

WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Green Guidelines for WMA meetings to create more sustainable events

Adopted by the WMA General Assembly, Berlin, October 2022

1. VENUE

1.1 Host events at hotels or conference centers that have a Green Building Certification where available.

1.2 Host events and lodging in the same hotel to eliminate the need for transport and shuttling participants across venues.

If this is impossible, have locations at walkable distance from each other and provide participants with clear information, maps and time estimations of the walk between the two locations.

1.3 Host events at venues that are easily reachable by public transportation or on foot and with amenities such as restaurants and shopping complexes that can be reached on foot.

1.4 Include in the contract with the hotel hosting the event a “green clause” whereby both contracting parties commit to implement the agreement through eco-friendly practices, in particular regarding food/beverage, waste management and events materials (see below under the relevant sections).

1.5 Organizing committees should actively look for ways and seek further feedback to make ‘planetary health’ or ‘environmental change’ visible in the conference in all aspects.

2. TRANSPORTATION

2.1 Encourage participants to be conscious of their transport options and to choose alternatives that use the smallest amount of energy -such as bus or train transport for participants from the region when feasible.

2.2 When transportation options are limited, encourage participants to carpool or fly on routes with the least number of connections as possible.

2.3 Encourage participants to fly with airlines that use modern and fuel-efficient aircrafts and have established environmentally friendly services such as sustainable food options, recycling of paper/plastic/aluminum, and limited extra packaging of amenities/food services)

2.4 Where possible, when hiring local transportation for an event, work with companies that have adopted an environmentally-friendly policies and practices.

2.5 Offset all travel emissions of WMA meeting.

3. FOOD AND BEVERAGE

3.1 Food waste:

- 3.1.1 Encourage participants to register for social events and indicate their dietary requirements in order to have an accurate guest count and food preferences so that caterers have time to create a meal plan that avoids waste.
- 3.1.2 Encourage caterers to source local fresh, seasonal products for all meals and coffee/tea breaks.
- 3.1.3 Manage portion sizes by opting to serve pre-measured portions at tables, instead of buffets. In case buffets are unavoidable, offer smaller plate sizes.

3.2 Minimize the use of meat and dairy products:

- 3.2.1 When meat is offered, encourage meat options with the lowest environmental impact in the raising of the animal to the table (i.e., poultry, fish).
- 3.2.2 Strive to have at least one fully vegetarian/vegan official dinner per meeting.

3.3 Packaging, where possible considering health safety requirements:

- 3.3.1 Ban single-use plastic at events: straws, plastic spoons, cups and bottles. Use compostable plastic products if necessary.
- 3.3.2 Avoid any unnecessary packaging of snacks or food, serve in bulk instead.
- 3.3.3 Serve condiments, sugar, milk and beverages in bulk.
- 3.3.4 Install water stations instead of offering bottled water.

4. EVENT MATERIAL AND MERCHANDISE

4.1 Reusable / recycled materials:

- 4.1.1 Include sustainability requirements in the request for proposals for conference material and merchandise and ask for proof of sustainability claims to prevent greenwashing.
- 4.1.2 Sustainable name badge system- use reusable badges/lanyards or participate in [lanyard lending programs](#).
- 4.1.3 Limit printing and opt for digital materials instead of paper. This includes digital signage in place of vinyl banners, mobile apps for event programs and LED screens, chalkboards or whiteboards instead of flip charts.
- 4.1.4 When needed, use recycled paper, plastic or recycled materials with zero carbon footprint.

4.2 **Gifts and welcome package:**

- 4.2.1 Consider experiential or digital gifts instead of physical gifts.
- 4.2.2 Minimize complimentary merchandise to the minimum necessary for the functioning of the meeting and source eco-responsible merchandise bought locally or made from recycled or reusable and durable material.
- 4.2.3 Reduce the amount of printed material in welcome packages. (Alternatively: Limit printed material to a one-page instruction sheet on how to obtain material electronically).
- 4.2.4 Instead of pre-packaged welcome bags, allow people to choose what they need. (Alternatively: Do not offer welcome bags but rather encourage participants to use their own durable or recycled bags).

5. **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

5.1 **Waste management plan:**

- 5.1.1 Define a waste management plan that will then be announced to event staff, personnel of the venue and meeting participants to build consciousness.

5.2 **Waste recycling:**

- 5.2.1 Where available, have recycle bins and if possible, compost bins in strategic parts of the venue according to expected recycling items. And inform participants of the compostable material.
- 5.2.2 Provide waste stations that are marked clearly to help delegates sort their waste.

6. **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Chairs of the Environment Caucus, together with volunteers from WMA membership, are commissioned:

- 6.1 To monitor and evaluate the implementation of the green guidelines;
- 6.2 Accordingly, to collect the information and comments during WMA events/meetings, and
- 6.3 To summarize recommendations on the implementation of the green guidelines to be presented by the co-chairs of the Environment Caucus and forwarded to the secretariat, so that those messages can be shared with the members as a part of the outcome of meetings. Key lessons learned are to be shared with the organizing committee of future meetings.

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