



Sustainable Travel | Alternative Routes (STAR)

Context

- SEED is mindful that, prior to the pandemic, we were responsible for a disproportionate amount of faculty carbon emissions arising from air travel. This is partly due to the nature of the disciplines within the SEED, which have traditionally involved a great deal of domestic and international travel.
- Whilst we recognise that some of this travel is essential, we must also acknowledge that the above situation is at odds with the SEED's research agenda, operational priorities and socially responsible principles.
- We believe that we can reduce our carbon footprint through the introduction of policies to improve sustainability in SEEDs business travel.
- SEED is therefore going to undertake a 12-month pilot programme (Sustainable Travel | Alternative routes: STAR), in which a new business travel policy (below) will be trialled that will incentivise members of SEED to travel more sustainably.
- STAR covers business travel only. It does not cover commuting or field courses. These will be addressed separately.
- In support of this, we have developed a website (carbon.manchester.ac.uk), which assesses travel routes and makes more sustainable suggestions, with clear, research-driven information on the carbon savings that could be made through alternative modes of travel.

SEED Travel Policy:

It is already the case that all academic business travel must be registered through the [Academic Absence Form](#). A PS Absence Form is currently being finalised; an email communication will be sent confirming when this form is live. These procedures are not affected by this policy.

SEED already has the following travel policy as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, this is not part of the STAR pilot, but still applies to all business travel:

- Only essential travel is allowed. Travel should be actively avoided in favour of virtual alternatives (e.g. Zoom) where appropriate - this is down to the discretion of the individual. However, approval of travel risk assessment will be contingent on a robust justification as to why travel is essential.

In addition to this, for the period 1st Jan – 31st December 2022, the following policy will also be in place for all SEED business travel:

- Travel to destinations in the UK, Ireland, France, Belgium and the Netherlands should make use of Eurostar trains and/or ferries. Air travel to these destinations require approval by the Head of School. Risks associated with the chosen mode of travel will need to be adequately addressed in the travel risk assessment.
- For destinations further afield, air travel should be avoided where practical – this is down to the discretion of the individual. *For example, you can travel from London to*

Cologne (Germany) by train in 4 hours; and it is possible to travel by ferry to destinations as far away as Spain.

- Where flights are necessary:
 - All bookings should be standard class (Economy). Bookings for other classes require approval by the Head of School.
 - The most direct journey should be chosen. This might mean avoiding a stop at an intermediate destination where possible; or choosing a stop at a location that minimises the overall distance of the journey where this is not possible. *For example, when flying from Manchester to Entebbe (Uganda), you should fly via Amsterdam rather than Dubai (see Figure 1).*
- Where possible, frequent journeys should be replaced with fewer journeys for longer periods where possible - this is down to the discretion of the individual. *For example, someone who travels to Uganda for a week four times a year might instead travel twice for a fortnight; halving the carbon footprint of their travel*

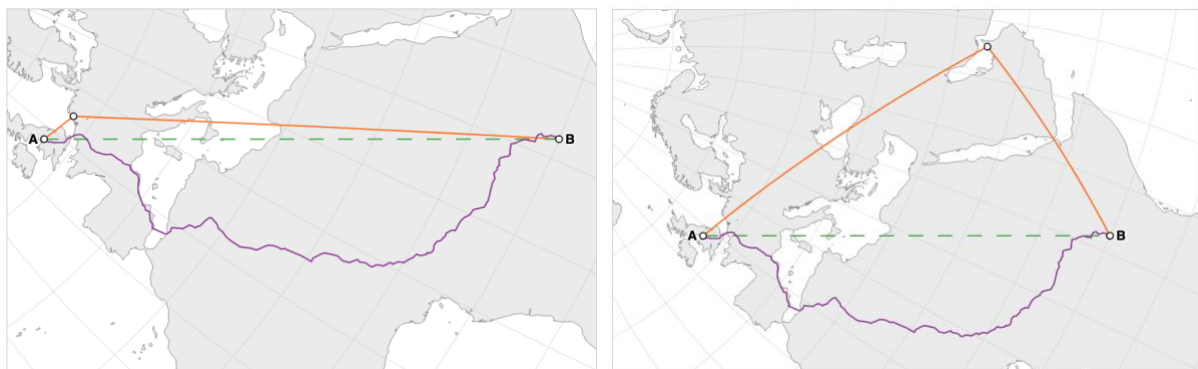


Figure 1: The orange line shows the Manchester (A) to Entebbe, Uganda (B) route via Amsterdam (left) and Dubai (right). The journeys take a similar amount of time, but the Dubai route takes an additional 1,102 kg of CO₂. The green line represents the direct route, and the purple line is a car/ferry route (which is theoretically possible but clearly impractical in this case). *Maps and calculations taken from carbon.manchester.ac.uk.*

We understand that making sustainable travel choices can be more expensive and/or inconvenient. To assist with this, SEED will provide the STAR fund, in order to:

- Pay the additional costs that arise from making sustainable travel choices. For example, if the air fare is £100 and the train fare is £150; SEED would pay the £50 difference.
- Incentivise sustainable travel choices, though providing funding for items such as additional hotel stays to break up long journeys, upgrading train tickets (to first class or 'sleeper' carriages), and so on.

Applications to the SEED STAR fund can be made [here](#).

Limitations

SEED has a generous, but finite budget for supporting this pilot scheme. Accordingly, amendments might need to be made to this policy throughout the duration of 2022, depending on level of uptake, and we may not be able to meet all requests for travel incentives. In support of this, limits may be applied to the amount that individuals can claim in order to permit fair distribution of these benefits.

Contact

If you have any questions or comments about the STAR programme, please direct them to:

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