

2023

# IMPACT REPORT

BETTER PLACES

Better  
Places

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# A message from our CEO

**When I founded Better Places in 2013, I had one goal: to use travel as a force for positive change at destinations. Ten years later, we find ourselves at a crucial juncture. While we have made strides in making our offerings more sustainable and reducing our emissions, we are also confronting the limits of what is achievable. Technology alone cannot save us. What we need is a radical shift in behavior. We must move away from traditional mass tourism and reshape how we travel.**

At Better Places, we make travel special again. It's not just something you do, but a meaningful experience that stays with you for the rest of your life. Travel occasionally, and when you do, make it meaningful—for yourself and the destination. For a week of relaxing in the sun, there's no need to fly for hours; that can be done closer to home. But if you do fly to a far-off place, seek out new experiences. Travel for as long as possible, outside peak seasons, and venture off the beaten path. This way, you avoid the crowds and gain a unique experience. It's better for you and better for the world.

Climate change is not some distant future scenario. It is happening now;

From the floods in Slovenia to the scorching heat around the Mediterranean. This is our wake-up call. Ignoring it is not an option. The travel industry clings to old models of growth and profit, business as usual. At Better Places, we draw a line under the idea that growth equals success. For us, it's all about impact and the positive changes we can make together.

This impact report shows where we stand today, the challenges we still face, and our determination to radically change the future of travel. Travel can and should be a tool to make the world a little better, and we are leading the way.



Let's work together to ensure that travel remains something special, both now and in the future.

**Saskia Griep**

*Director and founder Better Places*

# **Executive summary**

The 2023 Impact Report uses the 7 themes of the New Economy Index (NEx) to guide the sustainability strategy. Below we summarize the main results and objectives of 2023.

## **1. Biodiversity**

We have worked to protect biodiversity by investing in initiatives such as Land van Ons and encouraging our travelers to adopt more plant-based diets. Additionally, in 2023, we further strengthened our strict animal welfare policy, removing the last potentially harmful excursions from our offerings. Biodiversity remains a complex issue within the travel industry, and there is still significant room for improvement.

## **2. Circular Economy**

Reducing plastic and waste is a key pillar within the circular economy. In 2023, plastic-free safaris in Tanzania were further developed and travelers could use a filter bottle to avoid single-use plastic.

## **3. New Wealth**

We put impact over profit. In 2023, we invested 10% of our profits in positive initiatives. The total amount was €58,425. Part of that amount was allocated to Doctors Without Borders and ProVeg International, among others. We also contributed €77,052 to sustainable energy projects through our innovation fund.

## **4. True Pricing**

In 2023, we began communicating the true costs of transportation. This will enable travelers to make more conscious choices, such as flying less or choosing more sustainable transportation options.

## **5. Transparent Supply Chains**

In 2023, travel proposals included detailed information on sustainable actions and accurately calculated the CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions of travel, including those from flights, accommodations and local excursions.

## **6. Inclusive Business**

We collaborate with an international group of travel experts. Women lead 49% of our partner companies, and 66% of our travel experts are women. Our staff in the Netherlands consists entirely of women and is predominantly white.

## **7. Green Energy**

Our direct contribution to emissions from scope 1 and 2 is minimal. Therefore our focus is on reducing scope 3 emissions, particularly those from air travel. The goal is to reduce CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions by 55% by 2030. In 2023, there was a 21.1% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions per person per day compared to 2019, and travelers were actively encouraged to travel closer to home and choose more sustainable means of transportation.

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2023

# THIS IS US

BETTER PLACES



# This is us

**We are Better Places.** We are a social enterprise with a sustainable mission. Through our travels, we aim to make the world a better place for people, animals, and nature. We are travellers. We love exploring, meeting people, experiencing cultures, and admiring wildlife. And we want to share this. Also with future generations.

**We are dreamers and doers.** We strive to offer our travellers an unforgettable experience, ensure fair wages for local entrepreneurs, and give nature the rest it deserves. That's why we are dedicated to maximizing the positive impact of our travels while minimizing the negative effects.

**We feel the urgency.** We do not believe in procrastination or sugarcoating the truth. We take responsibility and make a difference. To secure a livable planet and a thriving travel industry, we must act now.

**We are catalysts for change.**

We believe things must be different and we show that they can be. You can run a successful business while making a positive impact on the world. Sustainability isn't an add-on; it is an integral part of quality. We continuously push ourselves and the entire industry to work more sustainably and transparently. In doing so, we encourage a new way of traveling that aligns with the desires of traveller and the challenges of our times. **That's Better Places.**



# Our mission and vision



## MISSION

“

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

”



## VISION

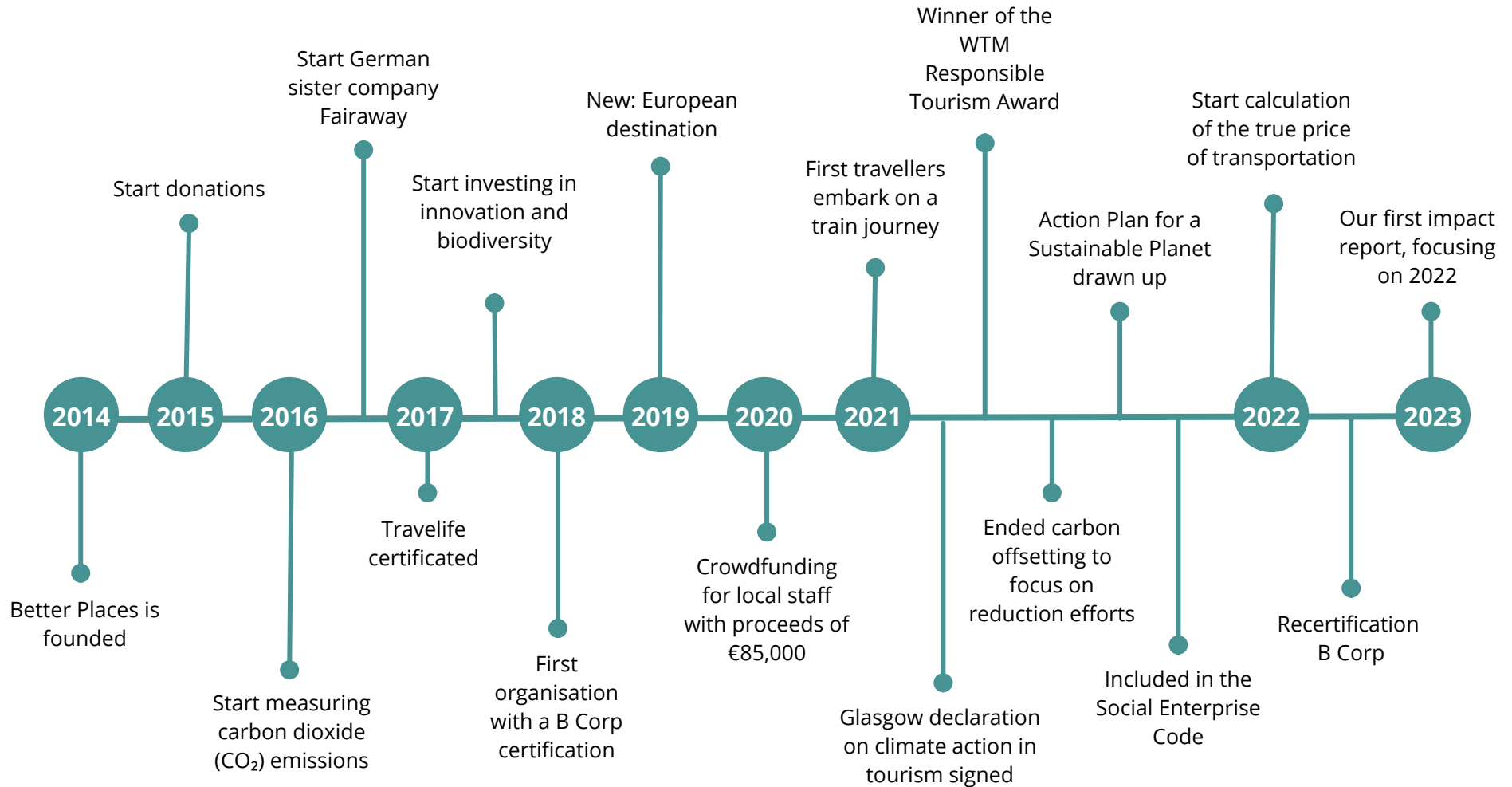
Our [constitution](#) sets out the following vision:

“

Organising responsible trips that support the sustainable development of visited regions, aiming to maximise tourism's positive effects while minimising its negative impact..

”

# Nine years of entrepreneurship





## 2023 in figures



1,886

▲ +31.80%

**Number of  
departed trips**



5,133

▲ +19.40%

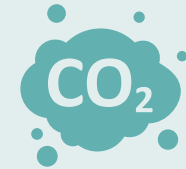
**Number of departed  
travellers (1.724 trips)**



8.9

● +0%

**Rating given to us by  
travellers**



21.1%

▲ -1.90%

**Reduced CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions per  
person per day compared to  
2019**



€ 12,202,550.55

▲ +29.98%

**Revenue**



€ 10,787.50

▲ +32.54%

**Donations from travellers  
to a [special school in Tanzania](#)**



€ 58,425.-

▲ +40.94%

**Amount of donations  
with a 10% profit**



€ 77,052.-

▲ +41.08%

**Investment in  
innovation fund**

# Our network

Together, we strive for more social and sustainable entrepreneurship. That's why we collaborate with organizations and initiatives that share our mission and help us achieve our best.

## OUR CERTIFICATIONS



### **Travelife**

*International certification program promoting sustainability within the tourism industry*



### **B Corp**

*Certification for companies with high standards for social and climate impact*



### **Code Social Enterprises**

*Dutch code of conduct that supports social enterprises in their pursuit of social impact over profit*

## INITIATIVES



### **Glasgow Declaration**

*Global initiative to halve carbon emissions in tourism by 2030*



### **Social Enterprise**

*Network of companies using profits to achieve social and climate goals*



### **MVO Nederland**

*Network of companies in the Netherlands promoting sustainability and corporate social responsibility*

# Our destinations



## NEW DESTINATIONS

Our offerings are always evolving. As we aim to inspire travelers to explore closer to home more often, we continue to expand our range of adventurous vacations within Europe. In 2023, we added Norway, Greece, and France to our portfolio. Additionally, we introduced new regions to our existing selection. As of 2023, travelers can also book trips to the Azores (Portugal), the Finnish Lakeland, Valencia (Spain), Wales, and Northeast Spain. Furthermore, we have included train journeys through Switzerland.



## GROUP TRIPS

In 2023, we organised several group trips: three in Europe, one in Jordan, and three in the Netherlands. The group trip in Jordan was a photography trip. In Europe, we arranged a hut-to-hut hike in Austria, the Fishermen's Trail in Portugal, and the Via Dinarica in Montenegro. New to our offer are hiking weekends in the Netherlands. Experienced guides took up to 10 participants for a few days on a hiking adventure in their own country. In 2023, we organised two hiking trips in Gulpen and one in Drenthe. The hiking trips in the Netherlands were conducted in collaboration with [Avontuur Dichtbij](#).



## DESTINATIONS WE DISCONTINUED

In 2023, several countries were removed from our offerings, including Laos, Mongolia, and Central India. There are several reasons for this decision. In some cases, we were unable to create sufficient positive impact to justify the necessary flights, or there was limited interest from our customers. Additionally, the travel expert for Central India decided to step away. We chose not to seek a new expert and instead to focus on our existing offerings in the Himalaya region and Northeast India.

# Our approach

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

We are catalysts for change, we believe things must be different and show that they can be. 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. Throughout the entire chain, we stay one step ahead.



### 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 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from transportation to, from, and within the destination. It also includes the excessive strain on livability and nature caused by 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 [Action plan for a sustainable planet](#) which was developed after signing the Glasgow Declaration in 2021. This outlines our efforts to reduce CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions from our trips by 55% by 2030 compared to 2019.

**2023**

# **MEASURING IMPACT**

**BETTER PLACES**



# 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. In 2023, we worked hard to improve our measurement method. The collected data enables us to better target our efforts towards achieving social and climate goals.



## HOW WE DO IT

For measuring the effects of our trips, we have established goals, which you can find at these pages. With the support of our interns, the product managers review all individually booked travel plans. We process relevant data into a developed program. This allows us to count the number of booked excursions and stays in small-scale accommodations for each travel plan. We also include CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions and the number of days a trip lasts in our measurements. With the collected data, we can clearly see our progress and what is needed to achieve our social and climate goals.

# The new Economy Index (NEx)

NEx stands for the New Economy Index. It is a measurement tool developed by MVO Nederland to assess how far companies have come on their journey toward more sustainable and fair business practices. The NEx consists of seven themes, each representing an important aspect of the new economy. We will explain these further on the following pages.

## NEW VS OLD ECONOMY

The New Economy Index is an alternative to the traditional way companies measure their progress and development. In the “old” economy, companies measure their success primarily by financial metrics, such as profits, sales, return of investment and stock prices. It focuses on how a company can minimize costs and maximize profits. Growing market share and increasing profits is seen as a sign of success.

NEx goes beyond these traditional metrics and focuses on the impact a company has on the climate and society.



## ADVANTAGES OF THE NEX

Using the NEx as a guideline for measuring success gives us a much broader understanding of the effects of our operations. This helps us create a future plan that is not just about making profits and growth, but also about making social impact and positively contributing to a better climate. This benefits everyone, including us as a company. After all, we are better prepared for future challenges and regulations and can benefit from new opportunities in a changing world.

# The 7 NEx-themes

The seven themes of the NEx define the route to a more sustainable business and a better world for everyone. We use the themes of the NEx to structure our sustainable actions and to assess whether we meet all the conditions to contribute to the new economy.



## **BIODIVERSITY**

As humanity, we depend on a healthy biodiversity. As a company, we must do everything we can to minimize the damage we cause to nature. At the same time, we must help protect and restore biodiversity. We do this, among other things, by encouraging more plant-based eating and organizing travel outside of peak seasons whenever possible.



## **CIRCULAR ECONOMY**

The resources we all use will eventually run out. That's why it's important to reuse as much as possible and to reduce waste. At Better Places, we ensure that the use of single-use plastics during travel is reduced as much as possible. To achieve this, we collaborate closely with our travelers, local partners, and the hotels where our guests stay.



## **NEW WEALTH**

This theme requires companies to pursue a social mission alongside making a profit. Better Places was founded to make the world a better place through travel. The social and societal mission is embedded in the company's DNA. For example, we always ensure that local entrepreneurs benefit fully from our trips, and we donate 10% of our profits to charities.



# The 7 NEX-themes



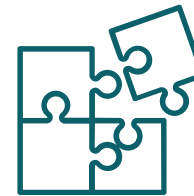
## TRUE PRICING

By accounting for true prices, polluting products and services become more expensive, while cleaner options become more affordable. In short: the polluter pays. Better Places was the first travel organization to calculate the true price of flying. This demonstrates what a plane ticket should cost if the environmental damage and air pollution costs are included in the price.



## TRANSPARENT SUPPLY CHAIN

In this theme, you evaluate the impact you have on people and the environment and are transparent about the effects of your actions, both positive and negative. Over the past years, we have worked hard to map out the impact of our trips on destinations and their inhabitants. This has provided us with valuable insights that help us improve our offerings.



## INCLUSIVE BUSINESS

Everyone has equal opportunities to participate, regardless of gender, race or ethnic background, nationality, religion or beliefs, disability, age, or sexual orientation. We do not collect statistics on the skin color or sexual orientation of our employees. Equal treatment and equal opportunities for all are key focus points in our workplace.



## GREEN ENERGY

For Better Places, focusing on green energy is less relevant, as the contribution of our office to climate change is minimal compared to the impact of travel-related transportation. Under this theme, we report on the CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions of our trips, including accommodations, excursions, and transportation to and from destinations.



2023

# BIODIVERSITY

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# Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the foundation of a healthy ecosystem. As a travel organization, we have a responsibility to minimize our impact on nature and, where possible, contribute to the restoration of biodiversity. While we take this challenge seriously, we must also acknowledge that in 2023, we have not yet taken concrete steps in this area.



## BIODIVERSITY IS A COMPLEX THEME

Biodiversity is a complex and difficult-to-measure theme, especially within the travel industry. It's challenging to exert direct influence at the product level, such as when designing tours. There are no clear guidelines to define our role in preserving or restoring biodiversity. Additionally, we frequently encounter dilemmas, such as bear-watching excursions in Romania. Bears are lured with food, which disrupts their natural behavior and also causes conflicts with humans. Moreover, what works in one country may not always be applicable in another. Each situation is unique, and the opinions of experts often differ.



## WHAT ELSE WE DO

In 2023, we started investing in projects such as [Land Van Ons](#). This citizen initiative focuses on restoring biodiversity by purchasing agricultural land and returning it to a more natural and diverse ecosystem. Although this is an initial step, we see it as a starting point for more targeted actions in the future.

In 2024, we will continue to explore how we can best address the theme of biodiversity.



# 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 frequently and avoid long-haul flights 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.

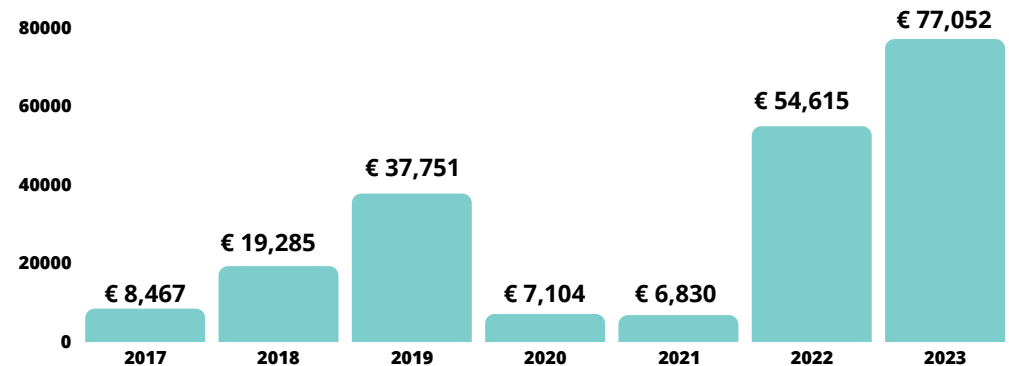
## OVERVIEW OF CONTRIBUTIONS BY ZONE

Zone	Amount 2023	Amount 2024
Zone 1	€ 7.00	€ 7.35
Zone 2	€ 15.00	€ 15.75
Zone 3	€ 20.00	€ 21.00
Zone 4	€ 25.00	€ 26.25

## 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. The amount depends on the distance travellers cover. For journeys close to home (up to 2,000 km), the amount is €7 per person. This amount increases to €25 per person for destinations more than 20,000 km from the Netherlands. In 2023, this resulted in €77,052. We invest this amount in sustainable projects. Each year, we increase the amount we invest per traveller. In the table above, you can see the amounts we will invest per traveller in 2024.

## 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. Land Van Ons is another project we are investing in with the proceeds from the innovation fund.



# Stimulate plant-based eating

## OBJECTIVE 2023



All travel proposals include information and tips on vegetarian food at the destination



## CLIMATE IMPACT OF FOOD

Tasting the local cuisine is an important part of experiencing and getting to know another culture. At the same time, what you eat has a significant impact on your environmental footprint. According to [research](#) from Oxford University, 'one of the most effective ways to reduce your climate impact is by avoiding meat and dairy.' This is, of course, also true when travelling!

## WHAT WE DO

- Travel experts are asked to include tips for (local) vegetarian and vegan dishes in the travel information
- Blogs have been posted with tips for vegetarian and vegan food at popular destinations
- We have mapped out what travel experts are doing to encourage plant-based eating while travelling

## RESULTS

At the most popular destinations, customers receive practical tips on how to travel more sustainably, including tips on how to make it easier for customers to eat plant-based. Some travel experts find it challenging due to limited knowledge or uncertainties about its impact. We have not yet achieved the goal and will continue working on it in 2024.



# Stimulate plant-based eating

## OBJECTIVE 2023



All cities in the travel proposals include tips for vegetarian or plant-based restaurants



### INSPIRE WITH TIPS

At most destinations, our customers choose where they want to eat themselves, so we have limited influence on their choices. With this goal, we hope to inspire travellers to make more sustainable choices. Many of our travel experts already share restaurant tips in their travel proposals. Using HappyCow, they can provide tips for restaurants with a plant-based menu.

### WHAT WE DO

- In a webinar, we discussed our expectations from the travel experts, why, and how they can best approach these
- With some travel experts, we had extensive follow-up contact after the webinar to address their concerns or practical challenges

### RESULTS

Including tips for vegetarian or vegan restaurants in the travel proposals is a bigger challenge at some destinations than at others. Some travel experts have enthusiastically begun and achieved the goal. Others need (more) support or explanation. In 2024, we will pay even more attention to the theme of plant-based eating while travelling.



## Solar panels in Colombia

Every year, Freek from [Piece of Freek](#) bakes carrot cakes for charity. For each slice of cake sold, €1 is donated to the [Children of Medellin](#) Foundation in Colombia. Through sports and play, the foundation helps children living in poverty work towards a better future. Better Places donated €2,270, bringing the total amount raised to €6,040 for installing solar panels on the clubhouse.



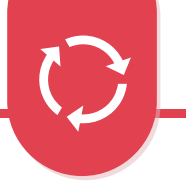
2023

# CIRCULAR ECONOMY

BETTER PLACES







# Reduce plastic

Plastic waste is a major issue at many destinations. That's why we help our travellers [reduce single-use plastic](#) while travelling. Although we have not yet set specific objectives for reducing plastic use during travel, this is a theme we have paid a lot of attention to in recent years.



## OTHER PRIORITIES

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus in 2023 was primarily on restoring tourism and restarting activities at the destinations. As a result, we were able to do less in terms of reducing plastic than we had hoped. However, significant steps have already been made, especially by some of our travel experts. In collaboration with our local travel experts, we have managed to persuade hotel owners at some destinations to offer refill stations with safe drinking water. This allows travellers to refill their own bottles and avoid purchasing plastic single-use bottles.

## PLASTIC-FREE SAFARIS

We are the only company offering 100% plastic-free safaris in Tanzania. Our safari vehicles are equipped with water tanks to refill reusable bottles. The food is served in metal containers and eaten from real tableware. This is unique in a sector where disposable packaging is the norm. In 2023, travellers were able to order a Water-to-Go filter bottle, paying only the shipping costs. The bottle allows you to filter tap water, so there's no need to buy single-use plastic water bottles. In 2024, we will revisit this theme. We will evaluate progress and identify what more we can do to reduce plastic use while travelling.

2023

# NEW WEALTH

BETTER PLACES





# Employment conditions

At Better Places, we believe in 'practice what you preach'. We take good care of the world and our own people. Not just financially, but also in terms of well-being. With our secondary employment conditions, we create a work environment where people feel good and can bring out the best in themselves.



## MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Employees receive 500 euros per year for personal development in the form of training and courses
- Employees receive 150 euros per year for engaging in sports or physical activities, such as yoga, gym, or sports clubs
- Opportunities to work remotely and abroad
- Employees receive 50 euros per year to spend on cultural outings, such as museums, cinemas, or theaters
- Instead of five days (collective labor agreement), the partner receives 10 days of paid paternity leave after the birth

## ENABLING SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOR

- Those who travel by train on vacation receive one extra day of vacation for a one-way trip and two extra days for a round trip
- Employees who travel by bike to the station or office receive a mileage allowance of €0.21 per kilometer
- Opportunity to attend a climate demonstration during working hours
- Employees may spend up to 20 hours per year of their working hours on social work
- Better Places acknowledges Keti Koti and gives everyone the day off on July 1st
- The office lunch is always 100% vegetarian



# Excursions

At Better Places, we ensure that the local population benefits as much as possible from tourism. Did you know that, in the worst case, [up to 80%](#) of the money people spend on a vacation does not stay at the destination but goes to international companies? This is known as 'tourism leakage.' We do things differently. All our trips include small-scale excursions organised by local entrepreneurs. This way, the largest possible share of the travel sum goes directly to the destination and its residents. This means a fair income for local entrepreneurs and an authentic experience for travellers.



## OBJECTIVE 2023



Every trip includes at least 2 excursions

## WHAT WE DID

- ✓ Encouraged our travel experts to include more locally guided excursions in sample trips and travel proposals
- ✓ Provided feedback to travel experts if our research showed that few guided excursions were included in booked trips

By hiring local entrepreneurs, such as guides and drivers, we enhance the social impact of our trips. It is an important part of our approach. Therefore, in 2024, we will map out how many guides and drivers are hired for our trips.

## RESULTS

In 2023, a total of 7,791 excursions were carried out, spread over 1,724 trips. That brings out an average over 4 excursions per trip. When we look at the results per destination, the average number of excursions per trip varies significantly. Of the 60 destinations, 21 destinations (35%) met the target. We find that including a minimum of 2 excursions per trip for European destinations is particularly challenging. This is partly because excursions in Europe are significantly more expensive than in distant destinations. Additionally, travellers often prefer to book excursions for European destinations shortly before departure or spontaneously during the trip.



# Tourism dispersion

Overtourism occurs when too many visitors come to a particular destination, potentially affecting the livability of a city or area. Nature and cultural heritage also risk being damaged or lost. This problem not only affects well-known European cities but also distant countries, natural areas, and cultural heritage sites worldwide. Better Places combats overtourism by encouraging travellers to avoid the peak season. These periods are from January 9, 2023, to July 7, 2023, and September 4, 2023, to December 22, 2023.. This goal contributes to a better distribution of tourism income throughout the year and is essential for the livability and preservation of destinations and attractions.

## OBJECTIVE 2023



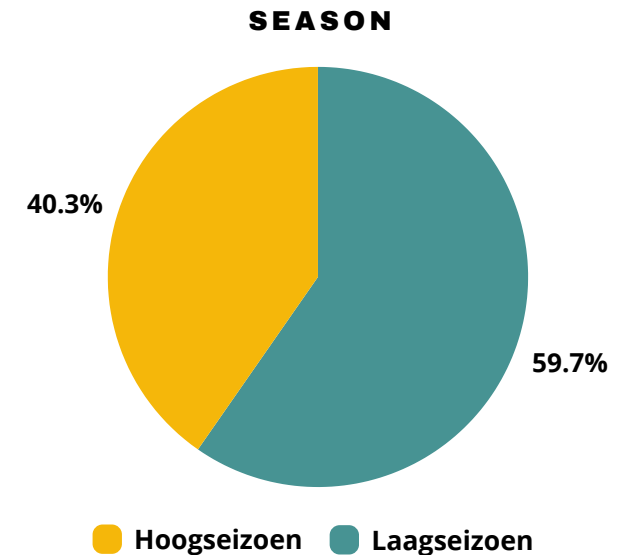
- 60% of our trips depart outside the summer and Christmas holidays
- 30% of our family trips take place outside the summer and Christmas vacation
- 77% of our other travel parties (besides family trips) take place outside the summer and christmas vacation

## WHAT WE DID

- ✓ Travel experts have been encouraged to recommend alternatives to the most crowded spots at the destination when departing during the peak season
- ✓ Travel experts advise, where possible, an alternative departure date for a travel request during the peak season
- ✓ Attention has been given to off-season travel in sample trips, newsletters, and social media posts

## RESULTS

In 2023, 59.7% of all trips took place during the off-season. Of our travellers, 38.2% were families. They are usually tied to school holidays, making off-season travel impossible for them. However, these families travelled outside of the peak season in 32.5% of cases. For other travel parties, 76.5% chose to travel during the off-season.





# Donations

## We donate 10% of our profits to positive initiatives

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 to ensure the money is well spent. We are transparent about where our money goes and the amounts. Based on the profits of 2023, we will donate €58,425 to various charities. Below are some of the charities we have already supported. The [complete overview of our donations](#) can therefore be found on our website.

### Doctors Without Borders

€ 9,000.-

DwB is a politically independent organisation that offers medical emergency aid to people in crisis situations

### ProVeg International

€ 2,500.-

ProVeg works toward a world where everyone enjoys food that benefits people, animals, and the planet

### UAF

€ 2,500.-

UAF supports refugee students and professionals with language courses, retraining, studies, and employment

### IDFA

€ 2,000.-

The IDFA documentary festival encourages the production of national and international documentaries

### Emergency aid Malawi

€ 1,050.-

Free meals and emergency aid for affected communities after the devastating Cyclone Freddy

### Foundation Nest Soedan

€ 1,000.-

Nest Sudan helps people affected by the war in Sudan with food and medicine

### De Witte Helmen

€ 1,000.-

De Witte Helmen are volunteer rescuers in Syria who dedicate themselves to helping civilian victims of war violence and disasters

### Travel Bookstore de Evenaar

€ 500.-

Renovating the Travel Bookstore de Evenaar in Amsterdam. A bookstore with a strong focus on sustainable and conscious travel

2023

# TRUE PRICING

BETTER PLACES



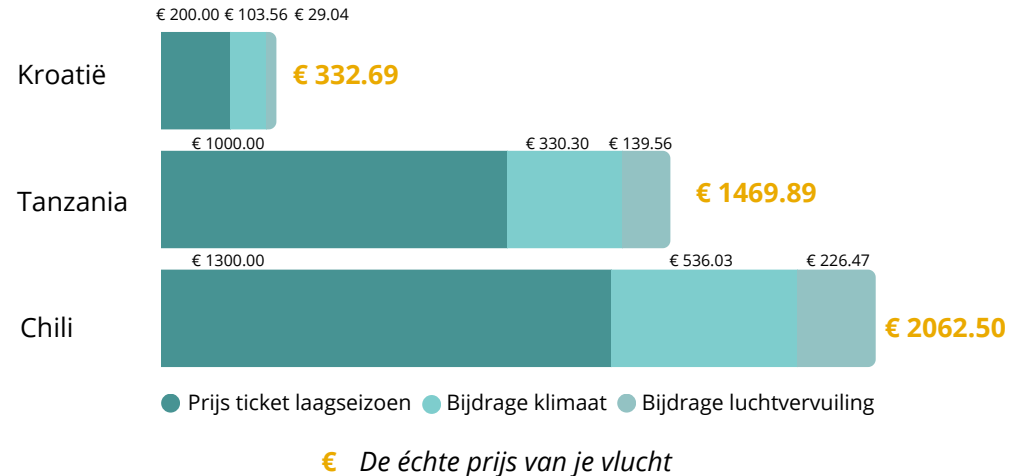


# The true price of transportation



## 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 like air pollution, noise pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions. The healthcare costs for people who develop lung problems due to air pollution and the costs of restoring nature lost due to nitrogen emissions from airplanes are not included in the price you currently pay for a train or plane ticket. When you add the price of these negative effects to the price you currently pay, you get the [true price](#). In 2022, in collaboration with the [Impact Institute](#), we calculated the true prices of various modes of transportation. We chose to calculate the costs for climate change and air pollution caused by trains, cars, and airplanes.



## HIDDEN COSTS

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. In 2023 we started communicating the true price of transportation to all of our destinations. For each destination we publish one Eerlijke Reiswijzer, where you can find the true price. This way our travellers can quickly see which (nearby) transportation option is the most sustainable choice. For distant destinations, they can compare a long-haul flight with a shorter flight closer to home. By revealing the hidden costs, we provide insight into the impact of holiday transportation and emphasize that airline tickets are currently underpriced.



2023

# TRANSPARENT SUPPLY CHAIN

BETTER PLACES





# Certification

Since 2017, we have been part of the [Travelife certification](#) programme and in 2021, Better Places was included in the register of [Social Enterprise Code](#). With these certificates, we have our sustainable actions evaluated by independent bodies, which contributes to the trust and credibility of our commitment to a sustainable and socially responsible travel industry. They keep us focused, ensure we stay informed about the latest developments, and help us maintain transparency. Our local travel experts operate according to the criteria of Travelife. Most of them participate in the Travelife training with the goal of achieving the Travelife Partner certificate within two years.



**15 travel experts obtained the Travelife certificate (Partner or Certified) or another GSTC certification**

## WHAT WE DID

- ✓ Webinar organised for our travel experts, during which we go through all aspects of the Travelife certification. Additionally, they receive support from a coach provided by Better Places to help meet all the requirements.

Some of our local travel experts already held a Travelife certificate but did not renew their certification during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2023, we resumed this effort and are actively supporting our experts in renewing their certification. Additionally, we assisted our travel experts in making use of [Sustour](#). This EU project aimed to encourage tour operators to operate in a more sustainable manner. Many of our European travel experts joined the project and earned the certification through training and coaching sessions.



## RESULTS

This year we started with 8 travel experts holding a Travelife certificate, and 3 experts with a comparable certification. By the end of 2023, 18 additional travel experts had obtained a Travelife certification. Of these, 11 achieved *Partner* status, and 7 reached *Certified* status. At the end of 2023, 7 travel experts were still in the process of completing the Travelife program and are expected to receive their certification in the first half of 2024.



# Animal- and child-friendly travel

At Better Places, we are committed to the welfare of animals and children. We enforce a strict 'no touching, no feeding' policy for wild animals and avoid tourist activities that may harm children, such as visits to schools and orphanages. These principles are explicitly included in the [code of conduct](#) that all our travel experts must sign before collaborating with us.

## OBJECTIVE 2023



**None of our trips include activities that are harmful to children or animals**

## CHILD-FRIENDLY TRAVEL

As part of impact measurement, we review all excursions included in travel proposals. In rare cases, we encountered excursions where travellers visited a school. Usually, this was at the specific request of the travellers and not a standard excursion in the travel proposals. In such cases, we consulted with the travel experts. We explain why we do not offer these excursions, provide information, such as [relevant blogs](#), to help them better communicate with travellers, and seek alternatives where needed. For example, visiting a school after classes have ended, to avoid disturbing the students.

## ANIMAL-FRIENDLY TRAVEL

In previous years, we worked hard to adapt and replace excursions to meet our strict [animal-friendly travel policy](#). In 2023, we tightened this policy further and removed excursions that did not meet our guidelines from local travel experts' offerings. With our growing selection in Europe, there is an increasing demand for activities like bear watching, husky tours, and fishing. For each activity, we have discussed it with the travel expert whether it meets our animal welfare standards. As there are sometimes strong arguments for and against, we will be seeking an expert to assist us in 2024.



## Truly discover new places – in Georgia, it's still possible

[Get to know travel specialist Mari](#)

"Because we offer tailor-made trips, every day brings something new. I love the variety and the excitement that new requests bring. Discovering something new – whether it's a new accommodation or an entirely new region – is incredibly enjoyable."



# Accommodations

When organizing our trips, we make use of sustainable and small-scale accommodations and homestays as much as possible. This creates a unique experience for our travellers. At the same time, it supports local entrepreneurs and helps improve the living environment and standard of living for residents. When selecting accommodations, our travel experts use our [sustainable accommodations checklist](#).



## OBJECTIVES 2023



**At least 55% of the overnight stays take place in small-scale/sustainable accommodations, homestays, or farmstays**

## WHAT WE DID

- ✓ Based on insights from the past year, we have adjusted and simplified the criteria for sustainable accommodations
- ✓ Travel experts were encouraged to include more small-scale, sustainable accommodations, homestays, and farmstays in sample trips and travel proposals
- ✓ We provided feedback to travel experts when analysis showed limited inclusion of these accommodations
- ✓ Sustainable and small-scale accommodations were highlighted in sample trips, newsletters, and social media posts

## RESULTS

To measure the number of overnight stays booked in small-scale and sustainable accommodations, we first categorized all booked accommodations as sustainable, small-scale, homestay/farmstay, or other. For this, we created a list of [criteria](#) that an accommodation must meet to fit into one of these categories. We analyzed over 20,000 overnight stays across more than fifty different countries. The results showed that 74% of overnight stays took place in small-scale/sustainable accommodations, homestays, or farmstays. Looking at the results by country, some destinations scored even higher, while others were lower



# Sharing knowledge

Sustainable entrepreneurship for us goes beyond just our own operations; it's a movement we actively pass on to all our partners. As a leader in sustainable travel within the Dutch travel industry, we feel the responsibility to set the standard. That's why we widely share our knowledge and experiences with competitors, partners, and students to inform, inspire, and encourage genuine climate action.

## OBJECTIVE 2023



Deliver a minimum of 6 guest lectures and/or presentations on sustainable travel



## GUESTLECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

- In 2023, we delivered 6 guest lectures on sustainable travel to students at Wageningen University & Research, NHL Stenden in Leeuwarden, and Breda University of Applied Sciences
- We also gave a presentation on collaborating with partners for sustainable travel during the Sunweb Sustainability Week

## OTHER PRESENTATIONS

- As a member of the ANVR sustainability steering committee, we contributed to developing a sustainable vision for the Dutch travel industry's future
- At the request of various tour operators, we shared our knowledge, experience, and practical tips related to sustainable entrepreneurship in the travel sector



# Travel information

Throughout the entire customer journey, we inspire travellers positively about sustainable travel and make it as easy as possible to make more sustainable choices. From choosing a destination to the travel proposal and arrival at the location, we provide practical tips and information to help make conscious choices.

## OBJECTIVE 2023



**At least 15 travel experts send clients concrete, sustainable travel tips via WhatsApp or email on the day of arrival**

We have developed travel tips for 14 countries, with 2 travel experts actively sharing them via WhatsApp upon arrival at the destinations.



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

All our destinations have a page with information about hotels. For more than 70% of them, this also includes information on sustainability



**Travel proposals include information about the sustainable actions of the hotel where guests will stay**

Out of all our destinations, there are 4 where additional information about sustainable actions at the respective hotels is included



**The top 20 destinations each have an impact blog**

There are now 29 impact blogs online, including 20 that focus on our key destinations.



**2023**

# **INCLUSIVE BUSINESS**

**BETTER PLACES**

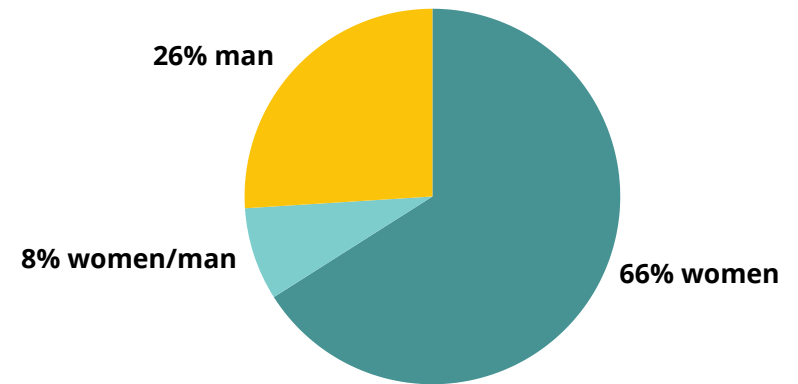






# Our travel experts

In 2023, we had 62 travel experts across 60 destinations. Some destinations have multiple experts, while some experts are solely responsible for more than one destination.



*Distribution of travel experts*

## WOMEN LEADING THE WAY

At 49% of our local partners, a woman is leading the way. In 5% of cases, the local travel agency is run by a couple: a woman and a man. The remaining 46% of local travel businesses are led by men. This means that the majority of our independent travel experts are women.

## OUR TRAVEL EXPERTS

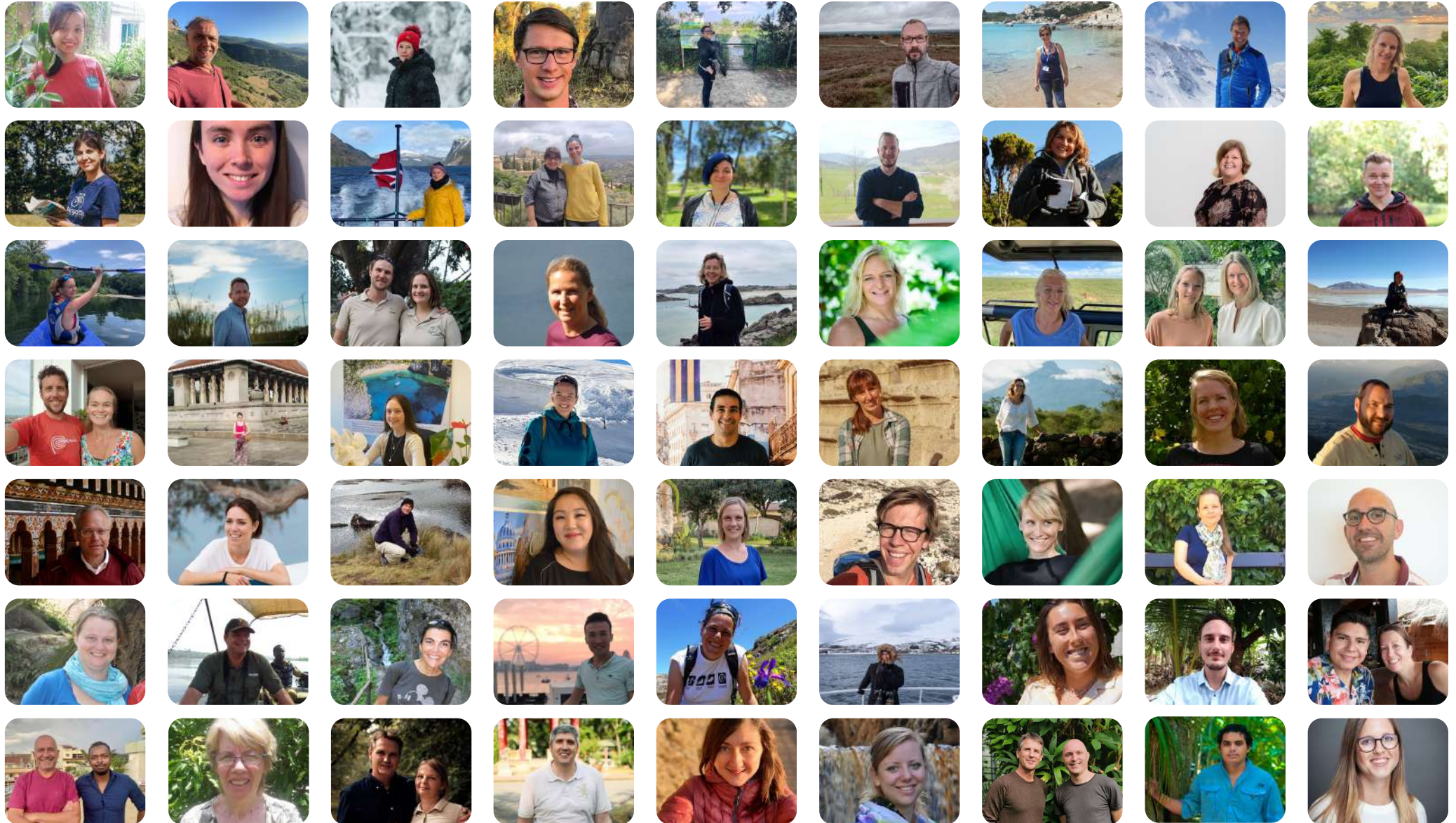
Our travel experts form a diverse group. Women represent 66% of our destinations, men represent 26%, and a further 8% are represented by a mix of men and women. Half of all our travel experts hold a non-Dutch nationality. Additionally, we have Dutch experts who have lived, or still live, in their destination country for many years.

## NEW AND OLD TRAVEL EXPERTS

In 2023, we welcomed 7 new travel experts and said farewell to 7 others. Some European destinations are now divided among regional experts, enabling multiple experts to work within a single country. In 2023, we began collaborating with new regional specialists in Portugal, Albania, Finland, France, Slovenia, and Spain.



# Our travel experts





# Our employees

For us, inclusive entrepreneurship means ensuring that everyone, regardless of gender, skin colour, or background, has equal opportunities to grow and contribute to our organisation. However, this is not always easy. Despite our intentions, there are still challenges we need to address.



## EMPLOYEES AND INTERNS

In 2023, we hired four new employees and said goodbye to two, ending the year with a team of 13 permanent staff members, 10 of whom work part-time. Our employees are covered by the Reiswerk collective labour agreement. Additionally, we welcomed five interns from various universities and colleges. This provides us with fresh insights while offering them a training opportunity with plenty of freedom to develop their skills in a versatile way.



## WOMEN VS MAN

Our current team consists entirely of female employees. While we value our talented women employees, we recognise that this composition limits broader diversity. The tourism sector has traditionally been female-dominated, presenting us with a challenge: how can we foster an inclusive work environment in a sector where women are the majority? In our job postings, we actively express our commitment to seeking greater diversity.



## DIVERSITY AT THE OFFICE

All our office employees in the Netherlands are white. This lack of ethnic diversity does not reflect the diverse world we operate in and depend on. It is essential that we take steps to create a workplace that represents the various communities we collaborate with, both locally and internationally.



2023

# GREEN ENERGY

BETTER PLACES





# Reducing climate impact

The time for offsetting is over. We must fly less if we want to slow down climate change. That's why we support our travellers in exploring alternative ways to travel: closer to home and more frequently by train or car.



## WHAT IS NEEDED

As a signatory of the [Glasgow Declaration](#) we pledge to reduce our CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions by 55% by 2030 compared to 2019. To meet the Paris climate goals, it is crucial to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. This is the only way the travel sector can continue to grow without compromising the planet's livability. To reach this goal, alternative forms of transport must be further developed and promoted. Additionally, measures are needed to reduce the number of long-haul flights. In 2022, we [stopped offsetting](#) the CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions of our trips and shifted our focus entirely to reducing our total emissions.

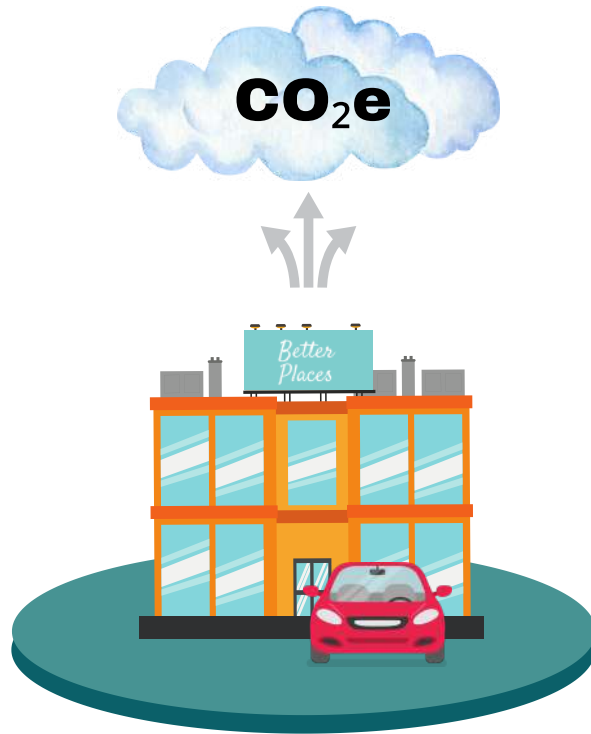
## SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

In a world without greenhouse gas emissions, tourism still has the potential to grow in both the number of travellers and overnight stays. This is the encouraging message of the report '[Envisioning Tourism in 2030 and beyond](#)' from [The Travel Foundation](#). The most effective way to reduce our climate impact is by flying less and travelling shorter distances. In 2019, we began offering destinations within Europe and encourage travellers to choose the train or car over flying. This doesn't mean the end of long-haul trips; however, we do encourage travellers to take such trips no more than once every three years, instead of annually.



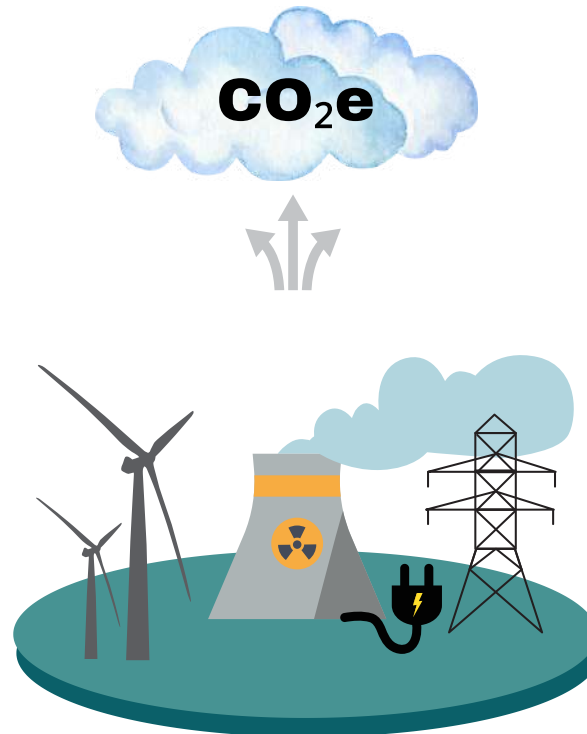
# The emissions of Better Places

Each year, we calculate the total CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions of our organisation. In mapping out our carbon footprint, we measure emissions across the three scopes of the globally recognised framework [Greenhouse Gas Protocol](#).



## SCOPE 1 DIRECT

Direct CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions, such as the impact of our office and the facilities we use.



## SCOPE 2 INDIRECT

Indirect CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions, for instance, the impact of purchased and consumed electricity and gas.



## SCOPE 3 INDIRECT

Emissions caused by value chain activities, such as transport, accommodations, and excursions



# Emissions in scope 1 and 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.



## CO<sub>2</sub>E-EMISSIONS IN SCOPE 1

Scope 1 refers to the CO<sub>2</sub> 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.



## CO<sub>2</sub>E-EMISSIONS IN SCOPE 2

We rent office space in a multi-tenant office building. To calculate CO<sub>2</sub> 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.



# Emissions in 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 CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions than we actually cause. Here we explain how we calculate CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions from our trips.



## CO<sub>2</sub>E EMISSIONS FROM AIR TRAVEL

Most travel organisations choose not to include the CO<sub>2</sub>e 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 CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions are caused by the flight needed to get to the destination.** To calculate the CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions and other greenhouse gases from flights, we use [Google Flights](#)' online tool. However, this tool does not account for other warming effects, such as contrails. In 2024, we will collaborate with the Royal Netherlands Aerospace Centre (NLR) to develop a model that includes these additional climate impacts.



## CO<sub>2</sub>E-EMISSIONS FROM OTHER MEANS OF TRANSPORT

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. This tool also includes the production of the car and its fuel in the calculation. For trains, it distinguishes between various types of trains running on different energy sources (electric, diesel, etc.). The CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions of domestic flights are calculated using Google Flights. Other forms of Scope 3 emissions we measure include those from accommodations, activities, and local transportation. You can read more about this on the following page.





## Other emissions in scope 3

During the trip itself, you also produce CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions through your accommodation, local transportation, and activities. While the largest share of a holiday's climate impact comes from the journey to the destination, we also include the remaining emissions during your stay in our calculations. To provide a realistic estimate of the emissions associated with the land arrangements, we use averages in our assessments.



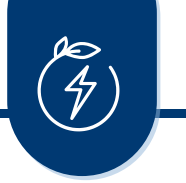
### OTHER EMISSIONS DURING THE TRIP

For calculating on-destination emissions, we use averages: for bookings with three or more people, the emissions average 15 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per person per day, while for couples it averages 20 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e pppd, and for solo travellers 25 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e pppd. The actual climate impact depends on various factors, such as the weather—air conditioning is used more often on hot days. Local conditions also matter; in Costa Rica, all energy consumed is sustainably generated, whereas in some countries energy is partially produced using diesel generators due to frequent blackouts. Traveller behaviour also plays a role; for example, a meat-heavy diet has a greater impact than a plant-based diet.



### EMISSIONS AT VACATION VS HOME

It's important to recognise that a significant portion of on-destination emissions can be offset against the emissions from your daily life at home. After all, you eat, sleep, and travel locally at home too, which also generates emissions. In some cases, such as a walking holiday with stays in simple accommodations, the on-destination emissions can even be lower than your usual emissions at home. This is why measuring the emissions from the flight remains the most significant component of the total holiday emissions. For this reason, we choose to work with averages and focus on the emissions that truly matter.



# Flying: far vs near

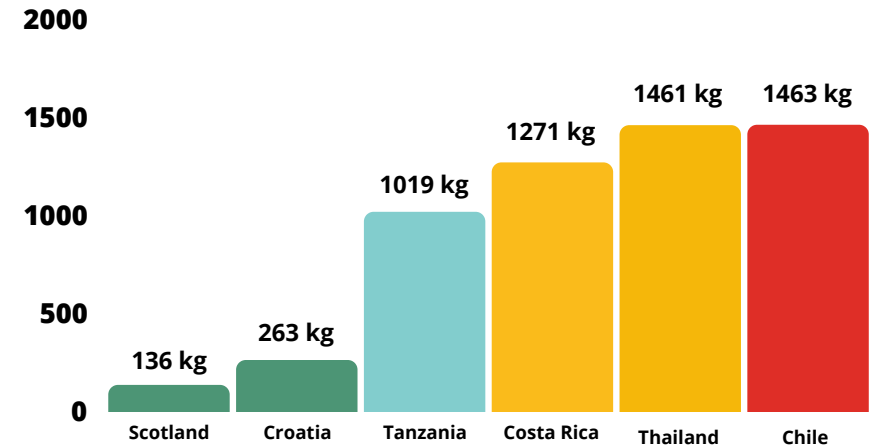


Zone	Distance round trip (km)
Zone 1	1.400 - 6.999
Zone 2	7.000 - 15.399
Zone 3	15.400 - 19.999
Zone 4	20.000 - 25.999
Zone 5	≥ 26.000

*Distance per zone*

## ZONES

Planning a round trip to Thailand for some sun? That generates 1,461 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>e. Prefer sunshine in Croatia? That's just 263 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>e. The difference is significant. To make this clearer, we've divided the world into zones, as shown in the image. Flights to countries in the green zone have the lowest emissions, while flights to destinations in zone 5 produce the highest pollution. We do not offer trips to countries in zone 5, such as Australia and New Zealand.



*The climate impact of the flight to your destination*

## CLOSER TO HOME

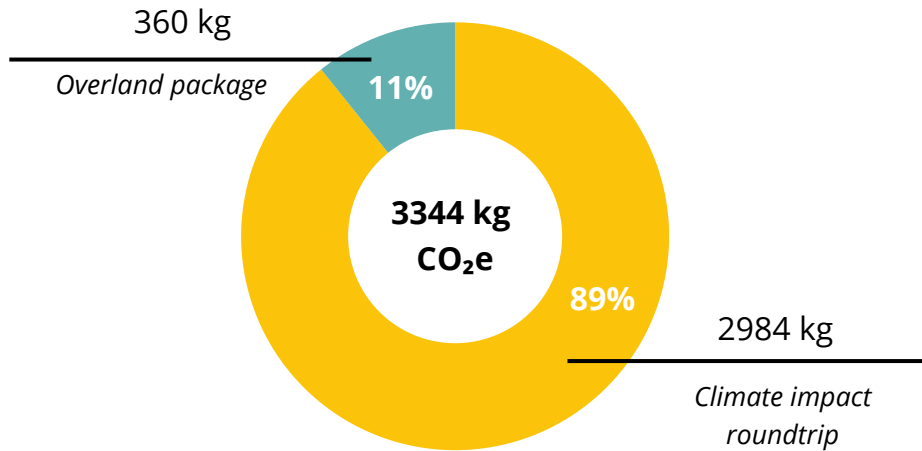
Up to 90% of the CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions from a long-haul holiday come from the flight. That's where the biggest gains can be made: flying less and shorter distances. We contribute by offering more trips within Europe. In 2023, we added three European destinations to our portfolio and stopped offering three long-haul destinations in the same year.



# Comparing CO<sub>2</sub>e-emissions

## FLIGHT TO NEW ZEALAND

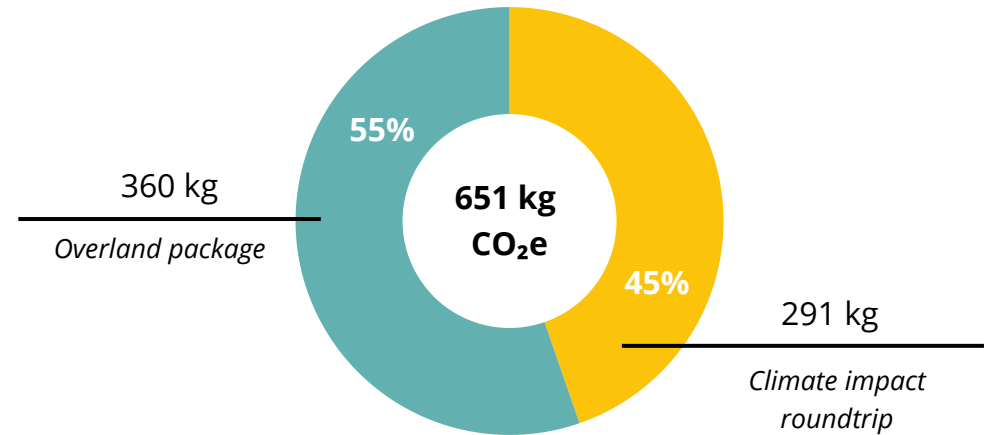
CO<sub>2</sub>e-emission  
Based on an 18-day trip



Source: Google Flights

## FLIGHT TO SICILY

CO<sub>2</sub>e-emission  
Based on an 18-day trip



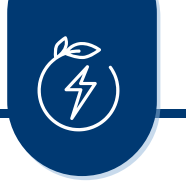
Source: Google Flights

### FAR OR NEAR?

In the figures above, we compare the total CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions of an 18-day tour to Sicily and New Zealand. During a trip to New Zealand, 89% of the total CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions come from the flight to and from the destination. This is why we focus on reducing the number of long-haul flights. At the same time, tourism is a vital [source of income](#) for many people in distant destinations. Our goal is to ensure that our trips have the greatest possible positive impact within the destination itself.

### FOCUS ON EUROPE

Even when a traveller flies to a European destination, the total CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions are significantly lower than flying long distances. In the comparison above, a return flight to Sicily produces 2,693 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e less per person than a return flight to New Zealand. That's why we offer fully-fledged tours within Europe, designed to replace, rather than add to, a long-haul holiday.



# Climate impact per traveller

## OBJECTIVES 2023



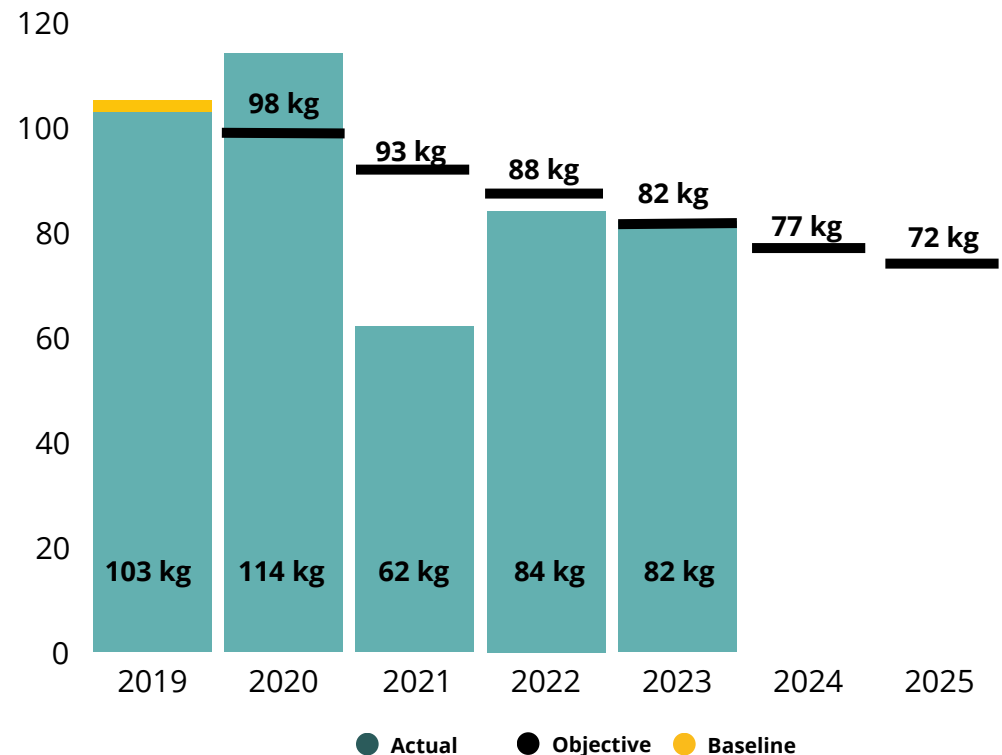
The total CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions per traveller per day are 20% lower than in 2019.

### TOTAL CO<sub>2</sub>E-EMISSIONS PER TRAVELLER

Year	Total CO <sub>2</sub> e-emissions	Total CO <sub>2</sub> e-emissions per traveller
2019	7432 ton	1503 kg
2020	1136 ton	1581 kg
2021	697 ton	904 kg
2022	5462 ton	1311 kg
2023	6641 ton	1327 kg

After the Climate Summit in Glasgow in 2021, Better Places, along with over 300 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, showing how we plan to reduce our emissions by 55%. Since 2016, we have been measuring the average CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions of all our trips, including the flights required to reach the destination.

### CO<sub>2</sub>E-EMISSION OBJECTIVE (KG PER PERSON PER DAY)





# Climate impact from our employees

We also contribute to indirect CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions through employee commuting, attendance at trade fairs, and study trips. Therefore, we encourage our team to use public transport or bicycles for all work-related travel when possible. Of the 23 employees and interns working at Better Places in 2023, 21 travelled by train or bike, while the remaining 2 (mostly) commuted by car.



## TRANSPORT OF OUR EMPLOYEES

In 2023, the total CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions from employee commuting to and from the office amounted to **2,027 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e**. This figure includes the combined emissions from train and car travel by 16 employees and 7 interns.

The total CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions from other work-related travel abroad, such as study trips and trade fairs, amounted to **3,544 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e**. Of the 15 study and business trips, 4 were made by plane and 11 by train. These work-related trips included visits to our colleagues in Berlin and study trips to Oslo, Ljubljana, Stockholm, Oviedo, and Rovaniemi.

40



## WHAT WE DO

- ✓ For study trips within Europe, we always travel by train for distances up to 700 km.
- ✓ If an employee flies to a destination within Europe, the minimum trip duration is 1 week.
- ✓ For study trips outside Europe, the minimum duration is 2 weeks.
- ✓ Employees who cycle more than 5 kilometres to the office or train station receive a bicycle allowance of €0.21 per kilometre.



## By train to the ANVR-Congress

Lees het hele [verhaal van Nynke](#)

Better Places colleague Nynke is the only attendee travelling to the ANVR Congress in Asturias, Spain, by train. While other attendees board their flights, Nynke has already been travelling by train for some time. She makes productive use of her time by working comfortably during the journey. Nynke deliberately chooses the train to minimise the environmental impact of her journey and to demonstrate how sustainable travel is not only feasible but also enjoyable.



# More travel in Europe

Our European trips are a fully-fledged alternative to long-haul holidays, inspiring people to choose destinations closer to home more often. Even if they decide to fly, the CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions are significantly lower than those of a faraway holiday.



## OBJECTIVE 2023



At least 30% of our trips take place within Europe.

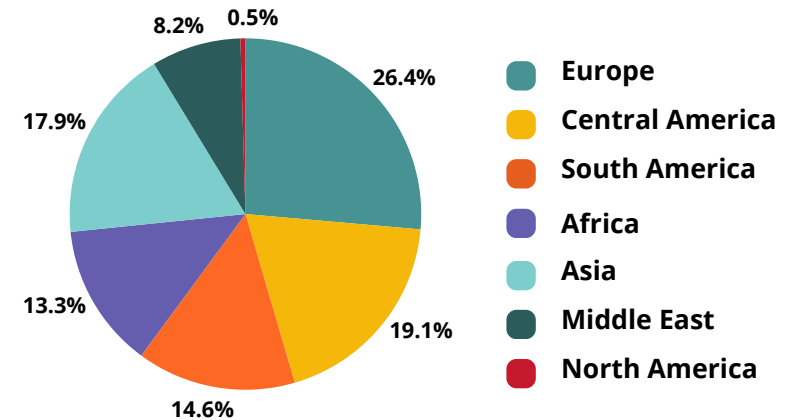
## WHAT WE DID

- ✓ Added more destinations within Europe
- ✓ Increased focus on marketing European destinations
- ✓ Published numerous blogs with a focus on Europe
- ✓ Organised walking trips and weekends in the Netherlands in collaboration with [Avontuur Dichtbij](#)

## RESULTS

It has proven too ambitious to have 30% of all our trips take place in European destinations. We've noticed that 'repeaters' (travellers who have previously booked with Better Places) tend to continue choosing long-haul destinations. Encouraging them to choose a nearby destination for their next trip is a challenge. Additionally, there is a common perception that trips within Europe are just as easy to arrange independently.

## DESTINATION DISTRIBUTION IN 2023





# Alternative transport

We encourage travellers to take holidays within Europe, using either their own car or the train. "For travellers with electric cars, we help plan routes and ensure ample charging stations are available.



## OBJECTIVE 2023



- For 10% of all trips to European destinations, travellers take the train
- For 45% of all trips within Europe, customers drive to the destination using a petrol, diesel, or hybrid car
- For 8% of all trips within Europe, travellers use an electric car to reach their destination

## WHAT WE DID

- ✓ Included information on train travel in example trips in collaboration with The Train Traveller
- ✓ Published 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 road trips

## RESULTS

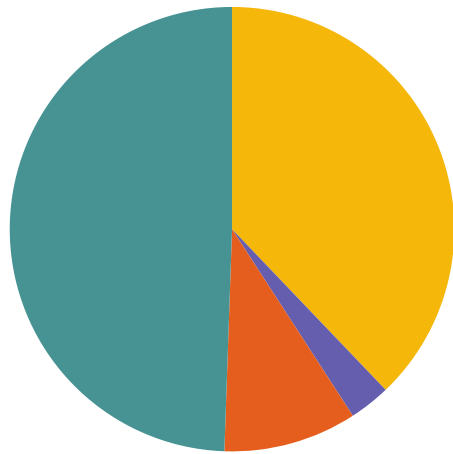
Travelling by train and electric car is becoming increasingly easier and more popular, as reflected in our numbers. We achieved our goal of having at least 10% of all European travellers use the train. While the number of travellers going on holiday by car has increased, we did not reach the target of 45%. Similarly, the goal of 8% travelling with an electric car was not met. This could be due to a lack of electric vehicles among our travellers or insufficient charging station coverage in some European destinations. On the next page, you'll find the graphs with all the percentages.





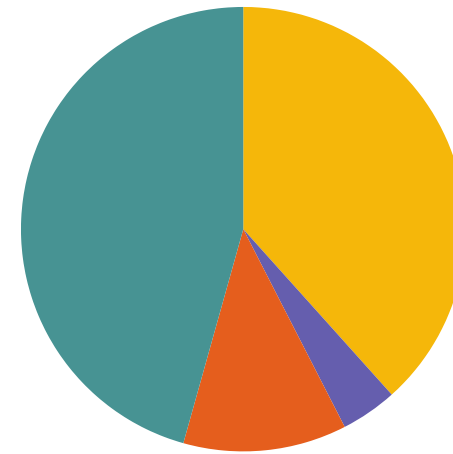
# Transportation distribution within Europe

**2022**



- Car (Petrol or Diesel): 37.9%
- Electric car: 3.0%
- Train: 9.7%
- Airplane: 49.5%

**2023**



- Car (Petrol or Diesel): 38.4%
- Electric car: 4.1%
- Train: 11.9%
- Airplane: 45.7%



# Direct flights within Europe

Do travellers still choose to fly to their destination in Europe? We recommend booking a direct flight. The majority of greenhouse gas emissions occur during take-off and landing. For shorter distances, opting for a direct flight instead of a connecting route significantly reduces CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions.



## OBJECTIVE 2023



For 85% of all flights within Europe, the journey is direct

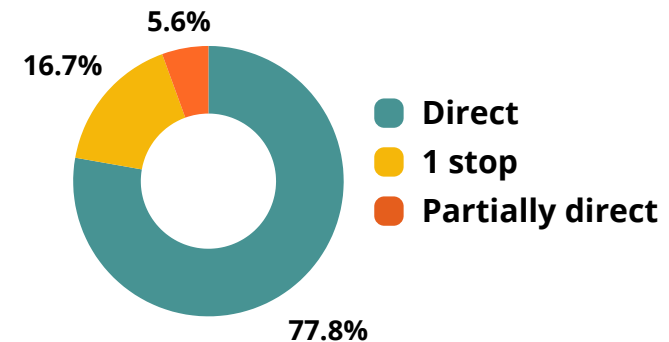
## WHAT WE DID

- ✓ We have improved the process for tracking the flights booked by our customers, allowing us to clearly identify which flight each traveller has chosen.

## RESULTATEN

In 2023, 77.8% of flights within Europe were direct. For destinations under 6,000 kilometres, opting for a [direct flight](#) offers significant climate benefits. However, we did not achieve our goal of at least 85% direct flights within Europe. While the environmental advantages are considerable for shorter flights, it can be challenging to persuade travellers to choose a direct flight when connecting routes are significantly cheaper. Additionally, some destinations simply do not offer direct flight options.

### FLIGHTS WITHIN EUROPE





# Minimizing domestic flights

There are also opportunities to reduce the climate impact at the destination itself. For instance, we aim to minimise the number of domestic flights wherever possible.



## OBJECTIVE 2023



- A maximum of 20% of trips include a domestic flight
- A maximum of 8% of trips include two or more domestic flights

## WHAT WE DID

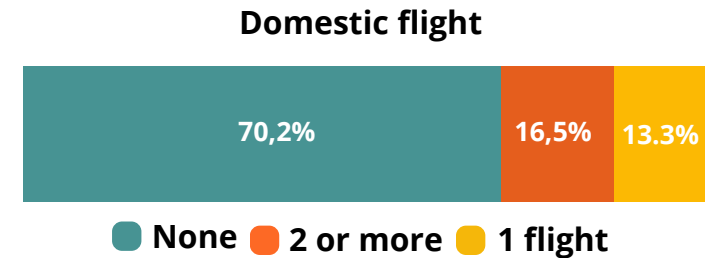
- ✓ Adjusted as many sample itineraries as possible to routes without domestic flights
- ✓ Encouraged travel experts to avoid including unnecessary domestic flights in trip proposals and to motivate travellers to travel overland
- ✓ Promoted [slow travel](#): fewer kilometres, more experiences

## RESULTS

Out of 1.724 trips, travellers flew 1.444 times for their holiday. A total of 192 trips (13.3%) included one domestic flight, while 238 trips (16.5%) included two or more domestic flights. In total, 29.8% of the trips included a domestic flight, while 70.2% did not. As a result, we narrowly missed our target.

## REMARKS

For some domestic flights, alternative transportation options generate a comparable amount of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions. For instance, there is little difference in emissions between a direct flight from Arusha (Tanzania) to Zanzibar and a car journey combined with a ferry to the island.





# Stimulate alternative transportation

We encourage our travellers to choose more sustainable transportation options, such as trains and electric cars. By adding sample itineraries that highlight train and electric car travel, we showcase what is possible. Additionally, we lower the barrier by making it as easy as possible to opt for these alternative travel methods.

## OBJECTIVES 2023



Add at least five sample itineraries featuring travel to the destination by electric car



Add at least five sample itineraries featuring travel to the destination by train

## WHAT WE DID

- ✓ We invested €6,000 in the European Sleeper to make train travel within Europe more accessible.
- ✓ We collaborate with The Train Traveller to identify the best train routes to our European destinations.
- ✓ We refer customers to The Train Traveller for assistance in planning and booking their train journeys.

## RESULTS

In 2023, we added four new [sample itineraries](#) designed for travel with an electric car. These trips are to destinations in Norway, Sweden, and Slovenia. Additionally, we introduced a [sample itinerary](#) for a Costa Rica tour using an electric rental car. The goal of adding at least five train-based itineraries was more than achieved. In 2023, we added 11 train journeys to our offerings. These train trips cover destinations such as Sicily, France, Norway, Northeast Spain, Sweden, Slovenia, and Valencia.



# Slow travel

We encourage our travellers to travel longer and slower. Extending trip durations provides more opportunities to create positive impacts. 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 2023



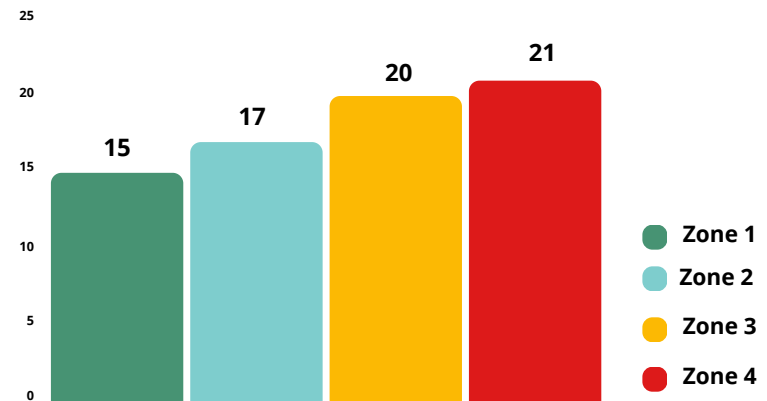
The average trip duration for completed journeys is:  
12 days for zone 1, 14 days for zone 2, 16 days for zone 3 and 18 days for zone 4

## WHAT WE DID

- ✓ Updated most sample trips on the website to a trip duration that fits the objective
- ✓ Introduced minimum trip duration on the application form
- ✓ Provided feedback to travel experts when analysis showed trips were below the minimum trip duration
- ✓ Addressed slow travel in newsletters and social media posts  
Provided travel experts with tips on how to motivate travelers to take longer trips
- ✓ Advised travel experts outside Europe not to process requests for trips shorter than 8 days, or advise travelers to travel longer.

## RESULTS

The average travel duration has been met for all zones.



Average travel duration



## To Scotland by electric car

[Read the whole story of Susanna](#)

'Scotland, in our view, is typically one of those countries where you want to drive around by car. How wonderful would it be to do so in your own car? Travel expert Henk put their trip together so that driving electric would not be an obstacle. Small roads that whizz by silently, beautiful landscapes and castles. The beautiful Scottish landscape turns out to be a great feast to drive through with an electric car.'

**2023**

# **ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT**

**BETTER PLACES**





# The role of the government

The responsibility for reducing CO<sub>2</sub>e 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.



2023

# OUR OBJECTIVES FOR 2024

BETTER PLACES





# Objectives: Biodiversity



All travel proposals include information and tips on vegetarian food at the destination



# Objectives: new wealth



**At least two excursions are included in each completed trip**



- 61% of our trips depart outside the summer and Christmas holidays
- 30% of family travel departs outside the summer and Christmas holidays
- 77% of other travel groups (excluding family trips) depart outside the summer and Christmas holidays



# Objectives: true prices



**Add Eerlijke reiswijzer with true price of transportation at all destinations**



# Objectives: transparent supply chain



**None of our trips includes activities harmful to children or animals**



**At least 61% of overnight stays are in small-scale/sustainable accommodations, homestays or farmstays**



**Give a minimum of 6 guest lectures and/or presentations on sustainable travel**



# Objectives: transparent supply chain



**At least 15 travel experts send clients concrete, sustainable travel tips via Whatsapp or email on the day of arrival**



**All of our destinations have an Eerlijke Reiswijzer**



**Send out the annual sustainability questionnaire for our travel experts**



**Encourage travellers to complete a sustainable travel questionnaire to gain insights into their perspectives**



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



# Objectives: green energy



● Zone 1 ● Zone 2 ● Zone 3 ● Zone 4 ● Zone 5



**The minimum duration of the sample trips on the website is:**  
9 days for zone 1, 14 days for zone 2, 18 days for zone 3, and 22 days for zone 4



**The average duration of completed trips is:**  
14 days for zone 1, 17 days for zone 2, 19 days for zone 3, and 21 days for zone 4



**The minimum duration of booked trips is:**  
8 days for zone 1, 10 days for zone 2, 12 days for zone 3, and 14 days for zone 4



# Objectives: green energy



**At least 12% of travellers in Europe choose the train as their mode of transport to their holiday destination**



**At least 30 sample trips on the website feature travelling to or at the destination by train**



**At least 42% of our travellers within Europe choose the car as their mode of transport to their holiday destination**



**At least 4% of our travellers within Europe choose an electric car as their mode of transport to their holiday destination**



**At least 15 sample trips on the website feature travelling to or at the destination by electric car**



**At least 80% of our travellers flying to a destination within Europe choose a direct flight**



**No more than 19% of completed trips include a domestic flight**



**A maximum of 5% of completed trips include two or more domestic flights**





# Objectives: green energy



The total CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions per traveller per day are 25% lower than in 2019



At least 32% of our completed trips take place within Europe



Add visuals displaying the emissions of transportation for all destinations on the website

## 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](#)

### IMPACT REPORT 2023

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