Although combating the coronavirus poses an exceptionally big challenge for the meeting industry, the Congress Center Basel (CCB) also recognizes the opportunities that this crisis is opening up. While recent events have led to greater attention being focused on the negative impact of travel, they have also highlighted two key concerns of Switzerland’s biggest congress centre: increasing sustainability and improving the quality of the services offered.

In geographical terms, Basel is the ideal place for staging a congress with the smallest possible ecological footprint. The city is, after all, located right at the heart of Europe with good rail links to all the major urban centres in its neighboring countries. The tram and bus network is so well developed that hardly anyone drives by car to get from A to B. And guests staying in Basel hotels can even use public transport free of charge. The city has also been committed to sustainability for many years. Only recently was Basel awarded the “Green City of Switzerland” Silver Label for its many green and unbuilt spaces. All its electricity comes from renewable energy sources and, by 2050, annual CO₂ emissions will be cut to less than one metric ton per inhabitant.

In the light of all these factors, it is not surprising that the CCB is also intent on ensuring environmentally friendly standards. To reduce the amount of waste and pollutants, it selects its suppliers carefully, while endeavoring to make sparing use of consumables. The CCB has now boosted its recycling rate to more than 90%. And that’s not all. Back in 2016 it set up its own in-house ‘Green Team’ – committed employees who put together environmentally-friendly offers and communicate these.

One of the Green Team’s key achievements is the CO₂ calculator. Organizers enter the data for mobility, location, overnight accommodation, and energy and water consumption, and then calculate the overall emissions of their events and the costs these generate. Evaluating the emissions is one aspect, and keeping them to a minimum the other. The Green Team thus works with the eminent Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, which is currently running a number of different climate-related projects. Organizers can now make a financial contribution to these projects, linking their event directly to the conservation of natural resources.

“The happenings of the past few weeks have sped up developments that we were already working toward,” explains Jonas Scharf, Head of the CCB. “Independently of environmental issues, one thing is certain: In the post-corona era, meetings must become more worthwhile for participants.” The CCB is convinced that it is well-positioned here, since the cliché of Swiss perfectionism is not without foundation. In addition to unique scenery, an outstanding specialist competence and quality of service await you in Switzerland. At the same time, the CCB offers attractive premises and state-of-the-art technical infrastructure. “And we can promise you,” says Scharf, “that we are using this quiet period to make even more improvements.”

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