

Adding value with sustainable business practices

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Sustainability in its various forms is one of Messe Frankfurt's fundamental business principles. Our commitment to sustainability is part of our responsibility towards the environment and other people – as a socially responsible enterprise, venue operator and event organiser. Our sustainable business practices are geared towards the ten principles of the UN Global Compact and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Messe Frankfurt is a signatory of the Net Zero Carbon Events Pledge and has been EMAS-certified since 2023.

Driving forward the sustainable transformation in the company is seen by the Messe Frankfurt Executive Board as a core management task. Environmental and sustainability performance is being improved continually and made accessible to everyone transparently. To this end, we have created a sustainability target architecture that helps us to process the ecological, social and economic dimensions in a structured way. With the Sustainability Board, which includes senior management from different disciplines, the company has established a broad base for formulating objectives and identifying and prioritising measures. These will be implemented and expanded with the relevant departments. In its Sustainability Governance Code, the company defined the relevant areas of activity for sustainable development both in the company and at its events around the world. The Code is based on the specifications of the UN Global Compact and on the accepted general standards with regard to sustainability and climate protection. Messe Frankfurt's Code of Conduct formulates the company's own standards regarding ethical conduct and business practices. Its leading principles include working with others in a spirit of respect and cooperation, social responsibility, protecting the environment and natural resources, and a wide range of governance issues. As a whole, they confirm Messe Frankfurt's principles and form the basis for the company's long-term commercial success.

In 2023, Messe Frankfurt passed the audit for the internationally recognised environmental management system in accordance with the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) at its Frankfurt base. With the EMAS validation, which also meets the requirements of environmental management norm ISO 14001, the company commits itself to continually improving its environmental performance. Beginning by reporting on our performance in financial year 2023, we will calculate the greenhouse gas emissions of our international business operations on a regular basis. We aim to complete our own decarbonisation process by no later than 2040 so that Messe Frankfurt will be climate-neutral in terms of the greenhouse gas emissions resulting from its energy consumption. This also includes establishing a sustainable water management system.

In recognition of its efforts to create a sustainable event business, Messe Frankfurt has received the AEO Excellence Award 2023 in the Best Sustainability Initiative category.

The company is successfully participating in ESG ratings (Environmental, Social and Governance) at its Frankfurt base. We are signatories of the Net Zero Carbon Events Pledge. Since as far back as 2010, Messe Frankfurt has been a member of UN Global Compact, the world's most important initiative for sustainable corporate management. It is committed to its ten universal principles relating to the environment, labour standards, corruption prevention and human rights and to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the company supports the "fairpflichtet – rightandfair" industry code for the sustainable organisation and implementation of events. Messe Frankfurt is also a member of the Charter of Diversity.

The Frankfurt exhibition grounds are among the largest and most modern anywhere in the world and are constantly being enhanced with regard to appearance, functionality and environmental efficiency. The Kap Europa congress building, which has been in operation since mid-2014, was the first congress building worldwide to be awarded Platinum Certification by DGNB (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Nachhaltiges Bauen). Energy efficiency and the conservation of resources are of central importance for the company. Messe Frankfurt's energy policy is defined by a common understanding of energy and by strategic paths of action. Suitable measures in the area of energy efficiency and resource protection were defined as part of long-term energy monitoring activities. By using efficient exhibition hall technology and tailoring systems operation to actual needs, it is possible to bring about a sustainable reduction in the consumption of electricity, water and heating energy. Three photovoltaic systems help to reduce CO₂ by an estimated total of 1,200 tonnes. Taken together, all three photovoltaic systems on the exhibition grounds help to reduce CO₂ by an estimated 1,200 tonnes a year. They allow us to harvest around 2.4 GWh of solar energy.

Messe Frankfurt switched over entirely to green power in the beginning of 2020. This includes the power supply for the stands, halls and exhibition grounds at its Frankfurt base. Efforts to reach the objective of permanently reducing the base load consumption on the exhibition grounds by ten percent are being implemented resolutely. Since 2024, we have been sourcing 30 percent of our power requirements – including our event operations – from a solar farm in Brandenburg. This means that we will know exactly where our climate-friendly electricity comes from. In the long term, a further 30 percent of our energy requirements are to be covered by wind energy. As well as optimising the efficiency of our operations and systems, we are using an energy-saving campaign to make all colleagues and service providers even more aware of the importance of energy efficiency – both at work and at home.

Messe Frankfurt is at the forefront of the sector through the systematic separation and recycling of waste at its exhibition grounds each year. Up to 90 percent of the waste generated each year is fed back into the material cycle.

With excellent connections to all key transport routes, the Frankfurt exhibition grounds are centrally located, which is an ideal basis for sustainable mobility and logistics. With a light rail station situated in the middle of the Frankfurt exhibition grounds and an underground train and tram connection at its City/Festhalle Entrance, Messe Frankfurt has an environmentally friendly public transport system that takes the strain off the city's traffic. Given its close proximity to Frankfurt Central Station, train travel is a viable and environmentally friendly option. Exhibiting companies and visitors with a combination ticket can use public transport at no additional cost. Messe Frankfurt also has one of the most advanced digital traffic management systems in the trade fair sector.

Environmentally sustainable business practices also apply to the catering sector. At Accente Gastronomie Service GmbH, our catering subsidiary, this begins with the purchase of predominantly local and regional food. Wherever possible, we avoid using disposable packaging and food containing dyes, preservatives and additives. The 80 or so catering companies that provide meals and refreshments during events only use reusable dishes and easily biodegradable materials.

We support cultural institutions and events focusing primarily on sports and the arts. In education – one of our main areas of sponsorship – we are involved in long-term projects such as our cooperation with the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences. As well as this, the company is involved in a series of social projects such as collecting donations for children's charity Children for a Better World e. V. at its Frankfurt base in keeping with the slogan "With Children. For Children".

As innovation forums, Messe Frankfurt's flagship events are clearly also a driving force when it comes to sustainability. Its worldwide flagship events are ideal interaction formats for communicating future trends and the importance of social responsibility. We work closely together with the sectors to increase awareness of the need for greater sustainability within our events.

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