



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release
07 February 2022

Airport climate action going from strength to strength despite pandemic hit

ACI launches the Airport Carbon Accreditation Annual Report 2019-2021 revealing robust performance in all world regions

07 February 2022 - ACI (Airports Council International) has today published the brand new *Airport Carbon Accreditation Annual Report*, covering the period May 2019 to May 2021¹. The publication marks a welcome resumption of yearly reports showcasing the results and developments in the global carbon standard for airports, *Airport Carbon Accreditation*, following the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Build Back Better in action

The Report points to healthy participation growth across all world regions in Years 11 (May 2019 to May 2020) and 12 (May 2020 to May 2021) of the programme, which have been merged into one single reporting period to help airports accommodate the challenging pandemic context. By the end of the reporting period, **304** airports were accredited globally, up from 274 airports in Year 10, illustrating the extent of the airport industry's readiness to decarbonise in the toughest of conditions. Their collective efforts yielded tangible results, with airports accredited in Years 11 and 12 bringing about a reduction of 347,718 tonnes of CO₂ (-5.5%) within the emissions under direct control of airport operators (i.e. Scope 1 and 2 as per GHG Protocol).

Looking beyond the specific timeline of the Report, taking the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 up to the present day, **93 airports** have become accredited for the first time and another **61** have progressed to a higher level of the programme². This upward trend is tangible evidence of airports actively investing to Build Back Better in spite of being severely hit by the ongoing pandemic.

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Airport Carbon Accreditation, having completed its 12th year, is not only growing but also evolving. At the height of the pandemic, in July 2020, the programme passed the milestone of 300 accredited airports worldwide. When it comes to programme developments, in November 2020, *Airport Carbon Accreditation* introduced the first major, structural change to the programme since its inception back in 2009. Two new accreditation levels – Level 4 Transformation and Level 4+ Transition – were launched, bringing the programme in line with the latest scientific and policy developments.

Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) commented: *“Despite the systemic disruption wreaked on the airport industry by the ongoing pandemic, the Airport Carbon Accreditation programme kept on growing and making steps to strengthen its framework with the addition of new levels, aligning its ambition with global climate goals. Industry-led initiatives, such as ACI’s Airport Carbon Accreditation, are crucial to support the realisation of the Paris Agreement.”*

Toulouse Declaration sets the scene for accelerated decarbonisation

The Report’s launch came on the heels of significant developments in the European region. On Friday, 4 February, the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union convened their aviation summit in and from Toulouse, France to discuss the future of European aviation and in particular its path to decarbonisation. The Summit marked the adoption of a landmark *Declaration on future sustainability and decarbonisation of aviation*, supporting European aviation’s goal to reach net zero CO₂ emissions by 2050. This Declaration was formally endorsed by ACI EUROPE as well as by **250** European airports³.

Since *Airport Carbon Accreditation’s* launch in 2009, the continent’s airports have been worldwide and industrywide pioneers of climate action. From a tight group of 17 airports joining the programme in its first year, today the number of accredited airports in Europe is nearing the 200 milestone. Their commitment can also be measured by their continued pursuit of higher levels of accreditation. Notably for the location of Friday’s Aviation Summit, Toulouse-Blagnac Airport is one of the latest airports to achieve Level 3+ Neutrality⁴, followed

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closely by Luxembourg Airport.

Olivier Jankovec, Director General of ACI EUROPE, said: *"Airports have long been at the forefront of climate action within the aviation industry, delivering tangible emissions reductions year by year. At this pivotal time for our industry, ravaged by the unprecedented devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic, and galvanised in the face of the impending Climate Emergency, I am extremely proud to see European airports upping the ante on their engagement in climate action within Airport Carbon Accreditation. Our region now counts close to 200 accredited airports – an excellent achievement and an example to follow in terms of building the collective momentum for carbon reduction. In addition, their overwhelming endorsement of the Toulouse Declaration is another case in point of their undiminished commitment to decarbonisation. Now more than ever, we need all stakeholders to understand what is at stake and help our industry transform itself in line with its ambitious goals."*

¹ Download the *Airport Carbon Accreditation* Annual Report [here](#)

² View the latest participation results on the programme website: www.airportco2.org

³ Access the list of European airports endorsing the Toulouse Declaration on the dedicated webpage: <https://www.aci-europe.org/toulouse-declaration>

⁴ Toulouse-Blagnac Airport is carbon neutral – [link](#)

ENDS.

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

Airport Carbon Accreditation is the only institutionally-endorsed, global carbon management certification programme for airports. It independently assesses and recognises the efforts of airports to manage and reduce their carbon emissions through 6 levels of certification: 'Mapping', 'Reduction', 'Optimisation', 'Neutrality', 'Transformation' and 'Transition'.

Through its 6 levels of certification, *Airport Carbon Accreditation* acknowledges that airports are at different stages in their journey towards comprehensive carbon management. It is a programme for airports of all sizes, extending beyond hubs and regional airports with scheduled passenger traffic, to include general aviation and freight-focused airports.

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For more information, contact:

Agata Lyznik, Communications Manager ACI EUROPE

tel: +32 2 552 09 89

Email: agata.lyznik@aci-europe.org

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