

EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF NURSING SCIENCE



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY v_1.1

Purpose and Context

This policy document guides the European Academy of Nursing Science (EANS) on how to run and participate in environmentally sustainable academic and research activities with the primary aim of minimising overall greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from these activities. This policy aims to ensure that EANS consistently adopts relevant and up-to-date environmentally sustainable practices.

Scope

The document applies to EANS at large and all those involved who support or participate in its academic and research activities. Any additions or potential exemptions to the policy will be considered exceptionally by the EANS Board in discussion with the Environmental Sustainability Working Group.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Global warming, driven by existing and future GHG emissions, poses a threat to human civilisation and development.¹ As institutions of education and research, universities and academic societies are increasingly being called to act as 'key catalysts' in driving shifts toward environmental sustainability through advocacy and activism.¹ Indeed, academics and researchers should, first and foremost, serve as role models in putting knowledge into practice.² Scientific activities and meetings, such as in-person summer schools, conferences, and workshops — characteristic of scientific communities — often leave significant carbon footprints, directly contradicting the imperative to decrease GHG and promote environmental sustainability.²
- 1.2 This document outlines actions to be taken by the EANS Board. It also includes actions to be taken by Organising Committees of EANS and site event organisers (all hereby referred to as 'the Organisers') designed to enable participants in EANS activities enact environmentally sustainable behaviours. These recommendations are primarily aimed at reducing GHG emissions resulting from the academic and research activities of EANS. The policy is based around the COM-B model, (figure) which posits that organisations need to make policy and contextual changes in order to provide individuals with the Opportunity to change their behaviours. However, people must also have individual

Capability and personal Motivation before they can take advantage of these opportunities.³ Therefore, organisations like EANS should enact additional strategies to enhance individual's capability and motivation for behaviour change. These strategies include environmental change, education, enablement, persuasion and incentivisation.

- 1.3 In addition, this document outlines actions that are necessary to support the policy recommendations, ensuring equitable, compliant, and effective actions.

2.0 Environmental sustainability recommendations

2.1 Opportunity

- 2.1.1 Organising virtual or hybrid events results in significant reductions in GHG emissions.^{4,5} However, numerous scholars express scepticism about the ability of virtual communication to match the networking and educational benefits offered by in-person events.^{6,7} While this should not dissuade EANS from hosting online and hybrid events, it should prompt the EANS Board to question, justify and minimise the number of face-to-face events in annual planning, having taken full account of the predicted GHG emissions profile of any such meeting(s).²

2.1.2 Online or hybrid events

- 2.1.2.1 Appropriate online platforms should be used, based on available financial and technological support capacity.²

- 2.1.2.2 Where applicable, the Organisers should dedicate time for participants to virtually meet and chat with other participants including experts one-on-one.²

- 2.1.2.3 The Organisers should ensure that virtual events are accessible to individuals with disabilities by providing closed captioning, transcripts, and other necessary accommodations.

2.1.3 In-person events

- 2.1.3.1 Careful event-location selection informed by the geographic dispersion of EANS members likely to attend the event is an effective strategy for reducing GHG emissions associated with travel.⁵ Locations in Central Europe have less carbon impact compared to those further afield.⁸ We recognise that these decisions need to be taken within the political and financial context of EANS, an individual membership-based, pan-European, inclusive scientific organisation. As such, the EANS Board may want to vary summer school venues to include places that are not in Central Europe, but when doing so should conduct a prior assessment of the predicted GHG emissions consequent upon these decisions. The EANS Board has agreed the following statement to assist in making

the best choices for summer school and conference venues that balance the environmental impact with venue inclusivity:

"In line with our commitment to environmental sustainability, the majority of summer schools and conferences should be organised in European locations that are easily accessible by ground-based transport, such as trains or other low-emission options for a majority of the expected attendees. This approach aims to minimise the greenhouse gas emissions associated with participant travel."

- 2.1.3.2 When selecting an event venue, the EANS Board should consider prioritising sites where the host university has a published sustainability policy concerning emissions from Scope 1 (produced directly by the university itself through its own activities) and 2 (indirect emissions caused by others who produce the energy consumed in the activities of the university), and other environmentally sustainable actions such as recycling, no single use plastics, seasonally sourced plant-based meals, etc. Choices should be made not just on published policies, but also from evidence, either through audit data, reports or legitimate national certification schemes, that such policies are being effectively implemented and are year on year reducing GHG emissions and other environmentally polluting behaviours at the host university.
- 2.1.3.3 Before selecting an event venue and host organisation or university, the EANS Board should demand that candidate sites wishing to run events on behalf of EANS outline a clear sustainability plan that includes actions to reduce, mitigate and eliminate site based GHG emissions and other environmentally polluting behaviours. The EANS Board should make decisions on awarding host status contingent on being satisfied with these plans.
- 2.1.3.4 The EANS Board should also share the EANS environmental sustainability policy with candidate host organisations to help them adopt best practices to reduce GHG emissions and other environmentally polluting behaviours.
- 2.1.3.5 The chosen location should be reachable by rich alternative ground-based transport options, such as high-speed electrified train lines, by as many participants as possible.^{2,8} The Organisers should also provide participants with low GHG hotel-to-venue travel options,⁸ and promote the use of public transport.²
- 2.1.3.6 The Organisers should block book accommodation with low GHG emission characteristics.⁸
- 2.1.3.7 The Organisers should provide participants with the opportunity to choose sustainable travel and accommodation options, offering assistance with, for example, booking train tickets.² Organisers can also collaborate with ethical, sustainable travel agencies prioritising lower GHG emissions for bookings.⁸

2.1.3.8 In view of the associated increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, animal-based food at events should not be the default choice, but rather one dietary option.^{9,10} The norm should be plant-based meals, based on local, seasonal, and field-grown vegetables.¹¹

2.1.3.9 The Organisers should avoid single-use items, such as booklets, lanyards, plastic water bottles, coffee cups, and other relatable items.^{2,12}

2.1.3.10 In cases where academic and research activities are covered by a registration fee, the Organisers should consider allocating a portion of registration fees to a legitimate carbon offsetting scheme, communicating this fact to event participants.^{2,12}

2.2 **Capability**

2.2.1 *Online or hybrid events*

2.2.1.1 The Organisers should choose online platforms that prioritise energy efficiency and have a commitment to sustainability. Platforms that utilise renewable energy sources for their servers and operations should be preferred.

2.2.1.2 During online and hybrid events, the Organisers should facilitate virtual networking opportunities including one-to-one meetings between participants to encourage networking and interaction, simulating the benefits of in-person events. Using virtual breakout sessions and discussion forums will help promote engagement from participants.

2.2.1.3 The Organisers should provide training sessions or resources for participants to familiarise themselves with the chosen online platforms. They should also share guidelines with presenters on how to make virtual presentations engaging and effective.

2.2.2 *In-person events*

2.2.2.1 Guidance and information about alternative modes of transport with fewer GHG emissions should be provided as part of the event communications and promotional materials. Websites such as [Seat 61](#) and [Rome 2 Rio](#) can enhance the capability of people to access sustainable modes of transport.

2.2.2.2 The Organisers should explore with the EANS Board ways to financially support those participants, particularly early career researchers on limited incomes, who choose to travel to events using sustainable ground-based travel options that are more expensive than aviation.

2.2.2.3 The Organisers should provide event participants with the option of contributing to a legitimate and reputable carbon offsetting scheme for transport and accommodation GHG emissions, communicating this possibility to event participants.^{2,12}

2.3 Motivation

2.3.1 *Online or hybrid events*

2.3.1.1 Where possible, registration fees for online events should be affordable or free.²

2.3.1.2 The Organisers should highlight the financial and GHG emissions savings associated with virtual attendance, such as reduced travel and accommodation expenses and emissions, communicating this to event participants before and after the event.

2.3.1.3 The Organisers should foster a sense of community through virtual networking events, discussion forums, and social media platforms.

2.3.2 *In-person events*

2.3.2.1 The Organisers should highlight the environmental and cost-saving benefits of participants making sustainable travel choices in event promotional materials, including application forms, by providing applicants with GHG emissions calculators such as <https://travel-footprint-calculator.irap.omp.eu/estimate.html> or www.travelandclimate.org.

2.3.2.2 The Organisers should showcase the event's commitment to sustainability by regular communication with event participants about the impact of their sustainability initiatives.

2.3.2.3 In both pre-event and post-event communications, the Organisers should provide updates on the positive environmental impact achieved through these actions, including updates during conferences.

2.3.2.4 The Organisers should explore with the EANS Board affordable strategies for financial support to participants, in order to motivate them to choose sustainable ground-based travel options that are more expensive than aviation.

3.0 Equality statement

3.1 When taking actions to minimise GHG emissions associated with EANS events, we emphasise that these recommended actions aim to create an overall effect on the carbon load at group level. Actions that penalise individuals should be avoided, as for some people alternative transport options are not feasible (e.g., not living within a reasonable distance of the venue, no easy ground-based travel options available, family

or caring obligations). The responsibility should rest with EANS to remove some of the barriers faced by individuals, increase participants capabilities and motivate them to choose different options. In that way EANS will minimise the carbon footprint at group level.

4.0 Implementation and Communication

- 4.1 The EANS Board and the Organising Committees and other Working Groups should provide evidence to the EANS Annual General Meeting to demonstrate implementation of this policy and quantify its impact on GHG emissions in all EANS research and educational activities.
- 4.2 It is the responsibility of the EANS Board to ensure that Organising Committees, Working Groups and academic institutions or organisations delivering EANS activities provide evidence to the Board to demonstrate implementation of these policy recommendations and the effects thereof.
- 4.3 The EANS Board, or working group thereof, should require that Organising Committees, Working Groups and academic institutions or organisations that deliver EANS activities audit and report their total GHG emissions from site based and travel activities using robust methods recommended by the EANS Working Group on Environmental Sustainability.
- 4.4 The EANS Board has responsibility for the effective communication of the policy to the relevant Committees, Working Groups, host organisations and target audiences. The EANS Board should ensure that the policy is promoted on advertising for EANS events and include its direct web-link in any communication.
- 4.5 Where appropriate, for example when holding the annual Summer School, the EANS Board, in collaboration with the Working Group on Environmental Sustainability, should develop and run bespoke support and educational sessions for the Organisers and participants to enhance understanding of, and adherence to, the policy.

5.0 Retention and Storage

- 5.1 The primary location for this policy is the EANS website (www.eansnursing.eu/).
- 5.2 The EANS Board is responsible for providing a copy of the final, approved version to the Website Administrator for upload. The Website Administrator is to ensure that only the latest version of this policy remains available for download.

6.0 Review process

- 6.1 It is the responsibility of the EANS Board to establish the review date/interval and ensure that the review is completed at the appropriate time. Normally a three-year review period is sufficient, however the EANS Board and/or the Working Group on Environmental Sustainability review may determine that a review might be required earlier if there is a legislative or regulatory requirement, or in view of new evidence-based recommendations, or other factors.
- 6.2 As part of the review process, the EANS Board should evaluate how effective the policy is in terms of its implementation and outcomes, particularly trends over time for GHG emissions from EANS activities, and also including behaviour change data such as travel modes used by event participants.
- 6.3 The EANS Board must ensure that any change implemented is in consultation with the EANS Working Group on Environmental Sustainability and Scientific Committee. This must be updated on the Policy Sign-off page.
- 6.4 A reviewed policy will have a new version number.

7.0 Compliance

- 7.1 The EANS Board is responsible for ensuring compliance with the policy.
- 7.2 An annual compliance check against the Policy recommendations should be undertaken by the EANS Working Group on Environmental Sustainability or a designated member/working group.

8.0 Feedback

- 8.1 Feedback on this policy may be sent to the EANS Board at info@eansnursing.eu.

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v_1.0	January 2024	First draft of policy	Joseph Grech, Lorna Hollowood and David A. Richards
v_1.1	February 2026	Second draft of policy incorporating the statement agreed by the EANS Board on principles for selection of in-person summer school and conference venues	Mieke Deschodt, David A. Richards. Reviewed and agreed by the other members of the EANS Environmental Sustainability Working Group

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Figure. EANS Behaviour Change Model for Environmental Sustainability

