

## **ASSESSMENT**

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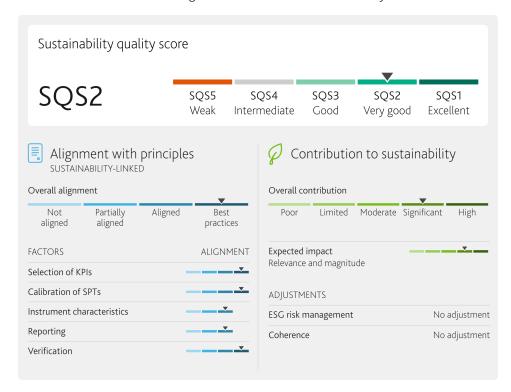
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# Air France-KLM Group

Second Party Opinion – Sustainability-Linked Financing Framework Assigned SQS2 Sustainability Quality Score

#### Summary

We have assigned an SQS2 sustainability quality score (very good) to Air France–KLM Group's sustainability-linked financing framework dated 12 December 2022. Air France–KLM Group has created this sustainability-linked financing framework to issue sustainability-linked instruments to finance general corporate purposes and has selected one key performance indicator (KPI) on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions intensity. The main feature of this type of financing is the change in the instruments' financial characteristics, depending on whether or not the issuer achieves predefined sustainability targets. The framework is aligned with the five core components of the International Capital Market Association's Sustainability-Linked Bond Principles (SLBP) 2020 and the Loan Market Association, Asia Pacific Loan Market Association and Loan Syndications & Trading Association's (LMA/APLMA/LSTA) Sustainability-Linked Loan Principles (SLLP) 2022. The company also incorporates recommended practices under these principles and all identified best practices. The framework demonstrates a significant contribution to sustainability.



## Scope

We have provided a Second Party Opinion (SPO) on the sustainability credentials of Air France–KLM Group's sustainability-linked financing framework including its alignment with the ICMA's Sustainability-Linked Bond Principles (SLBP) 2020 and the LMA/APLMA/LSTA's Sustainability-Linked Loan Principles (SLLP) 2022. The company has selected one sustainability key performance indicator (KPI) – in the area of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions intensity – as outlined in Appendix 2 of this report.

Our assessment is based on the last updated version of the Air France–KLM Group sustainability-linked financing framework, dated 8 December 2022, and our opinion reflects our point-in-time assessment of the details contained in this version of the document, and other public and non-public information provided by the company.

We produced this SPO based on our Framework to Provide Second Party Opinions on Sustainable Debt, published in October 2022.

## Issuer profile

Headquartered in Paris, France, Air France–KLM Group is one of Europe's largest airline groups by revenue. In 2021, the company generated €14.3 billion in revenue. Most of its revenue comes from the core passenger and cargo air transportation services provided through its flagship Air France and KLM brands, which account for 86% of its revenue, with another 7% coming from maintenance operations and 7% from Transavia, its low-cost airline division. In 2021, Air France–KLM Group carried 45 million passengers and 1.05 million tons of cargo, serving 310 destinations across 117 countries. The company's sustainability strategy encompasses both social and environmental elements. On environmental issues, the company is seeking to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions principally by modernizing the fleet for more fuel-efficient aircraft and use sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), and its sustainability strategy also encompasses improving air quality and protecting biodiversity. In terms of overarching sustainability goals, the company has publicly set additional greenhouse gas reduction goals for 2030 and 2050.

## **Strengths**

- » The timeline, baseline and trigger events are clearly disclosed.
- » KPI data undergoes both internal and external verification.
- » Verification will be conducted until maturity of the bond.
- » The KPI addresses a significant challenge for the aviation sector.
- » The sustainability performance targets (SPTs) are set in accordance with international standards.

## Challenges

- » The company's, and the overall aviation sector's, measures of achievement in terms of carbon footprint reduction involve a relatively high degree of uncertainty, notably around the scalability of key enabling technologies, such as sustainable aviation fuels.
- » Radiative forcing induced by non-CO2 emissions is not included in the KPI calculation methodology and SPTs to reduce the company's impact on climate change, which is also the case for its competitors.

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## Alignment with principles

Not aligned

Air France–KLM Group's sustainability-linked financing framework is aligned with the ICMA's Sustainability-Linked Bond Principles (SLBP) 2020, LMA/APLMA/LSTA's Sustainability-Linked Loan Principles (SLLP) 2022, and incorporates recommended practices under these principles and all identified best practices:

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Selection of key performance indicators		
O Social Loan Principles (SLP)	♂ Sustainability-Linked Bond Principles (SLBP)	✓ Sustainability Linked Loan Principles (SLLP)
Green Bond Principles (GBP)	O Social Bond Principles (SBP)	Oreen Loan Principles (GLP)

Aligned

Best practices

Partially aligned

#### **Definition – ALIGNED**

Air France–KLM Group has clearly detailed the characteristics of the selected KPI, including the units of measurement, the rationale and process for selecting the KPI, the calculation methodologies and the scope. These details have been disclosed in the framework. The company has selected one KPI — greenhouse gas emissions intensity, calculated in metric tons of carbon dioxide  $(CO_2)$  equivalent per revenue ton kilometer  $(gCO_2e/RTK)$  which is a commonly used metric in the sector despite the potential concomitant increase of absolute emissions.

#### Measurability, verifiability and benchmark - BEST PRACTICES

The company presents one KPI that is measurable and externally verifiable by independent auditors. The calculation methodology is consistent and in case of any change in methodology, the issuer commits to post-issuance external review of the relevant changes. The data has not been disclosed because of a recent change in methodology, although the numerator and the denominator were previously audited. The KPI's definition relies on external references, such as the GHG Protocol, allowing it to be benchmarked.

#### Relevance and materiality - ALIGNED

The selected KPI is relevant, core and significant to the airline's business strategy for its current and future operations. The KPI covers the most relevant sustainability challenge for the sector. The level of relevance and the significance of the KPI are analyzed in detail in the "Contribution to sustainability" section.

The scope of coverage for the KPI includes the flight and ground operations of Air France Group and KLM Group, including subsidiaries, as stated in Air France–KLM Group's most recent universal registration document (URD)<sup>1</sup>. Most greenhouse gas emissions are generated by Air France–KLM Group's direct activities (Scope 1, representing 73.7% of the group's footprint in 2019 with mainly flight operations, which represent 99.7% of Scope 1), and its indirect emissions linked to fuel production (Scope 3, representing 18.7% of the group's footprint in 2021), which together account for more than 90% of the company's carbon footprint. The KPI does not include Scope 2 (0.1% of emissions) or other elements of Scope 3 such as embodied emissions from aircraft manufacturing.

#### Best practices identified

- » There is continuity or traceability, with independent verifiers, in case of a change in the methodology used to measure the KPI
- » The KPI's definition explicitly relies on external references, allowing it to be benchmarked
- » Disclosure of the externally verified historical performance of KPI; for example, over at least three years

#### Calibration of sustainability performance targets



#### Consistency and ambition - BEST PRACTICES

The SPTs for the KPI are consistent with the company's existing targets set in its sustainability strategy and demonstrate a significant improvement compared with the company's business as usual (BaU). All the SPTs have been benchmarked against sector peers and science-based scenarios, with the level of ambition analyzed in detail in the "Contribution to sustainability" section.

The means for achieving the SPTs are also disclosed and generally credible, notably including a target to use 10% sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) by 2030. The company has identified some of the key factors beyond the issuer's direct control that may affect the achievement of the SPTs. The entire aviation industry is facing challenges in terms of the scalability of enabling technologies to reach net zero. The reliance of many airlines' decarbonization strategies on SAF made from biofuels is a particular challenge. The projected demand for SAF from aviation outstrips realistic supply projections, because of raw materials usage competition (e.g., food production, heating purposes etc.), the need for biofuels and hydrogen-based fuels in other industries, and the higher cost of production compared with more emitting fuels. Air France-KLM group has committed to only source SAF that does not compete with human food or animal feed supply and that is not derived from palm oil.

#### **Disclosure - BEST PRACTICES**

The timeline, baseline and trigger events have been disclosed in the framework. The issuer has set targets for 2025 and 2030 for its KPI, allowing sufficient visibility for its performance over time. The selected baseline is relevant and reliable.

#### Best practices identified

- » Disclosure of the means for achieving the SPTs as well as any other key factors beyond the issuer's direct control that may affect the achievement of the SPTs
- » The means for achieving the SPTs are credible
- » Disclosure of the timeline, baseline and trigger events, including relevant intermediate targets
- » The selected baseline is relevant and reliable

#### Instrument characteristics



#### Variation of structural characteristics - ALIGNED

Air France–KLM Group confirms that the instruments issued under this framework will be subject to variations in their financial characteristics depending on the achievement of the defined trigger events. The exact mechanism and impacts will be detailed for each instrument in the corresponding documentation.

The issuer has stated it will assign structural or financial implications, or both, to the achievement or non-achievement of the predefined SPT(s) at the relevant target observation date(s). These implications may include, but are not limited to, a coupon step-up, the payment of a premium at maturity of the instrument or a margin adjustment depending on the nature of the instrument. The relevant target observation dates that could trigger the aforementioned implications can be freely chosen by the issuer from the trigger events defined in 2025 and 2030 to ensure the eligibility of short-term instruments under this framework. Cases of failure to comply with some of the reporting or verification requirements will be treated as if the relevant SPT was not met on the relevant target observation date and trigger the respective financial or structural implications, or both.

#### Reporting



#### Transparency of reporting - ALIGNED

The issuer has committed to report annually until the maturity of the bond. The intended scope and granularity of the reporting is clear and exhaustive, covering all the required and recommended elements, including information on the performance of the KPI and any relevant information enabling investors to monitor the level of ambition of the SPTs.

#### Verification



#### Verification process - BEST PRACTICES

The performance of the KPI against its SPTs will be covered by an external verification, on an annual basis and in case of significant changes affecting the sustainability-linked bond's financial or structural characteristics (such as a trigger event), or both, until the maturity of the bond.

The verification assurance report will be publicly available in the annual URD of Air France–KLM Group.

#### Best practices identified

» Verification will be conducted until maturity of the bond or loan

## Contribution to sustainability

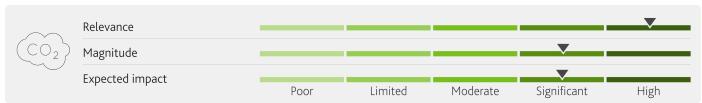
The framework demonstrates a significant contribution to sustainability.



#### **Expected impact**

The expected impact of the KPI on environmental objectives is significant. A detailed assessment is provided below.

#### KPI: Greenhouse gas emissions intensity – grams $CO_2e$ per revenue ton kilometer (gCO<sub>2</sub>e/RTK)



The relevance of the KPI is high. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are a highly relevant issue for the aviation sector. The sector accounts for around 2%-2.5% of global  $CO_2$  emissions, and this share is set to grow as other sectors decarbonize and absolute air transportation emissions continue to rise. However, the negative impact of the aviation sector on climate is not limited to the effects of its greenhouse gas emissions alone. Air France–KLM Group acknowledges that the regulatory environment in the future will also take into account the "non- $CO_2$  climate impact of aviation" (e.g., NOx, soot particles, contrails, etc.), which may have an impact on the company's activities and that of the aviation sector. Condensation trails alone are likely to contribute more to the sector's carbon footprint than  $CO_2$  emissions, making the total amount of GHG warming attributable to the sector more than 5%.

Overall, the magnitude of the SPTs, which reflects their ambition, is considered significant. The company's target represents a significant improvement from its business-as-usual scenario. The KPI fell at an annual average of 2.6% over 2016-19 and at an annual average of 1.6% over 2016-21. Starting from a 2019 baseline, the company plans to decrease greenhouse gas emissions intensity by 10% by 2025, which represents a 1.8% annual decrease, and then to accelerate afterwards to reach a decrease of 30% by 2030, bringing the average annual reduction up to 3.1% for 2025-30.

Air France–KLM Group's target to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions intensity by 30% by 2030 from a 2019 baseline shows a solid ambition compared with the targets of most of its sector peers. This target to reduce GHG emissions intensity by 30% by 2030 to 672 gCO<sub>2</sub>e/RTK appears to be in line with American Airlines Group's commitment to reduce similar emissions (related to jet fuel; 45% per RTK from owned and subcontracted operations) by 2035 from a 2019 base year and with Air New Zealand's target reduction of 28.9% per RTK between 2019 and 2030<sup>4</sup>. The Japan Airlines Group's target for 2030, which is to keep total emissions below 90% of the 2019 levels, appears to be one of the most ambitious absolute reduction targets for an airline around the world<sup>5</sup>. When this is translated into a greenhouse gas intensity metric using the Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI) methodology, it is equivalent to 550 gCO2e/RTK, which makes it one of the few airlines globally to have aligned with the TPI's 1.5°C scenario.

As for international standards, five airlines are currently classified under the Science-Based Targets initiative's (SBTi) Air Transportation - Airlines category with a near-term target status of officially validated. In October 2021, Air France–KLM Group became one of the first aviation groups committed to set carbon intensity reduction targets in line with a trajectory of well below 2°C and get them approved by SBTi. In November 2022, SBTi has validated the target to be aligned with a well-below 2°C trajectory, which supports the magnitude score of significant.

The IEA Net Zero by 2050 scenario states that a shrinkage in demand volume in aviation is critical for the sector to be aligned with the 1.5°C pathway, even if all operational measures and fuel-efficiency technologies to reduce emissions are implemented. In the case of Air France–KLM Group, the absolute greenhouse gas emissions are still likely to be 2% above 2019 levels by 2025. Air France-KLM's SPTs — as is the case for the whole sector — rely heavily on the development of SAF, the availability of which can be uncertain. Air France-KLM has excluded the use of carbon offsets for its 2025 and 2030 targets.

## **ESG** risk management

We have not applied a negative adjustment for ESG risk management to the expected impact score. The KPI does not seem to lead to any associated environmental or social negative externalities. Reductions in absolute greenhouse gas emissions are likely.

#### Coherence

We have not applied a negative adjustment for coherence to the expected impact score because the company's strategy seems aligned with the targets set under this framework.

## Appendix 1 - Mapping the KPI to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

The KPI included in Air France-KLM's framework are likely to contribute to three of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely:

UN SDG 17 Goals	KPI	SDG Targets
GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	Greenhouse gas emissions intensity, measured in CO2e per revenue ton kilometer (RTK)	7.3: Double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency
GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	Greenhouse gas emissions intensity, measured in CO2e per revenue ton kilometer (RTK)	9.4: Upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with all countries taking action
GOAL 13: Climate Action	Greenhouse gas emissions intensity, measured in CO2e per revenue ton kilometer (RTK)	13.2: Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) mapping in this SPO considers the KPI and associated sustainability objectives/benefits documented in the issuer's financing framework, as well as resources and guidelines from public institutions, such as the ICMA SDG Mapping Guidance and the UN SDG targets and indicators.

## Appendix 2 - Summary of the KPI in Air France-KLM's framework

KPI	SPTs	Sustainability Objectives	Unit
Greenhouse gas emissions intensity, measured in CO2e per revenue ton kilometer (RTK)	SPT 1: 10% emissions intensity reduction by 2025, compared to 2019 SPT 2: 30% emissions intensity reduction by 2030, compared to 2019	Climate Change Mitigation	tCO2e / RTK
Source: Air France-KI M's Framey	uork		

## Moody's related publications

## **Second Party Opinion analytical framework:**

» Framework to Provide Second Party Opinions on Sustainable Debt, October 2022

## **Topic page:**

» ESG Credit and Sustainable Finance

#### **Endnotes**

- 1 https://www.airfranceklm.com/en/system/files/airfranceklm\_urd\_2021\_va\_0.pdf
- 2 URD p. 151
- <u>3</u> Lee et al. 2020; ADEME 2021
- 4 https://www.aa.com/content/images/customer-service/about-us/corporate-governance/esg/aag-esg-report-2021.pdf
- 5 https://www.meti.go.jp/policy/energy\_environment/global\_warming/transition/transition\_finance\_case\_study\_jal\_eng.pdf

20 December 2022

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