

Business and Government for Smarter Freight

13 May 2016

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Nicolette van der Jaagt, Director General, CLECAT



The Paris COP21 agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emission has been deposited at the UN in New York and opened for signature. The pressure is on for the governments that will need to make significant efforts in the coming years to translate the ambitious commitments into concrete action, particularly in the transport sector. There is also pressure on the freight transport and logistics sector to engage actively in policy development as this will support them in making the right decisions and implement actions.

The reality today for front-runners and innovators is that the carbon footprints which are available are often neither accurate nor comparable. At the same time the pressure on shippers, logistics providers, and carriers to monitor, report, and reduce CO2 emissions continues to increase. Freight forwarders are expected to be able to inform shippers of their commitment to sustainable logistics operations and to reducing their environmental impacts. Many of the currently available footprinting tools for logistics are based on default values, such as the average fuel consumption of a certain vehicle type, rather than on the measured fuel consumption of a particular vehicle. Furthermore, the various tools employ different methodologies and assumptions. This lack of comparability is in itself a disincentive for the market to report, request or use carbon footprints. For example, if one carbon footprint is based only on Tank to Wheel (TTW) emissions, while another also includes the upstream, Well to Tank (WTT) emissions of the transport service, comparison becomes inherently difficult if not impossible for the average user.

To improve the harmonisation, accuracy and application of carbon footprinting, CLECAT and FIATA therefore support the following goals:

- calculations must be consistent and comparable;
- calculations must be reliable and accurate;
- for application in business practice, carbon footprinting must be simplified and facilitated;

- industry awareness must be increased

A universal means of carbon accounting – the [GLEC Framework for Logistics Emissions Accounting](#) – is in the making and will be launched in June, building on existing methods and the GHG Protocol. CLECAT is a member of GLEC, which unites like-minded groups specialising in CO2 calculations for various transportation modes, aiming to ensure comparable CO2 calculations across the transportation supply chain. GLEC does not seek to replace existing tools but to ensure comparability in support of more effective and clear expectations of green freight programs globally.

CLECAT and FIATA are of the opinion that industry is not yet ready for a mandatory reporting, as previously suggested by the European Commission. But a combination of voluntary reporting and mandatory use of common methodology has in our view the greatest potential for reducing GHG emissions, particularly in the long term, as it incentivises the full range of emission reduction measures and is the most accurate in estimating real-world emissions.

In doing so business needs to make ends meet in transposing low carbon operations, efficient procedures and competitive freight rates (“smart freight”) at the same time. There is clearly a role for governments, but not necessarily through more regulation. Governments should help to overcome market and policy barriers to accelerate the uptake of solutions and innovation.

A debate on this subject will take place at the International Transport Forum (ITF) Annual Summit in Leipzig, Germany on 20 May 9:00 - 10:30. Organized by the European Freight Forwarders’ Organisation ([CLECAT](#)), the European Shippers’ Council ([ESC](#)), the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Association ([FIATA](#)), the International Road Transport Union ([IRU](#)) and Smart Freight Centre ([SFC](#)), we will debate the need for business and government collaboration on smarter freight. [See here for more details](#).

The event will also showcase best practice of existing initiatives and thus accelerate the uptake of practical solutions throughout industry.

This event is open to Summit participants, please register for the Summit [here](#), if you would like to attend.

For more information, please contact info@smartfreightcentre.org. *The Annual Summit of the [ITF](#) is the premier global transport policy event. Held since 2008, it brings together transport ministers from around the world to share policy perspectives with CEOs, heads of international organizations, thought leaders from civil society, academia, and media.*

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