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Checklist sustainable and inclusive event management

The University of Göttingen is committed to designing events that are both sustainable and inclusive. This checklist for sustainable and inclusive event management provides key recommendations for organisation, realisation and post-processing of events.

When organising events, staff members and students as well as external partners are encouraged to integrate sustainability considerations and ensure accessibility for the widest possible range of participants. Prioritising inclusion and sustainability throughout the planning process helps create an event that is both environmentally responsible and welcoming for all.

A. Prior to the Event

Management:
- A designated person is responsible for sustainability issues.
- A designated contact person is available before, during, and after the event to address matters related to inclusion and accessibility.
- The event's sustainability goals are clearly defined.
- A strategy is in place for addressing discriminatory statements during the event and in digital spaces (e.g. social media), including clear reporting procedures and defined responsibilities.
- Event materials are made available online in accessible formats.
- Diversity among speakers and presenters is actively promoted across all speaking roles, including keynotes, chairs, and presenters.

Thematic focus and scheduling:
- Topics, calls, invitations are designed to appeal to a diverse audience and avoid stereotypes.
- Events are scheduled to avoid major religious and national holidays and accommodate family-friendly hours and part-time students.
- Invitations are sent early to allow time for accessibility, dietary, and any other requests.
- Breaks and transition times are planned to accommodate mobility needs.
- Security measures are considered, especially for evening and weekend events.
- All chairs and presenters are briefed to ensure accessible and inclusive presentations (see below).

Event Invitation/Registration:
- Options for sustainable travel (train, bus, carpooling) are communicated.
- Information on sustainable mobility on site (e.g., public transport, bike rental, e-scooters, etc.) including city maps, is made available. Transportation, as well as arrivals and departures required for the event organisation, are also coordinated to minimise emissions.
- Information on available facilities (e.g., reserved parking, wheelchair access, hearing loops, and quiet rooms) is provided in advance to those who may need it.
- Requests (e.g., dietary needs, accessible formats, communication support, and infrastructure) are addressed.
- Hotel options, preferably with green or sustainable certification, are provided, including accessibility details and public transport connections.
- Participants are advised to bring appropriate clothing for the venue's climate conditions.
- The option to voluntarily offset greenhouse gas emissions is communicated.
- Participants are informed if tap water is safe to drink and if leftover food can be taken away (reusable food containers are recommended or provided).

- All materials (invitations, websites, posters, emails) follow accessibility guidelines:
  - Minimum font size for handouts: 14 pt, sans serif (e.g., Arial).
  - Minimum font size for posters and presentations: 24 pt, sans serif (e.g. Arial).
  - High contrast (dark text on a light background).
  - Avoid small, italic, or decorative fonts.
  - Text is left-justified rather than justified at both margins.
  - Key event details are not embedded in graphics (to ensure accessibility for screen readers).
- Event materials use diversity-sensitive, non-discriminatory (figurative) language and imagery.
- Accessible name badges are designed with proper font size and display options, allowing inclusion of preferred pronouns or forms of address.

Choosing a venue:
- Alternatives to an on-site event are considered, such as offering a hybrid format.
- The venue is accessible and is chosen based on an appropriate size relative to the number of participants.
- Accessibility is ensured, relevant information is provided, and these measures are included in emergency planning.
- Communication support is arranged (e.g., live captioning, transcripts, Sign Language Interpreters, microphone system for 30+ attendees).
- Wheelchair accessibility is ensured, including seating, aisles, ramps, and height-adjustable speaker desks.
- Inclusive seating is offered (e.g., chairs without armrests, direct line-of-sight and proper lighting for Sign Language Interpreters, accessible power outlets, reserved seats for people using communication support).
- The venue and time are chosen to ensure easy access by public transport.
- Distances between different venues are kept short; if necessary, accessible transport options are arranged.

Sustainable procurement:
- It is checked which materials can be borrowed and which need to be procured, e.g., exhibition stands.
- Reusable products (e.g., cutlery and tableware) are prioritised, followed by environmentally friendly, recyclable, or recycled options (e.g., napkins made from recycled paper).
- Disposable products are avoided, e.g., decorative items such as balloons, disposable tableware and portion packs of e.g., sugar, ketchup, mustard, and snacks if hygiene standards allow.
- When using banners and decorations, it is ensured that they do not contain any event-specific information or dates so that they can be reused after the event.
- Communication is as paperless as possible, e.g., digital dissemination of information, invitations, registration and conference documents.
- Necessary print products are printed as efficiently and ecologically as possible. Printing is kept to a minimum and, if possible, without colour.
- IT devices are used that meet the accessibility and ecological criteria wherever possible.
- Guest gifts are avoided as far as possible. If this is not possible, attention is paid to environmentally friendly, socially responsible and regionally produced gifts.

Catering:
- Preference is given to local suppliers with short delivery routes. Only vegetarian/plant-based dishes are offered, with priority given to regional, seasonal, fair trade and organic products.

- Food is clearly labelled with allergen details and dietary options (e.g., gluten-free, vegan, halal).
- If catering is limited, a list of nearby accessible restaurants (with accessible bathrooms) offering diverse dietary options is provided.
- Food with a high ecological footprint, e.g., goods flown in, is avoided.
- Tap water is offered in carafes or via water dispensers.
- Information about origin, cultivation methods and working conditions during production is provided.
- A variety of seating options is provided, including accessible seating; buffet tables are wheelchair-accessible and staff are available to assist.

B. Day of the Event

Awareness:
- The event's sustainability goals as well as a clear equality and diversity statement are communicated to the participants.
- Participants are informed about how and who to report concerns to.
- Organisers are prepared to handle disruptions, group-related hostility, or discriminatory remarks from the audience and act as a clear contact point.
- Security needs are assessed in advance, and a safety plan is implemented if necessary to protect attendees, especially from external disruptions (e.g., by extremist groups).

Briefing for chairpersons:
- Ensure all panellists have equal opportunities to speak, especially less vocal participants.
- Speaking order is arranged to ensure that no individual is disadvantaged because of their personal characteristics or identities.
- Support non-native speakers by rephrasing complex audience questions.
- Encourage diverse audience engagement in Q&A sessions.
- Respect names, titles, and pronouns; confirm pronunciation in advance.

Briefing for presenters:
- Set a deadline for material submission to allow time for accessibility adjustments, prefer PowerPoint/Word over PDFs.
- Provide printed materials in accessible formats (e.g., accessible digital version, large print).
- During presentations:
  - Consider the Two-Senses Principle: Visual content is also explained verbally, and spoken content is available in text or visual form.
  - Explain acronyms and jargon.
  - Repeat audience questions before responding.
  - Always use a microphone and ensure participants do the same.
  - Allow time for (Sign Language) Interpreters and technical support.

Location:
- Clear signposting is provided for the entrance, rooms, toilets, and designated seating for people using communication support and their providers.
- It is checked whether the room temperature can be controlled on-site, if so, it is maintained between 20°C and 26°C during the event.

Environmental protection:

- Any leftover food is made available to participants. Appropriate food boxes are provided.
- Take-back systems or waste islands for separate waste collection are sufficiently available and clearly marked.
- Ecological and environmentally friendly cleaning agents are used.

C. Following the Event

Management:

- The event is evaluated afterward, including an assessment of its sustainability goals.
- Feedback on inclusivity and accessibility is collected to improve future planning.