



Galapagos Ecological Airport is the first Latin American airport to be recognised as carbon neutral under Airport Carbon Accreditation.

Transport Case Story

Airport Carbon Accreditation

Emissions from the transport sector are expected to increase in the coming decades under business as usual. Many initiatives in this sector, some of which are described in the 2017 Yearbook are setting the strategic directions and enabling conditions to reduce emissions and increase resilience across all modes of transport.

According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), passenger demand for air travel will double in 2035, as compared to 2016.^a Air transport has both global implications in terms of emissions from airplanes and local impact from the activities of airports. [Airport Carbon Accreditation](#), launched and managed by Airports Council International – European region (ACI Europe), is an initiative that empowers airports to make further progress in managing, reducing and ultimately neutralizing their carbon footprint.

Airport Carbon Accreditation follows the [GHG Protocol](#) methodology and, as such, airport emissions under the initiative can largely be divided into three scopes: 1) direct emissions from controlled sources, which include vehicles/ ground support equipment, on-site waste or water management, on-site power generation, boilers and furnaces; 2) indirect emissions from purchased electricity; and 3) other indirect emissions related to airport activities, such as the aircraft landing and take-off, auxiliary power units, off-site waste and water management, staff commute etc. The initiative currently endeavours to increase airport accreditations in all regions, and encourage

already accredited airports to continuously enhance their carbon management and thus progress towards the higher levels of accreditation.

ACI Europe,^b the association of European airport operators, launched Airport Carbon Accreditation in June 2009 to support and recognize participating airports' efforts to manage their carbon-dioxide emissions. Airport Carbon Accreditation is a voluntary and independent carbon management and reduction programme designed specifically for the airport community to reduce its carbon footprint, showcasing its achievement and sharing its knowledge and best practice. The initiative is administered by WSP, an international consultancy appointed by ACI Europe to enforce the accreditation criteria for airports on an annual basis. It accredits the airports under the programme, provides administrative and secretariat services and advises applicant airports through the accreditation process. The programme has expanded gradually to the other four regions of the global ACI network: Asia-Pacific, Africa, North America and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Airport Carbon Accreditation has 4 different, increasingly stringent levels of certification. Airports must have their carbon footprints independently verified in accordance with ISO14064 (Greenhouse Gas Accounting) for any application. Level 1 (mapping) of certification confirms that the airport is quantifying and independently verifying its carbon footprint. Level 2 (reduction) requires airports to implement carbon management

a. IATA (October 2016). IATA Forecasts Passenger Demand to Double Over 20 Years. Available at: <https://www.iata.org/pressroom/pr/Pages/2016-10-18-02.aspx>

b. ACI Europe represents over 500 airports in 45 European countries, handling over 90 per cent of commercial air traffic in Europe.

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and track progress towards a reduced carbon footprint. Level 3 (optimization) includes mapping, reduction and additionally requires third party engagement (aircraft operators, ground handling companies, retailers, public transportation service providers, etc.) in carbon footprint reduction. The highest level of accreditation is level 3+ (neutrality), requiring the airports to reduce their carbon emissions as much as possible and to neutralize the remaining emissions by offsetting them.^c

Airports may enter the programme at any level, provided they meet the requirements of that specific level. They can choose to progress through the programme at their own pace. Certification is valid for a period of one calendar year from the date of entry in the programme, unless it is a certification of level 3 or above, in which case the airports can opt for a three-year renewal process under certain conditions. One condition is that the airport also demonstrates an emission reduction for at least one Scope 3 emissions source.

There has been continuous progress since the initiative was launched – by 2014, Airport Carbon Accreditation was global, with 111 airports certified. Today, there are 245 accredited airports worldwide: 136 in Europe, 47 in Asia-Pacific, 35 in North America, 17 in Latin America and Caribbean and 10 in Africa. These 245 airports represent 44.2 per cent of the world's air passenger traffic, i.e. 3.3 billion people across 68 countries. In June 2017, the initial commitment for the European region was to obtain 50 carbon neutral airports by 2030 – this has been upgraded to achieve 100 carbon neutral airports in Europe by 2030. The amount of carbon dioxide emission reduced globally in the year 2017-2018 alone is over 347,000 t CO₂, which is the highest emissions reduction achieved since the programme launch. Additionally, 67200 t CO₂ have been compensated for through offsets for emission reductions achieved in other sectors. The initiative now has at least one carbon neutral airport in every region: 39 in Europe, 6 in Asia-Pacific, and 1 in each of the other regions.

There is an increased number of participant airports every year. Participation in the programme helps airports achieve real emission reductions, contributing to the national, international and industry targets. It also gives public credibility to the airport industry and individual airports' sustainability agendas, thus also increasing the brand reputation and stakeholder support. Additional benefits to participant airports may also be accrued from lower energy bills, as well as financial rewards and reduced costs in localities where the Federal, state, and local governments offer incentives for energy efficiency measures.

Another reason for its success is the fact that the initiative is focused on improving performance by providing assistance on the technical aspects of emission reductions. Airport Carbon Accreditation facilitates information sharing and exchange of best practices between airports, in addition to enhancing the



Nadi International Airport in Fiji – the first airport from a small island state to achieve Airport Carbon Accreditation Level 1.

dialogue between different airport departments on the issues relating to carbon-dioxide emissions. The challenge for the initiative at present is how to encourage airports to further scale up the ambition and implement reductions in alignment with the Paris Agreement goals. In the coming years, the initiative intends to further support the achievement of carbon neutrality through appropriate tools, studies and processes.

The main strength of the initiative lies on being performance-driven, with scalable ambition, and independent third party verification. This provides participants with a clear focus, a progressive path towards better carbon management, and a credible certification regarding their emission reductions. Coupled with the technical expertise provided, Airport Carbon Accreditation's strengths translates into the successful engagement of an increasingly higher number of airports.

c. The initiative considers an airport to be carbon neutral when all of the emissions under its direct control have been offset.