2021 ISSP Impact Report

A future where sustainability is standard practice.
Empowering sustainability professionals across the workforce and around the world.

**Collaboration**
Convening the sustainability professional community to share ideas and resources through networking events, virtual discussion forums, and chapters. We join with strategic partners to extend our reach and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other leading frameworks.

**Professional Development**
Education in support of the Sustainability Excellence professional credentials, on-demand foundational courses, and regular technical and career series online events support the professional development of sustainability practitioners—no matter their stage of career.

**Sustainability Excellence**
As creator and educational partner of the Sustainability Excellence credentials (SEA and SEP), ISSP defines excellence for the profession and supports credential-holders’ success.
CALL TO ACTION

Immediately prior to the world-changing events of 2020, ISSP co-convened the Global Congress for Climate Change & Sustainability Professionals with the Association of Climate Change Officers (ACCO) in Chicago, Illinois, USA. An 18-month deliberative process resulted in the 16-page Global Congress Report highlighting the key takeaways and opportunities for our professional sectors. From this industry-wide, collaborative process of research and insights, ISSP issued an ISSP Call to Action, an agenda for our sustainability profession as we navigate this decisive decade leading to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Our ISSP Call To Action guided our efforts over the past two challenging years.

Increase employer requirements for professional credentials.

Provide high-quality training and resources that enable industry-leading competencies.

Ensure leaders across business and society are adequately skilled and informed.

Advance social justice, equity, diversity and inclusion across sectors and throughout society.

Demonstrate measurable action that meets the targets of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement.

Foster a shared strategic agenda, knowledge, and practices across professions and sectors to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement.
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Sustainability professionals continued to work hard to secure a healthy planet where everyone thrives, despite the year’s tremendous stresses. You give us much to be grateful for. As part of this work, your engagement with ISSP helped the organization to have a fantastic 2021. As Governing Board President, I want to recount several successes from the past twelve months and give you – our members, supporters, and partners – a sense of what’s next for our community of sustainability professionals.

Among these successes were welcoming more than 750 new members in 2021 and supporting our network with three new foundational courses, redesigned Sustainability Excellence credential study materials, and 35 career-development and networking events – including TEDxISSP, a partnership with TED Countdown to bring leaders from the ISSP Sustainability Hall of Fame to share their insights for how our world can reach climate neutrality. You can see more of our impact on the next page.

During 2021, ISSP initiated the exciting process of transitioning from a working Governing Board with a General Manager to an advisory Governing Board with an Executive Director and an expanding team of devoted staff. We welcomed Michelle Benavides, LEED AP BD+C, as ISSP’s New Executive Director, who brings entrepreneurial acumen and a career empowering professionals – both emerging and established – to serve our community in this decisive decade.

The ISSP Governing Board and staff thank the ISSP community for your continued commitment to advancing sustainability goals across disciplines, across industries, and across the globe. Looking ahead, our focus will remain on growing our network and supporting the profession.

Denise DeLuca, PE, SEA
ISSP Governing Board President
**Impact**

**Collaboration**

- **2,450+** ISSP members
- **750+** New members in 2021
- **15** Networking sessions
- **12** Spotlight members profiled
- **15** ISSP Hall of Fame Honorees
- **TEDx 1** TEDxISSP

**Professional Development**

- **11** Training webinars
- **13** ISSP Education Partners
- **3** New on-demand foundational courses

**Sustainability Excellence**

- **864** Sustainability Excellence Associates (SEAs)
- **105** Sustainability Excellence Professionals (SEPs)
- **6** Updated study materials
- **8** Credentialing info sessions

In Partnership with Green Business Certification Institute
Collaboration

Global Congress attendees participate in a charrette to outline a needs assessment for the sustainability profession. See Page 13 for the Call to Action.
“A serendipitous encounter with ISSP led to me participating in two ISSP conferences, becoming an early Sustainability Excellence Associate, and contributing to the ISSP’s Sustainability Excellence Credential Study Guide—experiences that facilitated my transition into the sustainability space. In an increasingly interconnected world, it’s great to be part of a global community of like-minded sustainability practitioners. I am moving towards certifying as a Sustainability Excellence Professional, and look forward to co-creating a more inclusive ISSP with strong participation from Asia.”

Kiran Dhanapala
Founder & Principal, KIRA Sustainability Consulting

Launched in 2021, ISSP Member Spotlight series highlights sustainability leaders working across industries and around the world.
Growing in number by 50% during 2021, ISSP members form the foundation of our network of sustainability professionals working across sectors and around the globe. As part of our expansion, ISSP has become increasingly international, so that today one in four members reside outside of North America. South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa are among the fastest growing regions for ISSP members, but growth continues in every world region.

As a professional association for individuals, companies, and organizations, we convene a community of practice that centers on three primary focus areas: collaboration, professional development, and sustainability excellence. Partnerships to advance shared goals, with a particular alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are at the core of how ISSP’s community of practice drives impact.
In the years following the organization’s founding in 2007, ISSP primarily served the vanguard of leaders who were among the first Chief Sustainability Officers for their companies and institutions. Over the past several years, this relatively small, expert community continues to expand rapidly as more and more organizations prioritize sustainability—and the need for practitioners to drive impact. To meet the need, higher education institutions are putting sustainability curriculum at the core of their programming, driving student interest in ISSP, particularly through our Education Partners program (see Page 10).

These trends mean that today, ISSP serves as the ”big-tent” network for both long-time and emerging practitioners, with each category representing roughly half of our membership. The range of industries represented is diverse. Although those delivering consulting services have comprised about a third of our members for several years, banking and finance, supply chain, and education are among the fastest-growing industries for membership.
ISSP Education Partners

**ISSP Education Partners** are colleges and universities that are connecting their sustainability programs for students and professional development for faculty and staff to ISSP’s career-support offerings. Students and faculty benefit from membership in ISSP while unlocking a path for earning their Sustainability Excellence Associate (SEA) credentials.

Doubling in number during 2021, ISSP Education Partners support students’ immediate pathway to a career in sustainability while giving higher-education faculty and staff the connection to the wider network of sustainability professionals.

**120%**
Growth in new ISSP Education Partner Institutions in 2021

**3x**
Increase in number of students supported with career development as part of program in 2021

ISSP Education Partners are recognized for their commitment to sustainability excellence in curriculum, programming, and operations. Recognition activities resulted in more than 65,000 web impressions and interactions in 2021.
ISSP Organizational Members

Businesses and NGOs join ISSP to provide their teams with the sustainability resources and know-how necessary for advancing their organization’s strategic objectives.

Relaunched in 2021 with several leading companies and governments, the ISSP Organizational Member program supports workforce development through individual ISSP membership for member staff, organization-wide courses and training, and opening pathways for team members to earn and maintain their Sustainability Excellence credentials.

228
Career connections supported by the ISSPCommunity platform in 2021

5
Industries represented in the relaunched program, building a foundation for many more to follow
We know that the power of an idea is multiplied exponentially when we talk about it. That is why ISSP hosted TEDxISSP, a COUNTDOWN event, on April 24 during Earth Month 2021.

Across three sessions—covering the urgency of the moment, the transformation needed, and the action that it will take to solve the crisis—we heard from some of the world’s most prominent climate leaders in a set of short TED videos. The videos were followed by live breakout room discussions with Honorees from the ISSP Hall of Fame who are luminaries in the sustainability profession. Special guest, innovative illustrator and The New Yorker cartoonist Liza Donnelly, joined to commemorate the event.
Donna Dupont, Foresight & Design Strategist at Purple Compass, participates in a visioning session at Global Congress.
“Sustainability is a journey, both professionally and personally. Collaboration is certainly a key success factor on that journey. By joining our forces for good, we can all play a role and make a bigger difference. ISSP has opened doors for all of us by providing resources for empowerment, education, and networking. It continues to provide inspiration to pursue the positive in all we do.”

Anita Snader, LEED AP, BD+C
Sustainability Manager at Armstrong World Industries
Providing leading professional development is core to ISSP’s mission. Throughout 2021, we gave sustainability professionals access to the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs), tools, and career-development resources to accelerate impact.

Across more than 35 convenings in 2021, including our monthly technical webinar series, regular professional networking events, and strategic initiatives – such as TEDxISSP and the ISSP Hall of Fame – ISSP trained more than 1,300 professionals and convened 565 people in a range of networking sessions.
In support of Global Goals

ISSP is committed to the UN’s 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Recognizing that various sustainability frameworks exist and each can drive action, we stand behind the SDGs’ core tenets to create whole-of-society approaches so that no one is left behind. By mapping professional development offerings with the SDGs, we are able to ensure comprehensive sustainability support for the professionals who are implementing solutions in our decisive decade of action.

SDG15 Life on Land

Launching the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

Partnering to launch the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, ISSP convened and expert panel on youth, governance, and circularity to envision society-wide transformation.

SDG13 Climate Action

TEDxISSP COUNTDOWN

Across three sessions during Earth Month—covering the urgency of the moment, the transformation needed, and the action that it will take to solve the crisis—170 ISSP members heard from some of the world’s most prominent climate leaders.

SDG10 Reduced Inequalities

Breaking the Cycle of Intergenerational Urban Poverty

Harlem Children’s Zone Co-Founder George Khaldun joined ISSP Governing Board Vice President Trisha Bauman to show how combining high-quality education, cradle-to-career youth programming, affordable housing, and community leadership, has enabled HCZ to achieve its bold vision for combating urban poverty.
Tackling Food Waste

ReFED’s Dana Gunders walked us through the Roadmap to 2030, outlining seven action areas where the food system must focus its efforts.

SDG4 Quality Education

ISSP Foundations Courses

We designed three new courses in partnership with sustainability industry experts for both those new to the concepts and those with advanced careers in sustainability. Our 1-hour Sustainability Short Course and 4-hour Sustainability Foundations cover the concepts, issues, and levers of change for getting started in the profession, while the Introduction to Sustainable Hospitality & Tourism kicks off our sectoral series.

Our Foundations Series is suitable for anyone—or any team—seeking introductory knowledge to accelerate sustainability in their organization.

Building the network for economic transition

We do not need to wait to #TransformTomorrowToday. ISSP supported Ceres 2021 to explore how business, government, finance and society can thrive in the accelerated transition to a net-zero emissions future.
Sustainability Excellence
"ISSP has given me the tools to sharpen my skills in sustainability in a professional capacity, while becoming a Sustainability Excellence Associate credential holder has helped me to prove myself within the profession."

Mohammed S. Al Surf, PhD, SEA
Saudi Regional Manager for Market Development, GBCI
ISSP developed the Sustainability Excellence credentials through a multi-year global collaboration by sustainability practitioners, for sustainability practitioners. Designed with rigorous international standards in mind, today the credentials provide third-party verification of competency in the profession to a rapidly growing community of credential-holders.

In 2017, GBCI and ISSP partnered to enhance, scale, and promote the credentials in order to drive positive environmental, social, and economic outcomes in organizations and communities at a global scale. GBCI formally acquired the credentials in 2019 and is responsible for administering and delivering the credentials. At the end of 2020, GBCI gave the ISSP credentials a new name and look. The SEA and SEP continue to represent a mastery of the six domains of sustainability professional excellence that remain the core of the program.
Years of Research Underpin the Credentials

2010 - ISSP published the results of its research aimed at identifying the competencies most critical to the successful performance of sustainability professionals.

2013 - ISSP published the first “Sustainability Practitioner: Body of Knowledge” for the profession, outlining the Knowledge, Skills and Attributes (KSAs) a professional must demonstrate to assure successful completion of each job task. This job task analysis (JTA) formed the basis for the certification scheme, reflecting the input of ISSP members and other sustainability professionals from around the world.

2014 - Our Spring Survey of more than 800 sustainability professionals showed that 70% were in favor of creating a certification.

2015 - Research continued when we conducted a Sustainability Hiring Survey to catalog which knowledge, skills and abilities were in demand for organizations looking to hire sustainability professionals.

The Credentials Receive New Ownership—and a Fresh Name and Look

2017 - GBCI and ISSP partnered to enhance, scale and promote the credentials in order to drive positive environmental, social, and economic outcomes in organizations and communities at a global scale.

2019 - GBCI formally acquired the credentials and is responsible for their administration and delivery. ISSP delivers professional development to support exam preparation, credential maintenance, and professional development.

2020 - GBCI gave the ISSP credentials a new name and look. The credentials continue to represent a mastery of the six domains of sustainability professional excellence.

Today - GBCI and ISSP continue to partner together to provide best-in-class educational resources and empower a growing network of sustainability professionals.

Launching the Exams

2014 - Based on this foundational research, the ISSP Governing Board voted unanimously during its November meeting to create a credentialing process.

2015 - ISSP conducted a first round of beta tests for the Sustainability Associate (ISSP-SA) and Certified Sustainability Professional (ISSP-CSP) Certification programs—the former names of the SEA and SEP credentials. More than 160 members of the sustainability field participated to refine the credentialing process.

2016 - As a result of the high interest, ISSP conducted a second round of beta testing for the Sustainability Associate (ISSP-SA) exam. We also launched an Education Partner Program to recognize organizations that provide high-quality sustainability education, including new preparatory courses for the ISSP credential exams.

2016 - The ISSP-SA exam launches in November.
By the end of 2021, 864 credential-holders had become Sustainability Excellence Associates (SEA). Formerly the ISSP-SA, the SEA was designed for emerging sustainability professionals. SEAs understand and communicate sustainability topics to diverse audiences.
Intended for more advanced professionals than the SEA, the Sustainability Excellence Professional (SEP) demonstrates a mastery of the most current sustainability issues, tools and techniques as well as the ability to apply systems thinking in developing sustainability solutions and assess sustainability risks and opportunities in any organization, community or industry.

By the end of 2021, 105 SEPs were supporting planning, implementing and evaluating the integration of sustainability into organizational culture and practice.

“How to make sustainability more than just a buzzword on someone’s résumé? With the proliferation of training offerings by various providers, the primary certification in sustainability and experience verification is a must. A professional designation like SEP recognizes the commitment and confirms that a certified professional offers more add-on value than a non-certified one.”

Alexander Belyakov, PhD, SEP
Consultant to UN agencies and sustainability educator
"As sustainability professionals, we must know how corporate systems work, understand we encounter resistance and are sometimes isolated, insist on credentials highlighting our expertise. I know the ISSP community is here to support the novice and expert alike. ISSP is driving the imperative in the corporate world for verifiable expertise, as important as accounting, HR, or QA."

Rosalinda Sanquiche, SEP
Sustainability Manager at C.H. Guenther
2021 Financials

Where does our funding come from?

ISSP Membership 51.5%

ISSP Products 33.3%

Professional Development 7.1%

Credentialing 2%

Other Revenue 6.1%

Detailed Snapshots

Membership Revenue Breakdown

- Individual Memberships 83%
- Student Memberships 6%
- Education Partnerships 7%
- Organizational Memberships 4%

Product Revenue Breakdown

- SEA Study Materials 75%
- SEP Study Materials 7%
- ISSP Hosted Courses 6%
- ISSP Courses 10%
- Webinars 2%
### Current Assets

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<tr>
<td>Total Fixed Assets</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
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### Liabilities & Equity

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<td>Total Long-Term Liabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Equity</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</strong></td>
<td><strong>$293,683</strong></td>
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ISSP Co-Founder leaves a lasting legacy

Seventeen years ago, four consultants working from Portland, Oregon were comparing notes on their clients when they stumbled upon what appeared to be an emerging trend: These companies and organizational leaders were beginning to enlist employees to spearhead sustainability efforts. Perplexed but determined, the enlistees suddenly found energy efficiency, conscientious sourcing, and social outcomes shoehorned into their job descriptions – and “sustainability” added to their titles.

“It felt like they were free climbing, attempting to traverse a very rugged terrain without ropes or tools or maps,” says Marsha Willard, one of the consultants. “These people needed a club.” The International Society of Sustainability Professionals (ISSP) was born.

Along with Dorothy Atwood, Larry Chalfan, and Darcy Hitchcock, Marsha co-founded ISSP as a way to pull down the barriers of isolation facing this growing community of sustainability professionals and to banish reinvented wheels. She served as the organization’s first Executive Director and has remained a steadfast force behind ISSP as a Governing Board member ever since.

With bittersweet excitement and gratitude, we announced Marsha’s term on the Governing Board ended August 2021. While we will miss her day-to-day leadership, she leaves us with a lasting legacy. Her vision to build ISSP as a community of sustainability practice has grown to now boast members on every inhabited continent of the globe and spawned a network of regional chapters. We have convened the profession’s body of knowledge and codified it as part of the Sustainability Excellence professional credentials. Our ISSP Hall of Fame showcases the profession’s visionaries. And we continue to provide training and networking opportunities to move our community forward.
ISSP in the Year Ahead

Enhance our industry leadership

Our work in the year ahead will focus on strengthening our ability to provide a reliable, recognizable, and comprehensive source of sustainability knowledge and resources that help professionals develop literacy and foster agility in the sustainability market.

Expand our network

As part of this work, we will continue to respond to our growing membership – including an enhanced Organizational Member program – build on our revamped Education Partners program, expand ISSP Groups to new regions, and build partnerships that create and support a community of practice for sustainability professionals.

Grow our offerings

We will release the third of our three-course Sustainability Foundations series of on-demand foundational courses. This course will be the most comprehensive of the three and will align with the content in the updated SEA Study Guide. You can also look forward to our monthly professional development webinars, special topics courses, and networking opportunities. Technology upgrades will make navigating to and finding these valuable resources easier and more enjoyable.