# DHL's journey towards electrification and sustainability



DHL has been actively transforming its operations to cut vehicle emissions and reduce total cost of ownership (TCO) through innovative sustainability programmes. The logistics giant's ambitious goal is to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, a target set against a baseline of 40 million metric tons of CO2 equivalent in 2021. As part of this initiative, the company has been gradually implementing changes to its fleet to enhance sustainability while maintaining operational efficiency.

Currently, 25% of DHL’s fleet of 14,500 light commercial vehicles is battery-powered, with the company car fleet also transitioning to zero emissions at a similar rate. Marijn Slabbekoorn, Senior Director of Fleet Management and Sustainability at DHL Express Europe, stated, “Electric vehicles are cheaper for us in Europe than diesel vans from a TCO perspective.” This assertion highlights the economic viability of electric vehicles (EVs) in terms of leasing costs and the savings gained from lower charging expenses as opposed to refuelling with diesel.

DHL's sustainability initiatives have garnered recognition, with Slabbekoorn receiving both the European Fleet & Mobility Manager of the Year Award and the European Commercial Manager of the Year at the recent Fleet Europe Awards. Under his leadership, the company has adopted procurement frameworks that position battery electric vehicles as the standard option for its fleet and has established standardised plans for charging infrastructure, essential for supporting the electrification of one of Europe’s largest logistics fleets.

The operational structure of DHL requires local fleet managers to ensure that vehicle replacements align with corporate sustainability goals while addressing unique regional challenges in EV readiness. The process has involved reviewing operational business cases to validate the need for non-electric vehicle replacements based on factors such as payload, daily routes, and grid connection availability. Even so, DHL has gathered substantial evidence from its 250 electrified depots to demonstrate successful electrification.

The application of telematics has introduced a predictive maintenance approach, allowing DHL to receive alerts from vehicles ahead of potential failures, thereby minimising operational downtime. Slabbekoorn provided insights into the new system saying, “Telematics will allow us to move to predictive maintenance, whereby we receive information from a vehicle before it fails, allowing us to fix it, which is very interesting, because it should mean zero downtime.”

DHL’s charging strategy involves overnight charging at its depots, leveraging existing energy capacities from sorting machines and employing intelligent charging solutions. The complexity of charging infrastructure has required meticulous planning and quality assurance to ensure the reliability of operations. “At the start, we underestimated the complexity of charging infrastructure,” said Slabbekoorn, underlining the logistical hurdles faced in implementing effective charging stations.

Additional measures to support EV adoption have included enhanced employee engagement initiatives, where in-vehicle and classroom training emphasises safety and sustainability. The company has introduced incentives to encourage employees to opt for EVs, with over 50% of drivers in Europe now choosing electric vehicles as their default option. Some employees have opted for mobility budgets instead of company cars, highlighting the company's flexible approach to transport solutions, particularly in locations well-served by public transport.

DHL aims to electrify 75% of its European Express fleet by 2030, aligning with the broader goal of reaching 66% electrification of its last-mile delivery vehicles globally by the end of the decade. A recent survey conducted by DHL Express among 5,000 SMEs across 11 countries revealed that over two-thirds of respondents consider sustainability as either "very important" or "extremely important," suggesting a significant shift in business priorities towards sustainable practices.

As the logistics industry continues to evolve towards greater sustainability, DHL's proactive initiatives and advancements in fleet electrification underline the potential of integrating emerging technologies into business strategies to achieve both environmental and financial objectives.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dhl.com/discover/en-gb/logistics-advice/sustainability-and-green-logistics/what-dhl-express-is-doing-to-gogreen> - DHL's goal to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and its various sustainability initiatives, including electric fleet and green logistics.
2. <https://www.fiaformulae.com/de/news/6628> - DHL's commitment to zero-emissions logistics by 2050, including its interim milestones and the role of Formula E in driving innovation.
3. <https://group.dhl.com/en/media-relations/press-releases/2024/strategy-2030-dhl-group-to-accelerate-sustainable-growth-with-new-strategy-2030.html> - DHL Group's Strategy 2030, focusing on sustainable growth, revenue growth, and decarbonization targets.
4. <https://dhl-freight-connections.com/en/business/dhl-group-stays-on-track-science-based-targets-initiative-validates-2050-net-zero-emissions-goal/> - DHL Group's net-zero emissions goal by 2050 validated by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) and its detailed environmental roadmap.
5. <https://www.dhl.com/discover/en-gb/logistics-advice/sustainability-and-green-logistics/what-dhl-express-is-doing-to-gogreen> - DHL Express UK's goal to run a 100% electric courier vehicle fleet by 2030 and the use of electric ground service equipment.
6. <https://www.fiaformulae.com/de/news/6628> - DHL's efforts to reduce logistics-related emissions to net zero by 2050, including improving carbon efficiency and using clean transport solutions.
7. <https://dhl-freight-connections.com/en/business/dhl-group-stays-on-track-science-based-targets-initiative-validates-2050-net-zero-emissions-goal/> - The importance of the SBTi in validating DHL Group's decarbonization targets and the company's plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
8. <https://www.dhl.com/discover/en-gb/logistics-advice/sustainability-and-green-logistics/what-dhl-express-is-doing-to-gogreen> - DHL's use of sustainable aviation fuel, fuel-efficient aircraft, and electric planes as part of its sustainable aviation initiatives.
9. <https://group.dhl.com/en/media-relations/press-releases/2024/strategy-2030-dhl-group-to-accelerate-sustainable-growth-with-new-strategy-2030.html> - DHL Group's strategy to increase the share of electric vehicles in its local transport fleet and offer sustainable alternatives for all core products and services.
10. <https://dhl-freight-connections.com/en/business/dhl-group-stays-on-track-science-based-targets-initiative-validates-2050-net-zero-emissions-goal/> - DHL's plan to reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions and increase the share of sustainable fuels in its vehicle fleet by 2030.
11. <https://www.dhl.com/discover/en-gb/logistics-advice/sustainability-and-green-logistics/what-dhl-express-is-doing-to-gogreen> - DHL's use of bicycles, cargo bikes, and cubicycles for first and last mile services to reduce emissions and local air pollutants.
12. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMiqAFBVV95cUxPLVEyX1NMS0taNm5JMktpTk90aHdpdktpdVViUWJlTF81ZGNWZ0wxMVVNZGd3RVprWUw2WTZLN3V5ZlVfMjVXMmQ2d0RtVDB3SFF4V25td1dJZERZakxLd0YtWkVhdnp5NTZjbF9NMVpwVlJXai1jVVVVb0N0UHIyYy1VTXJObm9mTTN4dllwN3pDNmtPOUl5QWtGemZUOGY0UGZiczVsMnU?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data