ETH zürich

All for Zero 2030

Guide #3 for Sustainable and Inclusive Events

Conferences, congresses, fairs, and exhibitions outside of ETH-locations

Version 01/March 2024

Events and the Sustainable Development Goals

ETH Zurich pursues sustainability in its strategic guidelines. The 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals define sustainability in its ecological, social, and economic dimensions and serve as a model for the daily actions of the ETH community.

More than 2500 events are organized at ETH every year. This Guide for sustainable and inclusive events provides event organisers with a planning tool that goes beyond a guideline: by means of concrete proposals for measures, the organisers are supported in designing and implementing their events sustainably in line with the 2030 Agenda.

The measures are organised into five categories:
1. Mobility, Venue & Accommodation
2. Material & Waste Management
3. Gastronomy
4. Diversity & Inclusion
5. Concept, Organisation & Behaviour

The «Good Practice» measures correspond to the standard requirements of an ETH event and should be fulfilled by all events. «Excellent» measures go beyond the «Good Practices». You can find more Information on the website «Sustainable and Inclusive Events».

Sustainability tip: The checkboxes can be clicked digitally, so the guide does not need to be printed out.

Mobility, Venue & Accommodation

Arrival/Departure

Good Practice

Participants will be informed in advance about environmentally friendly travel options (including directions to (covered) bicycle parking, E-bike charging stations, lockers for helmets, etc.).

Air travel can be avoided by requesting participants to travel by train or coach for travel durations of up to 8 hours.

For participants required to travel more than 8 hours by train or coach, virtual participation options are offered.

If air travel is necessary (> 8 hours by train or coach), attendees are requested to book Economy Class from an airline with a favourable Airline Index.

Excellent

Incentives for environmentally friendly travel are provided and communicated in advance (e.g., reward with a food voucher).

After the event, a survey will confirm that no participants have arrived by plane or car (except for individuals with limited mobility or in case of material transport that is not feasible by public transportation).

If cycling or using public transport is not possible, a collective shuttle (preferably electric bus) from the nearest train station is organised, and/or carpooling is encouraged.

365.29 kg

335.77 kg

0.17 kg

40.44 kg
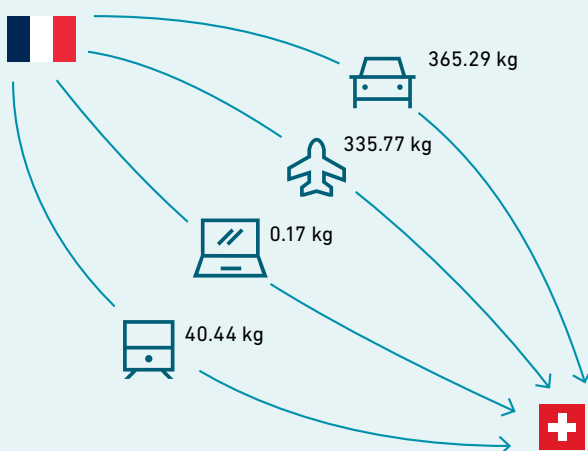
Comparison of different means of transport with online participation in terms of greenhouse gas emissions in kg CO_2 (Paris – Zurich). [1]

Recommendations for Implementation

Virtual Events
– Zoom for virtual meetings, webinars, and conferences
– Event technology support for ETH-Events

Mobility
– «Mobility Guide» for sustainable mobility at ETH Zurich
– Map of Europe comparing different modes of travel
– SBB Group Tickets (30% discount for 10+ people)
– Coach companies, e.g. Eurobus, Twerenbold, edelline
– Car Pooling platform BlaBlaCar

Venue

Good Practice

When selecting the event venue, sustainability standards are considered (e.g., «Swisstainable»-certification). If no certified venues are suitable/available, other sustainability measures are considered (e.g., renewable electricity and heating).

The venue is easily accessible by bicycle and public transportation (e.g., the event start and end times are coordinated with public transport schedules).

Event rooms are heated to a maximum of 20°C or cooled to no more than 6°C below the outside temperature (ask the venue accordingly). The area used (especially heated or air-conditioned area) is reduced as far as possible.

Event signage is written in inclusive language (including gender-neutral icons) following recommendations from ETH Diversity on gender-sensitive and non-discriminatory language.

The event will be made accessible to people with physical impairments if required (e.g. by choosing barrier-free rooms with barrier-free toilets within a reasonable distance along with accessible buffets, exhibition/information stands, speakers' podiums, etc.).

Heating in tents and outdoors (e.g. by patio heaters) is omitted, or environmentally friendly heating is used (e.g. pellet heating; see directives of the City of Zurich).

The use of generators is avoided or low-emission (e.g. solar-powered) generators are used sparingly.

Accommodation

Excellent

Only accommodations with sustainability certifications that are reachable by public transport or on foot are selected for participants and contributors (max. walking distance to the nearest station: 1 kilometre).
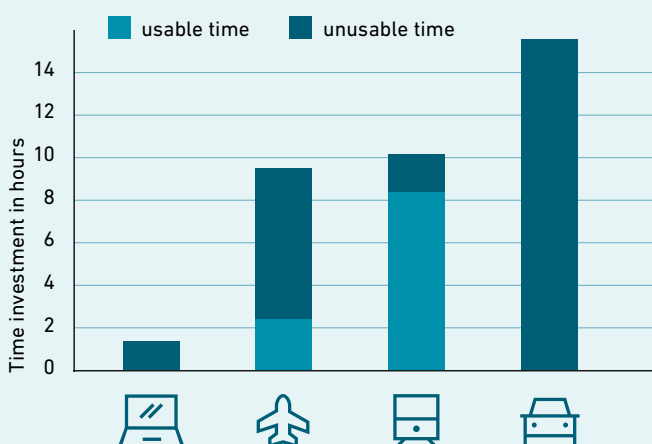
Comparison of the time investment for online participation with the time spent travelling to and from an event (using Zurich to Paris as an example). Comparison of the travelling time that can be used for other activities (e.g. for work). [2]

Recommendations for Implementation

Venue
– Venue Finder by Zurich Tourism
– «Swisstainable» committed venues
– ETH buildings: Directions for people with visual impairments
– ETH Room information incl. details on accessibility

Accommodation
– «Swisstainable» committed enterprises
– Responsible Hotels of Switzerland
– Certified «ibex fairstay» enterprises

Material & Waste Management

Printing

Good Practice

Printed products are minimised by using digital alternatives (e.g., online information and registration, event app, etc.). Flyers can be replaced with QR codes.

Banners, roll-ups, and flags have no specific event reference to allow for reuse (e.g., no year indication).

Printing resources are saved through the use of: recycled/grass paper, thin paper, low print run, small format, double-sided printing.

Name tags/badges and lanyards are collected at the end of the event and reused (except for simple name stickers).

Sustainability aspects are considered when selecting a printing company (e.g., environmentally friendly inks and printing processes, carbon neutrality, and/or social commitment).

To improve readability, sans-serif fonts in a sufficiently large font size with at least a 1.2-line spacing, and high contrast or contrasting colours are used (taking into account red-green colour blindness).

Excellent

New printed products are 100% avoided by using digital alternatives and/or reusing materials from past events.

Event Technology

Good Practice

Event technology is used within reason and sustainability criteria are taken into account when selecting external event technology companies (short transport routes, etc.).

Excellent

When selecting event technology companies, preference is given to companies with environmental certification (e.g. in accordance with ISO standard 20121).

Waste

Good Practice

Recycling and compost bins are available throughout the event venue, and proper disposal is organised.

Recommendations for Implementation

Registration tools
– Online tools for event registration, e.g.: ETH Registration management (Eventsair), ConfTool, Eventfrog, AEM Forms, Microsoft Forms

Printing
– ETH Print and Publish

– List of sustainable printing enterprises (dpsuisse)

Event Technology
– Consulting on Event technology

Decoration

Good Practice

Procured materials (e.g. furniture, exhibition stands, interior fittings for pavilions, etc.) are borrowed or sourced from environmentally friendly and fair production and are reused.

Decoration is consciously used sparingly (at own discretion) and is sourced from environmentally friendly and fair production and/or from companies with a social commitment.

Cut flowers and/or potted plants stem exclusively from seasonal, local, and fair production and are reused (e.g., cut flowers are distributed at the end of the event, potted plants are stored for subsequent events).

Excellent

Exhibition items and constructions are produced in an environmentally friendly and fair manner (e.g. from certified materials) and are reused. External exhibitors are made aware of this as well.

Decoration (including cut flowers) is 100% avoided or borrowed.

Merchandise, Gifts & Giveaways

Good Practice

Merchandise, gifts, and giveaways are consciously used sparingly (at own discretion) and sourced from environmentally friendly and fair production (e.g., upcycling, natural materials from certified sources) and/or from companies with a social commitment.

For gifts and giveaways, >50% (vegetarian/vegan) food items or immaterial gifts (experiences, donations) and <50% other meaningful consumables are chosen to conserve resources and avoid waste.
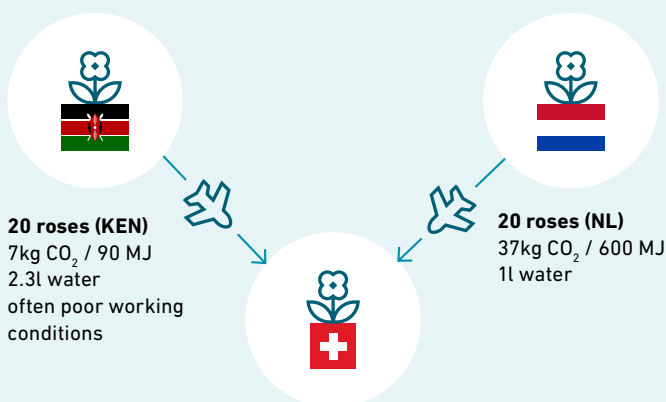
Merchandise and giveaways have no specific event reference to allow for reuse at subsequent events (e.g., no year indication).

Exhibitors and external co-organisers are requested to also implement the above good practices.

Excellent

Merchandise and giveaways are 100% avoided.

It is ensured that exhibitors and external co-organisers also completely refrain from handing out merchandise, giveaways, and physical promotional materials.

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20 roses (KEN)
7kg CO_2 / 90 MJ
2.3l water
often poor working
conditions

20 roses (NL)
37kg CO_2 / 600 MJ
1l water

Comparison of CO_2 emissions, energy and water consumption of flowers from typical cultivation areas (Netherlands and Kenya). Although flowers from Kenya have a smaller ecological footprint, they are not sustainable due to poor labour conditions. Flowers should therefore be produced regionally, seasonally and ethically. [3]

Recommendations for Implementation

Decoration
– Plant rentals for events in Zurich, z.B: Pflanzerei Zürich, Pflanzenmieten.ch, Blumenland Schweiz AG

– More sustainable cut flowers, z.B: VEG and the City, Blumenpost

– Dried and silk flowers, z.B: Froilein Blume, Blumen Krämer

Gifts, Giveaways
– Sustainable stores, e.g.: Changemaker, CIRCLE

– greensign: Sustainable giveaways

Gastronomy

Good Practice

>70% vegetarian menus/snacks are offered. At least one vegan option is available in each course.

A catering company with transparent sustainability efforts is chosen (see «Recommendations for Implementation»). For self-organised catering, the following points are met:

– >80% regional and seasonal fruits and vegetables are used for the dishes.

– >80% of plant-based and animal products are produced ecologically (e.g., IP-Suisse, Bio, naturaplan, etc.).

– Overseas products are 100% Fairtrade certified.

Relevant product information (vegetarian/vegan, allergens) is provided directly with the food items (has to be requested from the caterer).

Food waste is minimised by estimating the quantity of snacks needed to produce as few leftovers as possible (caterer's experience can help).

Leftover food is distributed to staff and/or participants (provide take-away boxes).

Beverages (e.g. wine, beer, soft drinks) are sourced from Switzerland or from near adjacent regions.

Instead of bottled water, tap water is provided in carafes, and water dispensers for refilling personal bottles are made available, if needed.

Energy-efficient refrigerators are used, and open-front refrigerators are avoided. Caterers and external exhibitors are requested to comply with this as well.

No disposable tableware (cups, plates, cutlery) is used, and coffee capsules are recycled.

Protein from dairy and eggs ■ Protein from meat and fish
Plant-based protein ■ Other
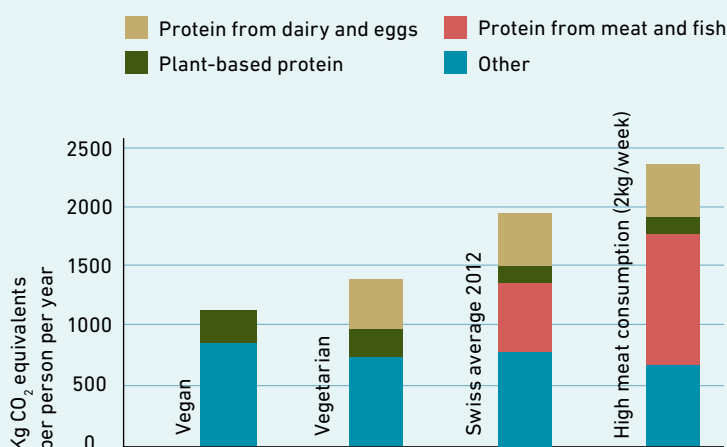
Comparison of greenhouse gas emissions from different diets. «Other» includes beverages, fats & oils, cereals, vegetables & fruit, transport, packaging, distribution. [4]

Recommendations for Implementation

Catering companies
– SV Catering (ETH-Partner)

– Compass Scolarest Catering (ETH-Partner)

– ZFV Catering Campus Basel (ETH-Partner)

– Zum Guten Heinrich

– Tibits Catering

– Hiltl Catering

General information
– Overview of food labels (WWF)

– «All you can eat for climate»-Poster (eaternity)

Excellent

Purely vegetarian and >50% vegan menus/snacks are offered.

For self-organised catering, the following points are met:

– 100% regional and seasonal products are used for the dishes (e.g., fruits and vegetables only from unheated cultivation).

– 100% of the plant-based and animal products are produced ecologically (e.g., IP-Suisse, Bio, naturaplan, etc.).
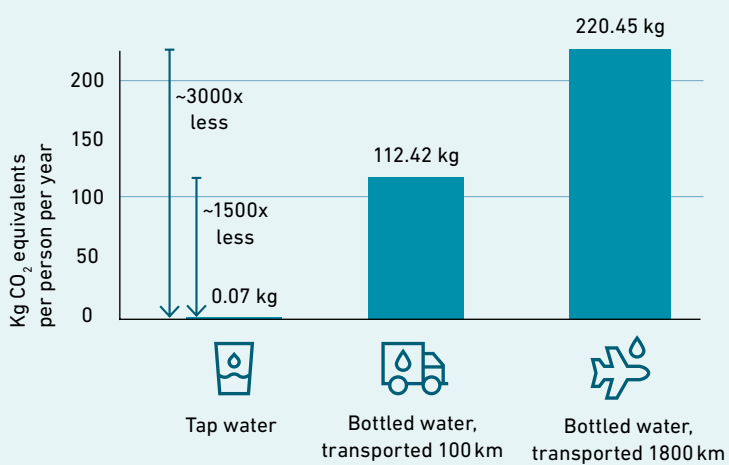
Comparison of the CO_2 emissions per litre of tap water compared to bottled water from the region or from further away. [5]

Diversity & Inclusion

Good Practice

The ETH Zurich Code of Conduct «Respect» is acknowledged and complied with.

It is ensured that the selection of speakers is balanced (different backgrounds, genders, ethnicities, etc.).

Information about the accessibility of the event is already included in the invitation and any individual needs are actively enquired about: «We are committed to providing barrier-free access to the event. If required, please contact us at …»

Publicity, including the website and promotional material, is written in inclusive language following ETH Diversity's recommendations on gender-sensitive and non-discriminatory language.

The online presence of the event is designed to be accessible, e.g. by providing alternative texts for images, subtitles or audio description for videos and transcriptions for podcasts.

When registering, it is also possible to specify non-binary forms of address and/or pronouns, which are inserted on the name badges.

Excellent

Tiered pricing is applied to facilitate the attendance of individuals with lower income (including students).

For events outside regular working hours, childcare services and/or a family room are offered on site to enable the compatibility of care work with participation in the event.

For virtual events, depending on the possible quality, either live and automatically generated subtitles (e.g. via Zoom) or subtitled recordings are made available afterwards. See Accessible videos.

Recommendations for Implementation

Supplementary checklist for diverse & inclusive events
– Organising inclusive, accessible events

– Checklist by ETH Diversity: Conference gender guide

Childcare
– ETH Service Centre Hello Kids!: Arranging childcare on an hourly basis or childcare for events lasting a whole day or several days

Instruction and tips
– Information on digital accessibility

– Seven golden rules for more accessibility

– Recommendations by ETH Diversity on gender-sensitive and non-discriminatory language

Concept, Organisation & Behaviour

Good Practice

All partners and contributors (e.g., service providers, sponsors, staff, authorities, suppliers, etc.) are informed about the sustainability standards of the event. They are encouraged to contribute.

Measures are taken to promote energy-efficient and energy-saving behaviour within the team (e.g., proper ventilation, turning off heating during ventilation, turning off unused technical devices).

(Promotion) partners and sponsors with a commitment to sustainability are given preference.

Excellent

Sustainable development is addressed during the event and/or supporting programme, e.g., through workshops, discussions, exhibitions, or experiential offerings of the event.

The greenhouse gas emissions of the event are calculated using the myclimate event calculator. Please enter the results in the following table:

Duration of the event		days
Number of participants		people
Total emissions		t CO2eq
thereof Mobility		t CO2eq
thereof Accommodation		t CO2eq
thereof Catering		t CO2eq
thereof Energy		t CO2eq
thereof Materials		t CO2eq
thereof Transport		t CO2eq
thereof Waste		t CO2eq

Recommendations for Implementation

– Sustainable Social Programs (Zurich Tourism)

– Excursions with a focus on sustainability (University of Zurich)

– myclimate event calculator

References

[1]   Mobitool-Emission factors v2.0

[2]   Own calculation of journey/flight times plus check-in, waiting times, etc.

[3]   Alig, Martina & Frischknecht, Rolf. (2018). Life Cycle Assessment Cut Roses Migros-Genossenschafts-Bund (MGB), Switzerland Fairtrade International Imprint Title Life Cycle Assessment Cut Roses. 10.13140/RG.2.2.21826.22724.

[4]   Jungbluth, N. Eggenberger, S., Keller, R. (2015): Ökoprofil von Ernährungsstilen

[5]   Bundesamt für Umwelt. (2022, 28. September). Leitungswasser – eine Selbstverständlichkeit. *Magazin «die umwelt»*, S. 58-59.

Impressum

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