

Sustainable Venue Benchmarking Tool

Introduction

This document should be used before, during and after your event. It is one of a series designed to help you improve the sustainability of your event. The other documents in this series are:



- ❖ Your organisation's general (i.e. logistical) events checklist
- ❖ 'Sustainable Events Checklist'
- ❖ 'List of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for a Sustainable Event'

Used together, these documents complete a 'Sustainable Event Toolkit'. Please contact Gayle Burgess (Program Director, LSx - e: g.burgess@lsx.org.uk / T: 020 7234 9404) if you have any enquiries.

Basics

As a starting point, consider whether your event really cannot can be convened by video-conference or conference call instead. If this isn't an option, proceed through the checklist below...

Essential features of a sustainable venue

Essential features of a sustainable venue include:

- An environmental management system, or ISO14001 / EMAS certification
- Close proximity to pedestrian routes / public transport options
- Plenty of natural ventilation and light
- Plenty of open space nearby where delegates can 'escape' to during breaks
- A renewable energy supply throughout
- A no-smoking policy throughout
- Accessibility and inclusivity measures throughout: e.g. the venue has disabled access, childcare facilities, etc, and isn't culturally exclusive
- The venue is dual use / will be re-used after your event: (e.g. is used by a community theatre group or similar, which you will support by using the venue. If the site is a Marquis / series of tents in a field or public open space, ensure the organisers / managers liaise with the local community / authority, are aware of and adhere to relevant environmental legislation, and can demonstrate how the site will be renovated / restored post-use)



Exemplar sustainable venues

A truly sustainable venue will demonstrate a more stringent / holistic approach, in addition to the essentials above. Indicators might include:

- The venue is primarily marketed through electronic channels e.g. on a website. Any venue brochure should be double sided, non-glossy and possible to recycle
- The venue has been constructed sustainably e.g. includes solar panels, cavity wall insulation, etc
- The venue space encourages / facilitates shared working, learning and networking
- The venue is decorated with potted rather than stem cut flowers and plants (the majority of stem cut flowers are grown in monocultures and treated with insecticides, herbicides, pesticides and intensive irrigation techniques. Once harvested, the flowers are driven / flown in temperature controlled units into the UK where they can expect a typical shelf-life of less than a month, and emit, rather than absorb, CO₂. A list of UK organic flower suppliers is available on the Soil Association website: <http://www.soilassociation.org/web/sa/saweb.nsf/0/b15ec5d7fe787d2b80256e230053a1eb?OpenDocument>)
- Site managers have an organisational environmental management / Corporate Social Responsibility policy, to complement the site specific one.
- The site demonstrates excellent working conditions and consideration for staff



- If site managers are taking an active role in hosting the event, they would not produce delegate packs that include glossy notepads, badges and pens
- Rooms are not temperature controlled / lit when not in use (e.g. for 'show' purposes)
- The site has water reduction measures installed on taps and in toilets
- Water that is not used for drinking at the site is delivered through a rainwater / greywater harvesting system / sewage is processed through a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS)
- Furniture is from sustainably managed forests or post consumer waste, and flame resistant using more environmentally benign chemicals than POPs / bioaccumulants such as Polybrominated Biphenyls
- Measures such as leachate mitigation and noise control are employed to reduce disturbance to local wildlife



Catering

If your event catering is supplied with the venue, consider whether:



- Food and drink will be sourced locally
- Food and drink will be organic / Fair Trade (ask the caterer if they can source organic / Fair Trade if they would not normally)
- Any animal products are free range and humanely / ethically produced
- Food and drink can be ordered in bulk (to reduce the amount of packaging waste) and use of single serving sachets (e.g. of salt & sugar) is avoided
- Food and drink packaging can and will be recycled after use
- An accurate order is made to follow the waste hierarchy and eliminate / reduce waste
- Check crockery and cutlery are all re-useable. If this really is not an option, find out why not and ensure plates / cups used are produced from recycled materials that can and will be recycled post-use

Overnight stays

If your event involves overnight stays, sustainable accommodation would include:



- Rooms with plenty of natural ventilation and light
- Rooms that have organic / locally produced natural fibres such as cotton and wool in beds, bedding materials and drapery
- Rooms which are furnished with wood from sustainably managed forests or post consumer waste
- Furniture that is flame resistant using more environmentally benign chemicals than POPs / bioaccumulants such as Polybrominated Biphenyls
- Signs inviting / asking / encouraging you to use your towels for more than one day
- Bathrooms with water reduction measures installed throughout
- Bathroom water supplied by rainwater / greywater harvesting systems, and sewage processed through a SUDS
- A reusable room service menu, with organic / locally sourced / ethically and humanely produced food
- Tap rather than bottled water in rooms, and reusable crockery rather than plastic / Styrofoam cups
- No single serving sachets e.g. of tea, coffee, sugar and biscuits
- A laundry service which uses environmentally benign and biodegradable chemicals



Top Tip: Add up how many checklist ticks you can attribute the venue, to help you rank several and make a selection. Please share your results with Gayle Burgess who will use them to benchmark venues being assessed by those using this Toolkit. Please contact Gayle (e: g.burgess@lsx.org.uk / T: 020 7234 9404) if you have any enquiries.