

ITU'S ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

1. Background

Urgent action is needed to tackle climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. Building on resolutions and decisions from its governing bodies¹ the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) joined the UN-wide commitment to achieve the UN Sustainability Strategy 2020-2030². The strategy commits ITU to implement an Environmental Management System and reduce its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 45% from its 2010 baseline. As the UN agency for digital technologies, ITU recognizes that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) offer both challenges and opportunities for the environment and are a catalyst for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

As part of its mandate to develop international ICT standards, manage radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbits, and close the digital divide, ITU is actively working with its public and private sector members to support their use of ICTs for monitoring, mitigating, and adapting to climate change. This work, primarily facilitated through the Green Digital Action initiative³, includes the development of standards and guidelines for energy efficiency, as well as reducing ICT sector carbon emissions and e-waste. At the same time, ITU recognizes its responsibility to lead by example and pursue its mandate in an environmentally and socially responsible manner by integrating sustainability considerations across its own operations, both at its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, as well as regional and country offices around the world.

To deliver on its mandate ITU employs around 1000 staff, including those on short-term contracts, consultants, and interns. Out of about 600 regular staff more than 90% work from the headquarters in Geneva. A large part of ITU's work includes facilitating meetings and events both at its headquarters and around the world. As a result, around 70% of ITU's GHG emissions and environmental impact is caused by staff international air travel, while the remainder is from headquarters heating, electricity, water, and waste generation.

2. Vision

To be the leader in environmental sustainability management in the UN system by systematically integrating sustainability considerations across ITU's work, minimizing negative impacts on the environment and showcasing the power of digital technologies to drive climate action.

3. Objectives

To fulfil its vision, ITU commits to the following objectives:

¹ Annex 2 to PP Decision 5 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022), PP-Resolution 167 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022), PP-Resolution 182 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022), WTSA-Resolution 32 (Rev. Hammamet, 2016), WTSA-Resolution 73 (Rev. Geneva, 2022), WTDC-Resolution 5 (Rev. Kigali, 2022), WTDC-Resolution 66 (Rev. Kigali, 2022), as well as Council's endorsement of document C21/68.

² <https://unsceb.org/strategy-sustainability-management-united-nations-system-2020-2030>

³ <https://www.itu.int/initiatives/green-digital-action/>

- Minimize negative impacts on the environment and encourage positive effects, in particular:
 - Reduce the use of natural resources.
 - Reduce GHG emissions and maintain climate neutrality⁴ as defined by measurement and reporting standards across the UN family.
 - Protect the environment and prevent pollution, minimizing waste production, and improving recycling of different waste streams.
 - Preserve biodiversity.
- Mainstream environmental sustainability as a cross-cutting consideration to be fully integrated into ITU's operations, practices, policies, and programmes, including by:
 - Integrating environmental considerations in the organization of events and meetings, in the management of facilities and the ICT function.
 - Integrating environmental criteria into the procurement process.
 - Promoting environmentally friendly travel practices that consider the need to reduce GHG emissions.
 - Advancing staff awareness and understanding of environmental issues.

4. Guiding Principles

This environmental sustainability policy is guided by the following principles:

- Being guided by, and contributing to, UN commitments and best practices (including the Strategy for Sustainability Management in the UN System 2020-2030), as well as international and national environmental standards and guidelines.
- Sharing methods, procedures, and approaches with other organizations within and outside the UN system (i.e. High-Level Committee on Management, Environmental Management Group, 2050Today), and, where appropriate, making use of ITU recommendations and other relevant standards.
- Encouraging an open dialogue with all stakeholders on environmental awareness and improvement of the environmental performance of the ITU ecosystem; ensuring staff awareness and engagement; collaborating with host countries where ITU operates to achieve good environmental performance, including at ITU events.
- Adopting a life-cycle perspective, which will minimize ITU's impact on the environment, while adding value to the organization.
- Striving for continuous improvement of the environmental performance by monitoring and measuring key environmental impacts and setting targets with respect to activities where ITU has the highest impact as well as direct control or influence, including travel and facilities, procurement, IT, HR, events, and meetings.
- Managing risks to the attainment of the objectives of this Policy and help improve the environmental performance of ITU in line with ITU's risk management framework.

5. Scope

This Policy applies to the ITU Secretariat and to the activities under its control. The Policy applies to all staff members worldwide, with each staff member bearing responsibility for their actions which affect the Organization's environmental impact.

⁴ ITU is climate neutral in worldwide operations since 2015. ITU uses Certified Emission Reduction units (Clean Development Mechanism issued) to offset its residual emissions to guarantee climate neutrality.

6. Governance and Implementation

The responsibility and accountability for the successful implementation of this policy rests with senior management and elected officials, with the support of the EMS governance structure.

At working level EMS governance is comprised of the EMS Coordinator and the EMS Working Group. The EMS Coordinator oversees day-to-day implementation and monitoring of the EMS, including chairing the EMS Working Group. The EMS Working Group is comprised of working level departmental focal points and regularly reviews EMS progress as well as development new targets and objectives to ensure successful EMS implementation. The EMS Working Group prepares updates on EMS progress for senior management.

The implementation of this Policy is primarily coordinated in the context of the ITU EMS, and its subordinate documents such as the EMS Action Plan, and Risk Register to be revised and updated as required.

This Policy shall be implemented within available allocated resources, with the possibility to use the savings from the implementation of some targets to finance the achievement of others. Financial, human and other resources needed for reaching the objectives shall be prioritized; prioritizing cost-savings through resource efficiency with a long-term view.

This policy will be communicated within ITU and made available to interested parties.

7. Monitoring and Reporting

To support ongoing continuous improvement, monitoring and reporting against targets are integral aspects. Monitoring against targets, outlined in the EMS Action Plan, is undertaken continuously, with corrective actions taken and targets and activities refined, whenever needed.

To ensure internal and external transparency and to facilitate representation within the ITU sectors, departments and units to promote implementation of this policy, ITU's environmental sustainability performance will be regularly reported to internal and external stakeholders, including annually to the ITU Coordination Committee and the ITU Council, in addition to the yearly UN System-wide reporting in the context of the Greening the Blue initiative.

The Policy will be reviewed and updated at least every four years to draw from emerging best practices and lessons learned.

Document version control

Version	Prepared by / date	Approved by / date	Comment
1	SPD / 2022	SPD / 2022	Original version.
2	SPD / 2024	MCG / 2025	Revised version.