

2019 WMF SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

OUR COMMITMENT

The Wikimedia Foundation is committed to reducing the impact of our activities on the environment – our goal is to act responsibly and sustainably. We believe that a long-term commitment to the environment, and consideration of the effects of climate change, is an essential component of our work. To this end, the Wikimedia Foundation will:

- Minimize our overall impact on the environment by seeking to reduce our global carbon footprint;
- Consider sustainability as a critical part of our decisions around how we plan our operations, travel, physical office use, and other procurements;
- Use green energy where it is available and financially feasible;
- Share sustainability information and lessons learned; and
- Perform and share an annual environmental impact assessment

OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

Each year we calculate the carbon emissions associated with our buildings/facilities, workforce travel and commuting impacts and data servers.¹ The resulting carbon footprint tells us in absolute metric tons how much greenhouse gas emissions we are responsible for in total. We also look at our relative carbon emissions to indicate how “carbon efficient” we are as we grow and evolve over time.

Impact	Methodology	2018	2019
Total carbon footprint	Total Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 tCO2-eq emissions for all functional areas	2,571.37	2,374.43
Office-related carbon footprint	tCO2-eq of San Francisco office (building + commuting) / # of SF-based employees and contractors	1.70	1.83
Product-related carbon footprint	kgCO2-eq of data center emissions / 1M pageviews on all language Wikipedias	4.89	2.33
	kWh / 1M pageviews on all language Wikipedias	11.89	10.78
Travel-related carbon footprint	tCO2-eq of travel (air travel + hotels)/ # of event attendees for internal convenings	3.21	1.65
	tCO2-eq of travel (air travel + hotels)/ # of event attendees for community convenings	N/A	2.10

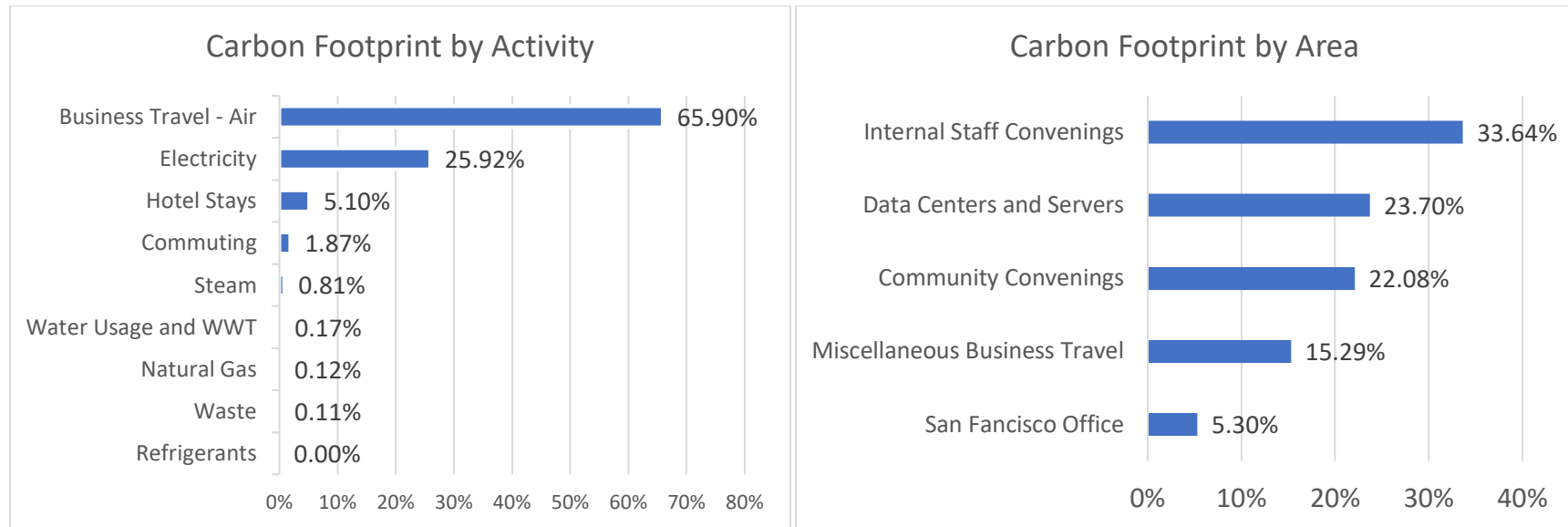
¹ In 2018, travel emissions were calculated based on actual number of trips, but estimated travel distances (grouped into “short, medium, and long” distance categories). In 2019, data tracking was improved to include actual mileage for travel, resulting in significantly higher quality results. We have recalculated air travel emissions for 2018 using this better methodology, and this Sustainability Impact Statement uses the restated 2018 carbon footprint results.

KEY CARBON IMPACTS

From 2018 to 2019, the Foundation’s carbon footprint decreased 7.66% overall. While the Foundation benefitted from significantly lower data center emissions (50.5% lower emissions than 2018), this improvement in data center efficiency was largely offset by an increase in travel emissions (33.44% higher emissions than 2018) as a result of 12% staff growth and additional events.

In 2019, air travel continued to be the main driver of carbon emissions (65.9% of emissions overall), split between travel related to convening remote staff for face-to-face meetings (i.e. “internal staff convenings” below), travel to/from events for the Wikimedia movement such as Wikimania (i.e. “community convenings” below) and miscellaneous business travel. Emissions related to data centers and servers continues to also be a highly significant driver of the overall carbon footprint (23.7% of emissions overall).²

Looking ahead, we expect to see data center efficiency continuing to improve (although at a slower pace) through an increase of renewable energy use, a focus on water conservation and recycling, and overall equipment and building upgrades. The Foundation is currently looking at options for better managing air travel, noting that 2020 air travel emissions will be dramatically curtailed because of the COVID-19 travel restrictions.



² WMF considers carbon-emitting activities over 20% of the total carbon footprint to be highly significant, activities between 11-20% to be moderately significant, between 1-10% to have low significance, and under 1% to be insignificant.

KEY 2019 SUSTAINABILITY ACTIVITIES

Our sustainability activities are aligned with WMF’s sustainability framework, which organizes initiatives under three categories: operations, engagement and culture.

In 2019, the key focus was to clarify WMF’s sustainability framework, identify and organize sustainability champions across the organization and develop governance processes to manage environmental activities going forward. Key accomplishments:

- Created a Sustainability Consortium, a cross-departmental team of Foundation staff dedicated to helping to create, implement, and advise executive leadership on potential activities to reduce the Foundation’s global carbon impact
- Implemented a process to annually measure and analyze WMF’s environmental impacts
- Developed a sustainability roadmap that identified specific actions to pursue in 2019-2021
- Documented sustainability activities and milestones to date and created processes to update that information on an annual basis



STRATEGIC SUSTAINABILITY ROADMAP

In 2019, we developed a sustainability roadmap to identify and organize the Foundation’s sustainability priorities and activities. The following chart highlights the key achievements completed and currently underway.

Strategy area	Deliverable	Notes
Minimize our carbon footprint	Calculate carbon footprint and publish impact statement	<p>WMF has completed two consecutive years of calculating its carbon footprint, and this is the first environmental impact statement to be incorporated into the Foundation’s annual report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019 Carbon Footprint Results (with 2018 air emissions restated) • 2018 Carbon Footprint Baseline (with original air travel emissions)
	Identify carbon-reduction opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air travel and electricity use from the Foundation’s data centers account for the vast majority (>90%) of the Foundation’s total carbon footprint and therefore carbon reduction opportunities are being focused on those areas. In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In 2019, we dramatically improved data tracking capabilities for air travel, giving the Foundation additional insight into how travel is being used and where it can be reduced, combined or eliminated.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We are updating our travel policy to allow Foundation staff to “bridge” back-to-back business trips to reduce the number of flight segments needed to complete two or more trips.
Integrate sustainability into planning process	Create and manage a robust sustainability strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019, the Foundation publicly outlined key sustainability policies, programs and performance via Meta-Wiki. • In addition, the Sustainability Consortium was created as a cross-departmental team of Foundation staff to oversee the implementation of the sustainability roadmap.
	Incorporate sustainability deliverables into budget/planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019, the Foundation committed to providing financial resources for annual carbon footprint assessments and incorporated sustainability as a key deliverable for quarterly metric reporting.
Empower “green” choices	Develop guidelines for remote vs. in-person participation of events, including meeting options to accommodate virtual participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts are underway to design remote event participation guidelines for internal WMF activities and evaluate for broader community implementation.
Leverage a remote workforce	Develop sustainable protocols for co-located Foundation events, including site selection criteria, lodging / accommodation practices, food / catering guidelines, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019, the Foundation explored ways to reduce the number of trips taken by Foundation staff. One focus area was to offer staff an opportunity to “bridge” sequential trips that occur in close proximity, to eliminate unnecessary back-and-forth flights. While this option has been implemented in only a handful of cases over the last six months, we see it as an opportunity to reduce overall air travel, particularly for long-haul international trips.
Enable global participation	Develop protocols for events to encourage and accommodate virtual participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Foundation increased its capacity for virtual participation at Wikimedia (Stockholm) in August 2019. The Foundation provided infrastructure and recording capabilities for keynote sessions, with Affiliates recording smaller selected sessions. This split in responsibility allowed for more sessions to be recorded for remote viewing later. • Guidelines are currently in development, with a pilot planned for the Hackathon in Albania during May 2020. Because of COVID-19 travel restrictions, this event was changed to be fully virtual, self-organized event.
	Develop, facilitate and support Community efforts in the sustainability space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019, the Foundation identified two sustainability efforts designed to have global participation: a climate change editathon and a “day of volunteering” for all Foundation staff. Due to COVID-19, these events were combined into a single event on Earth Day, April 22, 2020.
Share lessons learned	Create protocols for sharing lessons learned back with the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Sustainability Consortium is using results of the Foundation’s 2019 sustainability activities to discuss how best to share lessons learned back with the Community in 2020.

PRIORITIES FOR 2020

In 2019, the Foundation focused its efforts on getting a sustainability strategy in place and creating mechanisms to regularly share progress back with Foundation staff and Community members. In 2020, the focus will shift to piloting new protocols aimed at reducing air travel, enhancing virtual participation for Foundation events and meetings and diving more deeply into our most significant data centers and their environmental performance.

- The Foundation continues to grow, year over year, in the numbers of staff that are located globally. The number of team offsites and global events are also slowly increasing, in order to meet with our community members to discuss wide ranging topics such as Movement Strategy.
- As the world continues to read more and more articles on Wikipedia and its sister projects, our servers and website performance must keep up with the increased load. We are investigating installing a new data center with a keen eye toward sustainable power resources.
- We are looking at ways to bring our community and Foundation staff together in more virtual events. For instance, we are running a few events, mostly virtual due to COVID-19, in 2020 to test out ways to make technical conferences more accessible to more people while limiting the amount of travel.

As with all the Foundation's priorities, the impact of COVID-19 on our sustainability efforts cannot be overstated. By necessity, our air travel will be dramatically reduced, we will need to find ways to scale up virtual participation across the organization, and events will be postponed or cancelled until the crisis passes. In some cases, that will put a damper on our ability to implement sustainability goals. For example, it is impossible to enhance virtual participation options at Wikimania when Wikimania has been cancelled for 2020. In other cases, requirements to social distance mean we will be forced to get creative in finding ways to work together remotely. We will be looking for ideas, inspiration and lessons learned from this time to apply in a more structured way once the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, to ensure that virtual participation remains a viable way to interact with Foundation events going forward.

With a long history of a globally-distributed virtual team, the Foundation is well-placed to build on its remote workforce practices. The temporary closure of the Foundation's office in San Francisco has not stopped the internal sustainability team from meeting together remotely, managing the 2019 carbon footprint calculations and implementing 2020 items on the sustainability roadmap. We are committed to moving forward with our long-term sustainability goals and will continue to share our progress.