

# COP26 achieves International Standard For Sustainability

COP26 has achieved independent international recognition for its approach to delivering a sustainable event, attaining the ISO20121 certificate.

ISO20121 is an international standard which sets out the requirements to establish, maintain and continually improve an event sustainability management system. It requires event organisers to demonstrate consideration to all key financial, economic, social and environmental factors related to planning and operations.

Organisations adopting ISO20121 are required to demonstrate that they are minimising potential negative impacts on the environment, communities and local economy – maximising the positive impacts and leaving a legacy to be proud of.

COP26 President Alok Sharma said:

“Sustainability was at the core of COP26 and I am proud that the UK has added yet another impressive standard of environmental compliance to the event with the ISO2021 certification.

“To build on our work with ISO20121, COP26 will also be a carbon neutral event and become the first COP to have achieved PAS2060 validation on carbon neutrality. This will make good on our priority to reduce and avoid emissions at the highest level.”

Large ‘in-person’ events can put a strain on local resources such as water and energy, and create significant waste, or tensions related to culture or proximity with neighbouring communities. COP26 was able to illustrate, using the ISO20121 framework, its commitment to sustainability and that the event was managed in a sustainable way.

To attain the certification, the UK Government appointed Arup and Crowberry as technical sustainability advisors. BSI, British Standards Institution, provided an independent audit for certification of compliance.

Sustainability was embedded throughout the delivery of COP26, through the adoption and integration of the COP26 seven Sustainability Governing Principles:

1. Actively manage potential impacts on the environment and local community and identify opportunities to deliver environmental and social value
2. Provide an accessible and inclusive setting for all
3. Encourage healthy living
4. Ensure a safe and secure atmosphere
5. Encourage more sustainable behaviour
6. Promote the use of responsible sources and responsible use of resources throughout the supply chain

## 7. Leave a positive legacy

Additionally, the COP26 Unit has worked collaboratively with HMG teams, delivery partners and other stakeholders to embed and demonstrate how they have robustly considered all dimensions of sustainability. This includes a detailed assessment within all the operational delivery areas of the event including the Blue Zone and Green Zone Venues, Transport, Security, Suppliers, Catering and Health and Safety.

### Notes for editors

More information on the actions taken to deliver a more sustainable event under our seven principles is provided on the [COP26 Sustainability website](#), these include:

- Prioritising low carbon alternative energy sources such as electric and low emission vehicles, solar energy for temporary traffic lights and Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) in generators, instead of diesel.
- Prioritising sustainability by including explicit requirements in our supplier procurements and with partners.
- Encouraging delegates to use active travel such as walking and cycling or public transport where possible.
- Catering that prioritises locally sourced, healthy and in season food items to minimise mileage for transportation and supporting local business. You can find out more about catering in our press release [here](#).
- Working with our hygiene partners, we supplied PPE that was sustainable, washable and included filters, in order to follow local COVID regulations and deliver a safe COP26.
- Repurposing the furniture, which was provided by Ikea UK to furnish the conference, will involve working closely with Glasgow City Council to ensure the furniture is given a second life at charity organisations and local community projects across the city. Other legacy examples include distributing the conference carpets in the temporary structures to low-income families, sending MDF sheets and cotton roof panels from the Hydro installations to wood recycling and men's shed projects in the city and turning the hundreds of metres of black backed fabric graphics into bags, pencil cases, laptop bags, and boxes.
- Employing local people for specific event roles.
- Prioritising leaving a legacy in the events industry by hosting industry-wide workshops on how to improve standards and best practice for future events.