

# Changing behaviour in the international dispute community

International dispute practitioners are waking up to the need to change the way in which they manage cases to reduce their carbon footprint

The Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CIArb) is leading the way in adopting more environmentally friendly policies in its offices and branches across the globe. It is also actively supporting a new initiative in the international dispute community, the 'Pledge for Greener Arbitrations'. This initiative was launched in November 2019 to assess the carbon impact of international arbitrations and to encourage arbitration practitioners to consider the environment when conducting arbitrations.

The first step in this initiative was to conduct an environmental assessment of a significant international arbitration (around 30-50 million dollars in dispute). The results were striking. An international arbitration involves participants from all over the world and the Green Pledge team found that 93% of emissions from a major international arbitration came from flights alone. The team concluded that a major international arbitration required just under 20,000 trees to offset the carbon emissions created by that one arbitration – a number equivalent to four times the number of trees in Hyde Park or all the trees in Central Park. Eliminating one flight at every stage of every arbitration of this size would save over 6 million trees per year (based on a conservative estimate of 300 international arbitrations of this size). Eliminating all paper usage for filings would result in a saving of around a million trees annually.

The Green Pledge team, led by international arbitrator Lucy Greenwood C.Arb FCIArb, member of CIArb's Board of Trustees, are committed to changing the way in which international arbitrations are conducted. Greenwood says: 'Technology is the key to improving the efficiency and reducing the environmental cost of the process. Video conferencing and screen sharing technology can reduce the need to meet witnesses face to face to prepare them for cases. Similarly, viewing

documents on screen during hearings can eliminate the need for printed bundles. We have the technology; we just need to encourage people to change.'

The Chartered Institute of Arbitrators has moved to digital only content for its flagship journal, *The International Journal of Arbitration, Mediation and Dispute Management* and its quarterly magazine *The Resolver*. Making one tonne of paper requires 4 trees and emits more than 1.5 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e (carbon dioxide equivalent). Making the complete change to digital only signals the importance of green behaviours to the wider international dispute community.

As Greenwood says: 'We may be actively addressing climate change issues at home, but we believe that once we engage in our arbitration practice, it is someone else's problem. The international arbitration industry is made up of several autonomous parts: arbitrators, counsel, parties, institutions, as the main players, plus all the supporting acts such as court reporters, printers, couriers, hotels, airlines, taxi firms, and so on. We cannot absolve ourselves of our personal responsibility to address our environmental impact on each part of the arbitration we participate in.'



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