

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

The global technology company STL is committed to a sustainable future. In the last few years, the company has adopted several measures to make its digital networks green and fulfill its ESG commitments. **Akanksha Sharma, Global ESG Head – STL** tells us how the company has put SDG goals at the center of its practices.

Tell us about the sustainability ethos of the company.

STL has always put innovation, technology, and collective action at the heart of our Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) programs. Digital inclusion and tech-enablement thus form important elements of our social programs as well. As a global technology company, we aim towards creating digital networks that are green and sustainable. Our efforts to reach Net-Zero emissions, Zero Waste to Landfill (ZWL), Water Positivity, Sustainable Sourcing, Diversity and Inclusion, Skilling through STL academy look to further strengthen how we achieve progress ensuring it is inclusive and sustainable.

We therefore firmly believe that every single interaction should be guided by strong moral and ethical standards. That includes transparency in reporting, external assurances, necessary grievance redressal systems, and setting up best practices in the industry.

You recently announced your net zero commitment. What are the three key themes you are working on?

Three key themes we are relentlessly working towards to meet our net-zero commitment are:

- Energy efficiency, transitioning to renewables, and driving this across our value chain
- Expanding our ZWL efforts to cover 100% of our manufacturing facilities
- Build a green and clean sustainable supply chain.

As a manufacturing company, you have an added responsibility to ensure additional sustainable measures. Could you list some initiatives?

Besides ZWL, sustainable sourcing, water positivity, we have also initiated Life Cycle Assessments for ten optic fiber cable families and are looking to cover 100% by 2030. For example, our Celesta cable, uses lesser plastic content, while Aerial cables (ADSS) use less harmful thermoplastics like Aramid yarns. We are even working with partners to design and drive sustainable packaging solutions.

We are building water resilient villages in Aurangabad – a drought-prone region and replenishing 5 million cubic meters of water in these communities. Improving the ground-water table, behavioral change, and livelihood opportunities also form an integral part of the program.

What is the next big thing we should watch out for in terms of the ESG efforts of STL?

- By 2030, STL is looking to achieve water positivity. –We've recycled



over 3,451,000 cubic meters of water at our manufacturing facilities. In fact, we are looking to have all our manufacturing units in India Zero Liquid Discharge certified in 2022 itself and look at all globally by 2023.

- Another big initiative we are undertaking is an integrated Zero Waste to Landfill certification for STL as a company which will help us transition quicker to a circular economy ensuring reduction in harmful GHG emissions.
- Sustainable Sourcing - While we have begun working with suppliers on ESG criteria in terms of onboarding and monitoring, we will also track and monitor them on carbon, water, and other ESG related metrics.
- R&D and investment to deliver a green product portfolio which will further be externally verified as per globally accepted eco-labeling standards.
- We will also work closely with communities through tech-based and innovative products and social impact programs to facilitate digital inclusion and equality. We aim to create tangible and sustainable transformation at scale toward our goal of transforming the lives of 5 million people by 2025.

