

A mission to offset emissions

Behind the story

The boss of Easyjet insisted yesterday that carbon offsetting was “not a scam” as the airline became the first big zero-carbon carrier (Dominic Walsh writes).

Johan Lundgren, 53, chief executive, said that Easyjet would offset carbon emissions from the fuel used on flights across its whole network as a prelude to the development of sustainable fuel and electric flying.

Some campaigners have criticised

offsetting as “greenwashing”, but the former Tui travel group executive argued that it was not a soft option. “Carbon offsetting is not a scam,” he said. “It is scientifically proven that carbon offsetting works.” He added that it was also an interim measure. “We will continue the push to reinvent aviation for the long term,” he said.

Offsetting emissions will cost Easyjet about £25 million over the coming year. For every tonne of carbon dioxide emitted, the airline said that it would ensure that there was one tonne less in the atmosphere — “whether by reducing CO₂ by physically removing it from the air (for example, by planting more trees)

or by avoiding the release of additional CO₂”.

At the same time, Easyjet said that it would continue to support new technology, including the development of hybrid and electric aircraft. It pledged to work with others across the industry “to reinvent aviation over the long term so that European aviation can become net-zero carbon”.

It has been working with Airbus and has supported efforts by Wright Electric to produce all-electric commercial aircraft for short-haul flights. The airline is also working with Rolls-Royce and Safran Transmission Systems on new technologies to reduce the carbon footprint of flying.

