Let’s celebrate 10 years of FAO corporate environmental responsibility!

Ten years ago, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) embarked on this journey to reduce the environmental impact of its internal operations, as well as financial costs: approximately 2 million USD have been cumulatively saved since!

Today the Organization is still proactively seeking innovative solutions to improve its environmental footprint at Headquarters (HQ) and in its Decentralized Offices (DOs), in line with its internal Policy and the Sustainable Development Goals. Supported by the Sustainable United Nations facility (UN Environment) and a plethora of UN sister agencies adhering to the Greening the Blue movement, FAO faces new challenges in ever changing contexts to minimize all environmental impacts associated with facilities management, procurement and travel.

Implementing the FAO Corporate Environmental Reponsibility Strategy 2017-2020 and beyond

This report presents an overview of FAO’s environmental footprint in 2018 and efforts to sustainably lead by example.

Many were the projects implemented at HQ and in DOs. To list a few:

- A joint effort among FAO, UNDP, WHO and UNICEF, a solar photovoltaic system was installed at the UN House Nepal;
- 1 172 windows were replaced at HQ for expected annual savings of USD 270 000;
- A world-wide campaign to #BeatPlasticPollution was launched in collaboration with WFP and IFAD.

#GREENINGTHEBLUE
Environmental reporting: greenhouse gas emissions, water use, waste management and sustainable procurement

FAO focuses its environmental sustainability work in 3 priority areas – climate (greenhouse gas emissions and energy), water and circular economy (sustainable procurement and waste management).

The graph on the right and the table below summarize environmental statistics in these areas. With regards to Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from functional operations they have slightly increased (47 062 tonnes CO2e, +4% compared to 2016 emissions), especially due to an increasing number of Decentralized Offices Reporting (+3%) and augmented air travel (+12% travelled km).

### Water Usage

- 96 reporting DOs (88% total personnel)
- 8 286 m³ per capita
- 88 727 003 m³ total

### Waste Management

- 97 reporting DOs (88% total personnel)
- 107 kg per capita
- 41% recycling rate

### Sustainable Procurement

- Sustainability included in 15% of tenders for goods and contracts

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**Reduction efforts at FAO Headquarters**

At HQ, investments were made to reduce the consumption of natural gas and electricity for thermal purposes.

A solar water heating system was installed on the roof of building A in the Spring of 2018. The system will provide hot water for the kitchen of the cafeteria and will allow FAO to save 13 000 cubic metres of natural gas, approx. USD 5 000 and 25 tonnes CO2e per year.

Moreover, 1 172 windows have been substituted throughout the buildings facades. This project will annually save USD 270 000 and 630 tonnes CO2e emissions. Most importantly, the initiative will improve the staff safety and comfort in line with ASHRAE standards.
Reduction efforts in decentralized offices

Energy metres were installed in the FAO offices in Zimbabwe, Haiti, Niger, Mauritania, Jordan and Pakistan. These instruments allowed to formulate business cases for energy saving and shift to renewables projects.

In the meantime, a grid-tied solar PV system was installed at the FAO Representation in Djibouti. The 14 kWP system will annually save the office USD 5 000 and avoid approximately 9 tons of CO2e emissions – around 40% of the current energy costs and emissions relative to Building A. Being the first project in the area, it will be an opportunity to promote sustainable operations models in the area, inspiring other local organizations and FAO offices in the region to adopt renewable energy solutions.

Moreover, a hybrid solar photovoltaic (PV) system was installed in collaboration with other sister UN agencies at the UN House Nepal. The system comprises of 426 photovoltaic (PV) panels and a 204-kWh lithium storage battery, producing 196 000-kilowatt hour (kWh) annually – roughly equivalent to the consumption of electricity by 1 410 Nepali citizen in a year. The system will save USD 26 300 on electricity bills annually.

Partnership with the private sector

The Swedish company Aura Light Italy S.r.l. – which produces sustainable lighting solutions for businesses – donated external lighting for FAO Headquarters as well as lighting fixtures for the offices at the Regional Office for Africa (RAF) at Accra, Ghana. The in-kind donation by Aura Light Italy S.r.l. will produce the following savings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10 years savings</th>
<th>FAO Headquarters external lighting</th>
<th>FAORAF internal lighting block B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USD</td>
<td>68 060</td>
<td>65 340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kWh</td>
<td>494 700</td>
<td>198 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kg CO2e</td>
<td>163 250</td>
<td>85 140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Environmental management system in the FAO Regional Office in Asia and the Pacific

In order to strategically evolve from the climate neutral efforts toward a more systematic integration of environmental sustainability indicators into the internal management of our offices, FAO has developed its first Environmental Management System (EMS) for Headquarters in 2014. While maintaining such system for continuous improvement, this year FAO expanded the development of another EMS in a key pilot office: the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) at Bangkok, Thailand.

An Initial Environmental Review has already been completed, while an EMS Manual and a list of Objectives and Targets for the years to follow are being outlined at the time of writing. Most importantly, RAP colleagues are working in close collaboration with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to develop such EMS, in the spirit of “One UN”.

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Saying yes to less in Rome and beating plastic pollution worldwide

FAO has also waged war to waste in Rome outside its premises and organized the fourth edition of Clean Up Rome. Colleagues and their friends and family from FAO, IFAD, WFP, Bioversity and IDLO cleaned the Celimontana Park, contributed to the betterment of the hosting city and raised awareness on sustainable waste management.

This year our Organization also urged staff around the globe to Beat Plastic Pollution, with a joint pledge campaign organized in collaboration with WFP and IFAD. Specifically, the campaign encouraged staff to put on record their existing good habits and commit to at least one new action to reduce plastic waste on the occasion of the World Environment Day 2018. Almost 500 colleagues worldwide took part! While a vast majority confirmed that they already use refillable bottles (74%) and reusable food containers (68%), most colleagues pledged to choose cleaning products and cosmetics that are microbead-free (67%) and request less packaging when procuring at work (65%). There were also many other valuable pledges, such as avoiding pre-packed fruits and vegetables or encourage family and friends to join the campaign.

Greening the 24th Session of the Committee of Forestry (COFO)/6th World Forest Week

Many FAO conferences have kept an eye on their environmental footprint and integrated sustainability into the event planning this year. A very good example was the 24th Session of COFO / 6th World Forest Week.

As the COFO Chair, Mr Akram Hussein Chehayeb, brilliantly summarized during the session’s opening speech, “the FAO’s Forestry Department wishes to ensure that this event has as low an impact as possible on the environment. I would like to invite you to consult the relevant information on the COFO website under the Greening tab. Please note also that the secretariat made arrangements to offset emission from air and local travel through the UNFCCC Climate Neutral Now Platform. Finally, I would like to recommend that in the heat of July in Rome, participants could voluntarily opt for business casual attire, as appropriate.”