Let's :commit: and think about @tomorrow

Sustainability Statement

1. Introduction

Concerns about the well-being of the planet are growing globally, due to the negative impact humans have on our environment. Everyone has to play their part in creating a more sustainable and eco-friendly world, and exec(ut) is no exception. For this reason, we have decided to write a sustainability statement to clearly communicate the ongoing process of making exec(ut) more environmentally responsible.

We have a clear long-term goal:

"To make exec(ut) one of the most eco-friendly and carbon neutral conferences."

In this document you can find an evaluation of the past editions and our objectives for the upcoming conferences. A set of guidelines for goodies is included in the section 4, which can be used for reference by our upcoming committees and sponsors. If you have any more questions or comments regarding the sustainability practices of exec(ut), feel free to send an email to sustainability@execut.nl.

2. Evaluation of our past conferences

Our sustainability journey started during the second edition in 2019. Building on the success of the first edition, the goal was to upscale, but at the same time staying environmentally friendly. Ideas like compensating CO_2 emissions by buying trees were introduced that year.

During the pandemic, exec(ut) was transformed into a digital summer edition. Due to the nature of being a digital event, the conference was very eco-friendly, producing almost no waste at all. Invited speakers arrived from Europe or domestically, and attendees watched the conference from home.

Since then, exec(ut) was held again in its original physical form. Below the sustainability achievements previous editions will be evaluated.

2.1. Goodies

exec(ut) is made possible by its partners, who support the conference financially, but also physically by sending experienced IT professionals to attend the conference and represent their workplace. Partners also provided a large amount of useful and fun goodies to hand out during the conference. While most of these goodies were already very useful and meant for long-term use, some goodies were obviously less sustainable than others. To prevent unwanted goodies from ending up in landfills, the exec(ut) 2023 committee placed a large bin at the exit where visitors could dispose of their unwanted items. These goodies were returned to partners.

Furthermore, during the 2023 edition, there were plenty of goodies and goodie-bags leftover due to no shows (participants that bought a ticket but did not show up) and a miscalculation in the predicted amount of participants. Instead of throwing the remaining goodies away, we delivered them back to the partners so they could use the items for other purposes.

To prevent unwanted goodies, we have decided to create a blacklist to disincentive the distribution of unsustainable items on exec(ut). This blacklist can be found in section 4.

2.2. Less (paper) waste

One of the goals of the previous edition was to have less paper waste. We designed a website to replace the booklet that was used in previous editions. This way, our paper use was reduced greatly, since only the participant badges had to be printed.

Furthermore, we invested in buying reusable promotional assets. As an example we designed modular banners in 2022, on which posters can be displayed for the upcoming years instead of buying new banners each year.

2.3. Diet

We moved to 100% vegan/vegetarian food in the 2023 edition. Attendees responded positively to this change and from that edition onward the requirement of only serving vegan/vegetarian food has been adopted in the outsourcing agreement from the study association.

3. Objectives for upcoming conferences

Now with the evaluation of the last edition in mind, we will be increasing our efforts to make exec(ut) more sustainable. Based on previous experiences and inspiration from other events, we have devised the following sustainability objectives:

1. Prioritise a limited selection of high-quality conference goodies rather than offering a larger number of lower-quality items. A list of disallowed items is maintained in Section 4.

2. Refrain from distributing general goodie-bags. Instead, provide individual items only to those interested.

3. Aim to find other means to reduce the amount of unwanted goodies.

4. No more non-reusable/recyclable decoration items, except for the ones required by our sponsor agreements.

5. Reduce the amount of paper used as much as possible by relying on digital media.

6. Make all of the food served during exec(ut) is vegetarian or vegan.

7. Aim to transport speakers by sustainable means.

Looking forward, we will be vigilant in looking for more opportunities to make our conference even more eco-friendly.

4. Goodie-bag guidelines

Here is a short list of suggestions in what are sustainable and often desired goodies:

- Pens
- Paper notebooks
- Textile items (e.g. towel or socks)
- Decoration made from bio-degradable materials
- Ceramic items (e.g. mugs)
- Credit card holders and wallets
- Goodies made from sustainable materials

As a general rule of thumb we advise partners to focus on quality and not quantity of goodies and only hand them out to interested participants. This prevents goodies from being thrown out after the event.

The table below contains a list of undesirable items for our own goodie-bags.

Item	Reason for ban
Promotional flyers and business cards	These will almost always instantly be thrown out. There will be enough opportunities to promote the company on the conference itself through physical presence and digital media. Instead of including them in a goodie-bag hand them out to interested attendees or utilise digital tools such as our website.
Food items	Items with an expiry date cannot be reused and must be thrown away after the event.
Disposable plastic items	Plastic in and of itself is not always bad. Plastic is a long-lived material which is sometimes indispensable in items that are very durable and useful (such as computers). However, plastic disposables are very unsustainable and therefore unwelcome.
Plastic beer openers or pizza cutters	Students love beer and pizza, which is the reason we are often given lots of beer openers and pizza cutters made of plastics. These are fun and useful goodies, but the cheap plastic kind will simply be thrown out as we are often already given enough of the higher quality ones. Please leave the cheap plastic kind of cutter/opener out of the goodie-bags.
Plastic bags and wrappers	We understand that some items come in plastic wrappers directly from the manufacturer, but please try to limit excess plastic packaging and do not add your own plastic bags.

Of course we welcome any original and fun goodies that our sponsors and committee members can come up with, as long as they are not clearly unsustainable and undesirable for most of the students.

If you have any questions about this document or questions about if the goodies you have in mind are allowed contact us at sustainability@execut.nl.