

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Issue 1 Version 5

WHITESPACE GROUP
Corporate Social Responsibility
January 2024

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As part of the Whitespace Group's overall Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy, this Environmental Sustainability Policy formalises our commitment to supporting the principles of environmental sustainability and recognises that a sustainable environment is central to our lives and our work. This policy should be read and understood in tandem with our Social Sustainability Policy and Sustainable Purchasing Policy.

The aim of our Environmental Sustainability Policy is to:

- implement environmental actions within the company.
- monitor the environmental actions and improvements internally.
- communicate environmental initiatives internally and externally.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy and all associated procedures apply to all Whitespace Group divisions and employees. We foster the idea that if you work within the events and exhibitions industry, you have a duty to work sustainably. Specific employee roles, responsibilities, and expectations are further described within this policy.

3.0 POLICY

Whitespace Group respects our relationship with the natural environment and its ecosystems. We acknowledge the adverse impacts that both human activity and the exhibitions industry can impose and take actions to prevent degradation of those natural systems. We have made the decision to improve our every-day business practices to align with environmental sustainability. We believe that investing in higher quality equipment allows us to reduce scrap, waste, and energy consumption, and produce higher quality products. We make a conscious effort to design and develop exhibition stands that do not cause unnecessary waste of materials due to short life, poor design, inefficient construction, and manufacturing processes.

4.0 COMMITMENTS

Whitespace Group commits to the following principles and practices:

- Monitoring and managing our environmental performance and working towards targets set to reduce adverse impacts.
- Complying with relevant UK wide and Local environmental policy, practices, regulations and legislation, and industry-specific legislation.
- Committing to the continual improvement of our EMS and adherence to ISO14001 standards
- Reducing the consumption of natural resources in daily operations, including water, paper, and energy.
- Committing to the advanced waste hierarchy of Prevent, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover, Dispose

- Maximising the recycling of resources.
- Maintaining 0% waste to landfill targets
- Committing to the principles of preventing pollution to the environment and continual improvement.
- Minimising pollution by taking steps to limit carbon emissions resulting from vehicle and air travel.
- Where possible, using local suppliers and encouraging suppliers to meet high standards of environmental performance.
- Communicating this policy to all employees, contractors, and other stakeholders, as well as making this policy available to the public.
- Reporting on the company's environmental performance in both internal and external communications, where relevant.
- Reviewing this policy annually and measuring targets and performance as part of that review.

5.0 CONTRIBUTIONS

The Company contributes to environmental sustainability in the following ways:

5.1 OPERATIONS

- We've appointed a Sustainability and Social Impact Manager to lead our ESG journey and communicate all new initiatives to staff, internal and external stakeholders.
- Our office and warehouse have been powered by 100% renewable energy sources since 2018.
- We have introduced an Environmental Purchasing Policy and accompanying Purchasing Guide which can be found in our Staff Handbook, Whitespace Hub and via Sage HR.
- We have one of the largest exhibition rental inventories in Europe enabling clients to hire rather than purchase stands from simple pop-up displays to large structural exhibition stands. Rental cuts down on manufacturing and with the average lifespan of Whitespace Group rental systems of up to 10 years or more, provides for virtually no waste during the product lifespan at the end of which systems are recycled in any event.
- Our suppliers are routinely evaluated and expected to meet high environmental standards to ensure that our supply chain is supporting our mission every step of the way.
- We have commenced ISO14001's Environmental Management System accreditation, which means we have rigorous environmental impact reduction targets across the whole business.
- We conduct monthly environmental site risk assessments to monitor the direct impact of our warehouse and offices.
- We work with a global network of trusted build partners to ensure that stands are produced and built locally to every show across the world. This reduces the associated emissions from production, shipping, travel, and accommodation.
- We employ a re-usable modular flooring system.
- A new colour management system on one of our printing processes means 80% less graphic waste due to errors with computer-controlled cutting.
- We lease all company vehicles.
- It is our policy to consolidate shipping wherever possible, reducing the number of boxes and packaging used.
- Office consumables are fairtrade and made from recycled and compostable packaging where possible.
- We travel by public transport to events, site visits and meetings. We encourage this by offering a season ticket loan and railcard to staff. When this is not possible, we car-share and co-ordinate meetings to minimise the number of journeys required.
- We have installed secondary glazing in our office to reduce reliance on the heating and air conditioning units.

5.2 MATERIALS

- We use a modular system made from 75% recycled aluminium. when our rental inventory is damaged beyond refurbishment and repair, these systems are then recycled.
- We print using non solvent, water-based inks.

- All our graphics are designed to be reused multiple times and are fully recyclable.
- Our office furniture is purchased second-hand where possible.
- All stationary products are made from recycled materials including pens and printer paper.
- All our timber products are FSC approved. FSC is the forest stewardship council, an international, non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting responsible management of the world's forests. FSC has developed a system of forest certification and product labelling that enables people to identify responsibly sourced wood, paper, and other forest products.

5.3 WASTE

As part of our lean production processes, Whitespace Group also has a commitment to re-using as much of our excess materials as possible, contributing to the conservation of energy and resources, while keeping waste out of landfills.

- 0% of our waste goes to landfill.
- On average 91% of our waste is recycled and 9% sent to energy recovery (Jan – Nov 2023). This has increased from 2022 with 88% recycled and 12% to energy recovery.
- We contribute to local circular networks with any ex rental furniture and white goods, custom or hard to recycle pieces.
- Toner cartridges are recycled via our printing partner and waste ink disposed of according to environmental safety regulations.
- We compost our kitchen waste on-site.
- Any unwanted or outdated IT equipment is donated or recycled according to WEEE disposal regulations.
- We have partnered with one main flooring supplier to only purchase recyclable carpet which is responsibly removed post-show by our supplier partner and recycled after use.
- Samples, promotional materials, and fabric offcuts are donated to a local school in support of the OPAL programme.
- Our graphics are recycled responsibly at a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) and can then be recycled in one of two ways:
 - Mechanical recycling - the plastics in polyester are melted down to create new yarn, which can only happen a few times as fibres lose their quality.
 - Chemical recycling - this breaks down the plastic molecules and forms them into new yarn for use creating fresh products.

5.4 OFFSETTING

When looking into carbon offsetting schemes in 2022 we decided to focus on 'blue carbon'. Our research showed that the planting of mangroves and conservation of wetland areas has a far more effective impact on Co2 absorption than terrestrial forests.

For 2021-22 we planted over 1,165 mangrove trees via One Tree Planted's restoration projects across Asia and Latin America. Mangroves increase capacity for 5-10x more carbon storage and help protect against coastal erosion and climate change. As of September 2023, we are now partnered with Evertreen, planting 1000 Mangrove Trees along the coast of Kirepwe Island in Kenya with the support of local farmers, absorbing an estimated total of 308 tonnes of Co2e, a link to our "forest" can be found [here](#)

5.5 PARTNERSHIPS & VOLUNTEERING

We are proud to partner with The Big Blue Ocean Clean-up, a global organisation that works to remove plastic waste from the world's oceans and seas. We donate monetarily and are planning our own Whitespace Group Clean-up Day at the Thames.

We are a member of Isla, an independent events and exhibitions body founded by events professionals and industry leaders focused on the delivery of sustainable events.

We have organised an annual volunteer day with our local wetland reserve, London Wetlands Centre in Barnes SW London. Whitespace Group has also pledged support for WWT's Wetlands Can! Campaign to restore and create more wetlands areas in the UK.

We have pledged an annual donation to Sustainable Merton a local charity that tackles pressing environmental issues, promotes eco-friendly practices, and champions sustainable living within the Borough of Merton.

We have partnered with Event Cycle to donate ex-stand furniture and vinyl flooring to be re-used in community projects. We are offering this service to clients should they not want to re-use stand elements post show.

6.0 AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

We are proud to have won the below awards for our Sustainability Efforts.

- Sustainable Impact – Merton Best Business Awards 2023
- Sustainability Award – ESSA 2022
- Platinum Sustainability Award – World Exhibition Stand Awards 2022

We have also been shortlisted for the following.

- Sustainability Award – ESSA 2023
- Sustainability Initiative – AEO Excellence Awards 2023

7.0 REPORTING

7.1 On an annual basis each Head of Department (HoD) will meet with the Sustainability and Social Impact Manager to discuss departmental objectives, setting short- and long-term goals for that calendar year aligning with the overall company objectives.

7.2 On a bimonthly basis all HoD's will convene for a Sustainability Meeting led by the Sustainability and Social Impact Manager. This will allow each Department Head to report on the progress of their goals, discuss staff feedback and open the table for further process implementation and integration into our Quality Management System

7.3 We have joined the carbon accounting firm Greenly to conduct a Co2 audit of our activities. A full GHG emissions report will be calculated, and findings shared with all internal stakeholders.

7.4 At the conclusion of each calendar year, the Sustainability and Social Impact Manager shall publish a Sustainability Report and Plan for the Managing Director on the following:

- Full Scope 1 -3 Co2e Emissions as calculated by Greenly.
- Departmental progression
- For a minimum of four (4) Projects completed within the calendar year, report on the individual emissions and operational processes.
- The results of the Sustainable Purchasing case studies (as detailed in the Sustainable Purchasing Policy)
- Successes and areas for improvement
- Key Performance Indicators that are meaningful in terms of evaluating the Whitespace Group's progress in meeting our Sustainability Objectives.
- Sustainability Objectives for the following year based on current year's findings and progress.

7.0 RESPONSIBILITY AND REVIEW

This Environmental Sustainability Policy is the responsibility of the Sustainability and Social Impact Manager. We expect all Whitespace Group staff to understand and comply with this policy. Environmental sustainability is at the forefront of our Company's values and therefore we all share responsibility for sustainable development.

This policy was last updated January 2024 and will be reviewed January 2025.

Signed:



Alya Khalidi
Sustainability and Social Impact
Manager

Signed:



Mary Cole
Managing Director