

Virtual Conference: University Air Miles Reduction (30 Oct– 6 Nov 2017)

This is an invitation to members of all IARU universities and other selected universities to participate in the 1st Virtual Conference tackling the dilemma of high air traffic: **How can universities and their members reduce business air travel and still be successful?**

Motivation

- CO₂ Emissions from air travel make up a big share of universities' total emissions (~60% at ETHZ)
- Flying is common practice and part of academic culture despite productivity and credibility issues
- Cultural and organizational factors make many scientists think that they need to fly frequently for being successful in science (such as peer pressure and the scientific reward system)
- Need to discuss psychological, cultural and organizational reasons for why the potential of virtual collaboration in science is not fully utilized (e.g. mindset, insufficient personal VC experience, organizational effort)

Project description

University members within the existing IARU network and other selected universities convene virtually and locally in order to develop recommendations on how to deal with the dilemma of frequent flying as scientific/ university community and at their own university.

Initiators: ETH Zurich in collaboration with the University of Zurich (patronage of IARU network)

Location: University of Zurich (rooms tbd later) [and virtually connected to other universities]

Schedule: **Monday, Oct 30th | Start Webinar & Local Workshop 02:30 pm – 06:00 pm CET**
Tuesday, Oct 31st | One of the following Virtual Webinars:

07:00 am - 09:30 am CET | 09:00 am - 11:30 am CET | 04:00 pm - 06:30 pm CET

Wednesday, Nov 1st | Local Workshop 09:00 am – 12:30 pm CET

Monday, Nov 6th | Panel Discussion 06:00 pm – 07:30 pm CET

Total workload of the conference: 12 hours spread over a week

Target Group: Sustainability officers, faculty members, administrative & IT staff, executive board, students and doctorate students; frequent flyers; Scope: 10-15 people per university

Objectives:

1. Start an experiment to convene virtually using low-cost video conferencing technologies for collaboration within an existing university network, followed by a critical analysis to learn and collect best practices for further virtual conferences and collaboration formats across different time zones.
2. Produce a policy brief on how to reduce air miles as scientific community and at the individual universities in order to open the discourse about the dilemma of business travel at universities; to be published after the event.

Format: The conference will be a mix of local workshops with colleagues from your university and virtual workshops with university members from other universities around the globe.

Output: Policy Brief on how to reach a culture of less carbon intensive research.

Registration: Please sign up for the virtual conference by August 31st using this [link](#).

Website: www.sustainability.ethz.ch/virtualconference

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