flying less. We are doing this by offering more travel options within Europe. By the end of 2022, we had 18 European destinations in our portfolio. We added four of them in 2022. Additionally, we have begun organizing guided hiking trips in small groups within Europe.

Comparing CO₂e emissions

FLIGHT TO SICILY

CO₂e emission

Based on an 18-day trip

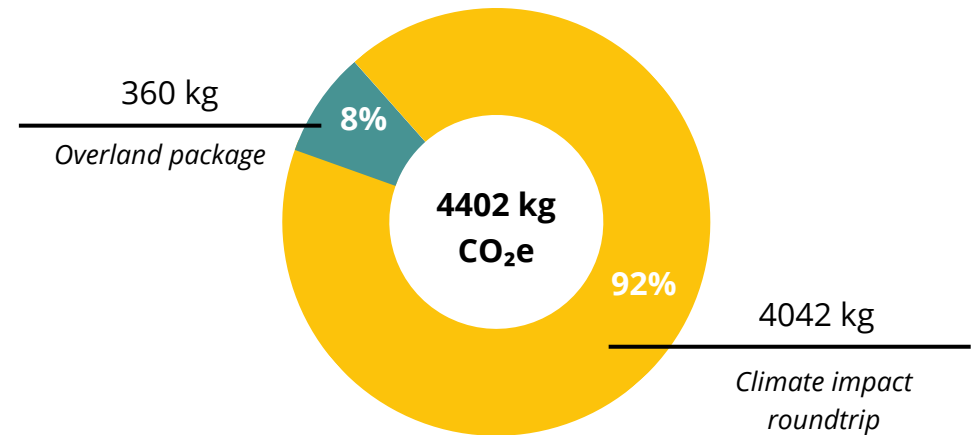


Source: Atmosfair and Greentripper

FLIGHT TO CUBA

CO₂e emission

Based on an 18-day trip



Source: Atmosfair and Greentripper

NEAR OF FAR?

In the above figures, we are comparing the total CO₂e emissions of an 18-day tour to Sicily and Cuba. During a trip to Cuba, 92% of the total CO₂e emissions from the vacation are caused by the flights to and from the destination. That's why we are focusing on reducing the number of long-haul flights. At the same time, tourism is an indispensable source of income for many Cubans. We aim to have the largest possible positive impact on the country through our travels.

FOCUS ON EUROPE

Even when a traveller flies to a European destination, the total CO₂e emissions are significantly lower than when they fly long distances. In the above comparison, a round trip to Sicily results in over 3000 kg less CO₂e per person compared to a round trip to Cuba. That's why we offer comprehensive trips in Europe that can be booked instead of, rather than in addition to, long-distance vacations.

Action Plan for a Sustainable Planet



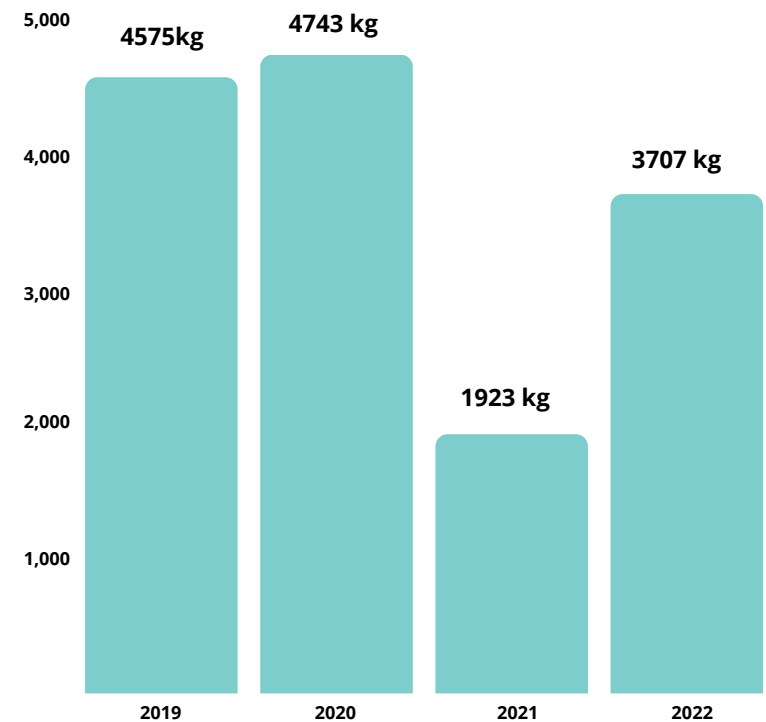
Our plan is to reduce the CO₂e emissions per passenger per day by 5% each year starting from 2020. By 2030, we aim to be 55% below the 2019 level.

CO₂E EMISSIONS PER PERSON PER DAY (KG)

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

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 Planet, demonstrating how we will reduce our emissions by 55%. Since 2016, we have been measuring the average CO₂e emissions of all our trips, including the flights required to reach the destination.

TOTAL CO₂E EMISSIONS PER TRAVELLER



CO₂e emissions per person (kg)

Reducing climate impact: scope 3

We also cause indirect CO₂ emissions by transporting our employees to and from the office, for visiting trade fairs and taking study trips. We encourage our employees to travel by public transport or cycle as much as possible for work-related trips.

OBJECTIVE 2022



We aim to reduce the CO₂ emissions from transport to and from the office, as well as for study trips and trade fairs attended by our staff.

WHAT WE DO

- ✓ For study trips in Europe, we always travel distances up to 700km by train.
- ✓ Does an employee still travel by plane within Europe? Then the minimum duration of travel is 1 week.
- ✓ For study trips outside Europe, the minimum travel duration is 2 weeks.
- ✓ Employees receive a bicycle allowance of 0.21 eurocents per kilometre if they cycle more than 5 kilometres to the office or railway station.

In 2022, total CO₂ emissions from transporting employees to and from the office and other workplaces was 6819kg of CO₂. We added up the emissions from train, car, and scooter trips of 15 employees and 9 interns.

Total CO₂e emissions from other work-related transport, such as for study trips and fairs, were 3421kg CO₂e. Of the 14 study trips and fairs, six were made by plane and eight by train. These work-related trips included visits to our colleagues in Berlin and trade fairs in Helsinki, Lisbon and Ljubljana, among others.



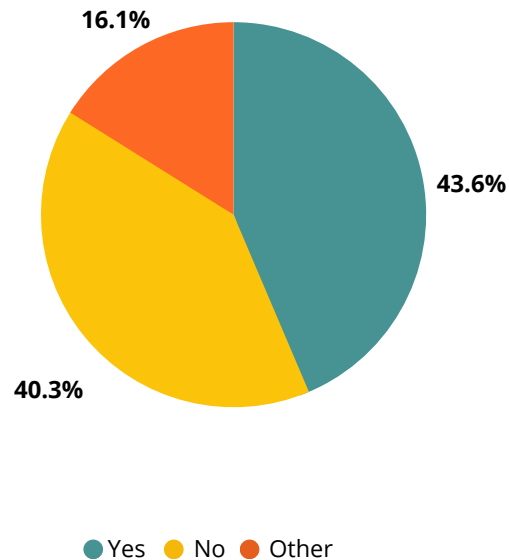
The European alternative

🔍 Meet [travel expert Hayley](#)

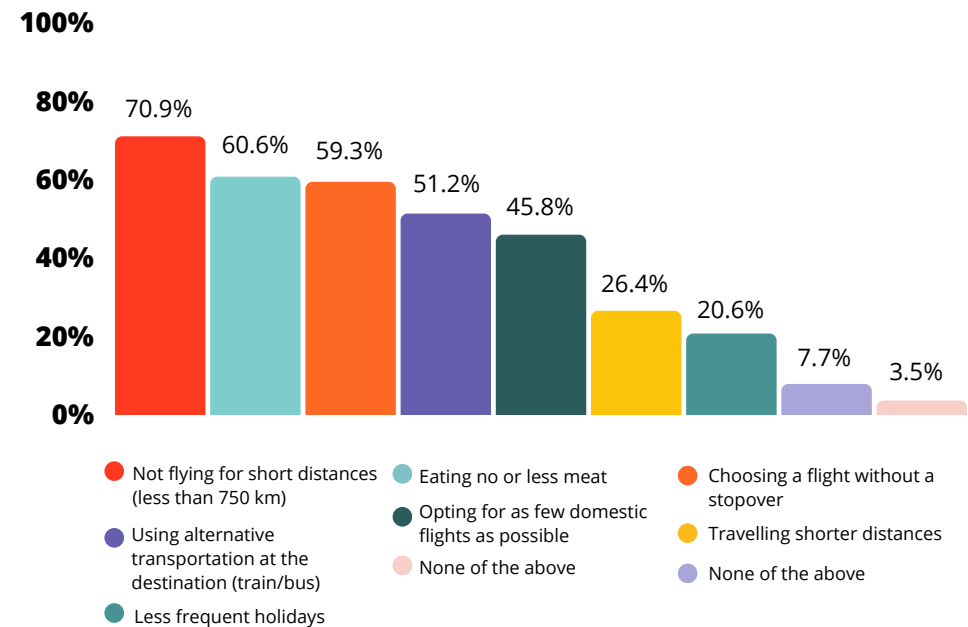
"Montenegro is the Patagonia of Europe. It is the ultimate proof that you don't always need to go far to fulfill a certain need. That's why, for me, the collaboration with Better Places and their sustainable mission is a very logical one."

Travellers' survey

DO YOU TAKE CO₂ EMISSIONS INTO ACCOUNT WHEN BOOKING YOUR HOLIDAY?



WHAT MEASURES ARE ACCEPTABLE TO YOU TO REDUCE YOUR CO₂ EMISSIONS?

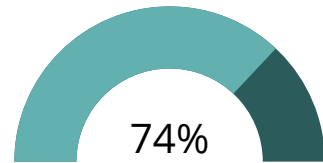


“ We could also choose not to fly, but we love countries like Costa Rica too much for that... I will, however, fly less frequently for weekend getaways. ”

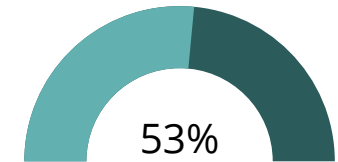
“ A combination of travelling less frequently and shorter distances: I really enjoy travelling, but we're trying to go far (by plane) once every two years and use the car for shorter trips in the other years. ”

Travel experts' survey

At the beginning of 2023, we conducted a survey among all our local travel experts. The results of the survey show us how important sustainability is in making certain choices. This also helps us understand how Better Places' mission contributes to the sustainability of our travel experts' practices.



takes into account the CO₂ emissions when creating a travel proposal



has changed their business operations regarding CO₂ emissions due to their collaboration with Better Places.

TRAVEL EXPERT MARI - GEORGIA

“ We have transitioned to using more fuel-efficient 4x4 vehicles when planning self-drives. If someone wishes to spend a few days by the Black Sea, we offer the option to return to Tbilisi by train. ”

TRAVEL EXPERT NICK - MALAYSIAN BORNEO

“ I am trying to reduce the number of flights wherever possible. I advise guests to travel more by road for longer distances, and based on that, I adjust the routes. ”

TRAVEL EXPERT HAYLEY - MONTENEGRO

“ We are considering ways to promote train travel to our region, something we did not think about before our collaboration with Better Places. ”

TRAVEL EXPERT GUIDO - PERU

“ We have come up with alternatives for (polluting) activities like buggy tours and flights over the Nazca Lines. ”

Reducing climate impact

Our European trips are a fully-fledged alternative to a long-distance vacation. This way, we can inspire people to choose destinations closer to home more often. Even if they still opt for air travel, the CO₂e emissions are significantly lower than those of a long-distance vacation.



OBJECTIVE 2022



25% of our trips take place within Europe

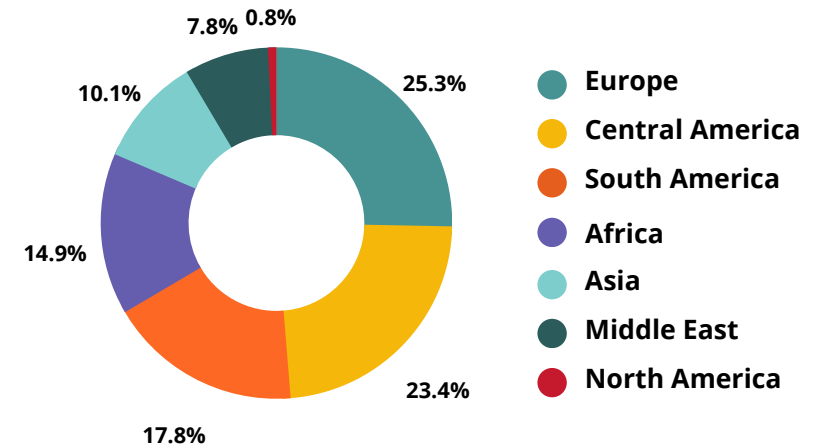
WHAT WE DID

- ✓ Added more destinations within Europe
- ✓ Increased focus on marketing European destinations
- ✓ Introduced hiking trips in small groups
- ✓ Added a tool for choosing European destinations on the homepage

RESULTS

We managed to organise over a quarter of our trips within Europe in 2022. However, we should not celebrate too early; this result is also influenced by the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many distant destinations were still closed or subject to restrictive measures. Additionally, people increasingly opted for vacations using their own cars, seeking flexibility and safety in their travels.

DESTINATION DISTRIBUTION IN 2022



Reducing climate impact

We encourage travellers to go on vacation within Europe using their own car or by train. If travellers have an electric car, we assist in planning the route, taking into account the availability of charging stations.



OBJECTIVES 2022



- For 5% of all booked trips to a destination within Europe, travellers use the train to reach their destination.
- For 5% of all trips within Europe, travellers use an electric car to reach their destination.

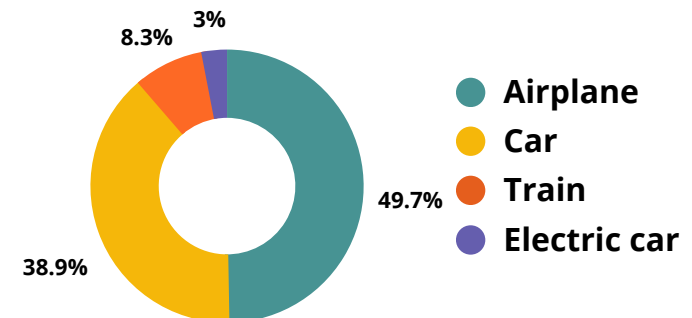
WHAT WE DID

- ✓ Provided sample trips with information on travelling by train in collaboration with The Train Traveller
- ✓ Written blogs about the benefits of travelling by train
- ✓ Highlighted train travel to destinations in newsletters and social media posts
- ✓ Added information about travelling with an electric car to blogs about travelling by car

RESULTS

Train travel is becoming easier and more popular, which is reflected in our numbers. We have comfortably exceeded the goal of having at least 5% of all European travellers choose train travel. However, we did not achieve the goal for travelling with an electric car. This may be due to a low percentage of our travellers owning electric cars and the lack of adequate charging infrastructure in some European destinations.

TRANSPORTATION IN EUROPA



Reducing climate impact

If travellers still choose to fly to their destination in Europe, we advise them to book a direct flight. Most greenhouse gases are emitted during takeoff and landing. For shorter distances, choosing a direct flight over a route with layovers can reduce CO₂e emissions.



OBJECTIVE 2022



80% of people flying to a destination in Europe opt for a direct flight.

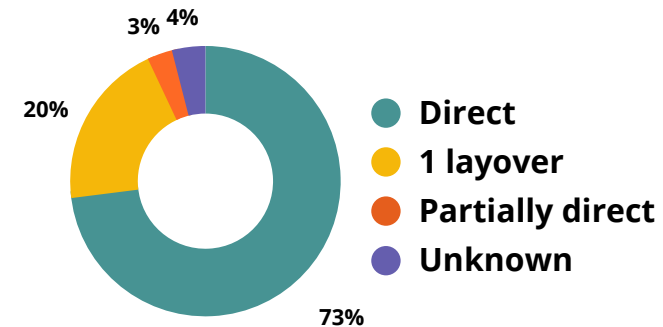
WHAT WE DID

- ✓ We have improved the process for tracking the flights booked by customers. This way, we can clearly see which flight each traveller has booked.

RESULTS

When flying to a destination within 6000 kilometers, it is worth opting for a direct flight. However, we did not achieve the goal of at least 80% direct flights within Europe. Although the environmental benefits are significant for relatively short flights, it can be challenging to persuade people to choose a direct flight when the layover route is much cheaper.

FLIGHTS WITHIN EUROPE



Reducing climate impact

OBJECTIVES 2022



- Up to 25% of booked trips include a domestic flight.
- Up to 10% of booked trips include 2 or more domestic flights.

WHAT WE DID

- ✓ We have adapted as many sample trips as possible to routes without domestic flights.
- ✓ We have encouraged travel experts to avoid unnecessary domestic flights in travel proposals and encourage travellers to travel overland.
- ✓ We promote slow travel: fewer kilometers, more experiences

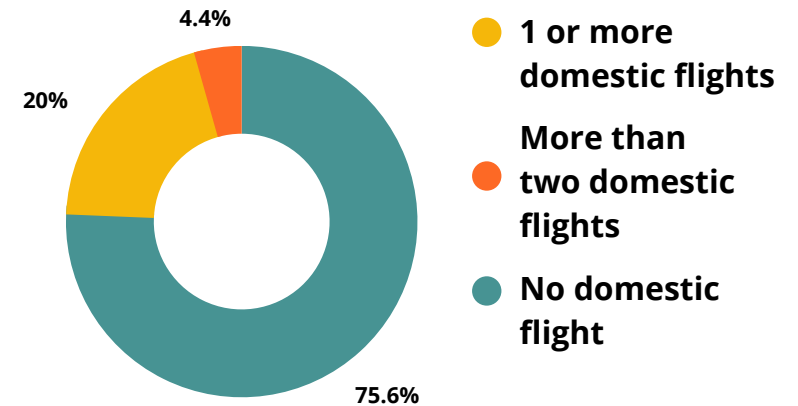
RESULTS

Out of the 1431 executed trips, 287 had one or more domestic flights, which accounts for 20%. Of those trips, 63 had two or more flights, totaling 4.4%. We have comfortably exceeded the goal.

COMMENTS

For some domestic flights, alternative transportation results in a similar amount of CO₂ emissions. For example, there is little difference in emissions between a flight and a car ride from Arusha (Tanzania) to Zanzibar. In Peru, the domestic flight from Cusco to Lima is difficult to avoid. Driving oneself takes about two to three days and has a comparable climate impact to the one-and-a-half-hour flight.

DOMESTIC FLIGHTS





To Petra through the backdoor

[Read more sustainable tips for Jordan](#)

“Petra receives a million visitors annually. We work with a local Bedouin guide who takes travellers through a 'secret' Nabatean route. This contributes to better tourism dispersion in Jordan. Additionally, it provides travellers with an unforgettable experience and contributes to a good income for the guide.”

Sharing knowledge

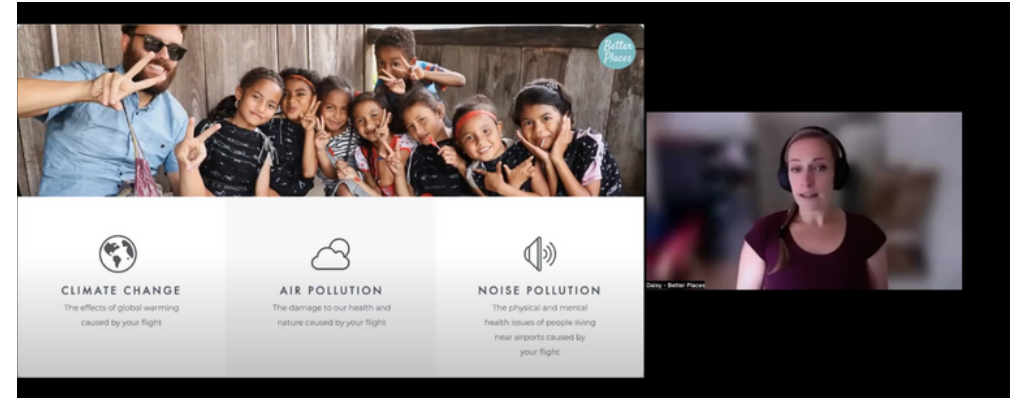
We see it as our mission and responsibility to continue to encourage and challenge ourselves and our stakeholders.



Sustainable entrepreneurship for us goes beyond our own operations. We want to pass the torch to all the partners we collaborate with. Moreover, we consider ourselves a pioneer in sustainable travel in the Dutch travel industry. That's why we share our knowledge and experiences with competitors, partners, and students to inform and inspire them to take (climate) action.

TRAINING AND COACHING

Twice a year, we organize webinars for our travel experts, where we go through all aspects of Travelife certification. Additionally, they receive assistance from a coach provided by Better Places to meet all the requirements."



KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

We exchange knowledge and experiences and collaborate with various (social) enterprises and organisations:

- The national government sets policies that we must adhere to. In return, we provide input for sustainable tourism policy development.
- At colleges and universities, we share our knowledge and experiences on sustainable tourism through guest lectures.
- We are part of the sustainable frontrunners group of ANVR (Association of Dutch Travel Agents and Tour Operators).
- We are members of the Advisory Board of Wageningen University & Research.
- In 2022, at the request of the CBI (Centre for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we participated in a webinar on regenerative tourism.

Investing in innovation

The energy transition is moving far too slowly. Especially in travel, there is still a lot to be gained. We would like more sustainable flying to be possible in the short term. Unfortunately, reality is different and we have to fly less (far) for the time being if we want to keep our planet liveable. As soon as it is possible to contribute to innovation in aviation, we will do so.

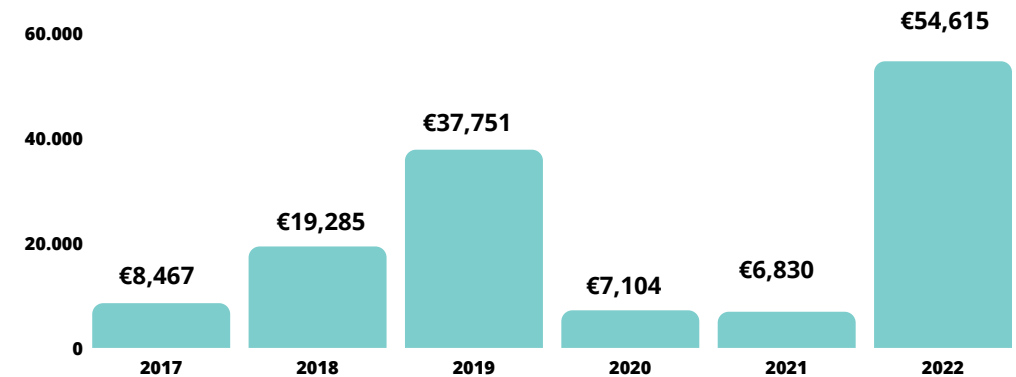
OVERVIEW OF CONTRIBUTIONS BY ZONE

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

WHAT WE DO: INNOVATION FUND

For every traveller who books a trip with Better Places, we allocate a sum to an [innovation fund](#). Travellers do not incur any additional charges for this. In 2022, the amount was €6 per person for trips within Europe and €15 per person for travellers outside Europe. In 2022, we allocated €54.615 to the innovation fund, with which we invest in sustainable projects. In 2023, we will increase the amounts per traveller as outlined in the overview above.

INNOVATION FUND



INVESTING

The total amount we raise through the innovation fund is invested in the development of sustainable energy. We do this, among other methods, through the crowdfunding platform [Lendahand](#): a social enterprise that allows us to invest in businesses in low-income countries. When a project is successfully completed, we reinvest the proceeds, including the generated interest, in new projects. In 2022, we invested €6,000 in the European Sleeper. This cooperative aims to reintroduce night trains.

Our donations

We donate 10% of our profits to positive initiatives following the guidelines of the Sustainable Development Goals.

We believe that in a country with so much prosperity, we have a responsibility to share our wealth with those less fortunate. This is why we give 10% of our profits to charities. When choosing those causes, we try to consider the organisation's effectiveness as much as possible, so that the money is well spent. We are transparent about where our money goes and the amounts. The [complete overview of our donations](#) can therefore be found on our website.



GIVE WELL

When choosing charities, we are guided by [Give Well](#). This research institute looks for charities worldwide that make the most impact per amount donated. They make sure we put our money to the best possible use, based on scientific evidence. We invested € 5,000,-.



DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS

[Doctors Without Borders](#) is an impartial organisation that is not dependent on political, economic, or religious interests. This means they do not exclude anyone and do not let anything hinder them when emergency aid is needed. In 2022, Better Places also made a donation of €10,000."



AVAAZ CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE EVICTION OF THE MAASAI

We donated €1,000 to a campaign [against the eviction of the Maasai](#) from the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Tanzania. The government intends to displace the indigenous inhabitants to make way for a foreign company offering trophy hunting to tourists. The funds will be used to hire top-notch lawyers.

Our donations



OIL CHANGE INTERNATIONAL

[Oil Change International](#) is an advocacy organisation and research and communication firm with a mission to reveal the true cost of fossil fuels. Additionally, OCI facilitates the transition to clean energy. Better Places donated \$5,030 to the organisation.



FRIS SUPERMARKT

[FRIS Supermarket](#) is a supermarket for financially vulnerable families, where they can shop for groceries for free. Additionally, families receive guidance to improve their situation. Better Places donated €2,000 to the initiative.



VERSFABRIEK NIJMEGEN

[Versfabriek](#) is a unique urban farm that brings food production back to the city of Nijmegen. Using surplus organic waste streams, urban farmer Ruud cultivates fresh mushrooms right in the heart of the city. We donated €2,000 to the initiative through the Crowd About Now platform.



TRAINING LOCAL GUIDES

Our travel experts regularly organise (free) training sessions for guides and drivers with a focus on sustainability. In 2022, we donated €1,500 to a training in Madagascar, \$450 to a training day in Tanzania, and €750 to a three-day training in Nepal.

Collaborating for the climate

We believe that more action should be taken to combat climate change. Therefore, from 2020 to 2022, we partnered with Justdiggit. With each booking, we asked our travellers who were flying to their destination to donate an amount to Justdiggit. They use that amount to re-green our planet.



ABOUT JUSTDIGGIT

Justdiggit's solution to climate change is surprisingly simple. Together with local residents in Africa, they dig crescent-shaped pits in places where the soil is so dry that nothing can grow anymore. This allows rainwater to seep back into the ground, enabling the remaining seeds to germinate. The new plants increase moisture in the air, leading to more clouds and ultimately more rain, promoting the growth of more plants. More plants result in more oxygen, less CO₂, and a cooler planet for all of us.

DONATIONS

“

In 2022, our travellers donated a total of €6,400 to Justdiggit

”

Justdiggit now receives significant support from large organisations. Therefore, in 2023, we have chosen to request donations from our customers for a [special school in Tanzania](#). This way, we ensure that our donations have the maximum possible impact.

The role of the government

The responsibility for reducing CO₂e emissions does not lie with the traveller and the travel operator alone. We desperately need the Dutch government and the European Union to achieve the Paris Climate Goals. They can tax flying fairly, set climate targets for aviation, stop further growth and make train travel more accessible. We call on politicians to take responsibility and protect citizens worldwide from the effects of climate change.



WHAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD DO

Dutch aviation [accounts](#) for about 15% of the total Dutch climate impact. So far, aviation has not been included in the Paris targets. It is about time that airlines pay excise duty on paraffin, that VAT is levied on flight tickets and that the aviation tax goes up. If the government invests that money in making the industry more sustainable, all parties will benefit.

WHAT WE DO

We openly oppose further growth of Dutch aviation and advocate for the [introduction of a fair aviation tax](#). We do this through our website, press releases, and on social media platforms like LinkedIn. Additionally, we raise awareness about the negative effects of flying. By doing so, we contribute to changing what we consider normal or not. With this knowledge, citizens can hold politicians accountable for their responsibilities.

CLIMATE DEMONSTRATIONS

We believe that climate actions drive change. Under pressure from activists, politicians are compelled to introduce regulations. That's why we encourage our employees to participate in climate demonstrations. As part of their secondary employment benefits, all Better Places employees are allowed to attend climate protests during working hours without having to take a day off.



Staying the night in the Bote community

[Read more about this homestay in Nepal](#)

"Most Bote women have never left the valley. Hosting guests is quite exciting for them, but they wanted to give it a try themselves. Travellers get to experience authentic Nepalese rural life here, and thanks to the proceeds, more children from the village can attend school."



OBJECTIVES 2023

BETTER PLACES

Objectives for 2023

POSITIVE IMPACT

Excursions

Every booked trip includes a minimum of 2 excursions that focus on the local population.



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



Off-season

70% of all trips take place outside the high season (equal to 2022 objective).



Europe

30% of all trips go to a destination within Europe (compared to 25% in 2022).



Accommodation

55% of overnight stays are in small-scale, sustainable accommodation.



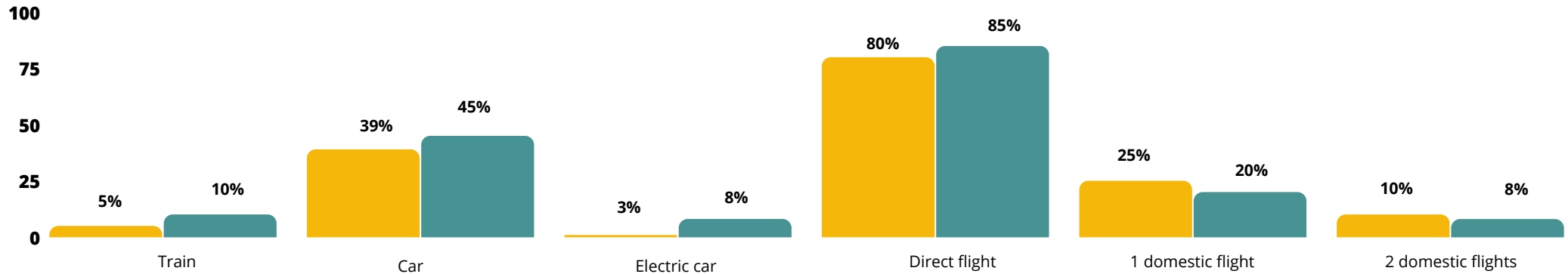
Zone	CO ₂ e in kg	Minimum days for sample trips	Minimum days for booked trips
● Zone 1	300 - 2.000	9 days	8 days
● Zone 2	2.001 - 4.000	14 days	10 days
● Zone 3	4.001 - 6.000	18 days	12 days
● Zone 4	6.001 - 8.000	22 days	14 days



Objectives for 2023

TRANSPORTATION

● 2022 ● 2023



In 10% of all trips within Europe, customers travel to the destination by train



Up to 20% of all trips include a domestic flight



In 45% of all trips within Europe, customers go to the destination by car



Up to 8% of all trips include more than two domestic flights



In 8% of all trips within Europe, travellers take an electric car to the destination



NEW

At least 5 new sample trips online, aimed at travelling to the destination by electric car



For 85% of all air travel within Europe, the flight is direct



NEW

At least 5 sample trips online, aimed at travelling to the destination by train



Objectives for 2023

SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Travel proposals

All proposals provided with information on hotel sustainability and tips for vegetarian food at the destination



Guest lectures

Give at least 6 guest lectures on sustainable travel.



Sustainable travel tips

At least 15 travel experts send customers concrete, sustainable travel tips via Whatsapp on the day of arrival



Certification

15 travel experts achieve Travelife certification (partner or certified) or another GSTC certification



Information on sustainability

Launch a pilot with travel experts from 10 destinations adding sustainability information to travel proposals



CO₂e emission

Total CO₂ emissions per passenger per day are 5% are below 2022 results



Objectives for 2023

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION



Hotel page

At least 70% of destinations have a hotel page with sustainability information



Marketing guidelines

Ethical marketing guidelines written



Impact blog

Our top 20 destinations have an impact blog



True price

Improved true price information





Sustainable Romania

🔍 Read more on [travel expert Adina](#)

"The collaboration with Better Places feels like a perfect match. Sustainability permeates everything we do. For instance, we encourage travellers to extend their trips and arrive by train – last year, 30% of our customers from the Netherlands and Belgium came by train, and they enjoyed it!"

More information



THIS IS WHAT WE DO. AND YOU?

We aim to be as transparent as possible in our efforts for sustainable travel and business. On our website and social media channels, we extensively share developments in this field. Want to know more about what we do or exchange knowledge and ideas about a sustainable travel industry? We'd love to hear from you via the contact information below.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [Sustainable travel checklist](#)
- [Travelling with a positive impact](#)
- [Action plan for a Sustainable Planet](#)
- [The true price of flying](#)
- [Sustainable entrepreneurship](#)
- [Measuring impact](#)
- [Impact Workshop Avance](#)
- [What is a B-Corp](#)

IMPACT REPORT 2022

Text: Daisy Scholte en Naline Roodbeen
Design : Megan Hoekstra
Photos: Daisy Scholte, Yvonne van der Laan, Maaïke Knockaert en anderen

www.betterplaces.nl

info@betterplaces.nl

071-5162025

