

EMS sustainable meetings policy

Guidelines for a sustainable organisation of meetings

I. Green meetings

Between 400 and 700 participants each year attend the EMS Annual Meeting & partner conferences. Though small by comparison, the travel across Europe, the amount of paper and waste produced as a result is considerable. The EMS agreed the following guidelines to express its commitment to conduct its conferences in a way that reduces greenhouse emissions as well as other waste and pollutants and minimises the use of resources. These guidelines are also provided to collaborating Professional Congress Organisers, EMS Societies submitting venue proposals, managements of potential venues, contractors, coordinators, committees and all EMS meeting participants. They will be continually evaluated as technologies and mitigation options continue to develop.

A sustainable-meeting policy covers a variety of areas and includes actions as well as recommendations for collaborating organisations and participants. The spectrum of areas to be considered reaches from travel activities (with their impact on the climate), to consumption of resources of energy, water, paper etc. to considerations about reduction and minimisation of waste. Also the procurement of products and services in a sustainable way is an essential aspect.

II. Actions and Recommendations

1. Mobility and carbon footprint

Personal travel of attendees likely is the largest contribution to the carbon footprint of the conference.

- Meeting participants are encouraged to travel by train and avoid air travel whenever possible.
- Carbon-offset for participants' travel to the conference is offered.

2. Venue and accommodation

- Criteria for selection of venues include that the venue has a sustainable-meeting policy in place (energy consumption, water and waste management, catering).
- Criteria for selection of venues include the availability of near-by accommodation and easy access by public transport.

3. Organisation and Arrangement of services

- Printed material is kept to a minimum, recycled material used when possible.
- The future provision of USB-sticks and a programme book will be re-considered, as the mobile app of the entire programme provides an alternative.
- Badge and lanyard recycling will be offered, receptacles provided in convenient locations.
- Banners and place cards are produced from recyclable material.
- Exhibitors and other organisations are encouraged to reduce printed material.

4. Catering

- For all goods produced for the meeting the most environmentally-appropriate, locally produced option available at reasonable prices is to be used.
- Plastic cutlery, cups, plates, stir-sticks etc for coffee breaks and meals should not be used; the preference is for china & other re-usable material, at least recyclable material should be used, and a recycling system be in place.
- Local tap water should be used instead of bottled water (with reusable/recyclable cups).
- When appropriate left-over food is provided to local food banks.

5. Communication

- Participants are informed in advance on the aims to minimise impact, through the website and conference material.
- Feedback surveys include the option to leave comments on environmentally-friendly practices at the conference and to make suggestions.
- The principles are communicated to all local assistants and service providers.