



GREENING COP17

Exhibition Greening Guidelines

Introduction

South Africa will be hosting of the 17th session of the Conference of Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the seventh Meeting of the Parties (CMP) to the Kyoto Protocol (UNFCCC COP17/CMP7, further shortened as COP 17) to be hosted from 28 November to 9 December 2011 in Durban, South Africa.

An important element of this event will be the Climate Change Response (CCR) Expo and other side events that will be hosted prior to and during this period. This document provides a guideline on how to host an exhibition in a responsible manner and all service providers, sub-contractors and participants are requested to implement these event greening principles and practices under the guidance of the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA).

Event Greening

Event greening refers to the process of incorporating socially and environmentally responsible decision making into the planning, organisation and implementation of, and participation in, an event or exhibition whether large or small. It includes sustainable development principles and practices into all levels of event organisation, and aims to ensure that an event is hosted in a responsible manner. It represents the total package of interventions at an event, and needs to be done in an integrated manner. Event greening should start at the inception of the project, and should involve all the key role players such as clients, organisers, (which could include meetings, incentives, conferences, events, exhibitions, etc.), sponsors, venues, subcontractors (such as transport, audio-visual, etc.) and suppliers.

The anticipated outcomes of a green event can be summarised as follows:

- To improve the resource efficiency of the entire event and supply chain management;
- To reduce negative environmental impacts, such as carbon emissions, waste to landfill, and the effect on biodiversity;
- To increase economic, social and environmental benefits (triple bottom-line);
- To enhance the economic impact, such as local investment and long-term viability;
- To strengthen the social impact, such as community involvement and fair employment;
- To improve sustainable performance within an available budget;
- To present opportunities for more efficient planning and use of equipment and infrastructure;
- To reduce the possible negative impact on local inhabitants;
- To protect the local biodiversity, water and soil resources;
- To apply the principles of eco-procurement of goods and services; where possible
- To raise awareness of sustainability issues among all role players;
- To transfer skills through education and training of staff; and
- To ensure that the aims and objectives are clearly defined and measured.

Aim and Objectives

The aim is to host COP17 as a **low carbon event** based on the following objectives for the planning, preparation and implementation:

- To reduce the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions where possible through the **event greening** initiatives. To measure the event's GHG emissions, including international delegate travel, and mitigate it through local mitigation projects.
- To actively reduce the amount of **waste** generated prior to and during the event. Waste separation should be provided at source to raise awareness and to reduce waste to landfill.
- To ensure that **water** is consumed in a responsible manner. Participants, venues and sub-contractors should be encouraged to implement water conservation principles and protect the country's natural resources.
- To encourage **energy** efficiency through energy saving technologies, management systems and responsible behaviour. The use of renewable energy sources, as well as the use of natural light and ventilation, should be encouraged in buildings.
- To encourage the use of public **transport** (availability, accessibility and efficiency), efficient management of transport and the avoidance of non-essential flights in order to reduce air pollution (greenhouse gases) Consideration should be given to the impact of the transportation of the thousands of delegates on the environment and local communities (for example, congestion, disruption, emissions and pollution).
- To maximise **sustainable tourism** offerings through encouraging venues and accommodation establishments to comply with (or exceed) minimum environmental standards and the minimum responsible tourism standards.
- To ensure that the **procurement** of goods and services is done in a sustainable manner, including the use of local products that have a minimal negative effect on the environment and to deliver increased performance of social responsibility.
- To promote **local economic development and social cohesion** and benefits within the host region. A triple bottom line approach should be implemented through demonstrating fair and responsible spend of government money, as well as using the investment into COP17 wisely for long-term benefit to the host region. The multi-cultural and diverse group of stakeholders should be respected, with special consideration to the host city.
- To encourage local **environmental protection** and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological systems.
- To ensure that the greening of the event is well **communicated and marketed** to appropriate target groups. It needs to encourage participation (exhibitors, visitors and contractors) with the view of behaviour change while also raising the profile of the event. Staff, sub-contractors, key suppliers and sponsors need to receive guidance about implementing event greening in a practical manner.
- To **monitor and evaluate** the greening initiatives so that lessons learnt can be captured and improvements made. An open and transparent reporting mechanism should be made available.
- To ensure that a **lasting legacy** is left behind that has a positive impact on the local people and environment, which can be sustained in a practical way.

Different role players are implementing a variety of **processes** and **projects** to support the aim of hosting a low carbon event. This includes initiatives directly relating to the hosting of the event, as well as mitigation projects that will assist to mitigate unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions. You are encouraged to do your bit to make this event as green as possible.



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Greening Actions

A variety of exhibition spaces will be hosted parallel to the main COP17 event and it provides the opportunity to think twice about our environmental footprint. This provides guidelines on how this can be done though including the organisers, venue, sub-contractors, exhibitors and visitors:

- **Clear guidance:** Ensure that a clear and simple 'green' message appears in your exhibitor manual, with tips on what the exhibitors can do, and what is expected from them. The sub-contractors or suppliers will also need to buy in on the event-greening strategy, which needs to be clearly communicated in the briefing sessions, and must be included in all the exhibition contracts. Outline green procurement and environmental requirements for exhibitors, such as avoiding the use of polystyrene food packaging, and only providing biodegradable products.
- **Generic signs:** Banners and signs should be generic whenever possible (i.e. not dated), so that they can be reused at future events. If some banners need to be one-off, ensure that these can be recycled.
- **Innovative designs:** Encourage exhibitors to be innovative by rethinking their designs and materials used in the building, such as the use of recycled and recyclable materials in their exhibition. Wood used should carry the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) logo to certify that it was grown and harvested sustainably. Innovative designs can minimise the need for lighting and other energy requirements at the stand.
- **Efficient lighting:** Exhibition organisers usually provide lighting to exhibitors, but sometimes exhibitors have a custom-built stand, and therefore bring their own, specialised lighting. Either way, it is important to promote the use of energy-efficient lights, and to ensure that these are switched off when not required.
- **Pamphlets and brochures:** Traditionally, exhibitors used to hand out many pamphlets and brochures among visitors, but this practice is expensive and not very effective. Encourage the use of digital media, where exhibitors provide information on their website, or on a reusable memory stick. Encourage visitors to take pictures with their cellphones, instead of printing product-specific brochures with a limited lifespan.
- **Visitor packs:** Inserts into visitor bags should be kept to a minimum, and visitors should rather be given the option to pick up appropriate information as they go through the exhibition. Consider giving away a memory stick instead of a bag, to encourage the move away from paper to electronic communication.
- **Giveaways:** Exhibitors sometimes have products or 'gimmicks' that they giveaway to visitors, and these are usually cheap and mass-produced. Encourage exhibitors to rethink their strategy, and rather give gifts made from reusable, recycled or recyclable materials. If these products are locally manufactured, it is even better, as it supports the local economy, and has a smaller carbon footprint.
- **Packaging:** Large volumes of waste are generated through over-packaging. Encourage exhibitors to keep the packaging material that was used at set-up, and use it again at break-down/strike of the exhibition.
- **Printing:** Ensure that paper has the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) logo, which indicates that the raw material was harvested, and the paper manufactured, in an environmentally friendly manner.
 - Print programmes and menus on recycled/environmentally friendly paper.
 - Consider providing programmes and menus digitally on-screen.

Water Management

- Drink tap water: Provide jugs with fresh water instead of bottled water where possible.
- Ensure that leftover water does not get poured down the drain, but is used for cleaning, or the watering of plants.
- Provide enough water points at outdoor exhibitions or shows to encourage people to drink tap water, and design these to catch runoff water (to be re-used for irrigation or cleaning purposes).
- If possible, channel the grey-water to a garden, but ensure that only non-toxic, biodegradable soaps are used.

Waste Management

An effective waste management system, including separation at source, is one of the most visually effective ways to influence event greening. The exhibition organiser, exhibitors and visitors can influence the effectiveness of recycling at a specific event. This section provides a few practical tips:

- Reduce the amount of waste generated; encourage exhibitors to bring only what they require.
- Encourage the reuse of items such as packaging material used for the transportation of an exhibition, or banners made for the exhibition.
- Encourage visitors and exhibitors to return their badges/lanyards when they leave, so that these can be reused at future events or recycled.
- Implement a multi-bin system in the exhibition area to encourage waste recycling at source.
- Ensure that visitors are informed about the recycling programme, and that they know what to do – this information needs to be provided at the recycling station, together with clearly marked bins.
- The golden rule is always to have a full set of clearly marked bins at each recycling station, and ensure that there are enough recycling stations – make recycling as easy as possible.
- Recycling stations need to be conspicuously placed close to where the waste is generated, such as where food is sold, or at security points.

A few waste management concepts are outlined below:

- **Separation at source:** When waste is separated at the same place where delegates/the public dispose of it by providing different bins for different types of waste, i.e. at the point when a useful item becomes waste:
 - A twin-bin system – when two bins are placed next to each other for recyclable (dry) and non-recyclable (wet) items.
 - A multi-bin system – when different bins are provided for different waste types, such as glass, plastic, tin, paper and non-recyclables.
- **Back-of-house separation:** When waste is not separated at source (where you throw the item in the bin), but the main recyclable items are removed from the waste stream for recycling on-site. This is a messy business, and contamination leads to a lower recovery rate when selling recyclable items, but can be avoided by providing separation at source.
- **Off-site separation:** When waste is neither separated at source nor on-site, but only once it reaches a material recovery facility (MRF). It usually has a low recovery rate due to contamination.
- **Composting:** When organic waste is processed in the presence of oxygen, resulting in a soil conditioner that can be used as a valuable source of nutrients for plants. When this is done in the absence of oxygen (anaerobic), such as in a landfill site, methane (which is a very powerful greenhouse gas) is produced as a by-product.

- **Landfill site** – when waste is not reused, recycled or composted, it generally ends up in a landfill site. The aim is to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill sites.

Local is 'lekker'

Using local products and suppliers is environmentally beneficial, because it reduces transportation requirements and the associated environmental impact. It also supports the local economy, which in turn makes the area more desirable as an exhibition destination. In addition, it supports local economic development, which in turn assists in job creation and poverty alleviation.

Consider your legacy

Where possible ensure that a positive legacy is left after the event. Whether goods are donated to charitable organisations or particular initiatives are identified and supported that can add social, environmental and economic value to the host city, leaving it a better place for its citizens and those who are vulnerable to climate change.

Communication

When all the hard work comes together during the actual exhibition, it is good to share this with the visitors, so it is important to ensure that the 'green' message is communicated. This needs to showcase all the greening efforts behind the scenes, and give guidance to the visitors on what they can do to contribute.

Additional resources

Enviropaedia – www.enviropaedia.com
 Event Greening Forum of SA – www.eventgreening.co.za
 Department of Environmental Affairs – www.environment.gov.za
 Durban / eThekweni Municipality – www.durban.gov.za
 Food and Trees for Africa – www.trees.co.za
 Fairtrade in Tourism SA (FTTSA) – www.fairtourismsa.org.za
 Green Leaf – www.greenleafecostandard.net
 Heritage SA – www.heritagesa.co.za
 Indalo Yethu – www.indaloyethu.com
 Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) – www.msc.org
 SASSI – www.wwfsassi.co.za or www.wwf.org.za/sassi
 The Story of Stuff – www.storyofstuff.com
 UN Global Compact – www.unglobalcompact.org
 Urban Sprout – www.urbansprout.co.za
 Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) – www.panda.org

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