

THE GREENING DIPLOMACY INITIATIVE

LEADING BY EXAMPLE



“As we deepen our commitment to the promotion of clean, renewable energy, energy efficiency and resource conservation, our embassies abroad and facilities at home become platforms for eco-diplomacy – models of sustainability that reflect and project America’s commitment to responsible environmental stewardship, reduce operating costs, and conserve our resources.”

-Secretary of State John Kerry

The Greening Diplomacy Initiative (GDI) aims to improve the environmental sustainability of the U.S. Department of State’s global operations and to encourage foreign embassies in Washington to do the same. Advanced by the Department’s Greening Council in 2009, the GDI challenges the Department to develop and implement policies and actions that lessen its overall environmental footprint, reduce costs, and ensure sustainability remains at the forefront of U.S. foreign policy.

PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE

President Barack Obama instructed federal agencies to develop, implement, and annually update a strategic sustainability plan to meet energy, water, and waste reduction targets (Executive Order 13514: Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance.) Agencies are rated on Energy Management, Transportation Management, and Environmental Stewardship. The State Department consistently receives high marks in all three areas of the Office of Management and Budget’s Sustainability/Energy Scorecard related to domestic operations.

GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION GOALS

The State Department has established a greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goal of 20% by FY2020 for its domestically controlled facilities (relative to a FY2008 baseline) for emissions created by building power generation. The Department also established a greenhouse gas reduction goal of 2% for emissions from waste, energy transmission loss, and travel.

RECENT STATE DEPARTMENT MILESTONES

- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions from domestic buildings by 34% from FY2008 baseline.
- Reduced energy intensity of its headquarters by 15% since 2003; achieving Energy Star rating.
- Since FY2009, achieved over \$18 million in energy savings performance contracts (ESPCs).
- Built its first domestic LEED Platinum facility along with 4 LEED Gold, 3 LEED Silver and 7 LEED certified embassies and consulates overseas, and 35 LEED projects underway.

- Increased number of vehicles using alternative fuels to 45% of domestic fleet.
- Established air- and commuter-travel teams to make employee travel more environmentally and energy efficient.
- In lieu of FY 2012 travel, enrolled over 60,000 trainees for online training; hosted over 33,000 digital video conferences and 1,300 web conferencing programs; and employed 209 virtual interns.

JOINING WITH D.C. FOREIGN MISSIONS

The D.C. Greening Embassies Forum established by the State Department and Earth Day Network was launched on Earth Day 2010. It consists of Washington, D.C.-based foreign missions and international organizations, and shares challenges, experiences, and best practices on green facility renovations. In 2012, the Forum brought together over 50 diplomatic missions and international institutions in Washington, D.C. to sign a pledge with the city and its mayor. They committed to maintain their operations sustainably and to pursue environmental and efficiency goals that parallel those of the District of Columbia.

SAVING ENERGY AT LITTLE OR NO COST

The Department is meeting a significant portion of its GHG reductions at zero net cost through installing energy saving measures, such as efficient lighting and plumbing fixtures, financed in part through ESPCs. Contractors install energy saving equipment throughout Department buildings and the energy cost savings from these measures pays contractors for a set number of years.

SHARING EMPLOYEES’ IDEAS

The State Department established an internal GDI website where domestic offices and U.S. missions overseas may exchange sustainability practices, propose innovative solutions, and search for Department resources. The Department also encourages online discussions with its workforce on greening issues.