

## PALEXPO AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development factors in the needs of all the company's partners, as well as those of future generations. It is the key to the company taking a balanced and responsible approach to its role in society. That's why sustainable management has always been a part of Palexpo's culture.

Where Palexpo is concerned, the definition of sustainable development – meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland Report, 1987) – also comprises an operational aspect which factors in environmental, economic and social concerns.

### A RECOGNISED FRAMEWORK

Applying sustainable development principles to company management must be structured around a precise framework comprising numerical indicators and a governance model. Palexpo has opted for the approach put forward by the Event Organizer Sector Supplement (EOSS) developed specifically for its sector of activity by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) in partnership with the the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI).

Palexpo is a member of the UFI's Sustainable Development Committee.

Last December, Palexpo achieved ISO 20121: 2012 certification for its infrastructure. The standard applies to its events activities and is a testament to the business's commitment to implementing a responsible management system.

### GOVERNANCE

Palexpo's management model incorporates strict corporate governance principles:

- Drawing up general principles and a code of conduct for operating in a way which respects the environment
- Carrying out a sustainable-management audit to evaluate corporate governance across the three components of sustainable development
- Setting up the Sustainable Development Committee which brings together staff from all Palexpo's departments: this body proposes sustainable development action and consolidates the indicators provided by each department
- Defining sustainable development indicators and creating scoreboards incorporating them
- Creating tools which measure and monitor sustainable use of human, natural and economic resources

The company also makes sustainable development considerations a priority in its dealings with third parties. All its transactions must comply with a set of clear and transparent rules:

- Fair competition and control of payments: fairness and objectivity in commercial transactions, three levels of control in tender-award processes
- Transactions accounting and auditing: Institute for International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) accounting
- Purchasing policy: systematically assessing the main risks with suppliers (manpower, meeting deadlines, financial risk, quality of products and services)
- Two guiding principles for purchasing: purchasing goods/services which are sustainable and/or recyclable, and sourcing as locally as possible.



## ENVIRONMENT

Palexpo makes every effort to minimise the volume of natural resources it uses. Even back when it was first built in 1981, the roof of the various halls was designed to be fitted with solar panels, and the entire facility was connected up to the district heating system right from day one.

Following two energy audits conducted in 2005 and 2008, energy efficiency was enhanced further still, in particular by completely revamping the halls' ventilation and lighting systems. A weather station installed on hall 6 is now able to adjust both systems in real time depending on the prevalent weather conditions. Data on electricity consumption is now collected electronically, too, providing detailed, real-time indicators.

Palexpo only uses electricity generated in Switzerland via hydropower, and with some 30,000 m<sup>2</sup> of solar panels fitted on its roof, the centre is also the second largest solar power 'plant' in the country. The panels today provide enough electricity to supply 1,350 households annually.

When it comes to waste, Palexpo applies the 3R's principle: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Half of all waste produced by the facility is sorted at source, while the rest is processed by a specialist service provider. At some exhibitions, almost 80% of all waste is recycled. Ensuring that containers are filled efficiently has enabled us to reduce the distance travelled by our vehicles and thereby to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

The Supercross event has used the same soil for the past 19 years, and the CHI international showjumping event reuses the same sand every year. Both soil and sand are stored on-site at Palexpo thereby eliminating the need for long journeys to truck them in each year.

Palexpo also has facilities for electric vehicles and these can even be recharged in the centre's car parks. Palexpo also works in partnership with public transport companies to offer combined train/bus/event tickets.

## ECONOMY

The aim of any business is to generate profit in order to survive and prosper. Stringent and streamlined management of resources helps to achieve this goal, and thanks to its sustainable development policy Palexpo has been able to boost both turnover per square metre rented and overall turnover, whilst at the same time reducing energy expenditure and its environmental footprint.

Palexpo's success has also enabled it to invest in modernising the way in which it operates to help it remain competitive. This cycle of generating funds and then using those funds to improve and enhance its facilities and services enables the company to ensure that its activity is sustainable over the long term whilst at the same time continuing to reduce its environmental impact per square metre. This is all the more important nowadays with event organisers increasingly favouring exhibition and convention centres which are sustainable-management certified.

## **SOCIAL**

Convention and exhibition centres also serve the local communities in which they are located, since regions in which such centres are sited benefit from the economic impact of the events staged there. Since 2005, Palexpo has been evaluating the economic benefits generated by its events using a model created by a professor at the University of Geneva – and the model has revealed that every year, several million francs are injected into the local economy.

The social aspect of sustainable management also includes labour rights and working conditions. It requires that fair working conditions and non-discriminatory policies be applied, that local jobs be encouraged and that the working environment be safe and secure.

Palexpo's 190 staff are involved in some 50 activities, and in line with sustainable management requirements, all executives are hired from the local labour pool. The proportion of women among the facility's executives also reflects the proportion of women working for the company as a whole (36%). Male and female employees performing the same role also receive equal pay.

A comprehensive H&S and communication system is in place to ensure that people, equipment and infrastructure are kept safe and secure at all times, and this system is framed within a policy setting out some ambitious goals. An H&S manager ensures that the very highest levels of safety and security are observed at all times to safeguard the health and safety of Palexpo staff, customers, suppliers and visitors alike.

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