

ECSA environmental guidelines

Introduction

In light of the current climate crisis, all organizations have an increasingly urgent responsibility to acknowledge, assess and address how their working practices affect the environment. These guidelines¹ set out ECSA's main environmental impacts and the steps we are taking to minimize these, while continuing to fulfil our mandate.

This document only applies to ECSA HQ staff, not its members. Also, it only applies to ECSA HQ staff during their working life. It does not seek to influence, or claim credit for, environmental actions that ECSA staff pursue in their private lives.

We have identified the following areas where we have a significant environmental impact, and will address these through the measures outlined. Monitoring of our progress will be made publicly available on our website and shared with all funders and consortium partners, so that they are aware of how we work and why we may, at times, decline to travel for work.

Air travel

To minimize environmental impact, we:

- encourage all staff to travel by train to destinations that are reachable within eight hours from their home city²
- reduce the number of people travelling to each event if air travel is required³
- take advantage of our decentralized team by sending the nearest person with the relevant skills and knowledge to events, when possible
- ask local ECSA members to represent us at events to which we are invited, if they have the time, skills and knowledge to do so; ECSA will support them by providing

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² This is in line with the guidelines of ECSA's host organization, the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin, and is also being supported at a national level in Germany. See: www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/02/germany-cuts-fares-for-long-distance-rail-travel-in-response-to-climate-crisis

³ This is in line with the findings of the Tyndall Centre, which found "no clear obstacles to justify an exemption for the research community from the emission reduction targets applied elsewhere". See: <https://tyndall.ac.uk/publications/tyndall-working-paper/2015/towards-culture-low-carbon-research-21st-century>



materials (e.g. presentations about citizen science) and acknowledging their support through our communications channels (social media, website, newsletter).

Our overall aim is to adjust our working practices, and ensure our funding is adjusted accordingly, so that we are able to reduce, over time, the amount of travel we do, and shift towards more sustainable forms of transport while travelling within Europe. We will monitor this by calculating and publishing our annual travel emissions on our website (as totals and the average per full-time equivalent team member), so we, our members and other interested parties can monitor our performance.

ECSA events and conferences

ECSA holds a general assembly every year, and organizes a conference on citizen science every two years. These events are invaluable in terms of engaging with our members, but they also bring with them environmental impacts, not least in encouraging people to travel from all over Europe (and beyond). There are further environmental impacts through the resources needed for conferences (e.g. publicity packs, printed delegate materials).

To minimize the impacts of these events, we will implement the following measures.

- We will time our events to ‘piggyback’ on other citizen science events where possible, so that delegates can attend two events but only need to travel once. This will be discussed with all institutes that offer to host an ECSA event.
- As a European network, we need to make sure our events are accessible to all our members, and not held only in central Europe. However, when choosing locations for ECSA events, we will prioritize locations that have excellent train connections, to enable as many people as possible to take this option.
- For fee-paying events (such as the ECSA conference), we will offer a €50 discount to delegates travelling by train (from locations more than 100km away) to help offset the usually higher costs of train travel.
- ECSA will provide vegetarian and/or locally sourced food for events, to reduce the environmental impacts of food miles and meat production. We will also ask all organizations hosting ECSA events to do this.
- All materials produced for ECSA events will be:
 - 100% recycled and/or FSC certified (for paper)
 - plastic-free
 - sourced from responsible producers, where possible.
- From 2021 onwards, we will commit to making 25% of all conference sessions available via live stream. This will enable ECSA members to remain involved should they choose to reduce their travelling, without creating a disincentive for a majority

of our members to attend (which might undermine the feasibility of holding an event).

ECSA headquarters

Our head office and administrative support is kindly provided by the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin (MfN).⁴ There is therefore a limit to how far we can implement steps to improve sustainability here, such as using renewable energy providers, responsible procurement, etc. However, MfN is also adopting more stringent environmental measures, from which ECSA will benefit.

To reduce the environmental footprint of our office, we:

- recycle all paper and plastics
- reduce paper use by maintaining an online office, as far as possible
- print all essential documents on recycled paper
- share desks to reduce the office space required.

Notes

This is a living document that will be reviewed and updated by ECSA and its members every 12 months. These are guidelines for ECSA about how to contribute to reducing ECSA's environmental footprint; they are not a policy that will be enforced.

⁴ Two staff members work remotely.