

The logo for C40 Cities, featuring the text "C40" in a larger font above "CITIES" in a smaller font, both in a green color. The logo is centered within a white rectangular box.

C40
CITIES

Environmental Policy



Foreword

C40's mission is focused on ensuring global temperature rise does not exceed 1.5C – as science dictates is necessary to prevent catastrophic climate change. We achieve this by supporting our cities to take bold, meaningful and sustainable action to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, and so shift global markets and demonstrate that it is possible to achieve thriving, zero carbon communities. Therefore, as a global climate change organization, we have a responsibility to provide similar leadership in regard to the emissions associated with our own work. While the carbon footprint of C40 staff is small when compared to the scale of our achievements, we must hold ourselves to the highest possible standards in reducing our impact on the climate.

The nature of C40's work, connecting more than 90 cities across 21 time zones, requires significant international travel by our staff. Events that C40 hosts and that we participate in around the world help raise the bar for global climate ambition. Yet, it is crucial for our credibility as an organization, that C40 makes every effort to work in the least environmentally harmful way possible.

Thank you to the C40 staff who have championed this initiative. I am proud that the team at C40 has stepped up and challenged us as an organization to lead by example. The world is watching us, and thanks to the recommendations detailed in this policy every C40 colleague can help us to be the change we want to see in the world.

Mark Watts, Executive Director,
C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group



C40 Environmental Policy

The work of C40 has rapidly expanded over the past decade. The number of C40 staff has grown year on year and our global reach now extends to 94 cities. Similarly, the number of workshops and events that C40 hosts or participates in has expanded. Therefore, the environmental impact of C40's work, and the greenhouse gas emissions generated by our efforts has also gone up.

The C40 Environmental Policy has been the result of a bottom-up, staff-led effort over 18 months, with contributions from employees across the organisation. The aim of the policy is to measure, understand and act to reduce the operational carbon footprint of C40 as an organisation. The C40 Environmental Policy consists of a series of recommendations designed to inform decision making by C40 staff. By encouraging colleagues to consider the climate impact of every decision, the C40 Environmental Policy aims to create an organisational culture that pursues the lowest possible emissions option needed to deliver on any given objective and outcome.

The C40 Environmental Policy is continuously reviewed, updated and improved based on suggestions from our employees and informed by leading external organisations and experts. We will also evaluate and report on the outcomes following the implementation of the policy.

Key Recommendations

A. Staff Travel

Flights have by far the highest carbon footprint of all of C40's activities. The primary aim of C40's Environmental Policy is to reduce the environmental impact of staff travel and avoid air travel whenever possible. However, some air travel will be necessary for C40 to deliver its mission. As such, the following actions should be taken:

- 1. C40 employees should avoid air travel if at all possible.** All C40 employees take responsibility to weigh the purpose and outcomes of their planned travel against the resulting carbon emissions. When booking flights is unavoidable, employees must be able to justify the choice, demonstrate lower emission options were not available, and that travel is necessary.
- 2.** As the majority of air travel emissions at C40 come from **long-haul** flights they should be avoided in particular.
- 3.** For **short-haul** journeys C40 employees should use **low-emission transport alternatives** (e.g. train, bus, ferry) wherever feasible.
- 4.** When flying is necessary, staff should, other than in exceptional circumstances, fly **economy class** and choose direct, low-emission routes and airlines.
- 5.** C40 employees should also use low-emission options for **local travel** (e.g. avoiding taxis and walking, or using a bicycle, bike share and public transport where available).



B. Events

Environmental sustainability must be among the primary considerations when planning and executing C40 events. All aspects of the event planning phases must be carefully examined to minimise environmental impact. C40 employees should reflect on personal choices at events and advocate for sustainable practices to all attendees to set an example. As such, the following actions should be taken:

- 1.** C40 employees should only travel to events, either those hosted by C40 or by external organisations, if their presence is absolutely necessary. All C40 employees take responsibility to **weigh the purpose and outcomes** of their presence at events against the resulting carbon emissions.
- 2.** When organising events, and selecting contractors or partners for events, C40 should use **environmentally conscious companies** and adopt sustainable practices.

C. Catering & Food

Adopting a vegetarian or vegan diet is the single most effective individual action to reduce one's environmental impact. It not only reduces greenhouse gas emissions, but also loss of biodiversity, air and water pollution whilst promoting more sustainable land use. As such, the following actions should be taken:

1. When ordering food for **C40 events**, staff should only use C40 funds for **vegetarian and vegan**, and mainly locally sourced food.
2. C40 employees should **only expense vegetarian and vegan food** when travelling for C40 business. It is, of course, everyone's individual right to choose what they eat, but C40 will only reimburse staff for vegetarian and vegan meals.



D. Office Waste

Recycling is not a substitute for reducing waste in the first place. Therefore, C40 employees must reduce waste as a top priority: when working in C40 offices and travelling for C40, single-use items should be avoided and reusable items should be used instead. As such, the following actions should be taken:

1. C40 employees should **reduce waste**, not just recycle. During working hours C40 staff should use take reasonable steps to ensure they can avoid consumption of single use items, for example, carrying a reusable water bottle or coffee cup.
2. C40 is a **paperless** organisation. C40 employees should only print documents if absolutely necessary.

