



# CONSCIOUS TRAVELING

IFSA Guidelines

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## Introduction

At IFSA, we recognize that all major modes of travel emit greenhouse gases and have some impact on our environment. Nevertheless, travel remains an essential aspect of IFSA, facilitating face-to-face intercultural exchange, collaboration, and the sharing of diverse perspectives. In-person meetings enrich our community and further our vision. This policy is designed to guide our travel decisions, balancing the environmental costs with the benefits of personal interactions.

## Historical Legacies and Global Emission Disparities

We acknowledge that historical processes such as colonialism and imperialism have led to significant global inequalities in emissions. The Global North has contributed a disproportionately larger share to historical emissions compared to the Global South. While the guidelines below apply to all IFSA members, we are aware of and sensitive to these inequities. We also recognize that sustainable alternatives to air travel, such as rail or bus, can be more expensive and less accessible for some members. Our aim is to ensure that environmental responsibility does not compromise equitable participation.

## Historical Legacies and Global Emission Disparities

### Short haul Air Travel

Short haul air travel (e.g. domestic) should be minimized, particularly for shorter distances where alternative modes of transportation (e.g. train, bus, or ferry) are feasible. However, short haul flights may be necessary for longer distances or regions with limited alternative transportation options, such as countries made up of multiple islands or archipelagos. If a short haul flight is deemed essential and supported by the IFSA Development Fund, a short justification must be provided in the Development Fund application. This statement should explain why alternative transportation methods were not feasible and demonstrate that the benefits of air travel outweigh its environmental costs.

### International (Intercontinental) Travel

Intercontinental travel will not be funded by IFSA under normal circumstances. This decision reflects our collective commitment to climate responsibility, equitable access, and the effective use of limited financial resources. Supporting more local and regional participation allows us to engage a broader and more diverse group of members, while significantly reducing our carbon footprint.

In exceptional cases where intercontinental travel is deemed essential to the success of a project or the representation of the network, a clear and compelling justification must be provided. Such requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and must demonstrate why virtual or regional alternatives are insufficient.

## Virtual Meetings as an Alternative

Members are strongly encouraged to assess whether meeting objectives can be achieved through virtual platforms. While acknowledging that online meetings may not fully replicate the benefits of in-person interactions, they offer a significant reduction in emissions and should be considered a primary option when appropriate.

## Quantification of carbon emission by traveling

When air travel is necessary, members are encouraged to critically reflect on the environmental impact of their choices. This includes being mindful of the significant carbon emissions associated with air travel and actively considering how to mitigate them.

While some individuals may explore options such as carbon offsetting, it is important to acknowledge that such schemes vary widely in credibility and effectiveness. Members are encouraged to take a close look at the credibility of offset programs and to consider the broader impact of their travel decisions beyond just buying compensation.

Carbon emissions from IFSA-supported travel should be estimated and submitted to the Head of the Sub-Commission on Carbon and Sustainability. This not only enhances our awareness as individuals but also helps IFSA track, assess, and reflect on its overall carbon footprint.