

Sweden: More Airports Became Carbon Neutral in 2012

In October 2012 Sweden national airport group, Swedavia, became the first national airport in the world to achieve the carbon neutrality status across its ten airports. Every year, the ten airports welcome well over 31 million passengers from all over Europe and beyond.

The journey to achieving carbon neutrality hasn't been an easy one for Swedavia. They have had to reduce carbon dioxide emission, engage other people in the process of CO₂ emission reduction and even buy offsets to keep CO₂ emissions under control. This is what helped them achieve the neutrality certification.



The director general of ACI EUROPE (Airports Council International), Olivier Jankovec, asserted that over the past three years, Airport Carbon Accreditation had seen a number of notable breakthroughs. He added that Swedavia's achievement was indeed a great milestone. He continued to state that four years had passed since European airports had made a commitment to reduce CO₂ emissions and ultimately become carbon neutral. Not so long after, he continued, Stockholm–Arlanda followed suit by becoming the first carbon neutral airport in the world. He congratulated the Swedavia group for becoming the first carbon neutral airport group.

He added that airports are very complex places and that there are usually many partners working together. He stated that for success to be achieved in such situations, someone has to lead the way.

Jankovic asserted that besides being an achievement for the aviation industry, Swedavia's achievement was a very fine example of how an airport group can lead by example for many businesses even beyond aviation. This, he said, was the way to go if there is any hope of achieving a carbon neutral environment and controlling climate change.

The CEO of Swedavia, Torborg Chetkovich, commented that she was very happy about the achievement as it meant that they would be operating in resource efficient spaces. She added that the end result of this achievement was that they would be more efficient in service delivery and as a result, their customers would have more opportunities to develop airport connections from and even within Sweden.

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The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) asserts that the total CO2 emissions by aviation account for 2 percent of global emissions that affect climate change. In that figure, the airports own operations only account for 5% of the emissions. However, regardless of how little this percentage may seem, it does impact very negatively on climate change.

The Airport Carbon Accreditation program was launched in Europe in June 2009. It is a voluntary programme that certifies airports into four of the available levels – mapping, reduction, optimization, and neutrality.

The level of each airport depends on their efforts to make their operating environment completely carbon neutral. This means that the company that has made most efforts will achieve neutrality and the one that hasn't but is planning to, will attain the mapping status. To date, over 67 airports in Europe that welcome 53 percent European passenger traffic annually are now Airport Carbon Accredited.

Approximately a year and a half later, the program expanded to the Asia Pacific region. This helped it gain the support of ICAO. Currently, five Asian airports have already been accredited. There are several other European airports that have achieved neutrality since. These include the SEA Milan airports, Malpensa & Linate airport, Avinor's Oslo, and Trondheim in Norway.

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