



## Contacta loops create hearing access at COP28

Clarity of sound is key at any event, but especially when world leaders, and 70,000 other delegates, are discussing the climate emergency.

So, organisers of the UN Climate Change Conference COP28 climate summit in Dubai needed the highest quality hearing loops to make events at the December 2023 conference accessible to those with hearing loss.

Our partners in the region, Topland, were commissioned to install Contacta large area hearing loop systems in 43 COP28 venues in the Blue Zone and in the Green Zone around Expo City, previously used for the Expo 2020 Convention.

The Blue Zone was a UNFCCC managed site, opened to host the formal negotiations across the two weeks of the conference. It was also home to the World Climate Action Summit, the country pavilions, presidency events, and hundreds of side events including panel discussions, round tables, and cultural events.

The Green Zone, managed by COP28's host country of UAE, was a more informal space for youth representatives, artists, businesses, regional and local decision-makers to discuss, present and exchange ideas and solutions for a net-zero future.

Having been called in at the design stage, Topland Managing Director, Andy Faulkner, and his team of engineers were given floor plans of the venues. Emphasis was given to the control of the magnetic signal emitted by all 43 systems. The goal was to ensure confidentiality and prevent signal from spilling over between rooms.

The Contacta design team here in Kent worked with Topland to carefully create bespoke phased array configurations, integrating cancellation loops in each system. Our latest 3D visualisation software enabled perfect control of the signal and optimal coverage throughout the large meeting spaces with no overspill.

Hearing loops were the assistive listening technology preferred by the COP28 AV integration contractors, following the positive experience they had had at previous conventions.

More than 9,500m of copper hearing loop cable was laid over several weeks prior to the event. Thirty-two V22a-Pro and V34a-Pro hearing loop drivers were selected to power

loops in the larger rooms and 11 V15a drivers powered systems in the smaller rooms and spaces.

Every installation can have its challenges, but changes in rooms layout configuration forced the team to think on its feet and come up with quick solutions to meet the deadlines of the project.

Flooding caused by heavy rains in Dubai days before COP28 opened was another unexpected issue the installation team had to face. Despite the standing water, the loop cabling was unaffected. Once the floors had dried, Topland's engineers were able to test the loops, commission them to the IEC-60118-4 standard and meet the tight deadline before the climate conference began.

"This was such a significant job for us and the quality of Contacta's design work for the loop areas gave us absolute confidence," said Andy.

"Hearing loops were the ideal assistive listening technology for COP28 because it draws delegates from all over the world. Loops are universal so no matter where people come from, with a T-coil enabled hearing aid or cochlear implant, they can access sound from the loop. There's no latency so presentations and discussions are inclusive, and everyone is able to participate."