



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AWARD 2018

PROPOSED BY:



## I. INTRODUCTION

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La Rural, Exhibition Center of Buenos Aires is the leader company in fairs, congresses and events of Argentina and one of the most important of Latin America –also manages the future Buenos Aires Convention Center and the Punta del Este, Convention & Exhibition Center-. More than 135 years of history guarantee its leadership.

After a decade of assuming and consolidating its commitment to sustainability, La Rural has efficiently incorporated into its core business different capacities to operate, relate, project and self-evaluate under the environmental, social and cultural premise.

The company is convinced that sustainability strategies represent a competitive advantage, both nationally and internationally. In this regard, La Rural has positioned itself as a reference in terms of sustainability, through the link with industry associations of the national and international market.

The business models focuses on integrated actions with the environment, the reduction of environmental impact and generate social value.

Following this line and guided by its institutional values, it fulfills not only a commercial goals but also integrates related cultural and social achievements, through multiple initiatives.

Given the commitment to managing its business with responsibility, ethics and transparency, La Rural has a Sustainability Strategy and a Social Responsibility Plan in place which engages every area of the company.

Sustainability programs are organized under the brand “*Mejores Vecinos*” (Better Neighbors) consolidating the actions conducted along the stakeholders the company works with on a daily basis: suppliers, clients, community and associates.

## I. EXECUTION

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The economic, environmental and social issues related to sustainability are analyzed and reviewed in meetings of different periodicity, both by the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee.

To enrich its sustainability strategy, La Rural considers open dialogue with its stakeholders (suppliers, customers, collaborators and the community); and implements its programs under national and international regulations.

The Institutional Relations Department coordinates the responsible management of the business; and this leads to Communication and CSR Head, which is in charge of the creation

of the Ad Hoc Committee for the preparation of the Sustainability Report, encompassed to the whole company.

All social actions of "Mejores Vecinos" (Better Neighbors) are focused on the awareness and the promotion of values. Its areas of work includes: training and inclusion activities for people in situations of social vulnerability; patronage of emerging artists; pedagogical, recreational and reading activities for students and teachers; and goal of total accessibility in facilities for disabled people.

### II.I. Actions and Sustainability programs

"Mejores Vecinos" (Better Neighbors) strategy is based on three dimensions



#### ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION

- **La Rural Recicla (La Rural Recycles)** - dismantling of exhibitions, division of waste at source, recycling of paper and plastic caps
- **Certificación Empresa Amiga de la Movilidad Sustentable** (Friendly Company of Sustainable Mobility Certification), an initiative that encourages the use of bicycles. The venue has three free bike parkings for collaborators and visitors.
- Other initiatives such as the **Plan for Optimizing Supplies and Resources; Health and Safety Plan; Energy Efficiency Plan**, etc.

#### SOCIAL DIMENSION

- **Cesión Solidaria de Espacios** (Lending Spaces for fundraising and social purposes), thanks to this program, non-for-profit organizations and foundations are able to hold their fundraisers on the venue at very competitive prices.
- **La Rural Accesible** (La Rural Accessible) - this program was developed to optimize the fairground's accessibility to make persons with any kind of disability feel welcomed.
- **La Rural Te Cuida** (La Rural Cares about you) - This prevention and health care initiative is addressed to associates and the community, customers and the public at large.

#### EDUCATIONAL – CULTURAL DIMENSION

- **Palermo Lee (Palermo Reads)** - The program aims at bringing children from Buenos Aires' schools closer to the habit of reading during the International Book Fair Buenos Aires.
- **IMPULSARTE** – This program of cultural sponsorship aims to the stimulation of contemporary artists through the acquisition of their works. Impulsarte take place during ArteBA (The main important fair of art in Latin America)

### II.II. Relationship with governmental instances

La Rural establishes alliances with public institutions in order to achieve different social objectives: the optimization and separation of waste at source (Local Government of Buenos Aires City, District 14 Palermo Neighborhood, Metropolitan Ecological Authority, Environmental Protection Agency of Buenos Aires and local waste management

companies); reformulation of the circulation sense of the streets near the exhibition center (Local Government of Buenos Aires City, Traffic Department); and other topics related to sustainable awareness, tourism and cultural promotion (Tourism Entity, Ministry of Education of the City of Buenos Aires).

### **II.III. Relationship with NGO's**

La Rural has a permanent channel of communication with social actors to keep optimizing their programs. This methodology, flexible and of constant learning, allows to know its audience needs, opinions and expectations; assess the impact of its actions; and find answers and results on both sides.

The company works among with NGOs to achieve shared goals of common good. These organizations represent a type of social problem and participate in sustainability actions contributing their specialized "know how" and focusing the public beneficiaries. Furthermore, it is possible to maximize the scope of action outside the neighborhood of Palermo, as in the case of La Rural Recicla (La Rural Recycles) program.

### **II.IV. Communication of "Mejores Vecinos" (Better Neighbors) of La Rural:**

Different channels and style of communication are used to share the programs and its results with the public of interest, thinking about the modern individual and their cultural consumption.

#### **Internal communication**

It includes: newsletter (quarterly); website; mailing; team meetings; surveys; message boards; flyers; and Sustainability Report (which includes meetings of the committee team, directors and general meeting with those responsible for the areas involved, all under the application of disruptive innovation methodologies such as Pitching days, creative brainstorming, moodboard and other techniques).

#### **External communication**

It includes: press releases; website; social media, meetings with shareholders and journalists from different sections. Likewise, the Institutional Relations Department promotes the dissemination of good practices with partners in the sector, in different meetings that take place on international stages; and also the open door to occasional referents.

## **III. EVALUATION**

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Within "Mejores Vecinos" (Better Neighbors) and in the environmental area, La Rural stands out for these actions: studies of noise levels on the venue; an Environmental Waste Management Manual (inspired by the ISO14001:2005 standard, constantly updated); energy and paper saving programs; also works to adapt infrastructure to

climate change; schedules of lights on and off and air conditioning equipment; a Consumption Rationalization Plan; a migration program towards eco-friendly technologies; CO2 measurement and awareness campaigns to save energy.

The outstanding results of 2017 related to the environment were:

- 322,364 liters of water were saved, compared to the previous year, thanks to the growing awareness of the importance of caring for this resource among internal and external publics.
- Natural gas consumption was reduced in a 25% (10,436 m3).
- The gas oil savings were 3002 liters.

Beyond the environmental indicators and located in the educational-cultural area of CSR, La Rural detaches the 2017 results achieved in the Palermo Lee Program, in which more than 1,100 children from 28 schools, foundations and care homes in the City of Buenos Aires were brought to the habit of reading through play, didactic activities and workshops. This year, as a novelty, children of initial level and special education schools were incorporated.

On the other hand, in the social area, there were 28 Cesiones Solidarias de Espacios (Lending Spaces for fundraising and social purposes), where non-profit organizations (7 of them joined for the first time) raised around 80 million pesos. To carry out this initiative, a cost of 1,580,300 pesos was assumed by the company.

Thanks to the environmental-social program La Rural Recicla (La Rural Recycles), 105,000 kg of reusable material was recovered during the dismantled of the fairs during 2017. To achieve this, 8 operations were carried after the expos close, which benefited 13 NGOs and institutions, which produced the following materials: toy libraries, didactic games, elements for the repair of homes and furniture.

We also recovered almost 1,711 kilos of paper and 3 kilos of plastic caps for the Garrahan Foundation. Since joining the Paper Recycling Program of the Garrahan Foundation in 2006, we recycled almost 29 tons of paper, which translates into almost 500 trees.

As an overall assessment, the advance in the scale and coverage of sustainability initiatives in the value chain is entered, gradually developing innovative practices to integrate environmental and a socially responsible behavior: relationship with suppliers, contact with clients, and the communication with community and collaborators.

For these reasons, the development of activities related to sustainability in the fair industry, remains for La Rural a key initiative.

Its results are consolidated -each year- by demonstrating how the discussion of the subject grows and also the debate is installed among the stakeholders of the company.

The sustainable strategy of La Rural, Mejores Vecinos (Better Neighbors), encompasses all of the initiatives aims at strengthening the bonds with its audience and the existing communication channels, with the ultimate goal in mind of making a better place for everyone.

Inside of the company, this process is transversal to the entire organization and includes the implementation of disruptive methodologies, with defined roles and incremental development practices that provides a different view on environmental issues, social commitment and the development of self-management capabilities.

Towards the outside, it is based on the association and development of work together with NGOs.

Due to this, La Rural is now consolidated as a source of knowledge for the design and application of sustainability policies. Any company wishing to replicate its action model can contact and access an "open doors" policy and in-house activities, which invite to learn by working from experience and action ("learning by doing").

The 2017 investment for *Mejores Vecinos (Better Neighbors)* was \$ 581,554 in Environmental Management Policies and a higher index of quantitative and qualitative results in the creation of social value.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

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In conclusion, the sustainability strategy of La Rural, "Mejores Vecinos" (Better Neighbors) can be assimilated and replicated by other centers of fairs, congresses and exhibitions around the world; and by organizations that have similar processes and operations.

In the future, the company is committed to continue developing its initiatives to achieve a better business result; mitigating the environmental impact of the activity and increasing the positive social impact.