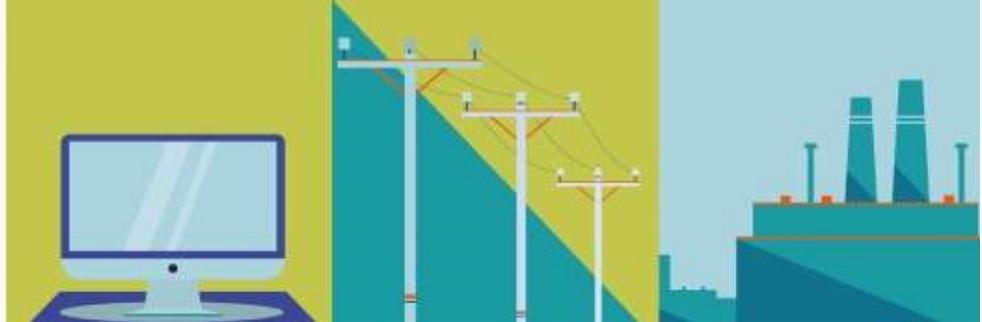


Greening digital companies:

Monitoring emissions and climate commitments



A new joint report between the [International Telecommunication Union \(ITU\)](#) and the [World Benchmarking Alliance \(WBA\)](#) documents the emissions and energy use of 150 of the world's leading digital companies. Beyond assessing the climate data and targets of leading technology companies, the [report](#) serves as a resource for companies to learn from best practice to improve emissions reduction performance and accelerate the achievement of low-carbon or carbon-free operations.

Key messages:

- Digital companies are playing a growing role in the race to eliminate harmful emissions from industry, transport, energy production, and other activities.
 - Digital companies accounted for 7 of the top 10 largest corporate purchasers of renewable energy in 2020. Thirteen of the 150 companies reviewed purchased all electricity from renewable sources.
 - The purchasing power of digital companies helps scale up renewable energy markets and cut emissions under the Paris Agreement. Some companies are members of the [24/7 Carbon-free Energy Compact](#) helping to accelerate the transition to a carbon-free electricity sector.
 - Sixteen digital companies are carbon neutral with 14 of those headquartered in Europe or the United States. Unavoidable emissions are being offset through climate-friendly projects, mainly in low- and middle-income countries, which include sustainable cookstoves, rainforest restoration and pay-as-you-go solar. Digital companies are investing over USD 4 billion in carbon removal technologies.
 - Digital products and services are making an impact by enabling wider emission reductions, including through video conferencing, building smart metering and transport systems.
 - The 150 companies' operational GHG emissions in 2020 contributed to 0.8 per cent of the world total and their electricity consumption to 1.6 per cent of the global total.
- There are noticeable differences among digital companies in their approach to decarbonization. Some are committed to eliminating their entire carbon footprint before 2030 while others, especially some of the biggest emitters, are moving slowly. Just 20 companies account for 75 per cent of the operational emissions, while 9 companies headquartered in East Asia accounted for half of all the emissions of the 150 reviewed.
 - Companies with headquarters in East Asia use relatively little renewable energy, have delayed adopting climate-friendly strategies, and will largely not reach carbon neutrality until after 2050 or around two decades later, on average, than companies headquartered in other regions.
 - Low- and middle-income countries frequently face energy challenges, including limited electricity access or unreliable grids, resulting in over-reliance on dirty diesel-powered generator sets. The report encourages governments to create favourable conditions for renewable energy use, warning that otherwise they may find it increasingly difficult to attract foreign investment from major tech companies.
 - Constraints in electrical grids mean that despite paying for renewable electricity, it is not always delivered to companies.
 - Data gaps were found in the availability and depth of climate data, and these gaps need to be narrowed. Some companies do not report scope 3 emissions at all or only report easily calculable categories like business travel. More emissions reporting is needed at the country level and greater guidance is needed on product use and enablement emissions.
 - Technical standards such as those developed by [ITU-T SG5](#) provide concrete methodologies and guidance to the ICT sector on how to set science-based targets, achieve net zero emissions, assess energy consumption and GHG emissions.

