

Low-emission cars to help make UK diplomats “the greenest in the world”

- Foreign Office to replace diplomats’ cars with all-electric or hybrid models
- FCO aiming to become the “greenest diplomatic service in the world”
- Change is part of wider FCO effort to reduce carbon footprint

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is replacing diplomats’ official cars with low-carbon vehicles as part of an ambitious programme to cut emissions and become the greenest diplomatic service in the world.

The UK’s Oslo and Holy See Embassies have already replaced their cars, and 30 other UK posts around the world will be among the first to receive either an all-electric or hybrid Jaguar I-Pace by April 2020. Fast charging stations will be installed at posts as part of the programme.

Converting to low-emission vehicles for its entire fleet is part of a wider Foreign Office effort to improve its environmental footprint.

The FCO is committed to achieving the targets set for all government departments to have a 25% electric fleet by 2022 and an all-electric fleet by 2030.

The FCO is also extending the use of solar energy on its buildings to reduce its carbon footprint and eliminating the use of single-use plastics across its global estate – saving 142,000 items from going to landfill every year.

Sir Simon McDonald, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, said:

Climate change is the greatest challenge of our time, and our fleet of flag cars is a high-profile tool for demonstrating the UK’s international leadership on climate change diplomacy.

I want us to be the greenest diplomatic service in the world. Shifting our vehicles away from petrol to all-electric will help us achieve this.

The UK will host COP26 in 2020. The event in Glasgow next year will be the UN’s 26th climate change conference, and bring together over 30,000 delegates from around the world, including climate experts, business leaders and citizens to agree ambitious action to tackle climate change.

Notes to editors:

1. The International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that transportation is responsible for 24 per cent of all global CO2 emissions.

2. In 2018-19, the FCO UK/domestic greenhouse gas emissions were 7,753 tCO₂e (tonnes of Carbon Dioxide equivalent), representing a 60 per cent reduction compared to 2009-10 and ahead of the 2020 Greener Government Commitment target. Of this, the FCO fleet accounted for 94 tCO₂e.

3. The first 30 Posts set to receive a low-emission flag vehicles are: 1) Abu Dhabi 2) Atlanta 3) Brasilia 4) Brussels 5) Bucharest 6) Calgary 7) Chicago 8) Colombo 9) Dubai 10) Hanoi 11) Kiev 12) Kingston 13) Lisbon 14) Madrid 15) Mexico City 16) Montreal 17) Moscow 18) Paris 19) Pristina 20) Riga 21) Rio De Janeiro 22) Sao Paulo 23) Singapore 24) Stockholm 25) Sydney 26) Taiwan 27) Tallinn 28) The Hague 29) Vilnius 30) Zagreb

4. Embassies can now only purchase petrol or diesel vehicles as a last resort in locations where electric vehicles are not serviceable or available.

5. Action taken to eliminate single-use plastics across the FCO global estate has seen a 98% reduction in the UK of single-use plastics, and 15 Posts now operate entirely free of single-use plastics. Upon completion, the campaign is expected to see the FCO's single-use plastic footprint cut by 99%, saving 142,000 items from entering local landfills per year.