

Guide for a Sustainable Fair Presence

Sustainability is best achieved together

Participating in a fair provides a valuable stage – but it can generate a lot of waste that consumes natural resources and has a negative impact on the climate.

Together with all participants, we can achieve better sustainability and avoid large amounts of waste – before, during and after the fair.

Together, we can help to achieve two key sustainability goals: Conserving resources and reducing CO² emissions. Your contributions to these two sustainability goals can be relevant for the reduction targets of your company's CSRD (Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive) report and your sustainability communication.

Our guide provides tips and ideas for a sustainable fair presence.

Your stand at the fair

A sustainable fair presence starts with the stand design – do have a chat with your stand builder and partners about this at an early stage if you are planning to build your own stand, especially if you are planning a new design.

Multiple use of a stand

Most waste is generated when a stand is only used once and then thrown away.

Materials such as plywood, wood, fabric coverings, carpets and display elements that could potentially be reused are lost as a result.

In contrast, modular stands and reusable stand equipment such as rental furniture make a valuable contribution to sustainability; they can also bring cost benefits. Multiple use means that the material remains in use for longer.

In the long term, a modular stand that can be dismantled and adapted to different settings is more cost effective than a stand that can only be used once.

Moreover, a stand with a well thought-out design can travel more easily thanks to its smaller volume, is faster to load and unload and therefore also saves time during assembly.

The elements for the System Stands at Frankfurter Buchmesse have been in use for several decades according to this principle.

Single-grade materials and packaging

For your stand, make sure that the material can be separated by type.

Mixed materials such as painted wood, chipboard or drywall elements cannot be recycled and usually need to be incinerated.

Ask your stand builder about alternative, material-saving flooring and opt for reusable solutions such as carpet tiles or laminate.

If a reusable flooring is not available, choose a single-grade product to enable easy and efficient recycling.

In addition to recyclability, look out for certificates and fairly produced materials.

The carpet in our System Stand products is unmixed and C2C silver certified.

Packaging material should also be kept to a minimum and be reusable. Replace plastic film wrappings with reusable cardboard packaging, boxes and crates.

Transport and storage

Where possible, work with a local stand builder and store reusable equipment as locally as possible. This will reduce transport journeys and packaging costs.

Furniture and stand equipment

Stand furniture rented on site cuts waste and allows a certain degree of flexibility. [Service contractors](#) for stand equipment.

Use potted plants for decoration instead of cut flowers and give them a second life after the fair.

Accessibility

A sustainable fair presence should also be inclusive: Right from the planning stage, make sure that your stand is inviting for all interested people and that products are accessible. [Useful tips for an accessible stand](#)

Management of recyclables

Our ultimate goal is a functioning circular economy. At the end of the fair, waste will be carefully separated for disposal.

Please make sure that all waste materials are left behind in their purest form so that they can be easily recycled.

Guide for a Sustainable Fair Presence

Sustainability is best achieved together

Waste consultants from Messe Frankfurt will be on hand to support you during set-up and dismantling. They regularly walk through the halls and can be contacted at any time. [Service Contractors – Waste Disposal](#)

Together with Messe Frankfurt and its partner Meinhardt Städtereinigung, we now achieve a recycling rate of more than 90 %. Another partner of Messe Frankfurt is Frankfurter Entsorgungs- und Service GmbH (FES), which generates electricity and district heating using a modern waste-to-energy plant.

Separate paper waste collection takes place on the exhibition grounds in the halls during dismantling.

During set-up, paper is not collected separately, but sorted afterwards by Meinhardt.

Where possible, team up with regional social organisations that would welcome donations (exhibits, plants or furniture) after the fair.

Since 2023, we have been working with our partner Trash Galore to repurpose leftover materials from our own exhibition areas that we have not yet been able to recycle. These materials thus also benefit charitable organisations in the Frankfurt area.

In case you also have reusable materials, [Trash Galore](#) will be happy to send you a quote: unternehmen@trashgalore.de.

Promotional and print material

Avoiding disposable giveaways can have a positive effect on your brand image. If you still decide to have them, choose ones with a long-term benefit and made from recycled or single-grade material.

Digitise your event materials and make them available at your stand using QR codes.

Travelling

The journey to the fair generates the largest proportion of greenhouse gas emissions. Frankfurt is located in the centre of Europe, with the exhibition grounds right in the city centre and optimal connections to local and long-distance public transport. For electric vehicles, there are sufficient charging facilities on the grounds and in the surrounding multi-storey car parks.

Where possible, try to use the train instead of travelling by car or plane. We offer an [event package](#) for your journey in cooperation with Deutsche Bahn. From Frankfurt main station it is only a 10-minute walk from the main station to the exhibition grounds.

If you have to travel by plane: it only takes 15 minutes by public transport from Frankfurt Airport to get to the city and the exhibition site.

Exhibitor Passes and trade visitor tickets include the use of local public transport (RMV) for travelling to and from the trade fair.

Energy

Energy efficiency on-site

Since 2020, 100% green electricity has been used across the entire exhibition venue. Since 2010, Frankfurter Buchmesse has provided exhibitors exclusively with green electricity.

The temperature in the halls is regulated based on weather conditions. Doors and gates should remain closed wherever possible and not be kept open permanently, to keep temperatures stable. This, as well as LED hall lighting contribute to a more sustainable fair infrastructure.

Messe Frankfurt has been operating an energy monitoring system since 2007. The base load at the Frankfurt site was reduced by 27 per cent compared to 2019.

Your contribution to sustainable electricity use

Check the energy efficiency of the equipment and lighting used during set-up and dismantling as well as during the fair itself. LEDs save up to 90 per cent of energy compared to conventional light sources.

As soon as your mobile phone, tablet etc. are charged, unplug the chargers from the socket.

Sustainable exhibition grounds

Messe Frankfurt, operator of the exhibition site where Frankfurter Buchmesse takes place, introduced the internationally recognised EMAS environmental management system in 2023, thereby also fulfilling the requirements of DIN EN ISO 14001. [Website Messe Frankfurt – Sustainability](#)

Catering

Avoid wasting food and use disposable products wherever possible.

On plastic bottles and cans, this logo  indicates a returnable product with a deposit: these products can be returned to most supermarkets.

When ordering catering, opt for regional and seasonal products, choose vegetarian and vegan dishes wherever possible and avoid small packages of milk and sugar.

The use of reusable crockery and the avoidance of packaging material helps to reduce waste.

Talk to your caterer or the local caterer at an early stage about the food on offer and the corresponding logistics in order to optimise delivery quantities and delivery times so that as little food as possible ends up being thrown away.

Guide for a Sustainable Fair Presence

Sustainability is best achieved together

On-site caterers have their own kitchens and can therefore provide food in line with demand. Food can also be adequately cooled, stored and prepared. These are key advantages when it comes to avoiding food waste.

Frankfurter Buchmesse is partnering with [Accente](#); they are responsible for catering across the exhibition site. The company, which is also EMAS-certified, works with regional producers in terms of sustainability and focusses on seasonal dishes and drinks. They are also adding more and more vegetarian and vegan options for visitors to the fair.

The disposable tableware used is made from recycled materials, renewable raw materials and compostable materials.

Accente's kitchen and the entire logistics, including the catering warehouse, are located on the exhibition grounds. Distances are therefore short, and delivery is made with electric vehicles.

Logistics

Early planning of logistics enables efficient use of resources – so try to avoid last-minute shipments.

Use reusable cardboard packaging, boxes and crates instead of film, and avoid unnecessary packaging material.

Our logistics partner DSV Solutions GmbH is certified according to the latest DIN EN ISO 14001 standards.

DSV tries to minimise transport, bundle shipments and avoid single truck journeys and downtimes.

Every time an order is placed, DSV has a tree planted in your name through the PLANT-MY-TREE® partnership, thus making a further joint contribution to protecting the environment.

An overview of all certifications and information about DSV can be found directly on the [website](#).

DSV operates Messe Frankfurt's Cargo Centre, which increases efficiency and reduces distances, thanks also to a digital traffic management system. Only electric forklift trucks operate within the Cargo Centre.

Social sustainability

Wir We want to make our contribution to achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda, see website.

Social sustainability is also important to us: compliance with human rights along the entire supply chain should be a top priority.

When booking staff, make sure that you observe the permitted working hours, provide sufficient breaks and ensure fair and equal pay.

If you provide staff clothing, the best choice is environmentally friendly and fairly produced clothing that can be reused several times.

Communication

Involve all participants in your sustainability strategy at an early stage.

Sensitise the entire team at the stand – it's worth spreading the word.

Make sustainability visible.

Don't be afraid to communicate the small steps. Sustainability is a process and won't be fully achieved right from the beginning.

Sustainability is best achieved together, so: join us!

You can find more information on sustainability at Frankfurt Book Fair [here](#).

Do you have further ideas or questions about sustainability at Frankfurter Buchmesse?

Reach us at:

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e-mail: sustainability@buchmesse.de