



# **SHORT GUIDE TO *AIRPORT CARBON ACCREDITATION***

**NOVEMBER 2020**

## THE PROGRAMME

*Airport Carbon Accreditation* was developed and launched in Europe by Airports Council International (ACI) Europe in 2009. As of late 2014, *Airport Carbon Accreditation* had expanded worldwide to all ACI regions. It is the only voluntary global carbon management standard for airports.

The aim of *Airport Carbon Accreditation* is to encourage and enable airports to implement best practices in carbon management and achieve emissions reductions.

*Airport Carbon Accreditation* focuses on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, as they comprise the large majority of airport emissions. Airports may include emissions of other greenhouse gases (GHGs) on a voluntary basis, as an example of best practices. Independent third-party verification by an approved verifier is an essential component of the programme. Airports can participate at one of four progressively stringent levels of accreditation: 1. Mapping; 2. Reduction; 3. Optimisation; and 4. Transformation. In addition, airports at Level 3 and 4 can choose to offset their residual emissions, thereby achieving Level 3+ (Neutrality) and Level 4+ (Transition) respectively.

Each level of accreditation has its own suite of requirements for various program elements as presented in Figure 1. Emission Scopes refer to the categorisation defined by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, depending on the degree of influence that a company has over an emissions source.

**Figure 1 - Summary of Participation Requirements at each Accreditation Level**

REQUIRED ELEMENTS	Level 1 (Mapping)	Level 2 (Reduction)	Level 3 (Optimisation)	Level 3+ (Neutrality)	Level 4 (Transformation)	Level 4+ (Transition)
Policy Statement	Policy commitment to emissions reduction				Policy commitment to absolute emissions reduction	
Carbon Footprint	Emissions under Airport Control (Scope 1 & 2)		Scope 1 & 2 + selected Scope 3 emissions sources		Scope 1 & 2 + all significant operational Scope 3 emissions sources	
Target and implementation	--	Formulation of a carbon emissions reduction target (absolute or relative) for Scopes 1 & 2.			Formulation of a long-term absolute reduction target for Scope 1 & 2 or Scope 1, 2 & 3 emissions, in line with the IPCC 1.5°C or 2°C pathways	
Target trajectory	--	No target trajectory required			Definition of a target emissions trajectory and milestones leading up to the target.	

REQUIRED ELEMENTS	Level 1 (Mapping)	Level 2 (Reduction)	Level 3 (Optimisation)	Level 3+ (Neutrality)	Level 4 (Transformation)	Level 4+ (Transition)
Target Compliance	--	Annual improvement against past 3-year-rolling average required.			Compliance assessed every 6 years through carbon footprint, and at interim milestones and target year. 15% deviation from trajectory accepted. Milestones and targets must be met without any deviation.	
Carbon Management	--	Development of a Carbon Management Plan to achieve the target, with distinct requirements depending on the level of accreditation				
Stakeholder Management	--		Development of a Stakeholder Engagement Plan		Development of a Stakeholder Partnership Plan	
Neutrality	--			Offset of residual emissions (Scope 1, 2 and staff business travel)	--	Offset of residual emissions (Scope 1, 2 and staff business travel)
Renewal Cycle	Annually; Verified every 2 <sup>nd</sup> year		Annually; 3-year-cycle permitted under certain conditions.		Every 3 years; Unverified footprint in interim years.	
Approved verifiers	Level 1-3/3+ approved verifier				Level 4/4+ approved verifier	

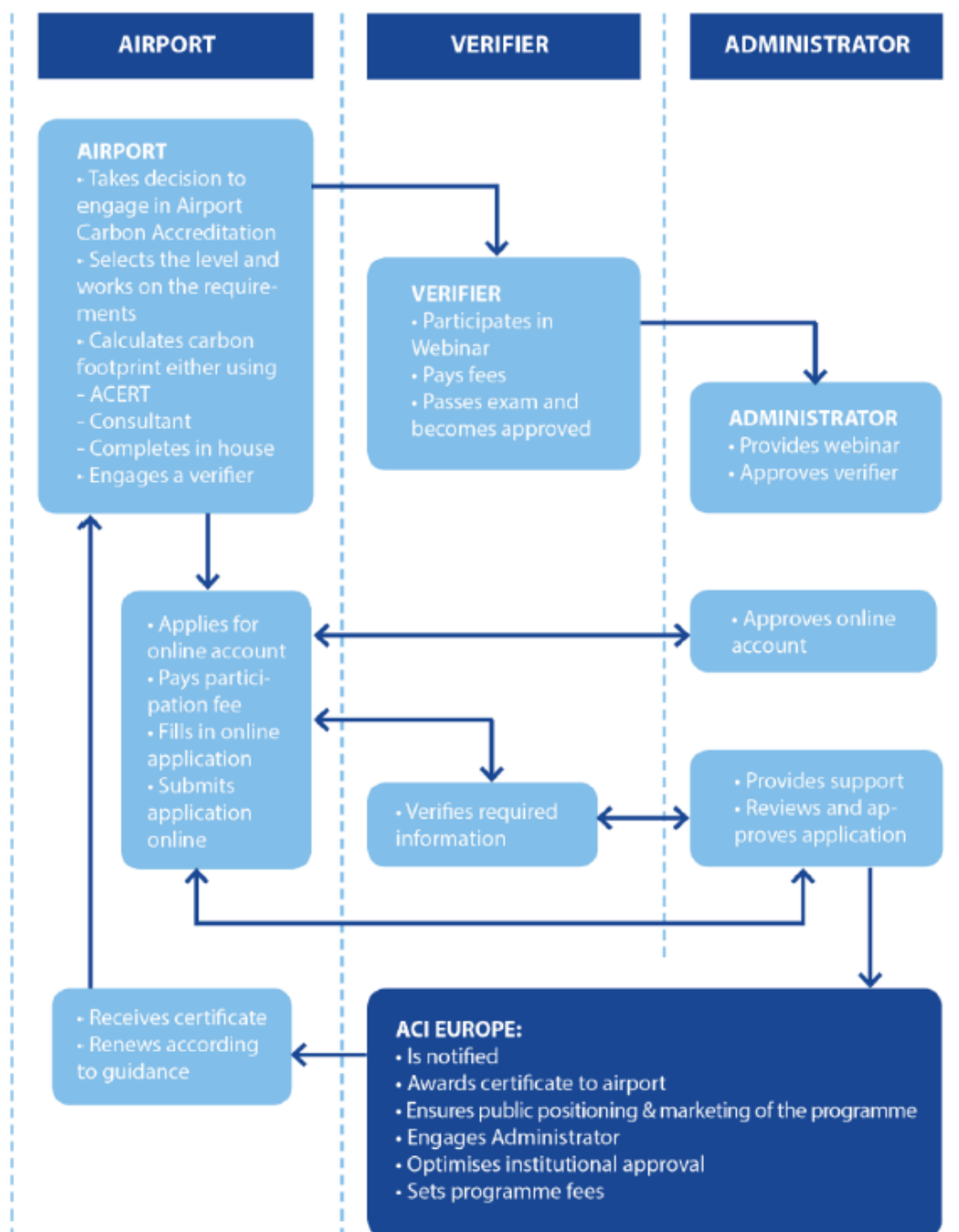
## THE PROCESS

Airports that are members of any of the ACI regions are eligible to participate in *Airport Carbon Accreditation*.

Application for accreditation (i.e., first-time accreditation, renewal and upgrade) is done through the online tool at [www.aca-application.org](http://www.aca-application.org).

The process involves the work and coordination between the airport (preparing all application documents), the verifier (verifying the application) and the Administrator (reviewing and approving the application) as depicted in Figure 2.

**Figure 2 - Roles and Responsibilities in the Accreditation Process**



# THE CARBON FOOTPRINT

The carbon footprint covering a 12-month period is a key component of *Airport Carbon Accreditation*. Typical airport emissions sources are outlined in Figure 3.

**Figure 3 - Overview of Scopes & Emissions**



Airports shall submit their carbon footprint data using, or in line with, the worksheets provided by the GHG Protocol, ISO 14064-1, ACI's Airport Carbon and Emissions Reporting Tool (ACERT) or an appropriate combination of these tools. Airports may use different tools and emissions factors that may be more up to date (e.g., emission factors published by the country's relevant authority, emission factors calculated by the airport).

**Figure 4 - Emission Sources and Reporting Requirements at Levels 1 to 4+**

EMISSIONS SOURCE	Level 1 (Mapping)	Level 2 (Reduction)	Level 3 (Optimisation)/ Level 3+ (Neutrality)	Level 4 (Transformation)/ Level 4+ (Transition)
Vehicles and Machinery, including GSE	Scope 1		Scopes 1 & 3	Scopes 1 & 3
Fuel used for fire training, incl. hand-held extinguisher				
Emergency Generators				
Furnaces, Boiler houses, Energy plants			Scope 1	
Solid waste processing				
Wastewater (Sewage) processing				
Construction machinery and equipment (contracted)				Scope 3
De-icing substances for surface and aircraft de-icing	-			Scopes 1 & 3
Refrigerant losses				Scope 1
				Scope 3 (V)
Electricity produced or purchased from off-site generation	Scope 2		Scopes 2 & 3	
Heating or cooling generated off-site and/or resold on-site				
Aircraft main engine fuel (LTO only)	-		Scope 3	-
Aircraft main engine fuel (full flight, on half-way or one-way method)				Scope 3
Aircraft APU fuel use	-		Scope 3	
Aircraft engine maintenance (run-ups)				
Landside vehicle access (origin-destination and back)				
Landside train/rail access				
Company Staff business travels (all modes)				
Landside maritime access				

(V) = voluntary

## THE EMISSION REDUCTION TARGET

For Levels 2 and above, emission reduction targets have to be formulated and signed off.

**Figure 5 - Summary of Requirements for Setting and Achieving Emissions Reduction Targets**

	Level 2 (Reduction)	Level 3 (Optimisation)	Level 3+ (Neutrality)	Level 4 (Transformation)	Level 4+ (Transition)
<b>Target type</b>	Absolute or intensity target using either passenger numbers, traffic units or kg of cargo.			Absolute targets only.	
<b>Target scope</b>	Scope 1 and 2 emissions.			Scope 1 and 2 emissions (mandatory). Scope 3 emissions (voluntary) including one or more sources representing >10% of total Scope 1, 2 & 3 emissions (excluding LTO and cruise) and over which the airport exercises significant influence.	
<b>Target amount</b>	No specific reduction amount is required.			Target reductions shall be in line with the IPCC 1.5°C pathway (wherever possible) or the 2°C pathway but can also be more ambitious.	
<b>Baseline year</b>	Baseline shall be chosen by the airport.			Airports shall use the baseline year of 2010, where possible.	
<b>Target date</b>	No specific target date is required.  Targets shall not be year-on-year, but further reaching into the future, however no specific length is required.			Target dates should fall on the middle or the end of the decade (e.g. 2030 or 2035). Long term targets shall reach at least 10 years into the future but can be as far off as 2050. If the long-term target is greater than 15 years into the future, airports shall set interim milestone: generally 10-15 years into the future.	
<b>Emissions trajectory</b>	No emissions trajectory required			Airports must define the emissions trajectory from their current application year to their long-term target (via any interim milestone).	
<b>Achieving targets</b>	Airports must be able to show emissions reductions against the three-year rolling average for the specific target type they have selected (e.g. absolute or intensity).			Airports shall meet the long-term targets and interim milestone set. Achievement is assessed through the submission of the airport's carbon footprint for the milestone/target year.	
<b>Demonstrating progress</b>	Airports do not have to show progress against a trajectory.			Emissions will be compared to airports' trajectories every other renewal cycle (6 years). Airports' emissions in that year can deviate from the trajectory by up to 15%.	

## THE CARBON MANAGEMENT

At Levels 2 and above, an airport shall develop a Carbon Management Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to demonstrate the meaningful efforts by the airport to reduce its emissions in line with the set target and policy statement. As a minimum, the Plan shall cover Scope 1 and 2 emissions as they have been defined in the carbon footprint. After its initial development, the Plan shall be updated at least every three years.

A Carbon Management Plan shall contain at least the following parts:

- Responsibility, resource allocation, and organisational structure;
- Carbon management initiatives;
- Implementation plan;
- Communication, awareness, and training;
- Self-assessment/auditing.

For Levels 4 and 4+, it should in addition contain the long-term target set by the airport, as well as the associated emissions trajectory.

## THE STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

Stakeholders represent an important component of airport efforts to manage greenhouse gas emissions. Stakeholders include operational and service companies, such as airlines, ground handlers, cargo handlers, catering companies, waste management contractors, public and local transport operators, passengers, decision makers, planners, employees, tenants, retailers, cargo operators, civil works and other contractors.

Airports at Levels 3 and 3+ shall formulate a Stakeholder Engagement Plan, while airports at Levels 4 and 4+ shall develop a more demanding Stakeholder Partnership Plan.

A summary of the respective requirements for stakeholder management is presented in Figure 6.



**Figure 6 - Stakeholder Management**

STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT	Level 3 (Optimisation)	Level 3+ (Neutrality)	Level 4 (Transformation)	Level 4+ (Transition)
Title	Stakeholder Engagement Plan		Stakeholder Partnership Plan	
Purpose	On-going dialogue, sharing of best practices, and promoting cooperation with stakeholders with the aim of reducing emissions from major stakeholder operations.		Actively driving third parties at the airport towards delivering emissions reductions themselves either through their own reduction plans or through measures initiated by the airport operator.	
Emission reduction objectives for stakeholders	No		Yes (absolute or relative)	
Reporting	Yes, for initial accreditation and every renewal.			
Minimum Information	Description of stakeholders, allocation of responsibilities for engaging with key stakeholders, evidence of engagement and outcomes, implementation plan.		Inclusion of all stakeholders that are responsible for a significant contribution to the Scope 3 footprint, setting of emissions reduction objectives for stakeholders, carbon reduction plans/measures directly taken by the stakeholders with airport contribution or defined by the airport operator.	
Revisions	After its initial development, the Plan shall be revised at least every three years. The revised Plan shall include updated information about stakeholders, joint initiatives, achievement of emission reductions, updated objective setting, training and awareness, etc.			
Verification	Confirmation from the airport’s verifier is required (in accordance with the verification timelines defined in Section 10.3) that a Plan has been formulated and implemented.			

## THE OFFSETTING

In order to achieve Level 3+ (Neutrality) and Level 4+ (Transition), airports shall compensate for their Scope 1 and 2 residual emissions as well as Scope 3 airport staff business travel emissions that cannot be reduced by other means by purchasing offsets. A dedicated Offsetting Manual has been developed to inform and guide airports in relation to offsetting instruments, to establish requirements and recommendations as well as to provide practical support through dedicated offset procurement guidelines. The Offsetting Manual is available on the programme website.

## THE VERIFICATION

Independent third-party verification is an essential requirement for all levels of *Airport Carbon Accreditation*. The primary aim of independent third-party verification is to provide confidence that the reported information, statements, and plans represent a faithful, true, and fair account of an airport's efforts.

**Figure 7 - Verification Requirements per Level of Accreditation**

ACCREDITATION LEVEL	VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS
Level 1 (Mapping)	Policy statement & carbon footprint
Level 2 (Reduction)	Level 1 requirements and emissions reduction target, carbon footprint of base year of target setting (once), annual emissions lower versus the 3-year rolling average, and Carbon Management Plan
Level 3 (Optimisation)	Level 2 requirements and Stakeholder Engagement Plan
Level 3 (Optimisation) – Three year renewal cycle	Level 3 requirements and quantitative verified emissions reductions achieved for at least one Scope 3 emissions source for which there is an active stakeholder engagement initiative in place
Level 3+ (Neutrality)	Level 3 requirements and offsets
Level 3+ (Neutrality) – Three year renewal cycle	Level 3+ requirements and quantitative verified emissions reductions achieved for at least one Scope 3 emissions source for which there is an active stakeholder engagement initiative in place
Level 4 (Transformation)	Policy statement & carbon footprint, long-term absolute emissions reduction target (in line with IPCC 1.5°C or 2°C pathway), Carbon Management Plan, Stakeholder Partnership Plan with emissions objectives
Level 4 (Transformation) – Renewal	Level 4 requirements, demonstration that the airport has achieved any long-term target / interim milestone for a year which has passed, verified emissions reductions achieved from Stakeholder Partnership Plan  Every six years the airport must demonstrate that they are on track with their forecast trajectory to their target.
Level 4+ (Transition)	Level 4 requirements and offsets
Level 4+ (Transition) – Renewal	Level 4 three-year renewal requirements and offsets

## SUPPORT

For the latest information about the programme, visit [www.airportcarbonaccredited.org](http://www.airportcarbonaccredited.org), while the participant Terms & Conditions are available at [www.aca-application.org](http://www.aca-application.org).

The Administrator provides a helpline service for all airports, which are considering or are in the process of applying as well as for all existing and potential verifiers. Airports are strongly encouraged to contact the Administrator via email at [aca@wsp.com](mailto:aca@wsp.com) in case of questions in relation to the Application Manual, programme requirements, etc.