

The postal sector's carbon footprint – Key figures 2010

Environment and Sustainable Development Programme



UPU | UNIVERSAL
POSTAL
UNION

The fight against climate change – a challenge for the future of the postal sector



As international efforts to tackle climate change are stepped up, every business sector is playing its part in combatting this defining issue of our time.

The postal sector is no exception; it is committed to the fight. Although designated postal operators bear some of the responsibility for the problem, they can nonetheless be an integral part of its solution.

Taking an active part in this fight will help to position the postal sector as a responsible economic player that is aware of its environment and is committed to reducing the harmful impact of its activities. It will also help the sector to anticipate the growing number of new and more stringent regulations on economic activities, for example by gauging the impact of the possible inclusion of transportation in the Kyoto Protocol's emissions system. More than anything, it offers operators a means of maintaining business continuity, and even creating new levers for growth by meeting the ever-increasing needs of their customers who wish for a greener sector.

The UPU carbon inventory – an asset for designated operators

Recognizing the importance of this, the UPU, a specialized agency of the United Nations, has made a firm commitment to step up efforts to promote sustainable development, in particular through initiatives to fight climate change.

To further these efforts, the UPU has developed a specific programme – the Greenhouse Gas Global Overview and Mitigation Project (GGOM) – designed to measure the postal sector's impact on climate change and to encourage initiatives to reduce that impact, particularly through the exchange of sound environmental practices.

The first step in the process of reducing the sector's carbon footprint is to take stock of the polluting emissions associated with postal activities.

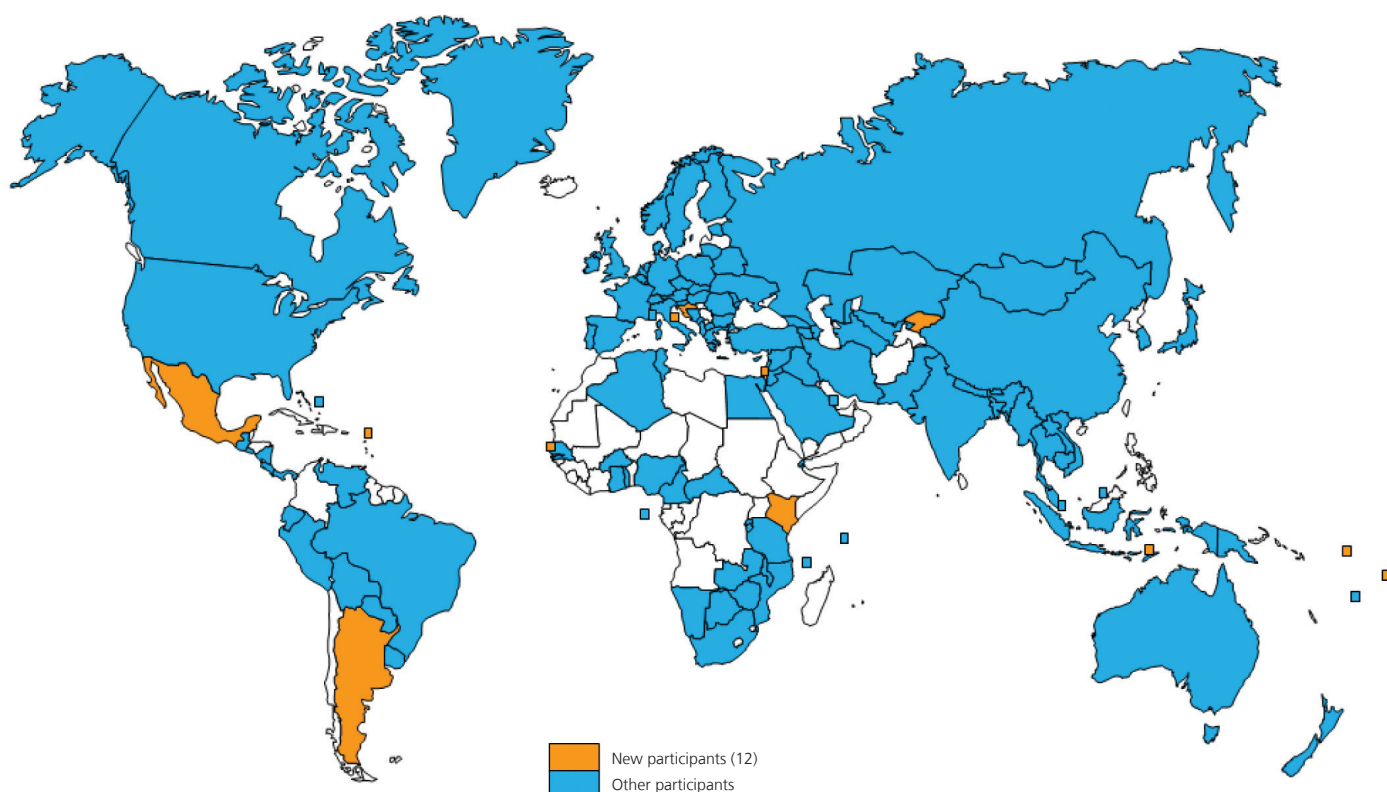
This brochure provides the key figures for the third inventory, which was carried out in 2010 thanks to the cooperation of the designated operators of 133 Union member countries. The UPU International Bureau performed the inventory calculations using a specific tool created by the organization, based on a methodology recognized internationally by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol and the Global Reporting Initiative and used by the United Nations Programme for the Environment (UNEP), among others. This new inventory takes account of emissions from vehicle fleets, postal buildings (electricity, fuel, refrigerant gases), air, sea and rail cargo, business travel and subcontractors' activities (transport and buildings).

Each designated operator has received the results concerning its individual 2010 emissions and may request a detailed report on those emissions from the International Bureau. In order to ensure continuous improvement, designated operators may use this data to set emissions reduction targets, communicate with their stakeholders and even inform customers of their efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of each item they send.

Your help in making this work possible is greatly appreciated. These efforts require the participation of us all, so that together we may build a responsible and inclusive postal sector looking resolutely towards the future!

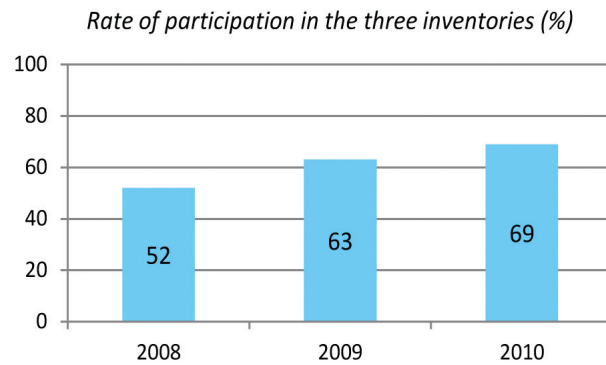
Edouard DAYAN
Director General of the UPU

Participating designated operators – 133 member countries



Albania	Costa Rica	Iraq	Nepal	Sweden
Algeria	Croatia	Ireland	Netherlands	Switzerland
Antigua and Barbuda	Cyprus	Israel	New Zealand	Syrian Arab Rep.
Argentina	Czech Rep.	Italy	Nicaragua	Tanzania (United Rep.)
Armenia	Denmark	Japan	Nigeria	Thailand
Australia	Dominica	Jordan	Norway	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Austria	Ecuador	Kazakhstan	Pakistan	Timor-Leste (Dem. Rep.)
Azerbaijan	Egypt	Kenya	Panama (Rep.)	Togo
Bahamas	El Salvador	Korea (Rep.)	Papua New Guinea	Trinidad and Tobago
Bahrain (Kingdom)	Eritrea	Kyrgyzstan	Paraguay	Tunisia
Bangladesh	Estonia	Lao People's Dem. Rep.	Peru	Turkey
Belarus	Fiji	Lebanon	Poland	Turkmenistan
Belgium	Finland	Liechtenstein	Portugal	Tuvalu
Bhutan	France	Lithuania	Qatar	Ukraine
Bolivia	Gambia	Luxembourg	Romania	United States of America
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Georgia	Malawi	Russian Federation	Uruguay
Botswana	Germany	Malaysia	Rwanda	Uzbekistan
Brazil	Ghana	Maldives	Samoa	Vanuatu
Brunei Darussalam	Great Britain	Malta	San Marino	Vatican
Bulgaria (Rep.)	Overseas Territories	Mauritius	Sao Tome and Principe	Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep.)
Burkina Faso	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)	Mexico	Saudi Arabia	Viet Nam
Burundi	Greece	Moldova	Senegal	Zambia
Cambodia	Guatemala	Monaco	Seychelles	Zimbabwe
Cameroon	Hungary	Mongolia	Singapore	
Canada	India	Montenegro	Slovakia	
Central African Rep.	Indonesia	Mozambique	Slovenia	
China (People's Rep.)	Iran (Islamic Rep.)	Myanmar	South Africa	
Comoros		Namibia	Spain	

Increased participation



The rate of participation increased for the third inventory, with 133 of 192 (69%) of member countries responding, an increase of 6 points over the 2009–2010 inventory and of 17 points over the first inventory in 2008–2009.

This steady increase can be explained in large part by countries' participation in regional sustainable development seminars organized by the UPU and its restricted unions.

Of the 12 new participants, 10 participated in sustainable development training and awareness-raising seminars in Bangkok, Thailand and San José, Costa Rica in 2010, and Yaoundé, Cameroon in 2011.

These seminars provide participating operators with an opportunity to benefit from the know-how of various experts and to share best practices at the international level. They are intended primarily for the directors general of Posts, building and vehicle fleet managers, and sustainable development correspondents responsible for relaying UPU action in the field. The UPU has a worldwide network of 160 such correspondents, who are frequently advised by International Bureau experts on how to help designated operators reduce the environmental impact of their activities



It is not too late for your designated operator to appoint its sustainable development correspondent. Please send contact details to the International Bureau (dcc.address.list@upu.int).

The next seminars will be held in Viet Nam from 25 to 28 June 2012 and in Panama (Rep.) in November 2012.

Geographical distribution of the 133 participating countries

The distribution of participants, especially new ones, is very encouraging. Most new participants are from regions which were previously under-represented – Southern Asia and Oceania (+4) and the Americas (+3). Their participation provided for a better balance of regions among respondents.

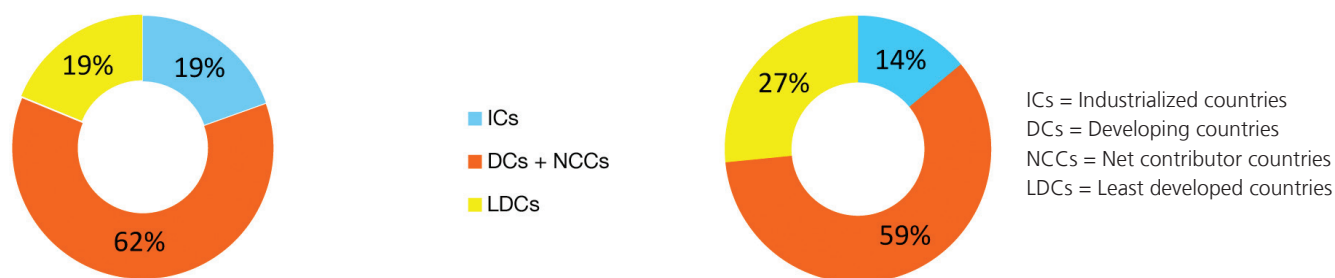


By comparing the distribution of the 133 participating countries (left) against the total number of 192 member countries (right), however, it is clear that the Africa and Americas regions remain under-represented. The International Bureau will work to reduce this gap in the coming years, in particular through the upcoming seminars on sustainable development.

In contrast, the Eastern Europe, Northern Asia and, above all, Western Europe regions are slightly if not significantly over-represented. This is due in particular to the existing cooperation between the UPU and PostEurop, the UPU's restricted union for this region, which has allowed for data exchanges and calculations to be made in direct consultation with the countries and designated operators concerned. Such cooperation is needed to ensure the greatest possible participation, and will be extended in future inventories.

Breakdown of participants by level of development

The new participants include developing (+7) and least developed countries (+4) which, for the latter category, represents an increase of nearly 20% compared to the second inventory.



Increasingly accurate calculations

The calculations for the 133 participating countries were used to calculate an estimate for the designated operators of all 192 UPU member countries. This estimate is based on a comparison of emissions according to several variables inherent to each country, namely:

- Area
- Population
- Population density
- Postal traffic
- Number of post offices
- Number of postal employees
- Development level
- Geographical region
- Road, rail and air infrastructures
- National greenhouse gas emissions – *World Perspective*, World Bank 2010

Postal Statistics 2010



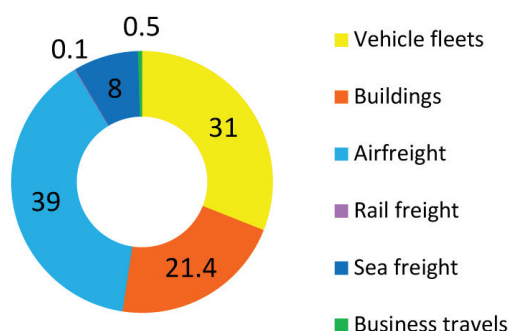
Details of the calculation method and the conversion factors used were provided in a guide which was made available to member countries and their designated operators in October 2009. The guide can also be downloaded from the UPU website at www.upu.int/en/activities/sustainable-development/environment/key-documents.html.

Emissions linked to postal activities in 2010

Based on the calculations performed for the 133 participants, as well as the estimates for the remaining 59 Union member countries, the greenhouse gas emissions of the designated operators of UPU member countries are estimated to be at least 56.5 million tonnes of CO₂e in 2010.

This result is stable in comparison with the previous inventory result of 54.25 million tonnes, especially when taking into account the fact that the inventory was extended to other activities, in particular the calculation of emissions related to rail and sea freight.

Emissions by source



The three main sources of emissions remain unchanged: postal airfreight, vehicle fleets (more than 1 million vehicles used by designated operators specifically for postal activities), and buildings (more than 500,000 buildings owned solely by designated operators, plus an additional 200,000 used by subcontractors).

There have been a number of efforts to reduce these emissions, including improved mail transport routes, investments in alternative fuel vehicles, building renovations in accordance with strict environmental standards, investments in renewable energies, etc.

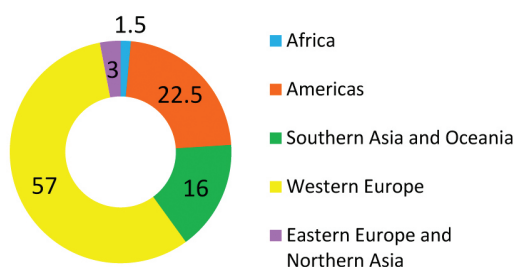
140,000 trips around the globe and zero pollution!

Designated operators use nearly 730,000 bicycles to collect and transport mail, covering nearly 3 billion kilometres each year, roughly equivalent to 195 trips around the globe every day. Postmen cover the same distance each year on foot. Taken together, these postal employees cover nearly 6 billion kilometres every year without emitting as much as a single gramme of CO₂.



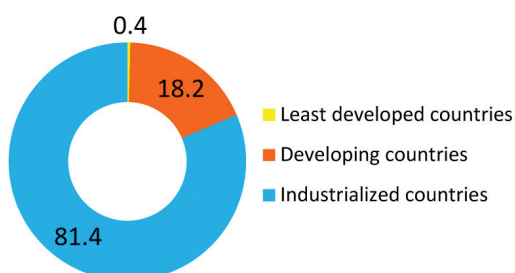
Photo : Correos (Spain)

Emissions by region



Three regions generate virtually all of the emissions: the Americas, Western Europe and Southern Asia and Oceania. Though they represent only 59% of member countries, they account for 95.5% of global emissions. This can be explained by the industrialized countries in these regions, which are the primary users of airfreight for mail and have the largest numbers of vehicles and buildings (in particular in Western Europe). By comparison, two regions – Africa and Eastern Europe and Northern Asia – pollute very little, accounting for only 4.5% of emissions even though they cover 79 countries.

Emissions by level of development



Though they represent 27% of member countries, least developed countries are responsible for only 0.4% of the total emissions. Industrialized countries, on the other hand, generate 81.4% of emissions, the volume of postal traffic being one of the variables to explain this higher proportion.

Comparison with other sectors

According to UNEP, total worldwide annual greenhouse gas emissions are estimated to be 38 billion tonnes of CO₂e. According to our estimates, designated operators of UPU member countries therefore account for at least 0.15% of these emissions.

It should be noted that the figure of 56.5 million tonnes of CO₂e concerns only a part of the emissions of the designated operators of UPU member countries and not all postal sector activities (private operator activities, manufacture of envelopes and parcels, industrial processes associated with postal activities, such as the fabrication of sorting machines, etc.).

Two figures are nonetheless useful for purposes of comparison:

- According to the figures published in September 2009 by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the maritime sector accounts for 3.3% of global emissions (1.2 billion tonnes).
- According to the figures published in September 2009 by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the airline industry accounts for 2% of global emissions (705 million tonnes).

Again, it should be pointed out that the ICAO and IMO inventories partially cover postal activities, as a portion of letters and parcels are transported by air and by sea. Furthermore, in 2012 the UPU plans to cooperate with ICAO to detail the impacts of postal airfreight. ICAO has very accurate statistics on mail volumes and destinations (domestic and international) broken down by country. This data is essential for the calculations and will help to provide more specific information on emissions by region and by country



Photo: USPS

The postal sector in figures

- 5,450,000 employees (designated operators)
- 473,000 postal buildings owned by designated operators
- 1 million motorized vehicles (including subcontractors)
- Several hundred aircraft making flights between the continents each day
- 381 billion letters and 6 billion parcels collected, sorted and transported every year



To obtain a detailed report on the emissions of your designated operator, please contact:
Ms Anne-Claire Blet
E-mail: anne-claire.blet@upu.int
Tel: +41 31 350 35 17

To learn more about the UPU's efforts to protect the environment and fight against climate change, please visit the UPU website: www.upu.int/en/activities/sustainable-development/environment/about-environment.html.

