

# Making IETF Meetings More Sustainable

While most IETF work takes place online, the IETF holds three week-long meetings a year with onsite participation between 1000 and 1500 people.. In-person meetings and events take a huge toll on the environment with travel, single use plastics, and food waste. A number of studies have indicated that conferences have significant environmental impacts. <sup>1</sup>

The IETF, with the support of Sustainability sponsors, is working towards more sustainable meetings by:

- **sourcing and using eco-friendly materials** in all of its meeting materials, such as signage, badges, and banners,
- **ordering meeting supplies from local suppliers** to the greatest extent possible, and
- **reducing the amount of plastic and single-use items.**

As just one recent example of putting these principles into action, we eliminated single-use plastic water bottles at IETF 117 in San Francisco, which **saved nearly 6800 plastic water bottles from the landfill.**

Because we believe the more meeting venues recognize that sustainability is important to organizations like the IETF, long before a meeting begins, including during initial evaluation of potential meeting sites, we work directly with venues to:

- inquire about their sustainability practices,
- encourage sustainable practices and reduce waste, and
- work together to take specific steps that improve the sustainability of IETF meetings.

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<sup>1</sup> "Targeted Statewide Waste Characterization Study: Waste Disposal and Diversion Findings for Selected Industry Groups (341-2006-0006)", CalRecycle, June 2006 and "How sustainable are sustainability conferences? – Comprehensive Life Cycle Assessment of an international conference series in Europe", Journal of Cleaner Production, Volume 242, 2020

**In 2022**, the IETF Administration LLC began a project to calculate and potentially offset the carbon footprint of IETF activities, including meeting. Using a calculator based on well-established international standards and with community input, and with data from IETF meetings, we now understand the scope and sources of the IETF's carbon footprint. In the coming year, we will explore potentially offsetting this footprint.

We also take suggestions from the community and work creatively to find ways to both improve the attendee experience and reduce our footprint. For example, we've created an IETF traveling library, giving IETF meeting participants who gather from all over the world the ability to leave a book and take a book.

**If you are interested in learning more about Sustainability Sponsorship opportunities, please contact [Stephanie McCammon](#).**



<https://www.ietf.org/sustainability>

Photos by Julia Filirovska  
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