

Africa's Travel Indaba 2019 introduces first-ever Green Stand Awards

For the first time, the Africa Travel Indaba will introduce the Green Stand Awards to award exhibitors who go that extra "green" mile to build and design stands that are environmentally and socially sustainable between 2 and 4 May 2019 at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli Convention Centre (Durban ICC), KwaZulu-Natal.



Image via [South Africa National Convention Bureau](#)

This introduction ties into South African Tourism's promotion of responsible tourism. South African Tourism has pioneered event greening since 2011, through the South Africa National Convention Bureau business events show, Meetings Africa. The awards have been implemented with great success at Meetings Africa in recent years and bringing it to Africa's Travel Indaba will start the conversation with exhibitors to consider responsible tourism as a part of their offerings.

The stands are judged against the Event Greening Forum (EGF) award criteria including design, materials, operations, transport, communication, beyond green and innovation. They would also need to submit a written motivation explaining why their stand is green.

The assessment includes demonstrating knowledge about the greening principles and practical implementation thereof. The panel of judges will include professionals with event greening experience and independent moderators.

Last year, Africa's Travel Indaba implemented measures to make the event more environmentally friendly. These included paperless contracts with exhibitors and the event app, that helps to cut down on paper before, and at the event.

The event organisers are also looking to appoint as many local suppliers as possible, cutting down on the event's carbon footprint, and promoting responsible tourism by giving resident SMMEs the chance to participate in the continent's largest travel trade show.

Pioneering event greening

Since 2012, Meetings Africa has won every annual Green Show Award from the Exhibition and Event Association of Southern Africa (EXSA).

Amanda Kotze-Nhlapo, chief convention bureau officer of South Africa National Convention Bureau, explains: "South African Tourism recognises the importance of hosting events in a responsible manner and which address the triple bottom line of people, planet and prosperity."

The Event Greening Forum Chairperson, Greg McManus adds: "We have been honoured to fulfil an advisory role for Meetings Africa over the years. The South African Tourism team have always been very receptive to our recommendations and to adopting new initiatives, which they have done with great results. We are looking forward to continuing this partnership and success with Africa's Travel Indaba."

The Event Greening Forum will this year conduct a baseline assessment at last year's event to gain a better understanding of the environmental impact of the event. This information is now being used to develop an event greening strategy that can be implemented at future events. The data gathered is proving to be critical to mapping out an effective event greening strategy.

Socio-economic and environmental upliftment

For the second year running, Indaba will feature an innovative Sustainability Village.

The Sustainability Village was created to showcase talented local artisans and SMEs, and their handcrafted goods. All of the items on display are made in South Africa and inspired by local culture and traditions, and some also have a strong sustainability ethos, such as using recycled materials.

Instead of the traditional corporate gifts, South African Tourism will give gift cards to delegates, allowing them to select their own gifts from this space.

The Sustainability Village's responsible gifting meets all three criteria that includes eco-procurement, social upliftment, and avoiding the unnecessary waste of unwanted gifts, all of which ensure event waste is reduced.

Justin Hawes, the managing director of Scan Display, Indaba 2019's infrastructure providers, concludes: "For the Sustainability Village, we created modular structures out of raw wood and African fabrics. Two thirds of them were re-used from the Meetings Africa show earlier this year, and they will be re-used over the coming years."