

# Events Sustainability Policy

The ICPA Events Sustainability Policy (the Sustainability Policy) explains how ICPA plans, delivers, and reviews ICPA-owned or ICPA-branded events (conferences, workshops, board meetings, and any event where ICPA selects or approves key suppliers). It covers the full event lifecycle: **planning**, **delivery**, and **post-event evaluation**.

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## 01. our Commitment

ICPA will design and deliver events that support the:



**Reduction in environmental impacts**  
(especially greenhouse gas emissions, waste, and resource use)



**Creation of positive social outcomes**  
(accessibility, inclusion, safeguarding, and community benefit)



**Responsible purchasing** (working with suppliers who share these values and can show progress)



**Transparency** (set objectives, measure key impacts, and reportable outcomes)

**The Sustainability Policy** follows an event sustainability management approach (informed by Event Sustainability Management Systems and common meetings-sector benchmarking approaches, including GDS-Index focus areas).



## 02. How this aligns with the UN SDGs

ICPA uses **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** as a shared language for priorities and reporting to map outcomes for its event.



| POLICY AREA                                | PRIMARY SDGS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Climate, energy, and emissions             | <br>                                                                                            | Lower-carbon travel guidance, venue energy practices, year-on-year tracking.                |
| Materials, circularity, and waste          |                                                                                                                                                                                  | Waste prevention, reuse-first signage/production, clear recycling streams, fewer giveaways. |
| Water stewardship                          | <br>                                                                                         | Refill infrastructure, less bottled water, reduced unnecessary laundering where applicable. |
| Food systems and food waste                | <br><br> | Plant-forward defaults, food waste prevention, safe surplus redistribution where possible.  |
| Inclusion, accessibility, and wellbeing    | <br>                                                                                        | Accessibility contact, accommodations process, inclusive planning, safe-event practices.    |
| Responsible work and ethical supply chains | <br>                                                                                        | Supplier standards, labour-law compliance expectations, evidence requirements.              |
| Local communities and legacy               | <br>                                                                                        | Community partnership options, local benefit considerations, collaboration with hosts.      |

## 03. scope

This policy covers the ICPA Annual Conference and any ICPA conference/meeting where ICPA is the organiser, co-organiser, or brand owner, it is specifically relevant to:

- ▶ Receptions, site visits, and social activities arranged by ICPA or under ICPA approval
- ▶ Event communications and materials (printed materials, signage, badges/lanyards, gifts, app content)
- ▶ Procurement decisions made by ICPA (and supplier requirements for the parts of delivery under ICPA control)

If partners, local hosts, and / or venues control specific operations (for example, venue building systems or catering production), ICPA will endeavor to apply this policy through contract clauses, briefings, and cooperation.

## 04. Governance, roles, and accountability

### ▶ Event Sustainability Lead (per event)

For each event, ICPA will appoint an Event Sustainability Lead. This person is responsible for:

- Maintaining the event Sustainability Plan checklist and assigning owners (venue, catering, production, comms, sponsorship)
- Running supplier sustainability briefings and checks
- Tracking KPIs and producing a post-event Sustainability Summary

### ▶ Decision-making

Sustainability will be considered in decisions about:

- Destination and venue selection
- Catering approach and menus
- Exhibition build and signage
- Delegate communications and travel information
- Social programme and community engagement

### ▶ Stakeholder engagement

ICPA will engage stakeholders (local host committee, venue/caterer, sponsors, exhibitors, attendees, accessibility contacts, community partners) to:

- Identify material impacts and feasible mitigations
- Ensure actions are practical, culturally appropriate, and safe

# 05. Core principles and minimum requirements

These are the minimum standards for ICPA events. If something cannot be met, it must be handled as an exception (see Section 8).

## 5.1 Climate and energy



### Objectives:

- Reduce event-related emissions where ICPA can influence them
- Encourage lower-carbon travel choices

### Minimum requirements – ICPA will:

- Provide attendees with public transport and active travel guidance in event communications (website/app/email)
- Use digital materials (app/QR) where applicable (see 5.3 if print is needed)
- Request / contract venues to use energy-efficient settings where possible (LED, sensible HVAC setpoints, lights-off in unused rooms)

## 5.2 Circularity, materials, and waste



### Objectives:

- Prevent waste first; then reuse; then recycle; and only then dispose
- Avoid single-use items and unnecessary giveaways

### Minimum requirements – ICPA will:

- Not buy single-use plastic water bottles for delegate consumption (use refill stations/jugs/dispensers)
- Provide and clearly signpost water refill options
- Require venues to develop venue waste plans, including: segregated bins, consistent signage, and clarity on back-of-house handling
- Request that gifts and items be reconsidered with a sustainability focus and, when used, they will be requested to be:
  - useful, durable, and relevant
  - not individually plastic-wrapped
  - sourced in line with Section 5.4
- Endeavor to source reusable signage systems (fabric, modular) and avoid dates on durable assets
- Plan end-of-life for banners, vinyl, foamboard, carpeting, and lanyards (reuse, take-back, recycling, or donation)
- Create a plan for leftover materials and sponsor/exhibitor items (collection points, donation partners, responsible disposal)

## 5.3 Printed Materials



### Objectives:

- Minimise printing
- Deliver lower-impact printing

### Minimum requirements – ICPA will:

- Consider utilizing online materials where applicable (app or web)
- Seek to reduce the impact of printing by:
  - using recycled/FSC-certified paper where available
  - avoiding lamination where possible
  - Undertaking right-size print runs using registration numbers and historical take-up

## 5.4 Responsible procurement and supplier standards



### Objectives:

- Use suppliers who share ICPA sustainability aims and can demonstrate good practice

### Minimum requirements – ICPA will, where possible, prioritize suppliers that can provide evidence of:

- Environmental management practices (for example ISO 14001, ISO 20121, Green Key, or equivalent). Formal certification is helpful but not always required if practices are demonstrable.
- Waste prevention and recycling practices
- Ethical labour practices and compliance with local law
- Accessibility and inclusion readiness (where relevant)

ICPA will, where possible, ensure contracts and supplier briefs include

- Material restrictions (avoid single-use plastics; avoid problematic materials)
- Data needed for reporting (waste volumes/streams, meal counts, donation quantities, etc., if available)
- Clear responsibilities and sign-off points

## 5.5 Catering and food systems (including food waste)



### Objectives:

- Reduce food waste and related emissions
- Offer inclusive, healthy, and culturally appropriate options

### Minimum requirements – ICPA will:

- Collect dietary needs during registration and share counts with catering to reduce overproduction
- Use reusable service-ware by default. If disposables are unavoidable, specify options compatible with local composting/recycling facilities.
- Agree a food waste prevention plan with the venue/caterer (portioning, replenishment strategy, late-lunch controls, etc.)
- Where legally and safely possible, arrange donation of suitable surplus food through approved channels. If donation is not possible, consider staff meals or composting.

## 5.6 Water



### Objectives:

- Reduce bottled water and unnecessary water consumption

### Minimum requirements – ICPA will seek to require service providers to :

- Provide refill stations and encourage attendees to reuse bottles
- Work with venues to minimise unnecessary linen/towel laundering for event components (where applicable)

## 5.7 Travel and accommodation (attendees, speakers, team)



### Objectives:

- Encourage lower-carbon travel and responsible accommodation choices

### Minimum requirements:

- In event communications, highlight:
  - recommended routes via rail/coach where practical
  - local public transport options
  - accessibility routes and step-free access where available

### Accommodation:

- When recommending hotels, prioritise those with credible sustainability programmes and clear accessibility information

## 5.8 Social sustainability, inclusion, and accessibility



### Objectives:

- Make events inclusive, safe, and accessible, and ensure benefits extend to the host community

### Minimum requirements – ICPA will:

- Ensure accessible routes to key spaces (plenary, breakouts, exhibition, toilets) and publish key accessibility notes in the app/website

- Support dietary inclusion (religious, medical, preference-based)
- Where appropriate, partner with community organisations for positive legacy actions, ensuring dignity, safety, and legality

## 5.9 Communications and attendee engagement



### Objectives:

- Make actions visible and easy for attendees to follow without greenwashing

### Minimum requirements:

- Provide clear “How to participate sustainably” guidance (travel tips, refill points, waste sorting, donation options)
- Use consistent, simple signage for bins and refill points

# 06. Data and continuous improvement

ICPA will measure impacts proportionate to event size and available data, and aim to improve year-on-year.

- ▶ Attendance (in-person / virtual)
- ▶ Number of printed items and quantities (programme books, badges, etc.)
- ▶ Water provision method (refill stations yes/no; bottled water purchased by ICPA yes/no)
- ▶ Catering: meal counts (if available)
- ▶ Waste streams available (general, recycling, compost) and any waste weights/estimates (if available)
- ▶ Food donation/redistribution volumes (if applicable)
- ▶ Accessibility requests handled (count and type, anonymized)
- ▶ Percentage of suppliers meeting agreed sustainability evidence criteria
- ▶ Local/community spend (where measurable)
- ▶ Attendee satisfaction with sustainability and accessibility measures

After the event, ICPA will produce a short Sustainability Summary that includes:

- ▶ Actions implemented
- ▶ Data summary – Lessons learned and improvements for future events

## • Review and approval

This policy will be reviewed every three years.



## Events Sustainability Policy

