



UFI Sustainable Award 2016

Exhibition: Meetings Africa 2015
Venue: Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg
Date: 23 February 2015: BOND DAY
24-25 February 2015: Exhibition
Organiser: Synergy Business Events
Client: South Africa National Convention Bureau

Meetings Africa was first eco audited in 2011 which provided the base line, 2015 was the fifth year that the event was monitored, and huge steps were taken towards greening the exhibition and surrounding events with the help of the National Convention Bureau and other key stakeholders.

In recent years, the global meetings industry has recognised that Africa and in particular South Africa is a sought after destination for business events as we have diverse services and products on offer including accommodation, venue, transport and other supporting services.

We built our Meetings Africa strategy based on the feedback we received from the exhibitors, visitors and other parties involved in the planning and implementation of the show. A statement for 2015 was confirmed as follows:

“The Meetings Africa team aims to showcase Africa as a premier business events destination that cares about its people and the natural environment. Through hosting the event in a responsible manner it reflects the importance of local economic development, as well as keeping up with international trends.”

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

As in previous years, exhibitors registered for the exhibition through the Meetings Africa website. The services forms were online which assisted in the reduction of printing. Electronic media was used extensively in order to promote Meetings Africa. This included Twitter, Facebook, Google Plus, You Tube, Flickr and the Meetings Africa official website.

Emails were sent out prior to the show on a weekly basis to all participants in Meetings Africa 2015 providing tips and information on how they could assist with ensuring that they were aware of the greening initiatives taking place around the show and how they could contribute towards these activities. Guidelines were also included in the exhibitor catalogue and daily newspapers.

The Meetings Africa website included a page that was dedicated to greening and it included information on the greening initiatives as well as a link to the Gauteng Green Events Guidelines.

The Meetings Africa App provided an electronic platform to keep the users in touch with the exhibitors as well as provided a page dedicated to ‘What’s On’ which was linked to the events being held during the three day show.



For the last three years, Meetings Africa has hosted the Green Stand Awards, which recognise exhibitors who demonstrate a commitment to sustainability through their exhibition stand design and management. In preparation for the show, exhibitors are invited to attend a free workshop where they are provided with information and 'how-to' tips to ensure that the execution of their stands is sustainable. In 2015 the Meetings Africa team introduced the Green Hotel Award to recognise the official Meetings Africa hotels that are committed to supporting sustainable practices.

ECO-PROCUREMENT

In 2015, we aimed to ensure that the procurement of goods and services were done in a sustainable manner, promoting the use of local products that have a minimal negative effect on the environment.

For catering a South African inspired menu was created with the bulk of the ingredients sourced from local, South African suppliers. Where practical in season fruits and vegetables were used and the seafood served was on the approved SASSI (South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative) list. Biodiversity in Wine Initiative (BWI) wines were served at the gala dinner and where possible single serving condiments were avoided.

The paper usage prior, during and post the exhibition equated to approximately 284 reams which was slightly up from previous years, however this can be indicative to the continual growth of the show on a year on year basis.

2015 was the first year that no bags were given to the participants of the show. The visitor lanyards, once again, were made from recycled plastic bottles and the hosted buyer lanyards were beaded by Viva Afrika which is an empowerment programme located in Johannesburg.

Water fountains were used throughout the exhibition area and participants were encouraged to make use of these facilities. Reusable water bottles were given as gifts to the hosted buyers. A premium of R5 per bottle of bottled water was implemented for the first time in 2015 and this saw a radical decline in the purchase of bottled water thereby reducing the amount of plastic entering the waste system. Thirty-eight bottles of water were sold during the event, raising R190 which was donated to the tree purchasing programme for offsetting the environmental impact of the event.

We encouraged exhibitors to use more electronic media to showcase their products to the buyers and visitors. The use of iPads and televisions screens increased from previous years.

OPERATIONS

Exhibitors were encouraged to use energy efficiency technology on their stands. These tips were provided using the Meetings Africa website and social media platforms. Appliances were switched off at night and during both build up and breakdown only half the lights in the venue were used.

In the past the show organisers purchased renewable energy for the show. In 2015 the exhibitors were offered the opportunity to purchase renewable energy through the exhibition services manual. A total of 11 Renewable Energy Certificates were purchased from hydropower generated at the Friedenheim Micro Hydro Plant in Mpumalanga.

33 Trees were planted at the Totomoya Primary School in Soweto on behalf of Meetings Africa 2015 by Food and Trees for Africa in an effort to offset the carbon footprint for the event. An additional 100 trees were planted on behalf of the Event Greening Forum, by Plant-for-the-Planet as part of the carbon offset of participants that attended the EGF event which was held on Bond Day.



An eco-audit was conducted by an environmental consultant, Grace Stead of Steadfast Greening. This assisted us with benchmarking our efforts for year on year results.

This was the third year that Futurelink, an enterprise development initiative that has been trained in recycling and back of house separation assisted with the on-site waste management. Earth Probiotic worked alongside the SCC and Futurelink teams in order to manage the organic waste. It is estimated that 77% of the waste generated at Meetings Africa 2015 was diverted from landfill which is up from the 42% in 2014.

TRANSPORT

The use of public and efficient transport should be encouraged where practical to reduce the overall carbon footprint. Hosted Buyers were each provided with a Gautrain card to use during their stay. This reduced the overall carbon emissions.

The hotels that were recommended are in close proximity to the Sandton Convention Centre. This enabled participants in Meetings Africa to walk to the venue or to use the local Tuk-Tuks.

Through the use of Rennie's Travel the use of non-essential flights was minimised as the routes chosen for the hosted buyers were kept to the minimum and the most direct flights were booked where possible.

BEYOND GREEN

The rolled carpets which were purchased for Meetings Africa 2015 were donated to the Loveness Crèche and Tabernacle Christian Academy in Ivory Park and the teams involved in the waste management for the show were encouraged to use what they had been previously trained on in their homes and communities.

Hospitality students were recruited as volunteers to the show. This gave them valuable experience in the conference and exhibition arena as well as an opportunity to interact with the players in the industry.

The Trees for All programme at FTFA is an effective programme that educates and improves the environments of schools and communities as a whole. The trees are purchased from the closest tree grower which assists in the growth of the local economy.

INNOVATION

The general meeting areas within the exhibition hall consisted of some of the same elements used in 2014. This included the up-cycling of materials such as the wooden pallets and tyres used for flooring, seating and tables. The lanyards from previous shows were used for seat webbing.

Once again the use of living walls, incorporating indigenous plants was included into the exhibition hall.

Not only are these areas innovative but provide a unique meeting space for participants in Meetings Africa to conduct business.



BODY OF EVIDENCE

1. Covers:
 - Photographs of the show
 - An example of the email correspondence with exhibitors for greening
 - A copy of the Renewable Energy Certificates given to the exhibitors
2. A copy of the FTFA report
3. The eco-audit report from Steadfast Greening
4. Presentation of 2015 Green Feedback and 2016 Green Strategy