

MINIMUM STANDARDS 2017



Sustainable Exhibitions

Minimum standards for evaluating and providing sustainable exhibitions and displays for meetings, events, trade shows, and conferences (events). This standard applies - but is not limited to, the selection of sustainable exhibition services and exhibitions in general when planning a sustainable event or activity.



Minimum Standards 2017

SUSTAINABLE EXHIBITIONS

Overview:

These minimum standards are intended for exhibitions associated with meetings, events, trade-shows, conferences or other events. This includes the set up and dismantling of trade shows and the exhibits that are built within the event venue.

Interpretations

For the purpose of this standard, the following interpretations apply:

“biodegradable”	material which is capable of decomposing under natural conditions into elements found in nature
“contractor”	a person or organisation hired to perform services on behalf of an organiser
“diversion rate”	the percentage of waste materials diverted from landfill or other traditional disposal methods to be recycled, reused or composted
“environmentally preferable”	products or services that have a reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose.
“environmentally sustainable”	components, functions or systems that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
“exhibitor”	a person or organisation that exhibits a product or service for others to view
“exhibitor contractor”	a person or organisation hired to perform services on behalf of an exhibitor, independently of an organiser
“supplier”	a provider or vendor offering facilities, products or services – or a combination thereof

Part One - Minimum Standards for Sustainable Exhibitions

The following standards are considered the minimum necessary to consider exhibitions and displays associated with an event as sustainable (Green). In all instances, service providers should strive to exceed this standard.

1. Sustainable Operations and Management

Sustainable exhibitions involve a number of separate but inter-related service providers or individuals. The Exhibition Organiser sets the sustainability objectives of the exhibition – including the minimum standard expected, while the exhibition service provider (exhibitors; stand builders; clients) develop, design and construct their stands and other exhibition materials in accordance with this standard. Finally, the venue associated with the exhibition needs to provide certain services to the whole group.

- a) The exhibition organiser shall:
 - i. document a policy that includes definition of the exhibition’s sustainability expectations, responsibilities and objectives;
 - ii. ensure that all appropriate personnel are made aware of, and can communicate effectively, about the environmental objectives of the exhibition;

- iii. distribute a written copy of the exhibition sustainability policy and objectives, and provide exhibitors, vendors and suppliers with such information by at least an exhibitor prospectus or e-newsletter or website;
 - iv. include a clause in the exhibition RFP that:
 - a. requires exhibitors to meet a minimum prescribed waste management practice and environmental performance;
 - b. requires exhibitors to meet a minimum prescribed energy management practice and environmental performance;
 - c. requires exhibitors to meet a minimum prescribed air quality management practices and environmental performance;
 - d. requires exhibitors to meet a minimum of responsible procurement practice and environmental performance.
- b) Exhibitors shall:
- i. comply with the sustainability management policies of the exhibition;
 - ii. communicate the exhibition sustainability objectives and performance criteria to all their employees and contractors;
 - iii. ensure that contractors are aware of, and comply with the sustainability objectives, performance criteria and goals of the exhibition.
- c) The venue /facility shall:
- i. comply with the sustainability management policies of the organiser;
 - ii. communicate the exhibition sustainability objectives and performance criteria to all their employees and contractors;
 - iii. ensure that contractors are aware of, and comply with the sustainability objectives, performance criteria and goals of the exhibition.

2. Social and Cultural Criteria

- a) The exhibition organiser shall:
- i. identify and publish a list of local sustainable community projects for consideration by exhibitors as donation or support recipients after the exhibition.
 - ii. take reasonable steps to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of donations, recycled, repurposed or reusable waste and other legacy items after the exhibition;
 - iii. record by weight, volume, or count the amount and nature of materials donated to local community initiatives after the exhibition. For example, materials considered for donation may include: steel/metals, plumbing/hardware, vinyl, shrink wrap, badges, badge holders, bags, lanyards, exhibitor sets and giveaways, carpeting/padding, and furniture.

3. Economic Criteria

- a) The exhibition organiser shall:
- i. contract with suppliers that demonstrate documented responsible procurement policies, which specify the environmental sustainability attributes of products to be purchased, or meet the environmental sustainability specification in the planner's RFP, or a combination thereof. These suppliers shall represent a minimum of 25 % of the planner's total supplier base for the event;
- b) Exhibitors and contractors shall:
- i. ensure that a minimum of 20% of exhibition materials are sourced locally;

4. Environmental Criteria

- a) The Exhibition Venue/Facility shall:
- i. ensure that all exhibitors and contractors are made aware of the sustainability management standards of the venue prior to the exhibition taking place;
 - ii. implement and monitor a no-idling policy of no more than 5 minutes of idling in every hour in the loading dock area and ensure that such policy is communicated to all exhibitors and contractors
 - iii. ensure that contractors, exhibitor contractors and exhibitors divert their waste into available recycling streams;

- iv. ensure that all exhibition stands and equipment are turned-off and/or unplugged out of show times;
 - v. operate exhibition hall lights at a maximum of 50% during set-up and break-down periods, taking advantage of natural light while not sacrificing safety or security;
 - vi. ensure sustainable procurement practices are applied to the procurement of supplies, products or services associated with the event;
 - vii. reduce the potential for waste associated with food through close cooperation with the organiser in respect of attendees, menu's and timing;
 - viii. achieve the following waste targets:
 - a) a minimum 60% waste diversion rate of waste from the exhibition floor;
 - b) a maximum 25% waste level for food waste when measured against total production for the event;
- b) Exhibitors and Contractors shall:
- i. ensure that a no-idling policy is applied by all vehicles entering the loading bay or delivery area of the exhibition venue;
 - ii. include a minimum of 25% environmentally preferable products in the construction of their exhibits;
 - iii. ensure that all waste associated with their activities is separated and diverted to the applicable recycling or waste handling facilities;
 - iv. provide the venue with an accurate and detailed schedule of construction activities to allow for sustainable scheduling of lighting, heating/ventilation/air-conditioning/ lifts and escalators;
 - v. ensure that wherever possible, décor, flowers or other reusable items are reused or donated in accordance with the exhibition sustainability management policy;
 - vi. make every effort to minimise packaging;
 - vii. ensure that a pack-out/pack-in policy is implemented to reduce waste and to increase the reuse of packing material;
 - viii. reduce or eliminate the use of harmful chemicals, materials or compounds in the construction of their exhibition stand;
 - ix. reduce emissions to air associated with products or services being exhibited;
 - x. take steps to limit the number and type of samples and promotional materials distributed at the event;
 - xi. avoid the display or use of any wildlife on their exhibit unless specifically approved by the organiser and relevant authority;
 - xii. implement measures to ensure the safe handling and transport of live exhibits and avoidance of loss of aquatic life where displays include the use of fish-tanks,;
 - xiii. turn-off all electrical equipment at the end of each exhibition day unless perishable goods or the safety of the exhibits are at risk ;
 - xiv. ensure that a minimum of 45% of all equipment and lighting used for exhibition purposes is energy efficient;
 - xv. ensure the most efficient and sustainable transport systems or methods for products, materials and personnel for the event;
 - xvi. minimise the use of water on booths that require a water element.
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Part Two - Interpretation Guide to the Standard

Implementing the Standard is in many instances a simple, organisational process, but the following interpretations of the Standards will assist in this regard. In all instances, these are for illustrative purposes and should not be regarded as the definitive practice.

1. Sustainable Operations and Management

Sustainable exhibitions are more than just gatherings at which low energy lighting are used on exhibitions stands and displays. To be truly sustainable, everything used on the stand itself – from construction materials and methods to the products being promoted, need to embody the concept of sustainability. Sustainable events require the collaborative efforts of all parties – the organiser; the client; the exhibitors; contractors, the venue and the visitors or clients.

The standard has been developed to address the responsibilities of the main role-players. Sustainable events start at the inception stage with the development of a **Sustainable Vision Statement** which outlines and establishes the 'rules of engagement' in respect of the overall sustainability objectives of the event.

- a) The exhibition Organiser is expected to develop a Statement (or Policy) which defines the sustainability objectives of the event, including details on who is responsible for any specific element of the policy and the expectations of the Organisers. This Policy must be made known to all personnel involved in the event, and the Organiser is responsible for ensuring that everyone is aware of the sustainability objectives, and of their roles in achieving these.

The Policy must be published and accessible (printed or electronic) and it must express managements' commitment to managing the impacts of the event and its' activities in a sustainable and responsible manner. The Policy should address the following commitments specifically:

- to the responsible use and management of water, energy, waste and emissions
- to the use of sustainable and responsible products and services and service providers;
- to the use of local community members and
- to a process of continual improvement.

In addition to this, exhibitors, contractors, venue management and service providers must be made aware of this Policy as part of their contract or participation agreement. It is recommended that the Environmental Vision Policy forms part of the overall contract for anyone involved in the event, and that the objectives and measures that are being taken are communicated widely through newsletters, the event website and other marketing and communications media.

- b) When issuing an RFP for an event – or in the contracting phase of an event, the Organiser must ensure that exhibitors are made aware of their obligations in respect of the minimum acceptable standards of the event with regards to water, energy and waste management and responsibility for ensuring sustainable procurement and environmental performance while involved in the event. This could include requiring exhibitors to:
- i. use low-energy lamps and lighting systems;
 - ii. avoid contamination of any water source or drainage system (paint brush cleaning is an example);
 - iii. avoid the use of bottle water on their stands and displays;
 - iv. minimise the use of non-recyclable products for the design, construction and disposal of their stands;
 - v. ensure a specific percentage labour or services associated with their participation uses local sources or communities;
 - vi. dispose of any waste products from their stand (construction/operation/break-down) in a responsible manner and
 - vii. ensure that the overall management and participation during the event supports and contributes to the overall sustainability targets of the event itself.
- c) The Organiser is responsible for ensuring that exhibitors comply with and support the sustainability objectives of the event. This will require some obligatory relationship (contractual or financial) with each exhibitor and continual communication and interaction to ensure compliance. Exhibitors must be expected to comply with whatever sustainability standard or requirement is required by the Organisers and to ensure that everyone involved in their exhibition stand is aware of these requirements. This extends to them making their contractors aware of the requirements, and for ensuring that their service provider meet the standard.

It is important to understand that the sustainability standards and expectations of the Organiser must be made known at the time of booking/contract to ensure that they are met. Expecting exhibitors to comply with additional standards that were not made known at the time of initial contracting raises all-sorts of legal complications, and in most cases, these are not enforceable.

- d) The facility or venue is an important part of an event, and once again, the Organiser must ensure that the sustainability objectives, standards and requirements are clearly communicated at the time of the initial contract or viewing. Many facilities and venues either don't have the means by which to meet these objectives – or they offer very basic means to do so at best, so it is important for the Organiser to make clear what is expected of the venue. Again, the Organiser must ensure that the venue is aware of the sustainability objectives and standards expected as early as possible, and the venue is expected to communicate these standards and expectations to all personnel and contractors that they are responsible for.

Often, venues outsource services or specific operational activities and it is important to ensure that the contract between the Organiser and the venue takes this into account. The Organiser should not be expected to enter separate contracts or service agreements with third-parties on behalf of venue management, and this must be made clear by the Organiser. Where this is not done, the Organiser will be responsible for the performance of these third-parties in any evaluation or certification process.

The venue or facility must have physical storage and handling facilities for the effective management, disposal and recycling of paper, cardboard, plastic, glass, wood and food waste. Where the venue makes use of a third-party for waste management, management must demonstrate what measures have been taken to ensure that the service provider meets this requirement. Where off-site recycling and waste separation takes place, venue management must demonstrate what measures have been taken to reduce possible contamination of recyclable waste (this could include separation at source system; separate bins for wet and dry waste; etc.).

If the venue forms part of a hotel or other accommodation establishment, then the establishment itself must adhere to and practice sustainable practices as a norm. This means that where a hotel does not have a sustainability or environmental management system in place, the venue itself cannot be regarded as sustainable.

2. Social and Cultural Criteria

Events and exhibitions can have significant social and cultural impacts (local and wider) and sustainable events are regarded as those in which the Organiser has taken specific measures to minimise or avoid these. Too often, Organisers find it more convenient to simply dump 'waste' that is generated during the breakdown period of an event, when in fact this material could be reused or repurposed (even sold as waste) by local community organisations and charities. Sustainable events and exhibitions generally align themselves with local community initiatives that address social, educational, health or job-creation opportunities in the local community.

To be considered a sustainable event, the Organiser is expected to work with the venue to identify and publish a list of local sustainable community projects that could benefit from donations or services by exhibitors, contractors or service providers at the end of the event. This support could be the donation of steel/metals, plumbing/hardware, vinyl, shrink wrap, badges, badge holders, bags, lanyards, exhibitor sets and giveaways, carpeting/padding, and furniture or even financial contributions as part of a general offset initiative. Working with your venue on existing initiatives – supporting their efforts, often makes this process easier, but the Organiser should identify and create awareness of other deserving causes where this is necessary. For example, local schools and hospitals (clinics) often welcome items such as carpeting; display items (flowers and gifts), books, notepads, pens and other basic items, while children's aid services look for items such as clothing, soaps and other personal items.

In order to ensure the success and effectiveness of the process, the Organiser is expected to take reasonable steps to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of these items after the event. This is often done in conjunction with community organisations that are already involved in the same line of work, but it is sometimes necessary for more hands-on involvement by ensuring that each of the identified charities or initiatives gets a fair share of the donations. It also requires transparent and recorded data related to the actual donations that are made. In the case of financial donations, audited distribution data is needed, while in other cases, records on the volumes, weight or range of donations must be kept. These records must reflect the recipient organisation and the type of material donated.

3. Economic Criteria

The economic benefits of events are well-known, and sustainable events are those that ensure all role-players associated with the event contribute to the local economy (local to the event itself). As part of this overall process, Organisers and exhibitors at events should demonstrate that they take sustainability seriously by sourcing products and services from local communities and service providers – and to the use of sustainable products as far as possible.

To meet this requirement, Organisers are expected to demonstrate that a minimum of 25% of all suppliers contracted by the Organiser can produce documented responsible procurement policies in their own right (which specify the environmental sustainability attributes of products they purchase for use at the event), or which meet the environmental sustainability specification in the Organisers' RFP, or a combination thereof. Essentially, this requires the Organiser to determine this information at the contracting stage and being quite specific about the environmental or sustainable characteristics of the products or services being contracted for.

This could extend for example to the range and type of lighting used; the type of paints and wall coverings used; the type and nature of floor covering; the registration process; the use of paper or other non-recyclable administrative items and other contracted services or products. It is important to establish the degree (percentage) of products and services that are being sourced locally as well, to ensure that contractors and service providers avoid 'importing' their products rather than identifying and supporting local businesses that can do the same thing. Obviously, consideration should always be given to using local service providers (where this is technically or operationally possible) and identifying possible suppliers should be done at the very start of the planning process by calling for interest at local level. The following examples could be considered:

- To what extent is catering provided by local businesses;
- Are local suppliers used for catering items (food and beverage);
- Are service staff being employed from the local community;
- Are local hiring companies available, and to what extent can they be used to provide the hired items for the event rather than having these brought-in from another area?
- Can the construction material used for displays, stands and other items be sourced locally – and if so, to what degree;
- Can the Organiser quantify the amount of money spent on the event locally?

Exhibitors and their contractors are required to demonstrate that a minimum of 20% of exhibition materials or services have been sourced locally as part of their commitment to this principle. This could include the use of local service providers for services such as cleaning; décor and design; technical services and other event-related services. It extends to sourcing sustainable products when it comes to items such as packaging; bottled water; food and beverage items and general procurement items that increase the potential for local spend and economic beneficiation.

4. Environmental Criteria

Sustainability incorporates a commitment to environmental responsibility and a sustainable event or exhibition clearly requires from each role-player to consider the impacts that they have – and to minimise or eliminate these impacts responsibly. In order to comply with the standard, the following must be considered by the Organiser and where possible, included in any contractual relationship.

Exhibition Venue or Facilities are expected to:

- i. ensure that exhibitors and contractors are made aware of the sustainability management standards of the venue prior to the exhibition taking place. This may extend to raising awareness of waste facilities and the use of energy and water. It could include making-known issues such as the build-up lighting policies and any operational controls that are expected by the facility;
- ii. ensure a no-idling policy of no more than 5 minutes of idling in every hour in the loading dock area managed and to ensure that such policy is communicated to all exhibitors and contractors. Security personnel should be instructed to monitor vehicles in the loading area, and appropriate signage must be visible for drivers to ensure the requirement is adhered to;
- iii. implement procedures to monitor the correct and responsible disposal of waste by exhibitors and contractors during the build-up and break-down periods of the event or exhibition. Items that can be reused – such as wood, Perspex or steel, and which could be donated to local initiatives, should be separated at the waste area where possible;

- iv. monitor the use of energy during off-show or non-event hours to minimise energy consumption. For example, stand lighting and displays should be switched-off at the end of each day unless these are necessary for food purposes or safety and security purposes;
- v. ensure that exhibition hall lights are operated at a maximum of 50% during set-up and break-down periods, taking advantage of natural light, while not sacrificing safety or security;
- vi. ensure sustainable procurement practices are applied to the procurement of supplies, products or services associated with the event. Any products or items provided by the venue should be procured on the basis of their recyclability or waste minimization potential as far as possible. For example, water coolers and paper cups are less environmentally unfriendly than bottled water, while crockery for meals and teas is preferable to paper or polystyrene;
- vii. minimise waste associated with food by monitoring the number of attendees; menu selection and food quantities that are prepared closely with the Organisers;
- viii. achieve the following waste targets
 - a minimum 60% waste diversion rate of waste from the exhibition floor;
 - a maximum 25% waste level for food waste when measured against total production for the event;

Exhibitors and Contractors are expected to:

- i. ensure that a no-idling policy is monitored and applied by all vehicles used or contracted to them in loading bays or delivery areas of the exhibition venue;
- ii. include a minimum of 25% environmentally preferable products in the construction of their exhibits. This can include lighting; stand materials; carpeting; furniture; plants and décor; etc.;
- iii. ensure that all waste associated with their activities is separated and diverted to the applicable recycling or waste handling facilities. While many exhibitors contract the construction of their stands to third-parties, they remain responsible for ensuring that the sustainability standards of the event are met;
- iv. provide the venue with an accurate and detailed schedule of construction activities to allow for sustainable scheduling of lighting, heating/ventilation/air-conditioning/ lifts and escalators by the venue;
- v. ensure that wherever possible, décor, flowers or other reusable items are reused or donated in accordance with the exhibition sustainability management policy;
- vi. take measures to minimise or limit packaging material used in their exhibition or display. Often, stand and exhibition material is packed in wood, cardboard or even bubble-wrap, and exhibitors should ensure that this material is reused or that the items are delivered in less packaging to reduce waste. A **Pack-out Pack-in** policy for all packaging should be applied by contractors and exhibitors, using the storage facilities provided by the venue or by returning packaging to a central point for reuse during the break-down period;
- vii. reduce or eliminate the use of harmful chemicals, materials or compounds in the construction of their exhibition stand by selecting their construction materials and techniques with due care. The use of high-gloss laminated surfaces should be used only where the stand or exhibition is being reused in an effort to minimise environmentally insensitive waste, while natural materials, cardboard, linen and other reusable or minimal impact materials should take preference. Another consideration would be the use of certain glue's, paints and finishes that affect the recyclability of waste items;
- viii. reduce emissions to air associated with products or services being exhibited by avoiding products that have a high VOC level, or which emit noxious gasses either during the construction and manufacture phase or as display and demonstration items on stands. For example, at a motor show, the vehicles should not be allowed to run for demonstration purposes unless this takes place in the outdoors and at approved test areas;
- ix. take steps to limit the number and type of samples and promotional materials distributed at the event. At consumer shows, it is sometimes difficult to limit the samples and range of brochures that are made available to visitors and attendees because of the nature of such events, but exhibitors should take steps to ensure that the samples don't create additional waste problems for the Organiser or venue by restricting the number of items available, or the packaging that they are provided in. At trade shows, exhibitors can reduce the number of brochures by providing electronic brochures and e-contact material, and limiting the freebies and other samples to items that minimise waste and increase recyclability potential;
- x. unless relevant and approved by the relevant authority and Organiser, the display or use of any animals or wildlife on an exhibit should be avoided. Relevant events or exhibitions may include wildlife auctions; animal shows (Dog or Cat shows); medical or veterinary events and others where the use of animals or wildlife is controlled and managed in accordance with applicable legislation;

- xi. implement measures to ensure the safe handling and transport of live exhibits and avoidance of loss of aquatic life where displays include the use of fish-tanks. This would extend to exhibits of plants and other living displays or the transport of approved wildlife;
- xii. monitor and manage energy and water consumption throughout their participation. While this would not specifically include taking water or energy consumption readings during an event, it does include ensuring that displays and equipment are switched-off after exhibition times, unless perishable goods or the safety of the exhibits are at risk ;
- xiii. ensure that a minimum of 45% of all equipment and lighting used for exhibition purposes is energy efficient;
- xiv. ensure the most efficient and sustainable transport systems or methods for products, materials and personnel for the event. This would include managing deliveries and loads to ensure the minimal number of deliveries to the event; the use of fuel-efficient vehicles and systems; the use of local accommodation for staff and contractors to minimise the need for daily transport and the use of alternate-energy type vehicles and equipment;
- xv. minimise the use of water on booths that require a water element. For example, where a fountain, water-wall or other water feature is used or incorporated into a display, the feature must be monitored to ensure that no unnecessary waste or spillage takes place, and that there are no leaks or potentially hazardous conditions created by the display.

Addendum 1

Draft Environmental Vision Statement

We, the organisers and sponsors of the (event name), recognise the impacts that this event will have on the environment and our responsibility to protecting our natural heritage and resources for the benefit of future generations.

We are committed to planning, conducting and managing this event in the most responsible manner possible, to recognising the principles of sustainable meetings and to minimising the environmental impact of (event name) through:

- encouraging our partners, business associates, guests and visitors to support our efforts;
- selecting products and service providers that share our environmental vision;
- raising awareness of the impacts of this event and of our efforts to address these responsibly;
- ensuring fair and equitable benefits for our community through our procurement and operational choices;
- managing and where possible decreasing the amount of solid waste produced by and as a result of the event;
- reducing energy and water consumption during the event;
- minimising or off-setting harmful emissions resulting from transportation and energy consumption associated with the event;
- disposing of all solid and liquid waste in an environmentally responsible manner;
- eliminating the use of harmful chemicals at or for the event; and
- establishing an environmental legacy to commemorate our achievements in this regard.

Signed this..... Day of 20.....

Event Chairman

Company Name