



# Global mobility and sustainability

## Are you helping or harming the planet?

“ Our planet and its people are suffering too much. This year has to be the moment for turning global promises into reality. Governments must take the lead with decisive steps. At the same time, businesses can provide essential solutions and resources that put our world on a more sustainable path.

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, speaking at Global Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland January 2016

Global markets continue to place new demands on employee mobility as workforce models evolve, transforming the way we work.

Mobility is growing year on year at an unprecedented pace. According to a PwC survey, **85% of organisations plan to increase the number of internationally mobile workers in the next two years** – not just formal assignments but more fluid mobility types (e.g. business travellers, commuters and employees with regional/global roles). This upward trend in mobility is despite advances in technology and connectivity; underlining that sometimes it is crucial for people to be on the ground to make things happen. There is no substitute for engagement at a human level to create relationships.

Business travel already has one of the biggest carbon footprints – **so is now the time to start focusing on global mobility and sustainability?** Is there a way in which business can align global mobility with its sustainability agenda? One which helps rather than hinders sustainability goals?

There is much to consider here, the business’s long-term strategy on engaging global talent; the process of on-boarding new mobile employees; engagement of new mobility service providers; and entering entirely new markets.

The Sustainable Development Goals are a collection of 17 global goals set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 for the year 2030 and as national governments are adopting these as targets, businesses are increasingly setting out their own goals. It is here that global mobility can be decisive in bringing solutions to suit business needs, aligning its mobility and sustainability policies. In an ideal world, every

global mobility function would understand how its activities align with business sustainability policies and their consequences (even the unforeseen ones).

Sustainable global mobility should not be confined to a single showcase project, nor should it have the effect of curbing the numbers of global moves where there is a clear business need for moving people across the world. Instead, it should be embedded in new ways of working, carefully considered in every small step when planning for moves. A simple change within the realms of the existing mobility policies may look like a drop in the ocean, but together these changes have an incremental effect, feeding into the mighty ocean of change that can be effected.



Making sure that the mobility policy goes hand in hand with the sustainability policies will result in **placing the right person at the right place, at the right time and at the right cost – to benefit the business and the planet** providing better experiences and outcomes across the entire mobility programme as well as helping our environment. Here are some ways that can be done:



## Green Mobility Package to drive sustainability

In the current business world, green credentials score highly as a market differentiator and a powerful retention tool – procurements often place as much as 15% value of their decision on vendors' sustainability solutions and employees increasingly pay more attention to their employer's green agenda. This is a 'Big Moment' in time when global mobility can really align with the business sustainability strategy and influence change.

### Pre-assignment considerations

**Climate action and carbon footprint:** pre-assignment orientation trips are core to many mobility packages today. Can this be provided in a more efficient way, saving costs to the business as well to the planet? Have you thought about:

- ✓ Deploying collaborative technology for digital consultations and virtual tours
- ✓ Incentivising assignees to link an orientation trip with a business trip
- ✓ Requiring that the relocation provider emphasises the need for environmental awareness, for example by setting out host country recycling provisions as part of orientation

## Relocation

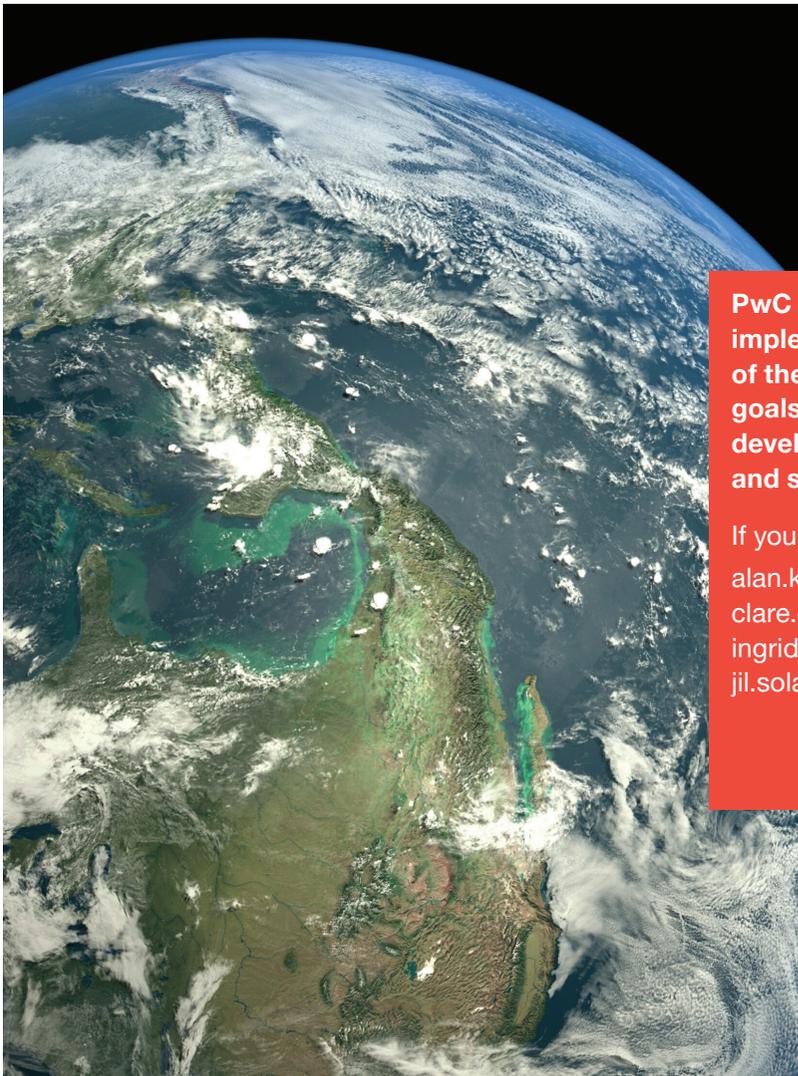
**Climate action and carbon footprint:** there can be a vast difference in the relocation carbon footprint depending on which airline carrier is chosen to relocate the assignee and their family; what class they will travel; and how their goods are transported. Have you thought about:

- ✓ Choosing flights/airlines with better green credentials
- ✓ Considering carbon offset contributions
- ✓ Providing green and electric cars to senior assignees; junior moves can be educated on car-pooling and green transport options available on the local market
- ✓ Considering whether the right balance exists between air freight and sea shipment in mobility policies, or would a mix of excess luggage and bigger ship containers work just as well?

### On-assignment support and benefits

**Responsible consumption and production:** even small changes in the mobility supply chain based on sustainable solutions can have a real impact on the environment. A simple supplier survey with a sustainability questionnaire would show the vendors' green credentials. Have you thought about:

- ✓ Understanding how sustainable your vendors and third party service providers are when providing temporary hotel accommodation, serviced apartments, furniture rental, or contracts for utilities
- ✓ Checking whether third party providers in host locations support responsible business and local social enterprises



**PwC has been working with clients who are looking to implement their sustainability strategy for any given part of their business, helping them focus on their sustainability goals and redesign their strategy and policies. We have also developed a number of tools which can help in this process and support the global mobility function.**

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190717-174830-IB-OS