



**GBTA** Global Business  
Travel Association

Many Voices. One Purpose.

## Building a Greener Future for Business Travel

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### GBTA Sustainability Summit 2023 Highlights

July 2023

On 13 June 2023, GBTA hosted its second global Sustainability Summit in Washington, DC. **Two hundred corporate travel buyers, suppliers, policy leaders, climate experts, and business travel industry executives joined** in a day focused on managing the environmental impact of business travel.

The event brought together subject matter experts to break down high-level topics, such as **how our industry can lead the green transition, the role of booking platforms to display green options, and financing the transition** – all with practical application via buy-side case studies.

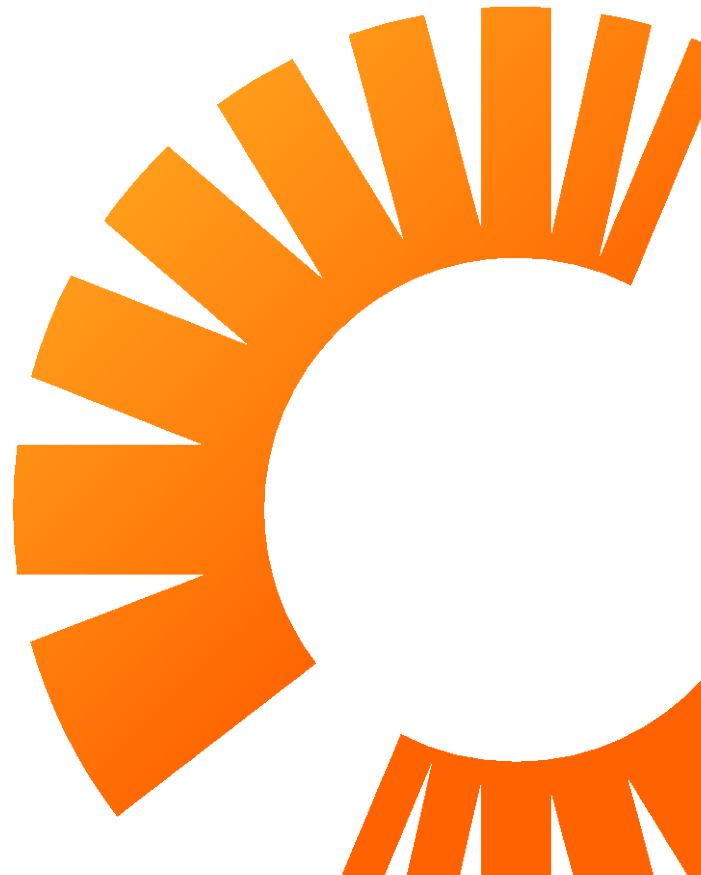
It was followed by GBTA's annual Legislative Summit, giving participants the unique opportunity to **bring their voices in front of U.S. Congress for policies that incentivize a greener travel landscape.**

**This second Summit built upon GBTA's inaugural event in Brussels in November 2022, designed to leverage the business travel industry's thought leadership for the needs of our collective future.**



**GBTA Sustainability**

A GBTA Foundation Program



# Essential Insights from the Event



## Industry Leadership and Collaboration

GBTA CEO Suzanne Neufang welcomed the group to the nation's capital, noting that the Summit was all about **business travel as a driving force for good**: for economies, for governments, and for people. This diverse group gathered, she pointed out, to engage the many voices of global business travel to build our collective future.

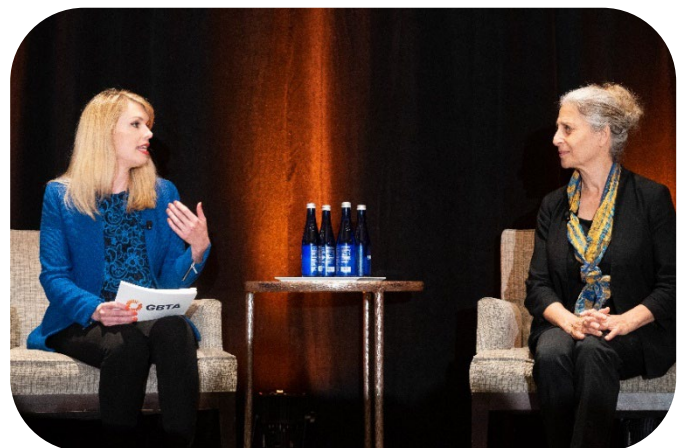
There is universal agreement that in building sustainable travel programs, it can't be about "us vs. them" -- buyers vs. suppliers. **We must think and work collectively and challenge the stubborn notion that sustainability programs are too difficult to take on.**

A decade ago, the corporate supply chain was all about cost, goods, and services. Today it has evolved to the point where **sustainability itself is part of the supply chain**. As Sam Israelit, Chief Sustainability Officer of Bain & Company warned, a company that doesn't talk openly about its impact on the world is going to lose competitively.

## Mounting Urgency: Decarbonizing Transport

For so many of us, business travel is imperative to our success – solidifying relationships with clients, strengthening value chains, and engendering innovative solutions. **The need to transform HOW we travel is top of mind, and simply increasing efficiencies in existing systems is not sufficient.** Two major areas of concern in the US are 1) how to make Sustainable Aviation Fuel a reality and 2) how to scale up rail infrastructure to allow for more multimodality.

**The US is making bolder commitments in green transport than ever before.** The US Inflation Reduction Act includes incentives for aviation sustainability, especially SAF, and the first facility that can produce 10 million gallons of SAF annually is now under construction. As for rail, the Biden Administration has made the biggest investment since the establishment of Amtrak -- \$66 billion, which is a significant indicator that we're moving in the direction of the rest of the world in terms of viable high-speed rail options.



## Helping Travelers Make Better Decisions

Technology is advancing quickly. The time will soon be upon us when travelers are more commonly presented with sustainability information at the point of sale. **The question is whether we inform purchasers, “nudge” them with incentives, or more firmly enforce a sustainability decision with hard and fast requirements.** AI can also be an enabler of this systems-change, by analyzing booking patterns and suggesting alternative modes of transport.

The consensus is that a **standardized methodology of measurement will allow purchasers to compare sustainable travel options more intelligently** and systematically as they book, but it’s still early days.

Whatever travel managers decide to implement, it is important that they aim for consistency of data, maintain an **active feedback loop with their travelers, and work with their TMCs and booking technologies to signal for better options.**

## Financing the Transition

The fact that Sustainable Aviation Fuel is projected to be from two to ten times the cost of conventional jet fuel is evidence that **there’s a significant cost to going green.** Government, nonprofit, or philanthropic support of sustainability, it’s agreed, won’t put a serious dent in the trillions of dollars needed – the industry itself will need to put dollars behind Net Zero commitments.

As an example, Beth Sullivan of Bank of America announced they will spend up to \$1.5 trillion on sustainability over the long-term and are currently heavily investing in SAF – up to \$1 billion over the next few years. The organization intends to be using a minimum 20% SAF by 2030 in its own aircraft. **But it’s not just about SAF, as other new technologies, compensation schemes, and energy-efficient investments all cost money.**

The rise of carbon budgets and taxation offer one solution. **Carbon pricing tactics signal that there is an environmental “cost” to traveling,** while also generating revenue that can be used to fund future-forward investments.

*“Post-pandemic in the US, politics are divided. Yet there is broad, bipartisan interest in the future of travel.*

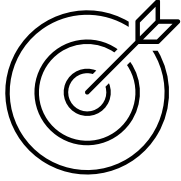
*Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) is and should be a bipartisan issue.*

*Ultimately, it’s up to all of us – each one of us is the ‘trim tab’ on this airplane, and we determine the direction.”*

Carol “Annie” Petsonk,  
Assistant Secretary for  
Aviation and International  
Affairs, *US Department of  
Transportation*



## Key Takeaways



### FIRMLY ENTRENCHED

Sustainability has truly begun to matter – from enlightened consumers to corporate leaders who know they need to make decisions that favor the planet. Sustainability itself is now part of the supply chain.

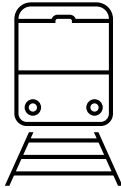
### IT'S A JOURNEY

Yes, decarbonization is a priority, but it won't happen overnight. The green transition is a long-term proposition that will take years and cost trillions. To be successful, sustainability must be weighed together with priorities like cost and risk.



### MULTI-MODALITY

With \$66 billion earmarked for rail – the largest commitment since the establishment of Amtrak – high speed rail is on track to becoming a bona fide business travel option for large parts of the US.



### SCALE UP SAF

To many, perfecting, promoting, and embracing Sustainable Aviation Fuel is the most immediate and pragmatic step toward low-carbon aviation. The job is figuring out how to make SAF a widely adopted reality in the aviation sector as quickly, safely, and cost-effectively as possible.

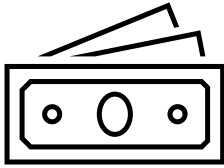


## Walking the talk at GBTA

GBTA believes in the importance of taking responsibility for our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. We are on a journey to minimize the impact of our events as much as possible and offset the remaining, unavoidable emissions.

At this event, we served a fully plant-based lunch and reception snacks. GBTA also partnered with [Destination DC](#) and the Westin to create a plan for better measurement and reduction of food waste. We also partnered with Southpole to build an [offsetting marketplace](#) for attendees and to offset unavoidable emissions related to the event.

## SHOW ME THE MONEY



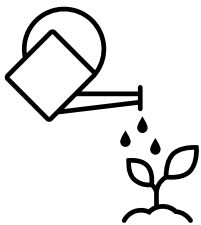
In years past, changing the mindset and attitudes of the business travel industry around embracing sustainability was a challenge. That challenge has been somewhat surmounted and replaced by a more concrete hurdle: simply finding the budget to effect the green transition.

## SUSTAINABILITY IS A TEAM SPORT

There is some confusion, fragmentation, and differing opinions on what it will take to achieve Net Zero. But there's also much agreement, as well as a widespread appetite for change. Only by working collaboratively, in both public and private spheres, will we unpack the challenges and be able to outline and enact solutions that work for all stakeholders.



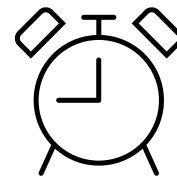
## DO MORE GOOD



The time has come not only to consider how to mitigate business travel's climate impact but how to leave our planet better than we found it. Investing in suppliers and projects that regenerate nature and community is just as important as bringing emissions to Net Zero.

## "SOMEDAY" IS NOW

The urgency for progress is real. Although the daunting nature of the green transition can sometimes lead to paralysis, focusing on the clear set of pathways to get us to 2050 is what counts. As an industry, we need to focus on what we can do today to get us closer to our 2050 goals.



## Scalable Best Practices

Throughout the day, practitioners from three buy-side companies shared their tips for sustainable travel management based on their own journeys. Here are their best practice recommendations:

### **TIP #1: Make sustainability “business as usual” for travel management.**

UBS identified four key sustainability focus areas for business travel: 1) track and report, 2) procure green, 3) reduce emissions, and 4) remove emissions. This framework helped them to accept that their travel habits have to change. They now travel less frequently but for longer durations – ensuring that all travel is purposeful. They have also integrated Responsible Supply Chain Management (RSCM) Standards for all vendor and supplier contracts, which includes assessing their partners and monitoring improvements, and inviting them to provide climate disclosures via the Climate Disclosure Project (CDP). All emissions data are collected via a “sustainability dashboard,” providing internal benchmarking for the entire business.

Salesforce’s sustainable travel efforts are part of its broader emissions reduction efforts, which focus on 6 core components: Emissions Reduction, Carbon Removal, Ecosystem Restoration, Education/Mobilization, Innovation, and Regulation & Policy. They took it a step further by being an early adopter of Science Based Targets (SBTs), committing to a 50% reduction in absolute emissions by 2030. A big part of this has been encouraging modal shifts – they’ve identified routes across the US where rail is a viable alternative, and these recommendations appear as pop-ups when employees book online. They’re driving home accountability for sustainability by tying ESG performance directly to executive pay and bonuses.

### **TIP #2: Envision sustainability as the “hub of the wheel” - arrange your business areas and stakeholders around its spokes.**

### **TIP #3: When incorporating sustainability upstream and downstream, transparency, clarity, and patience are key.**

Sustainability is a team sport. Accenture started by working with its finance team to include non-financial data in their accounting. This is a learning curve, as carbon accounting is new and not fully standardized. It’s challenging, but good practice is to attribute and allocate emissions to a particular client and project. This requires drilling down and measuring in a more granular way than you may be used to.



## Spotlight on...

### Carbon Offsets

The business travel field continues to navigate the complexities of carbon offsets and carbon removal, and the scale of the challenge is its main feature. **Both offsets and removal remain examples of tools that can be useful in the race to net zero.**

Because one-third of total emissions are land-use based – agriculture, deforestation, etc. – nature-based offsets remain a part of the solution. Large companies are investing in nature-based solutions like the restoration of wetlands and ecosystems. Technology-based solutions, such as direct air capture, are also emerging and will require investment to scale. Buyers' alliances offer the opportunity to be part of larger portfolios and maximize funds. **Companies should remember to always make sure projects are credible before contributing.**

### Regenerative Travel

What does regeneration mean in a business travel context? While sustainability is harm reduction, regeneration is improvement. **Regenerative travel means leaving a net positive impact on the destination to which you travel.**

Proponents of regenerative travel talk about improving a destination's sense of place and positively impacting an area's socioeconomic well-being or natural heritage. This can mean investing in projects that improve a business travel destination or in suppliers that are giving back. **It's important that business travel contributions aim to make lasting impacts, rather than one-offs.**

*“You need to be doing absolutely everything you can to reduce your own emissions first, then look into carbon removals and offsets. ‘Do your best, remove the rest,’ as the saying goes.”*

Jason Hochman, Co-Founder & Senior Director,  
*Direct Air Capture Coalition*



## What's next?

The business travel industry is uniquely positioned to drive positive change to the entire travel industry. [GBTA Foundation](#) will continue its work to build a greener future for business travel and empower corporate travel buyers and suppliers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other negative externalities through education, advocacy, and partnerships.

GBTA Foundation's 2023 priorities include:

- **HARMONIZATION:** This August, GBTA will be releasing its **Sustainable Procurement Criteria**, a consolidated bank of procurement questions aligned with international sustainability standards, to assess the sustainability efforts of suppliers in a consistent and harmonized manner.
- **CAPACITY-BUILDING:** Registration is open for GBTA's [Sustainable Travel Management Course](#), focusing on practical climate action to manage business travel emissions. It addresses challenges and opportunities for organizations implementing sustainable travel programs.
- **ADVOCACY:** Our advocacy priorities focus on pushing for radical collaboration across the business travel industry and with governments to push for less carbon-intensive fuels, including Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), and others. We are also advocating for the harmonization of emissions standards and methodologies.

## GBTA Convention – Dallas 2023

For more sustainability content, make sure to attend the Sustainability Track Sessions, including an interactive workshop, at [GBTA Convention in Dallas](#).





## LIST OF SPEAKERS

- [Agustin Silvani](#), SVP, Conservation Finance, **Conservation International**
- [Alexander D. Menotti](#), VP, Government Affairs, Policy, and Sustainability, **Lanzajet**
- [Andrea Giuricin](#), CEO, **TRA Consulting**
- [Andy Kunz](#), CEO & President, **US High-Speed Rail Association**
- [Angela Foster-Rice](#), General Counsel/SVP Policy & Market Innovation, **Everland LLC**
- [Brian Komar](#), VP, Sustainability Programs, **Salesforce\***
- [Annie Peterson](#), Assistant Secretary, **Department of Transportation**
- [Curt McKee](#), Principal Solutions Consultant, **SAP Concur**
- [Dan Rutherford](#), Principal Solutions Consultant, **International Council on Clean Transportation**
- [Daniella Foster](#), Senior Vice President, Sustainability, **Bayer**
- [Delphine Millot](#), SVP Sustainability & Advocacy, **GBTA**; Managing Director, **GBTA Foundation**
- [Elizabeth \(Beth\) Caligiuri Sullivan](#), SVP, Business Operations Executive, **Bank of America**
- [Elizabeth West](#), Editorial Director, **The BTN Group**
- [Jason Hochman](#), Co-Founder & Senior Director, **Direct Air Capture Coalition**
- [Jean Garris Hand](#), Vice President Global ESG, **Hilton\*\***
- [Joel Fisher](#), Vice President, Product, **Travelport\*\***
- [Kelsey Frenkiel](#), Senior Manager, Sustainability, **GBTA Foundation**
- [Kevin Welsh](#), Executive Director, Environment & Energy, **Federal Aviation Administration**
- [Lauren Riley](#), Chief Sustainability Officer & MD, Global Environmental Affairs, **United Airlines\*\***
- [Mark Cuschieri](#), Vice President, GBTA, Head of Global Travel Management, **UBS\*\***
- [Mike Nicholus](#), Global Environment Operations Director, **Accenture\***
- [Nancy N. Young](#), Chief Sustainability Officer, **Gevo**
- [Nora Lovell Marchant](#), VP of Global Sustainability, **American Express Global Business Travel\*\***
- [Ryan Panchadsaram](#), Technical Advisor to the Chairman, John Doerr, **Kleiner Perkins**
- [Sam Israelit](#), Chief Sustainability Officer, **Bain & Company**
- [Samantha Silverberg](#), Deputy Infrastructure Implementation Coordinator, **The White House**
- [Sean Newsum](#), Managing Director, Environmental Affairs, **Airlines for America**
- [Shelby Luzzi](#), Convention Sales Coordinator & Chair, Sustainability Task Force, **Destination DC**
- [Suzanne Neufang](#), CEO, **GBTA**
- [Tim Loonen](#), Head of Product & Partnerships, **Travalyst**
- [Wesley Espinosa](#), Interim Executive Director, **Center for Responsible Travel**

\* **GBTA Corporate Advisory Board** (CAB) company representatives

\*\* **GBTA Sustainability Leadership Council** (SLC) and liaison members

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