2020 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

While the COVID-19 global pandemic impacted every area of the Foundation, our commitment to sustainability remains steadfast.

Our Carbon Footprint

Each year we calculate the carbon emissions associated with our buildings/facilities, workforce travel and commuting impacts and data servers. 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.[1]

Impact	Methodology	2018	2019	2020
Total carbon footprint	Total Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 tCO2-eq emissions for all functional areas	2,867.86	2,605.32	1,169.43
Office-related carbon footprint	tCO2-eq of San Francisco office (building + commuting) / # of SF-based employees and contractors	1.70	1.62	0.77
Product-related carbon footprint	kgCO2-eq of data center emissions / 1M pageviews on all language Wikipedias	5.63	3.05	2.29
	kWh / 1M pageviews on all language Wikipedias	13.55	12.41	11.26

[1] During the COVID-19 global pandemic, selected data for the 2019 carbon footprint was unavailable. As a result estimates were used in last year's report until the actual data could be obtained in early 2021. In addition, more accurate information for certain 2018-2019 data center emissions and certain 2019 travel activity were made available in this year's reporting cycle. Our analysis incorporates this new/improved data and the results for 2018-2019 have been restated accordingly.

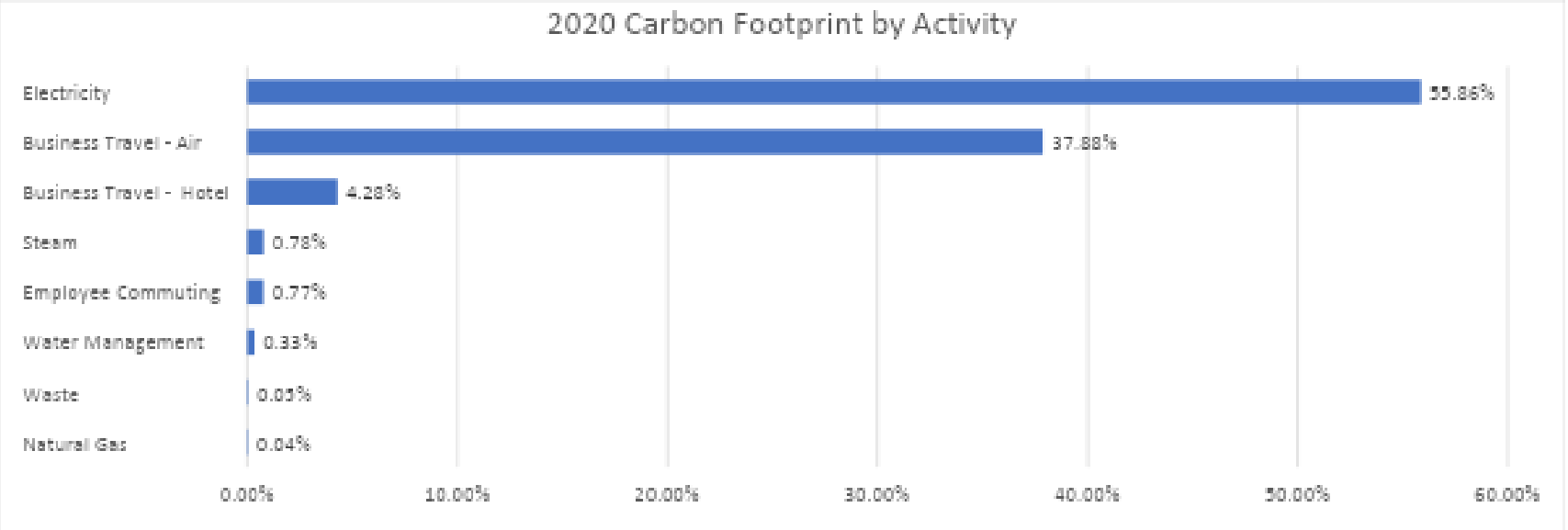
Travel-related carbon footprint	tCO2-eq of travel (air travel + hotels)/ # of event attendees for internal convenings	3.21	1.07	0.95
	tCO2-eq of travel (air travel + hotels)/ # of event attendees for community convenings	N/A	0.68	1.02

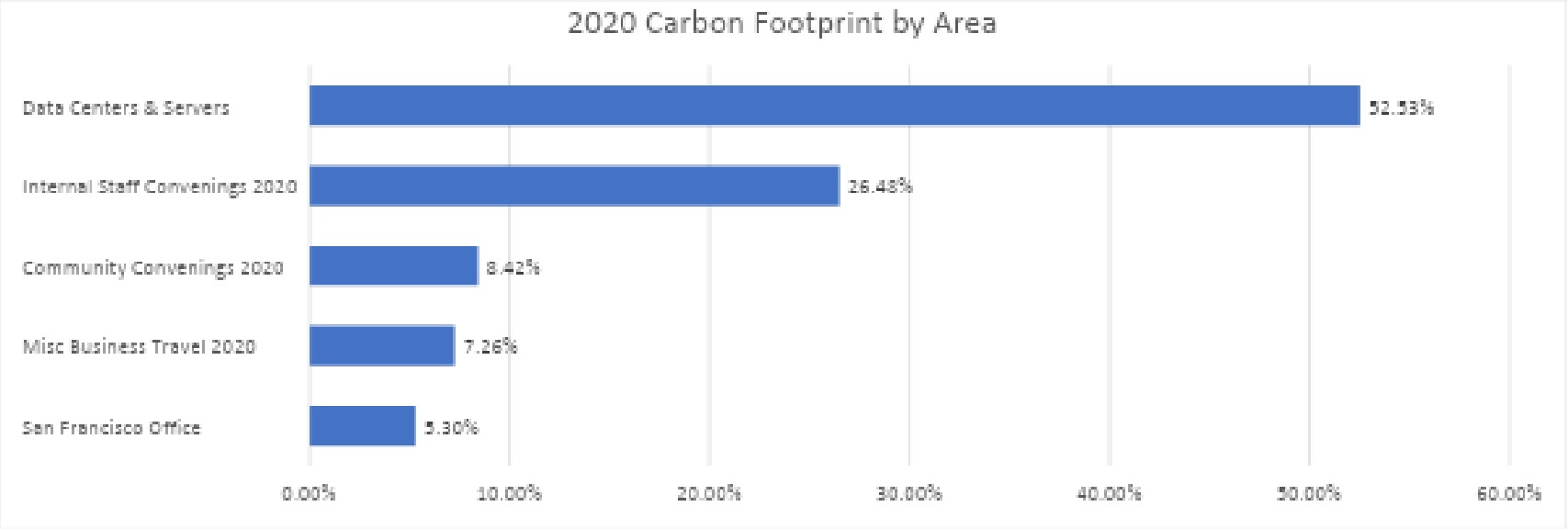
Key Carbon Impacts

From 2018 to 2020, the Foundation's overall carbon footprint decreased 59.22% overall. However, significant disruptions to the Foundation's operations and business travel as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic means that any comparison of 2020 carbon footprint results to previous years should be done with the following in mind:

- In a normal year, business travel makes up about two thirds of the Foundation's overall greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the single largest contributor to the organization's carbon footprint. Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, virtually all business travel (including Miscellaneous Business, Community Convenings and Internal Staff Convenings) was halted in March 2020 through the end of the year. As a result, air travel emissions were 72.35% lower and hotel emissions were 59.61% lower in 2020 than the previous year.
- While approximately two thirds of the Foundation's workforce works remotely on an ongoing basis, the remaining staff were shifted to a work-from-home model in March 2020. This change resulted in a 52.75% decrease in emissions related to the San Francisco operations and an 80.13% decrease in commuting emissions in comparison to 2019 levels.

As a result of the significant decrease in air travel emissions in 2020, data centers and servers were the top emissions source for the Foundation, comprising 52.53% of overall emissions. These emissions were not significantly affected by the COVID-19 global pandemic and show continuous improvement over the previous year (17.89%) and since the 2018 baseline year (53.97%). This decrease in overall carbon emissions is driven in part by operational improvements (a focus on water conservation and recycling and overall equipment and building upgrades), but even more by data center facilities switching to renewable energy sources.


2020 Carbon Footprint by Activity
Electricity
Business Travel - Air
Business Travel - Hotel
Steam
Employee Commuting
Water Management
Waste
Natural Gas
55.86%
37.88%
4.28%
0.78%
0.77%
0.33%
0.05%
0.04%
0.00%
10.00%
20.00%
30.00%
40.00%
50.00%
60.00%


2020 Carbon Footprint by Area
Data Centers & Servers
Internal Staff Convenings 2020
Community Convenings 2020
Misc Business Travel 2020
San Francisco Office
52.53%
26.48%
8.42%
7.26%
5.30%
0.00%
10.00%
20.00%
30.00%
40.00%
50.00%
60.00%

Key 2020 Sustainability Activities

Our sustainability activities are aligned with the Foundation's sustainability framework, which organizes initiatives under three categories: operations, engagement and culture. Despite the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Foundation was able to quickly adapt its operations and team workflows to continue the development and execution of a sustainability program. Key accomplishments included:

- Developed a set of protocols to guide environmental optimization of our events, including guidelines for remote vs in-person participation
- Launched a series of events for staff and the public, focused on environmental priorities like climate change, environmental justice, and women in the climate change movement
- Continued to integrate sustainability planning into business decision-making, including exploration of sustainable 401(k) and endowment options, carbon-offsets for our 2020 All Hands event, and refreshing our strategic sustainability roadmap

Strategic Sustainability Roadmap

The following chart highlights the key achievements completed in 2021 and those currently underway, based on the sustainability roadmap developed in 2019.

Strategy area	Deliverable	Notes
Minimize our carbon footprint	Calculate carbon footprint and publish impact statement	WMF has completed three consecutive years of calculating its carbon footprint, and this is the second environmental impact statement to be incorporated into the Foundation's annual report. ● 2020 Carbon Footprint Results ● 2019 Carbon Footprint Results ● 2018 Carbon Footprint Baseline
	Identify carbon-reduction opportunities	● In January 2020, we offset 281 tons of carbon emissions to host our first carbon-neutral All Hands event. ● In May 2020, our leadership team met to review our carbon footprint results, comparison to prior year's results, and recommendations for future carbon reductions. ● In December 2020, we announced our Consortium project: *Plant Your Change partnership*, an initiative focused on planting trees to remove carbon dioxide from the air. The campaign resulted in 400,000 trees being planted.

Integrate sustainability into planning process	Create and manage a robust sustainability strategy	• In September 2020, we undertook the Consortium project: *401K and endowment investigation*, which focused on exploring green alternatives for 401K and endowment investments. Read more. • In October 2020, we began two new projects: *Consortium project: 2020 footprint assessment* kicked off research for calendar year 2020 carbon footprint report and *Consortium project: Investigate carbon offsets and partnerships* explored partnerships with both environmental and free knowledge impacts.
	Incorporate sustainability deliverables into budget/planning process	• In July 2020, we undertook the Consortium project: *FY20/21 Planning*, which refreshed our strategic sustainability roadmap and identified environmental priorities and projects for the upcoming fiscal year.
Empower "green" choices	Create avenues for Foundation employees to be more eco-conscious *(new in 2020)*	• In January 2020, our All Hands workshop: *Sustainability: Climate change, the Foundation and you*, featured guest speaker Brett Walter from the Climate Reality Project, who shared practical steps and actions to help reduce our environmental impact, to turn knowledge into collective action. • In February 2020, we completed our annual environmental impact survey to gauge attitudes and awareness of sustainability amongst staff and quantify commuting impacts. • In October, we launched another Consortium project: *ERG Exploration*, which explored if the Consortium would qualify as a formal employee resource group within the Foundation (it was determined that the Consortium did not qualify).
	Develop guidelines for remote vs. in-person participation of events, including meeting options to accommodate virtual participation	• In June 2020, we finished an internal Consortium project: *Guidelines for remote vs in-person event participation*, to create guidelines for partly and fully remote events; these guidelines were useful during calendar year 2020 as all our events were fully remote, due to the global pandemic.
Leverage a remote workforce	Develop sustainable protocols for co-located Foundation events, including site selection criteria, lodging / accommodation practices, food / catering guidelines, etc.	

Enable global participation	Develop protocols for events to encourage and accommodate virtual participation	
	Develop, facilitate and support Community efforts in the sustainability space	• In April 2020, we established Earth Day as a Wikimedia Foundation holiday, facilitated an Earth Day "day of volunteering," and hosted our first *Sustainability editathon* focused on climate change, the environment, and environmental activists. • In September 2020, we hosted a Consortium event: *Climate Justice editathon*, focused on creating content which frames global warming as an ethical and political issue, rather than one that is purely environmental or physical in nature. We also hosted a Consortium event: *Community roundtable*, focused on discussing sentiments on emission certificates (carbon offsets). • In December 2020, we held our Consortium event: *Women in Climate Change editathon*, partnering with the WikiDonne user group to host an editathon focused on content about women in the climate change movement. That same month, we hosted our public Consortium event: *Wikipedia & Women in the Climate Change Movement*, with conservation strategist Dr. Ayana Johnson and co-founder of the *Women in Red* project Rosie Stephenson-Goodknight. The interview focused on gender bias in Wikipedia content and the necessity of closing gaps in climate change content that is both about, and written by, women.
Share lessons learned	Create protocols for sharing lessons learned back with the Community	• In May 2020, we completed the Consortium project: *Share lessons learned and create engagement protocol*, which created protocols for sharing lessons learned and engaging with the community. We published several updates in October, which can be read here.

Priorities for 2020

The Foundation's sustainability efforts in 2020 were focused on developing protocols aimed at reducing air travel, enhancing virtual participation for Foundation events and meetings, holding virtual discussions and editathons, and diving more deeply into our data centers and their environmental performance. In 2021, our priorities include:

- Continuing to evaluate our travel strategy to optimize air- and hotel-related emissions. As our international workforce continues to grow and we come out of COVID-related travel restrictions, we are carefully considering what a “new normal” for in-person events for our workforce and our community should look like.
- Understanding environmental performance considerations of our data centers and servers. As the world continues to read and edit 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.

While the COVID-19 global pandemic delayed the implementation of some of our sustainability efforts, we nonetheless continue to push forward. In particular, we are optimistic about using the lessons learned during our forced shift to virtual events and reliance on a 100 percent remote workforce to explore what collaboration models work best in 2021 and beyond.