

# Climate friendly economy: Of major importance for communications companies

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**How can Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) contribute to climate protection? How have customer needs developed? What does the WWF think of Swisscom's contribution to climate protection? Felix Meier answers the questions of Fabian Etter.**

*Fabian Etter: Mr. Meier, the WWF has conducted a study on the impact of ICT on climate change. Can you tell us about the key results?*

**Felix Meier:** Spectacular. Around one billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> could be saved through the intelligent use of ICT. We are talking about reduction in air travel due to virtual meetings via video conferencing, intelligent building control systems and the trend towards a more flexible and mobile workplace because of home offices, for instance. These recent solutions are changing our everyday lives and work environment. A hundred years ago, industrialisation led to an enormous increase in efficiency by more than a factor of ten; ICT solutions have at least as much potential.

*Savings potential must be realised first though. Where is the industry with this right now?*

The WWF study shows the theoretical potential. Sadly, we are still some way from being able to fully utilise it. Many ICT companies have yet to realise that they have a key role to play in the transition to an environmentally friendly economy. In launching its Green ICT programme, Swisscom has made a step in the right direction. The programme allows Swisscom to support its customers in holding virtual meetings via phone, web or video conferencing.

*How relevant are environmental or social criteria for customers these days?*

More and more people are paying attention to whether a company acts responsibly and people are increasingly opting for a more sustainable lifestyle. This is exactly where new communication methods come in; With video conferencing there is no wasted travel time. This helps to protect the environment and people's pockets – not to mention their nerves. A 30-minute presentation in London no longer means a stressful day with long waiting times at airports.

### *What do you think of Swisscom's commitment?*

Swisscom has been committed to environmental concerns for over eleven years. The company aims to increase the energy efficiency of its networks, buildings and vehicles by 20% by 2015, and today already uses only 100% renewable electricity. Last but not least, Swisscom motivates its own employees to protect the environment, surpassing most other large companies. In Switzerland, Swisscom is one of the companies most committed to climate protection.

### *Where do you see room for improvement?*

More and better and faster services for customers also mean ever larger data streams that get faster all the time, while consuming more and more energy, which has a significant impact on our climate. Swisscom will also face further challenges in future in terms of optimising energy efficiency. And although the company is strongly committed to energy efficient products at international level, there is still room for improvement when it comes to its own portfolio of devices or the reduction of fuel consumption in the company car fleet.

### *As a small telecommunications provider it is not easy to make demands on the equipment manufacturers. The new Centro router with 25% less energy consumption on standby marks an initial success. How do you see the position of telecom companies versus manufacturers?*

EU regulations are sadly not very demanding in this respect. Clearly, EU representatives have not asserted themselves enough against manufacturer lobbies. Endeavours such as those set in motion by Swisscom are thus tremendously important. Let's hope other buyers follow the Swisscom example – this is the only way to make equipment manufacturers sit up and react.



Swisscom is a member of  
the WWF Climate Group.

