
Sustainability Events Guide

Earth Friendly Products



Introduction

These guidelines encompass any meetings, events and gatherings of up to twenty-five attendees.

Goal: Raising awareness of our efforts and sharing the best sustainable practices

Educating the participants about the sustainable aspects of the event is very important. The delegates should be aware of the sustainability measures being taken to improve the image and reputation of the organization and to protect the environment.

Venue Selection

- If the event is organized outside Earth Friendly Products facilities, choose a venue that is close to public transportation facilities when possible.
- Consider venues with natural spaces showing a commitment to biodiversity and the natural environment
- If a venue is not within walking distance of public transportation, offer a shuttle service or encourage taxi sharing.
- Buy local, seasonally available food products.
- Provide healthy options, such as fresh fruits and vegetables. Plant-based foods are preferable because they have lower environmental impacts compared to animal-based products. Ensure the venue can accommodate special dietetic needs for your guests.
- Use fair-trade products, such as coffee, tea, bananas and chocolate.
- Use reusable crockery, glassware, cutlery, tablecloths, napkins, etc., when possible.



- Food tray and drink containers/ jugs should have labels with their full name and possibly contents.
- Serve powder creamer in a stainless steel container.
- If disposables are unavoidable, use paper or wooden products rather than plastic ones. Styrofoam items are banned from Earth Friendly Product facilities.

In order to include all sustainability requirements to run an event, work with suppliers that encourage more environmentally preferable measures.

- Choose a venue that is close to public transportation facilities. Ensure that venue size reflects the needs and number of participants to avoid excessive lighting and air handling requirements.
- Ask to see the venue's environmental policy or statement of venue organization and evaluate their commitment to environmental sustainability.
- Request rooms with natural ventilation and lighting (open windows/ blinds), water catchments, breezeways, etc.
- Ask whether you can control the heating and air-conditioning in the event's room. This will help you effectively and efficiently control the comfort of the room.
- Run events during the day to reduce energy consumption from lighting and heating.
- Request that environmentally safe cleaning products are used by the venue and by event contractors.
- Prioritize venues with accredited green power and/ or Green Start accreditation for construction and building requirements.



- Consider venues with natural spaces, showing a commitment to biodiversity and the natural environment.
- Ensure that the venue has standard accessibility requirements, such as level or ramped entry, acoustics appropriate for hearing aid users, and (working) loop systems in lecture theaters or reception desks.

Waste

The event organizers for Earth Friendly Products are expected to follow these directives:

- Have recycle and compost bins that easily accessible and clearly labeled.
- Store and reuse materials and equipment or salvage and donate materials for repurposing/ reuse.
- Eliminate the use of single-use plastic bags.
- Provide recycling facilities for bottles, cans, plastics, paper, cardboard and organic waste when possible.

Note on Sustainable Event Programming

Earth Friendly Products is committed to excellence, quality and community leadership in all its activities. At Earth Friendly Products, we aim to fulfill obligations to sustainability leadership by supporting activities that contribute to environmental awareness, social justice, human rights and a sustainable environment. Earth Friendly Products has identified and developed the Sustainable Events Guide to help event organizers run their events sustainably. When organizing an event, social,



economic and environmental impacts should be considered from the start. Reducing environmental impacts should be integral to any event.

A carbon neutral event is one where the carbon emissions from the event are balanced with appropriate carbon sequestering or offsetting, giving net zero carbon emissions. If following all the details in the guide is not possible, think about the overall approach and how the options you choose can make an event more sustainable. The Sustainable Events Guide aims to introduce programs by promoting reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and zero waste to landfills through strategies in the following areas:

- Water conservation
- Social justice and fair trade standards
- Sustainable catering
- Venue selection
- Transport
- Preparation
- Social wellbeing
- Evaluation

At Earth Friendly Products, the way we communicate our sustainability goals will impact both the image of the event and the effectiveness of our initiatives. The ultimate aim of a carbon management strategy should be to maximize the reduction of emissions. Organizing an event should follow this hierarchy of greenhouse emissions management:

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Earth Friendly Products
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- Reduce direct emissions – reducing the in-house carbon footprint and creating bottom-line savings by implementing all cost-effective carbon reduction measures
- Reduce indirect emissions – working with other organizations (e.g. suppliers to reduce emissions)

To protect our natural resources and save money, it is important that all aspects are sustainable – from the venue, easily accessible public transportation and catering services to the delegate pack and any giveaways. Consider the environmental impact during all stages of event planning, implementation and execution – wherever there is an opportunity to green up your act.

Raising Awareness of our Efforts and Sharing Best Sustainable Practices

Educating participants about the sustainable aspects of the event is very important. The delegates should be aware of the sustainability measures being taken to improve the image and reputation of the organization and to protect the environment. Inform the guests and attendees of our commitment to environmental sustainability. In addition to introducing the function and explaining emergency procedures, etc., state the venue’s resources for good environmental practice such as, recycling bin locations and the environmental measures we have taken, including reduced greenhouse emissions or waste minimization. All areas of event management, including water, energy, waste, transport, and procurement, provide opportunities to make environmental and cost savings. Sustainability clauses should be included in all contracts. One way is to make an announcement at the welcome session with information about the event. This information should also appear on any electronic communication.

Transportation



Transportation of the audience, crew, and gear to any event is generally the largest environmental impact due to greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuel use in the vehicles used to transport them.

The first main step towards reducing the environmental impacts due to transportation is to limit the number of meetings requiring travel when organizing the event by considering whether video or teleconferencing is a viable alternative. The use of virtual conferencing, making the conference into a webinar, or offering videoconferencing for delegates who are not local should be encouraged. Below are ways to reduce the climate change impact of an event by means of transportation:

- Promoting public and active transport would reduce the impacts of travel. This can be achieved by offering a travel plan. If not, consider where delegates are traveling from and choose a location that minimizes the requirement for travel, particularly by plane/ car.
- Recommend accommodation within walking distance of the event venue or use a venue that also offers shuttle services.
- Promote the use of public transportation by providing directions, appropriate train and tram timetables and details of any shuttle buses or carpooling schemes in event invitations.
- Provide a link to a travel, journey-planner site and/ or a map and inform delegates how they can reach the venue on foot
- Promote and/ or provide cycling facilities, such as local cycle lanes and routes and bike racks.
- Provide bike storage areas or a bike concierge for the event.
- Highlight bike routes to the event location and ensure that an adequate number of parking spaces for bikes are available.



- For those traveling by car, encourage carpooling. Put delegates in touch with others traveling from the same areas so they can share cars. This networking opportunity can also add value to delegates.
- Use low emission vehicles, such as hybrid cars, if possible. Reducing travel not only reduces carbon emission, it also saves on costs and improves the wellbeing of the delegates.
- Ensure that the event is sensitive to complications arising from peak travel times (i.e. time taken to reach events during peak times/ attendees may have stood or felt crowded for the duration of travel).
- Remind all staff that they are entitled to be reimbursed for public transportation fares for work-related purposes.
- Source service providers located close to the event venue to reduce the traveling distance.
- Use walking times instead of/ as well as distances – these are better for journey planning.
- Brief selected staff so they can answer questions about public transportation and timetables.
- Allow for the ticket cost/ registration fees to cover the price for carbon-offsetting transportation and/ or provide public transportation tickets for attendees.
- Offer a door prize for those who walked, biked or arrived by public transportation.

Sustainable Catering Criteria

Sustainable caterers should identify and implement simple modifications to working practices, increase staff awareness, and improve efficiency of equipment to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Catering equipment is often switched on at the beginning of a shift and left running throughout the day. In addition to its unnecessary consumption of energy, this equipment can generate



heat contributing to the uncomfortable environment of the kitchen and other rooms. Food production, transport, and marketing are responsible for up to 30% of human-caused climate change, so it is essential that event catering should limit its impact. Sustainable caterers also have a responsibility to ensure healthy and nutritious food that is served. Consider the collection of surplus food after the event for charities.

Event organizers and selected caterers should adhere to the following directives:

- Buy local, seasonally available ingredients; ensure that products of animal origin are produced with high environmental and animal welfare standards; and avoid the use of bottled water. Purchase fish from sustainably managed sources that are harvested in a manner that does not lead to overfishing or depletion of exploited populations.
- Consider the food choices. Provide a good range of vegetarian choices and options suited to specific dietary requirements, including choices for ethnic diversity.
- Use fresh fruit as an alternative to prepared desserts.
- When using external caterers, ask the selected caterers to be well-prepared and only bring necessary equipment to avoid unnecessary trips.
- If disposables are unavoidable, use paper or wooden recyclables or biodegradable plastics

Questions to ask the selected caterer:

1. Do you use mostly fresh, seasonal produce?
2. Are fair-trade goods, such as coffee and tea available?
3. Do you serve meals produced from healthy and nutritious ingredients and avoid foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar?
4. Do you serve food in bulk rather than individually packaged food?

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Earth Friendly Products
Revised – 2016



5. Do you offer tap water to drink to save on transportation of bottled water and recycling of bottles? (If bottled water is unavoidable, buy water in biodegradable, corn-based bottles, or, as a last resort, ensure the bottles are recycled).
6. Do you operate a recycling scheme, including composting? On-site is best.
7. Do you use reusable crockery, glassware, cutlery, tablecloths, napkins, etc. when possible?

Preparation for the Event

Making the best purchase decisions will positively affect the sustainability of an event. Sources of the most environmentally preferable products should be selected, including the following:

- Sustainable and certified timber
- 100% post-consumer recycled paper
- Eco-friendly, nontoxic paint
- Environmentally sound cleaning products
- Organic, fair trade, fair wear or alternative material merchandised
- Signage and banners
- Reuse and salvage products

When preparing for an event, consider the following:

- Design the event around standard-hire items with minimal construction or an approach that will be usable in other situations.
- Prepare a plan for travel routes to sites to collect supplies. This way the number and length of trips are minimized.
- Ensure your event reduces damage to grass and outdoor areas.

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- Avoid excessive paper usage by carrying out marketing, correspondence and registration electronically as much as possible.
- Post event information, such as downloadable versions of programs, handouts and itineraries, on a website for event participants.
- Use double-sided printing and nonglossy, recycled paper with vegetable-based inks when possible.
- Do not provide show bags or copious amounts of printed material.
- Always as if the printing of brochures and pamphlets is necessary.
- If providing delegate packs, hand them out on arrival to avoid duplication.
- Format handouts to minimize the amount of paper required (e.g. reduce the margins in page setup, print double-sized and print more than one page per sheet for PowerPoint handouts).
- Provide links to downloads to literature rather than providing large handouts or offer documents on CDs or memory sticks.
- Ensure that program guides, handouts and other written materials are limited and, when needed, printed double-sided on 100% post-consumer paper using a vegetable-based ink.
- Use email or online systems for the registration of events and advertising. Electronic communications save on the costs of paper, printing and postage.
- Consider using mobile text messaging services for event confirmation, seating arrangements and registration details.
- Consider whether printed advertising, such as pamphlets or posters is necessary.
- Provide links to a website from which notes/ presentations can be downloaded or offer documents on CDs or memory sticks instead of printing.



- Use post-consumer, recycled-content paper (paper that has been collected after it has been used at least once before), and ensure the percentage of recycled content in the paper is stated on the material.
- Make sure plastic name badges are returned at the end of the event to be reused.
- Have a laptop and printer on site so that literature can be printed on demand if delegates require hard copies. Also ensure that all paper waste is collected and recycled.
- Use large paper clips to hold the contents together instead of expensive and wasteful individual folders. Reusable display materials save on costs of producing new ones for different events.

Equipment and Supplies

- Contact suppliers and arrange for quotes electronically or over the telephone.
- Communicate with other event organizers regarding leaving useful equipment set up from their function for use at your event to reduce the transport of equipment.
- Make arrangement with suppliers to collect unused products and materials for reuse.
- Buy products made from recycled materials, as it is a key step in supporting recycling programs and resource conservation.
- Limit the use of electrical equipment.
- Appoint someone responsible for ensuring no unnecessary lighting, power and equipment is use (e.g. someone who makes sure all equipment is turned off at the power point when not in use).
- Turn off (or place on standby) computer/ projector equipment during Q&A, breaks and other appropriate times.
- Fix items and reuse them rather than discarding and replacing them.



- Consider buying/ renting reconditioned or recycled equipment.
- Before purchasing, consider the equipment's lifespan, how the product is used and how it is disposed of at the end of its life.
- Prioritize supplies and equipment that contain recycled materials and have end-of-life recycling.
- For reoccurring or annual events, avoid printing dates and slogans on signs, posters and banners so that they may be easily reused. Collect these items after the event.
- Use reusable display materials, as they save on the costs of producing new ones for different events.
- Use whiteboards rather than paper flipcharts
- Use reusable materials for exhibition stands, flooring, etc.
- Use stationaries such as pens and pencils made from recycled/ sustainable materials (e.g. from recycled vending cups or timber from sustainably managed forests). These make a positive statement about the efforts you are making to reduce the impact of your event and also can be used to communicate important messages.
- If reusable materials are not appropriate, use recycled and/ or recyclable materials for packaging, paper, etc. (contractual requirement).
- Communicate in advance with the venue to inform them of likely waste materials. A later event may be able to make use of them.
- If bags are needed, use reusable organic cotton, jute or recycled bags rather than plastic ones and advertise the benefits on the bags. Ask exhibitors and/ or event management companies to comply with these suggestions and reuse or recycle leftover literature.



Water Conservation

These are the key issues for sustainable water management:

- Water conservation
- Emissions to water
- Wastewater management

Whether the event is in an indoor venue, park, school, club grounds or a sustainable green site, an event will use clean water and produce wastewater. To be sustainable, we must aim to reduce the strain on sewer systems. Catering uses a lot of water. Sustainable caterers should ensure that their equipment is water efficient. Ask your attendees to be considerate of their water use. Prioritize venues that demonstrate a commitment to water conservation by installing water-saving devices.

Waste

At Earth Friendly Products, we are aiming for zero waste. How we minimize and manage waste is one of the largest areas of impact and certainly the most visible at the event. The key to successful waste operations at an event is to reduce the amount of waste that is produced. Every type of waste, particularly food waste, has a significant environmental impact. The amount of food that we throw away is a waste of resources and when food is sent to landfills, it produces more greenhouse gases as it breaks down. During the event, include information on recycling facilities in welcoming/ introductions to the event. The sustainable caterer should observe the waste hierarchy in the following ways:

- Actively working to identify and implement opportunities to reduce waste being generated



- Choosing reusable serving and storage options whenever possible, ensuring recycling is available, as well as composting for food waste whenever possible

The following are key questions you need to ask to produce the best waste management system for the event:

- What types of waste will be generated at the event?
- What waste treatment facilities are there locally and what processes do they use?
- How can you influence or regulate the types of waste generated?

The event organizers for Earth Friendly Products are expected to do the following:

- Have recycle and compost bins that are easily accessible and clearly sign posted
- Limit guests' and vendors' disposable waste and give preference to recycled and recyclable packaging
- Use salvaged and reclaimed materials
- Store and reuse materials and equipment or salvage and donate materials for repurposing/ reuse
- Manage waste created onsite by contractors, traders, caterers, NGOs, sponsors and the audience
- Provide recycling facilities for bottles, cans, plastics, paper, cardboard and organic waste where possible
- Ensure that recycling facilities are positioned appropriately and are sign posted
- Reduce use of packaging material and ensure essential packaging materials are reusable or recyclable
- Provide a “zero waste event” brief to participants (e.g. stallholders)
- Provide information about biodegradable/ reusable cutlery and crockery



- Remind attendees and participants to dispose of their waste and recyclables correctly during the event by providing announcements, roving performers, posters and volunteers at waste stations
- Minimize name-tag use – encourage BYO, reuse old name-tag holders and have organizers collect unwanted name tags at the end of the event
- Do not provide copies of notes for all attendees, but rather provide links to an electronic site where these can be downloaded or offer documents on CDs or memory sticks
- Encourage exhibitors to have reusable materials that can be taken to other events
- Eliminate the use of single-use plastic bags
- Take home material that cannot be recycled at the event
- Discourage the provisions of plastic bags to customers, staff and guests. Also use renewable or biodegradable bags when use of bags is unavoidable
- When promotional material is needed, provide green promotional products
- Use signage stating specific measures taken to reduce impacts

Monitoring and Reporting

Conduct waste audits on a sample of bins and provide a brief waste and recycling report. **DO** place the bins:

- In accessible points that coincide with movement of people to catch their attention
- In banks of two bins – side by side, one for recycling, one for general rubbish
- In areas where food and beverages are consumed (e.g. seats, tables or viewing areas)
- Near entry and exit points

DON'T place the bins:

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Earth Friendly Products
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- Individually with one recycling bin on its own
- Behind buildings, toilet blocks or away from public areas

Encourage use of your recycling facilities

Energy

Producing power for an event causes greenhouse gas emissions, produces harmful pollution and uses up precious nonrenewable resources. Reducing the amount of energy used can be achieved through energy-efficient equipment, smart power planning, “switch off” campaigns, careful planning and distribution of mobile generators powered with sustainable bio-fuels.

- Hold the event during the day and in a location that will provide adequate natural lighting
- Request rooms with opening windows for ventilation and natural lighting
- Appoint a staff member to take responsibility for eliminating unnecessary lighting, power and equipment use
- Switch equipment off at the power point after use
- Calculate carbon footprint of the event and purchase renewable energy certifications (RECs) to offset the event’s CO2 emissions

Social Wellbeing

Think about the wellbeing of your delegates, suppliers, the local community and any other stakeholders. Improving the wellbeing of the delegates – by minimizing travel, providing plenty of fruit and water and maximizing natural daylight – will help them to stay engaged and productive. It is



unlikely that every need can be anticipated. However, venues chosen for an event need to have basic reasonable adjustments for all individuals.

- Ensure you communicate emergency evacuation arrangements, such as flashing light fire alarms or vibrating pagers for deaf people
- Ensure there are accessible toilets and convenient and reserved parking spaces for those who need them. This should include any related website/ electronic communications
- Identify and engage with stakeholders (e.g. the local community and communicate information about the event and the sustainability measures being undertaken)
- Inform your delegates of local attractions and amenities to benefit the local economy and educate delegates

Offsetting Carbon Footprints

Once you have done all you can to reduce direct and indirect carbon emissions, consider the use of offsetting to achieve net zero carbon emissions.

- Offset staff and delegate carbon emissions or encourage delegates to offset their own emissions
- Provide information, such as link to offsetting sites or facts about emissions, on the registration page
- Consider carbon-offsetting activity to break up the day (e.g. tree planting), or consider inviting a guest speaker on carbon neutrality to address your event
- Prioritize offset programs that invest in renewable energies
- Ensure enough staff/ volunteers have knowledge about carbon offsetting to inform attendees



- Calculate the greenhouse gas emissions that an event produces and email the results to attendees

Evaluation

Keeping a record of activities undertaken (e.g. energy/ water used and waste produced) will enable effective evaluation and will allow delegates and other stakeholders to have confidence in your efforts.

Measurements allow continuous improvement by helping us in the following areas:

- Minimize negative sustainability impacts over time
- Become more ambitious with each event

Evaluate the success of the measures taken and learn from it for the next event. In addition to the above, there are other ways to evaluate an event:

- Offer delegates the opportunity to provide feedback (electronically or on a recycled paper form) before they leave
- Email delegates and other stakeholders to inform them of the successes and areas for improvement, such as energy savings and the percent of waste that was recycled.

