

## COP31 ZERO WASTE SUMMIT GUIDE

### “A ZERO WASTE COP IS POSSIBLE”

#### **A Vision for a Zero-Waste COP**

COP summits, where decisions on the global fight against climate change are discussed, must serve not only as venues for diplomatic negotiations but also as exemplary organizations where climate-friendly practices are tangibly implemented..

In line with this understanding, the 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) aims to extend environmental responsibility to all components of the summit through the COP31 Zero Waste Summit, centering on the "A Zero-Waste COP is Possible" approach.

This guide is designed to define the application of the zero-waste principle across all activities organized within the scope of COP31 and to provide a common roadmap for the public sector, private sector, local governments, civil society, and participants.

#### **Waste Management in COP Processes**

Previous COP conferences (COP26 Glasgow, COP27 Sharm El-Sheikh, COP28 Dubai) have generated significant experience in reducing the environmental footprint of large-scale events. These processes have highlighted practices such as the gradual phase-out of single-use plastics, the establishment of reusable infrastructure, and event designs focused on waste prevention.

#### **The Zero Waste Movement and Türkiye's Experience**

In Türkiye, the **Zero Waste Movement**, launched under the leadership of **H.E. Mrs. Emine Erdoğan**, Chair of the UN Zero Waste High-Level Advisory Board and Honorary President of the Zero Waste Foundation, has provided a practical and scalable model for large-scale organisations.

Practices developed by the Zero Waste Foundation through national and international summits, public events, exhibitions, and event venues have clearly demonstrated that zero waste events are both feasible and sustainable.

**COP31 Antalya** aims to make this accumulated experience visible on a global scale.

## **Reduction of Single-Use Materials**

Single-use products are among the primary sources of waste generation at large-scale events such as COP conferences. Plastic bottles, packaging, promotional items, and service equipment quickly result in high volumes of waste.

### **The COP31 Approach**

Within the scope of the COP31 Zero Waste Summit:

- The use of single-use plastic products will be minimised.
- Reusable, deposit-based, or sharing-based systems will be implemented as alternatives.
- Informational and behavioural guidance tools will be used to support shifts in participant behaviour.

### **Insights from the Zero Waste Movement**

In previous Zero Waste Foundation events, the elimination of single-use products resulted in significant reductions in waste volumes, increased participant awareness, and long-term cost savings for organisers.

### **Design of Recycling Points**

Zero waste is not limited to reducing waste alone; it also encompasses the proper separation of unavoidable waste. For this reason, the design of recycling points is one of the core components of the COP31 Zero Waste Summit.

Recycling points will be designed to be easily accessible, clearly signposted, and visually simple and easy to understand.

Recycling areas developed within the framework of the Zero Waste Movement have demonstrated that well-designed systems positively influence participant behaviour.

Reusable materials are among the fundamental pillars of the circular economy. COP31 aims to extend this approach across the entire event infrastructure.

### **Areas of Application**

Stand and pavilion systems, food and beverage service equipment, and directional and informational signage constitute the primary areas of application.

In Zero Waste Foundation events, the use of reusable materials has reduced waste volumes and enabled materials to be repurposed after the event.

Single-use products are among the primary causes of waste generation at large-scale events. Within the scope of COP31 Antalya, it is aimed to systematically reduce the use

of all single-use materials, particularly single-use plastics. Accordingly, the complete elimination of single-use products and their replacement with reusable, deposit-based, and sharing-based systems is essential. This approach will not only reduce waste volumes but also support a lasting behavioural transformation in participants' consumption habits.

The reduction of single-use materials is considered one of the most visible and impactful implementation areas of COP31's zero waste approach.

### **Design of Recycling Points**

The zero waste approach encompasses not only waste reduction but also the correct separation of unavoidable waste. For this reason, the design of recycling points is a core component of the COP31 Antalya Zero Waste Summit.

Recycling areas will be designed to be easily accessible, clearly guided, and visually simple. This design approach aims to support participants in adopting correct separation behaviour.

Well-designed recycling points directly influence the on-site success of the zero waste approach.

### **Reusable Materials**

Reusable materials are among the fundamental building blocks of the circular economy approach. COP31 Antalya aims to prioritise the use of reusable materials throughout the entire event infrastructure.

Stand and pavilion systems, service equipment, signage, and other event components will be designed to be reusable after the event.

This approach both reduces waste volumes and prevents material waste following the event.

### **Sustainable Pavilion Standards**

Pavilions are among the most visible spaces of COP Conferences and are areas where sustainability principles must be directly reflected.

COP31 pavilion standards are based on modular, demountable, and reusable construction systems. The use of recyclable materials and materials with low environmental impact is included among the mandatory standards.

These standards aim to prevent pavilions from becoming waste after the event.

### **Event Planning for Waste Reduction**

Waste management begins not after an event has started, but at the planning stage. At COP31 Antalya, waste-free event design is adopted as a fundamental principle.

Event programmes, participant numbers, logistical requirements, and service planning will be structured in a way that minimises waste generation.

This approach is one of the key factors enabling the zero waste policy to succeed at an operational level.