

# Sustainability Rider

**Düsseldorf**  
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## A Guide for Organizers

### How to organize sustainable events?

Events bring people together to create innovations, collaborate and discuss. They have a noticeable impact on individuals, organizations, and even society as a whole. Unfortunately, they also affect our planet – often in negative ways.

Sustainability is no longer a niche issue and is increasingly important along the entire MICE value chain.

Guidance and guidelines for demonstrable sustainability are provided by initiatives such as the 16 Steps Initiative for climate neutrality in the events industry, as well as the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations, which are aligned with our goals throughout our entire field of action: from our own event planning to collaborating with our diverse network of partners to serving as consultants and catalysts.

Our recent participation in the city-wide “Düsseldorf Climate Pact” initiative, aimed at being climate neutral by 2035, is another example of our sustainable thinking, actions and commitment.

Our goal is to inspire you to plan sustainably and develop and implement your own sustainable initiatives.

Inspired by the 16 Steps Initiative of sustainability expert Stefan Lohmann, the Sustainability Rider has been developed: a condensed checklist and guide with 13 steps and tips for your sustainable event in Düsseldorf, always considering environmental protection, social justice, and economic viability—the three pillars of sustainability.

As a partner of the 16 Steps Initiative and due to our close collaboration and exchange with Stefan Lohmann, we are pleased to provide you with this Sustainability Rider in the following document.

Think green, Act Green!



**Jens Ihse**  
Director Düsseldorf Convention



# Sustainability Rider

## 1. Environmentally friendly arrival of participants/Green Ticketing

Participants' arrival is the number one source of CO2 emissions (up to ¾ of emissions). When selecting the venue, ensure good public transportation access and inform the public about it, as well as the nearest stops to the venue, e.g. on the event and venue websites. Offer tickets that include the use of public transportation. Encourage participants to carpool and rent buses. Provide informative links to relevant services. Collaborate with a professional Green Ticketing partner who includes the cost of compensation in the ticket price to offset unavoidable emissions from arrival and departure.

Offer Deutsche Bahn event tickets for your events. Encourage participants to opt for low CO2 transportation methods – such as biking, taking buses or trains, or, in the case of cars, promoting carpooling!

## 2. Increasing energy efficiency, using renewable energy

Utilize renewable energy sources. Always assess your exact energy consumption to directly benefit from energy savings. In the office, during transportation, at the venue, and during the event itself, avoid unnecessary use of lights, air conditioning, or heating. LED technology saves electricity and therefore money. Ensure efficiency and utilization in transportation.

Do vehicles have the most environmentally friendly engines? What about suppliers? Are venues, hotels, caterers, stage and exhibition builders, transportation companies and technology providers focused on sustainability? Always have the responsible parties on-site (venue, trades, suppliers) show you their savings measures on a sample basis! Your apparent interest is highly motivating.

Switching to green energy is quick, easy and environmentally friendly. However, the potential for energy savings is enormous. Have your energy needs precisely analyzed (e.g., by a technical service provider) and dimension the generators accordingly. Studies show that generators are often operated at less than 30% of their capacity. This over-sizing causes significant unnecessary costs and higher emissions.

## 3. Sustainable procurement, reuse, recycling

Consider the ethical and ecological consequences of all purchases, from the office with printers, computers, desks, etc., to the event with stage construction, exhibition construction, flooring etc. Avoid purchases that contribute to deforestation, soil or water pollution or human exploitation! Certifications like the Blue Angel assist in material selection. Minimize packaging waste. Avoid useless single-use promotional gifts from sponsors etc. Opt for recycled materials. For new materials, are ethical sources certified, and is there a plan for their reuse or recycling?

For unavoidable waste, provide clearly labeled containers for easy separation, including food waste. Inform about what can be collected for recycling and what cannot. Aim for a closed loop of materials and a high recycling rate.

Ensure transparency. Inform all trades as well as participants about waste separation processes at events to maximize effectiveness!

## 4. Food and beverages

A definite "yes" to local and seasonal foods! Support local organic food producers and thus reduce transport-related CO2 emissions. Also, consider bio beverage providers and companies that reinvest some of the proceeds in sustainable projects when selecting beverage suppliers. Tap water in Germany is the cleanest food and therefore perfect for your guests, especially as it saves packaging and transportation on top.

All meat, fish or dairy products should be traceable and certified as local, organic or otherwise sustainable products (e.g., MSC, WWF, Red Tractor, Soil Association). More and more people prefer vegetarian and vegan alternatives. Adapt your offerings to this demand.

Make arrangements to collect and redistribute surplus food. This can also be done through suitable catering companies or by collaborating with a local organization for food collection and redistribution.

Meat and dairy production contribute significantly to global CO2 emissions. They often still rely on inhumane practices. Vegan or vegetarian diets are a healthy and valuable alternative! They consume much less water, land and oil and produce fewer greenhouse gases.

Only fairly traded teas/coffees/sugars/chocolates and avoidance of palm oil products. Ensure certified items, for example, Fair Trade or Rainforest Alliance.

Ensure no palm oil is used, or if used, it comes from ethical and ecological sources.

Make conscious purchases and thus contribute to combating exploitation! Because these products are usually sourced from poorer countries and conflict zones. Palm oil production globally causes significant deforestation, loss of biodiversity and negative social impacts.

## 5. Avoidance of plastic and single-use plastics

Say no to single-use plastic water bottles, plastic cups, plastic straws, plastic bags, unnecessary packaging and polystyrene. Offer reusable dishes (plates, cutlery, cups). Avoid foods with excessive or non-recyclable packaging as much as possible!

Many single-use plastics pollute our oceans. Their production consumes significant amounts of oil and water and causes conflicts, resource scarcity and greenhouse gases. Stop the disposable use of plastic.

## 6. Reduction of water consumption and environmental pollution risks

Consider measures to avoid water waste and reduce wastewater. Event organizers, venues and cleaning companies should only use environmentally friendly cleaning products, prevent potentially harmful contamination of land and water, and guarantee demand-oriented, environmentally friendly and clean sanitary facilities (toilets, showers, etc.) at outdoor locations.

Careful water management protects local watercourses, wildlife and groundwater.

## 7. Ethically impeccable towels, clothing, merchandise

Towels, clothing and merchandise should be made from ethically and ecologically correct fibers, e.g., organic cotton and produced sustainably. While these may be more expensive than cheap alternatives, they are also more durable.

Cheap textile productions can have serious social and environmental impacts. Studies show that plastics release microplastics into water streams during washing. You have the power to change this!

## 8. No unnecessary pressure, only FSC/PEFC recycled paper

Avoid unnecessary prints – and if absolutely necessary – use certified, ethically sound or recycled paper as well as bio-based inks. This applies to toilet paper as well as napkins, tickets or access passes. Digital event apps offer added value and easy handling, helping to eliminate the need for event programs, flyers, catalogs, etc.

Take a stand against deforestation and the loss of biodiversity by avoiding unethical or untraceable paper sources.

## 9. Local accommodations and hotels

Short distances save time and protect the environment. Minimize transportation to the event by providing nearby accommodation for your guests. Prefer accommodations with low environmental impact or an environmental certificate.

Ensure a sustainable supply chain for your events. Certificates for organic and sustainable hotels provide valuable guidance.

## 10. Local transportation/shuttle service

Utilize an environmentally friendly and demand-oriented transfer, e.g., using electric or hybrid vehicles, low-particle fuels or shared shuttles. Public transportation and modern demand-oriented buses with high occupancy ensure the best environmental balance.

Consider equipment, accreditation and schedules when selecting transportation options. And remember: transportation significantly contributes to global greenhouse gas emissions and local air pollution.

## 11. Accessibility and inclusion

Consider aspects of accessibility and inclusion at events as well as sufficient and legible signage. Perhaps consider hiring a sign language interpreter for the hearing impaired. Inquire with venues and service providers about suitable solutions.

As part of a diverse society, we are called upon to create structures that allow every person – including those with disabilities – to participate in events.

## 12. Targeted communication for sustainable implementation

Audiences, staff and service providers should be clearly informed about the ethical aspirations of the event. Encourage your service providers to follow your positive path and contribute to it. Many companies and service providers already have an environmental manager. Engage the relevant individual in your communication strategy with the aim of effectively informing the audience.

Provide assistance, offer sustainable customer retention tools and tips for waste reduction. Also, for event promotion, consider using service providers with a sustainable focus. Utilize environmentally friendly printing for unavoidable flyers, posters, and advertisements.

Raise awareness for sustainability through open and honest discussion!

## 13. CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions measurements and compensation

Events generate a significant amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions solely through guest travel and production transport. The same applies to electricity consumption if renewable energy sources are not available. However, there are many actions you can take. Keyword: compensation projects with additional benefits. These projects can have a significant impact beyond pure CO<sub>2</sub> compensation.

For example, small biogas plants for private households in India ensure reduced wood consumption, less smoke in living and kitchen areas, fewer chronic illnesses due to smog and more local job opportunities.

*We recommend event organizers to measure and evaluate their energy and resource consumption as well as their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and to identify improvement potentials. For a successful sustainability strategy, collaboration with professional offset companies and sustainably oriented or certified suppliers is advisable!*

*Take advantage of the enormous benefits of a sustainable supply chain and long-term partnerships. This automatically leads to events with a positive impact on people and the environment.*