



Climate-Neutral Meetings Initiative Brief

RATIONALE

Background

Since adopting the United Nations Climate Neutral Strategy in 2007, the United Nations Economic & Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) has accelerated towards comprehensive climate neutrality by 2020. As the most important regional convening body of intergovernmental meetings in Asia-Pacific, UN Environment’s Sustainable United Nations Secretariat selected ESCAP as a pilot location for the development of an Environmental Management System. ESCAP, with the support of UN Environment, is committed to organizing and implementing sustainable, environmentally-friendly and carbon-neutral meetings, taking UN Environment’s definition of a sustainable event as a guiding principle (2009): “A sustainable event is one designed, organized and implemented in a way that minimizes potential negative impacts and leaves a beneficial legacy for the host community and all involved.” ESCAP and the UN-Environment Regional Office for Asia & the Pacific have partnered to develop a methodology for accurate carbon accounting of meetings and related operations, and as a basis for off-setting efforts.

Previous Applications of the Initiative

The Initiative has been piloted on two meetings organized in the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC), Bangkok from 19 to 21 June 2017: "International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation, and Publication-IAMLADP 2017" and the "Regional Seminar on Innovative Climate Finance Instruments for Financial Institutions."

“Carbon Footprint Analysis & Climate Neutrality” reports were developed for both meetings featuring advanced carbon accounting and data analysis techniques, which take into account the emission impact of a variety of related activities including: air travel, conference room operations (printed materials, energy use), food/beverages, catering, food and other waste, accommodation and commuting to UNCC. The IAMLADP 2017 meeting had a total meeting carbon footprint of 93.92 tCO_{2e} (of which air travel comprised 84%), while the CF Regional Seminar had a total meeting carbon footprint of 16.77 tCO_{2e} (of which air travel comprised 67%).

<u>Emission Type</u>	<u>IAMLADP 2017</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>CF Regional Seminar</u>	<u>%</u>
Travel				
Air travel	78.90 tCO _{2e}	84.01%	11.27 tCO _{2e}	67.20%
Local travel	502.75 kgCO _{2e}	0.54%	200.83 kgCO _{2e}	1.20%
Accommodation	10.98 tCO _{2e}	11.69%	3.73 tCO _{2e}	22.24%
		96.23%		90.64%
Food				
Meals	2.59 tCO _{2e}	2.76%	861.6 kgCO _{2e}	5.14%
Food waste	186.77 kgCO _{2e}	0.20%	54.91 kgCO _{2e}	0.33%
		2.96%		5.47%
Conference & Venue related				
Electricity	746.97 kgCO _{2e}	0.80%	633.29 kgCO _{2e}	3.78%
Decorations	15.4 kgCO _{2e}	0.02%	15.4 kgCO _{2e}	0.09%
Printing	0 kgCO _{2e}	0.00%	8.66 kgCO _{2e}	0.05%
		0.81%		3.92%
Total	93.92 tCO_{2e}	100.00%	16.77 tCO_{2e}	100.00%

Carbon-offsetting was conducted based on the UNFCCC carbon credits purchasing programme (at the rate of \$0.90/ton) with a choice of a project in Thailand.

METHODOLOGY

Green Meeting Guide

A Green Meeting Guide, specifically tailored to meetings being held in the UNCC, Bangkok and managed by the CMU of ESCAP, has been developed to aid participants' selection of certified green hotels (situated in the vicinity of the UNCC to reduce commuting carbon footprint), local and international travel choices, food and beverage selection, and to provide further information on environmentally-friendly events.

Carbon Accounting

Carbon accounting follows the principles of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol developed by the World Resources Institute and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and is compatible with ISO 14064. The October 2007 decision of the Chief Executives Board (CEB) limits the minimum boundary of the UN greenhouse gas inventory to emissions from facility operations and travel that can be influenced by management-level decisions. These include emission categories associated with the purchase or generation of electricity and heat and air/ground transportation. It is also recommended to extend the scope of carbon footprint calculations to also include the carbon footprint of voluntary decisions.

For this meeting, we will also include approximations for accommodation, decorations, solid waste, food choices and food waste. ICAO methodology will be used to calculate the carbon footprint of air travel, while methods recommended by the Green Meeting Guideline are used to calculate the footprint of accommodation, decorations, solid waste, food choices and food waste. A tool called "Emission Calculation & Observation (ECO) Tool" has been developed to streamline data entry by both sponsored and non-sponsored participants.

Communication of Results

With further data collected in-house from the meetings' operations with the cooperation of CMU, FMU, and Sodexo, the total carbon footprint of each meeting will be derived within three weeks after the meeting is held with the publishing of a "Carbon Footprint Analysis & Climate Neutrality" report. The "Carbon Footprint Analysis & Climate Neutrality" report provides an overview of the methodology (coverage, data collection and analysis), the results of the carbon accounting and off-setting efforts. It is important to develop a communication campaign to support the initiative – from data collection to analysis and off-setting using various materials, including the Green Meeting Guide, infographic posters, video materials to enhance the overall pursuit towards climate neutral meetings

Carbon Off-setting Efforts

Once the carbon footprint of an event is calculated, it is recommended that off-setting measures are taken. UNFCCC is supporting a Climate Neutral Now (CNN) initiative, which invites organizations, businesses, cities to measure their climate footprint and report on it, reduce the footprint as much as possible internally, and address unavoidable emissions by purchasing UN Certified Emission Reductions. Further information on the Climate Neutral Now initiative is available on www.climateneutralnow.org. An on-line carbon emissions offsetting platform allowing for the purchase of carbon emissions is available at www.offsetclimateneutralnow.org.

FUTURE APPLICATIONS

Asia-Pacific Ministerial Summit on Environment

ESCAP, in partnership with UN Environment, is committed to the further application of the Carbon Neutral Meetings Initiative to the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Summit on Environment to be held in the UNCC from 4 to 8 September 2017 and is expected to host over 350 participants, with considerable carbon footprint impact. The co-convened Ministerial Summit will bring together two United Nations ministerial-level meetings on the environment, namely the 7th **Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific** and the 2nd UN-Environment's **Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific**. For more information, please visit <http://www.apministerialenv.org/>. Offsets for the carbon footprint of this meeting will be made in cooperation with the UNFCCC.