

The background of the entire page is a photograph showing several hands of different skin tones reaching up to touch a large, translucent globe of the Earth. The globe is held against a bright, slightly cloudy sky. The hands are positioned around the globe, with fingers spread, symbolizing global unity and environmental care. Some hands are wearing simple beaded bracelets.

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Sustainability Guide for Exhibitors

Tips & Tricks for your
sustainable exhibition
participation

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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Resource-saving stand design and materials

Concept and planning

- ☐ Communicate sustainability goals early to all stakeholders
- ☐ Plan a modular booth using reusable systems
- ☐ Prefer 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 reusable 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 giveaways that are fairly produced and have real utility 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

Accessible exhibition presence

Stand construction and barriers

- ❑ When planning the stand, identify and avoid potential barriers early on (no steps or thresholds)
- ❑ For raised stand structures: Bevel the edge of the booth facing the aisle; ensure a gentle slope
- ❑ Mark unavoidable steps with continuous contrasting stripes
- ❑ Plan for ramps: usable width ≥ 1.20 m, maneuvering areas at the ends $\geq 1.50 \times 1.50$ m (DIN 18040-1)
- ❑ Place ramps in clearly visible locations clearly indicate barrier free access

Stand design

- ❑ Ensure passageways ≥ 1.20 m
- ❑ Provide turning areas for wheelchairs $\geq 1.50 \times 1.50$ m
- ❑ Avoid thick-pile carpets that are difficult to navigat

Stand furniture

- ❑ In addition to standing tables, include low tables that are wheelchair-accessible
- ❑ Provide seating, especially for elderly people and people with walking aids
- ❑ Place exhibits and takeaway materials at a maximum reachable height (approximately 85 cm)

Accessible exhibition presence

Wall graphics, monitors, photo spots

- Place informational text at a height of 90 - 160 cm, and images and pictograms at a maximum height of 190 cm
- Ensure good readability: use a limited color palette, high contrast (e.g., black/white or red/white, in accordance with DIN 32975), and a sans-serif font with normal stroke width (DIN 1450)
- Use screens where contrast and font size can be adjusted
- Use simple language and supporting images
- Design photo spots so that they can also be used by seated or shorter people



Tip: Brief your exhibition staff. Make sure all team members are familiar with the barrier-free offerings, can respond attentively and flexibly to unexpected barriers, and always communicate respectfully at eye level. Actively offer assistance rather than assuming it is not needed.

Low-emission 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 or with good public transportation access
- ☐ 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.

Resources and waste

Before the exhibition

- ☐ Integrate recycling management into booth planning early on
- ☐ Check materials for reusability and recyclability
- ☐ Reduce packaging materials and choose reusable 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

Efficient and low-emission logistics

- ☐ Work with regional service providers and local partners
- ☐ Minimize transport distances through proactive planning
- ☐ Optimize transport volume with efficient packaging
- ☐ Request reusable 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

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Let's shape a sustainable future!

For further support, please contact:
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