IFC Green Buildings Initiatives

IFC’s Real Estate portfolio makes up one quarter of IFC’s carbon footprint, and contributes to IFC’s environmental footprint through water and waste impacts. That is why IFC is committed to improving the sustainability of all its office spaces, whether owned or rented, in both the Washington, DC headquarters and numerous country offices.

HQ INITIATIVES

While IFC is a global institution with more than 100 offices worldwide, its headquarters office in Washington, DC is IFC’s largest building—encompassing nearly 1.3 million square feet and over 3,000 workstations. IFC’s Corporate Real Estate team makes both technological and behavioral adjustments in the way the DC office functions, saving energy, reducing waste, and cutting water use.

Meeting Sustainability Standards:

IFC HQ is certified to LEED Platinum for Existing Buildings by the United States Green Building Council (USGBC). LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is the most widely used green building rating system in the world and is especially prevalent in developed economies such as the United States, where IFC’s headquarters is located. Practices that contribute to LEED certification include green cleaning products, energy efficient lighting, and IFC’s closed-loop carpet recycling system.

IFC HQ has achieved the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s EnergyStar certification for existing buildings nearly 20 times since 1999. The EnergyStar label is awarded to buildings that are rated in the top 25% of energy efficient buildings across the country, meaning that year-on-year IFC’s HQ continues to remain one of the most energy-efficient buildings in Washington, DC.

Reducing and Recycling Waste at All Stages:

IFC has introduced several programs to reduce waste to landfill including paper-saving towel and napkin dispensers, managed print services, and office supply reuse programs. In addition, recycling of multiple waste streams is available building-wide, including collection of composting and electronic waste.

IFC requires construction contractors and subcontractors to recycle as much building material as possible. They are encouraged to find ways of recycling products and materials that are used throughout the entire construction process and to develop, prepare and submit value engineering recommendations voluntarily in support of environmental objectives.

Contractors are also responsible for recycling of construction materials (i.e., carpet tiles, acoustic ceiling tiles, metals, etc.) as approved by the WBG. When interior renovations are made, IFC’s Corporate Real Estate team seeks to repurpose and reuse office furniture. In situations where this is not possible or feasible, IFC donates office furniture including desks, tables, chairs, and bookcases to local charitable organizations.

IFC’s HQ has replaced all plastic bottles sold on-site with alternatives packaged in glass, aluminum, or cardboard, and all drinking fountains provide filtered tap water to reduce bottled water purchases. All catered meetings at HQ default to pitchers of filtered water to further reduce unnecessary bottled water purchase.

Cutting Water Use:

Water efficiency measures save over 4 million gallons of water annually and include low-flow toilet flush valves and urinals, low-flow sink faucets in bathrooms and pantries, low-flow shower heads in fitness center locker rooms, and rain sensors to allow watering of landscaped vegetation to be based on actual rainfall.

Country Office Initiatives

Most of IFC’s Country Offices are in buildings that IFC does not own. That means we are somewhat limited in amount of improvements that can be made to our environmental footprint. IFC aims to locate offices in buildings that are certified to a green building standard – whether IFC’s own EDGE standard, LEED, BREEAM, or other local standard, we make best efforts to find buildings that perform better than business as usual.

When IFC owns its office, it has more latitude to make improvements from the start. For example, IFC’s Accra office, which is shared with the World Bank, was designed with LEED green principles in mind, stopping short of certification only due to the non-transferability of certain LEED criteria to the West African context. Building features include green roofing, rain harvesting and natural lighting. As a nod to the regional culture and environmental preservation, a decades-old Nim Tree was left intact in the middle of the grounds, surrounded by the four-story office structure. According to an assessment by IFC’s EDGE tool, the building is 52% more energy efficient and 32% more water efficient than the Accra building code requires.

All offices, whether leased or owned, have the ability to reduce waste. Many offices have eliminated plastic water bottles, many have recycling available within the limitations of local infrastructure, and where possible, offices participate in toner recycling schemes offered by manufacturers. All offices also work to reduce paper waste by reducing the number of print devices and the need for paper-based agendas, presentations, meeting notes, etc.

Finally, the World Bank Group, including IFC, specifies EPEAT as a standard for IT procurement. This reduces not only energy use but also a wide range of environmental hazards. WBG has been awarded the EPEAT Purchaser Award for committing to purchase Laptops/Desktops/Monitors/Printers that are EPEAT certified.