

THE GREENING DIPLOMACY INITIATIVE

LEADING BY EXAMPLE



“What we are trying to do today is to bring the message home to individuals, to embassies, to the State Department, and across the world that our goal is to make climate change, the greening of the world, a responsibility that starts with each and every one of us.”

– Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton launched the Greening Diplomacy Initiative (GDI) in April 2009 to improve the environmental sustainability of the State Department’s global operations. Advanced by the Department’s Greening Council, 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.

Agency Sustainability Plan

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 was one of six federal agencies to receive the highest marks in all three areas of the Office of Management and Budget’s Sustainability/Energy Scorecard.

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals

The State Department has established a greenhouse gas reduction goal of 20% by FY2020 for its domestically controlled facilities (relative to a FY2008 baseline) for Scope 1 and 2 emissions – those created by generation of power for buildings. The Department also established a greenhouse gas reduction goal of 2% by FY2020 for Scope 3 emissions– those from waste, energy transmission loss, and travel.

Recent State Department Milestones

- Reduced energy use by 12.6% and invested \$659,000 in energy/water-saving measures in FY2009
- Increased facilities’ renewable energy use to 5% in FY2010

- Broke ground for a new certified LEED Gold data center in FY2010
- Piloted the installation of renewable fuel pumps at a fueling center and initiated plans for more
- Increased the number of vehicles using alternative fuels to comprise 41% of the domestic fleet
- Established air and commuter-travel teams to research methods that could make Department employee travel more energy efficient

D.C. Greening Embassies Forum

The State Department and the Earth Day Network launched the D.C. Greening Embassies Forum on Earth Day 2010. It is a way to encourage green activities across Washington’s diplomatic community. The forum, consisting of Washington, D.C.-based foreign missions, meets quarterly to share challenges, experiences, and best practices on green facility renovations and sustainable business operations.

Funding for Green Projects

GDI encourages U.S. missions overseas to establish a “reinvestment fund” where future efforts are funded with savings generated by current ones. Missions consider the carbon impact of their procurement decisions and look for creative ways to secure funding – such as investing proceeds from the auctioning of embassy surplus goods into new “green” fixtures.

Sharing and Communicating Ideas

The State Department established an internal GDI website where domestic offices and U.S. missions overseas may exchange proven sustainability practices and submit innovative solutions, review environmental reports and submissions, and search for Department resources on greening. The Department also leverages technologies such as its internal e-Sounding Board to encourage discussions with the Department’s workforce on greening issues.