

The background of the cover is a photograph of a globe being held by many hands of various skin tones. The hands are reaching up from the bottom and sides, supporting the globe. The globe shows green continents and blue oceans. The background is a bright, slightly blurred sky. There are three main text areas: a dark blue box with 'formnext' in white, a white box with 'mesago' in red, and a large white box with the title and subtitle in black.

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Sustainability Guide for Exhibitors

Tips & Tricks for your
sustainable exhibition
participation

About this guide

Sustainability is a key factor of success when doing business responsibly – including in the context of exhibitions. As an exhibitor, you have numerous opportunities to make your exhibition presence more environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable without compromising on quality or impact.

This fact sheet provides you with **specific tips** on how to systematically integrate sustainability into planning, implementing, and following up on your exhibition participation. Whether it's material selection, logistics, booth design, communication, or reuse – even small changes can have a big impact. Discover practical solutions that can be directly integrated into your exhibition planning – **for a sustainable event culture that benefits everyone.**

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Sustainable booth design and material selection

Concept and planning

- ✓ Communicate sustainability goals early to all stakeholders
- ✓ Plan a modular booth using reusable systems
- ✓ Ensure accessibility for all visitors
- ✓ Favor system-based booth construction over custom builds

Materials and products

- ✓ Choose reusable and fully recyclable materials
- ✓ Opt for reusable flooring instead of disposable carpets
- ✓ Request sustainable packaging solutions from service providers
- ✓ Choose fabric graphics made from recycled, non-toxic materials
- ✓ Avoid using years on printed materials
- ✓ Avoid PVC banners and use eco-friendly printing inks

Reuse and additional products

- ✓ Use potted plants instead of cut flowers for decoration and offer them to visitors to take home afterward
- ✓ Provide sustainable giveaways with real practical value
- ✓ Digitalize informational materials (QR codes instead of paper brochures)
- ✓ Choose partners with environmental certifications or demonstrably sustainable practices



Look for recognized sustainability labels such as FSC (for wood products from sustainable forestry) or Cradle to Cradle (for circular products).

Energy efficiency at your booth

- ✓ Switch off all unnecessary devices completely after the exhibition closes
- ✓ Identify safety-related equipment that must not be switched off
- ✓ Use switchable power strips to minimize standby consumption
- ✓ Unplug chargers from power outlets after charging
- ✓ Use energy-efficient devices and technology
- ✓ Use LED lighting instead of conventional light sources

Sustainable mobility

- ✓ Promote low-emission travel for employees, partners, and customers
- ✓ Avoid domestic flights and use trains as the primary means of travel
- ✓ Organize and support carpooling
- ✓ Make use of Deutsche Bahn event tickets
- ✓ Choose accommodations close to the exhibition grounds
- ✓ Proactively inform customers about climate-friendly travel options



Traveling by train saves around 70–75% of emissions on average compared to traveling by car – a significant opportunity for us to reduce our impact together.

Resource conservation and waste management

Before the exhibition

- ✓ Integrate waste management into booth planning early on
- ✓ Check materials for reusability and recyclability
- ✓ Reduce packaging materials and choose sustainable alternatives
- ✓ Consult the trade fair organizer about disposal options

During the exhibition

- ✓ Separate waste consistently according to the organizer's guidelines, or request proper waste sorting if none are provided
- ✓ Offer digital media instead of printed materials
- ✓ Minimize resource consumption (water, paper, packaging)
- ✓ Raise staff awareness about resource-efficient behavior

After the exhibition

- ✓ Store materials for future use
- ✓ Donate or properly recycle materials that are no longer needed
- ✓ Evaluate and optimize resource consumption for your next event
- ✓ Review implemented measures and identify potential for improvement

Responsible action and donations

- ✓ Ensure fair working conditions and an inclusive, discrimination-free environment for all
- ✓ Choose environmentally friendly and fairly produced clothing for booth staff
- ✓ Donate unused materials, exhibits, and furniture to social organizations

Sustainable catering

- ✓ Prioritize regional and seasonal products
- ✓ Offer vegetarian and vegan food options
- ✓ Use reusable dishes instead of disposable ones
- ✓ Hire caterers who operate sustainably
- ✓ Plan quantities carefully to avoid food waste
- ✓ Donate surplus food to charitable organizations

Sustainable logistics

- ✓ Work with regional service providers and local partners
- ✓ Minimize transport distances through proactive planning
- ✓ Optimize transport volume with efficient packaging
- ✓ Request sustainable packaging made from recycled materials and avoid plastic wrapping
- ✓ Plan loading times and capacities efficiently

Transparent communication

- ✓ Communicate sustainability goals and measures actively, early, and openly
- ✓ Avoid greenwashing and support all environmental claims with concrete data
- ✓ Use recognized certificates and labels
- ✓ Use clear and accessible language when addressing sustainability topics

CO₂ balance

When calculating your carbon footprint, always follow this order: **avoid, reduce, compensate.**

Inform organizers and service providers early if you require data for your CO₂ balance.



The EU Green Claims Directive provides important guidelines for communicating environmental claims. Follow these to ensure credibility and legal compliance.

Staff training and awareness

Train booth staff on sustainability goals and measures

- ✓ Discuss sustainability topics in team meetings
- ✓ Appoint employees as sustainability ambassadors
- ✓ Collect feedback from staff on potential improvements
- ✓ Celebrate successes together and acknowledge commitment

A group of people's hands are shown holding a globe of the Earth. The hands are of various skin tones and are positioned around the globe, suggesting a collective effort. The background is a bright, clear sky with some light clouds. The globe shows green continents and blue oceans.

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Let's shape a sustainable future!

For further support, please contact:
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