

Addressing CO₂ compensation of air travel in external funding proposals

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The [Bavarian Climate Protection Offensive](#) intends to reduce air travel. If business travel by plane cannot be avoided, CO₂ emissions must be compensated.

The purchase of CO₂ certificates is carried out centrally by the State Agency for Energy and Climate Protection (Landesagentur für Energie und Klimaschutz = LENK). The University of Bayreuth receives a yearly invoice from the Ministry for all certificate costs incurred at the university in the previous year. These are traced back to the individual flights of members of the university. If the flight was part of an externally funded project, certificate costs need to be financed from the project funds.

For this reason, when applying for third-party project funding, the costs associated with CO₂ compensation for *air travel* must be taken into account. For *travel by car or train*, the Ministry has not yet stipulated that CO₂ compensation is required; our researchers can purchase CO₂ certificates themselves, if budgeted, and account for them directly by way of the usual project processing.

These guidelines inform you on addressing **CO₂ compensation costs of air travel** in third-party funding proposals submitted to the various funding providers.

DFG

The DFG announced the possibility of CO₂ compensation in a [press release](#) in December 2020 and recently provided [additional information](#). For new research project proposals, CO₂ compensation costs can be included as part of the travel costs. **When completing your budget, please include the CO₂ compensation costs of air travel as a separate item within your travel expenses.**

To help estimate the CO₂ compensation costs of a flight, the Ministry has provided us with an [Excel tool](#). In the worksheet for estimating costs ("Abschätzung Kosten"), you can enter the number of flights for each flight distance category to calculate the tons of CO₂ (t CO₂) as well as two different total costs, depending on whether the t CO₂ cost is €5 or €25. **Please make your calculations based on €25 / t CO₂, i.e. use the column on the far right.**

Regarding the outflow of funds: As in the past, the "normal" costs of air travel in the context of DFG projects will be settled by submitting supporting documentation in the following year. However, the CO₂ compensation costs incurred for the flights are not invoiced to the university by the Ministry until autumn of the following year. These are then passed on to the DFG the year after (centrally from our budget using the platform "[Sammelabfrage](#)"). Hence, there is a considerable time delay between travel and settlement of CO₂ compensation costs. The DFG is aware of this (see "outflow principle" in the [FAQs](#)) and allows for very staggered accounting, provided the funds had been budgeted.

The DFG also allows you to provide CO₂ compensation for emissions generated by *car or train travel*. You can use the [German Federal Environment Agency's tool](#), as recommended by the DFG, to estimate the amount of CO₂ generated in this context. The centralized certificate purchase in Bavaria is only carried out for air travel (see above), i.e. for other types of travel you may purchase the certificates yourself and estimate and account for them as you do with other expenses in your project. Most importantly, you should always list these expenses separately as CO₂ compensation costs. These figures are then reported to the DFG in a separate report on the use of funds ("[Einzelabfrage](#)"). See also the [information provided by the DFG](#) [*only available in German*] on this subject.

Federal Ministries

EU

Foundations etc

CO₂ certificates are also purchased centrally for air travel in the context of externally funded projects supported by the above-mentioned organisations. For this reason, you should always increase your air travel costs by adding the relevant compensation amount in your project proposals, using the attached Excel tool provided by the Ministry. Please always list the CO₂ compensation costs separately in the budget.

Regardless of the funding provider, the key points to remember when traveling within the scope of externally funded projects are:

- CO₂ compensation for business travel by air is **mandatory** for members of all Bavarian agencies (centralized certificate purchase).
- CO₂ compensation for business travel by car or train is carried out on a **voluntary** basis (individual certificate purchase).

These guidelines will be updated regularly, as many funders are still developing their climate policies and related CO₂ compensation regulations.