BTA | BUSINESS TRAVEL ASSOCIATION

Carbon Offsetting

Beyond the trees

Contents

As this report focuses on sustainability, we kindly request that you refrain from printing this document.

01
Introduction

Dear Reader,

Following our inaugural environmental, social and governance (ESG) benchmarking report released in the spring of this year, it became clear that there are still many concerns facing the environmental activities that our industry is dependent on to move towards a green future.

To tackle these issues, the BTA, assisted by our Public Relations team at Pembroke and Rye, will release a series of transparency reports to clarify the concerns raised. The first focuses on carbon offsetting, before a report covering sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).

The growing interest in ESG has sparked a sector-wide assessment of environmental activity, and we want to ensure that the business travel industry effectively and accurately leads this change from the outset.

This guide will cover emissions' reduction, education, measurement, and regulation while exploring the offsetting methods that include tree planting, renewable energy, rewilding, community projects and carbon capture.

This report does not aim to finger-wag, nor do we intend to tell you which method is best. Instead, we hope to equip you with the appropriate knowledge to inform your offsetting selection process, while raising awareness of positive environmental activity.

Our findings are drawn from interviews with buyers and travel management company (TMC) leaders across the business travel industry, specifically, Altour, Agiito, CWT, Deloitte, Gray Dawes Travel and Reed & Mackay. I sincerely thank everyone involved for your candour, time and eagerness to be involved in this study.

Going forward, it is clear that our attention must move away from offsetting to prioritise reduction. As well as this, we must focus on accurate measurement practices with effective regulation of reporting and offsetting activity.

I am excited for the change that we have the power to impart over the coming years and I welcome your feedback on topics addressed across the report.

Best wishes,

Clive Wratten
CEO of the Business Travel Association (BTA)
clivew@thebta.org.uk

02
Executive Summary

KEY LEARNINGS:

This report is not just about planting trees. Our research explores varied methods of carbon offsetting which also offer effective alternatives to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Interviewees have been candid throughout the research process, acknowledging that the government's current carbon offsetting guidelines are unclear and there is a need for standardised practices across all industries. It was found that the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) have been harnessed as shorthand guidelines for carbon offsetting best practice.

Fundamentally, our research finds that stricter measurement and offsetting regulations must be introduced, with consequences for those missing targets and breaking rules.

Furthermore, the legitimacy of carbon offsetting brokers also raised concerns amongst buyers and TMC leaders, as our research suggests that governments must act to ensure the authenticity and accuracy of carbon offsetting activity through a third party. As well as this, we determine that companies need to do more to educate themselves, their partners, and clients on carbon reporting.

Across our research, some interviewees suggest that an accurate understanding of carbon offsetting is lacking, allowing it to become a distraction from other, more effective, opponents of climate change. This results in the prosperity of greenwashing.

The guise of carbon offsetting has, therefore, allowed companies to continue unsustainable behaviour under the positive illusion that they are working against climate change when this is not the case.

Issues associated with carbon measurement including price, awareness and know-how are outlined across this report, but we must shift our focus toward reduction. Although offsetting activity works best in conjunction with cutting emissions directly, it is too often considered and implemented as the first solution.

Our research finds that we must change the narrative to position offsetting as the last resort to enforce positive progress to tackle climate change.

Moving forward, we must work together to proactively tackle the issues associated with carbon offsetting including reporting, price, legitimacy, and timescales, with a clear focus on collaborative reduction to make a positive impact on our planet.

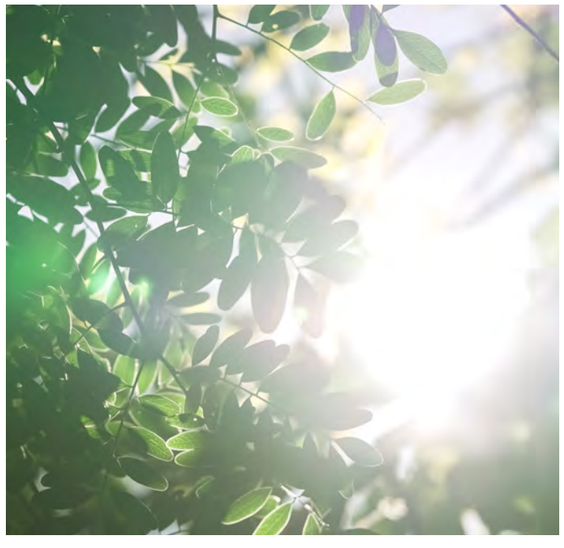
03

Carbon Offsetting Backgrounder

Under the Paris Agreement, parties committed to strengthening their global response to climate change, and pledged to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees.

The global necessity to achieve this goal, as well as the conclusions of COP26, have positioned carbon offsetting as a hotly debated topic with vast potential to limit global warming.

There are four major factors to the carbon offsetting argument: education, reduction, calculation and regulation. As it stands, there is no official methodology for carbon education, reduction, measurement, reporting or offsetting. Our research found that this must change to achieve effective, sustainable results.



Carbon offsetting is an environmentally friendly alternative to achieving net-zero emissions in cases where companies are unable to reduce their carbon outputs. Our research found that there is no baseline on the level of carbon understanding needed before instructing offsetting activity, with many unsure of how to analyse their carbon footprint. Therefore, as a starting point to tackle this confusion, there must be a global standard of education developed for carbon outputs, including the ways to reduce, measure production and offset activity across industries.

Reducing as much carbon consumption as possible across operations before accurately calculating carbon outputs and implementing carbon offsetting activity is vital to the offsetting process. These considerations, which cover how and where to reduce across the business' activity, help organisations understand their carbon outputs and result in effective development and implementation of carbon reduction targets. This puts sustainability and carbon abatement at the forefront of the business agenda, to streamline the entire carbon offsetting process.

"An overwhelming majority of our clients are taking this seriously both on the standpoint of understanding their carbon footprint and putting actions in place to do something about it."

CWT

Next, organisations must calculate their total carbon usage on top of these reductions to appropriately offset. By accurately understanding and measuring carbon consumption, companies can understand the level of offsetting required and implement offsetting strategies based on these calculations. Therefore, offsetting should only be instructed once organisations have reduced their maximum capacity, with the process implemented as a last resort.

However, the sustainability narrative surrounding carbon offsetting shows that organisations too often turn to blind, miscalculated offsetting practices as the principal solution to the climate emergency. This should first and foremost focus on reduced carbon activity before, as well as accurate measurement after, the expenditure of carbon outputting activity.

Strategies surrounding carbon offsetting have benefits, but their implementation must be carefully considered. Primarily, each carbon offsetting method alleviates a different amount of carbon. For example, tree planting does not absorb the same level of carbon as rewilding. The differences in sequestration levels must be considered by the selecting organisation in relation to their carbon measurements and the expected timescales of offsetting delivery before the practice is chosen. In some cases, offsetting is not immediate, for example, the time it takes a tree to grow to sequester 4kg of CO_2. Therefore, organisations must factor timings into their carbon calculations year-on-year, to match or increase their carbon deductions.

There is a high level of trust associated with your invested offsetting vendor, to guarantee that there is tangible change at the end of the offsetting chain. The regulation of offsetting activity, including the levels at which companies should offset, as well as the delivery of brokers' offsetting activity, should become an intrinsic part of the offsetting process.

Carbon offsetting often has mutual benefits to the communities they are embedded in. For example, direct carbon capture can improve the quality of air and water surrounding local communities, while community projects such as tree planting and peat restoration can alleviate the threat of landslides in remote areas, as well as promoting biodiversity and habitat restoration.

Offsetting is a strong step towards sustainability, but there must be stronger regulation in place across the process chain, and we call on governments across this report to bring this into fruition for the future of our planet.

"Offsetting gives us a solution for the here and now but it's not the end goal. There must be strategies in place to reduce."

Altour

"Over the last three to four years, we've seen a positive shift in companies' views on sustainability, largely due to government legislation and pressure from their own clients to make sustainability a priority."

Reed & Mackay

Measurement

A primary issue associated with carbon offsetting surrounds the individual measurement of carbon output by activity.

"More people are wanting to offset and not just offset but look critically at their travel programmes and policies to use it as a last resort."

Gray Dawes Travel

Our research suggests that customers are keen to offset the entirety of their journeys. Yet, we also found that there is a severe lack of carbon offsetting standardisation, measurement, education, understanding and subsequent regulation across, not only travel, but all industries with a carbon footprint. While this deficiency makes it virtually impossible for travellers to effectively understand their individual impact:

"Offsetting can have its detractors as it can be viewed that all you're doing is writing a cheque to mitigate behaviour. The reality is more nuanced, as the majority of offsetting projects do an enormous amount of good - it all depends on the motivations for the investment - and the manner in which these are then publicised/accounted for."

Reed & Mackay

The absence of standardised measurement and regulation of carbon offsetting practices also prevents collaboration across industries and impacts the worldwide ability to work together to impart tangible change against global warming. These internal and external structures surrounding carbon offsetting must urgently change to achieve the goals outlined in the Paris Agreement, and currently this is not as urgently prioritised as is necessary.

Our research found that in the absence of a standardised measurement of practice, the 17 SDGs as outlined by the United Nations have become an unofficial guideline for carbon offsetting and sustainable best practice. Although the goals outline a standard of environmental activity, there is still a global need for targeted, understandable measurement and regulation of carbon calculation and offsetting practices.

The ambiguity surrounding carbon measurement, offsetting, reduction, education and regulation of targets and activities, in relation to the expectation of corporates, travellers and providers, must be rectified to effectively move forward.

Consequently, the BTA calls on the business travel industry to lobby for the implementation and communication of an accurate, industry-standard of reduction expectations and carbon calculation, in addition to strict offsetting targets and regulation of practices. This will streamline sustainable activity across sectors, and annihilate the uncertainty of the carbon offsetting process, making it clear to comprehend and known to all businesses.

"The cost of carbon credits and offsetting varies greatly due to a number of factors including regulations, supply and demand, and set-up/implementation costs."

Altour

04

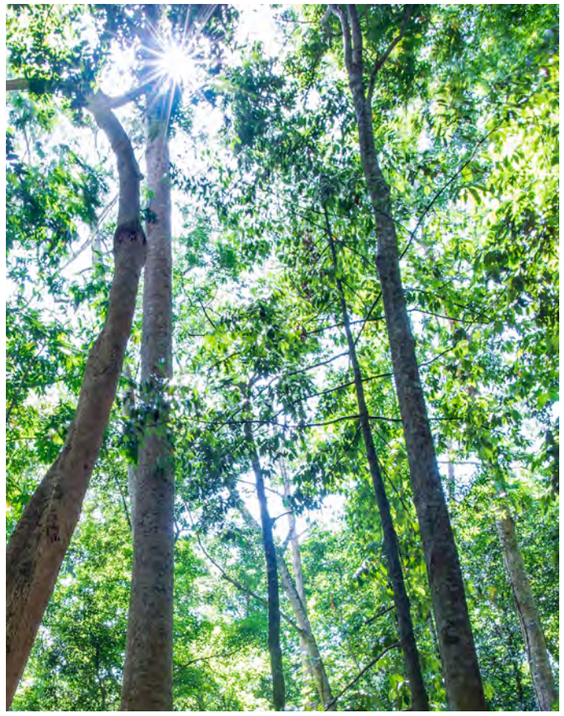
Tree Planting

Tree planting captures and stores carbon for centuries, which provides oxygen through photosynthesis. Forests, woodlands and trees play a large role in reducing the planet's carbon footprint.

The Woodland Trust notes that a young wood with mixed native species can store 400+ tonnes of carbon per hectare. Yet, the increased destruction of forests and our continued use of fossil fuels means that dangerously high levels of CO2 are released into our atmosphere.

Brands invest in tree planting and annually publish the exact number of trees in their 'forest'. Although tree planting is a widely accepted and celebrated method of carbon offsetting, it involves issues that must be considered as programmes can do more harm than good.

Here we will explore the advantages and disadvantages of tree planting, before defining the considerations that must be acknowledged before investing in woodlands as a carbon offsetting method.

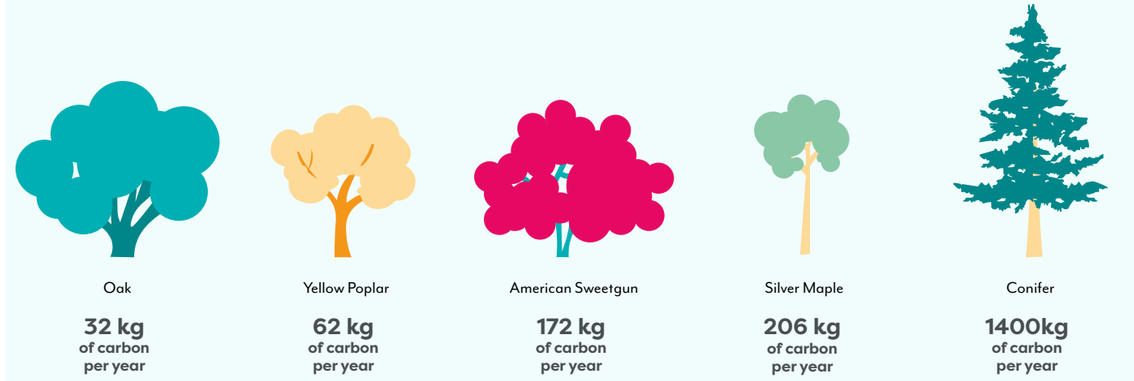


"Trees are currently our best carbon technology - scientists know of no other carbon drawdown solution that is quantitively as large in terms of carbon capture. Agiito supplements tree planting with renewable energy projects, to ensure our customer's purposeful travel is carbon positive."

Agiito

"It's all about credibility and transparency and just knowing that the carbon credits that you're purchasing are going to be retired in the correct way."

Altour



ADVANTAGES

Trees capture carbon and act as carbon sinks – they absorb more carbon than they release into the atmosphere. Yet trees do much more for the surrounding environment:

- Purify the air by capturing and storing carbon
- **Natural flood management and water regulation:** trees absorb water and relieve pressure on drainage systems as they regulate the movement of water through ecosystems
- **Protect and improve soil quality:** wind and rain are threatening forces to soil, so trees prevent soil erosion in multiple ways. Roots bind soil on slanting grounds and improve drainage as trees intercept rainfall and act as windbreaks to prevent soil blow-away
- **Reduce city temperatures:** the leaves of the trees provide shade, with water vapour released through the leaves causing transpiration, taking heat from surrounding environments and lowering temperatures
- **Improve the livelihoods of communities they are embedded in:** trees provide sustainable development, including career opportunities and mental health benefits
- **Protect biodiversity:** 80% of animal and plant life is associated with forest ecosystems. Planting and allowing trees to thrive secures habitats for wildlife to flourish and subsides the threat of climate change

DISADVANTAGES

Although tree-planting reaps the advantages outlined above, the disadvantages to this offsetting method must be considered:

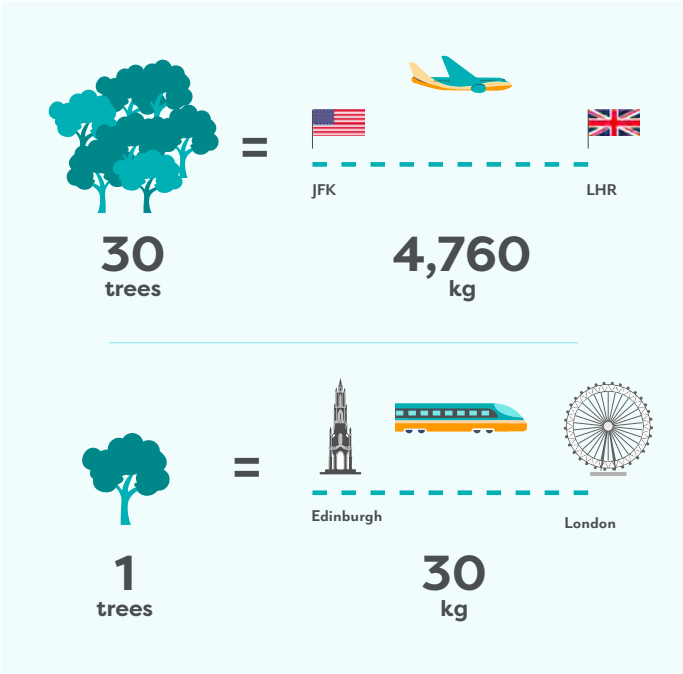
- **Climate colonialism and climate justice:** displacing indigenous populations from their lands when making space to plant trees can lead to wider human and land rights abuses
- **Deforestation and woodland disturbances:** these issues impact the ability of trees to store carbon, leading to more harm than good. Research into the location, the chances of deforestation and surrounding influences must be considered before selecting tree planting as an appropriate offsetting method
- **Slow carbon outputs at first:** according to Imperial College London, an English oak of about 30cm in diameter will contain about 500kg (0.5 tonnes) of carbon in its wood and leaves. Yet the issue involves the length of time it will take for the tree to grow to this size to store this amount of carbon. There is no immediate payback in GHG reduction, and this must be considered in relation to the calculation of carbon outputs and offsetting measures

CONSIDERATIONS

Sadly, more must be done to reach the terms settled in the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to below 1.5 degrees. According to the Woodland Trust, the UK's woodland cover is currently at 13%, compared to Europe's 37%. This needs to be increased to at least 19% to be net-zero by 2050, with 1.5 million more hectares of woodland needed.

In reflection of the advantages and disadvantages above, there are some considerations needed before choosing to plant trees as a method of carbon offsetting:

- Where are the trees being planted? The location of the trees should be considered, as grasslands, peat and tundra lands are not prosperous environments to allow the trees to grow
- Will the trees negatively impact local communities? Could they be planted elsewhere and have a more positive impact?
- Are you planting to reforest trees being felled or planting in a new space?



Forests are being destroyed at the rate of one football pitch a second. The threat of deforestation is rife and has a major influence on carbon outputs. Therefore, the action of planting trees to replace those being felled must be considered in the wider understanding of their impact on carbon sequestration

- **How long will it take for those trees to make a difference to GHG outputs?** It can take up to a century for trees to absorb the amount of carbon you want to offset immediately. Therefore, these calculations must be made at all stages of the tree's lifecycle to ensure you are offsetting accurately

- **Does the number of trees you will plant reflect the number of trees being cut down?** This is an important consideration for the overall calculation of carbon offsetting goals. If the trees planted do not compensate for and expand on the number of those being felled, then considerations of how carbon is calculated must be considered. This is not an individual issue, but rather an issue we all need to collaborate on

- **The legitimacy of tree suppliers: when purchasing your trees, it is important to fact-check the supplier, the location and the type of trees you are purchasing. The common issue surrounding tree planting involves ownership: How many people own the same tree?** This links back to other issues such as deforestation and replanting which must be addressed to make meaningful sustainable progress

- **Space:** although the ability of trees to lock up carbon is exciting, space is a factor that must be considered before committing to the offsetting method

- **The lifecycle and type of tree: when purchasing trees as a carbon offsetting strategy, it is important to factor in the trees' age in relation to your expected carbon absorption levels; the younger the tree, the less carbon it will sequester. Similarly, are you selecting the best tree for your intended level of carbon capture?** Dependent on the environment, some trees have higher absorption levels than others and this should be factored into the decision-making process

05

Rewilding

ABOUT

Rewilding involves taking the right steps to help nature manage itself and reinstate natural processes that shape landscapes and habitats.

There is a focus on standing back and letting nature take over, removing the human disturbance and allowing ecosystems to naturally flourish in the creation of wild and biodiverse spaces. This can happen across landscapes, from the countryside to lakes, and rivers to seas - with habitats restored, the stress on biodiversity is reduced due to carbon capturing.

The climate crisis has brought with it an immense threat to biodiversity. Although the SDGs specifically focus on biodiversity loss across SDG 14 and 15 (Life on Land and Life Below Water), more must be done to conserve species on a local and global scale.

Rewilding is a relied-upon force in the fight against the climate crisis, applied to restore and encourage a natural balance between people and nature, allowing both to thrive together.

Rewilding is a less intensive and more extensive method of managing land to let wildlife flourish, balancing the battle between grazing animals and vegetation growth across land and sea. By letting nature lead while monitoring land changes, natural disasters such as floods and wildfires can be prevented, boosting the population of endangered species and promoting carbon capture and storage.

Rewilding can happen on a local, national or global scale. Unlike schemes for tree planting or protection against the climate crisis, where support often lands further afield, you can support rewilding initiatives closer to home across the UK.

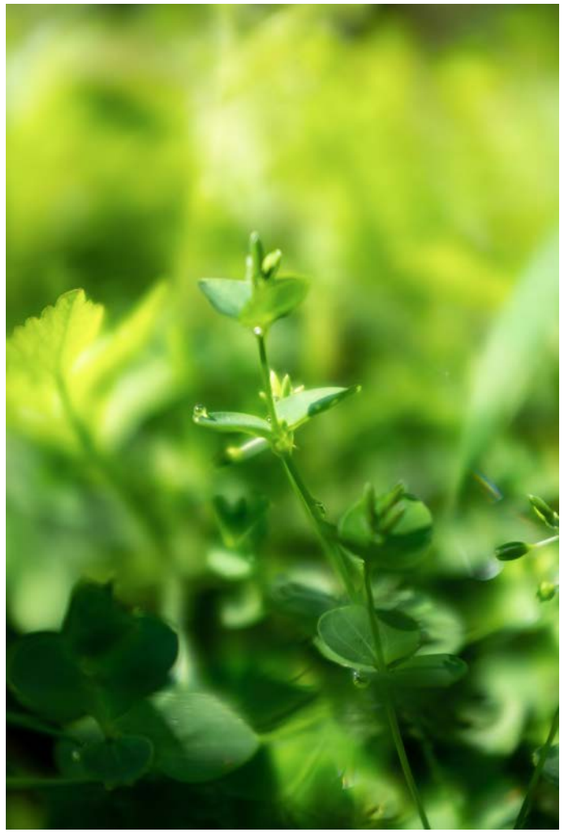
"Anything that achieves a strong level of carbon capture in a far more efficient and quicker process is a good thing. But for the landowner, there are bigger considerations - you're effectively locking that asset away and you can't do anything with it for however many years."

Gray Dawes Travel

ADVANTAGES

Rewilding has many benefits as it seeks to reinstate the balance between humans and nature:

- **It can increase carbon removal from the atmosphere:** rewilding allows nature to thrive, pulling carbon from the atmosphere and storing it in trees, peat, seaweed and natural habitats. When these are reduced, damaged or destroyed, the ability to continue to store carbon is limited with carbon released into the atmosphere
- **Helps wildlife adapt to climate change:** as carbon levels increase, wildlife habitats are destroyed. By removing the threat of human activity, wildlife is permitted to thrive, bringing benefits across ecosystems as they adapt to climate change
- **Reverses biodiversity loss:** as ecosystems are left to flourish, numbers naturally increase to protect biodiversity, rather than destroy it
- **Can be applied on a local scale:** unlike planting trees anyone can get involved in rewilding, including local communities, schools, and individuals. All that is needed is a relatively large outdoor space to allow wildlife to prosper
- **Reduces extreme events including floods and wildfires:** Vegetation plays a key role in preventing waterlog. As trees and bushes are left to grow, the water's course is disrupted, slowing water build-up and flooding



DISADVANTAGES

Although there are benefits to rewilding, there are disadvantages to be considered before investing in projects:

- **Gives some species a priority:** without human intervention invasive species can extend their dominance over other wildlife and threaten the development of other vital existing ecosystems
- **Dominance:** native organisms can become overgrown/ overpopulated without human intervention and eradicate weaker species, leading to an imbalance in the ecosystem
- **Disappearance:** some communities disagree that rewilding should focus on restoring weaker ecosystems as this would not happen outside of the rewilding environment
- **Speed:** like tree planting, it can take a long time for habitats and ecosystems to develop in the spaces provided

CONSIDERATIONS

Rewilding is an advantageous carbon offsetting method when accurately managed. However, there are elements to consider before investing:

- **Space:** finding and segregating large open spaces and leaving them undisturbed for long periods of time can be challenging
- **Legitimacy:** it is important to ensure the legitimacy of the rewilding supplier before investing long term
- **Surrounding location:** does the local community support the space being used for rewilding? Are there local issues at force that may contradict rewilding as a beneficial intervention?

06

Clean Energy

ABOUT

Although rewilding and tree planting specifically target offsetting, attention must shift toward reducing carbon consumption from the outset.

Using funds to ensure reduction at the point of use, as opposed to later employing offsetting methods, is a valuable method of limiting carbon outputs and must be prioritised as we drive towards the goal of net-zero.

Renewable energy comes from a completely natural source. Unlike fossil fuels, renewable energy is consistently replenished, releasing limited carbon into the atmosphere past the point of manufacture. Similarly, nuclear energy also provides a cleaner alternative to fossil fuels, as a recycled form of energy generation.

TYPES

There are five major types of renewable energy, in addition to the recycled example of nuclear energy:

- Using wind to generate energy
- Solar using heat from the sun
- Hydropower taking energy from flowing water
- Biomass using energy generated by plants
- Geothermal energy using heat from inside the earth
- Nuclear using nuclear reactions to generate electricity

ADVANTAGES

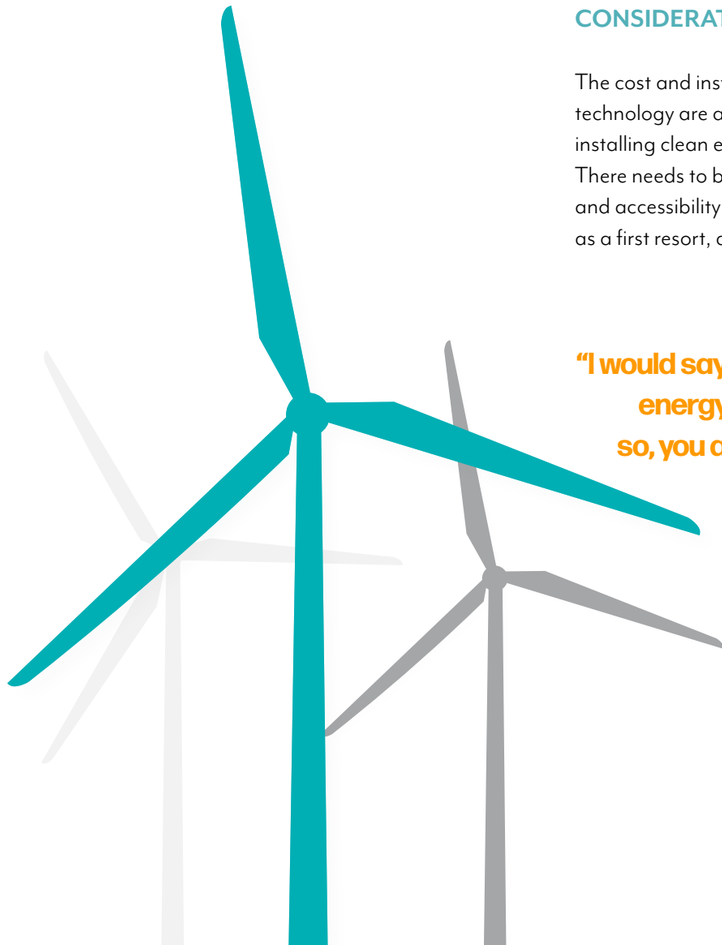
The major advantage of renewable energy is that it does not strain the Earth of its resources.

- **Limited CO2 emissions:** renewable energy does not emit CO2 emissions past the point of manufacture and installation, with limited maintenance needed across its lifecycle. Therefore, renewable energy resources allow companies to begin to reduce their carbon outputs almost instantaneously
- **Cost:** renewable energy has lower maintenance costs in the long run, by using natural, free resources from the planet as opposed to commodified fossil fuels
- **Limited need to carbon offset:** using clean energy almost completely reduces outputs, resulting in lower organisational carbon footprints. Therefore, organisations only need to offset in small quantities through the support of sequestration tactics such as rewilding or tree planting

DISADVANTAGES

As well as advantages, there are disadvantages to consider before investing in renewable energy:

- **Expensive:** initial installation costs for renewable energy providing sources can be expensive, although this will level out over time as energy bills decrease. However, the divide surrounding the accessibility of green alternatives is clear and an area where governments must intervene
- **Storage:** storing technology such as solar panels can cause issues for some businesses or households as buildings may not have the structural strength or the outdoor space to house them. Additionally, once the space is dedicated to the storage of renewable energy sources such as wind or solar farms, this will be locked in for extended periods of time
- **Accessibility:** clean energy alternatives are not as accessible to lower-income or smaller businesses or businesses operating in a remote/cloud-based working



CONSIDERATIONS

The cost and installation prices of renewable energy technology are a major consideration for those debating installing clean energy as a carbon offsetting alternative. There needs to be more focus on innovation of clean energy and accessibility to drive organisations to accept renewables as a first resort, as opposed to offsetting.

"I would say that investment into renewable energy is hugely beneficial as by doing so, you are reducing the requirement for burning fossil fuels elsewhere."

Reed & Mackay

07

Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage

ABOUT

Investment in Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) is an alternative to traditional activities associated with carbon offsetting, which can have an impact on the build-up of GHG emissions and the progression of global warming.

Research into the future of GHG reduction technology such as CCUS ensures a pathway to a sustainable future and as such, it must not be overlooked.

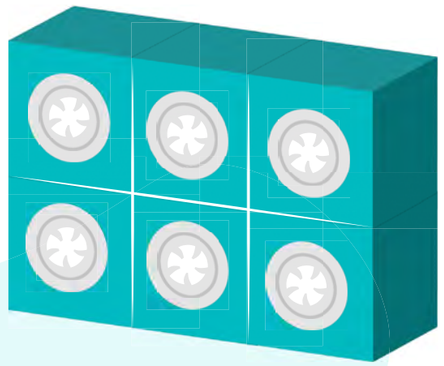
As a methodology, CCUS is vital for clean energy transitions, and it is still a relatively under-explored offsetting strategy in comparison to methods such as tree planting or community projects. However, its potential to boost the efficiency of carbon capture, removal and storage is extreme. By capturing and filtering air to directly extract CO2, direct air capture (DAC) technology compresses the raw CO2 to store it permanently underground in geologic reservoirs.

"People have got to see that every action they take has a consequence, but that consequence doesn't have to be negative. It's important that everybody also understands how their offsetting activity positively contributes to the planet."

Deloitte

TYPES OF CAPTURE

- Direct air capture
- Carbon capture



ADVANTAGES

The development of CCUS demonstrates a promising future for carbon reduction, initial advantages include:

- **Future focused:** secures a future focused on carbon reduction as a viable man-made method in the fight against the climate crisis
- **Stores carbon permanently underground:** once stored underground, it is harder to release this carbon back into the atmosphere
- **Efficiency:** can be implemented quickly and at scale
- **Less land use:** the technology used for carbon capture is minimal with the carbon caught locked away deep underground, there are limited restrictions on the land surrounding the machinery
- **Reuse:** the carbon captured can be reused to produce other products including plastic, carbon fuels and cement

DISADVANTAGES

Although CCUS provides a strong alternative to traditional carbon offsetting strategies, disadvantages to consider include:

- **Development of technology:** currently CCUS is implemented in areas with concentrated levels of carbon such as factory chimneys. For wider industries to uptake CCUS, advances in its technology are needed so that it can remove carbon from diluted air in open spaces
- **High costs:** there is currently no single cost for CCUS; it varies dependent on the CO2 source

CONSIDERATIONS

Although a strong weapon in the armoury against climate change, carbon capture is still relatively underdeveloped and less accessible in comparison to other methods such as rewilding, community projects and tree planting. There are currently 19 direct air capture plants operating worldwide and an increase in global capacity will require technology expansion and refinement as well as reduced capture costs. As a strong offsetting alternative, more action must be taken by governments to ensure this is accessible to the masses.

08

Community Work against the Climate Crisis

ABOUT

Projects against the climate crisis often combine carbon offsetting activities featured throughout this report to support those impacted by, and impacting, global warming.

Community projects are a popular methodology exercised by companies worldwide as they permit a level of variety in carbon offsetting responses while allowing businesses to have an immediate, global response to climate change.

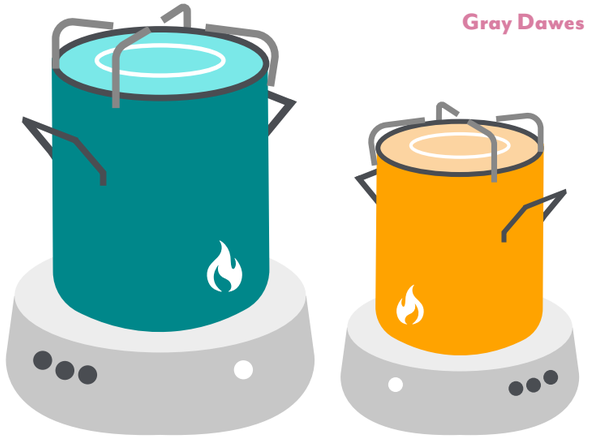
Funding projects that tackle the climate crisis in developing countries and remote communities offer a holistic solution to global warming, providing communities with careers, restoring natural carbon defence capabilities and promoting sustainable development, appropriately equipping them to mitigate GHG effects. These projects also offer developing countries flexibility in their activities toward meeting carbon reduction targets.

PROJECTS AVAILABLE

- Peat conservation and restoration
- Providing cookstoves to reduce wood and fuel consumption
- Protecting, restoring and replanting forests
- Providing water filters to reduce the need to burn fuels to purify water
- Improving the efficiency of transport systems in developing countries
- Clean energy generation: introducing wind power projects, hydropower alternatives, solar power plants and converting waste into biomass to produce electricity
- Promoting sustainable composting to reduce the level of global warming produced by waste
- Supplying energy-efficient alternatives to essential items such as boilers

"Being creative and not focusing on the narrative around planting a tree is a good thing because the issue is far more complex than just planting trees."

Gray Dawes Travel



ADVANTAGES

Community projects tackle the carbon crisis across the world in both rich and poor communities, therefore, its advantages are wide-ranging:

- **Protects habitats:** community projects help conservationists work with local communities to achieve the best outcome for the planet. This can include working against illegal deforestation, promoting rewilding or encouraging cleaner transport methods
- **Protects against soil erosion:** educating communities on their local environments can limit peat disruption and promote natural rewilding to promote carbon sequestration
- **Reduces greenhouse gas build-up:** remote communities with limited access to firewood and fuel benefit from cookstoves as they eliminate the need to burn materials such as plastic, reducing the output of toxic pollutants. Similarly, the provision of water filters for remote communities removes the need to boil water before drinking, reducing the carbon dioxide output from burning fuel. The implementation of renewable energy infrastructure in remote and developed environments reduces our reliance on fossil fuels long term
- **Reduces waste:** educating communities on effective ways to handle and dispose of their waste also has a greater impact on the wider narrative of carbon reduction

DISADVANTAGES

Despite its advantages, community projects also involve disadvantages to consider before investing:

- **Hard to control:** activities can occur in unpredictable locations with a large level of threat to the security of the projects in place
- **Trust:** there is a large level of trust associated with the companies you invest with. As projects often occur in developing countries, miles away from the businesses investing, there must be a high level of confidence in the broker to action the activities intended

CONSIDERATIONS

Like previous carbon offsetting activities, the location and the carbon reduction ambitions must be considered. Again, climate colonialism can become a problem here, as local communities may reject the interferences with their land and customs.

09

Conclusion

Thank you for reading the first in our series of transparency reports to tackle the industry's environmental issues, focusing here on carbon offsetting.

Throughout the research, we have found a desire for change to protect the future of planet. However, a focus on collaboration, reduction, reporting standardisation, clarity and stronger regulation must be prioritised as we move away from implementing offsetting as a first resort.

To ensure this, our understanding of carbon offsetting needs to change. Carbon offsetting should not be implemented as a substitute for reduction, and the industry must prioritise focus on activities that reduce emissions over offsetting practices.

The interviews cemented the understanding that more must be done by governments to regulate carbon offsetting guidelines, measurement/reporting, regulation, and reduction targets. As an industry, we must tackle the disparity between guideline understanding and measurement of outputs to ensure the accuracy of offsetting quantities. Additional regulation of offsetting activity to ensure legitimacy across the offsetting lifecycle must also be implemented to enact sustainable change.

Finally, we call for appropriate boundaries on carbon output levels that are regulated with sanctions in place for those who breach these. To move forward and make a valuable difference, we must promote transparency across our independent activities through progressive cooperation.

Later this year, the BTA will launch its second report in the series, which will explore sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) and aviation's advancements toward greener air travel.

Thank you again to all the buyers and TMC leaders who participated in the research. It is greatly appreciated and gives me hope for a cooperative and prosperous future ahead.

Please do share your thoughts and opinions with me as we aim to work towards a more open and transparent discussion on topics surrounding climate change.

Best wishes,

Clive Wratten
CEO of the Business Travel Association (BTA)
clivew@thebta.org.uk

"It's not yet clear how regulation around carbon offsetting will work, or whether global regulation or border specific will be more effective/accurate. Certainly, having one standard, or a set that are closely aligned would be helpful in ensuring we are holding ourselves accountable."

Deloitte

10

Our thanks to...

Gray Dawes Travel
CWT
Deloitte
Altour
Agiito
Reed & Mackay

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Contacts

Clive Wratten, BTA
clivew@thebta.org.uk

Thyme Francis, Research
thyme@pembrokeandrye.com

Victoria Naylor-Leyland, Media
victoria@pembrokeandrye.com

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