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Document name: Instructions for climate-friendly travel		
Issued by: Paul Glantz, Environmental Coordinator		
Approved by: Cynthia de Wit, Chair		

Instructions for climate-friendly travel and travel-free meetings

Stockholm University employees travel a lot by plane and car on official business; 36.5 million km in 2012, which is equivalent to 911 laps around the world. An intercontinental return trip by plane is, on average, equivalent to 1.5 years of normal driving. Business travel adds to the emission of greenhouse gases, which has a negative impact on the Earth's climate. In addition, travel uses up natural resources. Stockholm University thus needs to work to reduce this environmental impact. Choosing an environmentally friendly means of transport to and from the airport, or imposing environmental requirements on the rental car/bus and accommodation, is also important to reduce the environmental impact.

Stockholm University has two environmental policy documents for business travel: the environmental policy and the travel policy. The environmental policy states that natural resource use and air, land, and water pollution are key areas in need of improvement. The travel policy contains a general description of what kind of environmental concerns a department (or equivalent) should take into account when it comes to business travel. All employees should be familiar with these documents, and it is recommended that they be made available on every department's (or equivalent) website.

In order for the departments (or equivalent) to know what needs to be done to ensure that environmental issues are taken into account, proposed measures for air travel, accommodation, and car and bus travel are listed below, along with suggestions pertaining to travel-free meetings.

What to consider when travelling by air

Important measures include choosing travel routes within Sweden where it is possible to travel by train instead of by plane, as well as looking into which meetings can be held as video conferences (using Skype, Adobe Connect, etc.), i.e. travel-free meetings.

Air travel needs to be monitored in order for the department (or equivalent) to decide whether improvements are needed. The annual summary of the department's air travel, which is compiled by the faculty's (or equivalent) environmental coordinator, provides useful statistics for this purpose.

The department also needs to find out what types of meetings or other activities lead to air travel. This can be done by conducting a survey about the employees' travel habits. Examples of survey questions are available on the University's environmental website (www.su.se/miljo).

The purpose of each flight can also be documented as the head of department (or equivalent) approves the planned trip. The environmental advantage of this method is that it provides a complete overview of the purpose of travel.

Once the department (or equivalent) has an overview of business travel by air, it will be easier to determine what action needs to be taken to reduce this type of travel.

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Proposed measures:

- Organise web meetings, conference calls and/or video conferences (travel-free meetings) as alternatives to travel.
- Provide training in video conferencing (e.g. Adobe Connect) for employees.
- Travel by train instead of by air for journeys shorter than 500 km, and consider the possibility to travel by train for journeys longer than 500 km.
- Avoid layovers when travelling by air within Europe.
- For longer journeys, employees can choose to travel by train a day earlier and stay an extra night at a hotel.
- Develop a meeting policy describing what types of meetings should be travel-free meetings.
- Document the purpose of all travel on official business that is undertaken today.

What to consider when travelling shorter distances

The ordinance for environmental and traffic safety requirements for government agencies (2009:1) stipulates that the University is obligated to impose environmental requirements when purchasing, leasing, and renting cars, as well as on travel by taxi. All cars purchased for the University should be environmentally friendly, with the exception of cars with more than seven seats. There are also exceptions for light commercial vehicles and diesel cars, but environmental requirements are imposed on air emissions.

From an environmental point of view, public transport is by far the best travel option. When travelling by taxi, it is important to ask for a “green” car. The average proportion of green cars at three major taxi companies in Stockholm is 87 per cent. There are indications that the CO₂ emissions from taxis in Stockholm have been significantly reduced, which is clear from the statistics available on the environmental website (www.su.se/miljo).

In order to know the extent of greenhouse gas emissions caused by excursions with rental buses, it is important to request information from the bus company.

Proposed measures:

- Use public transport (including Arlanda Express) when travelling to and from airports, when travelling around Stockholm, and when staying in a different city.
- When travelling by taxi, make it a habit to ask for a green car.
- When travelling by car, make it a habit to rent cars that meet the highest emission standards.
- For excursions, hire bus companies that are environmentally certified (or equivalent), practice fuel-efficient driving, and use renewable/environmentally friendly fuels.

What to consider when choosing accommodation

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When it comes to choosing accommodation, employees are encouraged to choose hotels that actively engage in environmental work. Environmental aspects to consider include material use, water and energy consumption, chemicals, organic and locally produced food, etc. Proof that a hotel chain engages in systematic environmental work includes the Nordic Ecolabel or an ISO 14001 or EMAS environmental management systems certification. When choosing a hotel in Sweden, employees at Stockholm University should use the framework agreement at www.avropa.se, which is a ranked agreement divided into different areas. This means that, if there are rooms available in the area you are interested in, you must choose the hotel at the top of the ranking list. Please refer to the environmental website (www.su.se/miljo) for more information. There you can also read about environmentally certified hotel chains outside of Sweden.

Proposed measures:

- Use the proximity principle in your choice of location when, for example, the department is having planning days for its employees.
- Choose accommodation near the location of your meeting or conference.
- Choose a hotel that works systematically with environmental issues, such as a hotel carrying the Nordic Ecolabel. Remember that you can ask about this when making your reservation through the contracted travel agency.