



WWF

EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY

UK

2010

Climate change

Conservation

Sustainability

# Excess baggage: the case for reducing government flying

# LIST OF ACRONYMS AND INITIALS

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Attorney General's Office	AGO
Cabinet Office	CO
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	BIS
Department for Communities and Local Government	DCLG
Department for Culture, Media and Sport	DCMS
Department for Education	DfE
Department of Energy and Climate Change	DECC
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	Defra
Department of Health	DoH
Department for International Development	DfID
Department for Transport	DfT
Department for Work and Pensions	DWP
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	FCO
HM Revenue & Customs	HMRC
HM Treasury	HMT
Home Office	HO
Ministry of Defence	MoD
Ministry of Justice	MoJ
Northern Ireland Office	NIO
Office for National Statistics	ONS
Scottish Government	SG
Welsh Assembly Government	WAG

This is an executive summary of a report commissioned by WWF-UK, published in June 2010. The full report, by JMP Consultants Ltd, can be downloaded from [www.wwf.org.uk/excessbaggage](http://www.wwf.org.uk/excessbaggage). See page 23 for further details.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Between December 2009 and January 2010, WWF-UK sent all Whitehall departments and devolved governments a series of

requests under the Freedom of Information Act, to learn more about patterns of government flights over the past three years. Based on the responses<sup>1</sup>, we found that:

90%



OF ALL  
GOVERNMENT  
FLIGHTS ARE TO  
DESTINATIONS  
WITHIN THE UK

- overall, government flying is almost certainly growing, as levels in the largest flying departments (Ministry of Defence, HM Revenue & Customs) have increased
- less than half of government departments have reduced their flights
- if all government departments followed the lead of the best performers to reduce unnecessary flying, then over the next three years:
  - officials would take at least 600,000 fewer flights
  - government would cut its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by more than 59,000 tonnes (equivalent to 118,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e including aviation's non-CO<sub>2</sub> impacts on the climate)<sup>2</sup>
  - the government could be saving well over £100 million of taxpayers' money in avoided flight costs
- 90% of all government flights are to destinations within the UK
- the top non-UK short-haul routes are to Brussels, Geneva, Luxembourg and Strasbourg, which are all reachable by train
- there is a high concentration of flights to Washington DC and New York, suggesting that improved video links to these locations could be a quick win
- best performers are the Department for Education<sup>3</sup> and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
- worst performers include the Ministry of Defence and HM Revenue & Customs
- there is an urgent need for government departments to improve flight data to control levels of flying and manage these downwards
- the public sector has much to learn from the private sector about saving time, money and carbon by reducing business flights

>£100m

THE GOVERNMENT  
COULD BE SAVING  
WELL OVER £100M  
OF TAXPAYERS  
MONEY IN AVOIDED  
FLIGHT COSTS

## INTRODUCTION

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The recession has taken its toll on corporate travel budgets and resulted in a significant fall in UK business passengers. Although

numbers are now recovering slightly, it is questionable whether they will return to previous levels. An important reason for this, at least in the private sector, is that companies are ruthlessly questioning the need to travel, demanding to see results from trips that are deemed necessary, replacing travel with virtual meetings, and reducing carbon by switching from planes to trains. In other words, they are finding new ways of staying competitive and connected while travelling less.

**INCREASED FLYING  
CANNOT CONTINUE  
IF GOVERNMENT  
IS SERIOUS ABOUT  
CUTTING ITS COSTS  
AND CARBON  
EMISSIONS**



This message has yet to reach much of central government, where flying by many departments is on the increase. But this cannot continue if government is serious about cutting its costs and carbon emissions.

Pressure is growing to cut public sector expenditure and reduce carbon emissions. The new UK government has a sizeable deficit to reduce and a commitment to cut 10% of its emissions in a year. Air fares are set to rise, given the likelihood of increasing oil prices and environmental taxation. And, in the wake of criticism of MPs' expenses, there continues to be close public scrutiny of government expenditure, with sharp criticism of anything perceived to be extravagant or wasteful – such as unnecessary flying.

This report shows that substantial savings of taxpayers' money and lower emissions from government operations are both achievable by reducing government flights. Some departments are already making progress, but they are in the minority.

There is much to be done across Whitehall and devolved governments to catch up with the private sector in reducing unnecessary flying. Changing existing meeting and travel habits will require political will and the imposition of flight reduction targets, but only modest investment in new technologies. By demonstrating more sustainable working practices, the UK and devolved governments would be leading by example and showing their commitment to a lower carbon economy.

## WHY WWF IS INTERESTED IN REDUCED FLYING

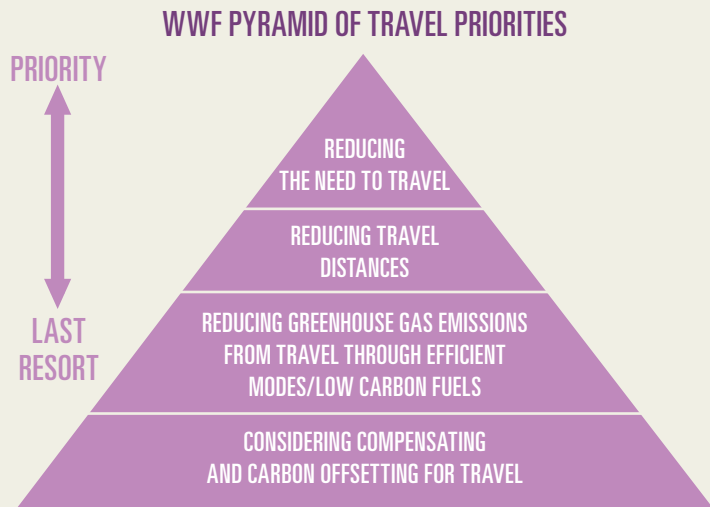
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WWF-UK is committed to finding credible solutions to environmental problems and helping government and business to seek less carbon-intensive work and travel practices. This means finding alternatives

to flying, which is one of the fastest-growing sources of carbon emissions. Flying is also the most carbon-intensive form of travel and likely to remain so for many years to come.

We advocate a hierarchy of travel priorities which first questions the need to travel, then seeks the shortest distance to travel to meetings, using the lowest carbon form of travel. At WWF, flying is a last resort when other alternatives aren't suitable or practical, and where flying is necessary, we offset to Gold Standard.

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In our view, rail provides a good, low-carbon option for many shorter trips, and for longer journeys the best alternative to flying is to hold a 'virtual meeting' – harnessing modern videoconferencing technology to remove the need for travel.

According to our research<sup>4</sup>, within Europe nearly 20% of business travel could be replaced with virtual meetings by 2020, and nearly 30% by 2030, if strong emissions reduction policies, especially in the transportation sector, are in place to drive an increase in videoconferencing.

# CHALLENGING BUSINESS

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Aviation is one of the fastest-growing sources of emissions in the UK. It's currently responsible for 13% of the damage the UK does to the climate. WWF's One in Five Challenge helps companies cut their business flights by 20% over five years. This will save businesses money and reduce their impact on the environment.

The One in Five Challenge is open to business and government and we are pleased to welcome the Scottish Government's entry into the scheme. They are joining the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and nine leading companies and organisations that are committed to finding lower carbon alternatives to flying. More information about joining the One in Five Challenge can be found at: [wwf.org.uk/oneinfive](http://wwf.org.uk/oneinfive).





## THE ONE IN FIVE CHALLENGE

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To help government and companies to reduce their reliance on business flying, we have developed the One in Five

Challenge, a guided programme and award scheme to cut business flying by 20% within five years. This scheme promotes the use of lower carbon travel alternatives and encourages staff to use video and other conferencing technologies, such as web and audio, where possible. Participants include leading companies and public sector organisations who are achieving significant cost and carbon savings through their membership. For more information see [wwf.org.uk/oneinfive](http://wwf.org.uk/oneinfive).

## WHY IT'S IMPORTANT FOR GOVERNMENT TO CUT UNNECESSARY FLYING

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According to the UK government's own figures, it spends more than £5 billion a year on travel<sup>5</sup>, with flights accounting for 36% of all miles travelled<sup>6</sup>. We are calling on government, as a major air traveller, to reduce its flying for the following reasons:

- in a time of economic austerity, it's important for government to demonstrate that it is curbing travel costs
- it shows that government is serious about cutting carbon from its operations
- it helps reduce the risk of public criticism over increased flying
- it provides an opportunity to lead by example in its use of lower carbon modes of travel and videoconferencing
- increased videoconferencing will increase resilience to disruptions caused by weather, volcanoes, industrial action or terrorism
- it will help achieve government targets of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050, in line with the Climate Change Act

Although we recognise that Ministers and their officials do need to fly in the course of their duties, that doesn't mean there isn't the potential to fly less.

There is no set definition of 'unnecessary' flying and each organisation needs to examine its own needs. However, government uses a very high percentage of domestic flights, most of which could be replaced by train travel. Internal meetings are particularly

IN A TIME OF ECONOMIC AUSTERITY, IT'S IMPORTANT FOR GOVERNMENT TO DEMONSTRATE THAT IT IS CURBING TRAVEL COSTS



**GOVERNMENT  
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MOST OF WHICH  
COULD BE REPLACED  
BY TRAIN TRAVEL**

suitable for conferencing technologies (audio, web or videoconferencing) where relationships are established, the working culture is shared and meeting in person isn't always essential. Meetings within Whitehall departments and devolved governments could be steadily 'virtualised'.

To replace long-haul flights, departments should examine flight frequencies on particular routes, to understand where investment in improved video links would most quickly pay off. For instance, the large number of flights to Washington and New York, as well as the high level of technological development and shared language in those destinations (allowing simpler remote communication), suggest these are routes where videoconferencing could replace a significant number of flights.

## **THE PURPOSE OF RESEARCH**

We wanted to determine the extent to which flying by government departments is increasing, how much of this may be

unnecessary, what best practice exists within the public sector and how much money and carbon would be saved if all Ministers and civil servants were to emulate these good examples.

**MEETINGS WITHIN  
WHITEHALL  
AND DEVOLVED  
GOVERNMENTS  
COULD BE STEADILY  
'VIRTUALISED'**

To this end, we commissioned JMP Consultants Ltd to help answer these questions and to provide recommendations for government action, based on evidence obtained from two Freedom of Information (FoI) requests, submitted to 22 central Whitehall departments and devolved governments in December 2009 and January 2010.

We asked for the number of flights undertaken by Ministers and their officials over the past three years and the costs and carbon emissions associated with these flights. We also asked each department to provide their top five flight routes so that we could assess the potential for alternatives. (See Appendix A in the full JMP report for copies of the FoI requests.)

We have also used the FoI responses to produce scorecards for each government department, which present our appraisal of their success in cutting costs and carbon from flying.

## WWF'S ANALYSIS OF KEY FINDINGS

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The following findings are based on FoI responses provided by each government department and are included as appendices to the full JMP report. We extrapolated the cost and carbon savings that could be

achieved if all central government followed the two best performing departments in reducing their flights, but we were only able to do so based on available data from a subset of departments. If full data had been provided by all departments, giving us a higher baseline, the estimated future cost and carbon savings from reducing government flying would have been significantly greater.

THE BEST PERFORMING DEPARTMENTS WERE THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND DEFRA

Government figures were reported to us in CO<sub>2</sub> terms only – but aviation has a number of non-CO<sub>2</sub> impacts such as contrails, changes to cirrus clouds and effects of exhaust gases at high altitude, that increase its overall warming power. In this summary<sup>7</sup>, we account for these effects using a multiplier of two<sup>8</sup> and report the resulting emissions in tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e).

- Overall, government flights are almost certainly on the increase, given that the top flying departments – the Ministry of Defence and HMRC – appear to be increasing their flying, based on their FoI responses.
- The best performing departments were the Department for Education and Defra, who taken together reduced flight numbers by 45%, costs by 39% and CO<sub>2</sub> by 17% across the three years, saving nearly £1 million of taxpayers' money in the process.
- If all UK government followed the lead of the best performers in reducing flights, taxpayers would potentially save more than £116 million over the next three years. The government would also cut its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by more than 59,000 tonnes (118,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e) as a result of taking 610,000 fewer flights.
- Less than half of UK government departments show any discernible progress towards reducing their flying. Those departments able to provide detailed flight data for the last three years have achieved an 11% reduction between financial years 2006/07 and 2008/09.
- Domestic flights account for 90% of all business flights taken by government Ministers and officials. These cost the taxpayer more than £20 million in 2008/09, according to recent government research<sup>9</sup>. Many of these flights are avoidable or can be replaced with lower carbon travel alternatives.



**DOMESTIC FLIGHTS  
ACCOUNT FOR 90%  
OF ALL BUSINESS  
FLIGHTS TAKEN  
BY GOVERNMENT  
MINISTERS AND  
OFFICIALS**

### **Routes**

- The most frequent domestic routes used by Ministers and officials are London/Edinburgh and London/Belfast. A high percentage of these flights could be replaced by rail travel (in the case of Edinburgh) or videoconferencing, saving money, time and carbon.
- The top non-UK short-haul routes are to Brussels, Geneva, Luxembourg and Strasbourg. These flights are being used far too often in preference to train travel, resulting in significantly more carbon per journey and less productive time en route.
- The most frequent long-haul routes are from London to New York and Washington DC, indicating the opportunity for videoconferencing links to these locations.

### **Data availability**

- Of the 22 central Whitehall departments and devolved governments contacted, only nine were able to provide complete flight data, a further seven provided partial data and the other six provided very patchy information that made it impossible to determine whether flights were on the increase or not. Poor or incomplete responses were received from several departments known to be major flight users, such as the MoD, DfID, FCO and HMRC.
- All data requested should have been readily available to departments – not only as a matter of good accounting practice, but also in order to monitor progress against government sustainability targets.
- Those departments that were unable or unwilling to disclose their flight details show poor transparency and/or record keeping – or they may not wish to disclose that their number of flights may be growing.

## SCORING DEPARTMENTS

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WWF has created scorecards for each government department, with green, amber and red colours given for best, moderate and worst performance. White ratings are

for newly-formed departments with insufficient historical data to assess. Grey ratings have been given to those departments that provided insufficient information to generate meaningful statistics.

### 4 NUMBER OF DEPARTMENTS RATED GREEN

A weighted points system was used to score departments on reductions in flights, costs and CO<sub>2</sub>; on levels of domestic flying and provision of comprehensive data. For more information on how we calculated each department's score, please see Appendix 1 to this executive summary.

- Those departments that we consider best performers (those that have reduced their flying the most and received top green ratings) are:
  - Department for Education
  - Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Those departments that are commended by WWF for their progress in reducing their flying and achieving a green rating, but where there are some issues that need resolving<sup>10</sup>, are:
  - Welsh Assembly Government
  - Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- Those that received a red rating, based on increased flying and/or incomplete data response, are:
  - Cabinet Office
  - Department for Communities and Local Government
  - Department of Health
  - Department for Transport
  - Department for International Development
  - Foreign and Commonwealth Office
  - HM Revenue & Customs
  - Ministry of Defence

**HM TREASURY,  
MINISTRY OF  
JUSTICE AND OFFICE  
FOR NATIONAL  
STATISTICS  
PROVIDED LITTLE OR  
NO DATA**

- Additional poor performers, given a grey rating, are those government departments that provided us with little or no data requested under the FoI. These are:
  - HM Treasury
  - Ministry of Justice
  - Office for National Statistics

For a performance review of each government department showing the FoI data provided, as well as suggestions for reducing their flying, see Appendix C in the full JMP report.

# WWF SCORECARDS BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (22 TOTAL)

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90

DEPARTMENT  
FOR EDUCATION

85

DEPARTMENT FOR  
ENVIRONMENT, FOOD  
AND RURAL AFFAIRS

80

WELSH ASSEMBLY  
GOVERNMENT

75

DEPARTMENT  
FOR CULTURE, MEDIA  
AND SPORT

65

DEPARTMENT FOR  
BUSINESS, INNOVATION  
AND SKILLS

65

NORTHERN IRELAND  
OFFICE

55

ATTORNEY  
GENERAL'S OFFICE

50

SCOTTISH  
GOVERNMENT

45

DEPARTMENT FOR  
WORK AND PENSIONS

45

HOME OFFICE

All figures are based on flights taken for business purposes by Ministers and their officials except where noted. The data was obtained from two FoI requests sent by WWF-UK to central government departments and devolved governments in December 2009 and January 2010.

For more information on how we calculated each department's score, please see Appendix 1 to this executive summary.

## KEY

- **Green** = Highest level of flight reduction and carbon savings, comparatively low level of domestic flights, good response to WWF's FoI requests. Score = 70+ points
- **Amber** = Moderate level of flight reduction and carbon savings, comparatively high level of domestic flights, fair response to WWF's FoI requests. Score = 30-70 points
- **Red** = Increase in flying and carbon emissions, highest level of domestic flights, poor response to WWF's FoI requests. Score = <30 points.
- **White** = Newly formed departments where insufficient data to award a colour score.
- **Grey** = Departments refused WWF's FoI requests on grounds of time and expense to report data requested.

25

CABINET OFFICE

20

DEPARTMENT FOR  
COMMUNITIES AND  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

15

DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH

10

DEPARTMENT FOR  
TRANSPORT

10

HM REVENUE  
AND CUSTOMS

5

DEPARTMENT FOR  
INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT

5

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

0

FOREIGN AND  
COMMONWEALTH  
OFFICE

20

HM TREASURY

0

OFFICE FOR NATIONAL  
STATISTICS

0

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

30

DEPARTMENT OF  
ENERGY AND CLIMATE  
CHANGE

## IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS FOR GOVERNMENT

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**10%**  
**QUICK ACTION ON FLYING IS A KEY WAY TO ACHIEVE THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO CUT EMISSIONS BY 10% IN 12 MONTHS**

make reducing government flights a clear and early priority in helping to cut public expenditure. Fewer flights should also make it easier to achieve the new Sustainable Development in Government (SDiG) targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the UK government estate and operations by 80% by 2050, in line with the Climate Change Act. Quick action on flying is also a key way to achieve the new government's commitment to cut emissions by 10% in 12 months.

The inability of most departments to provide us with the full flight data requested, which should have been easily available from each department's travel management company, suggests that reporting systems must be improved. Until now, record keeping has focused on ministerial flights costing £500 or more each, which provides only a very partial picture. It also seems likely that some flights are booked using unofficial channels such as personal credit cards, and that this information goes unrecorded.

Government transparency in answering WWF's FoI requests was generally moderate to poor; the excuse of time and cost exceeding FoI limits was used in far too many instances. Again, this suggests poor record keeping. Even worse, it could indicate a deliberate intent to suppress evidence of increased flying.

Our research shows there is still much room for improvement within central government to minimise travel and flying.

The extent of cost savings which are possible, at £116 million or more, should



**IT WILL BE DIFFICULT  
TO REDUCE THE  
NUMBER OF  
GOVERNMENT  
FLIGHTS WITHOUT  
A FULLER  
UNDERSTANDING  
OF DEPARTMENTAL  
TRAVEL PATTERNS**

It will be difficult to reduce the number of government flights without a fuller understanding of departmental travel patterns. This in turn raises the more general question of whether government can enforce its own codes and frameworks, such as the Civil Service Management Code for Travel and the Sustainable Operations on the Government Estate (SOG E) targets for reducing carbon emissions. (This is discussed in more detail in the full report.)

It is also apparent that without clear travel policy standards to minimise carbon or flight reduction targets across government, any efforts to cut government flying will be isolated and given insufficient priority. Ideally these should be championed by the Secretary of State for Transport and the new Efficiency and Reform Group being chaired jointly by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and the Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General. Their equivalents in the devolved governments should also be involved if these moves are to be implemented successfully.

# CHANGING CULTURE

WWF engages with business and government to promote climate-safe business models and to accelerate the move to a low-carbon economy. To reduce carbon emissions from travel, there is a need to move to a culture of virtual meetings, taking advantage of the latest conferencing technologies, ranging from mobile devices to sophisticated telepresence systems.





# ACTIONS WHICH NEED TO BE TAKEN

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WWF WANTS TO SEE  
GOVERNMENT CUT  
ONE IN 10 FLIGHTS  
WITHIN 12 MONTHS  
AND ONE IN FIVE  
FLIGHTS WITHIN  
FIVE YEARS,  
REPLACING THESE  
FLIGHTS WITH  
LOWER CARBON  
ALTERNATIVES  
SUCH AS RAIL OR  
VIDEOCONFERENCING

## 1. Set flight reduction targets

As there is currently no government-wide performance measure for air travel, departments do not have reduction targets for which they should aim. This needs to be rectified, with flight reduction targets being

introduced at the earliest opportunity.

These targets could be included in the new Sustainable Development in Government (SDiG) targets for the government estate and operations, which are replacing SOGE targets at the end of 2010. Their inclusion will also help to meet the Scope 3 emissions<sup>11</sup> included in this framework and get flight reduction targets into individual departmental travel policies. Work is currently under way to develop a sustainable development reporting framework for the Scottish Government which should also include flight reduction targets.

In their coalition agreement, the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats have pledged to cut government carbon emissions by 10% within 12 months of taking office, taking the 10:10 campaign<sup>12</sup> across the public sector. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Department of Energy and Climate Change and 10 Downing Street have already signed up to this campaign. Introducing flight reduction targets will not only help achieve this goal, but will also reduce public expenditure.

To help achieve a 10% reduction in public sector emissions, WWF wants to see government cut one in ten flights within 12 months and one in five flights within five years, replacing these flights with lower carbon alternatives such as rail or videoconferencing.

## 2. Join the One in Five Challenge

The 10:10 campaign recommends WWF's One in Five Challenge for businesses that are serious about reducing their travel emissions, and we invite the UK and devolved governments to participate in this scheme. This would provide a useful focus and discipline for flight reduction as well as assisting staff in breaking ingrained travel habits. One government agency, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), has already joined the Challenge and is making major strides in reducing its flights.

THE PROVISION OF  
GOOD-QUALITY  
ALTERNATIVES TO  
FLYING SHOULD NOT  
ONLY BE A CENTRAL  
PART OF THE NEW  
GOVERNMENT'S  
REVISED AVIATION  
POLICY, BUT IT  
SHOULD ALSO BE  
OFFERED TO ALL  
CIVIL SERVANTS

### **3. Provide good-quality alternatives to flying**

The provision of good-quality alternatives to flying should not only be a central part of the new government's revised aviation policy, but it should also be offered to all civil servants. A full suite of conferencing technologies including audio, web and videoconferencing, should be easily available for all staff to book and use.

Government should increase its support for videoconferencing and incentivise its uptake by business through the inclusion of videoconferencing equipment within the Enhanced Capital Allowance scheme or developing a network of for-hire telepresence hubs in regional business centres. This echoes a recommendation by the Sustainable Development Commission for government to create a UK network of high-quality videoconferencing facilities<sup>13</sup>.

We hope that the new government will uphold a commitment made by the former Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, Theresa Villiers<sup>14</sup>, to pilot advanced videoconferencing technology in government departments to reduce the need for some journeys. This would help kick-start a move towards greater use of videoconferencing within government, share facilities and improve return on investment. It would also help to show that government is leading by example in its use of new technologies.

### **4. Roll out high-speed broadband nationwide**

WWF is calling on the government to roll out high-speed broadband throughout the UK, and we welcome its commitment in the Queen's Speech to enabling investment for this to happen. This will help increase the use of videoconferencing, not least by government departments outside urban centres. Many questionable instances of government flying, such as between Leeds and Southampton, are to destinations where there are poor rail links but where videoconferencing could be used instead. Providing all government offices with high-speed broadband should therefore be a priority.

## **5. Reduce the cost of train travel relative to flying**

We appreciate that some train travel can cost more than flying if it is not booked well in advance. That's why a mix of alternatives should be used to replace unnecessary flying. A concerted government effort to lower the cost of train travel relative to flying would encourage less environmentally damaging travel choices, by both civil servants and the public.

Modal switch from plane to train will be further encouraged by the coalition's commitment to developing a high-speed rail network. However, this needs to be priced so that it's competitive or cheaper than air travel.

## **6. Improve management information and reporting systems**

It's clear from the incomplete responses to our FoI requests that flight data is not being systematically monitored or reported in many departments. Improving basic record-keeping is essential if government is to control and reduce its flying. This is probably best led by government procurement departments specifying more comprehensive reporting requirements to their travel management companies (TMC). At a minimum, government departments should be asking their TMC to provide data on domestic, short-haul and long-haul flights, the costs and carbon emissions associated with those flights, and the main routes. Having this information will help departments see where there is potential for modal switch or videoconferencing links.

## **7. Elevate environmental concerns within sustainable travel policies**

We would like to see more attention paid to environmental concerns. The civil service management and ministerial codes used by many government departments in their travel policies state that 'staff are expected to ensure that they use the most efficient and cost effective means of travel when undertaking official business either in the UK or overseas'. But nowhere do these codes mention the need to choose the lowest carbon travel method or conferencing technologies where possible.

Emphasising efficiency and cost effectiveness alone are bound to encourage cheap flights instead of train travel – but it's doubtful whether departments unable to identify their use of business flights will be able to ensure that they are efficient or cost effective.

We recommend that all Whitehall departments and devolved governments be required to adopt sustainable travel policies. Not only should these include flight reduction targets, but also a definition of unnecessary travel, a travel hierarchy that raises awareness of the suitability of different travel modes and alternatives to travel, with systems in place to ensure compliance.

## DISCUSSING FINDINGS IN MORE DETAIL

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We are happy to discuss these findings in more detail with the relevant Ministers or officials whose brief includes the reduction of costs or emissions from the government estate and operations.

The full report is available to download from [www.wwf.org.uk/excessbaggage](http://www.wwf.org.uk/excessbaggage). It contains JMP's assessment of all FoI data supplied and recommendations to government to reduce its number of flights. The report also contains detailed appendices with performance reviews for each department, based on FoI data provided, as well as copies of WWF's original FoI requests.

# APPENDIX 1

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT	OVERALL SCORE	TOTAL FLIGHTS FY 08/09	% CHANGE IN FLIGHTS
POINT DISTRIBUTION	100	–	30
ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE (AGO)		160	-28%
	55	–	30
CABINET OFFICE (CO)		N/A	+53% (based on km distance flown)
	25	–	0
DEPARTMENT FOR BUSINESS INNOVATION AND SKILLS (BIS)		3,788	-31%
	65	–	30
DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DCLG)		N/A	N/A
	20	–	0
DEPARTMENT FOR CULTURE MEDIA AND SPORT (DCMS)		241	-27%
	75	–	30
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION (DFE)		992	-37%
	90	–	30
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE (DECC)		1,378	N/A
	30	–	0
DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS (DEFRA)		1,724	-49%
	85	–	30



% CHANGE IN FLIGHT COSTS	% CHANGE IN CO <sub>2</sub> FROM FLYING	DOMESTIC FLIGHTS AS TOTAL FY 08/09	COMPLIANCE WITH WWF FOI REQUESTS	COMMENTS
20	20	20	10	–
-2%	+18%	69%	Good	–
5	0	10	10	–
+54%	+54%	<1% (based on km distance flown)	Moderate	Increase in km distance flown reported in Annual Report and Accounts 2008/09.
0	0	20	5	–
+49%	-85%	38%	Moderate	No second FOI response received. BIS formed June 2009; possible data anomalies may be due to merger of different departments and reporting systems.
0	20	10	5	–
-53%	+11%	N/A	Poor	–
20	0	0	0	–
-60%	N/A	30%	Moderate	No carbon data provided. Large reduction in expenditure relative to flights. Possible anomaly or perhaps greater use of economy flights.
20	0	20	5	–
-45%	-47%	72%	Good	–
20	20	10	10	–
N/A	N/A	49%	Good	Data for 2008/09 only as new department.
0	0	20	10	–
-38%	-17%	38%	Moderate	Carbon emissions data for last two years only. No second FOI response received.
20	10	20	5	–

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT	OVERALL SCORE	TOTAL FLIGHTS FY 08/09	% CHANGE IN FLIGHTS
POINT DISTRIBUTION	100	–	30
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH)		2,811	+38%
	15	–	0
DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (DFID)		N/A	N/A (but probable increase)
	5	–	0
DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT (DFT)		3,455	+3% (based on 2 years data only)
	10	–	0
DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS (DWP)		27,325	-3%
	45	–	10
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE (FCO)		N/A	+230% (based on km distance flown)
	0	–	0
HER MAJESTY'S REVENUE AND CUSTOMS (HMRC)		71,566	+21%
	10	–	0
HM TREASURY (HMT)		N/A	N/A
	20	–	0
HOME OFFICE (HO)		4,065	N/A (but probable decrease)
	45	–	0

% CHANGE IN FLIGHT COSTS	% CHANGE IN CO <sub>2</sub> FROM FLYING	DOMESTIC FLIGHTS AS TOTAL FY 08/09	COMPLIANCE WITH WWF FOI REQUESTS	COMMENTS
20	20	20	0	–
+41%	+5%	54%	Moderate	Carbon data core only.
0	0	10	5	–
+24%	+24%	N/A	Moderate	Offsetting costs the only expenditure data provided. Probable increase in flying as both offsetting costs and CO <sub>2</sub> have increased.
0	0	0	5	–
+12%	+14% (based on 2 years data only)	93% (only DVLA figures available)	Moderate	Flight data for core department and executive agencies reported separately; incomplete data in many cases.
0	0	5	5	–
+13%	-40%	95%	Good	–
0	20	5	10	–
N/A	+250%	N/A	Poor	Too little data to assess increase or decrease. Based on minister data for past two years, for charter and RAF flights only.
0	0	0	0	–
+31%	+23%	95%	Moderate	Based on last two years data only.
0	0	5	5	–
-27%	N/A	N/A	Poor	Cost data for UK and overseas flights only.
20	0	0	0	–
-27%	-25%	73%	Moderate	Total flights and % domestic travel from December 2008 – March 2009 only. Cost data for two years for core Home Office and UKBA only, carbon data for three years. Excludes IPS.
20	10	10	5	–

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT	OVERALL SCORE	TOTAL FLIGHTS FY 08/09	% CHANGE IN FLIGHTS
POINT DISTRIBUTION	100	–	30
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (MOD)		321,394	+78% (estimate based on uplifting December – March 2007/08 data)
	5	–	0
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE (MOJ)		N/A	N/A
	0	–	0
NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE (NIO)		9,539	-10%
	65	–	20
OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS (ONS)		N/A	N/A
	0	–	0
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT (SG)		6,586	-30%
	50	–	30
WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT (WAG)		916	-42%
	80	–	30

% CHANGE IN FLIGHT COSTS	% CHANGE IN CO <sub>2</sub> FROM FLYING	DOMESTIC FLIGHTS AS TOTAL FY 08/09	COMPLIANCE WITH WWF FOI REQUESTS	COMMENTS
20	20	20	10	–
+53% (estimate as per flight numbers)	Difficult to estimate due to data anomalies but rising	N/A	Moderate	Includes civilian and military personnel taking business flights, in addition to ministers and officials; % change figures for the past two years only; data only available from December 2007.
0	0	0	5	–
N/A	N/A	N/A	Poor	Partial second FOI response only.
0	0	0	0	–
-14%	-43%	98%	Good	Concern over high level of flying between Belfast and London by Northern Ireland civil servants (recent two year contract with Aer Lingus worth £500k/year).
15	15	5	10	–
N/A	N/A	N/A	Poor	Data provided for second FOI request only.
0	0	0	0	–
-13%	+1%	81%	Moderate	Possible anomaly in carbon data as substantial decrease in flights not matched by fall in emissions. Could indicate inaccuracies in emissions calculations or changes in reporting methodologies.
10	0	5	5	–
-29%	-78%	75%	Moderate	Data covers centrally booked flights only. CO <sub>2</sub> savings far higher than WWF would expect based on flights and cost; additional concerns about high level of civil servant flying between Cardiff and Anglesey.
20	20	5	5	–

# KEY

## ● Green

Highest level of flight reduction and carbon savings, comparatively low level of domestic flights, good response to WWF's FoI requests. Score = 70+ points

## ● Amber

Moderate level of flight reduction and carbon savings, comparatively high level of domestic flights, fair response to WWF's FoI requests. Score = 30-70 points.

## ● Red

Increase in flying and carbon emissions, highest level of domestic flights, poor response to WWF's FoI requests. Score = <30 points.

## ○ White

Newly formed departments where insufficient data to award any colour score.

## ● Grey

Departments refused WWF's FoI requests on grounds of time and expense to report data requested.

All figures based on flights taken for business purposes by Ministers and their officials except where noted. Data obtained from two FoI requests sent by WWF-UK to all central government departments and devolved offices December 2009 and January 2010.

### **Point distribution for % change in flights:**

% change >25% = 30 points

% change 10-25% = 20 points

% change <10% = 10 points

No reduction or response = 0 points

### **Point distribution for % change in flight costs/CO<sub>2</sub> from flying:**

% change >25% = 20 points

% change 10-25% = 10 points

% change <10% = 5 points

No reduction or response = 0 points

### **Point distribution for domestic flights:**

Where <50% of total flights = 20 points

Where 50-74% of total flights = 10 points

Where 75%+ of total flights = 5 points

No response = 0 points

### **Point distribution for compliance with WWF FoI requests:**

Good (where most/all data provided as requested) = 10 points

Moderate (where some data provided as requested) = 5 points

Poor (where little/no data provided as requested) = 0 points

## FOOTNOTES

- 1 The FoI responses provided by each government department are included as appendices to the full JMP report. WWF extrapolated the cost and carbon savings that could be achieved if all central government followed best practice departments in reducing their flights, but we were only able to do so based on available data from a subset of departments. If full data had been provided by all departments, giving us a higher baseline, the estimated future cost, and carbon savings from reducing government flights, would have been significantly greater.
- 2 tCO<sub>2</sub>e = tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, where a Global Warming Potential multiplier of two has been used to account for aviation's non-CO<sub>2</sub> impacts on the climate.
- 3 At the time of the survey, the Department for Children, Schools and Families.
- 4 WWF: From Workplace to Anyplace: assessing the opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with virtual meetings and telecommuting (March 2009), p67 (policy world scenario).
- 5 Defra: Procuring the Future, p17, 2006.
- 6 Sustainable Development Commission: Sustainable Development in Government 2008, p27.
- 7 Note that in JMP's full report, carbon emissions are CO<sub>2</sub> only as reported by government departments.
- 8 Based on the 100-year Global Warming Potential estimates given by the Committee on Climate Change, see Meeting the UK Aviation Target, December 2009, chapter 6: <http://hmccc.s3.amazonaws.com/Aviation%20Report%2009/21667B%20CCC%20Aviation%20AW%20COMP%20v8.pdf>
- 9 BBC News: LibDems criticise £20m Whitehall flight bill, 21 February 2010, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk\\_politics/8527078.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk_politics/8527078.stm)
- 10 These issues are explained in more detail in Appendix 1 to this executive summary.
- 11 As defined by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol Initiative, Scope three emissions include other indirect emissions from transport-related activities, including business travel; [www.ghgprotocol.org/calculation-tools/faq#consumertransport](http://www.ghgprotocol.org/calculation-tools/faq#consumertransport)
- 12 [www.1010global.org/uk/business](http://www.1010global.org/uk/business)
- 13 Sustainable Development Commission: Smarter Moves: how information communications technology can promote sustainable mobility, (2010), p5.
- 14 Letter from Theresa Villiers, Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, to Stephen Joseph, Executive Director of Campaign for Better Transport, 13 April 2010.

# Government flying by numbers

>£100M

If all government departments followed the lead of the best performers to reduce unnecessary flying, then over the next three years the government could be saving well over £100 million of taxpayers' money in avoided flight costs.

20%

To help government and companies to reduce their reliance on business flying, we have developed the One in Five Challenge, a guided programme and award scheme to cut business flying by 20% within five years.



90%

of all government flights are to destinations within the UK.

<50%

Less than half of government departments have reduced their flights.

100%  
RECYCLED



## Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

[wwf.org.uk](http://wwf.org.uk)