



## Sustainable Giveaways and Alternatives

**This document was prepared in collaboration with the UZH Sustainability team. It provides a non-exhaustive list of suggestions for non-material gifts and sustainable giveaways. The organizations and companies included in this document are only mentioned as examples; similar gifts are also available from other suppliers. The Event Management team and the Sustainability team are happy to get feedback on other sustainable gift ideas and provide further advice.**

**Please note:** Your most sustainable option is to avoid material giveaways altogether and hand out non-material gifts instead. If a gift is neither used nor regifted (e.g., because the recipient already owns it), it immediately becomes waste. You can prevent a negative impression by drawing attention to the fact that you are deliberately avoiding giveaways for reasons of sustainability. If you still want to show appreciation to speakers or guests with a material giveaway, you will find more sustainable options at the end of this overview.

### Non-material gifts as an alternative to giveaways

- **Donations to projects with a social or ecological purpose:** Either choose a project or organization for which you will make a donation yourself, or you can let the participants choose an organization or project that will receive a previously defined donation. The latter option provides participants with a higher degree of involvement. The amount to be donated can be freely chosen.
- **Sponsorships:** You can take out a sponsorship in the name of the event, for example based on a specific theme (e.g. sponsorships for water, education, wildlife conservation, trees, vines, bees and many more). Sponsorship costs vary greatly depending on the field. For example, there are sponsorships for CHF 150, CHF 350 or CHF 500.

### Material giveaways with a relatively low impact on the environment

#### Consumer goods

Consumer goods are suitable as material giveaways, as they are more likely to be used longer than durable (but often unnecessary) everyday items. They should be sourced from eco-friendly and regional suppliers, e.g.:

- **Organic jam from Zurich**
- **Honey**, e.g., local honey produced according to ecological criteria
- **Organic granola from Zurich**



### Gifts to promote biodiversity

Biodiversity is declining at an ever-increasing rate. Gifts to promote biodiversity can make a small contribution to its protection.

- **Flower or vegetable seeds:** For example, flower mixes, seed balls or individually printed and filled seed bags in different sizes. Make sure you choose organic seeds and plants that attract insects. Information on this should be available from the suppliers.
- **Bee hotel:** Make sure that the bee hotel provides nesting opportunities for various wild bees and is made of local wood, preferably by a charitable institution.

### Eco-friendly and fair gifts

If durable objects are given, it is important to make sure that they have been produced with as little environmental impact as possible, that they have been produced fairly, and that they can be of use to as many people as possible. In other words, it should be an item that most people do not already own.

- **Special notebooks:** For example, made from recycled leather from handbags and shoes, or from apple pomace.
- **Bags:** For example, made from paper, recycled PET bottles or fabric. We explicitly advise against using cotton bags, as cotton production has a high environmental impact. A cotton bag would have to be reused about 80 times to have a similarly low environmental impact as a disposable plastic bag, which consists of more than 80% recycled plastic, in line with the requirements for Blue Angel certification.<sup>1</sup>

The Event Management team and the Sustainability team will be happy to provide further information on sustainable giveaways and possible suppliers.

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<sup>1</sup> Hirschier, R. (2014). Ökobilanz von Tragetaschen. St. Gallen: EMPA, Abteilung Technologie und Gesellschaft.