

# WOMEN IN CLEANTECH

## GENDER DIVERSITY EVENT GUIDANCE

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2018 the London Sustainable Development Commission undertook research to understand the participation of women within London's low carbon, environmental goods and services sector, the "cleantech" sector. The evidence collected as part of that research indicates a low participation rate of women in cleantech. This is a problem for the growth of Cleantech in London.

Evidence is there to support the diversity dividend argument with the latest McKinsey "Delivering through diversity" report<sup>1</sup> finding that companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams being 21% more likely to have above average financial profitability, up from 15% in 2015. Gender diversity is good for business but women are still underrepresented in senior roles and this lack of representation is even more apparent in the tech sector.

## ABOUT THIS GUIDANCE

As part of our work to help more women enter the cleantech world we recognize the importance of events as opportunities to meet, network, promote and be inspired. However the reality is that many events are not tailored to achieve gender diversity and as a result can alienate and intimidate rather than inspire and encourage. Male dominated panels, speakers, event timings and format

can impact on the value that women get from events. By not tailoring events to meet the needs of the whole potential audience event organisers are also missing out on the diversity dividend both in terms of attendees and participants who could make their event more successful, enjoyable and effective.

The Women in Cleantech team have created guidance for event organisers to help shape events to better reflect a more gender diverse audience.

N.B. The WiCT work focusses only on gender disparity within Cleantech but it should also be noted that other disparities exist based on the 9 protected characteristics - <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics> - which sit outside of the scope of this guidance but which should also be taken into consideration when organizing events.

Whilst this guidance focusses on diversity considerations for event organizers it is also recommended that event delivery organisations follow sustainability guidelines and practices when organizing and delivering events to minimize the environmental impacts of events.

The guidance is designed for anyone organizing an event for the cleantech industry, taking you through the elements of organization from selection of speakers to venue and timing. It includes links to additional resources to help support you further.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/delivering-through-diversity>

## LOGISTICS

### Aim for 50% placement of women on panels and as speakers for your event.

#### How:

- Work with event partners to develop an organizer commitment to diversity and publish on event website.
- Work with partners to identify women panelists and/or speakers to attend from existing partner networks.
- Use a speaker bureau to search for female speakers/panelists for events (Organisations such as Future of London operate speaker bureaus to help identify suitable speakers for events in London - [www.futureoflondon.org.uk](http://www.futureoflondon.org.uk)).
- If running a specific investor or pitch event ensure that you target gender equality on pitch and investor panels.

### Ensure your venue and location meets the needs of your attendees and reflects your commitment to diversity.

#### How:

- When tendering for venues ensure you include the requirement for a diversity and inclusion policy or specific clause within an event sustainability policy or standard to advocate gender diversity as part of venue service delivery. The Greater London Authority has a Diversity and Inclusion standard covering its operations including recruitment - [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla\\_group\\_diversity\\_standard.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_group_diversity_standard.pdf)

- Many other organisations have developed their own policies to ensure diversity in the workplace and in wider service delivery. The British Standards Institution have also now published a standard on diversity and inclusion good practice for employers - <https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/about-bsi/media-centre/press-releases/2017/june/British-Standard-for-diversity-and-inclusion-launched/>

- Ensure venues are fully accessible.
- Locate centrally or near good transport connections rather than remote locations requiring overnight stays to avoid limiting access for those with caring responsibilities which can fall disproportionately on women.

**Ensure the timings of your event do not disadvantage carers or parents<sup>2</sup>** (women are more likely to take on caring roles – of the 6.5million unpaid carers in the UK 58% are women whilst women provide 74% of total childcare<sup>3</sup>).

#### How:

- Do not begin events before 9am, with networking from 8.30. Female parents and carers may have to miss networking opportunities. Instead start later and include networking as part of lunch breaks.
- Ensure events end by 5.30pm, instead of cocktails and drink receptions include afternoon or lunch time networking opportunities.

<sup>2</sup> Census 2011

<sup>3</sup> Changes in the value and division of unpaid care work in the UK: 2000-2015 ONS

## MARKETING

### Ensure your event title maximizes your audience.

#### How:

- Titles with women or diversity can deter men from attending, negatively impacting on collaborative opportunities for all potential attendees. Focus instead on the content of the event or presentations rather than your audience.

### Establish event rules of behavior/mission statement upfront for all participants to ensure respect and inclusion are core to the event ethos.

#### How:

- Develop a Code of Conduct for your event for suppliers, speakers, exhibitors and event partners to establish common principles of behavior. An example code of conduct can be found via a link on the Women in Cleantech web pages, <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/organisations-we-work/london-sustainable-development-commission/our-current-work-and-priorities/our-cleantech-and-innovation-work/our-women-cleantech-work>
- Publicise the code of conduct on relevant marketing material about the event, e.g. website.
- Provide a list of expected behaviours or approaches for attendees to make the most out of the event.

### Promote diverse speakers at your event.

#### How:

- Highlight diverse panels and speakers with photographs and biogs where appropriate.
- Avoid pictures of panels if they lack sufficient diversity as this may reinforce negative perceptions of the event from underrepresented groups.
- Think about establishing a speaker pledge initiative as part of the event with pledge cards for attendees to commit their organization to speaker diversity for any events that they may host in the future. Pledges are submitted and uploaded onto the event organizer website to highlight commitments. (See *Future of London* speaker pledge for example of this - [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScy4sWOI\\_EUzBI-DC84Ug8HQjVYDxU0MrkMxC4twgCfWaJQdA/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScy4sWOI_EUzBI-DC84Ug8HQjVYDxU0MrkMxC4twgCfWaJQdA/viewform))

### Ensure your content is accessible to all.

#### How:

- Provide facts and evidence for event contributors to consider specific audience needs in terms of visual content e.g. 8% of men are colour blind whilst less than 1% of women are.

## Getting the right audience along.

### How:

- Use your networks and invite lists to target a wide variety of potential attendees. Consider targeting female focused groups or groups where you wish to encourage more attendees.
- Review the WiCT network listings to establish links through which to promote your event.
- Offer a pre-arranged connection service for attendees, who are randomly paired with another attendee at the event to facilitate networking at scheduled times.

- Publish attendee lists at all events to help identify specific contacts and areas of interest.
- Consider using an event/conference app allowing participants to create profiles, list interests and arrange meet ups in advance. This approach can help elevate networking opportunities and increase confidence amongst participants.

## Enable a wider range of interactions from the floor during Q&A sessions to help increase participation.

### How:

- Use technology enabling questions to be submitted via phone during live discussions.
- Ask participants to submit questions either via email or written down on Q cards before each session.
- Actively encourage selection of underrepresented questioners by those selecting from the audience.
- Brief roving mic operators to take questions from a variety of attendees, think about starting with a question from a female attendee which can help create an inclusive environment where people feel empowered to contribute.

## EVENT STRUCTURE

### Design your networking sessions to avoid “conscious security”, where attendees only network with those who mirror them.

### How:

- Consider using a structured approach to networking such as topic/matching cards handed out during registration to help support random connections.
- Use tables labelled with specific interest areas to drive similarly interested individuals together.
- Employ gamification techniques to enable better connections, e.g. scavenger hunts based on collecting business cards, job titles, etc, speed networking, or business card collection contests.



## Ensure the physical environment of the event is conducive to supporting female participants.

### How:

- Female participants will be disadvantaged if high or bar stool like chairs are used in panel or stage discussions, skirt lengths or overall individuals height may make such furniture uncomfortable and challenging.
- Microphone and podium heights should be adjustable to allow for participants of varying heights.
- Temperature can adversely impact certain attendees e.g. menopausal women can struggle in overheated environments whilst a recent study<sup>4</sup> found that women increased their performance in maths problems by 1.75% for every 1.8 degree temperature increase. Ensure you assess the temperature of the event environment and maintain a balanced room temperature (colloquially within a range between 20-22°C) or be prepared to adjust according to audience and participant need.

## POST CONFERENCE

### Learn what went well, how you can improve and allow post conference follow up.

#### How:

- Run a post conference survey of attendees based either on a simple net promoter score or text input – include specific questions around diversity to gauge success and where improvements can be made.
- Circulate attendee lists as part of post event follow up to allow for those unable to make contact at the event to follow up subsequently.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

Best practices for gender diversity at industry events - <https://gwec.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Best-Practices-for-Gender-Diversity-Final.pdf>

Developing inclusive conferences - [https://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/about/equality-diversity/190522\\_Inclusive\\_Conference\\_Guide.pdf](https://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/about/equality-diversity/190522_Inclusive_Conference_Guide.pdf)

Inclusive conferences? We can and must do better - here's how: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2019/06/06/inclusive-conferences-we-can-and-must-do-better-heres-how/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/why-cold-offices-may-have-a-chilling-impact-on-women/>