

Options for reducing air travel by university affiliates

Prof. Philippe Thalmann

Swiss Network for Sustainable University Business Travel

23.11.2022

Outline

- A. General options
- B. Comparing the options
- C. Specific configuration questions
- D. My favourite option

A. General options

1. Call for voluntary restraint (recommendations, sufficiency)
2. Impose restrictions on flying (rules, prescriptions, budgets)
3. Impose quotas with flexibility (hybrid)
4. Make flying more expensive (pricing)

1. Voluntary restraint

- Information on why flying should be avoided, raising awareness (*personal responsibility*)
- Non-compulsory guidelines (*personal responsibility*)
- Support in organising alternatives (*facilitation*)
- Central booking, and train trips are always proposed first when feasible (*nudge*)
- Target setting for School / Department / Institute, and reporting (*collective responsibility*)
- Public displaying of least and most virtuous groups (*transparency, name and shame*)

2. Restrictions on flying

- Subject every flight to an approval procedure based on compulsory guidelines
- Ban flights of certain types, to close destinations, to very far destinations
- Allow only Economy class
- Set a limit on environmental impact (= number of flights or total distance or CO₂ emissions or climate impact) (*budgets*)

3. Flying quotas with flexibility

- Allow a certain environmental impact (*quota*)
- Unused quota can be used in future years (*banking*)
- Quota can be 'borrowed' from following year (*borrowing*)
- Unused quota can be traded (*cap and trade*)

4. More expensive flying

- Fee dependent on environmental impact
- Subsidy on train ticket or additional hotel nights (*implicit fee on flying*)

B. Comparing the options

Criteria for comparing the options:

- Practical, administrative and legal feasibility
- Effectivity: is the goal reached?
- Fairness (for the people directly concerned, e.g.: do those who most 'need' to fly get to fly?)
- Acceptability (for the people directly concerned)

B. Comparing the options

	Feasibility	Effectivity	Fairness	Acceptability
Voluntary restraint (1)	Green	Red	Yellow	Green
Authorization procedure	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow
Bans or budgets	Green	Green	Yellow	Red
Quotas with flexibility	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow
Pricing	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Red

(1) Personal or collective responsibility, nudge. Naming and shaming would be less acceptable

C. Configuration of the instruments – general questions –

1. Should the instruments only cover flying or all international travel?
2. Should the instruments be applied at the level of individuals, labs, institutes, departments?
3. Should there be some differentiation by 'need to travel' (e.g., junior faculty; project meeting vs academic conference)?
4. Should there be grandfathering (higher flying rights for past frequent flyers)?
5. What about the remaining climate impact? Should it be offset and, if yes, who pays for this?

C. Configuration of the instruments

– specific questions –

1. How is the environmental impact measured (trips, km, CO₂, CO₂×RFI)?
2. If it is fee or quota, where does the money come from? research funds, unit budgetary endowment, traveller's pocket?
3. If it is a budget: what sanction if it is exceeded?
4. If it is a fee:
 - a) What level? (internalisation of external costs, cost of offset, meeting a target)
 - b) Uniform or progressive, i.e. increasing with the number of trips or kilometres?
 - c) How are the revenues used?

D. My favourite

Flight km quotas with flexibility (banking and trading), accompanied with strong information campaign:

- Km is simpler and less controversial than CO₂ or CO₂×RFI
- Multiplier for non-Economy trips
- Allows for easy differentiation: junior faculty could be granted more quotas
- Reinforces the community: I can transfer quotas to a colleague who needs them more
- If a trip is offset by a qualified compensation project, no quota is needed (could help with outside funders)
- Would be a pilot for other organisations and even Switzerland!

Thank you for your attention



Introducing an Air Ticket Tax in Switzerland:
Estimated Effects on Demand



E4S White Paper
2021 - 2

Open Access Article

Towards True Climate Neutrality for Global Aviation: A Negative Emissions Fund for Airlines

by Sascha Nick * and Philippe Thalmann

Laboratory of Environmental and Urban Economics (LEURE), Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), CH-1015 Lausanne, Switzerland

* Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.

J. Risk Financial Manag. **2022**, 15(11), 505; <https://doi.org/10.3390/jrfm15110505>

Received: 5 August 2022 / Revised: 23 October 2022 / Accepted: 27 October 2022 /

Published: 1 November 2022

(This article belongs to the Special Issue **Innovation in Business and Energy Systems**)