



**A Practical Guidebook to Circular Economy (Volume 2):  
Collaborating with Value Chain Partners for  
Organising Circular Events and Exhibitions**



Partnership for Sustainability  
Leadership in Business  
商界永續發展領袖計劃

Initiated by



永續坊  
POLICY FOR SUSTAINABILITY LAB  
公民社會與治理研究中心  
CENTRE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOVERNANCE

Supported by



滙豐銀行慈善基金  
The Hongkong Bank Foundation

© 2024 Centre for Civil Society and Governance, The University of Hong Kong

ISBN: 978-988-76865-6-9

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part and in any form for educational or non-profit services without special permission from the copyright holder, provided acknowledgement of the source is made. The Centre would appreciate receiving a copy of any publication that uses this publication as a source.

No use of this publication may be made for resale or any other commercial purpose whatsoever without prior permission in writing from the Centre. Applications for such permission should be made via [ccsg@hku.hk](mailto:ccsg@hku.hk).

### Disclaimer

This publication contains general information only and is based on the experiences and research of CCSG practitioners. It is not a substitute for such professional advice or service. Before making any decision or taking any action that may affect your business, you should consult a qualified professional advisor. CCSG shall not be responsible for any loss sustained by any person who relies on this publication. The information and contents contained in this publication are based on publicly available information obtained from sources believed to be reliable. The Centre makes no guarantees as to their accuracy, completeness, timeliness or correctness. References in this publication to any external resources are for educational purpose and do not necessarily constitute or imply our endorsement or recommendation. This disclaimer is written in English, and the Chinese version is translation for reference only. In the event of inconsistency between the English and Chinese versions, the English version shall prevail.

### Suggested citation

Centre for Civil Society and Governance, The University of Hong Kong (2024), A Practical Guidebook to Circular Economy (Volume 2): Collaborating with value chain partners for organising circular events and exhibitions. Partnership for Sustainability Leadership in Business. [https://ccsg.hku.hk/pslb/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Practical-Guidebook-Volume-2\\_ENG.pdf](https://ccsg.hku.hk/pslb/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Practical-Guidebook-Volume-2_ENG.pdf)

## About the Partnership for Sustainability Leadership in Business

The “Partnership for Sustainability Leadership in Business” (PSLB) is a four-year (2020-2024) action research project initiated by the Centre for Civil Society and Governance, HKU, and fully supported by The Hong Kong Bank Foundation. The Project is led by Professor Wai-Fung Lam together with a group of sustainability experts. It is aimed at fostering sustainability leadership and collaboration in the business sector of Hong Kong through knowledge transfer, capacity building, and network development; in particular, the Project strives to foster strong partnerships between big corporations and SMEs in pursuit of sustainability. The Project aspires to build a collaborative ecosystem, which will enhance the capacity and role of SMEs in Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area in attaining sustainable development. More information about the Project can be found at this [link](#).

## About the Centre for Civil Society and Governance

Established in December 2002, the Centre for Civil Society and Governance (“the Centre”) is the first research centre in Hong Kong dedicated to enhancing our knowledge of civil society — its nature, constituents, dynamics, roles (in particular its contribution toward governance) — and to contributing to the attainment of a sustainable society through forging community-based, innovative solutions to inform policy deliberation and collective action. More information about the Centre can be found at this [link](#).

# Contents

---

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Acknowledgement</b>   | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Foreword</b>  | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>About This Guidebook</b>  | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>Understanding Business Event Operations and Sustainability Implications</b>     | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Trends and Demand for Circular Business Events</b>                              | <b>19</b> |
| <b>Case Studies on Value Chain-based Circularity Practices</b>                     | <b>28</b> |
| <b>Step-by-step Guide to Value Chain-based Collaborative Circularity Practices</b> | <b>55</b> |
| Step 1    Creating Resource Circularity Event Goal                                 | 64        |
| Step 2    Formulating Circularity-minded Event Policy                              | 66        |
| Step 3    Laying down Circularity Requirements in RFPs                             | 68        |
| Step 4    Negotiating for Circularity-minded Event Sponsorship                     | 76        |
| Step 5    Setting Circular Event Targets   | 78        |
| Step 6    Evaluating Circularity in the Event                                      | 82        |
| <b>Appendix and References</b>   | <b>85</b> |

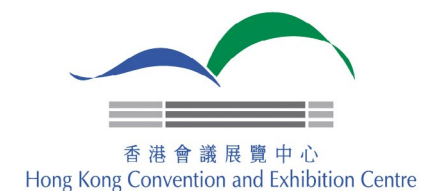


## Acknowledgement

This Practical Guidebook is part of the Partnership for Sustainability Leadership in Business project initiated by the Centre for Civil Society and Governance at The University of Hong Kong and fully supported by The Hongkong Bank Foundation.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all parties who generously shared their professional insights and suggestions during the stakeholder engagement phase, as well as contributed throughout the review and editorial processes of this publication.

### Contributing organisations (in alphabetical order)



## Credits

Lead author: Kelvin Fok

Co-authors: Darwin Leung, Mimi Kan, Woody Cheng, Prudence Yeung

Editorial team: Dr. Winnie Law, Prof. Wai-Fung Lam

## Foreword

Hong Kong is a city full of happenings. Business events and exhibitions of different sizes for various industries are held across the territory every day. These events are indispensable for professionals from businesses, academia, non-governmental organisations and government to access to market information, knowledge, networks and opportunities. Nevertheless, organising them always come with costs in both financial and environmental terms. Despite positively contributing to our local economy, a vast majority of them are currently run in a material-intensive and wasteful manner. The short-term economic gains are often at the expense of the long-term socio-ecological well-being of Hong Kong.

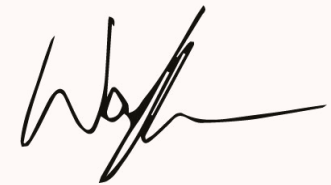
Whilst business events are short-lived, due to their scale and prominent use of single-use materials, they often produce a disproportionate amount of waste. Recycling and donation are popular practices nowadays; they are, however, tackling only the symptom – waste generation, not the root problem – how resources are planned and deployed in a sustainable manner. Going against the ideals of low-carbon and sustainable future that many businesses have committed to supporting, the predominant linear way of operation in these events desperately needs to be remodelled into a circular one.

Seeing the importance of transitioning towards a circular economy by some, the question of “how” remains for most. For instance, many businesses organise B2B events, but the event or marketing and communications teams may be unaware of how a sustainable and circular event looks like, let alone how to plan for one. To realise resource circularity in these events, a bigger challenge for the organisers is to get their value chain actors onboard and collaborate; how to effectively communicate with and engage them is a concern. Despite many

problems to be addressed in practice, the inspiring examples shared by some industry pioneers and researched by the project team encourage us to join in and facilitate the transition.

With awareness, engagement and innovative thinking crucial to making resource circularity in business events happen, this Practical Guidebook provides some good cases and ready-to-use templates to get your team started. The learnings and materials are applicable to not only meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) events but also other corporate activities. Bringing in industry practitioners’ professional inputs and also advice gathered from the stakeholder engagement activities, I hope this Practical Guidebook will enable you to plan for and carry out resource circularity-minded events.

This Practical Guidebook would not have been possible without the generous support from the MICE industry stakeholders along its development. To this, the Partnership for Sustainability Leadership in Business (PSLB) team and I would like to sincerely thank all the contributing parties for their active involvement and facilitation.



Professor Wai-Fung Lam  
Director, Centre for Civil Society and Governance  
The University of Hong Kong

## About This Guidebook

From corporate conferences and product launch events to trade shows and exhibitions, business events are treasured not just by the sales personnel but also by the professionals and practitioners for the exchange possibilities these occasions can bring. Nevertheless, if you have been to any of these, it would not come as a surprise to learn that organising one event consumes large amounts of resources and generates tonnes of waste – with linear economy as the culprit.

With the idea of green and sustainable events increasingly emphasised, this Practical Guidebook seeks to challenge this status quo from the perspective of value chain-based collaboration bending the linear process into a circular one. It will show you why and how a business event should and can, respectively, design out waste.



## What are the Objectives of This Guidebook?

This Guidebook aims to:



Raise the awareness of resource circularity among the business event-related professionals and stakeholders for holistic, circularity-minded event planning and execution



Inspire business event-related value chain actors to play their parts and advance resource circularity by learning from the market-leading cases



Facilitate changes in business events' resource management practices by providing useful examples and templates



Foster collaborations and partnerships in the MICE industry and beyond for positive change

## Who is This Guidebook for?

This Guidebook focuses on business events. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (2014), any assembly that is participated by 10 or more people, spans at least four hours, and happens in a contracted venue is considered a business event. Conventions, conferences, summits, forums, corporate meetings, trade shows and exhibitions all fall within the scope of this Guidebook.

This publication relates not only to large-scale business events that take place in convention halls or exhibition centres but also those of smaller scale in hotels and other indoor business venues. While this Practical Guidebook does not cover recreational events, such as concerts, galas and festivals, and consumer exhibitions, the circular event principles, strategies and framework detailed in this publication would be applicable to them.

This Guidebook is designed for project managers in the MICE industry, as well as event teams, and marketing and communications managers in all companies that are keen on organising circular events in Hong Kong.

The Guidebook refrains from suggesting actions by event role for individual value chain actors as some other existing guidelines do. After all, such a silo thinking is incoherent and inadequate in approaching a systemic topic like circular economy. Rather, it illustrates viable collaborative models that organisers and co-creators of business events can consider for circularity.

The PSLB team wrote this Guidebook based on extensive desktop research, engagement with the industry professionals, and first-hand event organising experiences. The terms “MICE” and “business events” are used interchangeably in this Guidebook.



This Guidebook dives right into the landscape and best practices observed in the industry. For fundamental information about the basics of a circular economy, please refer to **A Practical Guidebook to a Circular Economy: Collaborating with Value Chain Partners for a Resilient Business** at this [link](#).



# Understanding Business Event Operations and Sustainability Implications

## Key Messages

- The waste and carbon data drawn from various reports have prompted business events to progressively embrace a circular economy approach.
- Business events planned and executed with a linear mindset are incompatible with sustainability and are non-compliant with today's environmental, social and governance (ESG) protocols.
- The business-as-usual way of organising events is worsening the interrelated environmental, social and economic conditions, leading to risks faced by enterprises and events.



## MICE Events as an Economic Engine of Hong Kong

Hong Kong is a world-famous business hub and meeting place. The city has a vibrant MICE scene, hosting a variety of trade shows, conferences and exhibitions. The Government reported that in 2024, more than 150 conferences and 160 exhibitions would be organised at two of Hong Kong's major MICE event venues (Wong et al., 2024). It also predicted that the MICE sector would perform better than the pre-pandemic level. According to the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce (HKGCC) (2023), the exhibition sector contributed HK\$58.6 billion to Hong Kong's gross domestic product (GDP) – about 2.2% of the total GDP – and 77,000 full-time job positions before COVID-19.

Business travellers for MICE events are an important source of revenue for the local economy. In 2019, the Hong Kong Tourism Board recorded 1.69 million overnight MICE visits. On average, this type of overnight visitors spent HK\$7,200, or around HK\$1,300 more than the other tourist categories, when they stay in Hong Kong (Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2020). Especially with the rise of bleisure travel – mixing business travel with leisure activities (Amsler, 2023), their visits support different industries, including but not limited to hotel, transportation and foodservice (Allied Analytics LLP, 2024).

On the other hand, although the total number of local participants going to these events in a year is unknown, their participation implies potential business opportunities and necessary spendings to attend the events (e.g. ticket, commute, meal). Business events are hence good for tourism and other industries' development.

With a global market size of US\$876.42 billion in 2022, the MICE industry worldwide is anticipated to continue to expand by 2030 (Grand View Research, 2023). The research also foresaw Asia Pacific market to grow at the fastest rate compared with other regions in the world. In another report (PricewaterhouseCoopers Limited, 2024), the industry in Hong Kong was expected to experience a steady increase in revenue to US\$944 million in 2027 (HKGCC, 2024). Together with the mega event economy for which the Government is currently promoting (new.gov.hk, 2024), more MICE events are going to be organised in the city.



## Urgency for Business Events to Manage Resources Effectively

While events come in different scales and formats, being input-intensive in nature, conducting and managing business events in a resource-effective manner should have made good sense both financially and environmentally. However, from news reports to direct observations by industry professionals, this event approach has not been the norm yet. Although official waste data specific to business events in Hong Kong are unavailable, the current condition can still be grasped by the scant information from media:

- Estimate suggests that each convention and exhibition can produce dozens of tonnes of waste (沈帥青, 2018).
- One of the major business event venues in town was once said to generate around 1,000 tonnes of exhibition waste on a three-year average, with 200 tonnes being recyclable (新假期, 2015).

Contributed collectively by the value chain actors, including exhibitors, vendors and organisers, the waste problem is alarming if one considers the number of days, if not hours, these events generally last.

With rising awareness of environmental protection, recycling and donation programmes are increasingly common in business events nowadays. These downstream waste reduction measures, however, are insufficient for resource management as the receiving ends typically have limited carrying capacity; also not every event-related waste can be conveniently recycled. This suggests that business events need to go beyond these strategies to manage resources well.

Nor are recycling and donation programmes effective means to address the carbon emissions arising from these events. In addition to consuming large amount of resources to deliver the events, the activities along the event value chain are carbon-intensive, as evidenced by various research:

- Extrapolating from the results of the lifecycle emission studies on in-person conferences, a research paper published in Nature Communications suggests that the global event industry contributes as much as 10% of the carbon emissions worldwide (Tao et al., 2021).
- With reference to the general emissions profile for events, excluding travel and accommodation, “space design and production”, “food” and “freight” are the top three emission sources across all events (Net Zero Carbon Events, 2022)<sup>1</sup>.

A new mode that breaks away from a “business as usual” approach to running these events is clearly necessary to race against climate change. The findings imply that proper resource management should be considered at the event planning stage, instead of when the materials have become waste.

<sup>1</sup> They include international exhibitions, national exhibitions, international congresses, national congresses and corporate events.



## The Direct Stakeholders in Business Event Operations

It takes collective resources and efforts from various parties to deliver business events. A trade conference with exhibition which has the most complex structure makes the best example to illustrate the complexity involved. With reference to Figure 1, such an event involves six primary groups – i) event organiser, ii) venue provider, iii) event sponsors, iv) exhibitors, v) event contractors, and vi) delegates / visitors.

Figure 1: Direct event stakeholders in a trade conference with exhibition



While some of these parties may not be of relevance to other types of events, event organiser, event contractors, venue provider and delegates / visitors are in general the building blocks of an event. Their respective roles are as follows:



### Event organiser

Responsible for planning, coordinating and executing an event, event organiser sits at the centre as the key connector with other event stakeholders and oversees venue selection, logistics, marketing, programme development, event management and other aspects of an event.



### Venue provider

Offering physical space and facilities for hosting an event, venue providers can include hotels, exhibition halls, convention centres and landlords that own other event spaces.



### Event sponsors

Contributing financial or in-kind resources to an event, event sponsors support event organiser in exchange for promotional, branding or other business opportunities.



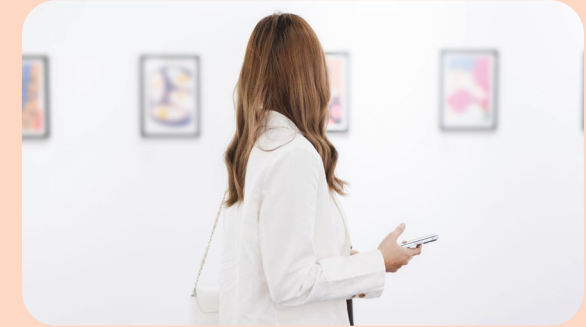
### Exhibitors

Exhibitors are organisations that are allotted a designated space or booth by the event organiser to set up displays and promotional materials to promote their products, services, company, as well as interact with delegates in an event.



### Event contractors

Providing goods or services for an event to support event operations and visitor experience, event contractors can include event freight forwarder, production house, equipment rental company, event management agency and so on. Contractors engaged by the exhibitors to build and design booths and exhibits are also included in this category.



### Delegates /Visitors

They are the participants that attend an event. In business events, they can be representatives of companies, industry associations, government, non-government organisations and institutes.

Depending on the scale and nature of the event, auxiliary services including catering, accommodation and transportation may be arranged by the event organiser. In other words, the event industry can sometimes intersect with the foodservice, hospitality and transport industries.

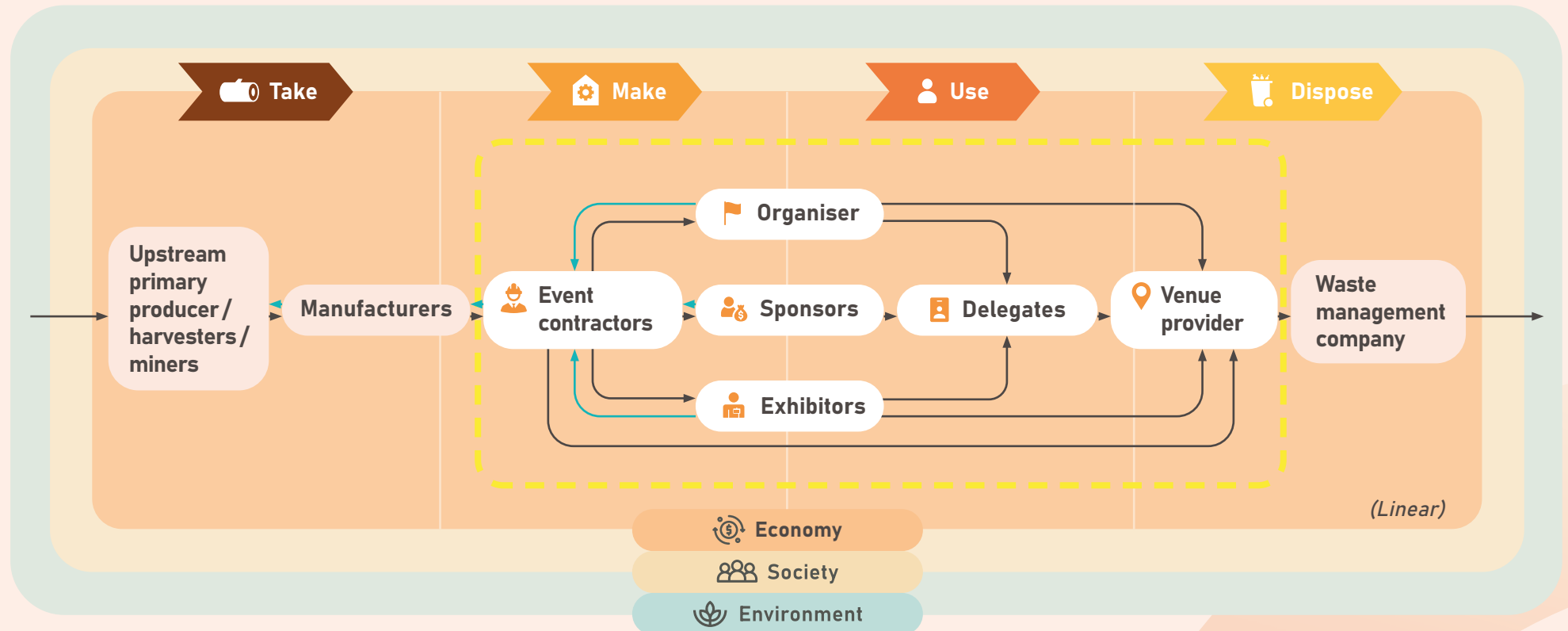
### Useful Information

A Practical Guidebook to a Circular Economy: Collaborating with Value Chain Partners for a Resilient Business has a foodservice industry focus. For information about how catering service providers can work with their value chain partners to practice resource circularity, please refer to [https://ccsg.hku.hk/pslb/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Practical-Guidebook-1\\_ENG.pdf](https://ccsg.hku.hk/pslb/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Practical-Guidebook-1_ENG.pdf) for details.

## The Problematic Linear Material Flow in Organising Events

Having examined the parties who have stakes in business events, we can next explore how materials flow in these activities and the consequences. Figure 2 illustrates a conventional event value chain which overlays with a linear economy-based material journey. It resembles the event stages, from preparation to execution and conclusion. The dotted, yellow frame highlights the value chain positions of the direct stakeholders.

**Figure 2: A conventional event value chain and material journey**



There are four key stages in the material journey:

### Take

The material flow starts from the upstream primary producers, harvesters, and miners who take and extract natural resources, namely wood, rubber, plants, animal, fossil fuels and ores, from the environment. This process is shared among different industries; business events contribute to part of the demand.

### Make

The manufacturers then acquire the raw materials and turn them into semi-manufactured or manufactured products, such as wood panels, paper, rubber tiles, packaged food, animal products, plastics, man-made fibre, glass, furniture and electronics. These products would be purchased by the event contractors, and processed and offered to the event organiser, sponsors and exhibitors upon request to set up the event. At this event preparation stage, some packaging materials, such as plastic wrap, used in last-mile delivery, would be discarded at the venue's waste facility.

### Use

The event organiser, sponsors and exhibitors use the materials to run the event and create delegate experience at the event operating stage. The visitors would receive some of these materials in different forms, such as badges, souvenirs, and brochures, which they may not be keen to take away.

### Dispose

The event concludes. The event items from the organiser and exhibitors are dismantled with the event contractors' help. One-off materials are thrown away, including those left behind by the delegates. The waste management company appointed by the venue provider would handle the unwanted materials. In the linear economy setting, they would be sent to landfill or incinerator.

Apart from the linear material flow, Figure 2 implies the overall event impact. The environment and society are the two fundamental sustainability dimensions that enable the economy embedded in them to function; these dimensions are interrelated, impacting while being impacted by one another. The linearity jeopardises them, worsening the existing conditions of climate change-induced extreme weather events, resource shortage, pollution, poor workforce health, poor living quality, and other conditions. As the environmental and social conditions deteriorate, the local economy suffers too.

### Side Note

Does this material journey ring a bell to you? Business events have been known to be organised in a resource-intensive and wasteful manner. The exhibition venues after shows are even described as a temporary junkyard by some!

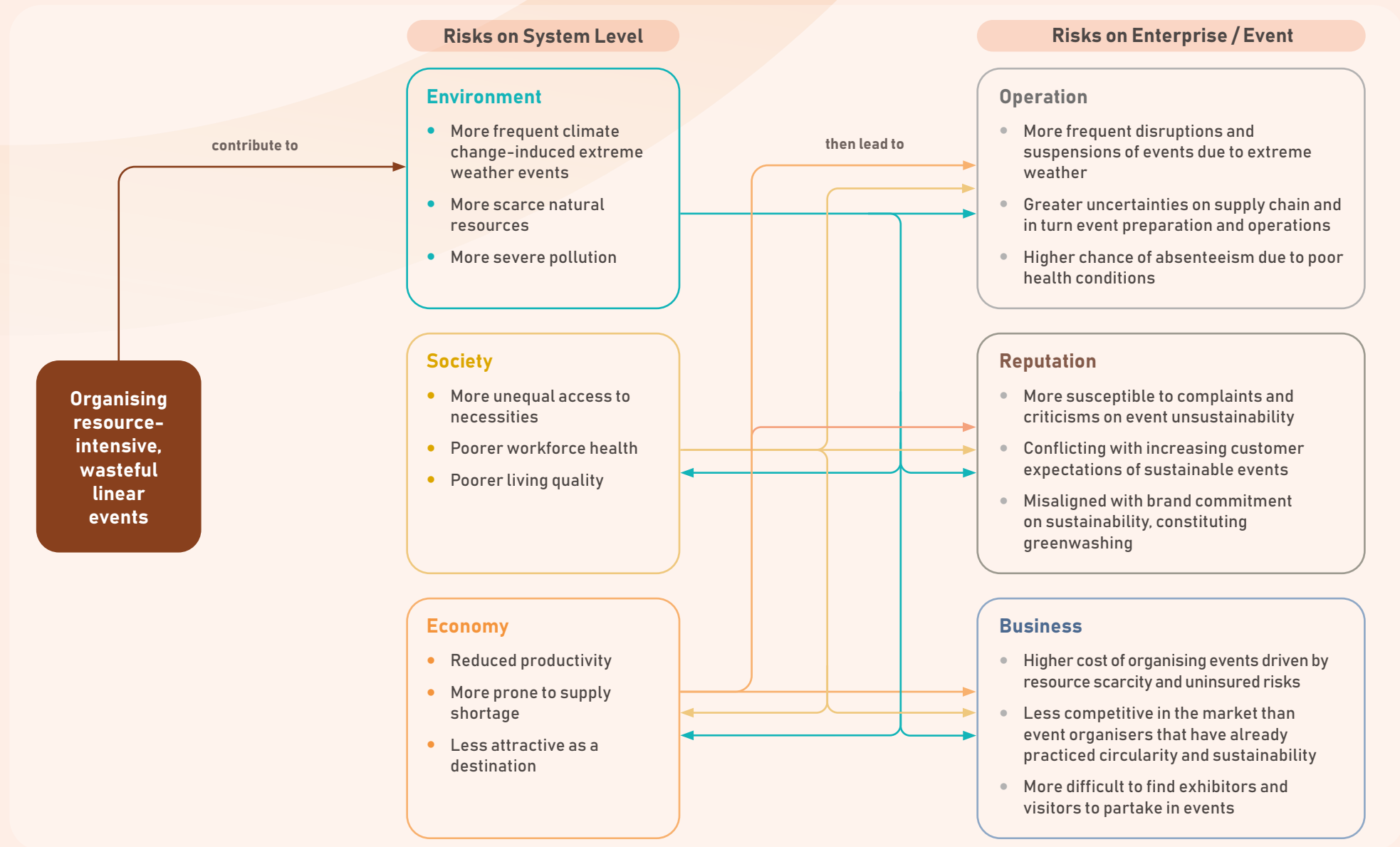


Business event professionals need to appreciate how they prepare for and run events can contribute to these system-level risks; and influence their events as well as organisations in terms of operational, reputational and business risks. Figure 3 serves as an example to help draw the connections.

MICE activities form a productive tourism segment for which many cities, including Hong Kong, are competing. As the business's awareness of sustainable travel and environmental, social and governance (ESG) has been heightening around the globe, companies, usually multinational ones, are looking for places that meet not only their events' needs but also align with these sustainability-related expectations to organise their events. Whether events can be more sustainable and circular has become one of the differentiators that help attract these companies. As a result, being wasteful and unsustainable in these events harm not only the destination's image but also the city's economic performance.

The implications to the environment, society and economy clearly point to the need to transition the business events and the related industries from working linearly to fully practicing resource circularity. Nevertheless, the misalignment or disconnection between event and organisational sustainability challenges this transition, as they usually are managed by disparate units within a company; very often sustainability knowledge is not commonly shared by different units and individuals in companies.

Figure 3: An example of how organising linear events poses enterprise / event risks





# Trends and Demand for Circular Business Events

## Key Messages

- Event organiser is the key connector with different event stakeholders, making its decisions influential for circular events to happen.
- Industry-led initiatives on net-zero emissions and sustainability as well as the HKSAR Government's work on green events are conducive to circular business events.
- Together with other practical challenges, the industry needs not only knowledge but also innovations and external support to realise circular and sustainable business events.

## Drastic Differences between Linear and Circular Events

With some basic understanding of the issues arising from linearity, distinguishing the qualities that can define linear and circular events, respectively, is our next focus. While we will discuss more about how to run a circular event through collaborations in the subsequent chapters, developing an awareness of what not to do in organising an event can help initiate the conversations to transition away from linear events.

Figure 4 illustrates how a linear event looks drastically different from a circular one. Linear events are commonly observed in the market; circular events are the highest standard for business event professionals to pursue. The portrayal of the two scenarios is based on industry practitioners' sharing of their observations in past events and exhibitions, some of the best practices in the Net Zero Carbon Event initiative (n.d.), and the PSLB project team's interpretations.

You can make use of this figure as a pulse check to quickly evaluate how far the event you are managing is linear or circular in nature as well.

### Useful Information

For more ideas of how individual components in an event can be more sustainable, you can refer to the resources, particularly the [Smart Production & Waste Management Guidance Document](#), on the Net Zero Carbon Event initiative's website. The initiative is also carrying out various work to drive sustainability in business events during the year. You can click [this link](#) for detail.



**Figure 4: Drastic differences between operating a business event with linear and circular manner**



Linear event is the prevailing mode of event organisation for some reasons. From a broader perspective, the way our economy currently works – which is also linear – shapes how events are managed. Business event professionals are just conforming to the status quo. Nonetheless, deep diving into the underlying factors leading to the linearity, not only are they about convenience but also a plethora of practical challenges experienced in the field. These include:

### Perception

- Treating event materials as one-off items instead of the company's assets
- Competing on eye-catchiness for branding
- Material-driven event experience with the-more-the-better mentality

### Resource

- Involving lead time to meticulously plan and coordinate with relevant stakeholders
- Cost considerations on alternatives
- Lack of storage capacity
- Inadequate time after event with packed show schedule

### Solution

- Unable to identify alternative routes or solutions for waste generated from events
- Downstream value chain not having sufficient capacity to digest the materials used in events
- Unable to tap into non-local solutions as export of waste is forbidden by law or subject to strict control

### Stakeholder involvement

- Lack of other event stakeholders' participation

On the other hand, as straightforward as switching from linearity to circularity may seem, organising a circular event takes more than changes in material. Even with multiple alternatives, the key lies in a mindset shift and behavioural changes with facilitating conditions. Below are the conditions that can enable circularity practices in events:

### Willingness

- Event team willing to devote time and resources to promoting event sustainability
- Other stakeholders willing to get involved and contribute to event sustainability

### Pre-event engagement

- Comprehensive pre-event planning and communications with different parties

### Solution

- Competitive prices for alternatives and reusables

### Event logistics

- Adequate event move-out time
- Have smooth workflow to sort materials and return to storage / send to value chain collaborators

### Event framework

- Have an overall goal and specific targets with communication
- Have event policy and protocol in alignment with the goal or specific target
- Spell out resource circularity requirements when procuring goods and services
- Measure and report the resource impact arising from the event



Transitioning to a circular economy can help companies manage risks while opening business opportunities. Even for a company that does not have sustainability commitment, strategising for resource circularity can bring tangible benefits to it, in addition to building a good company image. While the benefits vary from case to case, they generally include:

- Reducing new material inputs and hence operating expense (OPEX)
- Reducing time and cost of setting up the event venue and returning it to original state
- Minimising medical expenses from preventable accidents by removing excessive decorations to which installation poses safety risk
- Minimising waste cost imposed by the venue provider, waste management company or municipal solid waste charging scheme
- Adding innovations and hence talking points to events
- Increasing net profit from reduced cost, if a company runs events as its business

### Side Note

As an organiser, you oversee an event's performance including its environmental side. Your role as the key connector that links up different stakeholders in an event makes your decisions influential to whether a circular event can be delivered.

Read on to see how a circular event can be done through collaboration with other key parties in an event.

## Growing Trend for Circular Business Events

The heightened understanding of sustainability and, hence, demand among business professionals in general suggest a shift in how business events will be organised. Results from various surveys all point to the fact that sustainability has become a key element as far as business travel and events are concerned:

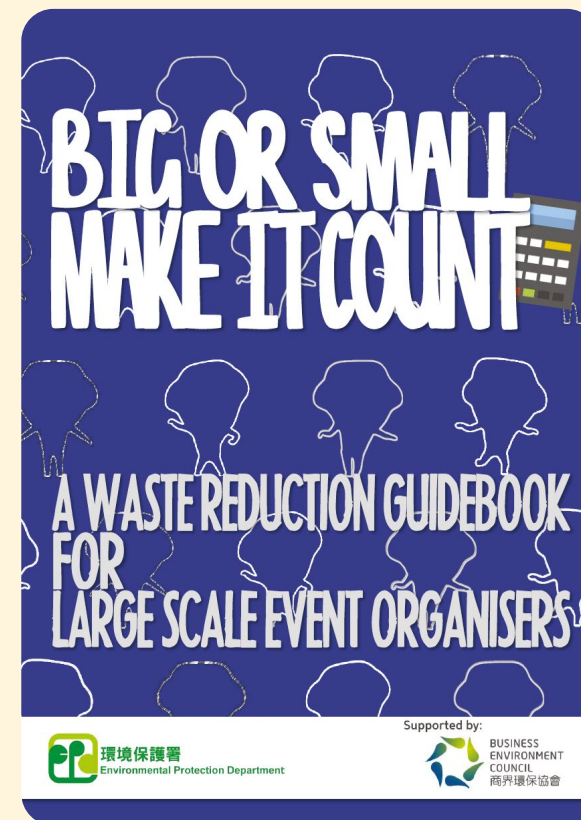
- Referring to a study published by the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (2023), at least 3 in 5 respondents' companies would pick organisers that emphasise environmental and social sustainability. More than 50% of all surveyed would not mind paying more to reduce carbon emissions from business travel.
- According to a survey by Trip.Biz (2023), approximately 85% of the Chinese business respondents have preference over "flights / hotels with green and low-carbon labels", and many are highly aware of low-carbon initiatives in aviation, hospitality and MICE industries.
- Expedia (2022) also pointed out in its Sustainable Travel Study that "consumers are willing to pay more for sustainable travel options" when traveling for leisure or business.
- The survey results from the Global Association of the Exhibitions Industry (UFI) in 2019 and 2020 revealed that more than 70% of visitors and exhibitors attached importance to a trade show's sustainability commitment (2021). Around 35% of them would not attend a trade show without reasonable approach to sustainability.

On the other hand, highly relevant to the topic of resource circularity, the business events industry has been increasingly involved in the net-zero carbon transition. In 2022, the Joint Meetings Industry Council introduced the **Net Zero Carbon Events** initiative, inviting globally all event value chain actors to join the industry-wide movement to work towards net zero by 2050. The initiative prioritises actions in five areas – venue energy, food and food waste, logistics, smart production and waste management, and travel and accommodation. With the available guidance documents, it aligns the industry's understanding and efforts towards the global climate goal.



Locally, the Hong Kong Exhibition & Convention Industry Association (HKECIA) (n.d.) has launched the ten-point [Sustainability Charter](#), and encouraged its members to sign and follow. The Charter in general promotes waste reduction, sustainable travel, energy conservation, support to local communities, sustainability education and engagement, and measurement and reporting. Specifically on waste-related issues, it highlights the use of environmentally friendly materials, recycling, responsible waste management and elimination of single-use plastics at events.

The HKSAR Government has also been promoting waste-less and carbon-less large-scale events in general. In 2017, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) introduced [A Waste Reduction Guidebook for Large Scale Event Organisers](#) to help primarily event organisers improve their events' environmental performance. Although the publication's scope is limited to leisure and cultural events<sup>2</sup>, it has been seen as a green guide in some trade shows, particularly those organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) (n.d.). EPD subsequently launched the ["Green Event Pledge"](#) (n.d.) to bring different event-related businesses and organisations together for waste reduction and recovery.



<sup>2</sup> They include cultural celebrations, festivals, entertainment, shopping, sports and dining events – all of which are excluded from this Practical Guidebook.



From 2020 to 2024, funded by Recycling Fund, Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency (HKQAA) developed the “Recycling Fund: Empower Recycling Industry Having a New Business Model in Green Event Recyclables Collection” project (Recycling Fund, n.d.). With a scope broadly covering sports events, carnivals, festivals, events with catering and exhibitions, commercial events and others, the quasi-government organisation established alliance platforms, incentive programmes, and award schemes; and provided advisory and informational support for event stakeholders to facilitate the integration of “reduce, reuse, recycle and replace” principles in events. Under the project, the organisation also published a [Green Event Management Guidebook](#) (HKQAA, 2023).



## More Innovations and Support Needed to Walk the Talk

While the outlook may seem encouraging, challenges remain for the industry to reroute the value chains and bring about resource circularity. According to American Express's 2024 Global Meetings and Events Forecast (American Express Global Business Travel, 2023), event planners in Asia Pacific have difficulties in avoiding the use of paper and plastic, as well as finding suppliers with sustainability certification. Cost associated with implementing sustainability initiatives may also be their concern as, given a shrinking meeting budget, it was the 3<sup>rd</sup> most picked option among 14 choices when the survey asked about which area the planners would cut first while still maintaining the attendee experience. The need to clear these barriers is obvious for sustainable events to become the norm.

The number of business events in Hong Kong is expected to grow with the Government's policy reinforcement in promoting mega event economy. Some of those highlighted by the authority are environment- and sustainability-themed, including the Asian Financial Forum, Hong Kong Green Week and the World Cargo Symposium (The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2024; HKTDC, 2024; Hong Kong Monetary Authority, 2024; The International Air Transport Association, n.d.). Beyond these large-scale meetings, conferences and exhibitions, with the topics entering the mainstream conversations, business events regardless of scale are anticipated to demonstrate the sustainability qualities in operation as well to avoid disconnecting or misleading visitor's experience as in what they suggest with what they do (i.e. greenwashing). Given the deep-rooted unsustainable event practices, advancing these events' circularity performance necessitates innovations and support.



### Side Note

Meanwhile, for businesses to realise resource circularity, further collaborations with different stakeholders are essential. You will learn more about what possibilities collaborative projects can open to in the next chapter.

# Case Studies on Value Chain-based Circularity Practices

## Key Messages

- Business events can do way more than recycling and donation with support from other value chain partners.
- With reference to the case studies, having an event management framework, thinking through material flows and proactively communicating expectations to event stakeholders during the preparation phase are crucial for delivering circular events.

Some event professionals have joined their heads together to create circular events. With the goal to inspire you and others to work collaboratively to bring about resource circularity in events, we have put together cases in this chapter through desktop research and, for some, interviews. You can refer to the corresponding icons under each case to understand how these exemplars approached resource circularity in their events.



**Initiative to circulate certain resources within event(s)**



**Initiative to circulate certain resources within the event value chain**



**Initiative to circulate certain resources in other value chains**



**Holistic closed-loop circular events**







Hong Kong

Mainland China

Singapore

## Engaging Exhibitors and Contractors for Booth Reusability with the Better Stands Programme

### Parties involved:

Informa Markets

Exhibitors

Booth contractors

### Type:

Exhibition

### Size:

Jewellery & Gem WORLD Hong Kong 2023 – 3,417 exhibitors

Hi Innovation Week 2023 – 336 exhibitors

FHA-Food & Beverage 2023 – Over 1,300 exhibitors

### Aspect:

Exhibition stands

### Resource concerned:

Single-use materials (e.g. wood, plastic)

### Process in

R0: Refuse    R3: Reuse    R8: Recycle

### 9R framework:

Exhibitors opt for raw space for the unlimited creativity that shell scheme booth cannot offer. Nevertheless, as they erect eye-catching, impressive-looking stands, the endless possibilities also imply heavy use of disposable materials, resulting in substantial generation of post-event waste so prevalent across exhibitions. Being a staunch supporter of sustainability in the business events industry, Informa Markets has been spearheading an industry-first programme for circularity transition at exhibitions with exhibitors and contractors. It is the Better Stands programme.



Initiated in mid-2010s by Informa Markets' EMEA (i.e. Europe, the Middle East and Africa) team and officially introduced to the Asian market since 2022 under the group's FasterForward programme, the Better Stands programme aims to motivate all raw space exhibitors and their contractors to build their stands with reusable structures instead of single-use materials. The participating exhibitors are expected to proactively work with their contractors on the stand design and production for reusability. Subject to the categories an exhibitor can fully fulfil (see Figure 5), a booth would be classified into Disposable, Bronze, Silver or Gold.

The programme is more than having the exhibitors pledge to reach at least a Bronze level with their booth designs. In practice, with the programme's third-party review mechanism, Informa Markets checks and confirms whether the booths have all the reusable components and would be reused as claimed both during and after the events. The team also seeks clarification from the contractor's person in charge or the exhibitors if there is any uncertainty. The mechanism ensures the recognition to the participating exhibitors is well-earned.

**Figure 5: Informa Markets' Better Stands Framework**

|                    | Category                          | Item  | Better Stands    |        |        |      |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|---|------------------|--------|--------|------|
|                    |                                   |   | Fully disposable | Bronze | Silver | Gold |
| Reused             | 1. Stand structure and walls      | Structure or framework of the stand, walls, panels for meeting rooms, backdrop  | X                | √      | √      | √    |
|                    | 2. Platform or raised flooring    | Structure of flooring (excluding surface covering, e.g. carpet)   | X                | √      | √      | √    |
|                    | 3. Furniture and equipment        | Showcases, counters, chairs, tables, sofa, coffee table, flyer stand, LED walls, TV, AV equipment etc.  | X                | √      | √      | √    |
|                    | 4. Lighting                       | All kinds of lightings in the stand and within showcases  | X                | √      | √      | √    |
|                    | 5. Fascia and overhead signage    | Overhead signage or branding, fascia, company logo on top of the stand structure  | X                | X      | √      | √    |
|                    | 6. Rigged structure               | Any rigged structure including lighting gantries, truss or other structural elements  | X                | X      | √      | √    |
|                    | 7. Ceiling                        | Any form of ceiling e.g. fabric ceilings, solid ceilings for lighting or stand support  | X                | X      | √      | √    |
|                    | 8. Display facilities             | Built-in or detachable product display cabinets, lightboxes, shelves etc.   | X                | X      | √      | √    |
| Reused or Recycled | 9. Floor covering                 | Carpet, floor tiles, HDF coverings, lino etc.   | X                | X      | X      | √    |
|                    | 10. Graphics and decorative items | Any sticker, fabric, paperboard, foamboard, poster, floor-standing graphics, plants and flowers, models and ornaments and any other decorative items etc. | X                | X      | X      | √    |

Source: Adapted from Informa Markets (n.d.)



While gradually rolling out the programme to all the events in Asia, examples from the Jewellery & Gem WORLD Hong Kong, Hi Innovation Week in mainland China and FHA-Food & Beverage in Singapore demonstrate how some of the exhibitors have got involved in the Better Stands programme and minimised the use of disposable materials:

### Jewellery & Gem WORLD Hong Kong 2023

- Majority of the stands were reusable in nature, as the trade show happens quarterly.
- Supported the reuse of booth materials even before the programme, the German Pavilion's design and materials have been used for more than ten years and will be reused in the future.

### Hi Innovation Week 2023

- Offered the all-inclusive booth package – which includes fee for exhibiting and booth-building service by Informa Markets – to the startup exhibitors; and 90% of all exhibitors designed and constructed the exhibition space in accordance with the Better Stands programme.

### FHA-Food & Beverage 2023

- Both the French Pavilion and German Pavilion were awarded the Better Stands Certification in 2023. The French Pavilion applied Octonorm materials as the back wall. Together with the other parts such as ceiling, showcases and floor platform, the Pavilion was built with high reusability. As the German Pavilion was made by metal and frame, its design and materials can be reused.
- Showcased a proof-of-concept, pilot project featuring a zero-waste booth made entirely from upcycled materials in collaboration with the Singapore Tourism Board and a sustainability technology company MiniWiz. This booth had a 45% lower carbon footprint compared to traditional booths and could be dismantled, packed, and reused for future events (Teo, 2023).



The challenges of promoting the programme lie in not only persuading clients to take part but also getting the sales team's buy-in, as the salespeople are the ones pitching for the programme. In the end, there needs to be a balance between commercial interests and sustainability goals. Internally, Informa Markets' sustainability team undertakes the role of change management, raising awareness of the programme, addressing their colleagues' concerns, and hence aligning the mindset across the board. Considering the bargaining power with the exhibitors, the company is also prioritising high-revenue events when introducing the programme as a strategy.

Informa Markets has set sights on making the programme an industry standard. For the events organised by the company, the programme will evolve into part of the requirements for its exhibitors to follow in the future (Informa Markets, 2024). Furthermore, the company has opened the platform and invited other industry peers to implement the Better Stands programme together (Better Stands, n.d.), hoping to create widespread impact with their involvement. This industry-led programme is set to support the business events industry in its transition towards sustainability by advocating for the use of reusable stands.



## Strategies used

- Described clearly what would be considered Better Stands
- Recognised exhibitors that met the criteria of the Better Stands programme with third-party review mechanism



## Drivers for collaboration

- Exhibitor's commitment to sustainability
- Reduced cost of design and construction for each event
- Branding opportunity as a sustainability-conscious exhibitor and contractor
- All-inclusive booth package offered to exhibitors



## Barriers to act

- Require programme awareness and balance between commercial interests and sustainability goals
- Limited awareness from exhibitors on post-event booth disposal
- Require clients' mindset shift that reusable booths in raw space do not imply inability to stand out from others
- Limited storage space for reusable booths and high maintenance fee



Hong Kong

# Getting Value Chain Partners Onboard to Minimise Single-use Materials at Startup Exhibition

**Parties involved:**

- CCSG-HKU    Mega Plan (MGP) Company Limited
- CBRE    CLS Environmental Technologies
- Gaaup1 Up Design Studio Limited    Muuse
- Safe+Sound    Sustainable Office Solution    Spare-it
- Worksheet    IsoFoodTrace    IXON    V Cycle

**Type:** Exhibition

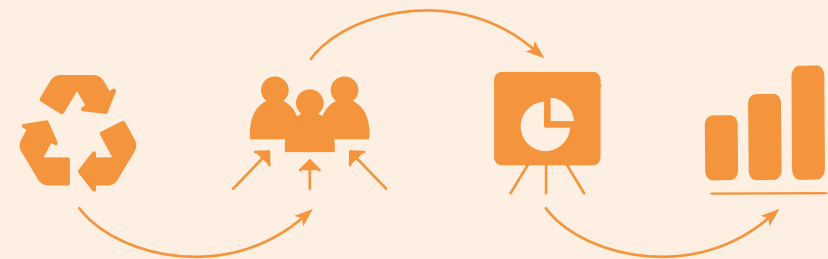
**Size:** ~150 people

**Aspect:** Exhibition booths

**Resource concerned:** Booth panel    Furniture    Promotional material

**Process in 9R framework:** R3: Reuse    R7: Repurpose    R8: Recycle

Through Knowledge Primer series, the PSLB team under the Centre for Civil Society and Governance, The University of Hong Kong (CCSG-HKU), has brought together distinguished leaders from different fields to share insights on business sustainability issues of policy and practical significance. At Knowledge Primer 5, themed “Scaling Circularity Through Transformative Technologies and Business Model Innovations”, an exhibition featuring 10 circular solution providers was hosted to showcase the robust startups scene in Hong Kong.





To live up to the event theme on circularity, the organising team had identified minimising single-use material at the startup exhibition as a key objective. By integrating reuse, repurpose and recycling principles as well as through collaboration with the event's value chain partners, several key actions were taken:

- Clearly requested the use of recyclable material for booth panels and recycling after event at the request for proposal (RFP) process for selecting production vendors
- Made use of the venue provider's furniture rental service to reuse exhibition tables, chairs and tablecloths
- Engaged exhibitors through pre-event meeting to communicate the event objective and specifics of booth setup, followed up with calls to gain buy-in for using a standardised, plain design for the booth backdrop to facilitate repurposing and recycling

While effort was needed to explain to the exhibitors the reason behind adopting a plain design for the booth backdrop rather than a brand-specific one that most exhibitors would have expected as the norm, all exhibitors welcomed the idea as it helped promote the circularity aspect of the event. Most exhibitors, being circular solution providers themselves, went the extra mile by using reusable promotional materials (i.e. leaflet in digital form, reusable promotional stands and displays) to contribute to the event objective.





As a result of the collaboration between the organising team and value chain partners, three features were integrated into the booth panels:

- All booth panels were made of recyclable honeycomb paperboard with an exhibitor logo sticker that was made of inkjet print with sticker backing. Despite being non-recyclable, it can be easily peeled off from the backdrop to facilitate the panels to be repurposed and recycled.
- The booths were built modularly, facilitating setup, dismantle and transportation. After the event, the production vendor collected all booth panels and repurposed them into boxes for storage and partition in the warehouse.
- Apart from the booth panels, all furniture was returned to the venue provider after the event so that they can be reused in future events.

Together with no single-use promotional materials being left behind by the exhibitors, minimal waste generation was resulted from the exhibition.



## Strategies used

- Communicated the event's expectations on resource circularity clearly with the supplier through RFP
- Explained the booth arrangement to the exhibitors early in the pre-event meeting and secured buy-in



## Drivers for collaboration

- Relevant to the event theme
- A clear RFP brief to production vendor
- Event team's proactiveness in communicating with exhibitors
- Exhibitors' awareness of the benefits for practicing circularity



## Barriers to act

- Limitation on design and variations deterring exhibitors from accepting this option
- Higher logistic and manpower cost for sending used panels to storage
- Manpower and time needed to facilitate the communication with exhibitors





Hong Kong

# Leveraging Vendor Brief and Sponsorships to Enhance Event Resource Circularity

## Parties involved:

- New World Development
- BMW Hong Kong
- Echo Asia
- Earthero Studio
- Elements Branding Solutions
- Muuse
- Mindbody
- Patio Verde

## Type:

Conference with exhibition and workshops

## Size:

~600 people

## Aspect:

Event materials

## Resource concerned:

Single-use event materials (e.g. art installation, lanyard, bottled water, souvenir)  
Furniture

## Process in 9R framework:

R0: Rethink   R3: Reuse   R7: Repurpose   R8: Recycle

Since 2021, the 1.5°C Summit – which is one of the prominent events at the week-long StartmeupHK Festival – has served as an occasion for industry peers and professionals to learn about the available sustainability solutions through discussions, as well as an outreach opportunity for the startups incubated by New World Development to promote their businesses. In 2023, New World Group hosted the one-day annual summit on the topic – The Defining Decade for Impact with Tech at K11 ATELIER King's Road.

As an event centering on low-carbon transition across different industries, the event team had paid conscious effort to run the Summit in alignment with the theme as much as practicable. They started from identifying event materials on a need basis, finding environmentally friendly alternatives for unavoidable items, and leveraging sponsorship for resource circularity during and after the event. The team was able to enhance the circularity performance with support from various value chain partners.



Earthero Studio, one of New World Development's incubatees, was engaged as a vendor to produce an art installation for the event. The event team welcomed any ideas, given that the installation could be built and executed in a sustainable manner. In light of this consideration, while several options were proposed by Earthero – including a 1.5°C ice sculpture and bamboo scaffolds, the team reckoned that making the former would involve the production of custom-made ice moulds which would only be used for this event, let alone how to handle the meltwater.

The latter was chosen as the structure aligned with the event's focus on sustainable building and construction and incorporated elements of circularity. The bamboo scaffolds were materials used in construction site; and other leftover fabrics used were collected from textile factories in Sham Shui Po. Together with the patented-soilless-medium-grown potted plants by Plant Plant Holding as souvenirs to the VIP guests, the iconic installation embodied the event's ethos. All the materials were responsibly handled afterwards, with the bamboo scaffolds being reused at other sites, and the fabrics stored by the vendor for future use. The souvenirs were all handed out as planned.



On the other hand, the event team identified lanyard and bottled water as unavoidable event materials among others that would compromise the delegates' experience. Therefore, the team has engaged Muuse, another incubated startup under the accelerator programme, alongside several other partners such as Elements Branding Solutions and Mindbody as the sustainable solution providers for the event. These partners respectively provided reusable cups, recyclable paper-based lanyard, and water refill station as the environmentally friendly alternatives. Other sustainable solution providers also helped promote the event's resource circularity, such as Patio Verde who lent the stylish furniture used on stage.





The Pioneer Sponsor of the event – BMW Hong Kong – also joined forces in avoiding unnecessary production for its product showcase. Aware that the automobile company would host a roadshow half a month before the 1.5°C Summit, the event team liaised with the marketing team to see if the sponsor could keep all the exhibition materials at their production house for later use in the Summit. Aligned the viewpoints with the marketing team and arranged the space based on the previous event’s specifications, they were able to recreate the car exhibition with minimal additional material inputs. In fact, 90% of items at BMW booth were taken from their previous event.

Avoiding all waste from event is challenging, as some factors are beyond the organiser’s control. For the 1.5°C Summit in 2023, since the organiser rented a vacant office floor to hold this event, the venue provider required the team to install carpet as part of the agreement. To cope with the requirement, the organiser opted for carpet that was made with environmentally friendly materials. After the event, Echo Asia, the event production house collected the carpet and repurposed certain materials from it to create pet toys that were subsequently donated.



## Strategies used

- Identified unavoidable event materials and looked for environmentally friendly alternatives from startups and solution providers
- Liaised with sponsor to reuse exhibition materials in recent events



## Drivers for collaboration

- Relevant to the event theme
- Shared vision on event sustainability
- Availability of environmentally friendly alternatives in the market
- Brand exposure opportunities for sustainable solution partners



## Barriers to act

- Relatively high cost compared to conventional way of organising events
- Efforts needed to facilitate the understanding from sponsors



Hong Kong

# Designing out Waste by Thinking through Product and Service Procurement

**Parties involved:**

- CCSG-HKU
- Alchemist Creations
- HALO Design Studio
- Bain Marie

**Type:**

Conference

**Size:**

~120 people

**Aspect:**

Props    Catering

**Resource concerned:**

Packaging waste (single-use items)

**Process in 9R framework:**

R3: Reuse

Gaining publicity and generating buzz are undoubtedly a key focus for event teams when organising business events, with creative gimmicks such as props and installations to draw the audience’s attention and mark the moment. However, these materials are generally designed for single use only, and would end up in the company’s storage or being sent to landfill right after the event.

As an event about realising resource circularity in foodservice industry, the PSLB team under CCSG-HKU doubled down the circularity commitment and actions in this respect in Knowledge Primer 6. The team had established two circular event goals at the initial planning phase:

- To refrain from using disposables
- To prioritise reuse



Upon agreeing on the event rundown and visualising every event aspect, from layout and decoration to reception and catering, the team researched the potential vendors by asking if the products or services they offer could align with the goals. In terms of event gimmicks, two vendors were engaged to design and produce the props for guest reception and launch ceremony respectively.



Alchemist Creations produced a prop with can gems – which are made of aluminium cans collected from Japanese all-you-can-eat restaurants. The project team worked with the social enterprise to create a A0-size installation. Formed by 20 tiling pieces on a magnetic stand, the puzzle was designed as a photo-taking opportunity at the reception where the representatives of the event’s supporting organisations put the pieces together, signifying the joint efforts on making the first Practical Guidebook and Knowledge Primer 6 possible. The social enterprise collected the installation on the same day after the event to its workshop to disassemble for reuse in future projects.



For the launch ceremony of the Practical Guidebook, HALO Design Studio created 18 3mm-thick, corrugated cardboard-made handheld props with resource circularity-related graphics for group photo-taking. While some of the graphics were designed as representation of the supporting organisation’s circularity initiatives, to increase the reusability of the props, the project team requested the design house to remove brand elements including logo and company name initially placed in them. Although the cardboard option was slightly more expensive than printing on foamboard, it enabled recycling. For the time being, the props would be reused at other occasions of the project for group photo.



As for catering, the team hired Bain Marie seeing that it offers sustainable solution.



The caterer delivered refreshments in reusable containers, and the team rented reusable coffee sets, appetiser forks and dessert plates. The items were collected on the same day after the event concluded for washing and reuse. Together with careful ordering, the team managed to minimise catering-related waste.

This case demonstrates the importance of not only having circularity-minded event goal but also thinking through the circularity opportunities and identifying the enabling collaborators right from the beginning of organising a business event for making circularity happen.



## Strategies used

- Thought through every event aspect where material use was necessary
- Specified circularity requirements in relation to the circular event goals when procuring props and catering service



## Drivers for collaboration

- Event team's commitment to and knowledge in sustainability
- Access to business opportunities
- Readily available sustainable solutions for props and catering



## Barriers to act

- Slightly higher production cost
- More work and time needed for coordinating post-event logistics to return reusable items
- Event organiser's responsibility for any lost reusable item



Hong Kong

# Promoting Resource Circularity through Sustainable Event Guidelines and Waste Management Systems

|                                 |  |                  |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------|
| <b>Parties involved:</b>        | EnviroEvents (ReThink) Limited                     | Spare-it         |
|                                 | Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) |                  |
|                                 | Cleaning contractor                                |                  |
| <b>Type:</b>                    | Conference   | Exhibition       |
| <b>Size:</b>                    | ~6,000 people                                      |                  |
| <b>Aspect:</b>                  | Exhibitors' materials                              | Waste management |
| <b>Resource concerned:</b>      | Packaging materials (e.g. paper, plastic, metal)   |                  |
| <b>Process in 9R framework:</b> | R0: Refuse   | R1: Rethink      |
|                                 | R2: Reduce   | R3: Reuse        |
|                                 | R4: Recycle  | R5: Recover      |
|                                 | R6: Redesign                                       | R7: Reutilize    |
|                                 | R8: Repair   | R9: Repurpose    |

EnviroEvents (ReThink) Limited (hereafter the "EnviroEvents HK"), which organises the annual business forum and solutions expo on sustainability named "ReThink HK", has established itself as a role model in the industry for its dedication to minimising waste generation and promoting resource circularity. As a leading sustainable event organiser in Hong Kong, EnviroEvents HK has also become a signatory of the Net Zero Carbon Event initiative, and endeavoured to play an active role in mobilising the events industry to combat climate change and reduce their carbon footprint.



Entering its 4<sup>th</sup> edition, Rethink HK 2023 demonstrated unwavering commitment to diverting waste from landfills and encouraging proper recycling as part of their event waste management practices. Covering various event aspects and spelling out the dos and don'ts, the organiser's [Sustainable Event Guidelines](#) set the tone for the exhibitors to observe.

### Key Event Guideline Measures

- Prohibiting the distribution of printed leaflets, brochures, and other promotional materials
- Forbidding the use of vinyl pull-up banners
- Requiring the use of reusable, sustainably sourced, ethically manufactured and zero plastic packaging / wrapping for giveaways and souvenirs
- Banning the use of single-use plastic bottles
- Offering rental options for plasma TV screens
- Providing the water refill facilities while the event encourages the use of reusable cups
- Providing no waste bins in exhibition booths to reinforce the use of designated recycling stations
- Installing designated recycling stations within the event venue

Aligning with the Sustainable Event Guidelines, ReThink HK 2023 has incorporated other circularity practices and principles, which included collaborating with suppliers and event partners to ensure the purchased materials and goods are reusable or recyclable; reusing event equipment, including audiovisual machinery, furniture, aluminium for booth setup and theatre construction, and lanyards; setting up a more engaging and eye-catching lanyard and badge recycling point; and using event app to encourage paperless communication among event participants.

With all these measures in place, a total of 3,150 kg of carton and cardboard and 881 kg of carpeting were fully recycled, and 600 distributed bamboo lanyards were returned for future usage. Detailed waste and environmental performance data are provided in their [2023 Sustainability Report](#).





In addition, EnviroEvents HK partnered with a greentech startup, Spare-it, to establish an effective waste management system at ReThink HK 2023. The startup set up six smart waste stations across the event venue for tracking daily waste production in real time; and used its software-as-a-service engagement platform for data collection and waste intelligence insights. At each station, four waste streams, namely general waste, plastic, metal and paper, would be collected in separate bins which were placed on top of electronic scales. The solution enabled Spare-it to collect and process live data on waste generation, and display the information during the event. The company subsequently generated [sustainability report](#) and post-event newsletters, providing insights for the event organiser to reflect on the performance of their waste management efforts.

Spare-it's technology enabled the event organiser to understand visitors' behaviour through the datasets. Optimising operational efficiency and monitoring contamination risk, it fosters upstream waste collection, sorting and recycling, ensuring the recyclables remain high quality with fewer impurities for further turning into new products or materials. Additionally, the event organiser could learn about the waste flow and hotspots within the venue, and evaluate if the centralised waste sorting stations are placed effectively. Most importantly, these efforts would help reduce the cost under the municipal solid waste charging scheme and minimise the environmental impact. From the visitors' perspective, waste and recycling data are crucial for increasing confidence in recycling and encouraging them to take action together.

ReThink HK has become a catalyst for change in the event industry, encouraging the adoption of sustainable practices and successfully inspired visitors and exhibitors to rethink their consumption patterns and embrace sustainable alternatives.



## Strategies used

- Provided Sustainable Event Guidelines for exhibitors to observe the dos and don'ts
- Promoted reuse and recycling by working with value chain partners



## Drivers for collaboration

- Staging an event with a sustainability theme
- Having concrete guidelines and targets for all stakeholders to follow
- Saving costs from minimising resource use and waste generation



## Barriers to act

- Higher cost for deploying technological solution
- Exhibitors may find it challenging and time-consuming to complete the booth materials report



Mainland China

# Recognising and Incentivising Green Custom-built Booths that Adopt 3R

## Parties involved:

China Foreign Trade Centre

Exhibitors

Booth building contractors

## Type:

Exhibition

## Size:

~129,000 people (2023 Spring Session)  
(China Foreign Trade Centre, n.d.)

## Aspect:

Custom-built booths

## Resource concerned:

Packaging materials

## Process in

### 9R framework:

R0: Refuse

R1: Rethink

R2: Reduce

R3: Reuse

R8: Recycle

Custom-built booths provide flexibility and visitor experience that are seldom found in standard booths. However, since they tend to be made with many materials but disposed of after events, these booths are one of the major waste sources in trade shows. Besides imposing limitations on booth construction for the exhibitors and contractors to follow, event organisers can create incentives to encourage these parties to exhibit more sustainably.

Canton Fair, which is organised by the China Foreign Trade Centre, has been adopting this approach for years to incentivise exhibitors opting for custom-built booths to exhibit in an environmentally conscious manner. Based on the 3R principle (reduction, reuse and recycling), exhibitors can apply for the award and be assessed against criteria including their booths' reusability or recyclability, material use reduction, environmental friendliness, functionality, design, technique and aesthetics (i-CABLE, 2023).



Twenty-seven exhibitors were awarded the Green Booth Award in Canton Fair 2023 (央視網, 2023). One of them commented in a news interview that, since the design stage, the booth aligned with the green and sustainable goal. Most of the booth building materials were made of PVC soft film and steel, reducing the use of wood and paint. The table surface and stand could be disassembled easily by removing the bolts for reuse. Another mentioned that the company had rented storage in Guangzhou so the booth materials could be kept there for next year's use (新快報, 2023).

In addition to receiving certificates and publicity opportunities, the organiser offers tangible business benefits to the awardees. According to Canton Fair's official website (China Foreign Trade Centre, 2023a; 2023b), the awarded exhibitors, under similar conditions, will enjoy more preferential booth arrangement than the others in the next Canton Fair. On the other hand, the award-winning booth building contractor will be placed on trade associations' and chambers of commerce's recommended list in the next event. The exhibiting standard will also be reviewed by the organiser for other exhibitors' and booth constructors' continuous improvement.

While waste data for the Canton Fair was not found, the case suggests an exhibitor engagement initiative that can be explored by other event organisers to promote circularity for booths.



## Strategies used

- Introduced an award scheme for exhibitors and contractors building environmentally conscious booths
- Offered incentives to the awarded organisations



## Drivers for collaboration

- Recognition and tangible business benefits for taking part actively
- Shared vision on event sustainability by some exhibitors
- Readily available solutions for building green booths



## Barriers to act

- Require cost-effective storage option for keeping and retrieving booth materials
- Level of event team's circularity awareness and thus requirements on booth design and building



Korea

## Staging the First Sustainable MICE Event in Accordance with ESG Guidelines

### Parties involved:

Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism,  
Republic of Korea

Korea Tourism Organization

Incheon Tourism Organization

ESG advisors

Vendors

Exhibitors

Participants

### Type:

Conference    Exhibition

### Size:

~2,600 people

### Aspect:

Event management framework

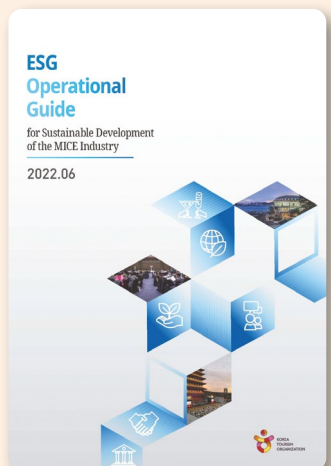
### Resource concerned:

Electricity / Power    Disposables

### Process in 9R framework:

R3: Reuse    R7: Repurpose    R9: Recover

Setting clear targets and creating a system that encourages event organisers, exhibitors, service providers, visitors and government agencies to work together are not just nice-to-haves but essential components for expediting the sustainability transition of the industry and ensuring its resilience. As an exemplar hosted by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Korea Tourism Organization and Incheon Tourism Organization, the KOREA MICE EXPO 2022 (KME 2022) was acknowledged the first MICE event in Korea to implement the [ESG Operational Guide for Sustainable Development of the MICE Industry](#) (Korea Tourism Organization, 2022a), which was published by the Korea Tourism Organization.



To begin with, the KME 2022 has established the following carbon reduction and resource circularity objectives to achieve a carbon-neutral event goal:

- Reducing energy consumption, particularly in heating and cooling processes
- Minimising waste generation
- Using eco-friendly materials and reusable items instead of disposable ones
- Promoting the use of public transportation whenever feasible
- Encouraging all participants, including visitors, exhibitors and buyers to adhere to the ESG Operational Guide

In addition to the overarching goal and objectives, eco-friendly guidelines were laid down for participating companies and agencies. The guidelines included various practical measures and action plans such as using environmentally friendly products and materials, digital devices, and improving recycling and reuse efforts.

ESG advisors were appointed to provide guidance to the Korea MICE Bureau. Their role was mainly to offer advice on strategies for achieving carbon neutrality and aligning with ESG guidelines.

Prior to the event, the KME event organiser actively engaged the companies that joined the event. For example, information such as the sustainability goals, exhibition manuals and booth layout, installation schedule, and on-site guide asking participants for ESG compliance were delivered to the participating companies via 13 emails.

In an effort to foster sustainability, particularly in the context of resource circularity, the event organiser did their part by:

- Using materials and equipment that were either leased or reused (e.g. furniture for the KME stage, KME lounge, buyer lounge, podium stand, carpets).
- Event space such as the KME lounge and buyer lounge was set up with low-carbon products using recycled materials.
- The digital podium and video system were fully utilised at the KME stage to eliminate the use of any materials made of paper or plastic.
- Prohibiting the use of disposables and plastics, and placing recycling bins for waste separation.

The 225 exhibitors were also encouraged to abide by the ESG Operational Guide. Part of the exhibiting companies had joined forces by:

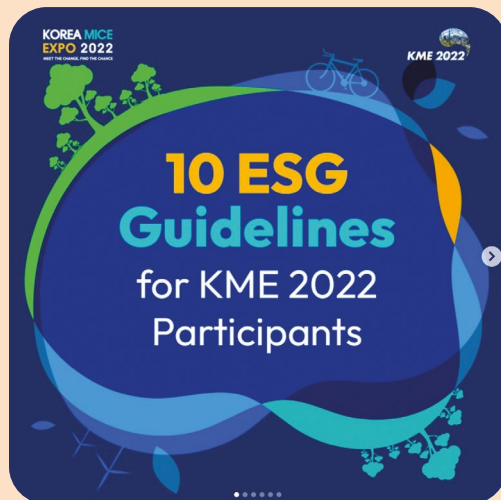
- Using reusable cube blocks for constructing the booths
- Renting furniture
- Limiting distribution of documents, such as brochures to reduce paper use
- Using LED panels in lieu of printed materials for promotion and decoration purpose



The [Ten ESG Guidelines](#) was shared with and signed by a total of 581 participants. The Guidelines included using public transportation or eco-friendly vehicles when traveling to the venue, choosing eco-friendly certified accommodations, participating in campaigns to reduce food waste and disposables, participating in environmental and social contribution programmes, and visiting tourist attractions and restaurants around the venue to revitalise the local economy etc.

The KME 2022 is a noteworthy illustration of how the industry can establish a collaborative system to promote resource circularity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

For more information about the planning and implementation process of the event, please refer to the [Sustainable Management Report](#).



## Strategies used

- Set clear event goals and objectives
- Promoted ESG Operational Guide to exhibitors and participants



## Drivers for collaboration

- Financial and in-kind support from local governments to facilitate sustainable practices and initiatives
- Clear and comprehensible ESG guidelines that facilitate MICE industry stakeholders and participants to embrace sustainable practices



## Barriers to act

- Higher logistic and manpower cost, as well as the need for ample storage space to support the reusable systems and furniture rental
- Additional time needed to facilitate the communication with exhibitors and service providers on the goals and operational guidelines
- Educational campaigns and awareness-building efforts to garner support from the visitors



Hong Kong

# Partnering and Engaging Value Chain Stakeholders to Minimise the Use of Single-use Materials

**Parties involved:**

- Hong Kong Archives Society
- Earth Production
- Exhibitors
- Venue provider
- On-site cafeteria
- Event helpers

**Type:**

Conference    Exhibition

**Size:**

~750 people  
12 exhibitors

**Aspect:**

Event materials    Catering

**Resource concerned:**

Single-use items (e.g. cutlery, cups  
bottled water, foamboard)  
Furniture

**Process in 9R framework:**

R0: Refuse    R2: Reduce    R8: Recycle

An increasing number of event organisers have expressed their commitment to achieving carbon neutrality and zero waste goals. However, transforming these aspirations into practical solutions and integrating sustainability into all aspects of event planning remains a distant concept for many. To bridge this gap, partnering with an event management company that specialises in sustainable and circular solutions can facilitate collaboration across value chain stakeholders and help organisers realise their sustainability goals through more sophisticated circular-minded event planning.







Hong Kong Archives Society, which recognised the potential risks of climate change to archive preservation, had a vision of embedding sustainability goals in the celebration of the International Archives Day (IAD) 2023. The event took place at the revitalised CLP clock tower, which was listed as a Grade 1 historic building. Unfamiliar with planning a green event, Hong Kong Archives Society reached out to Earth Production, an event sustainability consultation and management company, with an initial goal to reduce the use of single-use foamboards. Being aware of the organiser's aspirations, Earth Production went the extra mile to brainstorm resource circularity strategies with the organiser, and actively engaged the value chain stakeholders for piloting the solutions, with the view to transforming the event into a platform for promoting sustainability.



To begin with, exhibitors were encouraged to minimise the use of single-use disposables. Earth Production communicated with exhibitors through an exhibitor manual to raise their awareness. Recommendations included using honeycomb boards instead of foamboards for signage production and avoiding giving out souvenirs or gifts with excessive packaging. Tables for exhibitors were sponsored by Hong Kong Baptist University Library and were soon to be disposed of. Earth Production recycled these tables after the event.

Cost is often the most important consideration for exhibitors and organisers. Earth Production on one hand assisted the organiser in reworking the floor plan, based on the principle of R2: Reduce to minimise signage needed. On the other hand, to incentivise the use of recyclable materials over traditional foamboards, Earth Production offered honeycomb boards to exhibitors at cost price. These measures enabled the exhibitors and organiser to opt for the more expensive eco-friendly materials without exceeding their budget.

Around half of the exhibitors had adopted the manual despite the fact that most of them showed interest and welcomed the guidelines provided. The key factor that hindered exhibitors' adoption was the delayed involvement of Earth Production, who was only invited to participate in the preparation one month ahead of the event. Therefore, by the time the manual was provided, many exhibitors had already completed the design or production of their booths, making it challenging for them to incorporate circular practices.

Gaining the buy-in of value chain partners is crucial for implementing circularity practices. Earth Production anticipated that due to the hot weather, event participants would need to refill their water bottles. However, since there was no convenience store near the venue, Earth Production proposed to utilise the existing water filling facility at the venue provider's staff pantry to reduce the consumption of bottled water. The venue provider was in favour of the proposal but had expressed concerns about potential property damage if open access to the staff pantry was provided, which Earth Production shared. After thorough discussions, the organiser addressed these concerns by arranging a helper to monitor the pantry's operation and successfully solicited support from the venue provider.



Catering often contributes to a significant portion of waste generated in events. Considering that the venue's location is distant from any restaurant, the on-site cafeteria would likely be a go-to option for most participants. Earth Production collaborated with the caterer and put forward measures to eliminate the use of single-use plastic cutlery, containers and paper cups. For example, coupons were provided to event helpers to encourage them to dine-in at the canteen rather than ordering takeaways. Putting this measure in place, more than 80% of helpers chose to purchase their meals at the canteen. Earth Production also urged the caterer to make efforts to reduce the distribution of single-use utensils to customers.

Planning a green event may be unfamiliar territory for many organisations. Some event organisers may even question the need for implementing sustainable or circular solutions, especially for smaller-scale events. However, there is no direct relationship between the scale of an event or the number of participants and its environmental impact. With hindsight, the experience and data gathered serve as benchmarks for continuous improvement. Hong Kong Archives Society intended to reference the data in IAD 2023 when planning IAD 2024. They also aimed to engage with value chain stakeholders early on to organise a more sustainable event. Ultimately, by being attentive to details and considering multiple perspectives, cost-effective circular solutions could be identified and implemented to promote event sustainability.



## Strategies used

- Hired event management agency with shared vision and expertise
- Communicated and worked closely with value chain partners



## Drivers for collaboration

- Organiser's support and commitment towards sustainability
- Timely communication with value chain stakeholders to get them onboard
- Provision of incentives from event agency to prioritise the use of recyclable materials
- Readily available solutions provided by value chain partners



## Barriers to act

- Lead time needed for communicating the guidelines to exhibitors in advance to ensure sufficient preparation time
- Higher event cost for choosing recyclable materials
- Capacity of value chain partners to support the circular measures



# Step-by-step Guide to Value Chain-based Collaborative Circularity Practices

## Key Messages

- Circular business events are feasible through collaborations based on the 9R framework of circular economy.
- Event organisers can follow the standard-aligned decision-making flow chart suggested by the PSLB project team to integrate resource circularity into events.
- Through active planning, communication and support, all event stakeholders can be circular event enablers.
- As repeatedly mentioned in the Guidebook, collaboration is key to pulling off circular events.

## The Collaborative Approach to Circular Business Events

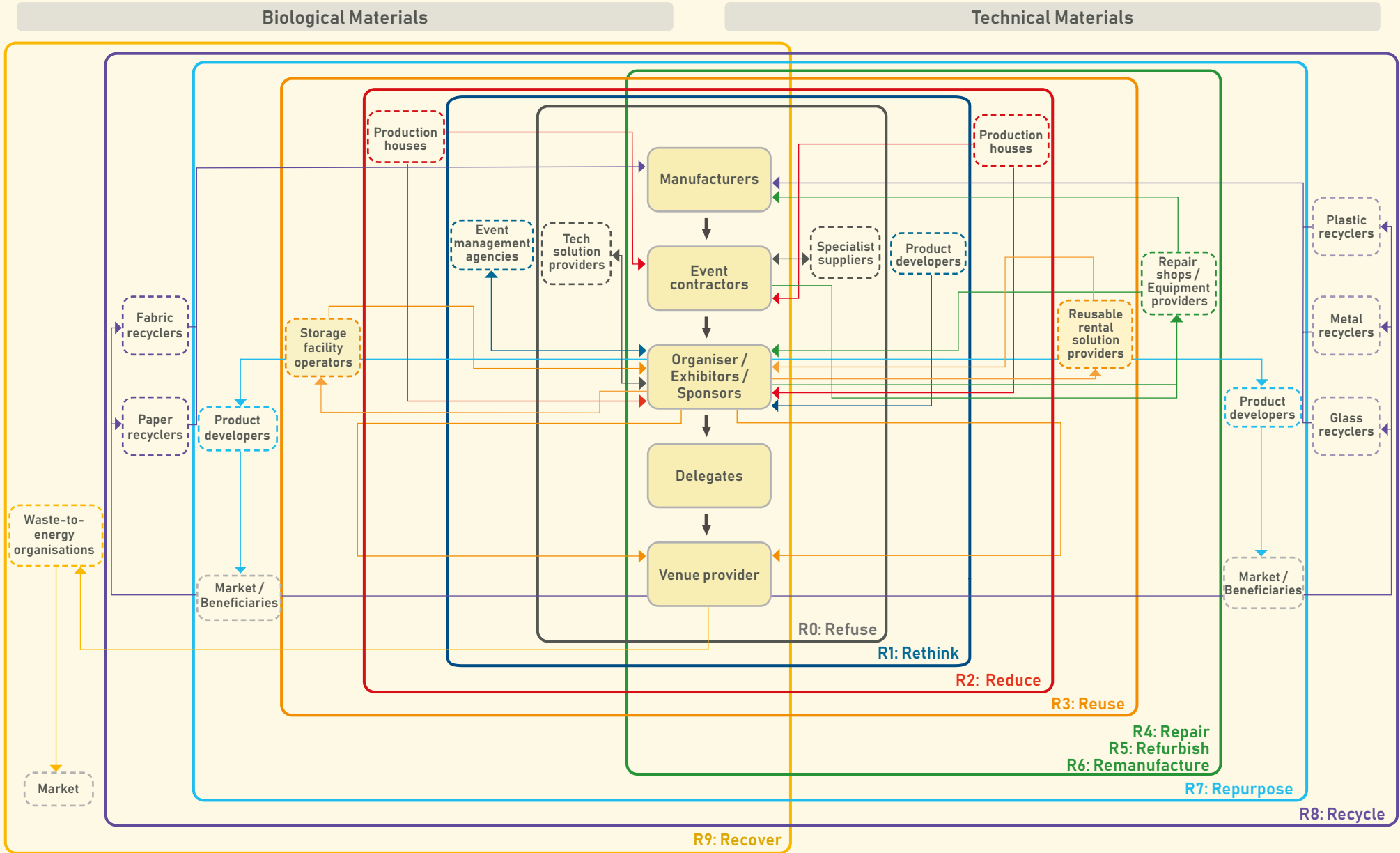
Resource circularity is possible in a well-connected system with different types of value chain actors that facilitate the movement, modification, and transformation of materials. Some of these parties might already be in the original value chain while some others might come from other industries or places. Collaborations are pivotal to change course, from linear to circular business events.


To help you better visualise how event materials can circulate through value chain-based collaborations, Figure 6 provides an illustrative example. Re-engineering the linear value chain (shown in Figure 2 on P.15), each party in it is categorised according to the functions it can perform under the [9R framework of circular economy](#). As a snapshot, this figure and the descriptions that follow highlight some potential avenues for retaining the materials in the system and designing out waste; they enable the nature to recover from the extractive, linear economic activities, and to thrive.

As a rule of thumb concerning energy inputs and value retention ability, the closer the strategy is to the centre, the more preferred it is (i.e. R0 is more preferred than R1; R3 is more preferred than R8 etc.). This means while R8: Recycle has been commonly practiced in business events, it should be applied when the possibilities of the previous Rs are exhausted.



Figure 6: Illustrative example of value chain actors for a circular business event



 **R0: Refuse**

- **Technological solution providers**  
Replacing printed participant badges, event programmes with mobile app
- **Specialist suppliers**  
Using reusable pallet straps or nets instead of plastic wrap for transporting goods

 **R1: Rethink**


- **Product developers**  
If unavoidable, offering souvenirs that are multi-functional to users
- **Event management agencies**  
Making non-event-specific signage that can be used across different occasions

 **R2: Reduce**


- **Production houses**  
Optimising manufacturing processes to minimise the use of resources

 **R3: Reuse**

- **Venue providers / Storage facility operators**  
Storing shell scheme booths and non-branded components of custom-made booths for future events' use
- **Reusable rental solution providers**  
Offering reusable containers, furniture, display solutions

 **R4: Repair**

- **Repair shops**  
Repairing and maintaining event materials to lengthen the product lifespan

 **R5: Refurbish**


- **Equipment providers**  
Collecting used products and making them relevant to the latest event

 **R6: Remanufacture**


- **Manufacturers**  
Taking functional parts from broken event materials and putting them in new products that serve the same purpose

 **R7: Repurpose**

- **Product developers**  
Making use of used event materials as components to develop new products (e.g. wooden pallets into furniture and biochar)

 **R8: Recycle**

- **Recyclers**  
Turning the recyclables into raw materials to be used for producing the same or different products

 **R9: Recover**

- **Waste-to-energy organisations**  
Applying the biological event materials as feedstock to yield alternative energy from waste-to-energy processes

Besides the value chain actors shown in the diagram, can you think of any other? You can use the [Template for Planning Circularity Practices with Value Chain Actors](#) to work out how your event can apply the 10 resource circularity strategies through collaborations.

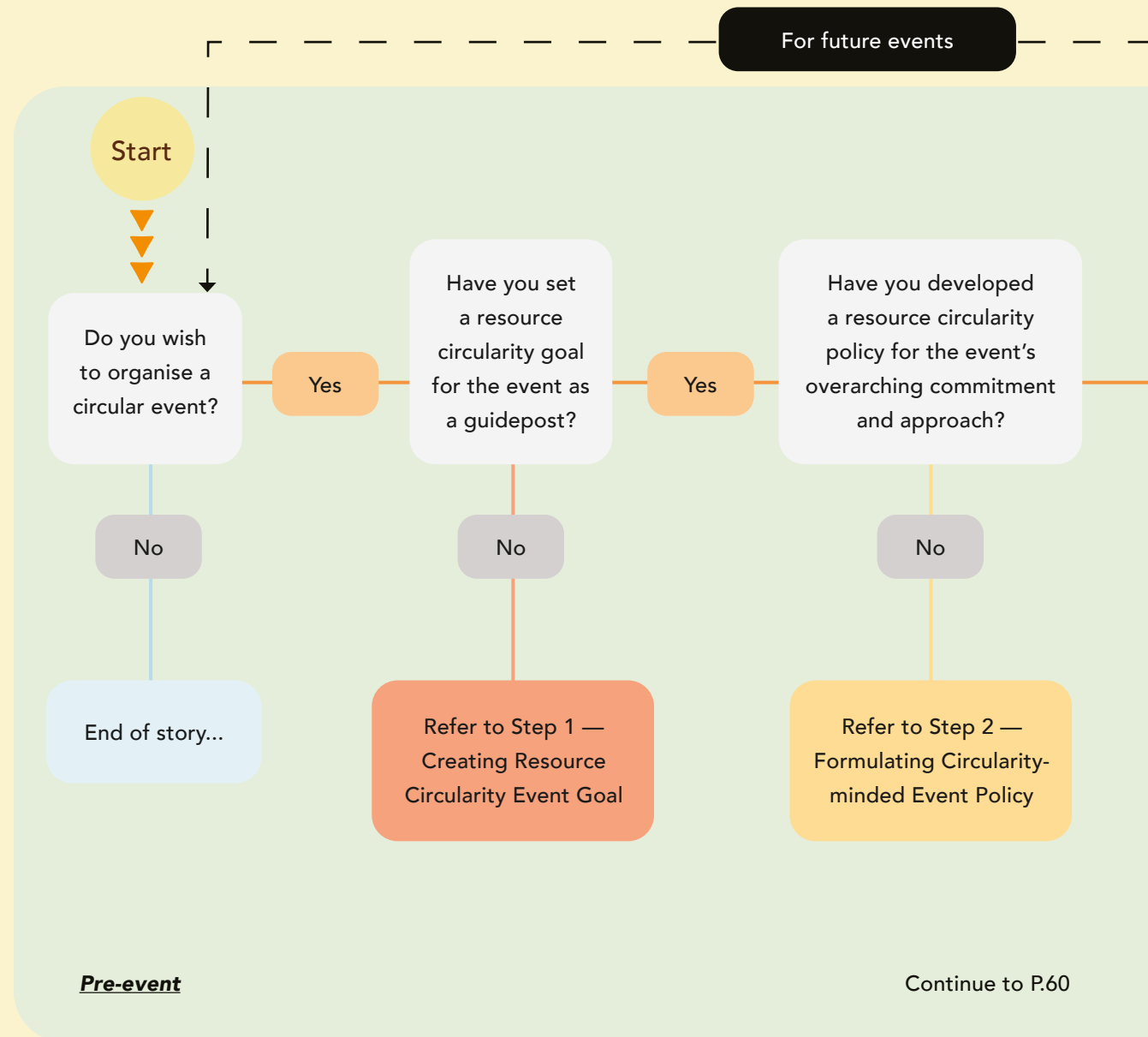


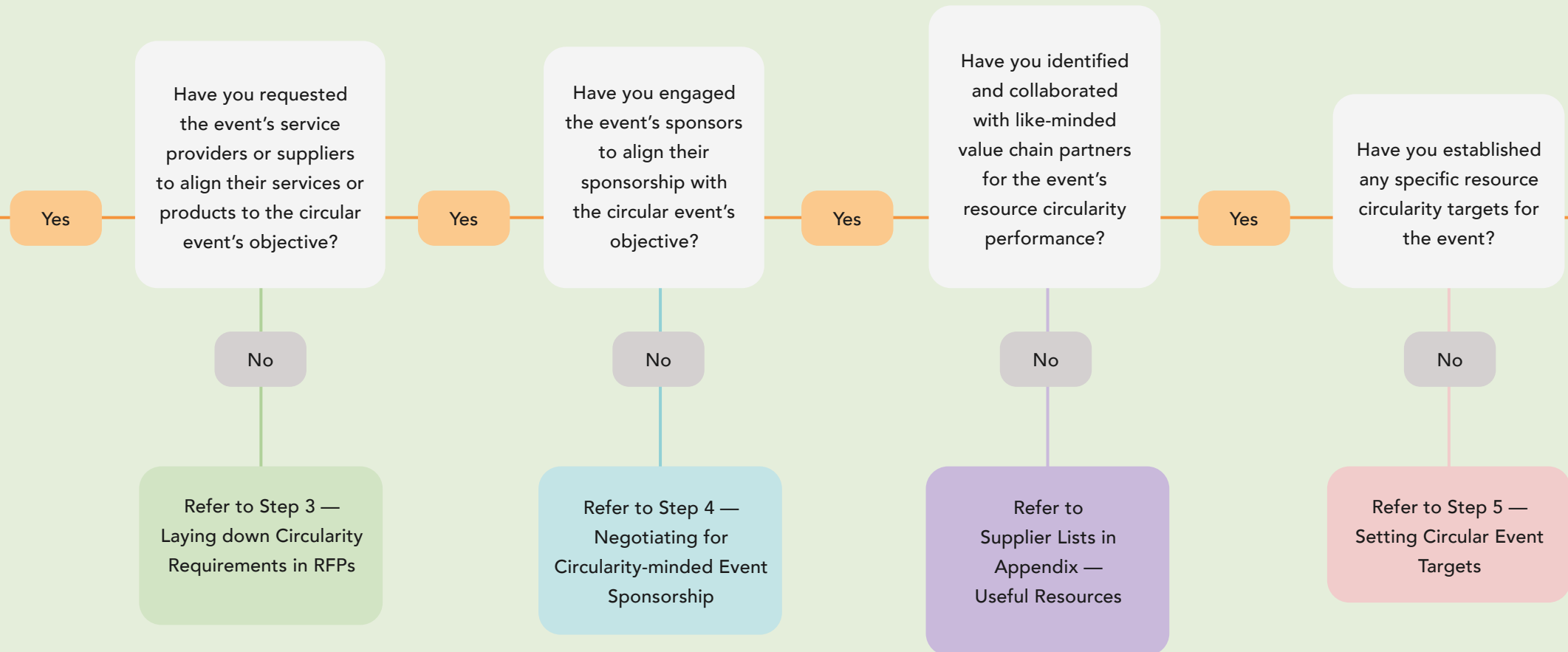
## Step-by-step Guide for Realising Circular Business Events

Same as the other event aspects, if you fail to plan for resource circularity in events, you plan to fail. Designing out waste starts from the event design and planning stage.

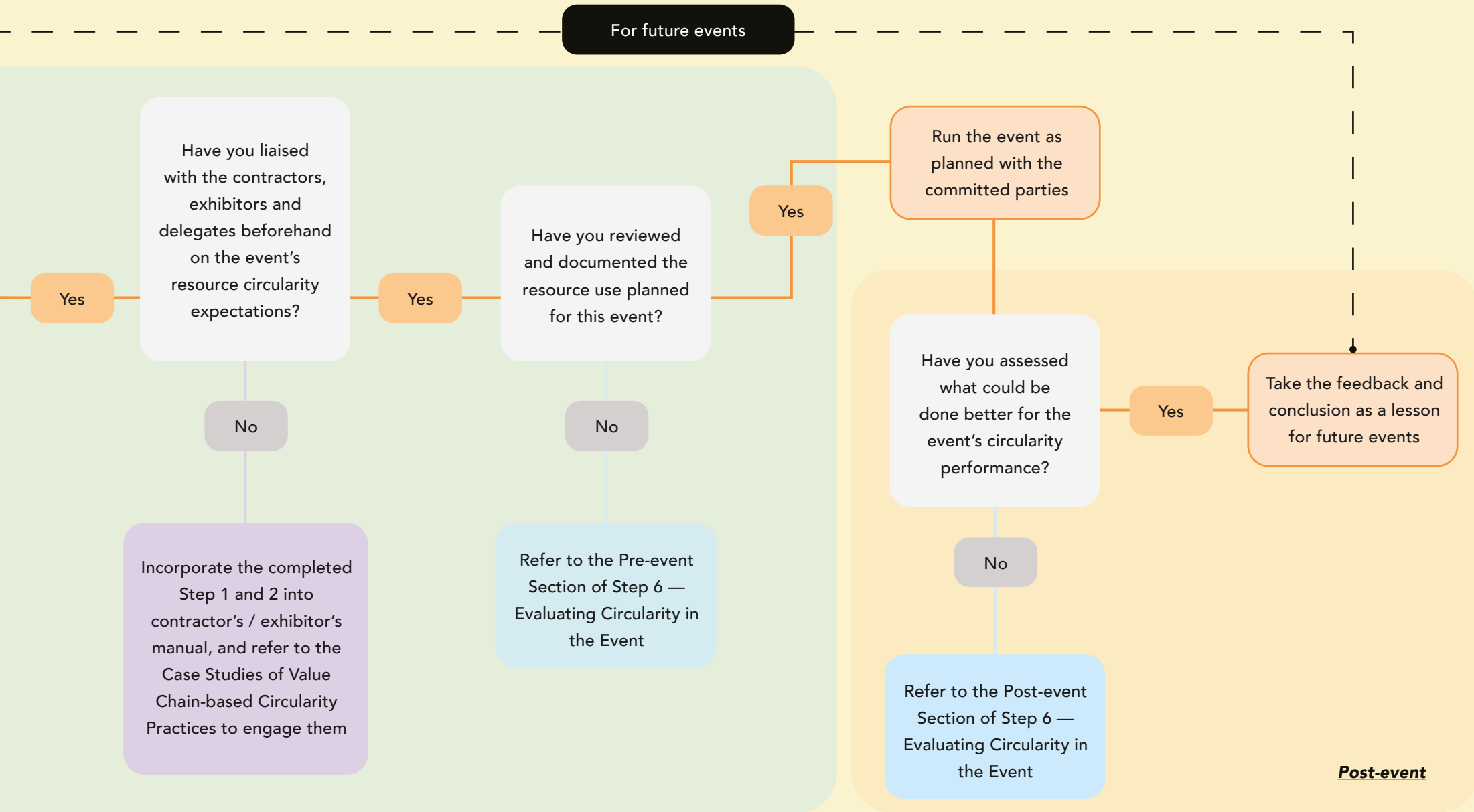
From the perspective of an event organiser in making circular events happen, the PSLB project team has come up with a decision-making flow chart (Figure 7) and corresponding templates to help. They are also applicable to other event value chain actors by adjusting the scope from the entire event to the part they are responsible for. By following through the suggested steps which are drawn from the team members' extensive event organising experience and resemble the internationally recognised Plan-Do-Check-Act framework, you will be able to prepare for a circularity-minded event and improve the future performance in a systematic manner.

Figure 7: Decision-making flow chart for a circular event





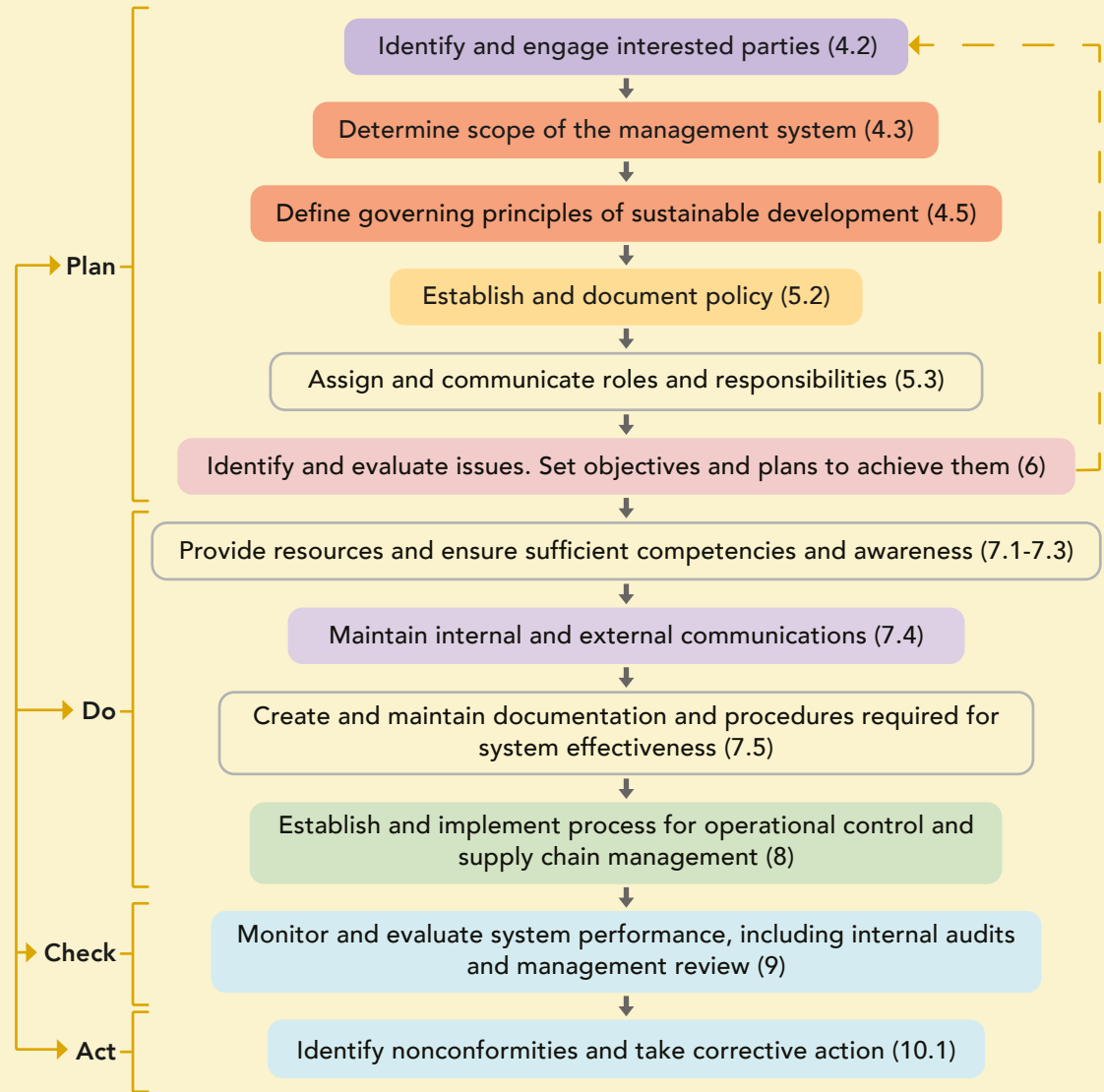
Continue to P.61



Although an international standard specifically for circular event has not been established, considering business events as projects for some, the AFNOR XP X30-901 Circular economy project management standard, which was illustrated in [A Practical Guidebook to a Circular Economy](#) is of reference value. On the other hand, event professionals who are familiar with ISO 20121:2024 Event sustainability management system can apply the procedures in the standard to organise circular events. It is an international standard that guides event stakeholders, particularly organisers, to better manage their events and the associated environmental, social and economic impacts.

In addition to performing the steps in Figure 7, you can adopt the other components in the management system’s model (see Figure 8) by referring to the ISO’s guidance document. By doing so, the management framework for your event can become more comprehensive and robust. Those components that correspond to the recommended steps in the decision-making flow chart are coloured accordingly. The PSLB-suggested framework largely aligns with the internationally recognised model.

**Figure 8: Event sustainability management system model for ISO 20121:2024**



Source: Adapted from International Organization for Standardization (2024)



Fostering resource circularity in business events is a collective effort. The market has had plenty of waste management-related publications on events that detail practices that individual parties can adopt. Nevertheless, circular economy is concerned with not just how waste can be prevented and diverted, but indeed how the economic system and industry value chains can be redesigned to minimise natural resource inputs, optimise flows of pre-existing materials, maximise resource value, and thereby significantly cut pollution and waste. It necessitates collaborations that can be sustained with multi-win situations.

### Useful Information

You can check out [Appendix — Useful Resources](#) for the publications related to waste management in events.

While event organisers and venue providers can reflect if the usual event arrangement is providing different parties with a facilitating environment to work together, exhibitors, sponsors and contractors can identify collaboration opportunities to contribute to the event's circularity performance.



**Step 1****Creating Resource Circularity  
Event Goal**

This part will assist you in establishing an overarching event goal for resource circularity. The goal is going to be the north star that you will revisit from time to time when planning, running and evaluating your business event. It enables you as an organiser to envisage the event's level of contribution to a circular economy, facilitating your strategy formulation, action plan design and implementation, value chain partner communications as well as post-event review at subsequent stages. Hence, setting the tone right is the essential first step for a circularity-minded event.

**What is Event Goal?**

An event goal is a general, vision-oriented and often short statement that an organiser can form to precisely depict the desired condition one wishes to achieve in the event. An event can have more than one event goal, as shown in the examples below:

**FHA-Food & Beverage's Goals (n.d.)**

- The conversion of FHA-Food & Beverage into a Zero Waste Event.
- The conversion of FHA-Food & Beverage into a Carbon Neutral Event of international distinction.
- The delivery of an enduring Legacy of Knowledge, catalysing the swift assimilation of sustainable event practices throughout the region.

**25<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Dermatology (2022)**

- The decision to produce the 25<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Dermatology as a green event aims for efficiency, a good "waste reduction, reuse, recycling, recovering and repairing strategy" and, a positive impact on the community.

**IMEX Frankfurt Sustainability Goals (n.d.)**

- Measure our event footprint
- Deliver net zero events by 2030
- Make sustainability education accessible to all
- Share what we learn and amplify best practice
- Give back to our local communities
- Champion the positive impacts of meetings and events

From them, you can also see that the structures for a similar event goal vary. In this part, for ease of setting a resource circularity goal for your event, the PSLB team suggests expressing your goal with:

- a **verb** that indicates the action or direction of change; and
- a **noun phrase** that encapsulates the desired condition or delineates the resource circularity focus

A selection of possible words is listed below for you to consider and play around. You can think out of the box and add in more.

| Verb  |   | Noun Phrase   |
|---|---|---|
| Increase / Drive / Create / Stimulate / Enhance / Promote / Encourage / Support / Foster / Maximise | + | Zero waste event / Circular event potential / Innovative circular solutions / Cross-sectoral collaboration / Value chains collaboration / Emergence of circular economy / Diverse and resilient economy / Public awareness of circularity |
| Reduce / Decrease / Slow down / Eliminate / Mitigate / Avoid / Minimise                             | + | Virgin raw material extraction / Natural resource depletion / Single-use material / Greenhouse gas emissions / Carbon emissions / Waste generation / Landscape and habitat disruption / Damage to local environment                       |

An example is created below with reference to Knowledge Primer 7 organised by the PSLB team:

#### Knowledge Primer 7 Resource Circularity Goals

As the organiser of Knowledge Primer 7, we have identified three resource circularity goals as listed below:

- **Avoid** using **single-use material** as much as possible at Knowledge Primer 7
- **Foster** **collaboration between value chain partners**
- **Support** the growth of **innovative circular solutions** in Hong Kong market

Your event's resource circularity goal(s):

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Next Steps

With at least one resource circularity goal set, you now have a direction to follow through in your event. While you can announce the goal internally at this stage, you should remember that an event's circularity performance depends on how effective the communications and execution are on the working level. To get rid of the intention-action gap, concrete guidelines and instructions that target at frontline personnel are needed. These will be covered in the next two steps.

## Step 2

## Formulating Circularity-minded Event Policy

Formulating a circularity-minded event policy is crucial for you as an event organiser to demonstrate your event's dedication on resource circularity and expectations on the internal and external stakeholders' sustainable resource management practices. This part provides you with an event-level policy template that you can work on. At the minimum, it provides you with the framework and vocabulary of how to structure the content and express circularity concerns, respectively, in a policy.



[Last edited date]

[Name of the event organiser]

[Name of the event]

Circular Event Policy

### Policy Statement

With the event goal(s) of [insert goals set in Step 1], [Name of the event organiser] is committed to practicing resource circularity in preparing and running [Name of the event].

This Circular Event Policy (The Policy) sets out an overall approach for promoting the event's circularity performance and expectations on our employees as well as value chain partners. The Policy emphasises the application of the 9R framework of circular economy in the event, ([include if applicable] alongside the guiding framework of BS 8001 Circular Economy).

### Scope

The Policy applies to all the value chain partners of [Name of the event], including [select as appropriate] our employees, suppliers, subcontractors, venue providers, exhibitors, sponsors, and delegates. It covers all stages of this event, from planning and execution to evaluation and other decision-making processes.

### Principles

[Name of the event organiser] is aware that promoting resource circularity in events necessitates collaborations with value chain partners. In line with the 9R Framework of circular economy, [Name of the event organiser] would, as far as practicable, devise an action plan for refusing,



rethinking, reducing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing, remanufacturing, repurposing, recycling, and recovering resources with the value chain partners to design out waste and promote resource circularity practices. Other relevant guidance, (*[include if applicable]* – including BS 8001 Circular Economy), would be taken into consideration to maximise the circularity potential of this event.

### Circular Event Objectives

**[Name of the event organiser]** strives to operationalise the above goals and principles with the following objectives:

*[Select those applicable, or create your own]*

- To design event setups and structures that can be reused for future events
- To promote the use of rental services or sharing platforms for event equipment, furniture, and props
- To implement comprehensive waste management practices that prioritise waste reduction
- To encourage the use of recycling and composting systems to divert waste from landfills
- To prioritise suppliers, sponsors, venue providers and exhibitors that share the same vision with track record on resource circularity in events
- To establish partnerships with local charities or organisations to donate leftover food, event materials, or unused items to reduce waste and support community initiatives
- To train suppliers, sponsors and exhibitors to positively contribute to the event's circularity direction
- To explore creative ways to repurpose event materials and decorations

- To work closely with suppliers and stakeholders across the entire value chain to minimise the environmental impact of products and services throughout their lifecycle
  - To monitor and report the event's resource circularity performance (against targets established) for continuous improvement
  -
- 

### Review and Revision

**[Name of the event organiser]** will review this policy regularly at different stages of this event. The content is subject to enhancement on a need basis. Relevant stakeholders will be engaged before and after the change to ensure effective implementation of the policy.

### Next Steps

Now that you have a circular event policy, you can circulate it internally and when liaising with value chain partners to keep everyone on the same page. If your company organises a number of events in a year or operates an event organising business, rather than making a policy every time you have an event, you can save time by generalising some of the descriptions in this policy on an organisational level. You can refer to the links below for reference:

- [IAIA Sustainability Event Management Policy](#)
- [GL events Event Sustainability Development Policy](#)

After setting the tone for the event, you can start considering how to meet the event goals and objectives established, with the aid of the next step.

## Step 3

## Laying down Circularity Requirements in RFPs

Inquiring about the sustainability management and circularity practices among event partners has two key benefits for you as an event organiser: (i) it motivates your suppliers / service providers to provide alternative options that they may not have offered by default, and prompts them to seek more sustainable solutions; (ii) by explicitly including circular requirements in a request for proposal (RFP), the suppliers / service providers would recognise that they are being evaluated not only based on price / cost competitiveness but also their commitment to sustainability. This approach will reinforce the business case that drives much of the impetus for suppliers and service providers to pursue resource circularity in their products, services and overall business model.

This section provides RFP templates for you to communicate the requirements and specifications with potential business partners, and systematically integrate sustainability into your business events. From the perspective of selecting and / or contracting with suppliers or service providers, it is packed with specific questions and / or criteria that you can adapt or directly copy to your RFPs. These cover product or facility specifications, processes to be put in place for achieving resource circularity and environmental sustainability goals.

### Section 1 – Request for Proposal Letter

Dear [Name],

[Name of your company] hereby invites you, being a /an [Event management agency / Event venue provider / Design and production house / Exhibition stand contractor / Transportation or freight service provider / Catering service provider], to submit a proposal for the [Description of the MICE event: Meeting / Incentive / Convention / Exhibition] scheduled to take place on [Date], [Time] at [Venue], with an estimated attendance of [Number of visitors / participants].

Please acknowledge receipt of this Request for Proposal (RFP) by sending an email to [Email address], indicating whether you intend to submit a proposal or otherwise. If you are interested in submitting a proposal, please ensure that it adheres to the requirements, procedures and sustainability criteria set out in this RFP. With regards to the resource circularity goals of [Goals set in Step 1] and the accompanying [Name of the policy laid down in Step 2], please include information and supporting documents to demonstrate how the following sustainability criteria will be met or addressed:

- [A list of applicable item(s) from Section 2]
- ...

All submitted proposals will be evaluated based on price / cost competitiveness, quality and sustainability, as well as other factors deemed appropriate and relevant. The deadline for proposal submission is [Date].

[Name of your company] looks forward to receiving your proposal and thank you in advance for your interest.

Yours sincerely,  
[Your email signature]

## Section 2 – Sustainability Requirements for Selecting Suppliers and Contracting Services

| Supplier / Service Provider | Evaluation Criteria                          | Response Prompts  |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| i. Event management agency  | Single-use disposables / paperless operation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please provide details for how the agency manages and delivers the event and event-related activities in a way that minimises the use of paper and single-use disposables:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Options for paperless onboarding or e-tickets, with mobile apps or online platforms for disseminating digitised information such as location map and event rundown that save reams of unnecessary paper</li> <li>• Flexibility for on-site badge printing or printing event badges on-demand</li> <li>• Skipping the plastic event badge holder or event badge lamination, and ensure the environmentally friendly badges and lanyards are biodegradable or made of recycled materials</li> <li>• Provision of LED wall and digital signage options which reduces printed materials for advertising flyers or brochures and other types of printed materials that will be discarded</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|                             | Accreditation                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please indicate the circularity- and / or sustainability-related certifications or labels and event management systems that the event management agency has attained, and demonstrate how the agency plans, manages and delivers events / event-related activities in a sustainable way accordingly.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ISO 20121 certification</li> <li>• ISO 9001 certification</li> <li>• ISO 14001 certification</li> <li>• Others, please specify:</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |

| Supplier / Service Provider | Evaluation Criteria                                      | Response Prompts  |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| ii. Event venue provider    | Waste auditing and diversion                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please provide details for how the event venue provider manages its waste to divert from landfill:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types of waste generated at the event that can be diverted (e.g. packaging waste, wood, booth / stand waste, food, paper etc.)</li> <li>• The recycling station setup and structure (e.g. types of bins, placement, signage used, recycling logistics)</li> <li>• How the event venue provider ensures the pre- / post-event waste is diverted (e.g. whether waste audit will be conducted, or an information system be put in place for control and monitoring of waste streams)</li> <li>• Any limitations due to the facility's capacity or destination of the venue</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Please provide details on any waste-related programmes and / or partnerships offered by the event venue provider that aims to divert or donate leftover materials.</li> </ul> |
|                             | Reuse and recycling of furniture, fixtures and equipment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please identify which of the following items are readily available on-site for use / re-use without the need for separate purchase or rental, and whether these items have obtained any sustainability labels or certifications:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lighting</li> <li>• AV equipment</li> <li>• Booths / Stands for exhibitors</li> <li>• Chairs and tables</li> <li>• Carpet</li> <li>• Decoration materials</li> <li>• Others, please specify:</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |



| Supplier / Service Provider | Evaluation Criteria                    | Response Prompts   |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| ii. Event venue provider    | Energy efficiency and renewable energy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please indicate whether measures are put in place to eliminate unnecessary energy demand, for example:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimising the need for HVAC</li> <li>• Reducing total consumption by ensuring staff, contractors and volunteers switch off the electronic equipment when they are not in use</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Please provide details on the provision of energy-efficient equipment, for example:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LED lighting</li> <li>• Motion sensors</li> <li>• Other sustainable solutions, please specify:</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Please provide details on the measures for reducing transportation-related emissions:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting the use of public transportation and walking for accessing the venue and exploring the vicinity</li> <li>• Availability of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, bicycle parking facilities, or incentives for carpooling etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Please indicate whether renewable energy (and by what %) will be:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generated or purchased to power the electricity use at the event</li> <li>• Generated or purchased to power the venue's electricity use for the entire year in which the event takes place (indicate in simple terms the calculation method for determining the electricity usage attributed to the event)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|                             | Accreditation                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please indicate the circularity- and / or sustainability-related certifications or labels that the venue has attained, and justify how this certification or label will positively affect the visitor / exhibitor experience and resource circularity performance of the event.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WELL</li> <li>• LEED</li> <li>• BEAM Plus</li> <li>• Green Key</li> <li>• B Corp</li> <li>• Others, please specify:</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |

| Supplier / Service Provider              | Evaluation Criteria   | Response Prompts   |
|--|---|--|
| iii. Design and production house         | Eco-friendly materials /<br>Green energy /<br>Creative design | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please indicate how circularity / sustainability considerations are incorporated into the design and production of the promotion materials, including but not limited to banners, props, signage and publicity materials.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of eco-friendly materials or materials that are made from previously used / discarded items, or that can be easily reused or recycled after the event: e.g. opt for FSC-certified paper / wood; fabrics, metal or plastic that have been refurbished or repurposed from other sources for producing event décor, signage, props and unavoidable printed promotional items</li> <li>• Opt for LED lights, solar PVs or batteries for the lighting, sound system, or power for reducing energy consumption and emissions</li> <li>• Integrate creative and innovative ideas in event production design, e.g. using digital, VR / AR, or other interactive elements for entertainment, education, or networking with a view to reducing material use and wastage</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| iv. Transport / Freight service provider | Single-use disposables /<br>Packaging                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please provide details for how the environmental impact of packaging from ground transportation and shipments can be reduced:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimalist packaging during transportation and handling</li> <li>• Environmentally friendly qualities of the packaging materials (e.g. how far they are recyclable, renewable, compostable and / or biodegradable)</li> <li>• Reusability of the packaging and crates, boxes, or other containers after the event</li> <li>• Waste management processes to reduce waste generated from packaging, and divert them from landfill or incineration</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
|  | Carbon emissions  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please describe and provide any supporting documentation for how the vehicle fleet or services for ground transportation have considered the sustainability criteria, in particular:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of electric / low-carbon vehicles</li> <li>• Alternative modes of transportation</li> <li>• Route optimisation to shorten delivery distances</li> <li>• Others</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |

| Supplier / Service Provider              | Evaluation Criteria  | Response Prompts   |
|--|----------------------|--|
| iv. Transport / Freight service provider | Carbon emissions     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please indicate:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether transport emissions will be tracked, quantified and reported</li> <li>• Whether the emissions will cover direct shipments to the venue, or only ground transportation to the venue after warehousing</li> <li>• Whether the emissions will be offset, with any relevant details of the offset programmes / schemes</li> <li>• The calculation method that will be used to determine the emissions attributed to freight transport for the event</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |
| v. Exhibition stand contractor           | Exhibition materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please indicate how circularity / sustainability considerations are incorporated into exhibition stand construction, with respect to questions such as "Where does it come from?", "What is it made of?", "What is it wrapped in?", "What impact does it have in use?" and "What will happen to it after the event?". Examples of potential circularity solutions include, but not limited to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reusable modular exhibition stand systems</li> <li>• Use biogenic materials for stand construction, e.g. bamboo, hemp, wood, etc.</li> <li>• Use of recyclable materials for creating the fascia board and reuse banners for decorating the advertising surfaces on the exhibition stands</li> <li>• Avoid single-use plastics and PVC for use in exhibit and display cases</li> <li>• Reusable transport containers for holding stand elements and accessories until their next deployment</li> <li>• Offer sustainable woollen alternatives to polyester carpets; alternatives such as carpet tiles that can be stored and reconfigured easily for reuse</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

| Supplier / Service Provider   | Evaluation Criteria  | Response Prompts   |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| vi. Catering service provider | Single-use disposables / Packaging / Waste management system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please indicate the actions that the caterer can provide to address circular operations and sustainability criteria for the event:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether single-use plastics and disposables will be used when preparing or serving food and beverage, and any steps taken to eliminate or provide alternatives</li> <li>• Efforts to reduce packaging of food from vendors that will be discarded inevitably</li> <li>• Efforts to provide reusable items on-site such as food service ware</li> <li>• The serving area waste setup and structure (e.g. bins placement, waste measurement, additional diversion equipment such as a biodigester, staff training and relevant qualifications for facility handling)</li> <li>• Actions to reduce food waste from the consumption end</li> <li>• Efforts to find effective use of any leftover materials (e.g. how food waste will be donated or diverted from landfill and incineration)</li> <li>• Reduce use of heating and cooling and their associated GHG emissions</li> <li>• Provision of locally sourced menu items</li> <li>• Provision of sustainability-certified items</li> <li>• Provision of vegetarian / vegan and plant-based menu</li> <li>• Any limitations the caterer has in addressing the above due to the facility's capacity or the venue</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Please indicate whether the above products or services are typically provided by default for all clients or would be only for this specific request; and indicate how the above have been factored into fees quoted.</li> </ul> |



## Next Steps

In general, vendors' proposals or quotations are evaluated based on factors such as price (cost competitiveness), quality of the product or service, delivery time, payment terms, and so on. In view of integrating circularity mindsets and principles into the planning, execution, and post-event phases of a MICE event, the RFPs can be assessed based on a simple scorecard approach, where:

- (i) "Price" holds a weight of 50%, "Quality" holds 30%, and "Sustainability / Circularity" holds 20%; and
- (ii) R0: Refuse, R1: Rethink and R2: Reduce are given more weight than R3: Reuse, R4: Repair, R5: Refurbish, R6: Remanufacture and R7: Repurpose with a moderate weight, and R8: Recycle and R9: Recover have the least weight (refer to [The Collaborative Approach to Circular Business Events](#) for the rationale).

However, the specific weighting system can vary depending on the event organiser's vision and mission, market demands, and implementation constraints for each MICE event.

Apart from incorporating sustainability criteria in the RFP, asking vendors to (i) complete a supplier sustainability questionnaire (i.e. pre-qualification questionnaire) to check that the vendor aligns with the sustainable and ethical standards; and (ii) organise briefings and training sessions at the early planning stage of the MICE event are good practices to mainstream circular mindsets and operations among the suppliers and service providers. They form part of the procurement process to create a wider awareness of resource use optimisation within the industry, and drive more widespread adoption of circularity practices and sustainability solutions.

## Step 4

## Negotiating for Circularity-minded Event Sponsorship

This template provides you with a suggested list of sponsorship items that can be included when working on a circularity-minded event with your business partner. It is applicable to event organisers seeking sponsorship as well as organisations negotiating for an environmentally conscious sponsorship package. Consistent with the commonly known saying – “take nothing but memories, leave nothing but footprints”, taking things virtually goes a long way for circularity-minded events.

Designing the package according to the list can deliver additional brand value to both the organiser and sponsor, demonstrating the commitment to circularity and helping establish a leadership image of being responsible and environmentally friendly.

Collectively crafting and agreeing on a circularity-minded sponsorship package create a common ground for event organiser and sponsors to work together on the subject. The list is by no means exhaustive. You can work with the counterparty and discuss what can be offered so that both side's branding and sustainability objectives can be met.

### Instructions

- 1 Fill in the blanks with the event goal. You can refer to Step 1
- 2 Determine the sponsorship type, package fee and quota according to your event
- 3 Read and select the sponsorship items suitable for your event
- 4 Tick (✓) to indicate the corresponding items for the sponsorship types and state the quantity or number of times, if applicable, in the boxes
- 5 Incorporate the completed template into your event sponsorship brochure
- 6 Reach out to the potential sponsors and discuss



| Illustrative Sponsorship Package  |          |          |          |          |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Sponsorship type  | [Tier 1] | [Tier 2] | [Tier 3] | [Tier 4] |
| Amount  | \$       | \$       | \$       | \$       |
| Quota   | [No.]    | [No.]    | [No.]    | [No.]    |
| Pre-event Exposure  |          |          |          |          |
| Organisation description in 100 words on event website  |          |          |          |          |
| Logo placement on event invitation and eDMs   |          |          |          |          |
| Logo placement on event webpage   |          |          |          |          |
| Logo placement on media advertisement   |          |          |          |          |
| During-event Exposure   |          |          |          |          |
| Sponsorship acknowledgement when emcee introduces the event at the beginning, after the break and at the end of the event |          |          |          |          |
| Speaking opportunity for a 3-minute keynote speech  |          |          |          |          |
| Speaking opportunity for a 10-minute sustainability-themed talk   |          |          |          |          |
| Logo placement on event LED wall backdrop   |          |          |          |          |
| Logo placement for virtual photo booth  |          |          |          |          |
| Logo placement on digital signage   |          |          |          |          |
| Logo placement on event mobile app  |          |          |          |          |
| Reusable logo cardboard placement at refreshment area (width x length x height)   |          |          |          |          |
| Company name-styled event WiFi  |          |          |          |          |
| Digital tickets to the event  |          |          |          |          |
| Booth space (width x length x height)   |          |          |          |          |
| Post-event Exposure   |          |          |          |          |
| Logo placement on media advertisement   |          |          |          |          |
| Logo placement on digital event impact report   |          |          |          |          |

Items applicable to the specific sponsorship types are indicated with a tick (✓).

This event has a goal of *[e.g. no single-use plastic use / zero waste etc.]*. To strive for the goal, we as the event organiser have taken steps to *[e.g. replace unnecessary single-use items from all event aspects / increase the reuse of event materials / engage all the event stakeholders on avoiding producing waste etc.]*.

The same principle goes for our event sponsorship package, and we expect sponsors to align the commitment and practices with ours. Together with your support, we can deliver this event in a more sustainable and circular manner.

### Next Steps

Other than the sponsorship package, sponsors can make use of its substantial influence to realise the event's circularity goal by recommending good practices to the organiser and monitoring the real-time conditions. Showing attention to different event aspects (e.g. event materials, booth materials, catering options etc.) on resource circularity would signal to the organiser to do its part as much as possible. Likewise, the event organiser can remind the sponsors if their behaviour falls short of what is expected in a zero-waste event vision.

If the event policy (refer to Step 2) can be communicated beforehand, the sponsors can be on the same page and support the circularity actions in events.

## Step 5 Setting Circular Event Targets

Key performance indicators and targets are important for event management as they can concisely communicate your expectations as an organiser to the event work and performance. This section focuses on helping you to formulate circular event targets. For the event targets to be meaningful, the organiser can follow the SMART principle:

- Specific – Get into the specifics of the desired results
- Measurable – Put a number associated with the target to make it measurable
- Achievable – A realistic target that makes sense to the set timeframe and investment
- Relevant – Create target that is relevant to the event’s and / or company’s purpose
- Time-bound – Adding a clear timeframe to keep the working team accountable

With the examples given below, this part provides you with an idea of how circular event targets can be established.

### Examples of the Key Components for Different Types of Resources Circularity Targets

| Targets Related to Input Material   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| The Origin of the Input Material  | Types of Input Material  | Target Pattern  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virgin material</li> <li>• Non-virgin material</li> <li>• Renewably produced</li> <li>• Regeneratively produced</li> <li>• Sustainably produced</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plastic</li> <li>• Paper</li> <li>• Wood</li> </ul> | <p>(Action) + (Origin of the input of material) + (Types of input material) + (Measurable results) + (Timeline of the target)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the usage of sustainably produced paper by 50% at the [Insert event name]</li> <li>• Reduce the usage of virgin plastic material by 20% in [Insert organiser name]’s exhibition portfolio by end of 2024</li> </ul> |



## Targets Related to Operational Waste

| Types of Operational Waste   | Circular Channels to Return Waste into Resources Loop  | Target Pattern   |
|--|--|--|
| Overall event operational waste  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>R0: Refuse – Make product redundant by abandoning its function or by offering the same function with a radically different product</li> <li>R1: Rethink – Make product use more intensive</li> <li>R2: Reduce – Increase efficiency in product manufacture or use by consuming fewer natural resources and materials</li> </ul>   | <p>(Circular channels) and / or (Action) + (Measurable results) + (Types of operational waste) + (Timeline of the target)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the overall operational waste generated from [Insert event name] by 20% compared to 2023</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Waste by category</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plastic wrappings</li> <li>Wooden pallets</li> <li>Food waste</li> <li>Wastewater</li> <li>Disposable cups</li> <li>Disposable cutlery</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>R3: Reuse – Reuse by another consumer of discarded product which is still in good condition and fulfils its original function</li> <li>R4: Repair – Repair and maintenance of defective product so it can be used with its original function</li> <li>R5: Refurbish – Restore an old product and bring it up to date</li> <li>R6: Remanufacture – Use parts of discarded product in a new product with the same function</li> <li>R7: Repurpose – Use discarded product or its parts in a new product with a different function</li> <li>R8: Recycle – Process materials to obtain the same (high grade) or lower (low grade) quality</li> <li>R9: Recover – Incineration of material with energy recovery</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refuse all disposable cutlery in [Insert organiser name]’s exhibition portfolio by end of 2024</li> <li>Recycle 50% of wooden pallets generated from the logistics at the [Insert event name]</li> <li>Increase the repurpose rate of food waste by 10% compared to 2023</li> </ul> |

## Targets Related to Circular Outputs

| Output Material   | Circular Channels for Reapplying the Output Materials  | Target Pattern  |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stands</li> <li>• Plastic panels</li> <li>• LED lights</li> <li>• Carpet</li> <li>• Furnishing</li> <li>• Electronic devices</li> <li>• Lanyards</li> <li>• Printed promotion materials</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R3: Reuse – Reuse by another consumer of discarded product which is still in good condition and fulfils its original function</li> <li>• R4: Repair – Repair and maintenance of defective product so it can be used with its original function</li> <li>• R5: Refurbish – Restore an old product and bring it up to date</li> <li>• R6: Remanufacture – Use parts of discarded product in a new product with the same function</li> <li>• R7: Repurpose – Use discarded product or its parts in a new product with a different function</li> <li>• R8: Recycle – Process materials to obtain the same (high grade) or lower (low grade) quality</li> <li>• R9: Recover – Incineration of material with energy recovery</li> </ul> | <p>(Circular channels) and / or (Action) + (Measurable results) + (Types of output material) + (Timeline of the target)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reuse 100% of the exhibition stands at the [Insert event name]</li> <li>• Increase the recycling rate of used carpets by 50% at the [Insert event name] compared to 2023</li> <li>• Increase the refurbish rate of furnishing by 10% in [Insert organiser name]'s exhibition portfolio by end of 2024</li> </ul> |

### Targets Related to Circular Products, Services and Solutions

| Circular Products, Services and Solutions  | Metrics Related to Adoption / Revenue / Engagement   | Target Pattern   |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rent-a-coffee-mug system</li> <li>Reusable stands programme</li> <li>Furnishing rental programme</li> <li>Electronic devices rental programme</li> <li>Renewable energy</li> <li>Water refill stations</li> <li>Paperless communication</li> <li>Low-carbon transportation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adoption rate</li> <li>No. of companies adopted</li> <li>Engagement rate</li> <li>No. of companies engaged</li> <li>Amount of revenue generated</li> <li>Percentage of revenue generated compared to other source of revenue</li> </ul> | <p>(Action) + (Metrics related to adoption / revenue / engagement) + (Types of circular products, services and solutions) + (Measurable results) + (Timeline of the target)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the adoption rate of [Insert organiser name]'s reusable stands programme by 50% compared to 2023</li> <li>Engage 100 exhibitors to promote [Insert organiser name]'s electronic devices rental programme in 2024</li> <li>Increase the revenue generated from water refill stations rental to exhibitors by 10% at the [Insert event name] compared to 2023</li> </ul> |

Your circular event targets:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Next Steps

After setting the targets, you as an organiser can now make use of them at various event planning stages by:

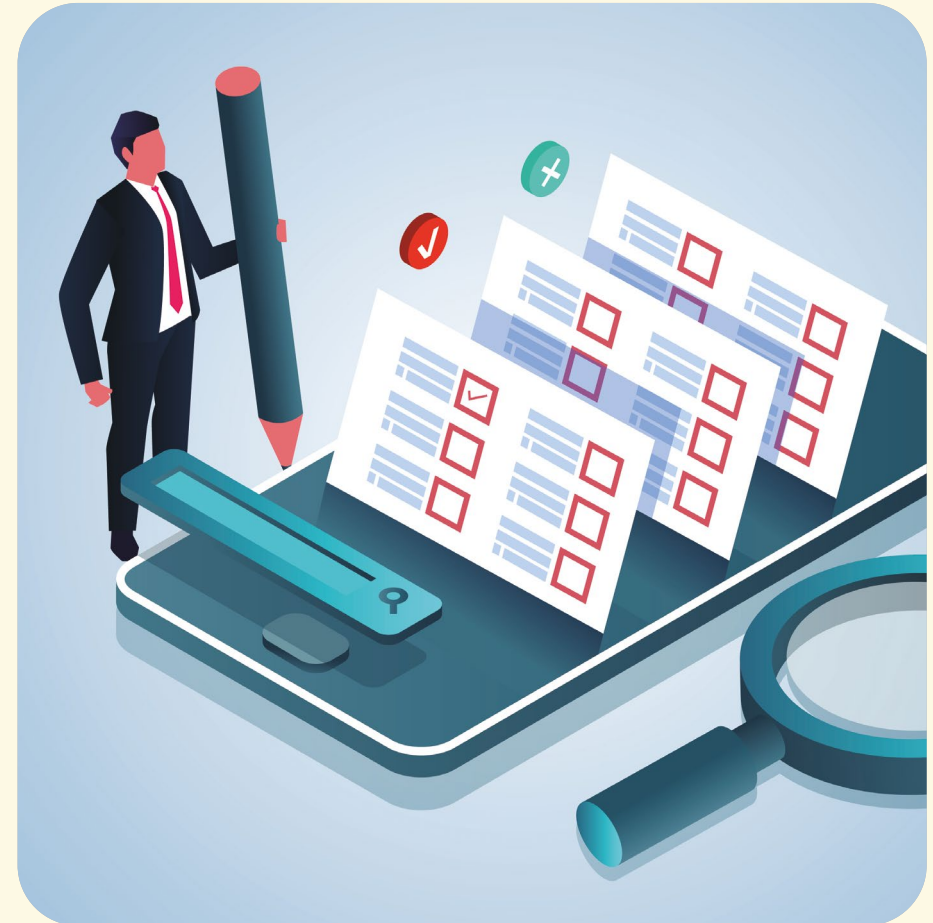
- Designing initiatives and soliciting innovative circularity ideas that are effective to achieve the targets
- Engaging suppliers further on collectively improving the event's resource circularity performance
- Continuously monitoring and communicating the event's circularity progress

## Step 6 Evaluating Circularity in the Event

This template suggests a method to assess an event's resource circularity. Collecting information per material type and function space, you can use it at the planning and evaluation phases (i.e. pre-event and post-event). The Pre-event Section suggests some practical measures that can be taken by the event organiser to start examining the situation. You can also refer to them as you begin to consider and prepare for a circularity-minded event. The Post-event Section requests the organiser to link the relevant data to the measures taken to gauge the effectiveness. Through this exercise, event organiser may discover gaps that can be further filled when hosting another event.

As an organiser, stocktaking the event material use and checking with the event stakeholders on how the materials are handled after the show finishes will help monitor the resource circularity performance in this event and improve that in the future. While taking the lead to compile the information, exhibitors, sponsors, venue providers and other relevant parties' inputs are essential to complete the template.

The "Material Type" consists of objects that are commonly found in events. You are free to include other resources into the form to make the evaluation more comprehensive for your event. Essentially, resource circularity can be enhanced in an event from the onset by using fewer materials, applying non-virgin resources, and avoiding waste disposal at the end of the event.





|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Event Name</b>   | <i>[Name]</i>   |
| <b>Function Space / Booth</b>                               | <i>[e.g. event reception area, refreshment counter, networking lounge, Exhibitor X's booth etc.]</i>  |
| <b>Material Type</b><br><i>[One material type per form]</i> | <i>[e.g. paper / cardboard / foamboard / carpet / furniture / wooden structure / metal structure / electronics / plastic / glass / souvenir / participant badge / event booklet / food / dinnerware / fabric]</i> |
| <b>Measurement Unit</b>                                     | <i>[e.g. kilogram / tonne / piece]</i>  |

| Pre-event Section   |  | Post-event Section  |                 |
|---|--|---|-----------------|
| <b>Date of Pre-event Assessment</b>                                 | <i>[Date]</i>  | <b>Date of Post-event Assessment</b>                                  | <i>[Date]</i>   |
| <b>Assessor</b>   | <i>[Name]</i>  | <b>Assessor</b>   | <i>[Name]</i>   |
| <b>Is this material absolutely needed in the event?</b>             | <i>Yes / No</i>  | <b>In hindsight, is this material absolutely needed in the event?</b> | <i>Yes / No</i> |
| <b>How many of this material will be used in the event?</b>         | <i>[Data]</i>  | <b>How many of this material remains after the event?</b>             | <i>[Data]</i>   |
| <b>Will this material be used only in this event?</b>               | <i>Yes / No</i>  | <b>How many of this material is disposed of to landfill?</b>          | <i>[Data]</i>   |
| <b>Is the material reused from previous events?</b>                 | <i>Yes / No</i>  | <b>How many of this material is sent for energy recovery?</b>         | <i>[Data]</i>   |
| <b>Is the material made with repurposed material?</b>               | <i>Yes / No</i>  | <b>How many of this material is recycled?</b>                         | <i>[Data]</i>   |
| <b>Is the material made with recycled material?</b>                 | <i>Yes / No</i>  | <b>How many of this material is donated?</b>                          | <i>[Data]</i>   |
| <b>How are you planning to handle the material after the event?</b> | <i>Disposal / Energy recovery / Recycle / Donation / Repurpose / Reuse</i> | <b>How many of this material is repurposed?</b>                       | <i>[Data]</i>   |
|   |  | <b>How many of this material is returned to the storage?</b>          | <i>[Data]</i>   |
|   |  | <b>How many of this material will be reused in future events?</b>     | <i>[Data]</i>   |

## Next Steps

The information collected can serve as baseline data for you as the event organiser to communicate with the corresponding stakeholders on the event's overall resource circularity performance. It forms the basis for you to further engage them to better plan for a circularity-minded event and improve the performance in the future. For example, if majority of the resources would be sent to the landfill, you can think about other possible avenues with the 9R framework to extend the life of the resources. This can in turn help you determine the targets and actions for the subsequent events.

The 9R framework can be applied practically if you can identify the appropriate upstream and downstream partners to make use of the corresponding resources. You are recommended to look out for any solution providers or refer to the Supplier Lists under [Useful Resources in the Appendix](#).





## **Appendix & References**

## Appendix – Useful Resources

You can refer to the non-exhaustive list of useful resources below if you are keen on reading further about how to integrate resource circularity and who can enable the action in business events.

### Standards and Guides

[Coalition Clean Baltic – Quick Guide to Sustainable Event Management](#)

[EPD – A Waste Reduction Guidebook for Large Scale Event Organisers](#)

[German Environment Agency – Guidelines on Sustainable Event Organisation](#)

[Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency – Green Event Management Guidebook](#)

[International Organization for Standardization – Sustainable events with ISO 20121](#)

[Korea Tourism Organization – ESG Operational Guide for Sustainable Development of the MICE Industry](#)

[Macau Fair & Trade Association – A Guidebook on Calculation of Carbon Emissions from MICE and Events](#)

[Ministry of Commerce, People’s Republic of China – Booth environmental evaluation criteria \(SB/T 11217-2018\) \(Chinese version only\)](#)

[Ministry of Commerce, People’s Republic of China – Guidelines for design and production of environmentally friendly booths \(SB/T 11231-2021\) \(Chinese version only\)](#)

[Net Zero Carbon Events – Food & Food Waste Guide](#)

[Net Zero Carbon Events – NZCE Measurement Methodology](#)

[Net Zero Carbon Events – Smart Production and Waste Management Guidance](#)

[PCMA Foundation – The Time is Now - Sustainability in Business Events Industry Event Planning Map](#)

[State Administration for Market Regulation – Evaluation guidelines for green booth \(GB/T 41129-2021\) \(Chinese version only\)](#)

[State Administration for Market Regulation – Green exhibition operation guide \(GB/T 42496-2023\) \(Chinese version only\)](#)

[Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau – Green Meetings Guideline](#)

[The Association of Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\) – ASEAN Guidelines on Green Meetings](#)

[The International Trade Administration, MOEA – Year 110 Green Exhibition Guide \(Chinese version only\)](#)

[Tokyo Convention & Visitors Bureau – Sustainability Guidelines for Business Events in Tokyo](#)



## Supplier Lists

[Eco Expo Asia 2023 – Green Tips \(for Exhibitors\)](#)

[Ellen MacArthur Foundation – Circular Startup Index](#)

[EPD – Bin Supplier List and Electric Composter Supplier List](#)

[EPD – Green Service - Before the Event](#)

[The Green Earth – Green Supplier](#)

[Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency – Green Event Facilitator](#)



## Greenhouse Gas Emissions Calculators

[Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency – Carbon Footprint Estimation Calculator](#)

[Macau Fair & Trade Association – MICE Events Carbon Emission Calculator](#)

## References

25<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Dermatology (2022). WCD2023 Green Policy. Retrieved on 19 March 2024 from [https://www.wcd2023singapore.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/WCD2023\\_GREEN\\_POLICY\\_rev02.pdf](https://www.wcd2023singapore.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/WCD2023_GREEN_POLICY_rev02.pdf)

Allied Analytics LLP (2024). MICE industry is experiencing significant growth and is forecasted to reach \$2,309.4 billion by 2032. Retrieved on 19 March 2024 from <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/696276190/mice-industry-is-experiencing-significant-growth-and-is-forecasted-to-reach-2-309-4-billion-by-2032>

American Express Global Business Travel (2023). 2024 Global Meetings and Events Forecast. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from <https://www.amexglobalbusinesstravel.com/content/uploads/2023/10/2024-Global-Meetings-and-Events-Forecast.pdf>

Amsler, S. (2023). Bleisure travel explained: Everything you need to know. Retrieved on 18 March 2024 from <https://www.techtarget.com/whatis/feature/Bleisure-travel-explained-Everything-you-need-to-know>

Better Stands (n.d.). Qualifying Criteria for the Better Stands Programme. Retrieved on 12 March 2024 from <https://betterstands.info/qualifying-criteria>

China Foreign Trade Centre (2023a). The 134th China Import and Export Fair International Pavilion Exhibitor Manual. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from <https://cmsfile.cantonfair.org.cn/files/cms/2023-10/202310120956365636451.pdf>

China Foreign Trade Centre (2023b). 廣交會綠色展位獎評選辦法. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from [https://cief.cantonfair.org.cn/cn/exhibitor/exhibition/green\\_detail.aspx?oid=29668](https://cief.cantonfair.org.cn/cn/exhibitor/exhibition/green_detail.aspx?oid=29668)



- China Foreign Trade Centre (n.d.). About Us – Buyer Attendance of Previous Sessions. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from <https://www.cantonfair.org.cn/en-US/customPages/about#6-2>
- Donough-Tan, G. (2023). Informa Markets leads MICE sustainability initiative in Singapore exhibitions. Retrieved on 15 March 2024 from <https://www.ttgmic.com/2023/09/04/informa-markets-leads-mice-sustainability-initiative-in-singapore-exhibitions/>
- EPD (n.d.). Greening Your Events. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from <https://www.wastereduction.gov.hk/en-hk/waste-reduction-programme/greening-your-events#toc-green-event-pledge>
- Expedia Group (2022). Sustainable Travel Study. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from [https://go2.advertising.expedia.com/rs/185-EIA-216/images/April\\_2022-Sustainable-Travel-Study-PDF-No-URL.pdf](https://go2.advertising.expedia.com/rs/185-EIA-216/images/April_2022-Sustainable-Travel-Study-PDF-No-URL.pdf)
- FHA-Food & Beverage 2023 (n.d.). Sustainability. Retrieved on 15 March 2024 from <https://fhafnb.com/about/sustainability/>
- Grand View Research (2023). MICE Market Size, Share & Trends Analysis Report by Event Type (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Events), by Region (Asia Pacific, North America, Central & South America, Europe), and Segment Forecasts, 2023 – 2030. Retrieved on 19 March from <https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/mice-market-report>
- HKECIA (n.d.). Sustainability Charter. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from <https://exhibitions.org.hk/sustainability-charter/>
- HKGCC (2024). Rosy Outlook for Hong Kong Trade Shows. Retrieved on 19 March 2024 from [https://www.chamber.org.hk/en/information/the-bulletin\\_detail.aspx?id=1206](https://www.chamber.org.hk/en/information/the-bulletin_detail.aspx?id=1206)
- HKGCC (2023). The Revival of Hong Kong's Trade Shows. Retrieved on 19 March 2024 from [https://www.chamber.org.hk/en/information/the-bulletin\\_detail.aspx?id=1021](https://www.chamber.org.hk/en/information/the-bulletin_detail.aspx?id=1021)
- HKQAA (2023). Green Event Management Guidebook. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from [https://greenevent.hk/Document/resources/Green%20event%20guidebook\\_final.pdf](https://greenevent.hk/Document/resources/Green%20event%20guidebook_final.pdf)
- HKTDC (2024). 第17屆亞洲金融論壇今日隆重揭幕 過百環球政商界領袖擔任演講嘉賓 探討多邊合作 同譜新篇. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from <https://mediaroom.hktdc.com/tc/pressrelease/detail/20616/17th%20Asian%20Financial%20Forum%20opens%20today>
- HKTDC (n.d.). Exhibitors' Manual Electronic Version. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from [https://www.hktdc.com/event/hklicensingshow/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2023/02/Exhibitor-Manual\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.hktdc.com/event/hklicensingshow/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2023/02/Exhibitor-Manual_ENG.pdf)
- Hong Kong Monetary Authority (2024). Hong Kong Green Week – Finance Stream. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from <https://www.hkma.gov.hk/eng/key-functions/international-financial-centre/hkma-green-week/>
- Hong Kong Tourism Board (2020). Annual Report 2019/20. Retrieved on 18 March 2024 from <https://www.discoverhongkong.com/eng/about-hktb/annual-report/annual-report-20192020/download-pdf/eng/MICE.pdf>
- i-CABLE (2023). 廣交會第二期綠色低碳產品比例逾兩成 學者：有助提高國家發展綠色會展標準. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from <https://www.i-cable.com/%E6%96%B0%E8%81%9E%E8%B3%87%E8%A8%8A/%E4%B8%AD%E5%9C%8B%E5%9C%A8%E7%B7%9A/170416/%E4%BB%8A%E5%B1%86%E5%BB%A3%E4%BA%A4%E6%9C%83%E7%AC%AC%E4%BA%8C%E6%9C%9F%E7%B6%A0%E8%89%B2%E4%B-D%8E%E7%A2%B3%E7%94%A2%E5%93%81%E6%AF%94%E4%BE%8B%E9%80%BE%E5%85%A9%E6%88%90-%E5%AD%B8%E8%80%85>
- IMEX Frankfurt (n.d.). Sustainability at IMEX Frankfurt. Retrieved on 13 March 2024 from <https://imex-frankfurt.com/sustainability>

- Informa Markets (2024). Better Stands Brochure 2023. Retrieved on 13 March 2024 from <https://www.medlabme.com/content/dam/Informa/medlabme/2024/brochures/mlme-better-stands-brochure-2023.pdf>
- Informa Markets (n.d.). Better Stands Procurement Guide For Exhibitors. Retrieved on 22 March 2024 from <https://www.figlobal.com/content/dam/esa/hn/figlobal/brochures/better-stands-procurement-guide.pdf>
- Informa PLC (2023). Informa Sustainability Report 2022. Retrieved on 15 March 2024 from <https://www.informa.com/globalassets/documents/sustainability/reporting/2022/2022-informa-sustainability-report.pdf>
- Informa PLC (n.d.). FasterForward. Retrieved on 15 March 2024 from <https://www.informa.com/sustainability/faster-forward/>
- International Organization for Standardization (2024). Event Sustainability Management Systems – Requirements With Guidance For Use. Retrieved on 27 March 2024 from <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/en/#iso:std:iso:20121:ed-2:v1:en>
- Korea Tourism Organization (2022a). ESG Operational Guide for Sustainable Development of the MICE Industry. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from [https://koreaconvention.org:8090/eng/sustainable/MICE\\_ESG\\_Operation\\_Guide.pdf](https://koreaconvention.org:8090/eng/sustainable/MICE_ESG_Operation_Guide.pdf)
- Korea Tourism Organization (2022b). Sustainable Management Report on KOREA MICE EXPO 2022. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from [https://koreaconvention.org:8090/eng/sustainable/sustainable\\_Management\\_report.pdf](https://koreaconvention.org:8090/eng/sustainable/sustainable_Management_report.pdf)
- Net Zero Carbon Events (2022). A Net Zero Roadmap for the Events Industry. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from [https://www.netzerocarbonevents.org/wp-content/uploads/NZCE\\_Roadmap2022\\_Full-Report-updated-26Jan2023.pdf#page=12](https://www.netzerocarbonevents.org/wp-content/uploads/NZCE_Roadmap2022_Full-Report-updated-26Jan2023.pdf#page=12)
- Net Zero Carbon Events (n.d.). Initiative Resources. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from <https://www.netzerocarbonevents.org/resources/>
- news.info.gov.hk (2024). HK to foster mega events economy. Retrieved on 19 March 2024 from [https://www.news.gov.hk/eng/2024/01/20240126/20240126\\_155510\\_542.html](https://www.news.gov.hk/eng/2024/01/20240126/20240126_155510_542.html)
- PricewaterhouseCooper (2024). Global Entertainment & Media Outlook 2023 – 2027: Hong Kong Summary. Retrieved on 19 March 2024 from <https://www.pwchk.com/en/tmt/gemo-china-media-2023-2027.pdf>
- Recycling Fund (n.d.). Project Details. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from [https://www.recyclingfund.hk/en/assessment\\_en/news/approved\\_item7/detail\\_id359/](https://www.recyclingfund.hk/en/assessment_en/news/approved_item7/detail_id359/)
- Tao, Y., Steckel, D., Klemeš, J.J. & You, F. (2021). Trends towards virtual and hybrid conferences may be an effective climate change mitigation strategy, *Nature Communication*, Volume 12, 2021, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-021-27251-2>
- Teo, C. (2023). Singapore takes the lead with innovative zero-waste booth. Retrieved on 15 March 2024 from <https://www.meetings-conventions-asia.com/News/Conferences-and-Exhibitions/Singapore-takes-the-lead-with-innovative-zero-waste-booth>
- Thailand Convention and Exhibition Council (2023). Executive Summary – Study on Behavioral Trends and Strategic Forecasting to Meet the Needs of MICE Travelers. Retrieved on 11 March 2024 from [https://intelligence.businesseventsthailand.com/files/insights/insights\\_document\\_7f1a3534cf6fbf3f76b51299c642c771.pdf](https://intelligence.businesseventsthailand.com/files/insights/insights_document_7f1a3534cf6fbf3f76b51299c642c771.pdf)
- The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (2024). 推動盛事經濟. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from [https://gia.info.gov.hk/general/202401/26/P2024012600235\\_446610\\_1\\_1706264934280.pdf](https://gia.info.gov.hk/general/202401/26/P2024012600235_446610_1_1706264934280.pdf)

The International Air Transport Association (n.d.). World Cargo Symposium Hong Kong (SAR), China. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from <https://www.iata.org/en/events/all/wcs/>

Trip.Biz (2023). Corporate Travel Management Market White Paper. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from [https://ct.ctrip.com/whitePaper/2023/dlwp?locale=en-US&ctm\\_ref=shanglv\\_brand\\_1531](https://ct.ctrip.com/whitePaper/2023/dlwp?locale=en-US&ctm_ref=shanglv_brand_1531)

UFI (2021). Status of Sustainability in the Exhibition Industry. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from [https://www.ufi.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/UFI\\_report\\_on\\_Sustainability\\_July-2021.pdf](https://www.ufi.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/UFI_report_on_Sustainability_July-2021.pdf)

United Nations World Tourism Organization (2014). Global Report on the Meetings Industry. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284416097>

Wong, W., Ma, J. and Cheng, L. (2024). Hong Kong's exhibition business expected to exceed pre-pandemic levels by end of year. Retrieved on 19 March 2024 from <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/hong-kong-economy/article/3252433/hong-kong-commerce-chief-optimistic-city-set-host-mega-events-which-earlier-took-place-singapore-uae>

央視網 (2023). 第134屆廣交會 綠色低碳成主流 綠色佈展27家企業獲頒綠色展位獎. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from <https://tv.cctv.com/2023/10/26/VIDEfSkEuuVggzT2YOxXJNgw231026.shtml>

新假期 (2015). 搞展覽搞出幾千噸垃圾. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from <https://www.weekendhk.com/lifestyle/%e6%90%9e-%e5%b1%95%e8%a6%bd-%e6%90%9e%e5%87%ba%e5%b9%be%e5%8d%83%e5%99%b8%e5%9e%83%e5%9c%be-110508/9/>

新快報 (2023). 佈展材料統統打包, 明年再用. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from <https://finance.sina.cn/tech/2023-10-26/detail-imzskawz8516423.d.html?fromtech=1&from=wap>

沈帥青 (2018). 展覽業浪費嚴重 減廢有責. Retrieved on 1 March 2024 from <https://topick.hket.com/article/2039693/%E6%B2%88%E5%B8%A5%E9%9D%92%EF%BC%9A%E5%B1%95%E8%A6%BD%E6%A5%AD%E6%B5%AA%E8%B2%BB%E5%9A%B4%E9%87%8D%20%20%E6%B8%9B%E5%B%2%A2%E6%9C%89%E8%B2%AC>





Partnership for Sustainability  
Leadership in Business  
商界永續發展領袖計劃

Initiated by




永續坊  
POLICY FOR SUSTAINABILITY LAB  
公民社會與治理研究中心  
CENTRE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOVERNANCE

Supported by



滙豐銀行慈善基金  
The Hongkong Bank Foundation

 Room 703, The Jockey Club Tower,  
Centennial Campus,  
The University of Hong Kong,  
Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong

 3917 4767

 <https://ccsg.hku.hk/pslb/>



© Copyright 2024 Centre for Civil Society and Governance, The University of Hong Kong.  
All Rights Reserved.



978-988-76865-6-9