World Climate Research Programme
Guidelines on reducing carbon emissions from travel
Draft, 8 May 2023

1. Background:

- The World Climate Research Programme (WCRP) recognizes its responsibility as a leader in facilitating international climate research to take account of the emissions generated from travel to meetings and events.
- While it is recognized that in-person participation in some meetings and events plays an important role in WCRP's work, there are many meetings and events that can be held online. Other models, such as meeting in 'regional hubs,' has also be successfully utilized to reduce the need to travel.
- A number of WCRP projects and activities are already implementing procedures, both formally and informally, to prioritize their travel to reduce carbon emissions demonstrating that the timing is right to provide a set of guidelines on a Programme-wide level to ensure that we can, as a Programme, set goals and monitor progress.
- To set goals and monitor progress, all WCRP core projects and other high-level activities (e.g., lighthouse activities) will need to calculate their carbon emissions from travel in a universally agreed way against an agreed baseline.
- It is important that the calculation of carbon emissions from travel provides clear and meaningful information that can be acted on, but also that the process is not unduly onerous on the WCRP Secretariat and International Offices.

2. Goal:

- To set in place a transparent set of guidelines and procedures that can be used by the WCRP Secretariat and the International Offices to calculate carbon emissions from travel and report on this to the WCRP Joint Scientific Committee (JSC) at their annual Session.

3. Procedure

The calculation of carbon emissions from travel for all WCRP projects and activities needs to be centrally calculated to ensure that we can assess the overall carbon emissions from travel of the Programme. All high-level projects and activities of WCRP (Core Projects, Lighthouse Activities, etc.) should have a focal point for carbon emissions calculations. This will either be a staff member of an International Office or the WCRP Secretariat Officer responsible for a given activity.

The procedure each year will be:

- A *WCRP travel carbon calculation* template will be sent by the WCRP Secretariat to all focal points in January (or as soon as possible) of each year (e.g., in year *n*).

Section 4 provides a list of meetings and events that should be included in the calculation sheet.

- In January of the following year (e.g., in year *n+1*), the finalized travel information sheet for the preceding calendar year is sent to the WCRP Secretariat together with a brief report (less than a page) outlining any information needed to interpret the calculations and any difficulties encountered.

The WCRP Secretariat collates all the data submitted and arranges for the annual carbon calculation for WCRP travel to be made (this is conducted externally). Once the carbon calculation is completed, a report on the annual carbon calculation for WCRP travel is compiled in time for the annual JSC meeting the same year. This includes a detailed report for the JSC (closed report: the full break down from each group is reported) and a summary report (where the carbon footprint of WCRP travel as a whole is reported, with statistics that don't single out any individual group or activity) to be made available publicly, including on the WCRP website.

4. Travel to be included in the carbon calculation

The carbon calculation of WCRP travel is for all attendees to the following meetings and events:

- Joint Scientific Committee (JSC) Sessions
- Steering Group[1] meetings
- Activity meetings
- Conferences, workshops, ECR events (including seasonal schools)
- Other meetings or events where travel is for official representatives of WCRP[2]

Travel can be by air, rail, coach, taxi, car, cycling, and walking. Terminal travel (e.g., travel to and from an airport), should also be included if this is known. If the full details of travel are not known, the office should provide a best estimate and note any assumptions made in the appropriate place in the calculation sheet or end of year report. It is noted that for large events of more than a few hundred participants, estimations may be needed to allow a calculation to be made.

5. Hybrid and online meetings

In order to ensure that we take account of a reduction in total carbon emissions due to online meeting participation, participants who attend meetings online, should be recorded as remote attendees. For example, if the JSC had its annual meeting in-person one year and online the next year, the details of the number of online participants may demonstrate a

[1] Steering Group refers to each Core Project Scientific Steering Group (SSG) and all of the highest-level Lighthouse Activity (or similar) Steering Groups (or equivalent)

[2] Attendance as an official representative of WCRP or of one of its core projects or activities.

50% reduction in emissions over two years. This would also help to make the case that the same science can be delivered with reduced emissions.

6. Goals and measuring progress

WCRP carbon emissions from travel in 2023 will be used as a baseline for a reduction in subsequent years (without WCRP OSC emissions). The goal will be to reduce travel from the 2023 baseline by 75% by 2030. At the annual JSC Session progress towards this target will be assessed.