

# Thalys International (Thalys)

ACKNOWLEDGE  
PRIORITISE  
SET STRATEGY & GOALS  
TRACK

GHG EMISSIONS



## Background on Thalys

Thalys is a high-speed train service operating within Europe that connects France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium. It was founded in 1996 and is headquartered in Belgium. Thalys International is a cooperative (with limited liability) between SNCF, National Rail Company of Belgium, and Deutsche Bahn. On average, Thalys carries 6.5 million passengers a year and since starting operations has carried over 100 million passengers. It reported revenues of €487 million in 2015.

## How did Thalys come to start thinking about context?

Environmental awareness has long played a role in influencing the internal policies at Thalys, and it has been actively measuring its GHG emissions since 2008<sup>1</sup>. Thalys is driven by the belief that the private sector has a responsibility to engage in finding solutions to sustainability issues. The Thalys customer surveys have also highlighted that nine out of ten Thalys customers expect Thalys to have strategies in place to address their concerns<sup>2</sup>.

With the [COP21](#) in 2015, Thalys began to consider how it could go beyond good intentions and start to meaningfully monitor the impacts it has on climate change<sup>2</sup>. With COP21 likely to result in an agreement on setting international targets to limit global temperatures to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, Thalys began to look at how it would need to respond to any agreements from COP21 to better link its efforts to those of the wider international community, and a contextual approach provided it with this link.

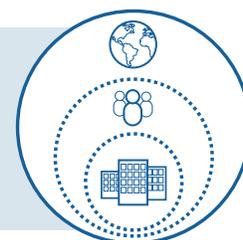
<sup>1</sup> Thalys (2015). Press Release: 40 % less CO2 emissions by 2020: Thalys, supported by WWF, is the first European railway undertaking to sign up to the Science Based Targets. Accessed at: [https://www.thalys.com/img/pdf/presse/release/en/1446108695\\_29.10.2015\\_40\\_percent\\_less\\_CO2\\_emissio.pdf](https://www.thalys.com/img/pdf/presse/release/en/1446108695_29.10.2015_40_percent_less_CO2_emissio.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Science-Based Targets (2016). Case Study: Thalys. Accessed at: <http://sciencebasedtargets.org/case-studies/>

## What does context look like at Thalys?

### 1 ACKNOWLEDGE the need to operate within global, regional, and/or local socio-ecological thresholds.

GHG EMISSIONS



GHG emissions: Thalys acknowledges that there is an urgent need to reduce its carbon emissions in a way that supports efforts to limit global temperatures to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels<sup>1</sup>. The company believes that companies need to reduce their emissions in line with their respective responsibilities<sup>3</sup>. Thalys has yet to formally commit to working with its value chain in a broader capacity to support their efforts to operate within the limits of this threshold.

Other thresholds: Thalys acknowledges the importance of other socio-ecological issues including water, land-system change, biodiversity, air quality, gender diversity, and employment but does not yet discuss them with reference to thresholds.

### 2 Transparently understand and PRIORITISE a set of focus areas in relation to key socio-ecological trends at the global, regional, and/or local level.

GHG EMISSIONS



Thalys appears to use what we call a 'classic' materiality approach whereby it prioritises its key socio-ecological issues primarily based upon the expectations of its customers. Thalys outlines its approach for evaluating and measuring the impacts the transport sector has on society in a 2015 report titled Sustainable Mobility.<sup>4</sup>

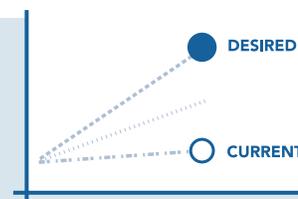
GHG emissions: Thalys outlines four areas of its business activities where it is directing its efforts to support meeting its contextual GHG emissions goal<sup>4</sup>. A significant source of Thalys's GHG emissions comes from its trains, and Thalys has committed to working with its value chain to improve the energy consumption of its trains<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Thalys (2016). Our Actions for the Environment. Accessed at: [https://www.thalys.com/img/1472827771/pdf/developpement-durable/brochure\\_carte\\_en.pdf](https://www.thalys.com/img/1472827771/pdf/developpement-durable/brochure_carte_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Thalys (2015). Sustainable Mobility. Accessed at: [https://www.thalys.com/img/1446813842/pdf/developpement-durable/method\\_en.pdf](https://www.thalys.com/img/1446813842/pdf/developpement-durable/method_en.pdf)

### 3 SET STRATEGY AND GOALS by transparently articulating the current performance gap and what portion of this gap the business will address.

GHG EMISSIONS



GHG emissions: Thalys has committed to reduce its scope 1,2, and 3 GHG emissions per passenger kilometre by 41.4% by 2020, using a 2008 baseline<sup>2</sup>. Thalys's scope 3 emissions (50%) are covered by this target and Thalys has committed to work with its value chain to set explicit goals to reduce the remainder of these emissions<sup>2</sup>. To establish its target, Thalys worked with the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) and an external consulting company. The [Science-based Targets](#) initiative has assessed this goal and determined it to be in line with its definition of a "science-based" goal. Thalys states that during the development of the goal it considered the fact that the transport sector accounts for 20% of all global carbon emissions but beyond this it has not transparently outlined the assumptions or rationale it used to develop the goal<sup>2</sup>.

Other thresholds: Thalys has not yet set contextual goals in relation to any other thresholds.

### 4 Transparently TRACK performance against realistic trajectory targets.

GHG EMISSIONS



GHG emissions: Thalys has yet to set realistic trajectory targets that will be used to monitor its progress towards achieving its contextual GHG emissions goal. Thalys has also yet to outline if it intends to set any metrics that could be used to assess its influence in supporting its value chain in adhering to the limits of this threshold.

Other thresholds: Thalys reports its performance against other socio-ecological issues including water, land-system change, biodiversity, air quality, gender diversity, and employment but does not yet report its progress in relation to their associated thresholds.

## What is the road ahead for context at Thalys?

Thalys has openly embraced a contextual approach to setting its GHG emissions goal and has indicated that it wants to further engage other railway companies, partners, and suppliers to help educate them on the merits of setting similar contextual goals<sup>2</sup>.