

# RUMBA

## FDFA environmental report 2024

1 October 2024



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA  
**Directorate for Resources DR**



# Management summary

## Reduction targets for 2020–23 RUMBA period partially achieved

The FDFA set itself the goal of reducing its environmental impact points per full-time equivalent (EIP per FTE) and total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 9% respectively between 2020 and 2023. During this period, the EIP per FTE decreased by 8% compared to the base year 2020, narrowly missing the 9% reduction target. GHG emissions went down by 11% however, meaning that the target here was fully achieved.

## The three main categories: air travel, heating and paper

The FDFA's GHG emissions amounted to 9,137 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent in 2023, mainly relating to air travel (94%). The next largest sources of emissions were heating (3%) and paper usage (2%). Regarding air travel, scheduled flights accounted for around 78% of GHG emissions; the remaining 22% can be attributed to Federal Council jets and helicopter flights. Concerning heating, natural gas was the largest energy source, accounting for around 63% of emissions in this category. In terms of paper usage, external print jobs accounted for 92% of the overall total.

## Long-term positive development thanks to a variety of measures

When analysed from a long-term perspective, the FDFA's GHG emissions show a clear downward trend – an overall reduction of 5% since 2006. The FDFA has implemented a wide range of measures in these and other environment-related areas since 2006.

## Outlook for 2024–27 targets

For the 2024–27 RUMBA period, the FDFA has set itself the goal of reducing its total GHG emissions by 21% by 2027 compared to 2020. It is thereby maintaining the target set for the 2020–23 period and continuing to aim for an average annual reduction in GHG emissions of 3%, contributing to the achievement of the overarching targets for all administrative units involved in RUMBA.

## Implementing the air travel action plan

The air travel action plan, adopted for the entire Federal Administration in 2019, has been implemented consistently at the FDFA. Although emissions from air travel were almost 13% lower in 2023 than in 2019, they were still higher than in 2020–22 when COVID-19-related travel restrictions were in place. Nevertheless, the data available indicates that the assessment of the plan's implementation and effectiveness should be positive.

In view of the volume of air travel-related GHG emissions in 2023, from 1 September 2024 the FDFA will apply the 'economy only' measure to meet the Federal Council's target of reducing emissions from air travel by 30% by 2030 compared with 2019. This means that all business trip-related air travel by FDFA staff will only be in economy class.

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# FDFA key figures 2024

## Target achievement for the 2020–2023



### Greenhouse gas emissions

2023: 9 137 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, -11% since 2020



### Environmental impact

2023: 4.19 million EIP per FTE, -8% since 2020

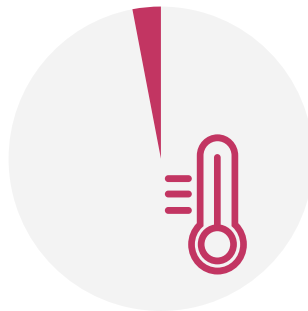
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## Main categories of greenhouse gas emissions



94%

Air travel



3%

Heating



2%

Paper

# 1 Introduction

This report presents the results of the environmental impact and greenhouse gas (GHG)<sup>1</sup> emissions of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA).

It includes a review of the 2020–23 RUMBA period as well as an outlook for the new 2024–27 target period.

The report also analyses long-term developments (from 2006 to 2023) and the measures implemented, as well as the Federal Council's air travel action plan.

This report does not include any data on Switzerland's external network with the exception of scheduled flights booked via the Swiss Government Travel Centre (SGTC).

<sup>1</sup> GHG emissions are calculated as the sum of all carbon dioxide and other GHG emissions [e.g. methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O)].

## 2 Review of 2020–23 target achievement

The FDFA set itself the following objectives for the 2020–23 target period:

- 9% reduction in total GHG emissions by 2023 compared to 2020,  
→ fully achieved with an 11% reduction.
- 9% reduction in overall environmental impact per full-time equivalent (EIP/FTE) between 2020 and 2023  
→ narrowly missed with the actual 8% reduction achieved.

### 2.1 GHGs – developments and results

The three main categories for GHG emissions are air travel (94%), heating (3%) and paper usage (2%). The FDFA's GHG emissions amounted to 9,137 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent in 2023, 7% more than the previous year. The main reason for this is air travel, which increased by 7%.

GHG emissions went down by 11% compared to 2020<sup>2</sup> however, mainly due to reductions in air travel (-974 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent), heating (-51 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent) and paper usage (-88 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent).

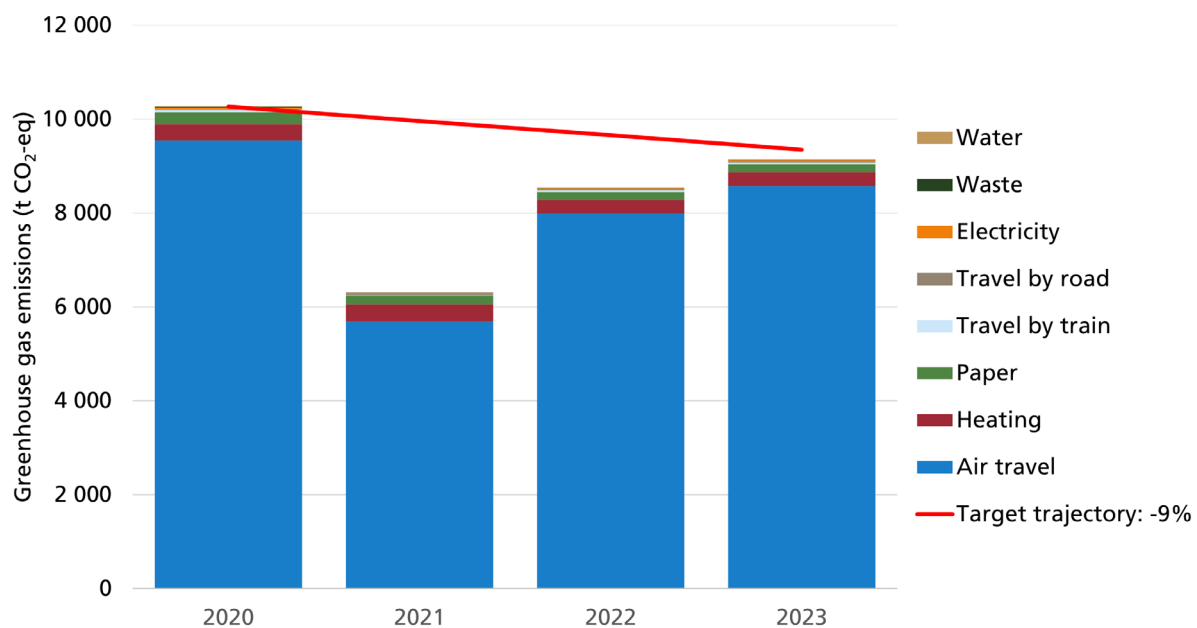


Figure 1: FDFA GHG emissions development since 2020

<sup>2</sup> In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had a strong impact on the emissions of the Federal Administration due to factors such as the obligation to work from home and a sharp decline in business trips. The data of the year (2020) used as a benchmark to calculate the progress made towards achieving these targets was, therefore, in accordance with the Federal Council's decision of 11 December 2020, extrapolated on the basis of 2019 records, taking the 2020 decrease in GHGs to be 3 percentage points and EIPs per FTE to be 2.67 percentage points. This is in line with the downwards trajectory required to achieve the RUMBA targets by 2023. The targets set out above are based on the adjusted reference year (2019 extrapolated) rather than the actual figures for 2020.

## 2.2 Environmental impact – developments and results

The three main categories for environmental impact are air travel (85%), heating (3%) and paper usage (8%). The FDFA's impact in 2023 amounted to 4.19 million EIP/FTE, a 12% increase on the previous year. The main reason for this was the increase in EIP/FTE<sup>3</sup> for air travel, which rose by 12%.

Compared with the 2020 reference year, the environmental impact per full-time equivalent has been reduced by 8%.

The EIP/FTEs in all three main categories decreased compared to 2020:

- The largest reduction of 32% was made in paper usage.
- In terms of heating, the EIP/FTE fell by 11%.
- For air travel there was only a 4% reduction. As this area is responsible for 85% of the FDFA's EIP/FTE however, this comparatively lower reduction still had a significant impact.

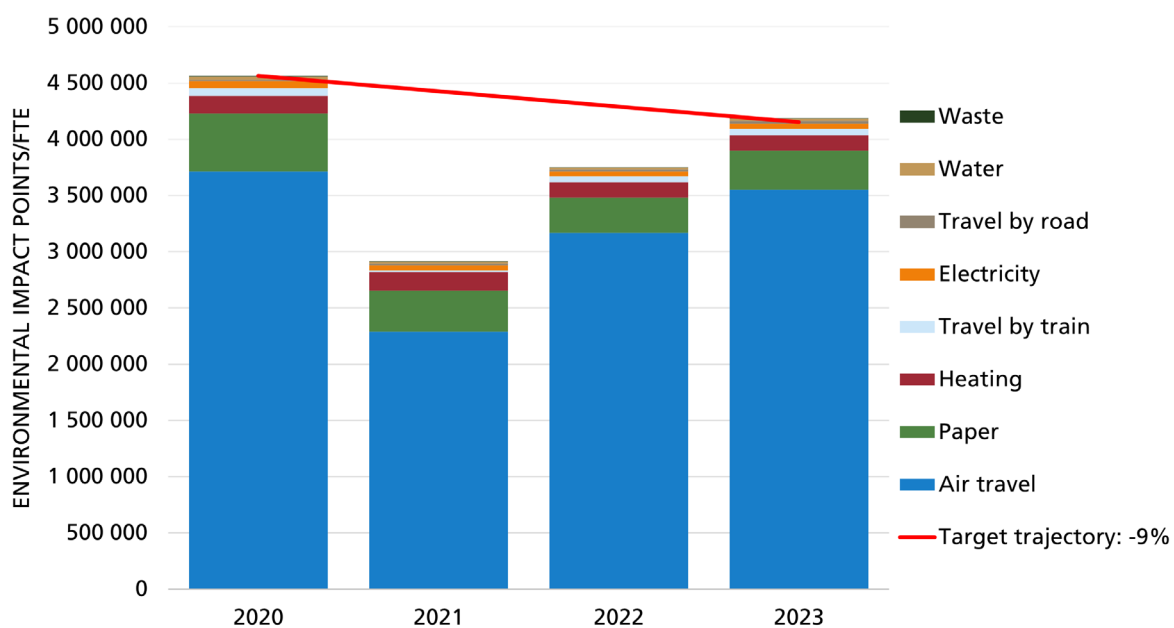


Figure 2: FDFA environmental impact development since 2020

<sup>3</sup> Environmental impact is determined using the ecological scarcity method. This method takes into account a broad spectrum of environmental impacts including soil, water and air emissions and traffic-caused noise emissions, factoring them all into one key indicator – the environmental impact point (EIP) – through full aggregation. Unlike GHG emissions, EIPs also take into account such aspects as changes in land use, which is why paper, for example, accounts for a greater share in the overall EIP balance compared to the GHG emissions balance.

## 2.3 GHGs – main categories

The following section covers the three main categories of FDFA emissions.

### 2.3.1 Air travel

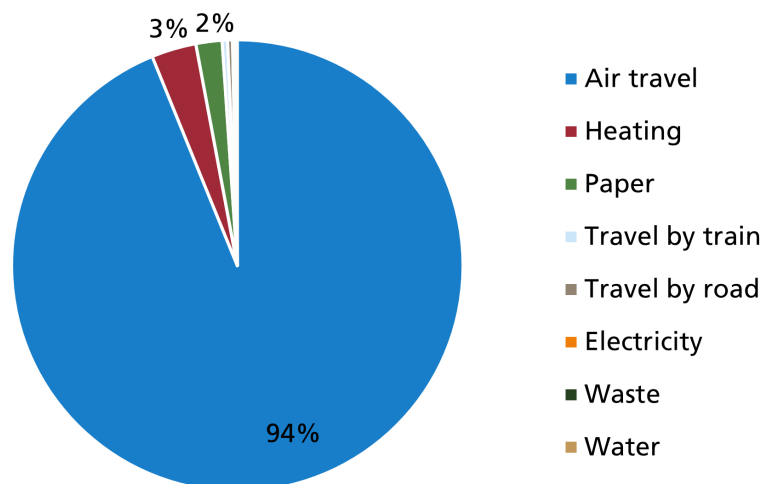


Air travel remained the largest source of GHG emissions at the FDFA, accounting for 94%<sup>4</sup> of the total and 8,575 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. Of this, 22% can be attributed to business trips on Federal Council jets and helicopters; the remaining 78% was due to scheduled flights, 75% of which (total kilometres flown and emissions) were caused by long-haul flights.

Compared to 2020, flight-related GHG emissions decreased by 10% overall. Of this, emissions from Federal Council jets and helicopters went up around 4% while emissions due to scheduled flights decreased by 14%.

In terms of scheduled flights, the highest GHG emissions were caused by long-haul flights in economy class at 2,527 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent followed by long-haul flights in business class at 2,471 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. While the GHG emissions of long-haul business class flights account for 37% of the emissions of all scheduled flights, they represent only 23% of the total distance travelled.

The opposite is true for long-haul flights in economy class. While these flights caused 38% of the GHG emissions of all scheduled flights, their mileage reached 52% of the total distance flown. This difference is due to the fact that business class flights generate much higher emissions than economy class flights. More details can be found in the air travel action plan under section 4.3.



**Figure 3:** FDFA GHG emissions in 2023

<sup>4</sup> This includes travel on Federal Council jets and helicopters as well as scheduled flights booked by the SGTC for staff at FDFA head office and in the external network.



### 2.3.2 Heating



Heating had a 3% share in 2023, making it the second largest source of emissions at 293 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. Of this amount, around 63% of the emissions can be attributed to natural gas (0.9 GWh) and 37% to district heating (1.2 GWh).

GHG emissions from heating show a decrease of almost 15% compared to 2020, with emissions from district heating falling by 14% and natural gas-related emissions by 15%. The decrease is partly due to warmer winters but also thanks to the efforts of energy-saving initiatives (e.g. lowering the room temperature to 20°C in winter).

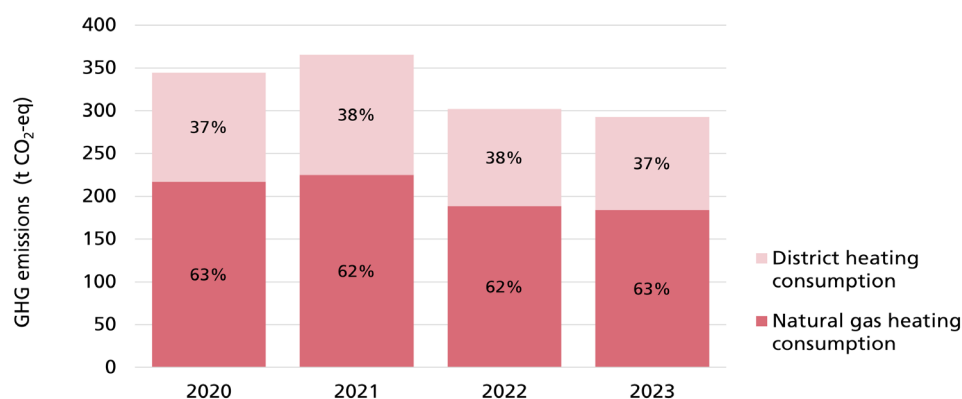


Figure 4: FDFA heating-related GHG emissions development since 2020

### 2.3.3 Paper



Paper usage in 2023 created 171 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, making it the third largest source of emissions. Around 92% of the paper-related GHG emissions were attributable to external print jobs. Printing paper and envelopes accounted for 6% of the emissions; tissue paper and paper towels for 2%.

GHG emissions attributable to paper usage went down by 34% compared to 2020 however, mainly because of a 26% reduction in external print jobs. Emissions from printing paper and envelopes fell by 63% and those from tissue paper and paper towels by 81%.

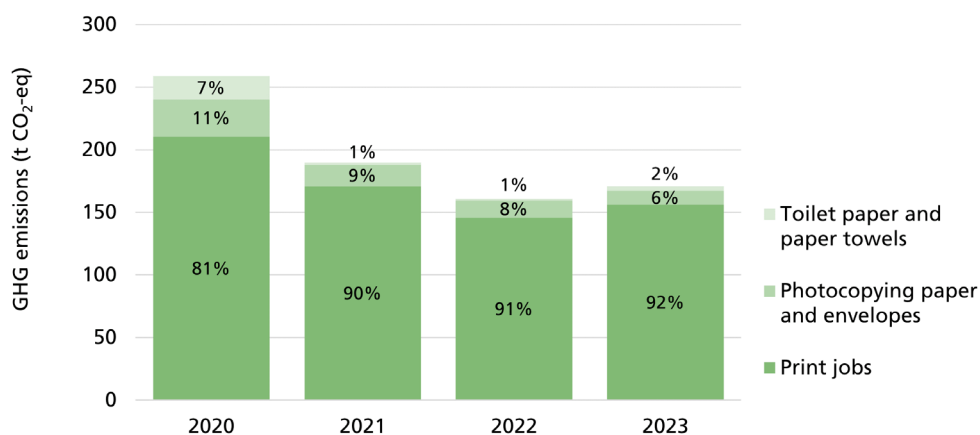


Figure 5: FDFA paper-related GHG emissions development since 2020

### 3 Outlook for 2024–27 targets

For the 2024–27 period, the Federal Council has adopted the following overarching objectives for all administrative units involved in RUMBA:

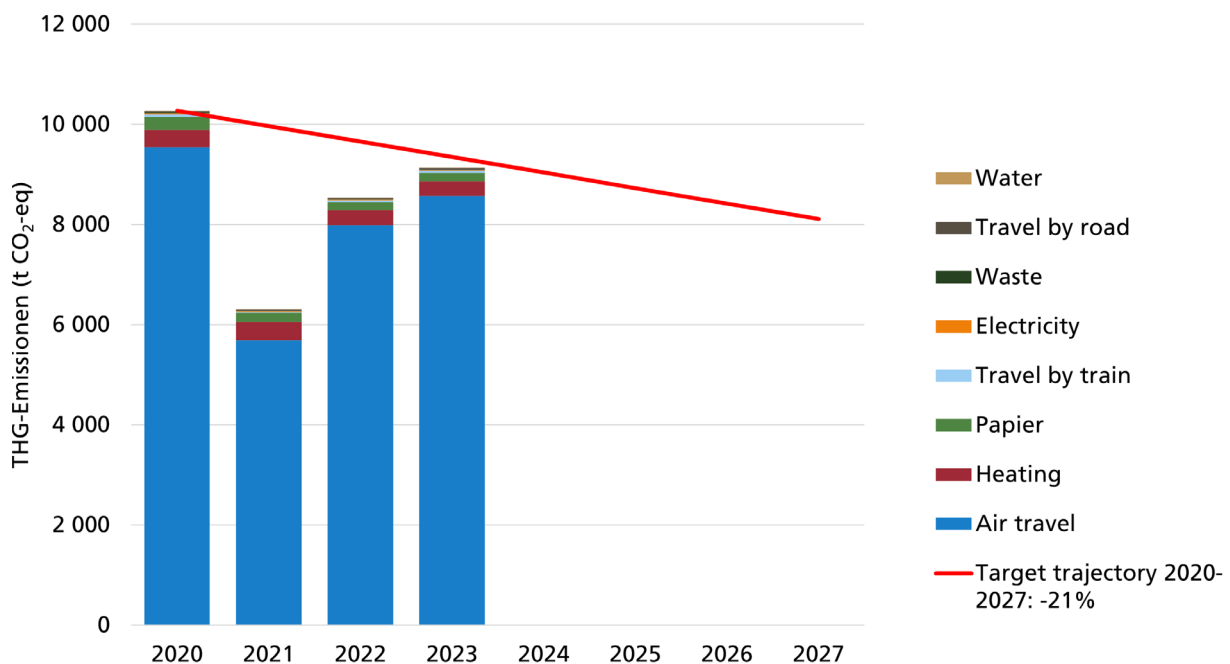
- 24% reduction in total GHG emissions by 2027; remaining GHG emissions fully offset via international certificates
- 21% reduction in overall environmental impact per full-time equivalent (EIP/FTE) between 2020 and 2027

For the 2024–27 RUMBA period, the FDFA has set itself the following goals:

- 21% reduction in total GHG emissions by 2027 compared to 2020

It is thereby maintaining the target set for the 2020–23 period and continuing to aim for an average annual reduction in GHG emissions of 3% as set out in the Federal Council's air travel action plan.

These targets have been harmonised with those of the Federal Administration's climate package (target -50% 2006–30), the Federal Council's air travel action plan (target -30% 2019–30) and the Paris Agreement<sup>5</sup>. Each department must contribute to meeting the Federal Administration-wide targets.



**Figure 6:** FDFA targets between 2020 and 2027

<sup>5</sup> [The Paris Agreement \(bafu.admin.ch\)](https://www.bafu.admin.ch)

## 4 Long-term trends

### 4.1 GHG emissions since 2006

Between 2006 and 2023, the FDFA reduced its emissions by 5% – an absolute reduction of 504 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent.

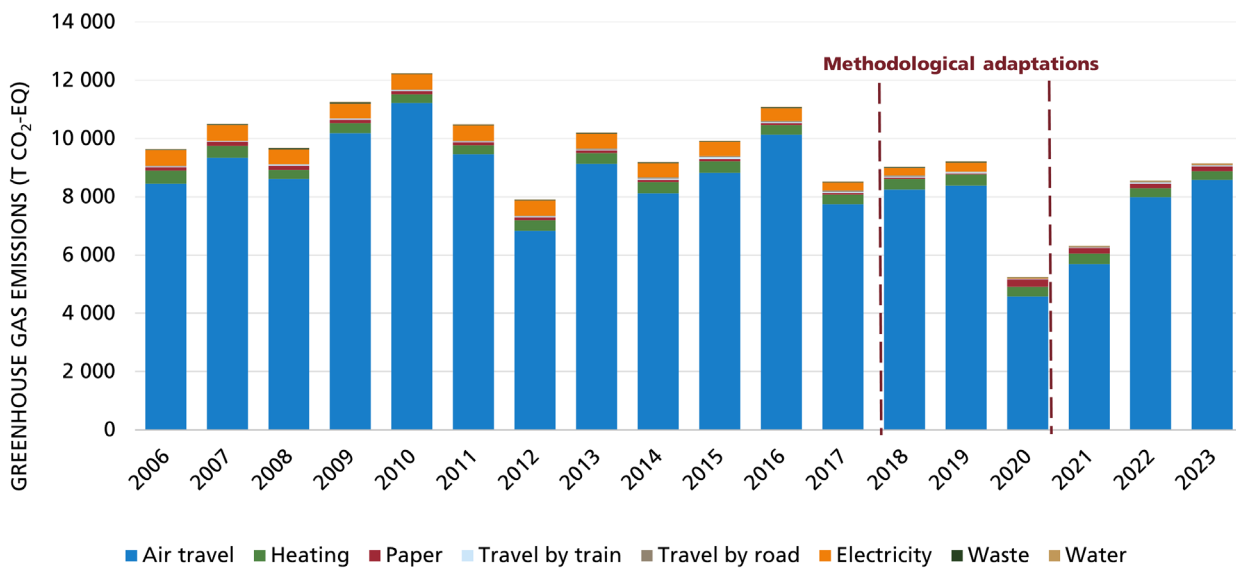


Figure 7: FDFA GHG emissions development since 2006<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The pronounced decline from 2019 to 2020 was primarily due to COVID-19; since then, emissions have been climbing back up to the level they were at before the pandemic. However, the calculation of environmental impact from 2020 no longer takes into account Switzerland's electricity mix; only the purchase of renewable electricity (mainly hydropower) is factored in. Additional methodological adjustments made in 2017 and 2020, such as the inclusion of flights on Federal Council jets and helicopters and paper usage from external printing orders, have led to differences compared to the previous RUMBA periods, which is why the figures are not comparable on a 1:1 basis.

## 4.2 Key measures to reduce GHG emissions

The downwards trend depicted in figure 7 is rooted in the FDFA's efforts to reduce its GHG emissions. These efforts have included various measures taken by the department since 2006. This section highlights the measures most relevant at this time, i.e. those with the greatest impact in the three main categories. A distinction is made here as to whether the measure has already been implemented (✔), is recurrent (🔄) or planned (⌚).


### 4.2.1 Air travel

Air travel is the largest emissions category. As such, measures in this area are of great importance to the FDFA.

Measures	Description
 <b>Annual reduction target</b>	Since 2020, the FDFA has been aiming for an average annual reduction in its carbon footprint generated by flights booked via the SGTC by 3% (base year: 2019).
 <b>Monitoring</b>	The FDFA monitors flight data regularly.
 <b>Economy only</b>	As a rule, staff working for the SDC (1.2022), Consular Directorate (6.2023) and Directorate for Resources (1.2024) travel economy only.
 <b>Economy only throughout FDFA</b>	As of 1 September 2024, all FDFA staff will in principle only fly economy.



### 4.2.2 Heating

Heating is the FDFA's second largest emissions category.

Measures	Description
 <b>Room temperature adjustment</b>	Daytime room temperature fixed at 20°C.

### 4.2.3 Paper

Paper usage is the third largest in terms of FDFA emissions.

Measures	Description
 <b>Digital first</b>	For certain internal publications, only a few copies are printed out. The FDFA gives priority to digital format.
 <b>Secure printing rolled out</b>	Secure printing was rolled out at all FDFA premises in Switzerland in 2021.

#### FDFA Sustainability Platform

Awareness-raising on sustainability issues for FDFA staff is carried out regularly, particularly via the FDFA Sustainability Platform launched in December 2022. The platform, which is being developed on an ongoing basis, is a space for staff at head office and in the external network to share experiences and information on the subject, as well as providing tools that promote the economic use of resources in line with the 2020–23 Foreign Policy Strategy and the 2030 Agenda.

[Here](#) you will find the key sustainability milestones of the FDFA. This page will be updated periodically.



Or scan it

### 4.3 Air travel action plan

One of the first elements of the climate package's implementation was the Federal Council's adoption of the air travel action plan in December 2019. This plan sets the goal of the Federal Administration (excluding the DDPS) to reduce its air travel-related GHG emissions by 30% between 2019 and 2030.

The pronounced decline from 2019 to 2020 was primarily due to COVID-19; since then, emissions have been climbing back up to the level they were at before the pandemic.

The FDFA's flight-related GHG emissions will still be lower than the 2023 target, but only by 2 percentage points. Because of this, the FDFA will probably have to take targeted measures from 2024 to ensure that it continues to achieve the Federal Council's target.

In 2023, GHG emissions from air travel at the FDFA amounted to 8,575 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, representing a decrease of 13% compared to 2019.

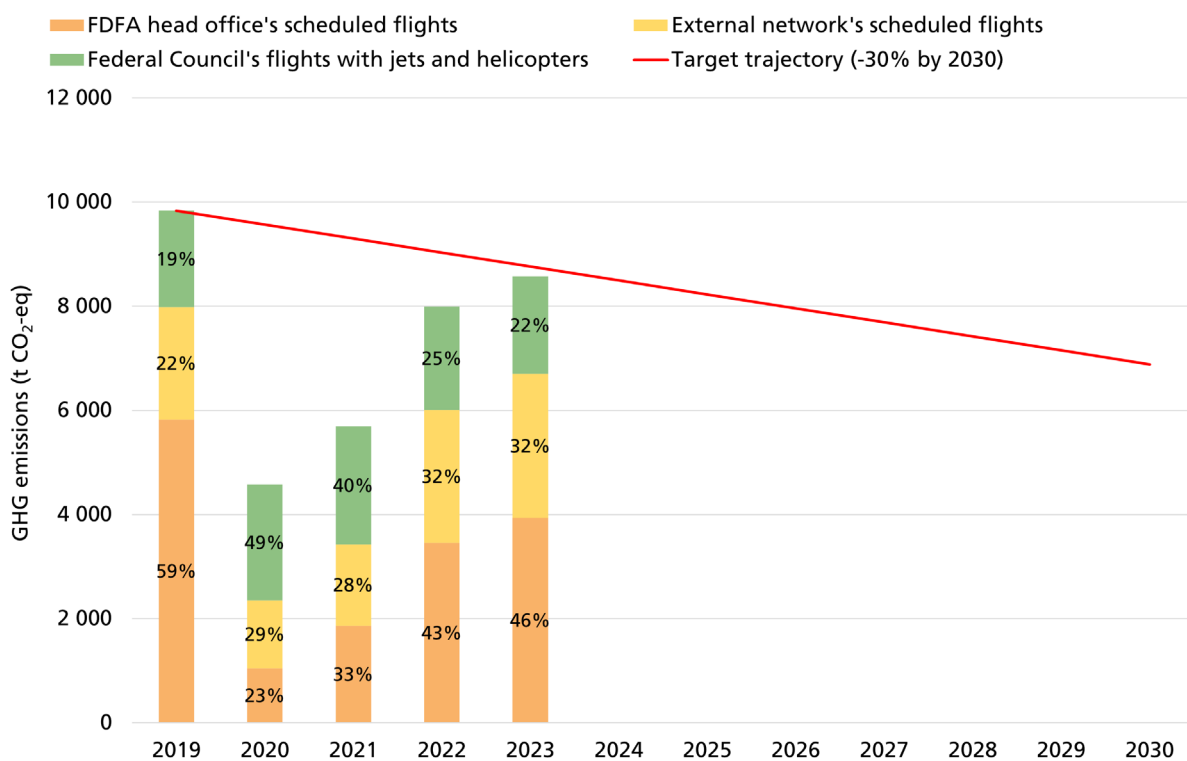


Figure 8: FDFA air travel-related GHG emissions development since 2019

This section analyses the Federal Council's air travel action plan measures and the current status of implementation in more detail.

#### 4.3.1 Smaller delegations



The FDFA has been consistently implementing the measure on reducing the size of delegations to international conferences. In 2023, the average delegation size at the FDFA was 1.19 persons per delegation (2022: 1.23, 2021: 1.33). Of the 2,834 delegations in 2023, 362 (13%) comprised more than one person.

#### 4.3.2 Phone and videoconferencing



With the COVID-19 pandemic and consequent demand for teleworking including phone and video conferences, the use of phone and videoconferencing has risen sharply. In 2019, the Federal Administration saw between 6,000 and 8,000 phone and video conferences each month. By 2023, this figure had already reached 75,000 to 110,000. These numbers have been trending upwards from year to year. There are no individual figures for the FDFA because of the current data situation.

#### 4.3.3 Train not plane



The SGTC and FOPER have compiled<sup>7</sup> a list of destinations for which staff on business trips must take the train. FDFA staff follow these guidelines and only use the train to reach these locations. A total of 640,370km were travelled abroad by train in 2023, an increase of 22% compared to 2022 (525,989km). The increase amounts to 148% (257,805 km) compared to 2021, clearly showing that FDFA staff are complying with the guidelines. For staff at the FDFA's Directorate of International Law (DIL), flights may only be taken for journeys lasting more than 12 hours by train.

#### 4.3.4 Economy not business



In keeping with the rules, none of the FDFA's short- or medium-haul flights were booked in business class. The share of long-haul flights in business class was 29%. These figures show that the FDFA is complying with the provisions of the Federal Council's air travel action plan.

Given that the scope for reducing GHG emissions through these federal measures has been exhausted, further reductions can only be achieved through voluntary measures. In 2023, two FDFA directorates started to implement just such a measure by allowing only economy-class flights regardless of duration. The 'economy only' measure will be extended to the entire FDFA from 1 September 2024.

<sup>7</sup> [Train not plane for business trips \(de, fr, it\)](#)

# Illustration directory

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**Figure 6:** FDFA targets between 2020 and 2027 ..... 10

**Figure 7:** FDFA GHG emissions development since 2006 ..... 11

**Figure 8:** FDFA air travel-related GHG emissions development since 2019 ..... 13

# List of abbreviations

<b>CO<sub>2</sub></b>	Carbon dioxide
<b>EIP</b>	Environmental impact point
<b>FTE</b>	Full-time equivalent
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse gas
<b>km</b>	Kilometre
<b>RUMBA</b>	Federal Administration's resource and environment management system
<b>SGTC</b>	Swiss Government Travel Center



## Imprint

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