
Addressing CO₂ compensation of air travel in external funding proposals

Version 23.05.2024

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

These guidelines inform you on addressing **CO₂ compensation costs of air travel in third-party funding**.

General regulations for all third-party funded projects

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. These costs must be taken into account as part of travel expenses and requested in the budget when submitting the project proposal.

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.

Calculating the costs of CO₂ compensation

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.**

CO₂ emissions generated by **car or rail travel** can also be compensated (voluntary). 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. You can also use this tool for projects of other funding agencies. 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.

Information on individual funding agencies

DFG:

In its detailed [FAQs](#), the DFG provides all the information on CO₂ compensation in the context of third-party funded projects. **Most importantly, you should always list these expenses separately as CO₂ compensation costs.** This also applies to the (voluntary) CO₂ compensation of car or train journeys. The figures regarding the compensation costs 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

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.

EU:

One of the aims of the EU's Horizon Europe research framework is to implement the European [European GreenDeal](#). For this reason, measures to reduce or compensate CO₂ emissions are also supported as part of the research projects funded by the EU. This is explicitly required as part of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. The content of the [MSCA Green Charter](#) can also serve as a guideline for all other EU projects. The costs for CO₂ compensation are applied for and invoiced as part of the travel costs in all projects.

Bund, Stiftungen u.a.:

CO₂ certificates are also purchased centrally for air travel in third-party funded projects funded by these organizations. Therefore, please always increase the costs of air travel in your proposals by the corresponding compensation amount using the attached Excel tool from the Ministry. Please always show CO₂ compensation costs separately in the budget.

Important notes in the context of travel in externally funded projects:

- CO₂ compensation for air travel is **mandatory** for employees of all Bavarian departments (certificate purchase centrally).
- The costs for CO₂ compensation are part of the costs of a business trip and must therefore be taken into account for all third-party funded business trips.
- CO₂ compensation for business trips by car or train is **voluntary** (individual certificate purchase).