



**GBTA** Global Business  
Travel Association

Many Voices. One Purpose.

## DRIVING CLIMATE ACTION IN BUSINESS TRAVEL

### GBTA Sustainability Summit 2022 Highlights

In November 2022, close to 300 delegates - including 100 corporate travel managers - gathered in Brussels for GBTA's first-ever Global Business Travel Sustainability Summit. Participants from 20 countries, including business travel professionals, policymakers, NGOs, and experts, tackled the most critical sustainability issues impacting the business travel industry. Through panel discussions, breakouts and an interactive session on climate action planning, the business travel community showcased their strong commitment towards decarbonizing the industry.

**The engagement signaled a recognition that in order to continue to enjoy the notable benefits that business travel brings to the global economy, a collective approach to decarbonization is critical – and taking action is of the utmost importance.**



*'Travel is needed to run our societies, travel is what runs our economies, it's our modern way of life [...] We want to make travel cleaner, safer and smarter but we don't want to cut on travel.'*

*Walter Goetz, Head of Cabinet, EU Transport Commissioner*

# Key Takeaways



1. **Radical collaboration across all stakeholders is essential to unlocking the green transition** – with governments providing enabling policies, businesses driving investments and delivering solutions, and civil society advancing and advocating for higher ambitions.
2. **Business travel has an opportunity to play a leading role** and become the frontrunner in reducing emissions now while also scaling up the next generation of solutions.
3. **It is essential to standardize sustainability criteria and harmonize methodologies** to report on Scope 3.6 emissions so that we are all speaking the same language and can compare apples to apples.
4. **Aggregated demand on the corporate side and prioritizing sustainability in their procurement decisions** will compel suppliers to improve their ESG performance.
5. While most companies are now incorporating some elements of a decarbonization strategy, no one is perfect, and it is important to **share case studies and best practices so that we can learn from each other**.
6. **Senior management buy-in is critical to a decarbonization strategy**, as it impacts the entire company culture. Travel managers need to provide their leadership with clear data to influence sustainability decision-making.
7. **The business travel community must send a strong demand signal for sustainable aviation fuel (SAF)**, which is a critical tool in the short and medium-term towards Net Zero commitments.

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## Thought leaders emphasize that businesses need to take a leading role

To set the stage, stakeholders from government, industry, and civil society demonstrated how a truly cross-sectoral approach is essential to unlocking the green transition. In a fireside chat with GBTA VP Mark Cuschieri, **Head of Cabinet for Transport Commissioner Walter Goetz** shared the European Commission's plans to incentivize, finance, and provide the infrastructure for sustainable mobility.

*"If we want to enjoy the economic and social benefits of travel, we have got to make it more responsible... And time is running short. It requires real leadership, and urgent action right now."*

*Paul Abbott, CEO, American Express  
Global Business Travel;  
Chair, GBTA Foundation*



The Opening Panel on Leading the Transition then weighed in on some of the most debated questions in sustainable business travel. The dynamic debate resulted in agreement on the pillars that should frame collective action: **collaboration across sectors, harmonization of standards, and solidarity with the countries most impacted by climate change.**

*"Unless you bring everyone on board and make sure you do not leave anyone behind, there is no way we can make the transition to a more sustainable world." – Brune Poirson, Chief Sustainability Officer, Accor; Member, Sustainability Leadership Council, GBTA*

Keynote speaker Dr. **Gabrielle Walker, climate change writer and Founder of non-profit Rethinking Removals**, stressed that the only way climate solutions can scale at pace is if businesses take a leading role. Capital markets can drive the finance where it is needed and governments can give a measure of certainty, but it is businesses that must be the delivery arm of the solutions. And while these new solutions scale up, actions must be taken now to reduce emissions from business travel.

Dr. Walker stressed that we need to put all our efforts into finding and scaling the solutions. Business travel can be a big part of this by supporting the providers that are taking climate change seriously.

**Business travel needs to be a frontrunner to support the development of new technologies – in aviation and in carbon removals – that we will need to get to net zero in time.**



## CORPORATE HOW-TO'S: Track, Measure and Decarbonize

Data-based decision-making requires that corporates first understand how to track and measure their climate impact in a standardized way. Efforts are underway to harmonize methodologies for calculating carbon emissions, particularly as reporting is becoming mandatory in jurisdictions across the world. However, as innovations like sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) are coming to market, the accounting guidance needs to catch up. Panelists shared what is next but stressed that **companies can take action now, even before the perfect accounting methodology is published.**



*“Either you supersize your efforts, or you downsize your ambition. As a travel manager, never allow things that you cannot control... kill your ambition to make an impact. Use your voice, your platform, to influence those things that you can control.” – Alben Taseva, Nordic Strategic Sourcing Manager, Codan Forsikring*

Three companies then addressed the question – in practice, how do we decarbonize our business travel programs? Panelists showcased that strategies to promote more purposeful travel, incentivize employees, and mandate new travel policies do work. There are a range of effective approaches for those who are well-advanced or just starting out. However, they demonstrated that senior management buy-in is crucial, and travel managers need to **provide their leadership with clear data in order to influence sustainability decision.**

## On the Road to...

### Sustainable aviation

**Sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) is not the only solution in reaching Net Zero by 2050, but it is an important one for the aviation sector in the short to medium-term while other technologies develop and scale.** While SAF is far from being globally available at scale, the business travel community has a unique role to play in addressing the supply issue because of our disproportionate impact on aviation and ability to send a strong demand signal. The book-and-claim model has the potential to unlock demand for SAF at a global scale, even in geographies that couldn't normally access it. It is however essential that companies get clarity around how to report on their SAF investments so that the concern around greenwashing is not a barrier.





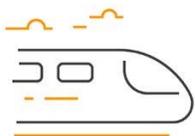
### Green hospitality

**Panelists agreed that to ensure access to clear, consistent, and credible data, sustainability standards must be pre-competitive.** International organizations are now on a path to harmonize the standards, methodologies, and pathways for sustainability in hospitality. Companies and organizations applying sustainability must start with what is already out there, rather than reinventing the wheel. Travel managers don't need to know all the differences between different certifications, but just need to introduce sustainability into decision-making and make sure it is prioritized.



### Electromobility

**For a successful uptake of e-vehicles, consumers need to be reassured that they can reach their destination.** Three major gaps need to be addressed: the cost of electric vehicles (EVs); the lack of a market for used e-vehicles; and the convenience of charging e-vehicles. On the supply side, for the successful introduction of EVs, the supply of raw materials must be guaranteed. The US and the EU are both introducing measures to address these gaps, particularly in infrastructure.



### Switching to rail

**There is demand for greener transport options, and seamlessness – both in the booking process and in the trip itself – is of utmost importance, even over price.** The technology to compare rail with other transport options or to combine multiple modes of transport in one trip is still emerging, hindered by lack of access to data. Government investment is crucial to improve railways and expand high-speed connections, and regulations will ensure that suppliers are sharing their data with travel intermediaries. TMCs must prioritize seamless solutions to make multimodality and switching to greener transport modes possible.

### Walking the talk at GBTA

GBTA believes that we cannot talk about the race to net zero without putting in every effort to green our own operations. With the support of our vendors, we took steps to hold a greener event, including eliminating red meat, using digital signage where possible, working with responsible caterers, encouraging use of greener transport options, and eliminating single-use plastic water bottles.

Using [Green Evenements' CLIMEET tool](#), GBTA calculated and offset a portion of our emissions related to Sustainability Summit and European Conference. The offsetting project, selected by attendees, installs a 70MW solar power facility in Rajasthan, India. This decreases the need for fossil fuels, while also funding solar-powered light and electricity for the local community.

## What's Next ?

GBTA will continue to position business travel as a force for positive climate action, especially through its work under the [GBTA Foundation](#).

- Based on our Summit's think tank session and guidance by our [Sustainability Leadership Council](#), GBTA will establish a climate action plan with concrete steps on how to decarbonize business travel and reach net zero by 2050
- We will extend our partnerships with like-minded organizations and NGOs to multiply the impact of our collective work.
- We will continue advocating for:
  - Investments in SAF and green technologies
  - Development of rail and EV charging infrastructure
  - Better multimodality and interoperability
  - Harmonized global standards and methodologies to calculate emissions for business travel

**We look forward to continuing this conversation at our Sustainability Summit in June 2023 in Washington, D.C.**

**'The challenge is bigger than any individual company, and is one that requires action throughout the full supply chain and ecosystem. This is where GBTA can add value by aggregating the many voices, combined purchasing power and scaling capabilities of the business travel sector'.**

**Suzanne Neufang,  
CEO, Business Travel  
Association**



## List of speakers

- [Suzanne Neufang](#), CEO GBTA
- [Walter Goetz](#), Head of Cabinet for Transport Commissioner, European Commission
- [Mark Cuschieri](#), GBTA, Vice President
- [Caroline Strachan](#), Managing Partner, Festive Road
- [Paul Abbott](#), CEO, American Express Global Business Travel
- [MEP Ismail Ertug](#), Committee on Transport and Tourism, European Parliament
- [Brune Poirson](#), Chief Sustainability Officer, Accor
- [Denise Auclair](#), Corporate Travel Campaign Manager, Transport & Environment
- [Matthew Parsons](#), Corporate Travel Editor, Skift
- [Sally Davey](#), Chief Executive, Travalyst
- [Randy Durband](#), Chief Executive Officer, GSTC
- [Patrick O'Meara](#), Head of Business Development, Sustainable Hospitality Alliance
- [Zlatko Kregar](#), Policy Officer, DG Mobility & Transport, European Commission
- [Thomas Neumann](#), Policy Manager, AVERE
- [Robin Loos](#), Sustainable Transport Officer, BEUC – The European Consumer Organisation
- [Dr. Andrea Giuricin](#), Chief Executive Officer, TRA Consulting
- [Emmanuel Mounier](#), Secretary General, EU Travel Tech
- [Raul Cazan](#), President, 2Celsius
- [Jacqueline Starr](#), Chief Executive, Rail Delivery Group
- [Bev Fearis](#), Editor, The Business Travel Magazine
- [Michael Schneider](#), Assistant Director Aviation Environment, IATA
- [Szymon Osciowski](#), Deputy Head of Unit, DG MOVE, European Commission
- [Dan Rutherford](#), Program Director, International Council on Clean Transportation
- [Shelley Fletcher-Bryant](#), Senior Director, Sales & Client Relationship Management, Advito
- [Amon Cohen](#), Business Travel News Europe
- [René Rühl](#), ASG Mobility Lead & Mobility Sustainability Market Business Partner, Accenture
- [Barbora Vosahlova](#), EMEA Travel, Meetings, & Events Operations Manager, Ernst & Young
- [Albena Taseva](#), Nordic Strategic Sourcing Manager, Codan Forsikring
- [John Harvey](#), Managing Partner, Globalyse
- [Kim Carnahan](#), Head of Secretariat, Sustainable Aviation Buyers Alliance (SABA)
- [Maarten Dansen](#), Senior Manager, Corporate Responsibility, PwC NL
- [Chris Truss](#), Sustainability Director, Reed & Mackay, A Trip Actions Company
- [Chris Elmitt](#), Chief Executive Officer, LIVVE
- [Hendrik Vordenbaeumen](#), Global VP Product Strategy & Head of Sustainability, SAP Concur
- [Catherine Dolton](#), Chief Sustainability Officer, IHG Hotels & Resorts
- [Sara Digiesi](#), Chief Executive Officer, BWH Hotel Group Italia.
- [Joel Fisher](#), VP of Product, Travelport
- [Markus Trapp](#), Director & Head of Sales DACH, CWT
- [Dr. Gabrielle Walker](#), Climate Change Writer and Founder of CUR8

### Multi-stakeholder Perspective

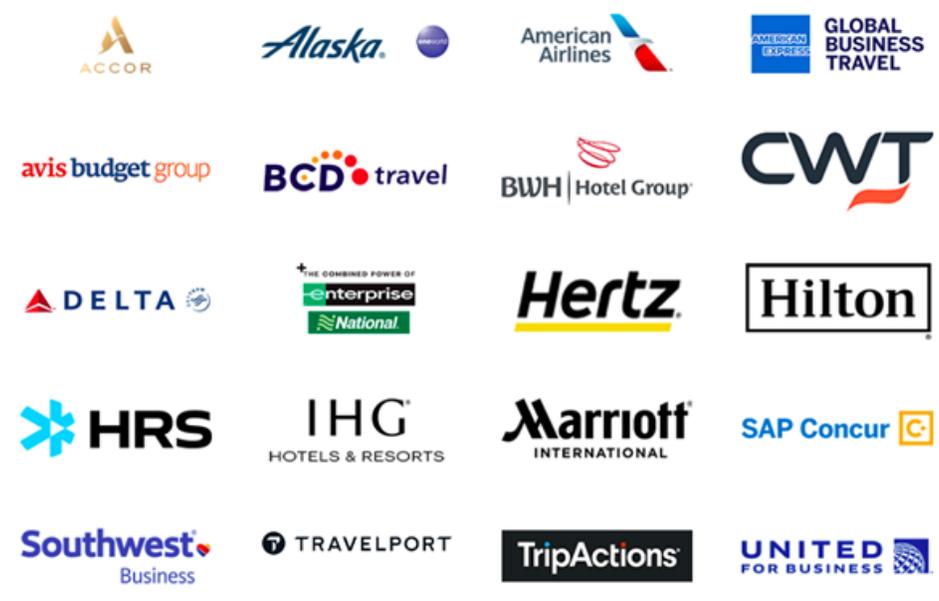
high-ranking EU officials  
C-level business leaders  
academicians and experts  
NGOs  
trade associations  
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journalists

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