

Main thematic area: Economics/Science/Technology

Cost: £/££/£££

Project Icarus: Developing approved environmental accreditation standards and a carbon reduction toolkit for companies that purchase business travel

Carbon footprint

Whilst companies that purchase air travel are increasingly concerned about their carbon footprint, many have limited insight or practical means as to how it can be reduced without forfeiting economic growth. Working with the Institute of Travel Management, Project Icarus aims to provide a quick resource and practical toolkit for such companies. It will help to drive more environmentally sustainable business travel purchasing decisions.

Business travel accounts for around 40-50% of all air travel. Providing the means by which the companies that purchase this travel can reduce their carbon footprint – whilst protecting the economic activity created as a result of it – will help rebalance the environmental impact of business related air travel.

Environmental impact reduction toolkit

Project Icarus will create an environmental impact reduction toolkit and a set of approved standards for UK companies to adhere to. The toolkit will incorporate:

- standards and practices for travel policies and carbon emission reporting
- travel avoidance options
- a diagnostic tool to assess travel mode switching for carbon reduction
- resources and support to assist buyers and suppliers to set a process in place to reduce their environmental footprint
- an assessment of internal vs external company business meetings and advice on use of travel alternatives including video, tele and webcasts
- carbon offset programmes.

Accreditation process

In addition the project will develop an accreditation process through which, once developed, travel buyer organisations and their suppliers can drive carbon reducing strategies through their travel purchase decisions.

Lead: Cranfield University

Duration: 12 months

Partner: Cambridge

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These will allow corporate purchasers of business travel to implement programmes which are measured and approved and can therefore be included in public corporate social responsibility (CSR) reporting. Executives from multinationals who purchase business travel will join academics to provide insight and distribute surveys.

Widespread credibility

Project Icarus draws together key corporate buyers that work for organisations that seek to minimise their carbon footprint without reducing their economic activity. The involvement and leadership of the key UK association of travel management ITM in the development of the toolkit and the accreditation scheme will bring widespread credibility to the results of the project and high levels of adoption within the business travel procurement community.

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Omega is funded by HEFCE