



Sustainability Report 2021



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About SED's First Sustainability Report

Smart Energy Decisions is proud to be the first energy focused business-to-business media company to demonstrate a commitment to progress across three key sustainability sectors: environmental, social, and governance.

While helping others achieve their sustainability goals has been integral to our business since our inception, we felt it was time to “walk the walk” and inform our community on what we are doing ourselves.

SED's first Sustainability Report focuses on the elements of our business we believe have the most significant opportunities for positive impact in environmental, social and governance. These topics were selected after thoughtful consideration of our stakeholder priorities and their alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals.

This report uses day-to-day business operations in 2021 and the December 2021 **Renewable Energy Forum**, which was produced in person, to inform how we would use 2022 emissions as our baseline for targeted future improvements.

SED values feedback from the community and we invite you to contact our Director of ESG and Administration Alexandra Failla at Alexandra@smartenergydecisions.com with your suggestions and comments. 



A Letter from the Founder



Dear SED Community,

It has been one of the greatest honors in my career to serve you as Founder of **Smart Energy Decisions**. Our entire team is inspired by your work and we are excited to share our first Sustainability Report with you.

The SED vision has sustainability at its core: To change the world by helping our community navigate the energy transition. We do this by providing you with the education and connections you need to reduce the amount of energy you use and increase the amount of renewable energy that you source. We envision a world where all large power users have implemented energy efficiency and renewable energy sourcing.

We have been inspired by your efforts to make a difference in the world and felt it was about time for us to join the movement directly as a matter of principle.

It is an exciting time to be involved in the movement towards decarbonization and our commitment is stronger than ever to provide the knowledge and connections that you need to succeed. In many ways, we feel like we're just getting started. We look forward to embarking on our own journey to have a positive impact on the environment and our community alongside each of you.

I want to personally thank the SED team for their efforts and enthusiasm in integrating sustainability into the many aspects of our business, and the leadership brought to this initiative by Alexandra, which has led to this first Sustainability Report of which we are proud.

Regards,



John Failla
Founder & CEO
Smart Energy Decisions

Navigating the Energy Transition: SED's Mission and Values

As global temperatures increase, sea levels rise, and natural disasters become more frequent, it is apparent that climate change is real and organizations need to become more focused on sustainability strategy and work to mitigate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Many companies realize their role in the problem but need information and connections to address these issues.

Enter, Smart Energy Decisions

Smart Energy Decisions is the first web-based information resource dedicated exclusively to addressing the energy information needs of large power users. We produce news, analysis, research, webinars, podcasts, and events to help our community make smarter energy decisions. Our goal is to serve as a catalyst for change in support of the dramatic energy transformation taking place in the electric power market impacting large power users, utilities, and suppliers.

While some organizations are well along in their journey to set targets and reduce their carbon footprint, others have yet to begin this journey. SED is committed to helping organizations at all stages of their journey.

Decarbonization has become a central focus in many organizations' sustainability strategies. SED assists stakeholders in answering four key questions as they navigate the energy transition.

- What strategies should we employ?
- Which suppliers should we work with?
- What technology should we implement?
- What's the best way to finance our programs?



Markets Served

Our digital media platform and events inform and connect energy, sustainability, and facility management executives with their peers and suppliers, all in the interest of their mutual and collective success.

These individuals are decision-makers in four primary sectors:

- Industrial (majority of load from manufacturing)
- Institutional (education and healthcare)
- Commercial (majority of load from operating facilities)
- Government (cities and municipalities)

These executives are responsible for the following functions in their respective companies:

- Energy management
- Sustainability management
- Facility and plant management

Smart Energy Decisions' **Advisory Board** represents a cross-section of organizations across all four sectors. They provide ongoing input and direction for SED's programs, content, and research.

Topics covered in our digital media platform and our events include:

- Energy efficiency strategies and tactics
- Demand response
- Distributed energy resources
- Resiliency
- Electrification of transportation
- Microgrids
- Renewable energy strategy and procurement
- IoT and energy management connected buildings
- Procurement trends and strategies
- Science based targets and net zero
- Customer and utility relationships

Stakeholder Engagement

Our stakeholders are at the heart of everything we do. Feedback and input from all stakeholder groups are imperative to Smart Energy Decisions' success. We listen to, collaborate with, and inform existing stakeholders through numerous methods of engagement. Stakeholder engagement helps SED proactively consider the needs and desires of our community, which fosters trust, confidence, and buy-in for our initiatives. During COVID, for example, we initiated monthly Advisory Board calls to keep a finger on the pulse of the community and formed a Virtual Event Taskforce to help us shape a unique virtual event model which replaced our physical events while travel bans were in place. This commitment to stakeholder engagement helps us mitigate risk and potential conflicts in the strategic planning process.

We are a data-driven organization and monitor community engagement data from our e-newsletter, webinars, website, events, research, and social media channels to make informed decisions on community needs.



Stakeholder Engagement

| | |
|---|---|
|  <p>Energy Suppliers</p> | <p>Suppliers are an essential element of our community and we seek to serve them with a passion to exceed their expectations and help them succeed. Our media and event services connect our suppliers with energy and sustainability managers at current and potential customers to advance their business initiatives. Helping suppliers do business impacts the sustainability of both supplier and customer organizations. Suppliers engage with Smart Energy Decisions in pulse surveys and post-event supplier reviews that provide invaluable feedback on how we can better serve our community.</p> |
|  <p>Energy, Sustainability, Facility Managers</p> | <p>SED is proud to be a leading information and event platform nationwide. We seek to maintain this leading position by ensuring satisfaction among our buyer community. We do so by providing information, insights, and connections all year long and responding to their expressed needs.</p> |
|  <p>Advisory Board</p> | <p>The SED Advisory Board provides insight into industry trends and has been especially valuable as SED has navigated the return to in-person events throughout COVID. Our monthly meetings with the Advisory Board allow for SED to seek feedback on a wide range of issues, including business strategy, trends in the industry, emerging challenges they are facing, and ideas on how we can serve them.</p> |
|  <p>Employees</p> | <p>Our smart, committed, and hardworking team members are at the heart of SED's success. Employee engagement and involvement in product development and decision-making takes place daily. While all employees operate from their home offices, SED utilizes Zoom and other services to ensure communication throughout the day is seamless and effective.</p> |
|  <p>Contractors & Vendors</p> | <p>As the “small but mighty” SED team operates on a day-to-day basis with a small team of full-time employees, we rely heavily on contractors and supplier partners to fulfill our mission. While our size limits our ability to exert significant influence on the policies and practices of our vendors, we are conscious of the fact that these suppliers contribute to our environmental, social and economic impact, and we make efforts to work with suppliers that align with our values.</p> |
|  <p>Content Partners & Industry Relationships</p> | <p>SED collaborates with NGOs and government agencies whose respective missions are aligned with ours. Through this collaboration, we are able to assemble the most comprehensive set of information resources available to assist large power users in their energy efficiency and renewable energy efforts.</p> |
|  <p>Readership Community</p> | <p>We deliver news, analysis, research, and opinions to assist our readership community in making informed decisions within their companies. Our goal is to provide the information, contacts, and inspiration our community needs to succeed.</p> |

UN Sustainable Development Goals



While Smart Energy Decisions supports all of the seventeen UN Sustainable Development Goals, we are highlighting how a few of them align with our business using our environmental, social and governance framework.



Environmental

The majority of emissions and waste are produced during events while on-site at our partnering hotels. SED aligns with **SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation**, **SDG 7: Affordable Clean Energy**, **SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production**, and **SDG 13: Climate Action** in order to minimize our impacts on the environment.



Information about environmental opportunities that align with these SDGs can be found on page 11.



Social

SED engages with its community by prioritizing social impact efforts by providing financial assistance to causes aligned with **SDG 4: Quality Education**, **SDG 7: Affordable Clean Energy**, and **SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities**. Information about social opportunities that align with these SDGs can be found on page 15.



Governance

We believe our company mission and values directly align with **SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production** and **SDG 17: Partnership For The Goals**, as we are taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, and are providing the education and resources that our partners need to reduce their footprints. Information about governance opportunities that align with these SDGs can be found on page 18.



SED's ESG Commitment





Emissions

As we are a team that cares deeply about using renewable energy to lessen the impacts of climate change, we feel it is important to practice what we preach and demonstrate Smart Energy Decisions' commitment to sustainable development by keeping track of our own greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and how our impact affects the planet.

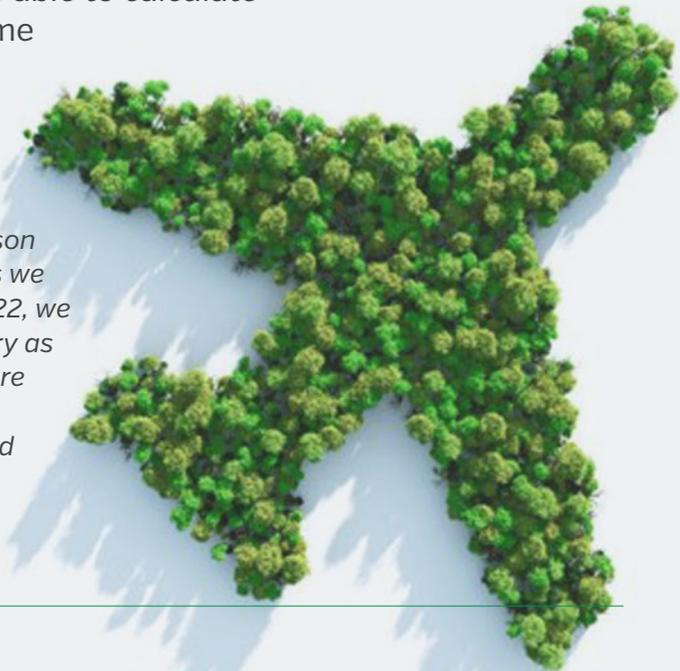
We began measuring our GHG emissions in order to better understand our environmental impact. Because we do not own or operate office space & machinery, SED has no **Scope 1** emissions and **Scope 2** emissions are limited to purchased office electricity. Nearly all our emissions are **Scope 3** emissions, which consist of business travel, purchased goods and services, professional services, and waste generated in operations at events.

Prior to COVID, our team operated out of co-working space in Manhattan. Ultimately, we agreed the switch to remote work not only worked well for our team members' productivity but also reduced daily travel emissions to and from work. Since

much of our emissions are Scope 3 and beyond our direct control, we plan to both encourage and strategically partner with hotels and suppliers that align with our sustainability efforts.

When calculating these Scope 3 emissions, we separated "event months" vs. "non-event months" as our footprint is considerably higher in March, June, September, and December due to the nature of our events. As COVID severely impacted our normal carbon footprint while we were unable to host in-person events for the last two years, the Renewable Energy Forum in December 2021 was the first event where we were able to calculate emissions. We are thrilled to resume in-person events in 2022 as the community values in-person interaction to get business done.

NOTE: The 2021 emissions analysis included emissions from only one in-person event due to COVID travel restrictions. As we are planning four in-person events in 2022, we will be using the 2022 emissions inventory as our baseline upon which to measure future reductions. All calculations were completed using a carbon calculation and sustainability management software.



Environmental



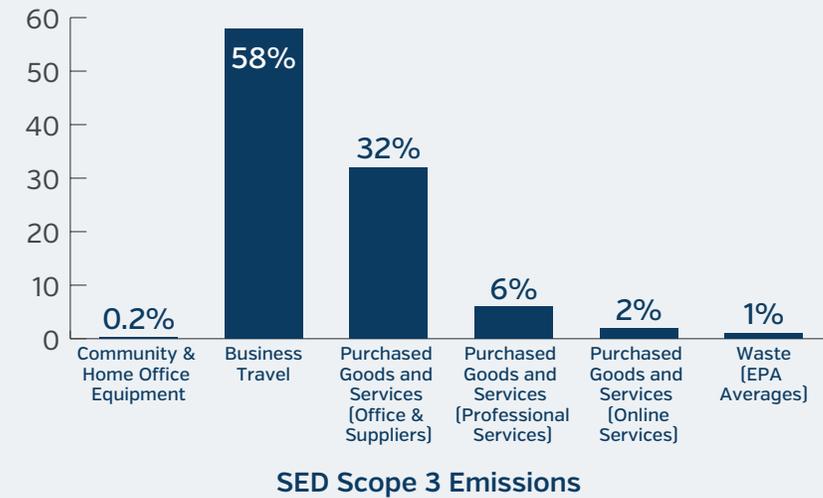
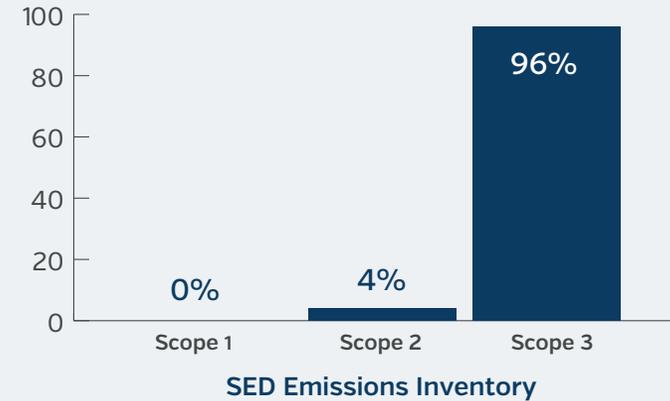
Emissions Inventory

We identified energy consumption and emissions generated from business travel to our events as the most significant metrics to measure from our operations. While we have not historically tracked energy use in a systematic way, we have implemented a process moving forward by working closely with hotels to provide this information after each event. We plan to track our energy metrics and offset emissions generated from each event.

2021 Office Operations Emissions: **21.48 MT CO₂e**

Event Emissions (December): **219.58 MT CO₂e**

Total Emissions in 2021: **241.06 MT CO₂e**





Waste Management

The majority of waste produced by operations comes from waste during events while onsite at our partnering hotels. We recognize that using single-use plastic products and signage that is not easily recycled contributes unnecessary waste to landfills. We have evaluated our waste and recycling practices and look forward to purchasing offsets to combat our emissions. For future events, we also plan to implement changes to our waste management program while onsite to reduce the amount of waste that we generate.

2021 Office Operations Waste Metrics: **2.16 MT CO2e**

Waste Metrics from RE Forum in December 2021: **0.55 MT CO2e**

NOTE: These metrics are based on EPA waste averages



Environmental



Emissions

- Research options to offset Smart Energy Decisions' event-related carbon emissions
- Explore available options for event attendees to offset their carbon emissions from travel

Waste Management

- Reduce single-use plastic at events, both on stage and during meals
- Deploy clearly labeled recycling bins where appropriate at our event hotels
- Research alternative materials for signage at events
- Linen re-use programs to be offered to all SED guests at partnering hotels
- Request accurate waste metrics from hotels to measure progress



Inspiring Diversity in Energy

In October 2019, the *Wall Street Journal* cited the energy industry as 10th out of 11 industries measured in their article “The Business Case for More Diversity.” Smart Energy Decisions took the first step in addressing how we can inspire diversity in energy at with our first conference session on the topic at Accelerate Philly in December 2019. Our commitment to have a more diverse group of voices in our digital media, at our events, and on our Advisory Board has been an ongoing progression since then. To date, SED has hosted six conversations in the series, which have evolved from general awareness about the topic to strategizing actions to help bring more diversity to the industry.





Community Involvement

To engage with our local community, we have prioritized various social impact efforts through educating our community and providing financial assistance to causes aligned with our values.



The American Association of Blacks in Energy is a national association of energy professionals dedicated to ensure the input of African Americans and other minorities into the discussions and developments of energy policies and regulations. Smart Energy Decisions has supported AABE both financially and through our Inspiring Diversity in Energy series over the last two years. You can learn more about this organization here: [AABE](#)



Every December, the SED team provides financial assistance around the holidays through **Donors Choose**, an organization that gives financial assistance to classrooms around the US. We believe in the value of equity in education, and have funded numerous projects, some of which include assisting teachers in educating students on renewable energy. You can learn more about this organization here: [DonorsChoose: Support a classroom. Build a future.](#)

DiCE - Diversity in Clean Energy

Diversity in Clean Energy (DiCE), is a coalition initiated at Duke Energy Sustainable Solutions to help connect diverse suppliers with prospective purchasers of clean energy products and services. Smart Energy Decisions has provided media and promotional support during the early stages of its development and will continue to do so. The SED community is interested in increasing the amount of business they conduct with diverse suppliers and we believe DiCE can help.



Women in Smart Energy



WISE 2022
WOMEN IN SMART ENERGY AWARDS

SED believes in workplace equality: we recognize that women play an integral role in energy and sustainability programs at their organizations, even as they are underrepresented and sometimes underrecognized. In an effort to honor the successes of notable women throughout the energy industry, SED is implementing the **Women in Smart Energy Awards**, which launched in March 2022 at the Innovation Summit in Houston. Efforts for this initiative began earlier this year, and we have put considerable work into recognizing these deserving women in the industry.

Social Opportunities

- Continue SED's **Inspiring Diversity in Energy** series at 2022 events
- Implement the **WISE Awards** at the Innovation Summit in March 2022
- Support the launch of **DiCE**
- Develop ideas for social programs to be launched in concert with the **Net Zero Forum** in September 2022



Guiding Principle

At Smart Energy Decisions, we hold ourselves accountable to operate with integrity and fairness.

Vendor & Site Selection Process

We represent diversity when we go to the marketplace and foster inclusion across our partners. We encourage our partners to increase the level of diversity within their teams and corporate structure.

In the future, we aim to work with hotels and suppliers that are aligned with our sustainability goals. We will accomplish this by establishing a process to screen and source vendors whose operations are consistent with our sustainability practices.

Customer Privacy

SED takes our readers' data privacy very seriously. Our digital world has enabled many modern conveniences, but it has also put personal information at risk. SED's privacy policy is clearly stated on our [website](#). We use reasonable administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to protect personal information against theft, loss, or misuse.





Workplace Equality—Empowering Our People

Smart Energy Decisions takes an active role in ensuring that we promote a diverse workforce, eliminate gender bias, and support equal opportunities in our governance body, staff and partners. We are inclusive in the way we work and celebrate individuality in our workplace. Our core team is made up of five individuals, three of which are female. We provide equal pay based on position and experience and do not base pay on gender or race.

SED's dedication to the needs of employee stakeholders is at the forefront of the business model. Focusing on equality, community, continuing education, and training, our team remains strong and can serve our community in the most efficient way possible.



Female full time staff:
60%

Advisory Board

SED is honored to have the involvement and support of an Advisory Board made up of industry leaders from a wide array of commercial and industrial market sectors. Their collaboration and engagement help to shape and direct our content and programs. Their influence as board members advances industry best practices and ensures we remain true to our mission. We believe it is important to increase representation of minorities and women on the Advisory Board and will make this a priority in the future.

Governance Opportunities

- Develop a screening process for future hotels that we partner with to ensure they align with our sustainability goals
- Increase representation of minorities and women on SED's Advisory Board
- Increase representation of minorities and women speakers at events





SMART ENERGY DECISIONS

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