

The German Federal Government's climate-neutral Business Trips

The German Federal Government has been offsetting the climate impact of its employees' business trips annually since 2014. This means that the climate impact of business trips is offset by savings in emissions elsewhere. Emission reductions from highly ambitious climate protection projects have been acquired and cancelled as existing credits permanently.



The **offsetting of greenhouse gas emissions from business trips by the German Federal Government and the federal administration** sends out an important climate policy message and sets an example for private stakeholders, companies and other public institutions to imitate.

The German Emissions Trading Authority (DEHSt) at the German Environment Agency handles this offsetting on behalf of the Government. This includes the calculation of emissions from business trips and the selection, procurement and deletion of credits from high-quality projects.

Travel principle: Avoid – Reduce – Offset

The Federal Government follows the climate policy principle: **avoid – reduce – offset**. Business trips can be avoided by an increased use of video and telephone conferences. The number of business trips can be reduced by deciding whether the trip is necessary at all. The Government acquires “green tickets” for rail travel for which there is currently no offsetting. The remaining, unavoidable emissions caused by business car trips or air travel must then be offset.

Emissions from car journeys are calculated based on fuel consumption combined with emission factors for the different fuels.

In addition to pure CO₂ emissions, a key element of offsetting is the inclusion of additional climate-relevant non-CO₂ effects in aviation. This includes emissions of water vapour, nitrogen oxides and soot particles. All these data are used to determine the climate-relevant emissions of air travel. UBA currently uses the Radiative Forcing Index (RFI) to assess the overall climate impact of air travel.

The procedure uses an RFI of 3.0, i. e. the calculated CO₂ emission is multiplied by a factor of three.

Climate protection projects

by country and emission reductions [t CO₂eq] since 2014

Total: 1,873,246 emission reductions [t CO₂eq]

Biomass for electricity generation
India

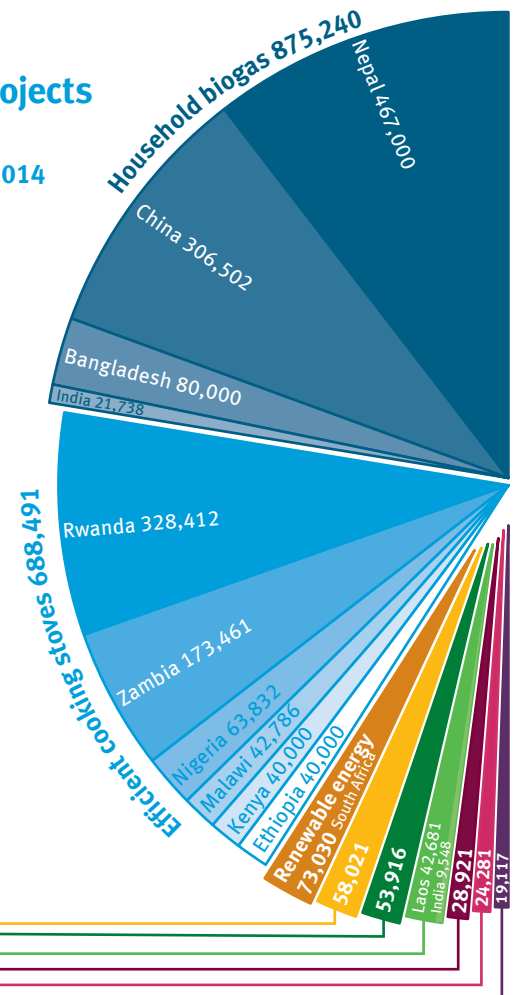
Drinking water
Uganda

Small run-of-river power plants
52,299

Landfill gas for electricity generation
Mexico

Drinking water and efficient cooking stoves
Rwanda

Wind power for electricity generation
Costa Rica



Project Examples

Project type: Household biogas from biomass

How a biogas plant works:

Instead of the widespread disposal of animal and other faecal matter in open manure pits, biogas plants treat excrement in closed tanks in the absence of air and provide the farms with biogas, i. e. methane produced is used for cooking. The original, smoky cooking systems using coal can therefore be replaced. This also often creates health improvements. In addition, a high-quality fertiliser remains after fermentation that can replace chemical fertilisers.



Project type: Biomass for electricity generation

How a biomass power station works:

Smallholders farmers can supply such a power plant with their crop residues and secure an additional income by selling the formerly useless waste, e. g. plant stalks, to the plant operator. This provides them with an additional income. Large warehouses can ensure that there are enough crop residues to generate electricity all year round, even outside harvesting times. Crop residues are burnt thus heating a boiler to produce steam. This steam drives turbines and generators to generate power which is fed into the regional electricity grid.



Ambitious and comprehensible climate protection projects provide more than just emission reduction!

Voluntary offsetting should go beyond a mere reduction of greenhouse gases. Ambitious climate protection projects also provide an important, not necessarily climate-related, added value ('co-benefits') contributing to sustainable development in ecological, economic and social sense.

Therefore, not only should the projects save quantifiable tonnes of greenhouse gases but they must also have a positive impact on the sustainable development of the host country. In this way, they can fulfil one or more UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Examples for Co-benefits



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