



SAP Concur Whitepaper | PUBLIC  
Concur® Travel & Expense | Sustainable Travel

**With corporate travel returning, Indian organisations are confident of sustainable efforts**  
Supported by Asia Insight

# Table of Contents

# Executive summary

After being hit particularly hard by the coronavirus in the last two years, India appears to have seen the worst of the pandemic. In November 2021, it opened up to international visitors while its residents have been travelling both domestically and internationally as well.



The country has almost returned to pre-pandemic volumes for domestic travel, while international travel volumes are also gradually going back to before Covid-19 struck, according to SAP Concur's latest study of six countries in Asia-Pacific (APAC).

The country's job market, in particular, for the travel and hospitality sector, has also rebounded, according to other studies this year. Though not yet at pre-pandemic levels, it is on the [road to recovery](#).

To be sure, things are not business as usual in the world's second-most populous country. This time, India's corporate travellers besides being cautious about their health and safety, are looking to fine-tune how they travel to make their trips more sustainable.

A majority of respondents from India believe they have at least some sustainability efforts in place when it comes to corporate travel, according to the SAP Concur study, which also found that the

country's organisations are the most bullish in terms of sustainable corporate travel.

At the same time, the study revealed that many respondents in organisations here believe a lack of personal knowledge and training are the biggest obstacles to making an impact with their corporate sustainability efforts.

Like their counterparts across APAC, Indian organisations need to know the standards they should work towards. They have to engage employees to make the right travel and accommodation choices, and monitor and report their progress in cutting greenhouse gases emissions over time.

This is where technology, travel policies and employee engagement can come in to ease implementation. With the right technologies, organisations' efforts towards sustainability can be more concerted, efficient and demonstratable.

---

## Research Methodology

The SAP Concur APAC Sustainability Business Travel Survey, conducted by Consulting Group – Asia Insight, covered senior and mid-level managers in corporate travel, finance, human resource, procurement and sustainability, who are residing in Australia, China, India, Malaysia, Singapore, and South Korea.

There were 648 respondents (110 in India) responding to the online survey in April and May 2022. The study had a mix of organisations – 49% had headcounts of 1,000 and above, 25% had 500 to 999, and 26% had 100 to 499.

# Travel on the agenda again for Indian organisations

With a population of 1.38 billion, India is set to overtake China as the world's most populous country in the years ahead. Unfortunately, it is also the third-largest energy consuming country today, with 80 per cent of demand met by **coal, oil and solid biomass**.

To tackle this, the country has committed to expanding renewable energy, which is expected to fulfil half of its energy requirements **by 2030**. It also aims to have "net zero" emissions by 2070.

Besides solar and other familiar sources of green energy, **green hydrogen** could also play an important role of powering up homes and factories without today's harmful emissions.

Though transitioning to greener forms of energy will take a massive undertaking for a country the size of India, organisations in the country certainly are not intimidated by the task at hand.

When it comes to sustainable corporate travel, India's fast-growing economy and enormous market opportunities mean that organisations will always be looking beyond their home bases for business.

As business returns to a new normal after a devastating pandemic period, many will be keen to get their corporate goals back on track. This presents good opportunities for organisations to better plan their corporate travel, because they can make a real difference with their travel choices.

By harnessing the right tools to get important insights into each decision, they can select more sustainable travel options, for example, flights that use more fuel-efficient routes or hotels that are more energy efficient in their operations.

In future, sustainability is going to be a core part of doing business. Already, investors are seeking to fund companies that are sustainable for the long term, so it is no surprise many organisations in India now have sustainability high on their agenda.

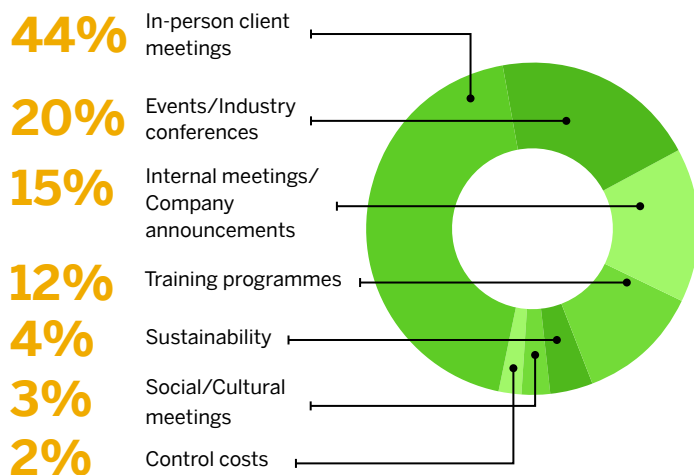


# Organisations buy in to sustainable travel

In late 2021, India opened its borders again to international travellers after being closed for almost two years during the pandemic. In the APAC regions surveyed by SAP Concur, the country is the closest to returning to pre-pandemic travel volume.

Some 95% of organisations say they are back to domestic travel volumes before Covid-19 struck, while the number is 80% for international travel. For Indian organisations, the most common reason for corporate travel is to meet clients in person (44% of respondents).

## What is the key purpose for your organisation's corporate travel programme?



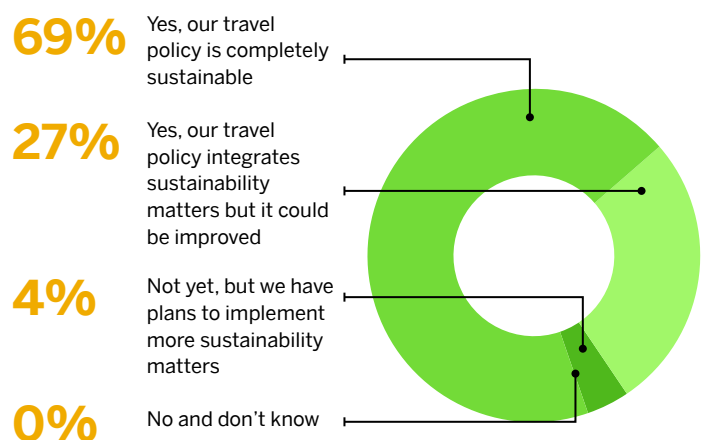
## Bullish about sustainable travel

Given the speed with which the country has returned to pre-pandemic levels of travel, it is good news that Indian organisations appear the most bullish about their sustainability efforts when it comes to corporate travel.

Some 69% believe their travel policy is completely sustainable, the highest in the region. Another 27% believe that their travel policy integrates sustainability matters but could be improved.

When it comes to an overriding sentiment towards sustainable corporate travel, the most common response (57%) among Indian organisations is that they live and breathe sustainable corporate travel, with high stakeholder engagement with their purpose.

## Is sustainability an integral part of your travel policy at your organisation?



### Need for more knowledge, training

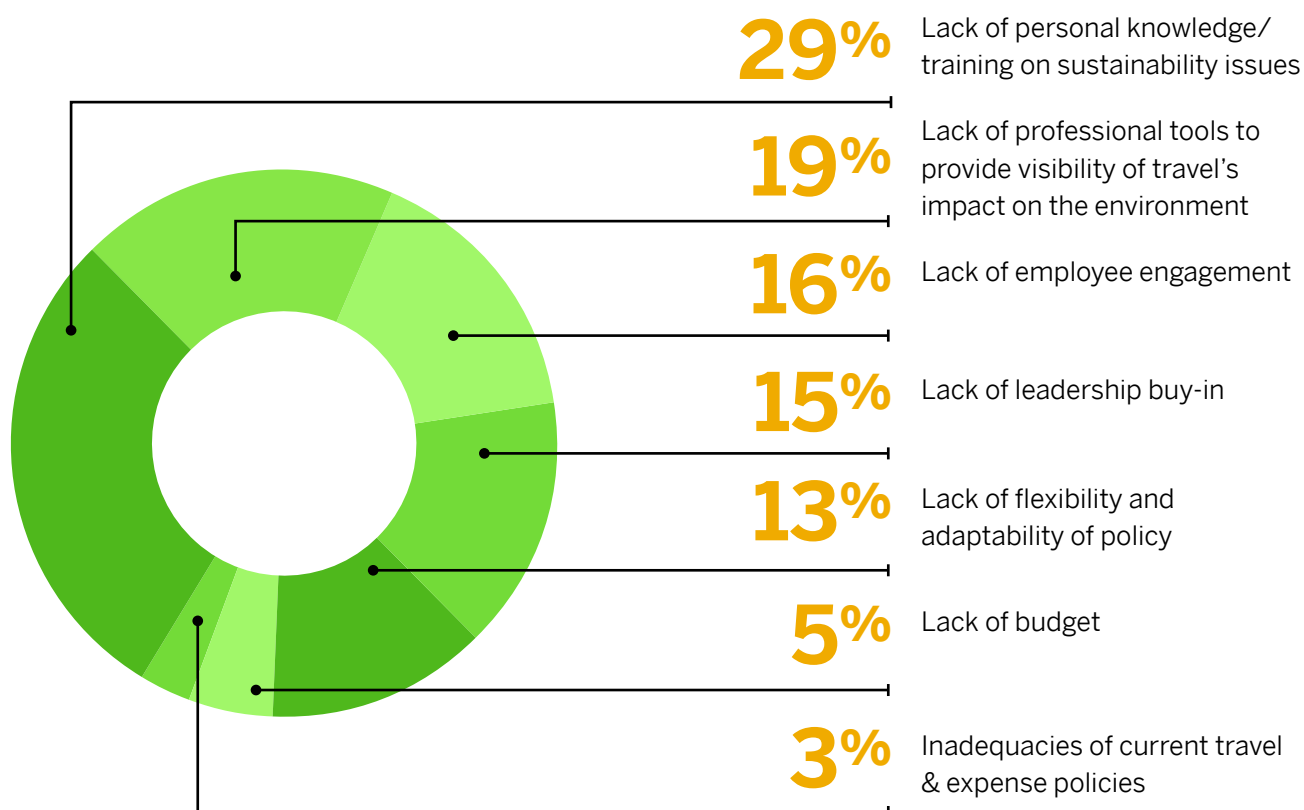
In India, the greatest barrier to developing a more sustainable travel programme is the lack of personal knowledge or training on sustainability, which is cited by 29% of respondents.

Notably, the use of tools to assess the sustainability of travel and accommodation options was the most cited way (74%) to change behaviours internally and raise awareness for sustainable corporate travel.

Despite being confident of their sustainable travel policies, Indian organisations can further improve by equipping employees with the relevant knowledge and skills to accelerate their efforts. Regular workshops to educate staff on sustainability best practices may help, as may regular employee feedback sessions on new ways to improve corporate travel.

The use of tools to assess the sustainability of travel and accommodation options was the most cited way **74%** to change behaviours internally and raise awareness for sustainable corporate travel.

### Which is considered the greatest barrier to your organisation developing a more sustainable corporate travel programme?





### Using technology to boost efforts

It is no surprise that more than half of Indian organisations (52%) already have software in place to support corporate travel and expenses. Another 34% plan to have it very soon and 10% plan to have it at some point. In this regard, India is a leader in the use of software.

Comparatively, in APAC, 38% of respondents have such software in place, while 33% plan to have very soon and 21% plan to do it at some point.

Technology can enable organisations to have better visibility into sustainable corporate travel, allowing both managers and employees to make smart choices for their next trip.

Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) flights, trains and electric vehicles (EV), for example, are “greener” modes of travel than conventional airplanes, in terms of carbon emitted per traveller. Eco-hotels are also available in many locations today. Technology can guide employees towards making sustainable choices.

More than half of Indian organisations **52%** already have software in place to support corporate travel and expenses.

Another **34%** plan to have it very soon and

**10%** plan to have it at some point.



# The way forward

India is a forerunner in terms of attitudes towards sustainable corporate travel. It is also the region's leader in terms of using software to support corporate travel and expense management, which bodes well for organisations looking to plan and attain sustainability goals.

What Indian organisations can do is boost the training and education of employees, as a lack of knowledge was one barrier cited by most respondents in the SAP Concur study.

It is a positive sign that Indian organisations want to reduce their travel carbon footprint. They will be pleased to know that with the right expert guidance, policies, benchmarking and technological support, making corporate travel greener is highly attainable.

Here are three recommendations to accelerate sustainable corporate travel efforts:

## 1. Equip travellers to make sustainable choices


According to the [Global Business Travel Association](#), partnerships are required to support one another by sharing best practices

and by ensuring that the full value chain commits to improving its environmental performance. In a study it conducted in early 2022, 67% of travel buyers said the business travel sector should commit to a common climate target.

In other words, an organisation cannot do everything alone. Meaningful partnerships are needed to make a difference.

Start with sourcing – If your suppliers and partners practice sustainability, it is that much easier for your travellers. So make sustainable travel part of your negotiations and quarterly reviews. Work it into your contracts, and look for ways to add financial perks for suppliers who hit carbon-saving thresholds. It is also important to work with suppliers to determine the level of data and analytics they can supply.

Travellers want to do the right thing, but they don't always know what that is especially with so many variables. Present them with clear choices and simple tips that guide them towards more sustainable travel decisions.



**67%** of travel buyers said the business travel sector should commit to a common climate target

## 2. Gauge the real impact to improve it

Track and make sustainability efforts measurable, so that they can be more effectively managed.

Data makes the difference, because it can show you what sustainable travel looks like and help you measure your progress. Familiarise yourself with your organisation's overall sustainability metrics, and use that data to set, track, and manage sustainability efforts for your programme and the organisation as a whole.

You will also want to evaluate your reporting tools to make sure they equip you to deliver regular reviews on critical factors, and do deep-dive analysis.

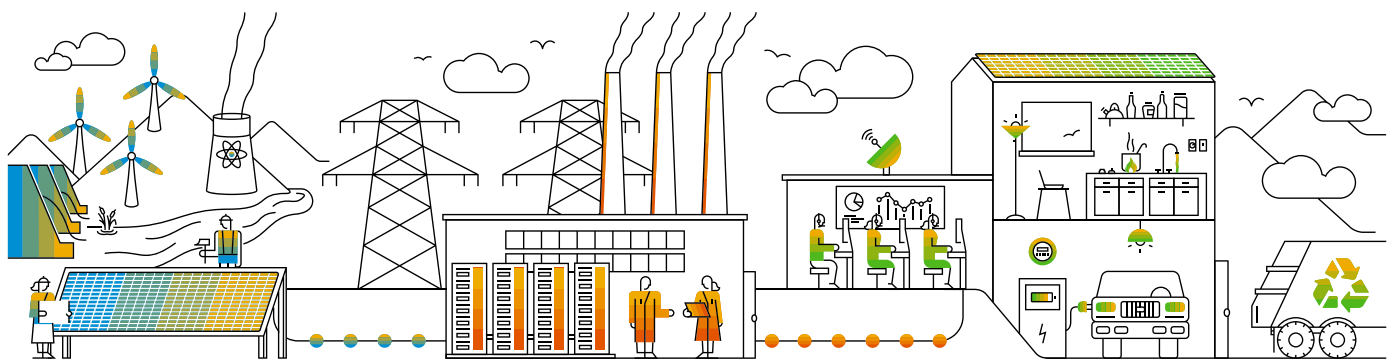
Travellers also need help with tracking. Consider tools that show them the effect of their individual booking choices, as well as their ongoing environmental impact.

## 3. Prove your commitment to constituents

Employees, investors, regulators, and communities support organisations that recognise doing good is good for business.

Travel sustainability is a key contributor to any company's eco-efforts – it is important to communicate sustainability efforts across and within the organisation, as a whole.

Give management and employees guidance on what can be done internally to reduce emissions and overall carbon footprint. Get the C-suite involved and make sure they are vocal about the value of sustainable practices.



As corporate travel gradually resumes, Indian organisations should feel confident they can make a real difference. Already ready and willing to take concrete action, they should grasp the opportunity offered by a post-pandemic “reset” to deepen their sustainability efforts, engaging customers, suppliers, partners and employees in their efforts.

## **SAP Concur Solutions to Support Travel Sustainability**

### **Concur Travel:**

- Highlight sustainable options and green partners with custom fields, so when employees are booking travel, they can quickly pick the most sustainable choice.
  - Guide employees towards greener travel before, during, and after their trip. For example, should they rent a hybrid car?
  - Use personalised messaging to explain your company's sustainable initiatives, helping employees understand that it's not about not travelling, it's about travelling smarter and more efficiently.
- 

### **Concur Request:**

- Use powerful rules-based engines to proactively guide employees through compliant options
  - Enhance sustainability aspects of your entire employee spend programme, making sure travel and expense policies are aligned and respected while offering a seamless end-to-end experience.
- 

### **Concur Intelligence:**

- Dive deeper into your analytics and get insights into carbon emissions, top destinations, green suppliers, business traveller practices, and spending behaviours.
- 

### **TriplT from Concur:**

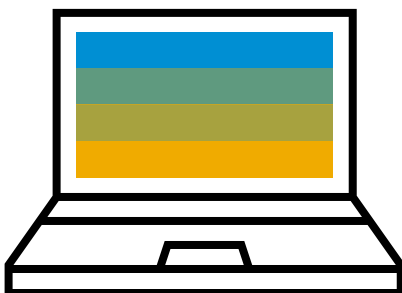
- Show employees their individual travel footprint and give them practical options for offsetting their impact.
- 

### **Concur Expense:**

- Use electronic receipts to go paperless and cut miles of paperwork out of the process.
- 

### **Partner Ecosystem:**

- Use our App Center to find sustainable suppliers who can support you at all levels of your corporate social responsibility strategy.



For more information about SAP Concur's tools and other ways to support travel sustainability, please download the [infographic](#) or contact us [here](#).

Follow all of SAP



[www.concur.co.in](http://www.concur.co.in)

**With Corporate Travel Returning, Indian Organisations Are Confident of Sustainable Efforts Whitepaper (22/08)**

© 2022 SAP SE or an SAP affiliate company. All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or for any purpose without the express permission of SAP SE or an SAP affiliate company.

The information contained herein may be changed without prior notice. Some software products marketed by SAP SE and its distributors contain proprietary software components of other software vendors. National product specifications may vary.

These materials are provided by SAP SE or an SAP affiliate company for informational purposes only, without representation or warranty of any kind, and SAP or its affiliated companies shall not be liable for errors or omissions with respect to the materials. The only warranties for SAP or SAP affiliate company products and services are those that are set forth in the express warranty statements accompanying such products and services, if any. Nothing herein should be construed as constituting an additional warranty.

In particular, SAP SE or its affiliated companies have no obligation to pursue any course of business outlined in this document or any related presentation, or to develop or release any functionality mentioned therein. This document, or any related presentation, and SAP SE's or its affiliated companies' strategy and possible future developments, products, and/or platforms, directions, and functionality are all subject to change and may be changed by SAP SE or its affiliated companies at any time for any reason without notice. The information in this document is not a commitment, promise, or legal obligation to deliver any material, code, or functionality. All forward-looking statements are subject to various risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from expectations. Readers are cautioned not to place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements, and they should not be relied upon in making purchasing decisions.

SAP and other SAP products and services mentioned herein as well as their respective logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of SAP SE (or an SAP affiliate company) in Germany and other countries. All other product and service names mentioned are the trademarks of their respective companies.

See [www.sap.com/copyright](http://www.sap.com/copyright) for additional trademark information and notices.