

REPORT OF OCTOBER 2023

# **RUMBA – FDFA ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT 2023**



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

**Federal Department of  
Foreign Affairs FDFA**

# MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

## **ON TARGET FOR THE 2020–23 RUMBA PERIOD**

The FDFA has set itself the goals of reducing its environmental impact per full-time equivalent by 9% and its absolute greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 9% between 2020 and 2023. It is clearly on course with both goals.

## **THE THREE MAIN CATEGORIES: AIR TRAVEL, HEATING AND PAPER**

In 2022, the FDFA's GHG emissions amounted to 8,539 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. The majority of these come from the air travel category (94%). Other significant sources of emission are heating (4%) and paper (2%). Regarding air travel, around 75% of GHG emissions were caused by scheduled flights, just under 25% by business trips on Federal Council jets and less than 1% by helicopter flights. Concerning heating, natural gas was the largest energy source, accounting for around 62% of emissions in this category. In the paper category, external print jobs made up the lion's share, at just over 90%.

## **LONG-TERM POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT THANKS TO A VARIETY OF MEASURES**

When analysed from a long-term perspective, the GHG emissions of the FDFA show a clear downward trend; they have been reduced by 11% since 2006. The FDFA has implemented a wide range of measures in these and other environment-related areas since 2006.

## **IMPLEMENTING THE AIR TRAVEL ACTION PLAN**

The air travel action plan, adopted for the entire Federal Administration in 2019, has been implemented consistently at the FDFA. Emissions from air travel were almost 19% lower in 2022 than in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted transport-related practices less than in previous years, meaning that emissions from air travel increased compared to 2020 and 2021. Nevertheless, the data available indicates that the first assessment of the plan's implementation and effectiveness should be positive.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the objectives set by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) for the 2020–23 target period and the results of its 2022 greenhouse gas (GHG)<sup>1</sup> emissions and environmental impact. The report also analyses long-term developments (from 2006 to 2022) and the measures implemented, as well as the air travel action plan.

Data from Switzerland's representations abroad is not included in this report, with the exception of scheduled flights booked by the Swiss Government Travel Centre (SGTC) for Switzerland's external network.

<sup>1</sup> GHG emissions are the sum of carbon dioxide and other emissions such as methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O). The separate document specifying the system's limits and methodological bases and changes is available from the RUMBA Specialist Service upon request.



# 2 RUMBA 2020–2023

## 2.1 OBJECTIVES

The FDFA has set itself the following objectives for the 2020–23 target period:

- Objective 1: 9% reduction in overall environmental impact per full-time equivalent (EIP/FTE) between 2020 and 2023.

- Objective 2: 9% reduction in total GHG emissions between 2020 and 2023; remaining GHG emissions fully offset through emission reduction certificates.

## 2.2 GHGS – DEVELOPMENTS AND RESULTS

In 2022, the FDFA's GHG emissions amounted to 8,539 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. That is 35% more than in the previous year. The three main categories for GHG emissions are air travel (94%), heating (4%) and paper (2%). Compared to the extrapolated reference year 2020<sup>2</sup> (corresponds to the start of the blue line), GHG emissions

have decreased by 17%. The FDFA is currently 12% below the targets calculated for 2022 (see Figure 1).

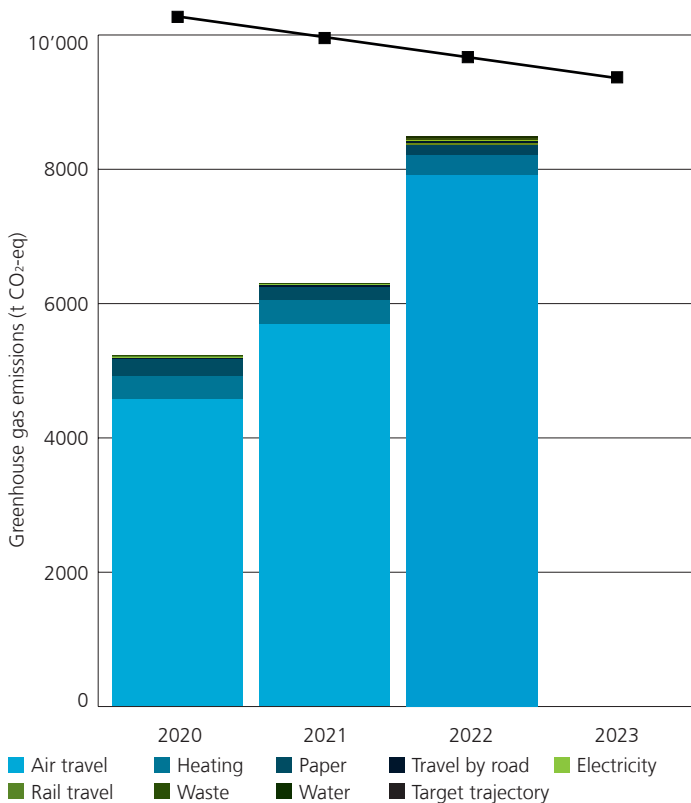


Figure 1: FDFA GHG emissions (tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent) development (incl. targets) by sector since 2020

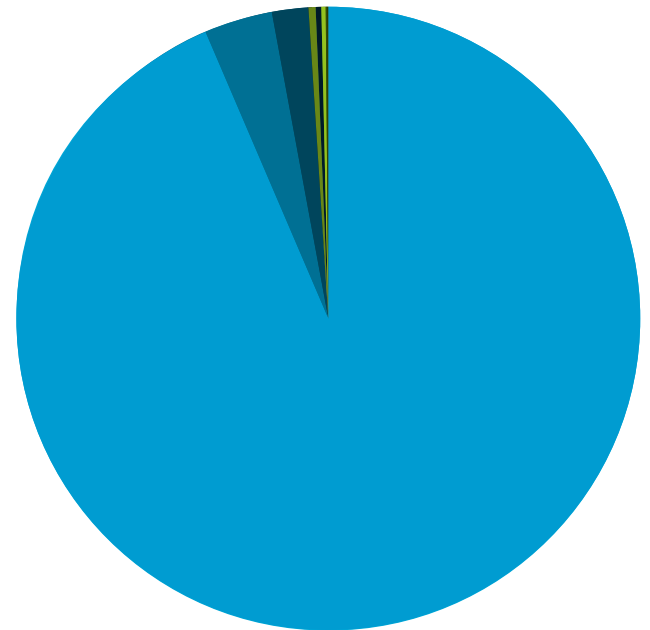


Figure 2: Breakdown of FDFA GHG emissions (tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent) by sector in 2022

<sup>2</sup> In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had a strong impact on the emissions of the Federal Administration due to factors such as the obligation to work from home and sharp decline in business trips. The data of the year (2020) used as a benchmark to calculate the progress made towards achieving these targets was, therefore, in accordance with the Federal Council's decision of 11 December 2020, extrapolated on the basis of 2019 records, taking the 2020 decrease in greenhouse gas emissions to be 3 percentage points and EIPs per FTE to be 2.67

percentage points. This is in line with the downwards trajectory required to achieve the RUMBA targets by 2023.

## 2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT – DEVELOPMENTS AND RESULTS

In 2022, the FDFA's environmental impact<sup>3</sup> amounted to 5.840 billion EIPs, or 3.7 million EIPs per FTE. This represents a year-on-year increase of 29% (see Figure 3). The three main categories in 2022 were air travel (84%), paper (8%) and heating (4%) (see figure 4).

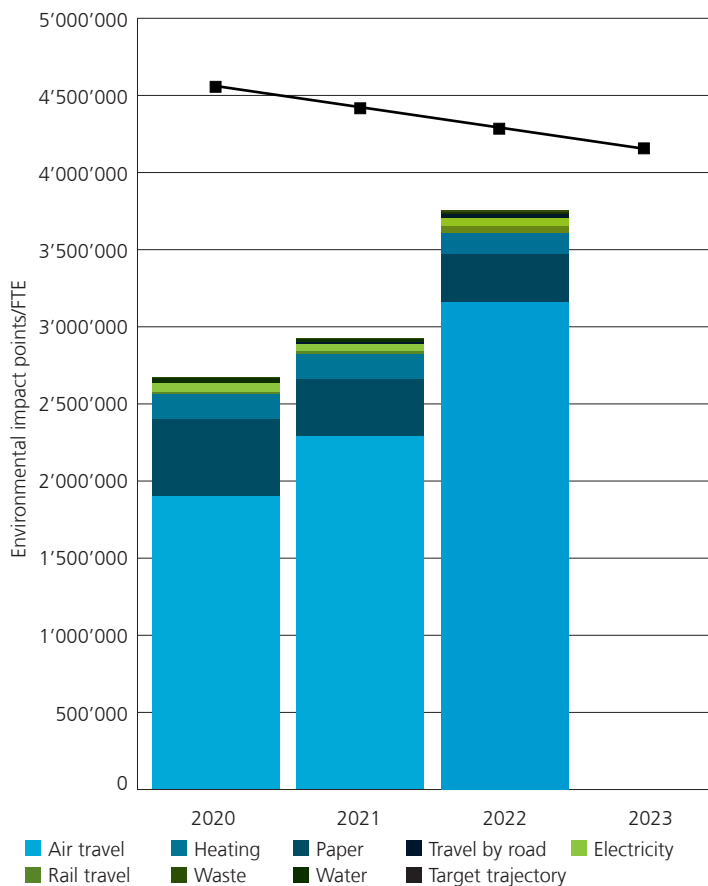


Figure 3: FDFA environmental impact development (EIP/FTE incl. targets) by sector since 2020

Compared to the extrapolated reference year 2020 (corresponds to the start of the red line), the FDFA's EIPs per FTE have decreased by 18%. The FDFA is currently 13% below the targets calculated for 2022. Unlike GHG emissions, EIPs also take into account such aspects as resource depletion (changes in land use, exploitation of minerals and metals, gravel mining, freshwater consumption, etc.), which is why paper, for example, accounts for a greater amount in the overall EIP balance as opposed to the GHG emissions balance.

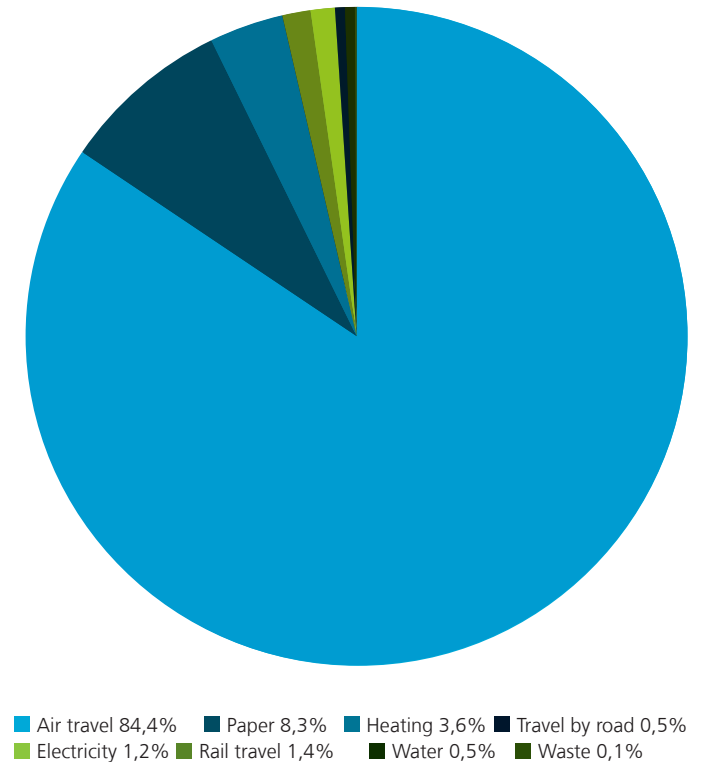


Figure 4: Breakdown of FDFA environmental impact by sector in 2022 (EIP/FTE)

<sup>3</sup> EIPs are determined using the ecological scarcity method. This method takes into account a broad spectrum of environmental impacts in areas such as soil, water and air emissions and traffic-caused noise emissions and factors them all into one key indicator – the environmental impact point (EIP) – through full aggregation.

## 2.4 THREE MAIN CATEGORIES

The following sections report on the three main categories of FDFA emissions in the order of the magnitude of each one's GHG emissions in 2022.

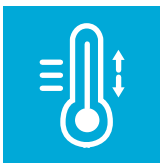
### 2.4.1 AIR TRAVEL



Air travel<sup>4</sup> has a 94% share, making it the largest source of emissions and producer of GHG emissions at 7,989t CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. In 2022, around 75% of this overall figure was caused by various scheduled flights while almost 25% can be attributed to business trips on Federal Council jets. Long-haul flights made up 55% of these scheduled flights. Federal Council helicopters account for just under 1%. The air travel category's GHG emissions went up by 40% compared to 2021. This rise can be attributed to the resumption of business trips after COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. Travel on Federal Council jets decreased by almost 13% in 2022.

In terms of scheduled flights, the highest GHG emissions were caused by long-haul flights in business class amounting to 2,244t CO<sub>2</sub>-eq, followed by long-haul flights in economy class at 2,162t CO<sub>2</sub>-eq. While the GHG emissions of long-haul business class flights account for 37% of the emissions of all scheduled flights, they represent only 23% of the total distance travelled. The opposite is true for long-haul flights in economy class. While these flights cause 36% of the GHG emissions of all scheduled flights, their mileage is 50% of the total distance flown. This difference is due to the fact that economy class flights generate lower emissions than business class flights. More details can be found in the air travel action plan under section 3.3.

### 2.4.2 HEATING



Heating has a 4% share, making it the second largest source of emissions and producer of GHG emissions at 302t CO<sub>2</sub>-eq in 2022. Of this, around 62% was caused by natural gas heating and 38% by district heating consumption. Overall, heating consumption amounted to just over

2.1 GWh. District heating consumed the greatest share of this, 1.3 GWh, followed by natural gas at just under 0.9 GWh. GHG emissions from heating show a decrease of almost 17% compared to 2021. This decrease is partly due to the warmer winter, which meant that less heating was needed year on year. In addition, as part of Swiss government's initiative to save energy in winter, heating-energy savings measures were implemented in the winter of 2022/2023 (e.g. lowering the room temperature to 20°C).

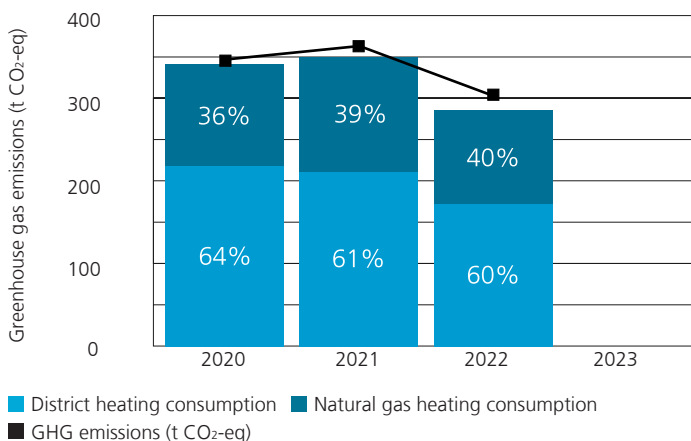


Figure 5: FDFA heating-related GHG emissions development since 2020

### 2.4.3 PAPER



Paper use is the third largest source of emissions and producer of GHG emissions, at 161t CO<sub>2</sub>-eq in 2022. Around 146t CO<sub>2</sub>-eq, i.e. almost 91% of GHG emissions caused by paper use, can be attributed to external print jobs. Since 2020, these statistics have included all the FDFA's orders for external print jobs. Paper for printers and envelopes amounted to 14t CO<sub>2</sub>-eq (8%) GHG emissions. In addition, toilet paper and paper towels were responsible for GHG emissions of one tonne CO<sub>2</sub>-eq.

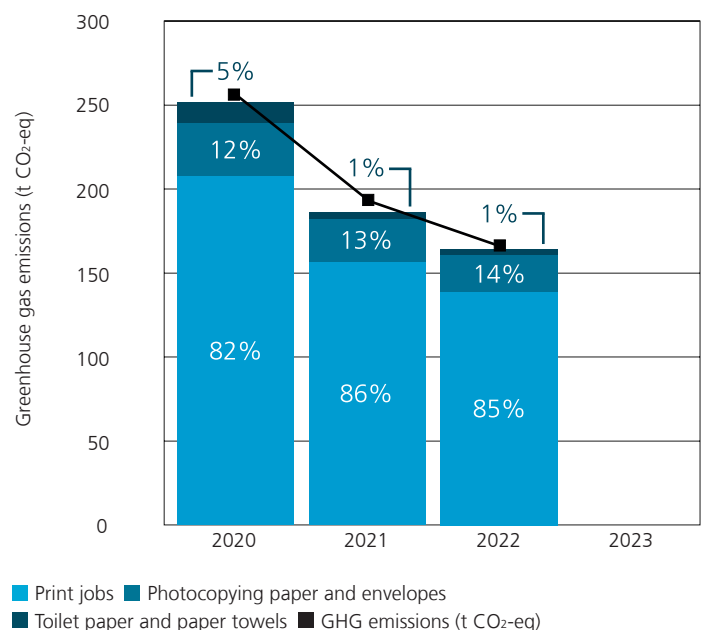


Figure 6: FDFA paper-related GHG emissions development since 2020

<sup>4</sup> This category comprises the flights of the Federal Council's jets and helicopters, as well as the scheduled flights booked by the SGTC for the FDFA's head office and for Switzerland's external network.

# 3 LONG-TERM TRENDS

## ▶ 3.1 CONTEXTUALISING THE RESULTS SEEN SINCE 2006

In 2022, the FDFA reduced its emissions by 11%, from 9,641t CO<sub>2</sub>-eq to 8,539t CO<sub>2</sub>-eq (see figure 7). Compared to 2021, GHG emissions have increased by around 35%. This is mainly due to the increase in the air travel category's emissions, an increase connected to the resumption of business trips. The air travel category is also mainly responsible for the reduction seen since 2006.

Additional methodological adjustments, such as the inclusion of flights with Federal Council jets and helicopters and of the paper consumption of external printing orders, have exacerbated the level of FDFA emissions. They lead to differences compared to the previous RUMBA periods, which is why the figures are not comparable on a 1:1 basis.

The figure shows that the GHG emissions have been clearly trending downwards since 2006. The pronounced decline from 2019 to 2020 is primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic; since then, emissions have been climbing back up to the level they were at before the pandemic.

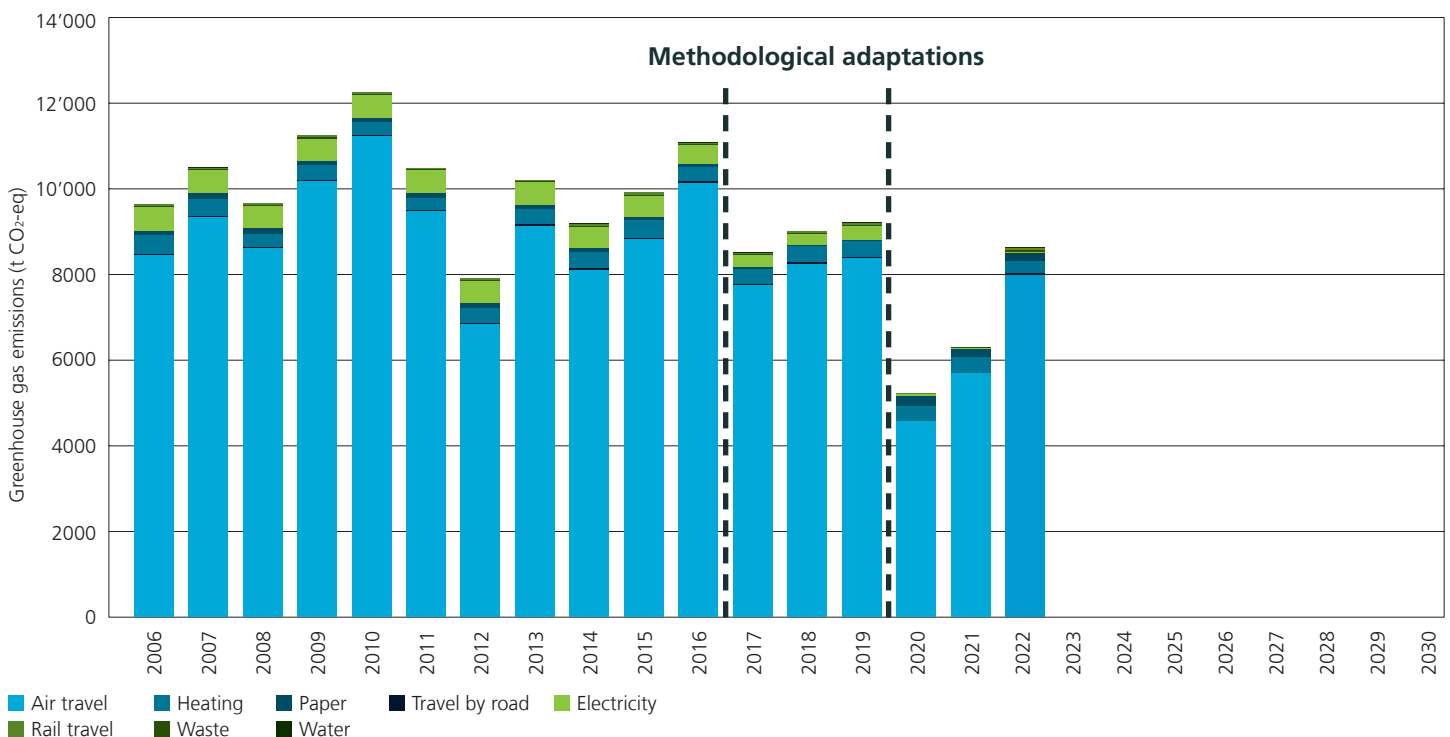


Figure 7: FDFA GHG emissions development since 2006



## ▶ 3.2 GHG REDUCTION THROUGH STRONG MEASURES

The downwards trend depicted in figure 7 is rooted in the FDFA's efforts to reduce its GHG emissions. These efforts have included various measures taken by the department since 2006. This section highlights the measures most relevant at this time, i.e. those with the greatest impact in the three main categories. A distinction is made here as to whether the measure has already been implemented (✓), is recurrent (↻) or is planned (📅).

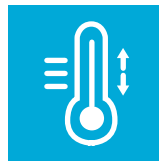
### 3.2.1 AIR TRAVEL



Air travel is the largest category. As such, measures in this area are of great importance to the FDFA.

Measures	Description	Status
Air travel action plan	For more information, see the section 3.3 on the air travel action plan.	↻
Objective for reduction per year	The FDFA has been aiming, since 2020, to reduce its carbon footprint generated by flights booked by the Swiss Government Travel Centre (SGTC) by 3% compared to 2019. This objective is integrated into the annual budget with a plan of tasks and finances.	↻
Monitoring	Data on flights are monitored regularly.	↻

### 3.2.1 HEATING



Heating is the FDFA's second largest emissions category.

Measures	Description	Status
Room temperature adjustment	The room temperature was set to stay at 20 °C during the day.	✓

### 3.2.1 PAPER



The paper category is the third largest in terms of the share of FDFA emissions.

Measures	Description	Status
Digital first	Certain internal publications are now handed out with only a few copies for each administrative unit.	✓
Secure printing rolled out	Secure printing was rolled out at all FDFA premises in Switzerland in 2021.	✓

#### Interactive FDFA Sustainability Platform

Sustainability issues are regularly brought to the attention of FDFA staff, in particular through the Interactive FDFA Sustainability Platform, launched in December 2022. This platform provides the FDFA's head office and Switzerland's external network with a forum for exchanging experiences, sharing information and providing tools to promote the sustainable use of resources in line with the objectives of the Foreign Policy Strategy 2020–23 and the 2030 Agenda.

3.3 AIR TRAVEL ACTION PLAN

One of the first elements of the climate package's implementation was the Federal Council's adoption of the air travel action plan in December 2019. This plan sets the goal of the Federal Administration (excluding the DDPS) reducing its air travel-related GHG emissions by 30% between 2019 and 2030. The FDFA is on track to achieve this goal.

COVID-19 restrictions heavily limited business trips in 2020 and 2021. In 2022, GHG emissions from air travel at the FDFA amounted to 7,989t CO<sub>2</sub>-eq, which corresponds to a current decrease of 19% compared to 2019 (see figure 8).

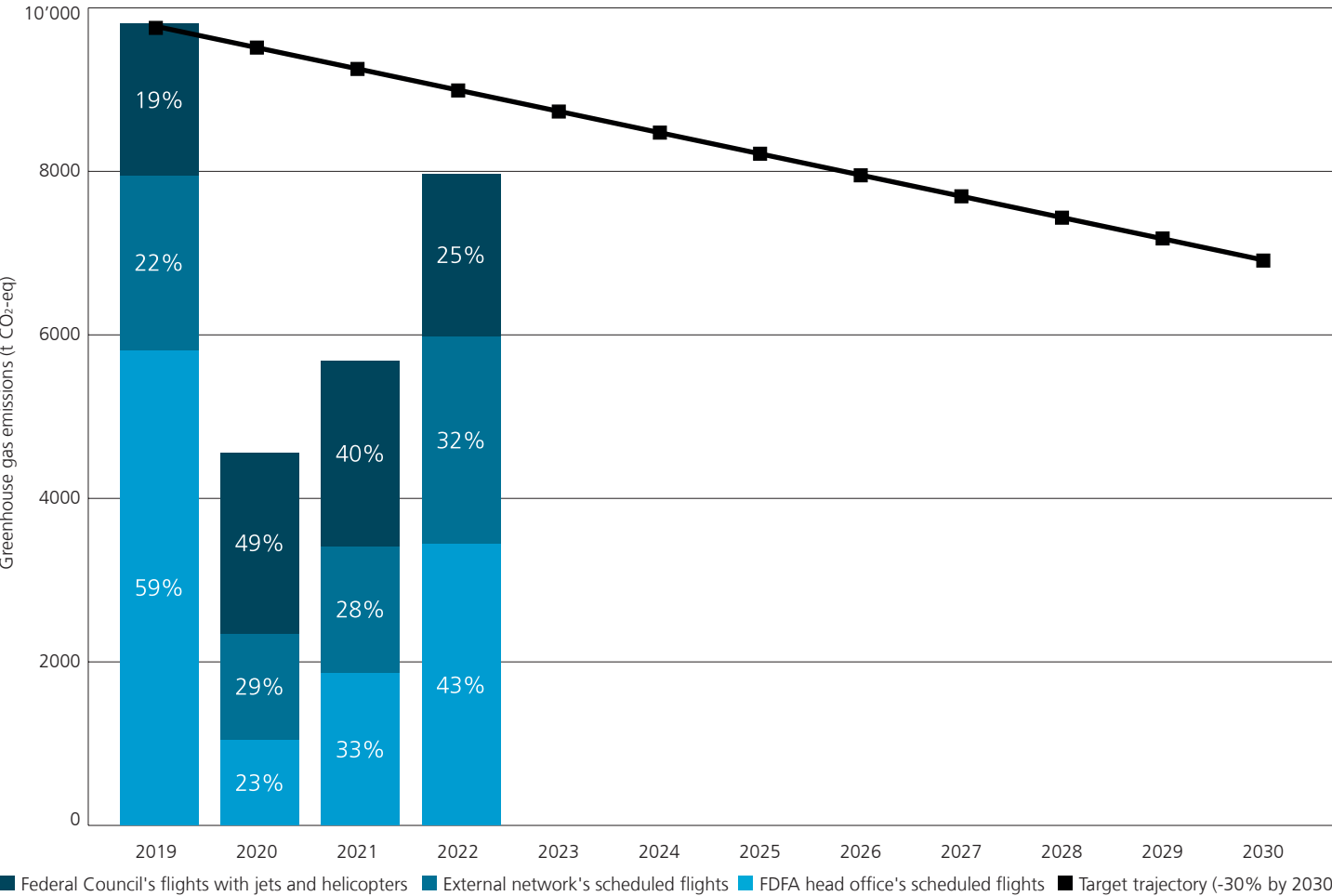


Figure 8: FDFA air travel-related GHG emissions development since 2019.

This section analyses these measures and the current status of implementation in more detail.

## SMALLER DELEGATIONS



The FDFA has been consistently implementing the measure on reducing the size of delegations to international conferences. The average delegation size at the FDFA in 2022 was 1.23 persons per delegation (2021: 1.33). Of the 2022 total of 2,730 delegations, 381 (14%) were made up of more than one person.

## PHONE AND VIDEOCONFERENCING



With the global pandemic and consequent demand for teleworking, the use of phone and video conferences has risen sharply. In 2019, the Federal Administration was still seeing between 6,000 and 8,000 phone and video conferences each month. By 2022, this figure had already reached the level of 65,000 to 120,000. These numbers have been trending upwards from year to year. There are no individual figures for the FDFA because of the current data situation.

## TRAIN NOT PLANE



The Federal Personnel Office (FOPER) and SGTC have compiled a list<sup>5</sup> of destinations that must always be reached by train. FDFA personnel have been adhering to these rules and taking trains not planes to the destinations concerned. A total of 525,989km were travelled abroad by train in 2022, an increase of 104% compared to 2021 (257,806km). This rise is linked to the lifting of the COVID-19 travel restrictions.

## ECONOMY NOT BUSINESS



In keeping with the rules, none of the short- or medium-haul flights were booked in business class. The share of long-haul flights in business class was 29%. These figures show that the FDFA is scrupulously complying with the provisions of the federal government's air travel action plan. Any further emissions reductions to be achieved from following these rules would now only come about thanks to additional, voluntary measures. Certain administrative units of the FDFA have already taken such measures, for example by stipulating that only economic class can be booked, irrespective of the duration of the given business trip's flights.

<sup>5</sup> [www.news.admin.ch/news/message/attachments/61628.pdf](http://www.news.admin.ch/news/message/attachments/61628.pdf)

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**IMPRESSUM**

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