# EACH Environmental Policy

**Aim**

EACH recognises that climate change is a real threat to people around the world and particularly the most vulnerable members of our communities. EACH is committed to implementing practices to minimise the environmental impact of its activities.

**Context**

EACH is a relatively small, not-for-profit charitable association that provides opportunities for international networking and sharing of expertise in healthcare communication teaching, research, policy and practice. Since its inception in 2001, EACH has become a global community of practice with a mission to support the development of effective patient-centred communication in countries across the world.  Many countries and healthcare disciplines are still in the early stages of understanding the need for effective clinical communication and how to accomplish it.  EACH provides an important means to share good practice irrespective of international borders. EACH covers its running costs primarily through membership fees and event registrations, and to a lesser degree through consultancy and event sponsorship.

A huge proportion of EACH’s work is conducted remotely (e.g. on Zoom), such as webinars, online courses, the Summer School for early career researchers, networking, and meetings (Executive Committee, Advisory Committee, Teaching, Research, and Policy and Practice Sub-committees, Special Interest Groups, Finance, Board of Trustees, Annual General Meeting). Resource sharing and networking also take place via EACH’s interactive website and social media channels.  A small proportion of EACH’s activity is conducted in-person (e.g. in-person courses, and a biennial international conference). Whenever possible, in-person events are held in tandem to reduce travel (e.g. pairing a course with a sub-committee meeting, or holding courses and committee meetings adjacent to the conference).

The range of EACH-hosted activities and events provides a balance between in-person and online participation, as each have their own features which support networking and sharing of best practice to promote the development of high quality healthcare communication:

* ‘Tentpole’ in-person events enable colleagues to come together to share information and network in a way that is maximally supportive, enabling colleagues to benefit from the creative and social-bonding elements of workplace interactions that are known to be important both for productivity and a sense of belonging.
* Remote events enable more frequent, flexible and convenient interactions within our international community, which goes some way to addressing barriers members might face, such as distance, finances, ability to travel and other commitments (such as caring responsibilities).

This balance aims to send a clear signal to EACH members that EACH is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming community in which all members are able to participate.

EACH was born out of a sense of community that was fostered at the previously ad hoc international conferences held during the 1990s. The biennial EACH-hosted international conference is an important event for EACH members and conference delegates to share good practice and to develop supportive and longstanding working relationships. The international conference is carefully designed by EACH members to be a high quality, ‘one-stop-shop’, to enable delegates to access up-to-date, evidence-based innovations and good practice in clinical communication teaching, research and practice, as well as providing opportunities to discuss these with experts in the field. Pre-pandemic, the international conference could only be attended in person, and during the pandemic, it was delivered entirely remotely (albeit in abbreviated form). In the post-pandemic world, neither of these binary options enables the conference to fulfil all our requirements. Consequently the conference is currently designed as an in-person event, with the option of online-only attendance available for those who are unable to travel (e.g. due to finances or caring responsibilities) or who have chosen not to attend in person (e.g. due to not wishing to travel). Both forms of attendance include opportunities for delegates to present their work and network, as well as attending presentations (such as keynote talks): the online option is not a ‘view only’ form of attendance, and the aim is that all delegates are able to participate meaningfully in the conference.

EACH has a policy that all conference venues are easily accessible to delegates through a variety of means of public transport (such as trains, ferries, coaches, buses and/or trams).

Across the board, all of EACH’s events (both in-person and online) are designed to:

* Provide opportunities for networking, both planned and spontaneous
* Enable sharing of evidence-based best practice
* Facilitate the development of collaborative working relationships
* Foster good practice in healthcare communication across the globe

**Our commitment:**

EACH undertakes to:

* Promote responsibility for the environment within the association and communicate and implement this policy at all levels within the association.
* Comply with all relevant environmental legislation and regulations.
* Ensure that all our policies and activities are developed in a way that is consistent with this Environmental Policy.
* Take into account environmental considerations in our procurement.
* Minimise waste by implementing ‘reduce, re-use and recycle’ methods wherever possible.
* Encourage lower carbon travel options.
* Include carbon ‘offsetting’ options for any carbon-intensive activities.
* Ensure that our members are familiar with our environmental policy.
* Work in collaboration with our suppliers to reduce the overall environmental impact of the supply chain.
* Require suppliers to provide their own environmental policies for us to review their carbon footprint and carbon reduction targets, wherever possible.

**EACH’s practices to minimise the environmental impact of its activities**

EACH-hosted in-person events will:

* Have drinkable water freely available and encourage all event attendees to bring reusable water bottles.
* Make use of technology and apps rather than paper agendas and programmes.
* Discourage unnecessary printing.
* Provide recycling facilities.
* Be easily accessible by public transport.
* Be hosted in venues with ‘green credentials’ wherever possible.
* Use caterers who source locally and serve food on sustainable materials.
* Encourage more vegetarian options.
* Discourage use of cloud recording of events and delete once used.
* Use materials (e.g. branding, banners) which can be re-used.
* Provide the option of online attendance where appropriate, e.g. live streaming, presenting and/or networking facilities.

# Responsibility and review

This Environmental Policy was prepared by the EACH Executive and approved on 16.1.24.

It was adopted by the Board of Trustees on 19.3.24 and will be reviewed annually.

It was last reviewed on 19.3.24.

LN 27.3.24