

Charter of the National Coalition for Ethical Data Center Infrastructure (NCEDCI)

Preamble

We, the founding members of the National Coalition for Ethical Data Center Infrastructure (NCEDCI), recognize the rapid expansion of data centers as a critical component of the digital economy. However, this growth must not come at the expense of our environment, communities, or human well-being. Data centers consume vast resources, including energy, water, and land, and their construction can lead to significant ecological degradation, displacement of communities, and exploitation of labor if not managed responsibly.

NCEDCI is established to advocate for and enforce ethical standards in data center development. From the inception of any project, hyperscalers (large-scale cloud providers) and project developers must adopt known best practices in construction, operation, and decommissioning. We commit to holding these entities accountable for consciously addressing—rather than disregarding—the known environmental and human impacts of failing to implement these practices. This charter outlines our mission, principles, objectives, and operational framework to guide our collective efforts toward a sustainable and equitable digital infrastructure.

Mission Statement

The National Coalition for Ethical Data Center Infrastructure is dedicated to ensuring that all data center projects, from planning through execution, prioritize ethical, sustainable, and humane practices. We aim to prevent the conscious disregard of environmental harms (such as excessive carbon emissions, water depletion, and habitat destruction) and human impacts (including labor exploitation, community displacement, and health risks) by promoting the adoption of proven best practices. Through advocacy, education, collaboration, and oversight, NCEDCI will foster a national standard where technological advancement aligns with planetary and societal well-being.

Core Principles

NCEDCI operates under the following foundational principles, which must guide all members and inform our advocacy:

1. ****Sustainability from Inception****: Every data center project must integrate environmental impact assessments at the earliest planning stage, using lifecycle analysis to minimize carbon footprints, resource consumption, and waste.
2. ****Human-Centered Development****: Projects shall respect human rights, including fair labor practices, community engagement, and equitable economic benefits. Developers must avoid displacing vulnerable populations and ensure safe working conditions.

3. **Transparency and Accountability**: Hyperscalers and developers are required to publicly disclose project plans, impact studies, and compliance reports. NCEDCI will monitor and report on adherence to best practices.
4. **Innovation with Ethics**: While encouraging technological advancements, we prioritize solutions that reduce negative impacts, such as renewable energy integration and efficient cooling systems, over short-term cost savings.
5. **Equity and Inclusion**: Data center development must address digital divides, ensuring benefits reach underserved communities without exacerbating inequalities.

Objectives

To fulfill our mission, NCEDCI will pursue the following objectives:

- **Advocacy and Policy Influence**: Lobby for federal, state, and local regulations that mandate best practices in data center construction, including incentives for green building certifications (e.g., LEED or equivalent standards tailored to data centers).
- **Education and Awareness**: Develop and disseminate resources, such as guidelines, case studies, and training programs, to educate stakeholders on environmental and human impacts. This includes workshops for developers on topics like water-efficient cooling and low-impact site selection.
- **Monitoring and Enforcement**: Establish a voluntary certification program for ethical data centers. Conduct independent audits to verify compliance and publicly call out instances where known best practices are disregarded.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships**: Build alliances with environmental organizations, labor unions, technology firms, and government agencies to share knowledge and drive industry-wide change.
- **Research and Innovation**: Fund or support research into emerging best practices, such as AI-optimized energy management, modular construction to reduce waste, and circular economy approaches for hardware recycling.

Best Practices Framework

NCEDCI endorses the following known best practices for data center construction and operation, which members commit to promoting. Failure to adopt these, when feasible, constitutes a conscious disregard of impacts:

Environmental Best Practices

- **Site Selection**: Choose locations that minimize ecosystem disruption, avoid flood-prone or biodiversity-rich areas, and prioritize brownfield redevelopment over greenfield sites.
- **Energy Efficiency**: Design for Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE) below 1.3, incorporating renewable energy sources (e.g., solar, wind) and advanced cooling technologies like liquid immersion or free-air cooling to reduce water and energy use.
- **Water Management**: Implement closed-loop cooling systems and rainwater harvesting to achieve near-zero water consumption in water-stressed regions.
- **Materials and Waste**: Use sustainable, recycled materials and modular designs to facilitate deconstruction and recycling at end-of-life.
- **Carbon Neutrality**: Offset unavoidable emissions through verified carbon credits and aim for net-zero operations within five years of completion.

Human Impact Best Practices

- **Community Engagement**: Conduct thorough stakeholder consultations, including indigenous groups and local residents, to address concerns and provide community benefits like job training programs.
- **Labor Standards**: Ensure fair wages, safe working conditions, and union rights in line with International Labour Organization conventions. Prohibit child labor and forced overtime.
- **Health and Safety**: Mitigate noise, air pollution, and electromagnetic field exposure through design and monitoring.
- **Economic Equity**: Prioritize local hiring and supplier diversity to support regional economies without causing housing or resource shortages.

Membership and Governance

Membership

- **Eligibility**: Open to organizations, companies, academics, and individuals committed to our principles. Categories include Founding Members, Corporate Partners, NGO Affiliates, and Individual Advocates.
- **Commitments**: Members must sign this charter, adhere to its principles, and contribute annually (e.g., through dues, volunteer time, or resources).
- **Benefits**: Access to NCEDCI networks, certification programs, and advocacy tools.

Governance Structure

- **Board of Directors**: Elected from members, responsible for strategic direction. Includes representatives from diverse sectors (e.g., tech, environment, labor).
- **Committees**: Specialized groups for Advocacy, Education, Research, and Compliance.
- **Decision-Making**: Democratic voting with a focus on consensus. Annual meetings to review progress and amend the charter as needed.
- **Funding**: Derived from memberships, grants, and donations. Financial transparency is mandatory.

Ratification and Amendments

This charter is ratified on September 23, 2025, by the founding members of NCEDCI.
Amendments require a two-thirds majority vote from the Board and membership ratification.
NCEDCI invites all stakeholders to join in building an ethical future for data infrastructure.

For inquiries or membership applications, contact [hypothetical email: info@ncedci.org].