

ECTAA has signed the Glasgow Declaration in 2021 and adopted a Climate Action Plan in 2022 around the 5 pathways: measure, decarbonise, collaborate, regenerate and finance. This is published on the ECTAA [website](#).

ECTAA is the European umbrella organisation of national travel agents' and tour operators' associations in Europe. As a **supporting business trade association**, we see our primary role in raising awareness of the need for urgent and effective climate action in the industry and promoting the uptake of sustainable practices to help curb the negative impact of climate change on people and the planet. Tourism is exposed to climate risks. Locations such as coastlines and mountains are very vulnerable to climate change. Damage is already being felt everywhere - with worsening droughts and heatwaves, floods and wildfires, snow melt and changes in seasonality, and biodiversity loss. Action is urgently required.

This report is the first report on the implementation of the ECTAA Climate Action Plan. The aim is to provide an overview of the actions undertaken in the frame of the 5 pathways in 2023.

1. Measure

1.1 Upgrade of CARMACAL

ECTAA was part of a 3-year EU-funded project entitled '[SUSTOUR](#) - Promoting sustainability among the European tour operator sector through a business led approach' (ending September 2023). The aim of the project was to foster the capacities and skills of 175+ tour operators (SMEs) to implement training, management systems, standards and solutions in order to improve their sustainable management and performance and open up new market opportunities.

As part of this project, the existing tool for the calculation of carbon emissions of holiday trips, [CARMACAL](#), was upgraded to make it more user-friendly. This tool allows travel companies to measure the complete and detailed carbon footprint of their travel packages, including transportation, accommodations, activities and other key factors. It contains the carbon footprint of 25 different modes of transport, as well as 500.000+ accommodations. For all other accommodations, an average carbon footprint is given for 20 different types of accommodations. It also contains the CO₂ emissions of 21 carbon intensive activities.

With CARMACAL, travel companies are able to develop carbon emission reduction strategies, such as optimising transportation routes, promoting energy-efficient accommodations, encouraging sustainable practices of suppliers etc. It also allows travel companies to display the carbon footprint of their products to consumers and to possibly steer them toward a more sustainable option. CARMACAL allows a comparison of different travel packages.

Finally, CARMACAL also references high-quality offset projects. These projects support initiatives such as reforestation, community developments, etc.

The beta version of CARMACAL was extensively promoted among the SUSTOUR SMEs as well as through the ECTAA members, who were able to use CARMACAL free of charge for a trial period ending end of 2023.

1.2 Application of CARMACAL

As part of the SUSTOUR project, a comprehensive [support programme](#) was rolled out to help more than 600 SME travel agents and tour operators become more sustainable. SMEs were able to choose between 5 different support modules, including one which focused on improving the carbon management of the participating SMEs.

The carbon management module focussed on coaching and supporting SMEs to use CARMACAL for the CO₂ footprint assessment of their packages, implement carbon reduction measures into their operations and report against a set of carbon management criteria. **57 SMEs successfully implemented CARMACAL and calculated in total 5500 travel packages.**

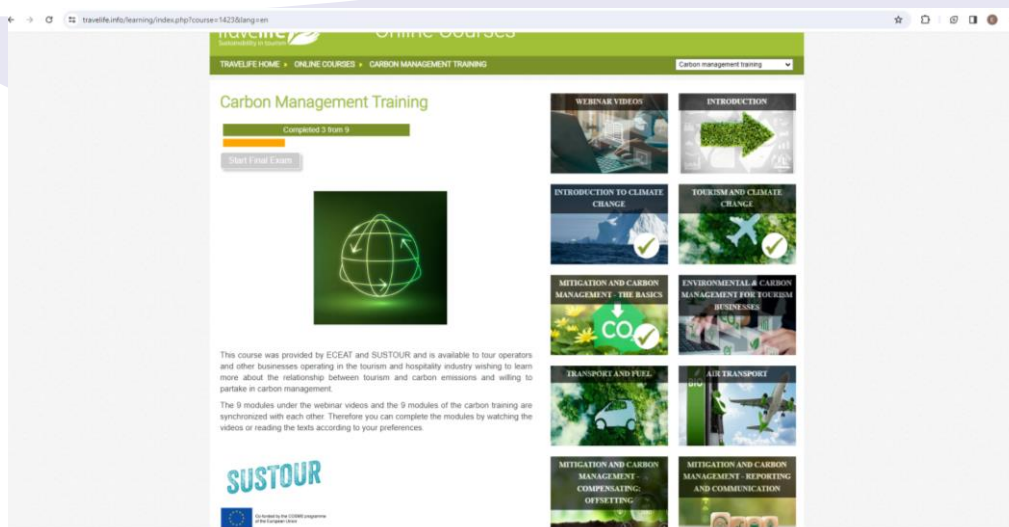
In addition to the support module on carbon management, CARMACAL was available to test for all SUSTOUR SMEs free of cost (however, without dedicated carbon coaching). The resulting uptake of carbon management measures becomes evident in highlighting that **142 SMEs inform their customers about carbon compensation options** and 79 out of these include carbon compensation in the booking process (at least on a voluntary basis).

1.3 Development of carbon management training and webinars

SUSTOUR developed a carbon management training for travel agents and tour operators. The training is now available as one of the 12 theme trainings available on-demand in the [Travelife](#) learning platform. All SUSTOUR companies were encouraged to complete these additional themed trainings. 307 individual coordinators and staff members of SUSTOUR SMEs completed on average ca. 4.5 theme trainings per person, leading to a total of 1400 trainings.

SUSTOUR also offered a number of themed webinars in the field of sustainability, including a webinar on carbon management. This 3-part introduction training to carbon management for tour operators provided a deep dive into the topic of tourism and climate change, mitigation and carbon management for tourism businesses, levels of carbon emissions per transport type, compensation and offsetting.

The carbon management training and webinar formed the beginning of the carbon management support module but were also made available for all SUSTOUR SMEs and Travelife members on the Travelife platform.



1.4 ECTAA carbon footprint calculation

2 people from the ECTAA staff (4,75 FTE) carried out a carbon management and reduction training, which included to calculation of the carbon footprint of ECTAA with the help of the tool Carbon ALT DELETE. The calculation was based on the activities of the previous year 2022. It included all scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, with the exception of the semi-annual meetings of ECTAA. **The carbon footprint of ECTAA for 2022 was 83 tons of CO₂e** and can be broken down as follows:

Organisation activities	Tons of CO ₂ e	%age
Goods and services	39,8	48,2
Stationary combustion	14,8	17,9
Business travel	16,8	20,3
Capital goods	6,6	8,0
Mobile combustion	1,9	2,2
Commuting	1,2	1,4
Energy supply	1,0	1,3
Electricity	0,5	0,5
Waste	0,2	0,3
Total	82,7	100,0

The semi-annual meetings of ECTAA were not included in the carbon footprint assessment, as they are typically hosted by a member association or a destination, so ECTAA has limited influence over the selection of suppliers (venue, catering, transfers, etc.) and does not bear any expenses, with the exception of travel of staff and speakers, which is included in ECTAA's travel expenses. However, considering that participants are traveling for the purpose of attending the ECTAA event, the Board of ECTAA decided to include in future the carbon emissions generated by these events into the scope 3 emissions (see further details in point 2.2.).

2. Decarbonise

2.1 Decarbonisation efforts by SME travel agents and tour operators

As mentioned under point 1.2. (see above), the SUSTOUR project provided support to SMEs to help them improve their sustainability performance. As a result, 142 SMEs inform their customers about carbon compensation options and 79 out of these include carbon compensation in the booking process (at least on a voluntary basis). Below some examples of **SUSTOUR SMEs that have included the carbon offset into the price of the package**, though there are very few companies offering this yet.

SNP, The Netherlands – Information on offsetting of a trip to Madeira

The screenshot shows a webpage for a trip to Madeira. The main content area is titled 'Duurzaam op reis' (Sustainable travel). It explains that the trip has a carbon footprint and that SNP provides CO2 compensation. A circular chart shows the breakdown of CO2 emissions and offsets. The chart is divided into three segments: 'Aankomstvlucht' (Arrival flight), 'Bekijk lokale transport' (Check local transport), and 'Vertrekvlucht' (Departure flight). The 'Aankomstvlucht' segment is the largest, followed by 'Vertrekvlucht', and 'Bekijk lokale transport' is the smallest. Below the chart, there are buttons for 'Geld mee op reis' and 'Vervoer ter plaatse'.

Chamäleon Reisen, Germany – Information on offsetting of a trip to South Africa

The screenshot shows a webpage for a trip to South Africa. The main content area is titled 'Nachhaltig reisen' (Sustainable travel). It features a 'POSITIVE BILANZ' (Positive Balance) table with the following data:

Icon	Value	Category
Footprint icon	3,65t	CO ₂ -Emission
Tree icon	250m ²	Regenwald
Hand icon	50%	Lokaler Verdienst

Below the table, there is a section titled 'Zusammensetzung der Emission' (Composition of Emissions) with the following data:

Icon	Percentage	Category
Plane icon	80%	Flug
Bus icon	13%	Transport
Hotel icon	7%	Unterkunft

The page also includes a map of South Africa with a travel route, a 'Reiseroute' section, and a 'Reisenverlauf' button. A contact box on the right says 'ICH BIN FÜR DICH DA. +49 30 347996-251'.

2.2 ECTAA Carbon Reduction Strategy

Based on the carbon footprint assessment of ECTAA in 2022 (see point 1.4.), the ECTAA Board decided in October 2023 that ECTAA should have a **comprehensive carbon reduction strategy as from 2024**, covering the yearly assessment of emissions, setting reduction targets, implementing mitigation measures, and regularly monitoring progress. The aim is to achieve net zero by 2050. The carbon reduction strategy is currently being drafted and will be presented to the Executive Board of ECTAA beginning 2024.

3. Collaborate

3.1 SUSTOUR networking opportunities

In the frame of the SUSTOUR project, a number of events were organised to allow SUSTOUR companies to exchange with each other. Among other, on Wednesday 8 March, SUSTOUR hosted an exchange event at ITB for the SUSTOUR participating SMEs from various European countries to exchange their experiences, solutions and ideas on some of the main sustainability topics for tour companies, including carbon management.

Moreover, a hybrid final event was organised end of August 2023 in Cascais, Portugal. The 2-day programme included 5 theme sessions that showcased 24 success stories of SUSTOUR participants in the fields of carbon footprint and single-use plastic reduction, sustainable excursion management, supply chain management and sustainability marketing & communication. The presentations and recording of the sessions are available from the SUSTOUR [website](#). Below are some photos taken from the carbon management session.



The final SUSTOUR event has implemented sustainability practices in the organization of the event – see [here](#). After all sustainability measures have been implemented, the remaining greenhouse gas emissions from the international transport, local transfers and hotel nights of the event participants have been calculated with CARMACAL and compensated via South Pole.

3.2 VIVA matchmaking event

On 23 November 2023, ETOA and ECTAA have organised for the first time an **online B2B matchmaking event** on sourcing sustainable products. The half-day workshop was targeting international tour operators, wholesalers, OTAs and agents who are specifically looking to engage with suppliers offering ethical and more environment-oriented services with special consideration for carbon reduction and climate action, social inclusion and accessibility, positive community impact as well as product diversification and capacity optimisation. The workshop brought together 18 suppliers and destinations as well as 32 buyers.

3.3 Presentations

Various presentations were given by ECTAA to its Members or other stakeholders on the importance of effective climate actions, including:

- ECTAA semi-annual meeting in Lamego, Portugal, 30-31 October 2023: **Session on climate actions**, including presentations on ETC's Climate Action Plan and The Travel Foundation – Climate Action Planning. This was followed by a presentation of the ECTAA carbon footprint assessment of 2022 and a break-out session discussing with Members what the ECTAA Climate

Action Plan should include in terms of actions and how we can coordinate the different actions of Members and ECTAA.

- Meeting industry Sustainable Forum, 21 November 2023, Warsaw, Poland: Presentation of the tools developed in the frame of the SUSTOUR project to help travel companies improve their sustainability performance, including **CARMACAL**.
- IBTM World Association Leaders Forum, 28 November 2023, Barcelona, Spain: Presentation on the need for **Effective Climate Actions by Trade Associations – Leading by Example**.
- GNTO/ECTAA webinars on [2 November](#) and [14 December](#) 2023: **Greening the Greek Experience – A Collaborative Approach to Sustainable Tourism**. Recordings available on LinkedIn.

4. Regenerate

This is a pathway that has not been explored much yet. Further actions may follow with the implementation of the ECTAA Carbon Reduction Strategy in 2024.

5. Finance

5.1 SUSTOUR

SUSTOUR was a project funded under the EU COSME programme. It was a three-year project with a budget of €1,327 million, which was co-financed 25% by the project partners ECEAT, ECTAA, Futouris, ANVR, APAVT, SMAL and UHPA. **ECTAA co-financed the project with €153.000 for the period 2021-2023.**

5.2 Funding opportunities

ECTAA keeps its Members informed about funding opportunities available under the different EU programmes supporting the green transition in travel and tourism. It also provides information on open calls for SME applications.

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