Messeforum Oy
Carbon neutral exhibition stand

Carbon footprint management report 2024

1. The carbon neutral exhibition stand concept

Messeforum Oy is a Finnish exhibition services expert and stand builder operating internationally which launched its carbon neutral stand in 2020. All stands designed and built by Messeforum have been carbon neutral since autumn 2021.

The carbon neutral exhibition stand concept is based on the definition of carbon neutrality in the ISO 14068 standard and complies with the carbon neutrality requirements set by the standard. Messeforum has prepared a carbon neutrality management plan as required by ISO 14068 and operates in accordance with this plan.

The greenhouse gas emissions of every stand we build are calculated using the carbon footprint calculator developed by OpenCO2.net. The calculation is based on the ISO 14067 standard on the carbon footprint of products. Open CO2.net has verified our emissions calculation.

We reduce the emissions of our stands in numerous ways ourselves and where we are unable to mitigate emissions alone without jeopardising our business, we use CO2esto's emissions cutting service to offset the remaining emissions reliably, with additionality.

2. Emissions

In 2024, Messeforum produced a total of 112 carbon neutral exhibition stands. Following our own emission reduction measures, their

- remaining verified total emissions were 257 tonnes CO2e.
- average emissions per built m2 of stand were 0.045 tonnes (45 kg) CO2e.
    - in 2023, the equivalent emissions / m2 were 0.048 tonnes (48 kg) CO2e.
    - in 2022, the equivalent emissions / m2 were 0.052 tonnes (52 kg) CO2e.

The emissions calculation incorporates all sources of emissions in building our stands, including construction materials, furniture and equipment and their transport. The calculation also includes the electricity used on the stand, the travel and accommodation of Messeforum employees and subcontractors when building the stand, and the transport and processing of waste arising when dismantling stands.

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3. What we are doing ourselves to reduce emissions

In 2024, we have reduced the emissions arising from our production of exhibition stands ourselves, through measures including choosing as low-emission materials as possible, optimising the use of materials and advocating the circular economy. We also adopted a modular design which lends itself to our pavilion exhibition stands, where reusing the elements several times helps to reduce the emissions of our pavilion projects. We have engaged in constant discussions with our subcontractors on how emissions can be reduced even further.

3.1 Committing subcontractors

Getting subcontractors on board with our emissions reduction measures has been one of the most important things we have done to reduce emissions in 2024. With our key partners, we have arranged joint review and development meetings at their production premises, for example, where we run through the current situation and our emission reduction goals and the challenges, opportunities and new ideas involved in cutting emissions. We have used dialogue and training on minimising emissions frequently over the year in conjunction with almost all our projects, and are regularly involved in dialogue and developing new ideas on an ongoing basis.

3.2 New lower-emission joint stand concept

Our lower-emission joint stand concept developed last year became a reality with our country pavilions in 2024. The modular structure makes reuse more versatile and more efficient than ever before. Over the year, we have continued to fine-tune the concept. On top of this, we have also outlined a modular-based solution for our individual stands, which could be reused over and over again.

3.3 Materials library

In 2024, we started creating a detailed materials library, which helps us to optimise the use of materials and furniture and find the most appropriate and lowest-emission elements and furnishings to suit the aims of each project. At the same time, the materials library will make our emissions calculations even more precise. The materials library was completed by the end of the year and in 2025, we will be able to put it to the test, seeing its real impact on reducing our emissions.

3.4 New materials

Over the year, we have surveyed and endeavoured to find new materials with lower emissions. Low-carbon and even carbon-negative carpet tiles are one interesting find, for example. The problem with using them at trade fairs is their high price compared with traditional stand carpeting, where customers very understandably tend to go for the cheaper option instead. We continue to explore new materials. We have also sought to

educate our customers, informing them of the impact materials have on the carbon footprint of their stand and how they can change that, when planning their projects.

3.5. Use of materials

Flooring materials

Instead of stand carpeting, we have sought to use low-emission laminate as the flooring material whenever our customers are happy to do so. For customers, the choice usually comes down to price, as laminate is a more expensive material. However, we seek to steer our customers towards lower-emission choices. Laminate is a sustainable material and we have reused it as much as possible. For the structure below the laminate floor, we have made use of wall materials saved from previous projects. We also reuse the metal corner pieces used with laminate flooring.

If carpet is used as flooring and if the carpet can no longer be removed neatly to be used again, it is used to protect furniture and elements that will be reused in other projects in transit. In some projects, we have also used wind barrier board underneath raised floors as this is a completely wood-based material which can be reused. As it is light, its transport emissions are lower too.

Wall materials and graphics

Where customers are looking for graphic printing to be produced separately, we recommend using graphics designed so that they can be used in several projects, and, in such cases, using fabric prints which, when stored and used again, produce lower emissions than single-use printed paper or vinyl prints.

We have used old furnishing laminate, previously used elsewhere, as a wall material when the walls will be covered by graphic printed materials or fabrics. We have also reused wall materials in invisible places such as wall support structures or in storage furniture.

Furniture

We have always saved and stored our customers' furnishings for next time whenever this is appropriate and makes sense in terms of reducing emissions. When examining emissions, attention must be paid to the furniture's own emissions burden and the emissions arising from its transport and storage.

Storage areas

For all our stands, we have adopted the Octanorm system for kitchens and storage areas and their furnishing. Octanorm is made from 100% reusable aluminium and can be reused a practically unlimited number of times. In visible areas of our stands, Octanorm doesn't meet the demanding level of quality required by Messeforum or

our customers for areas which are on show, but it works very well in places, such as storage areas, that can't be seen.

3.6. Stand electricity and lighting

Most European trade fair and exhibition centres offer electricity from renewable energy sources. We have always purchased renewable electricity for all our exhibition stands wherever this is available.

For stand lighting, we have used LED lighting which can be kept and used again several times in different projects. LED lighting uses less energy and so helps to minimise emissions.

3.7. Travel and transport

Working with our subcontractors, we have optimised transport and accommodation routes in terms of the logistics involved in travelling and transporting stands. Due to the nature of our work and our project schedules with rapid turnaround times, we are unable to avoid flying, but we aim to take direct routes whenever we do have to fly. For short routes between fairs, we have sought to also use non-air travel and especially public transport. We offset our travel costs as part of our carbon neutral exhibition stand concept. Additionally, we are members of the Lufthansa Group's offsetting programme, in which the business benefit points collected from our flights are used to buy Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF).

3.8. Waste

After dismantling the stand, any waste is sorted in line with the exhibition centre's recycling guidelines. All the major exhibition centres have signed up to advanced sorting and recycling systems in line with sustainable development.

4. Offsetting remaining emissions

Some of the emissions arising from building exhibition stands are impossible to avoid or reduce if we are to be able to keep operating and offer high-quality stands to our customers. We offset all the emissions remaining after our own emission mitigation measures using CO2Esto's emissions cutting service. CO2esto acquires and invalidates emission allowances from the EU Emissions Trading System, which is an officially monitored system. Buying and invalidating emission allowances from the Emissions Trading System genuinely reduces emissions, with additionality, as it reduces the total amount of emission allowances available in the market, meaning that another actor in Europe dependent on emission allowances will have to reduce their own emissions and invest in new, lower-emission technologies, for example.

We have calculated the amount of emissions to be offset using a carbon footprint calculator developed for the purpose and checked its calculations with OpenCO2.net, which also verifies that the remaining emissions are offset. Our verified calculations are awarded the OpenCO2.net Carbon Neutral label.

For more information about Messeforum's carbon neutral exhibition stands:
https://www.carbonneutralstand.eu/

This document was updated on 31.1.2025.
It will next be updated by 31.1.2026 at the latest.

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