

## PRESS RELEASE



### GLOBAL BUSINESS TRAVEL FUND NEEDED TO PROTECT UK ECONOMY

**1st November 2023:** Today, the Business Travel Association (BTA), the authoritative voice of business travel in the UK, has launched a Manifesto outlining a strategic pathway to tackle industry pressure points and support the UK economy.

The Manifesto outlines filling the skills gap, achieving net zero emissions and investment in transport networks as key issues to address in 2024.

The Manifesto also pushes for a new UK Global Business Travel Fund, to ensure that international travel is efficient. As part of this, the BTA calls for more financial clarity following the UK's departure from the European Union. With approximately **200 SMEs** applying for this fund each month, the continuation of investment is vital for the UK economy. The fund would encourage SMEs to travel to new trading partners and unlock new business deals across the world.

Post-pandemic, the BTA highlights that demand for business trips has not dampened, with business travel contributing **£27.7bn per annum** to the UK economy, supporting over **280,000 jobs**. As KPMG's economic outlook highlights the UK's GDP growth is slowing to **0.4%** in 2023 with an estimated **0.3%** growth in 2024, investment in business travel is vital.

Clive Wratten, CEO of the BTA, says: "Business travellers are the drivers of international trade. As such, our industry should be recognised for its crucial role in the UK economy, and more must be done to improve the wider travel ecosystem. Constant unruly disruptions are pushing commuters to their cars as they lose faith in public transport networks. Delays to work trips due to travel incompetence are not only an inconvenience but carry significant economic and environmental costs for the UK."

The BTA's Manifesto emphasises that outdated and abandoned infrastructure such as the HS2 project, connectivity issues, poor sustainability commitments, and a depleting workforce are challenging traveller trust. To confront this, the Manifesto is a framework for all sectors to ensure a prosperous travel network. It calls for trade agreements to include new work visas and permits, an industry standard for carbon off-setting, and a strategic multi-modal transport strategy.

The BTA also calls for an industry standard of carbon offsetting to tackle the environmental burden of travel. This is needed to reduce 'greenwashing' by ensuring all businesses are held to the same level of accountability. Greater collaboration is needed between the government and industry sectors to guarantee a suitable accreditation.

Wratten added: "There is no common standard for businesses operating in the industry. This must change. We demand that the government recognise the value of business travel and work together with the industry to ensure we collectively champion the unique needs of business travellers."

The Manifesto features contributions from travel management company (TMC) partners and predicts that the 2024 outlook could be positive, with business travel returning to **80-85%** of pre-pandemic levels. However, at its current pace, the reality will result in economic growth being stunted further, with additional environmental pressure.

The Manifesto was launched ahead of the King's Speech on 7<sup>th</sup> November.

**\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\***

### **Notes to Editors**

To download the full manifesto, click [here](#).

### **About the BTA**

The BTA is the authority on business travel. Working collaboratively across the industry and with the government to promote the integral role of business travel and events to the wider economy.

Originally founded in 1967, the BTA has a diverse membership and roster of industry partners. It's TMC membership accounts for over 90% of UK expenditure on managed business travel, delivering value for money and great service to business travellers in the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors. The BTA focuses on delivering practical solutions to challenges and market changes, as well as supporting best practice, sustainability, and the well-being of travellers.

For more information on BTA please visit: [www.thebta.org.uk](http://www.thebta.org.uk) or call 020 3657 7010.

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