

Message to the EAS president

To: Roger Davies

CC: Robert Massey, Tony Antonaeva

Dear Roger,

As former members of the EAS sustainability committee and members of Astronomers for Planet Earth, we have seen that you submitted your first [report to the UNFCCC](#) on climate action. As mentioned in your newsletter, the reported greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions amount to 22 tCO₂eq generated from staff travel, presumably to and from council meetings. At the same time, the EAS' UNFCCC climate report states that the "complete Scope 3" was included. However, this should include the full upstream and downstream emissions of the reporting entity, and in the case of the EAS would have to include at least all emissions caused by the annual EAS meetings. As you know, the emissions caused by the EAS annual meetings are of order 100 times larger than the reported 22 tCO₂eq (<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41550-020-1207-z>).

EAS council member Antoaneta Antonova has answered our previous question why the EAS meeting emissions were not included. Her response was that those emissions have not been included because "We do not pay these costs for the participants". While this statement is obviously true, it does not remove these travel emissions from the EAS' Scope 3 - as defined and laid out in the relevant reporting standards based on the concept of operational control (as opposed to financial control).

Background: The standard accounting principles, as defined by the relevant standard laid out in "[Greenhouse Gas Protocol](#), Corporate Value Chain (Scope 3) Accounting and Reporting Standard" state that all upstream and downstream indirect emissions over which the entity has the authority to introduce and implement reduction measures fall under "Scope 3". As an example, car manufacturers need to report emissions throughout the lifetime cycle of their product, including those produced by the use of their cars although the manufacturers obviously do not use or even sell the gasoline, see e.g. <https://www.transportenvironment.org/discover/carmakers-lifetime-emissions-50-higher-than-reported/>

You reported to include "complete Scope 3" in Box 12 of the UNFCCC report. Scope 3, according to Sec. 5.2 of above GHG Protocol reference includes: "Emissions from leased assets, investments, and franchises that are excluded from the company's organizational boundary but that the company partially or wholly owns or controls". Travel emissions to a conference are Scope 3 emissions arising from selling the product "conference attendance". This would apply even if the conference fee was zero, since the conference organisation would still be under EAS control. It is clear from your website that the EAS annual meeting falls under your control: "The annual meeting of the EAS, formerly EWASS conference, is organised since 2014 by the EAS in collaboration with a local Hosting Committee and with the support of a Professional Conference Organiser and a local Destination Management Company."

EAS reported that no other than their own business travel was relevant in Box 19. We think that you should either have calculated the conference participant travel emissions or marked "Use of sold products" as "Relevant, not yet calculated". Not doing that is at odds with the need for disclosure according to Section 6.3 in the Accounting Standard.

One option for a correct carbon emission reporting could be to move to a "third-party verified GHG inventory", i.e. get an expert company do the calculation, as is a report option in Box 14. Another option would be to remove the declaration of having accounted for "complete Scope 3" from the report.

EAS cannot hope to achieve the self-stated goal of "climate neutrality" if it incorrectly excludes 99% of the relevant emissions. We urge you to publish a correction to your declaration and calculation and submit it to the UNFCCC, and then correct the erroneous statements in the EAS newsletter. Please let us know what you decide.

We also continue to urge you to be leaders in the astronomy community in these times of climate crisis and swiftly reduce the emissions of your annual meeting by at least providing full hybrid access.

Remember that we are racing against time in the climate crisis. The clock is ticking and there is no more time to waste.

With kind regards,

Leonard Burtscher
Ronald Drimmel
Cenk Kayhan
Luigi Tibaldo
Pablo Arnalte-Mur
Zephyr Penoyre
Lola Balaguer-Núñez
Annie Hughes
Beatriz Mingo
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