ICCA Congress 2019
Sustainability Report
Contents

I. ICCA 2019 Congress Overview

II. ICCA Sustainability Approach
   • Sustainability Issues
   • Sustainability Objectives
   • Commitment and Process
   • UN SDGs
   • What were our goals

III. Performance Review
   • Impact Overview
   • Carbon Emissions
   • Waste Management

IV. Key Successes
   • Venue Selection
   • Waste Management
   • Food and Beverage
   • Mindfulness Lounge
   • Moving Conversations
   • Participant Engagement
   • Sustainability Performance
   • Community Impact

V. Key Learnings & Recommendations

VI. Event Impact Data

VII. Credits

International Congress and Convention Association
www.iccaworld.org
ICCA 2019 Congress Overview

Meetings industry professionals from across the globe descended on Houston, Texas, U.S.A. during 27-30 October 2019, for the 58th ICCA Congress, one of the most prestigious events in the international association meetings industry’s annual calendar.

With almost 1,000 senior meetings industry professionals and association meeting planners from 75 countries in attendance, the International Congress and Convention Association’s 2019 Congress is the largest ever held in the North American region.

ICCA delegates experienced a world-class, custom-designed education programme, knowledge and business exchange, networking opportunities with senior meetings industry professionals and association executives from all industry sectors.
FOOTPRINT and HANDPRINT

Events can have a significant environmental footprint from carbon emissions, waste and resource usage.

They can also have a significant HANDPRINT by contributing to environmental, social and economic development of the community.

Our responsibility is to plan, manage and improve both the negative and positive impacts of our events.
Sustainability Issues

As part of the planning process, we reached and engaged our key suppliers and stakeholders in dialogue about the sustainability impact of our event.

We identified the following issues:

- Reducing waste and recycling.
- Increasing sustainability of the food offerings.
- Supporting local communities & businesses.
- Measuring carbon emissions.
- Improving communications to delegates about sustainability.
- Promoting the use of shared transportation.
- Additional and reduced costs.
Based on our sustainability issues assessment, we developed the following objectives for the 2019 Congress:

1. Measure and report on the environmental, social and economic impact of the Congress
2. Use the SDGs to assess, identify and implement a performance improvement action plan
3. Improve the sustainability knowledge and skills of our team
4. Raise awareness of our event participants about sustainability
The ICCA Event team in combination with our agency MCI, and local partners focused on improving the environmental and social sustainability of 10 key areas of the congress.

Builds upon APEX Environmental Sustainability Event Standard covering all major areas of meeting production.
UN’s Sustainable Development Goals

Working with MCI, we decided to use the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s), as a filter to help us brainstorm and then create our sustainability action plan.
What were our goals?

1. **NO POVERTY**
   - Partner with charity “Start of Hope”
   - Make a donation from ICCA and raise funds by 5k run.

2. **GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**
   - Design a walkable Congress.
   - Organise a Mindfulness Lounge.
   - Organise a Monday Morning 5k Run and Morning Yoga.
   - Provide more healthy menu choices including a Meatless Lunch

3. **QUALITY EDUCATION**
   - Provide specific content on sustainability in partnership with GDS-Index and Incredible Impacts.
   - Organise a University program.
   - Organise Technical Tours (ie. Cancer Center, Space Port).

4. **GENDER EQUALITY**
   - Improve and manage diversity of Speakers (gender balance; cultural background).

5. **DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**
   - Best Cities Alliance promoted “Incredible Impact” project.

6. **INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**
   - Integrate innovation firmly into Congress theme and programme

7. **SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES**
   - Provide mobility scooters

8. **RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION**
   - Replace name badge with no plastic holder.
   - Reduce single use plastic and eliminate plastic water bottles
   - Switch to use biodegradable cups for water stations
   - Eliminate almost all paper through Mobile Event App
What were our goals

**13 CLIMATE ACTION**

**14 LIFE BELOW WATER**
Ask Marriott & Hilton: to source sustainable seafood

**15 LIFE ON LAND**
Select vendors with sustainable Waste Management programs. Use reusable and biodegradable cups.
Improve recycling bins & composting toilet facilities for Halloween night.
Minimize Set and stage design and wastage.

**17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS**
Raise awareness about the SDGs, and the importance of collaborating for sustainability through keynote and sessions.
Performance Review
How did we do?
Impact Summary

Taking a sustainability approach we made important steps to improve the social, environmental and economic performance of the Congress.

**Plastics**
- Eliminated 99% of plastic water bottles
- 91% of all serviceware was reusable.

**Carbon Emissions**
- Produced 4.3 metric tons of waste.
- 53% was diverted from landfill.
- Weight of an elephant

**Community Development**
- Donated $5k to community projects in the US
- Supported Star of Hope

**Local Economic Development**
- Sourced 30% of food locally, on average
- i.e., within 160km

**Impact Summary**
- 96% of signage was made from sustainable materials
- Produced 1,430 Metric Tons of carbon emissions
- Annual CO2 output of 3,576 Kenyans

Produced using data from ICCA, the event agency, key hotels, congress venue, transport suppliers and general contractor. Missing data was replaced using Industry benchmarks supplied by the GDS-Index.
Carbon Emissions

ICCA 2019 Congress
Carbon Emissions (Mt CO2e)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Carbon Emissions Mt CO2e</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIR TRAVEL</td>
<td>1,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCAL TRAVEL</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VENUE &amp; HOTEL</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATERIALS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOOD</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASTE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,430</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But how much carbon is this?
1439 MtCO2e is equivalent to the annual carbon emission of 89 people living in the US, or 151 living in the Netherlands, or a staggering 3,576 people living in Kenya.
Or it is the equivalent of driving an mid-size car around the world 122 times.

Produced using data from ICCA, the event agency, key hotels, congress venue, transport suppliers and general contractor. Missing data was replaced using Industry benchmarks supplied by the GDS-Index.
We estimate that we produced approximately 4.2 Metric Tonnes of waste. That 4.2kg per person. We recycled approximately 53% of all our waste.

For this Congress, we were unable to obtain in depth details on our waste generation and management. We have learnt that this requirement needs to be included in our supplier contracts, and explained very early on in our project management meetings.
Key Successes
ICCA Congress 2019 was held at the Marriott Marquis Houston. The venue has a solid commitment to sustainability. Some of the sustainable features and initiatives the Marriott Marquis Houston promotes includes:

- Linen-less tables are used for some classroom set up.
- Sensors in all Meeting Space for lights to turn off/on.
- Water Stations throughout meeting and public spaces.
- Eliminating pads of paper from Conference/Classroom Sets.
- Electronic Request Center for internal requests such as Air Conditioning in Meeting Space.
How did we reduce carbon emissions
- A walkable congress

The venue for the Congress and all hotels were contracted in the heart of downtown Houston.

All side events and social functions were organized within walking distance.

We only used one bus for internal transfers during the Congress. All other transfers during the event were by foot.

49% of attendees used the shuttle to get to/from the airport.
Separated and recycled waste during the event.

100% of cups were compostable and biodegradable.

MiCo-Milano Convention Centre provided reusable water bottles for attendees.

Water stations were installed throughout the Congress.

Plastic straws were replaced with corn based straws in the coffee breaks stations.

How did we reduce waste?
How did we reduce waste?

- Switched from foam to use ReBoard signage Towers which were made from recycled cardboard.

- 96% of all signage was made from more sustainable materials. 84% of all signage was recycled.

- Switched from PVC signage to use reusable signage bases with paper inserts. The signage base was reused multiple times and reduced printing.

- 70% of signage was electronic.
How did we make the food more sustainable and healthy?

Fresh, local, organic, seasonal and sustainably sourced food (FLOSS) was an important aspect of the Congress.

As a sign of their commitment to sustainability, IMEX generously sponsored a Meatless Lunch.

By eliminating meat from the menú, 1,024,200 liters of water and 1,890 kg of CO2 were saved. That's the equivalent to taking a car off the road for 4,725 miles.

The menu card was made by seed paper.
How did we make the food more sustainable?

- 30% of food was sourced within 100 miles
- 35% of all food served was vegetarian
- 91% of all serviceware was reusable.
- 98% of food condiments were served in bulk
- 99% of plastic water bottles eliminated
- 9% of serviceware was single use, made from compostable materials. We could not validate if this was properly composted.
Mindfulness Lounge

An holistic approach where attendees found wellness by connecting mind & body, with carefully curated human-centric mini sessions. Quiet noise levels, healthy refreshments & cozy seating all worked together to inspire mindful rejuvenation & conversations.
Physical activity has been known to enhance basic cognitive functions related to attention and memory facilitated learning. We were pleased with the turnout of our ‘Moving Conversation’ where attendees had an opportunity to join an education session by stepping outside and riding a 14 passenger party bike.
Delegates were asked to complete a sustainable checklist in the Congress App to rate their participation in the sustainability services provided during the congress.

5K Fun Run/Walk benefiting the Star of Hope Charity. This was a leisurely, run or walk around the beautiful Discovery Green Park.
Attendees were invited to pledge their commitments to make the Congress more sustainable. Over 800 commitments were received during the event via a Mobile App, that was developed by MCI, and generously sponsored by Dubai Business Events.
Our chosen Congress cause was Star of Hope; a local charity who work with the homeless in Houston.

We donated $5000 to The Star of Hope.

With a commitment to develop future industry leaders, we provided scholarships to support 16 students to attend the Congress.

The congress attendees donated clothes and participated in a sponsored 5k fun run/walk!
Key Learnings and Recommendations
V. Key learnings & recommendations

Whilst we are proud of our achievements, we realise that sustainability is an ongoing process and journey. Our advisers – the GDS-Index have identified the following points that require attention to improve performance for future events:

- **Planning**
  - Strategy: Sustainability should be included in RFPs from the first moment of planning the congress. Sustainability goals and policy needs to be clearly communicated to the host community.
  - Early integration of sustainability into contract language is important to ensure agreement, understanding and good performance of key suppliers. We struggled with waste management of one of our key suppliers.
  - Contracts must require suppliers to provide sustainability measurement data within two weeks after the event.
  - Green Team: Building a green team consisting of ICCA and key event partners can help to co-create the Congress sustainability strategy and support each other with the implementation challenges, and to celebrate successes.

- **Production**
  - 4% of signage was made from PVC. 16% went to landfill. Efforts can be made to fully eliminate PVC and ensure zero waste goes to landfill.
V. Key learnings & recommendations

Agency / Event Team

- Involve the suppliers sustainability lead as soon as possible
- Better integration of sustainability team in planning calls would have helped achieve more.

Delegate Engagement

- Communication of sustainability could be stronger on-site, such as at the catering areas for the food story and coffee breaks (corn based straws).
- Follow up sustainability communications after the event to ensure continuous interest.
- Ask attendees to donate badge lanyards at the end of the event.
- Ask attendees to donate hats, bandanas, t-shirts and any material given during the event (ie CAT night).

Food and Beverage

- Many delegates disposed of the compostable utensils in the recycle bin instead of the compost bin. Clearer instructions should be given in future, such as an MC announcement, better signage on display near the utensils and recycling bins.
- The sustainability story of the food served could be told in a more compelling way, explaining which farm/area the food is from rather than just with a “Vegetarian” or “Gluten Free” label.
- When serving vegetarian food, we must ensure the menu is delicious, creative and enticing.
V. Key learnings & recommendations

- Communication Coherency

  - We need to ensure consistency in our messages to delegates. At times we communicated about sustainability, and then minutes later we had activities that incorporated single use plastic items. This could have been improved with clearly communication with our sponsors and guidelines on sustainability.

  - Plastic hands were used as part an activity during the Congress.

  - We need to communicate our sustainability policy with our sponsors so that they are aligned with the sustainability practices.

  - Gallons of water were wasted because the hotel pre-served water on all the tables.

  - Many Balloons were used at Cat Night.

  - At the first evening, we employed a lot of single use items on the tables.

  - When the biodegradable cups were finished, the hotel used a non-biodegradable option.
Event Impact Data
This was our first year of measuring impacts. For various reasons, we were not able to collect reliable data for all aspects. Consequently we estimated using industry averages/benchmarks. This introduces a potential for error. We estimate the confidence in the data as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Confidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flights</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local transport</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material usage</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy, waste, water</td>
<td>Not measured</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the future, we must better include measurement requirements into our RFP and contracts, and support our suppliers to provide this information in a timely fashion.

### Event Impact Data Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impacts</th>
<th>KPI</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECONOMIC</strong></td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Number of attendees 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL</strong></td>
<td>Stakeholder engagement</td>
<td>Suppliers signing sustainability clauses in contract 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of key suppliers evaluated for sustainability 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health and quality of air</strong></td>
<td>Space designated smoke free in venue 100%</td>
<td>Percentage of venues assessed for Health and Safety 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hotels and venues with accessibility programme</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Action</strong></td>
<td>Donations of cash or in-kind $5000</td>
<td>Number of charities and NGOs supported 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impacts</th>
<th>KPI</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENVIRONMENTAL</strong></td>
<td>GHG emissions</td>
<td>Total Carbon footprint (tonnes co2 equivalents) 1,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flight Emissions (tonnes co2e)</td>
<td>1,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local Transport (tonnes co2)</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hotel and venue (tonnes co2)</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exhibition (tonnes co2e)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food and paper emissions (tonnes co2e)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waste (tonnes co2e)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emissions per delegate (tonnes co2e)</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Energy</strong></td>
<td>Total electricity consumed (kwh)</td>
<td>Not Measured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total gas consumed (kwh)</td>
<td>Not Measured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Water</strong></td>
<td>Total water used (m³)</td>
<td>Not Measured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paper and materials usage</strong></td>
<td>Approx. sheets of A4/letter paper used for printing (KG)</td>
<td>1,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Signage and banners (M²)</td>
<td>1,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of production made from Eco Substrates</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of production materials reused</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carpet used for event (KG)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carpet landfilled/incinerated through event (KG)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Badges recollected</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impacts</th>
<th>KPI</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENVIRONMENTAL</strong></td>
<td>Waste management</td>
<td>Total waste from event (Mt) 4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Incinerated (Mt) 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Landfilled (Mt) 1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recycled (Mt) 2.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Diversion rate from Landfill 53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total waste per event participant (kg) 4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food</strong></td>
<td>Number meals served</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage local (&lt;160km) food sourced for meals</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent organic food sourced for meals</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent vegetarian meals served</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibly sourced seafood</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plastic water bottles used and disposed of in event</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Condiments served in bulk containers</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is an example of how an event can measure its impacts, including economic, social, and environmental aspects. The data collected includes participation numbers, supplier sustainability clauses, and various environmental metrics such as carbon footprint, electricity consumption, and water usage. The confidence in the data is estimated based on industry averages, with some aspects, such as energy and waste, not being measured.
VII. CREDITS

This report was prepared by GDS Index with valuable data and editorial support provided by the ICCA Team and suppliers.

Special thanks go to the Congress suppliers for their leadership stance in the hospitality industry and their commitment to sustainable practices – Visit Houston, MCI, Marriott Marquis Houston, Hilton Americas Houston, Four Seasons Hotel Houston, Freeman.

Pictures used in this report were provided by - Buller Photography
www.BullerPhotography.com

About GDS-INDEX

The GDS-Index benchmarks, creates and improves the sustainability strategy and performance of destinations, events and associations.

Contact

In the interest of continual improvement, we welcome all ideas and comments on this report. Please address comments to:

Mieke van Loenen | Director Events
International Congress and Convention Association
mieke.l@iccaworld.org
Thank you to all our members and partners for helping us improve our social and environmental impacts. We have a long way to go but we can be proud of our initial efforts!