



UNWDF 2021 – Report on the implementation of the sustainability concept

A. Introduction

The sustainability concept details a series of recommendations and actions that can be reused to organise more sustainable national and international events in the future. In order to serve as a model, the concept's recommendations and actions were neutrally formulated making them easier to implement in other contexts. The Swiss Confederation therefore wanted to provide elements that would be useful to the organisers of future events wishing to focus their management on sustainability and to pass on the know-how and experiences gained through the organisation of the United Nations World Data Forum 2021 (UNWDF).

Published in June 2021, the sustainability concept was developed specifically for the UNWDF. As a reminder, it was written by the Project Road to Bern team/UNWDF in cooperation with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), the Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE) and the Federal Office of Energy (SFOE). To develop the concept, the project team also consulted its partners, such as the United Nations, the Kursaal Bern AG, the SWISS airline, Bern Welcome, Switzerland Tourism and CBM Global, who work closely with International Disability Alliance.

This report on the implementation of the sustainability concept will therefore refer to the general actions of the sustainability concept and explain in detail how they were implemented at the UNWDF, as well as detailing the extent to which the recommendations were fully supported.

B. Implementation of actions

1. CARBON NEUTRALITY



1.1. Ensuring carbon neutrality

- Emissions were offset by the Swiss Confederation through the funding of two projects chosen in cooperation with ClimatePartner GmbH. For emissions caused by the UNWDF (excluding flights), a project was funded in Switzerland. It was the most expensive project suggested by our partner and the only one in Switzerland. It comprises Swiss regional projects in which volunteers look after their local forest with the supervision of experts. <https://fpm.climatepartner.com/project/details/1071/fr> For emissions caused by flights, a project was funded in Columbia. This project in the suburbs of Soacha aims to gradually eliminate the use of fossil heating fuel in favour of biomasse. [https://fpm.climatepartner.com/project/1070/fr?utm_source=\(direct\)&utm_medium=climatepartner.com](https://fpm.climatepartner.com/project/1070/fr?utm_source=(direct)&utm_medium=climatepartner.com)



→ The UNWDF 2021 has been declared a climate-neutral event.

2. MOBILITY



2.1. Travel by train

→ When communicating with participants we encouraged them to travel to Switzerland by train if the distance allowed it or at least to use public transport once they were in Switzerland. Furthermore, we informed them about the highly advanced public transport networks in Switzerland and Europe, which make it easy to get from place to place.

2.2. Offsetting CO₂ emissions

→ Although the emissions caused by flights were offset by the Swiss Confederation, we also recommended to participants coming by plane to directly offset their flight when buying their ticket.

2.3. Using public transport during stay in Bern

- In all the information on our website, we strongly encouraged participants to use public transport in Bern.
- We provided participants with all the information necessary for moving around in Bern, especially by giving them more information about the “BernTicket” enabling them to use public transport for free. More information was also given to participants staying in the outskirts of Bern, outlining how they could take advantage of special fares by buying daily tickets valid for several days.

2.4. Using public bikes

→ In cooperation with our partner Publibike, a discount was offered to forum participants, who received the first 30 minutes free of charge when hiring a bike.

2.5. Staying in a local hotel

→ In cooperation with our partner Bern Welcome, UNWDF participants staying in selected hotels in Bern received a discounted room rate.



3. CATERING



3.1. Vegetarian buffets

- We decided to ban meat from the Forum and to offer fresh, regional and seasonal meals.
- Products of animal origin were labelled and marked for allergies: vegetarian, vegan, lactose or gluten free.

3.2. Reducing food waste

- Based on registrations and a questionnaire completed by participants, we calculated the quantities we needed to order to serve a maximum of 80% of persons physically present in Bern.

3.3. Using washable and reusable crockery

- Ten water dispensers were installed in several places in the Kursaal.
- We distributed reusable cups. We had them customised and clearly indicated that they were reusable to motivate participants not to throw them away.

3.4. Using personal water bottle

- To avoid using plastic bottles, we also encouraged participants to bring a bottle with them, ideally a water bottle they could fill up in the Kursaal or in town where water is safe to drink.

3.5. Coffee and tea from sustainable production

- We provided Ronnefeldt BIO fairtrade coffee and tea.

3.6. Using reusable napkins and tablecloths.

- Our partner Kursaal wished as much as possible to use reusable napkins and tablecloths rather than paper ones.

3.7. Using left-over food

- We gave participants the possibility of taking away left-over food by providing food boxes and our partner Kursaal reused uncooked and unpacked food in its restaurant.

3.8. Accessibility of catering facilities



- A few tables with benches for seating were set up. Still with our partner CBM (in cooperation with “International Disability Alliance”), we ensured accessibility for people with disabilities.

4. LOGISTICS

4.1. FORUM MATERIALS



4.1.1 Reducing document printing

- Our flyer was very compact with an abridged programme and we printed very few copies.

4.1.2 Reducing materials used

- We only produced a few floor plans and the final UNWDF document - the Bern Declaration - which were also printed.

4.1.3 Use of a dedicated website

- We uploaded all documents needed in advance to the Forum website that was fully accessible for persons with disabilities and from where participants could download them to a portable device. We also informed the participants about this

4.1.4 UNWDF application

- In cooperation with the UN, an application was made for the UNWDF.

4.1.5 Reduction of note pads and pens

- We distributed only a small number of note pads and pens in order to discourage their use.

4.2. DISPLAYS AND EXHIBITORS



4.2.1. Encouraging the responsible behaviour of UNWDF exhibitors



- We advised all exhibitors registered at the UNWDF to follow strict recommendations. When necessary, we helped them and gave them any advice they needed to best align with our sustainable event.

4.3. WASTE MANAGEMENT



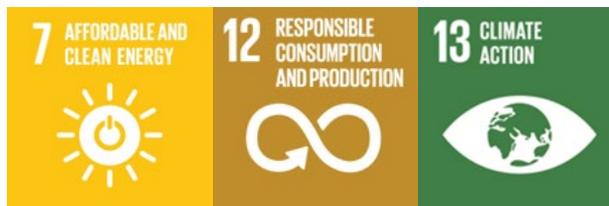
4.3.1. Reducing waste

- We reduced waste by encouraging participants to bring their own water bottle, by providing reusable cups and by using only washable or reusable crockery.

4.3.2. Sorting waste

- Throughout the Kursaal building, different bins were provided to sort PET, paper and other waste.

4.4. ENERGY



4.4.1. Using only green energy

- We cooperated with “Energie Wasser Bern”, thus using renewable energies (“district heating from EWB”).

4.4.2. Reducing energy consumption

- We urged exhibitors to avoid any unnecessary energy consumption and also urged UNWDF participants to reduce their consumption of energy within and outside the Kursaal by turning off electric devices while not in use (computers, tablets, etc.).

5. SOCIAL ASPECTS

5.1. EMPLOYMENT



5.1.1. Encouraging sustainable behaviour from our partners

- We advised all of our partners and the main subcontractors to follow strict recommendations. Ideally they should create and use a sustainability concept in the future. When necessary, we helped them and gave them any advice they needed to best align with our sustainable event.

5.2. ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



5.2.1. Accessibility of the Forum, in all aspects, to persons with disabilities.

- To implement all aspects related to accessibility for persons with disabilities, we were in touch with “CBM Global”, who work in close cooperation with the International Disability Allowance, organisations specifically for persons with disabilities, to ensure that the UNWDF was accessible to them.

5.3. GENDER



5.3.1. Balanced gender representation at the UNWDF

- Those wishing to participate in person at the UNWDF had to register via an online platform. Each registration was then assessed by the UN to maintain diversity at gender level, thus ensuring a fair distribution of men and women.

5.4. GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY





5.4.1. Balanced representation of all regions at the UNWDF

- ➔ Those wishing to participate in person at the UNWDF had to register via an online platform. Each registration was then assessed by the UN to maintain diversity at region of origin level, thus ensuring a fair distribution of regions among the 600 participants who registered to take part in person. Despite the pandemic, the rate of international participants was 88%. The UN regions were also well represented.

6. ECONOMIC ASPECTS



6.1. Economic impact for Bern and Switzerland

- ➔ The UNWDF attracted over 600 participants from Switzerland and abroad to Bern who stayed in hotels, ate in restaurants, used transport and enjoyed entertainment. We contacted several partners, such as Bern Welcome and Publibike, to organise hotel accommodation in Bern and its surroundings, so that guests could benefit from public transport and bikes.
- ➔ The UNWDF employed staff, from the Confederation and the UN, but also all the Kursaal staff as well as those of its partners and local and national media.

7. SUSTAINABLE CONFERENCES



7.1. Recording the UNWDF plenary sessions

- ➔ The main sessions were transcribed on line so that a maximum number of interested people could follow them.



7.1.1. Subtitles and international sign language interpretation

- We concluded a contract with the UN for the subtitling and interpretation in international sign language of the UNWDF sessions.

7.2. Reusing the sustainability concept

- The aim of the sustainability concept details was also to serve as a model for the organisation of sustainable national and international events in the future.