

# Sustainable Events:

## Ideas for Incorporating Environmentally Friendly Practices into Meetings and Events

Revised March 2014



# Sustainable Events

*“The Sustainable Events document was developed to assist event planners, venues, suppliers/vendors, exhibitors, and hotels in implementing sustainable practices to make events and services greener...”*

*Sustainable Events: Ideas for Incorporating Environmentally Friendly Practices into Meetings and Events* was first developed as a collaborative effort between the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio (SWACO), in preparation for hosting the EcoSummit 2012 conference in Columbus, Ohio. Tasked with providing recommendations for making the conference as sustainable as possible, the collaborators studied various existing guidelines and standards, such as the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Standards for Environmentally Sustainable Meetings, Events, Trade Shows and Conferences, and the United Nations’ Green Meeting Guide 2009; and incorporated the experience of venues such as the Greater Columbus Convention Center. A list of documents reviewed can be found in the reference and resources sections.

This document provides a collection of environmental, social and economic sustainability practices that can be implemented by those involved in the planning or servicing the different components of a conference or event. It is intended as a source of ideas for those wanting to conduct “green” events for the first time, or just looking for additional ideas. While comprehensive in the number of sustainable practices included, this document does not describe the steps required to implement them, nor how to measure how sustainably the event performed. The reader is strongly encouraged to review the referenced guidelines and standards used for this document, as most provide detailed steps for implementation, and customize this document to their needs.

This is a living document. Additional ideas for sustainable practices will be appreciated. Please send your ideas to [bwhetstone@morpc.org](mailto:bwhetstone@morpc.org), [kristi.higginbotham@swaco.org](mailto:kristi.higginbotham@swaco.org) or [angel.arroyo-rodriguez@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:angel.arroyo-rodriguez@epa.ohio.gov).

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# Sustainable Events

## **Who is this document for?**

This document is intended for any organization or business involved in planning and/or running a conference, event or meeting. It was developed to provide event planners, venues, suppliers/vendors, exhibitors, and hospitality sector with ideas of sustainable practices that can be implemented to make their events and services greener. This document should be a good source of ideas for those wanting to conduct “green” conferences or events for the first time, or expanding existing efforts.

## **How is it organized?**

The document is organized into sections based on the various parties responsible for planning or servicing different components of a conference or event. The sections are:

### ***Event planning team***

The event planning team is the primary party responsible for hosting the event, setting event goals, and making purchasing decisions. See the accompanying Green Ribbon Exhibits Recognition Program manual for an example of a recognition program to encourage conference exhibitors to incorporate sustainability practices into their exhibits.

### ***Venue management***

Venue management represents the organization charged with representing the specific venue and helping the event planning team implement the event. The event planning team should work closely with the venue management staff to ensure sustainability goals of the event are met.

### ***Venue vendors***

Venue vendors can include any business that provides services needed by those attending the event. The event planning team should allow sufficient time to coordinate with vendors in order to ensure they make necessary arrangements to meet the sustainability goals of the event.

### ***Exhibitors***

Exhibitors can include any organization that promotes their business, services or mission in a designated space during the event.

### ***Hospitality***

Hospitality includes lodging (hotels, motels, guest houses), commercial food service (restaurants, room service and catering) and event specific transportation services (tour bus services).

## **How to use this guide**

Each section contains a series of sustainability practices organized by topics (ex. registration materials, field trips, recycling, transportation, etc.), as applicable. Each section is formatted as a checklist, to allow for tracking the number of sustainability practices implemented. The practices were intended to provide as many options as possible. Ideally every action would be implemented, but they may not be applicable in every situation. While it can be assumed that the more practices implemented, the more sustainable the event is, it is not intended for ranking or accurately measuring how sustainable the event was.

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# Event Planning Team

The event planning team is the primary party responsible for hosting the event, setting event goals, and making purchasing decisions.

## REGISTRATION MATERIALS

- Make the conference schedule and other relevant information available via website, phone app, or QR code.
- Purchase badges, holders, lanyards, ribbons, registration bags and other items that are reusable, biodegradable or made of post-consumer recycled content.
- Donate reusable leftover registration and exhibit materials.
- Collect badges, holders, lanyards, ribbons and other items for reuse or recycling.

## GRAPHICS/SIGNAGE

- Use display graphics/signage that do not need frequent content updates or use easily updatable signage such as those requiring only printed inserts.
- Utilize reusable graphics/signage.
- Utilize the venue's digital monitors in place of printed signs.
- Repurpose or recycle graphics/signage after use.
- Use paper and card stock made of recycled content with preference for paper with post-consumer content and processed chlorine-free. Consider using paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council and the Chlorine Free Products Association.
- Use biodegradable foam board.
- Use soy or EcoSmart certified inks. Consider additional green printing certifications such as Green Globe.
- Purchase materials that are sourced locally, such as produced within 100 km of the event location. In addition, a minimum percentage can be set for local sourcing.
- Substitute needed signage by strategically placing volunteers throughout the event space to direct attendees.

## DISPLAY STRUCTURE

- Utilize a display made from sustainable materials (recycled content, sustainably produced, biobased, compostable).
- Purchase materials that are sourced locally, such as produced within 100 km of the event location. In addition, a minimum percentage can be set for local sourcing.
- Use a reusable structure.

## PRINTED MATERIALS

- Reduce the amount or replace printed material.
- Use paper and card stock made of recycled content with preference for paper with post-consumer content and processed chlorine-free. Consider using paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council and the Chlorine Free Products Association.
- Use soy or EcoSmart certified inks. Consider additional green printing certifications such as Green Globe.

# Event Planning Team

The event planning team is the primary party responsible for hosting the event, setting event goals, and making purchasing decisions.

- Distributed materials should be recyclable and include the recycling logo.
- Purchase materials that are sourced locally, such as produced within 100 km of the event location. In addition, a minimum percentage can be set for local sourcing.

## IDEAS TO REDUCE OR REPLACE PRINTED MEDIA

- Use a computer or electronic display to share information.
- Include a QR code on display signage linking to a website.
- Collect email addresses and follow up with electronic files or links.
- Provide information on a CD.
- Have information available for immediate transfer to a flash drive or e-mail.
- Use single sheet, double-sided pages for printed material.
- Make generic business cards featuring company website address, QR codes linking to information or appropriate instructions to access information, and ensure your website lists your staff's contact information.

## PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

- Limit the number of items distributed.
- Select items that have a use or purpose.
- Use items made from sustainable materials (recycled content, sustainably produced, biobased, compostable).
- Purchase items that are sourced locally, such as produced within 100 km of the event location. In addition, a minimum percentage can be set for local sourcing.

## STAFF APPAREL

- Purchase items made of sustainably grown fibers, organic fibers or recycled materials.
- Avoid clothing designs (printed or otherwise) that are only relevant for a single event.

## FIELD TRIPS

- Provide lunch options requiring minimal packaging or packaging/containers. Any packaging should be compostable or acceptable for recycling through the local recycling systems.
- Arrange for separate collection of recyclables (ex., aluminum cans, plastic bottles, paper) and for food scraps and other compostable food wastes.
- Reduce the use of plastic bottled water by encouraging attendees to bring reusable bottles or providing reusable bottles.



## Event Planning Team

The event planning team is the primary party responsible for hosting the event, setting event goals, and making purchasing decisions.

### RECYCLING

- Determine a baseline for waste generation and diversion at the facility, and set a measurable recycling rate. ASTM suggests 40%, and a zero waste event goal is at least 90%.
- Offer training upon request to conference center or appropriate staff to ensure success.
- Provide means to recycle during set-up, conference and take-down.
- Provide clear signage to direct attendees to collection areas, which should be located next to trash cans.
- Provide for the collection of plastic bags and other film plastic.

### FOOD SCRAPS AND COMPOSTABLE ITEMS

- Donate food leftovers to local organizations.
- Collect pre-consumer food scraps and related non-food compostable items
- Collect post-consumer food scraps and related non-food compostable items.
- Recycle fats, oils and greases.

### SHIPPING

- Ship minimum necessary quantities.
- Utilize smallest packaging possible.
- Use no, minimal, or recycled content packaging.
- Use efficient low-carbon footprint freight carriers, such as SmartWay certified or equivalent programs.
- Use shipping containers that are reusable and/or recyclable, such as rotomolded (recycled) plastic containers, cardboard boxes, and green packing supplies (no polystyrene).
- Save boxes after set-up for reuse for packing upon leaving the event. Recycle boxes you don't need.
- Plan single shipment well in advance and avoid multiple shipments via express shipping.
- Transport display and/or supplies in a single vehicle or trip.
- Ship from and/or to another event to reduce transport to/from home office.

### FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROCUREMENT

- Vendors should procure foods and beverages that include any or all of the following attributes: organic, locally grown and produced, environmentally sustainable, fair-trade, cage-free (as defined by ASTM).
- Offer vegetarian and vegan options.
- Showcase and promote local food and beverage products. Purchase food and beverages sourced locally, such as produced within 100 km of the event location. In addition, a minimum percentage can be set for local sourcing.

## Event Planning Team

The event planning team is the primary party responsible for hosting the event, setting event goals, and making purchasing decisions.

- Request the use of reusable service items such as china, cloth napkins and tablecloths, and bulk condiments.
- Require that any single-use serveware or food containers are compostable and napkins/paper products are processed chlorine-free.
- Consider garnishes, centerpieces and decorations that can be eaten, donated, recycled, reused, planted or composted.
- Print paper menus and other printed materials on a single sheet, double-sided page made of recycled content with preference for paper with post-consumer content and processed chlorine free paper, and soy or EcoSmart certified inks.
- Procure coffee for events that is at least one of the following: certified organic, Bird Friendly, Rainforest Alliance, Fair Trade Certified or other similarly certified product.

### ENERGY CONSUMPTION/LIGHTING

- Provide venue with detailed schedule of events to allow for adequate scheduling of lighting, HVAC systems and escalators.
- Unplug all electric equipment at the close of each day (except for refrigeration of perishable products).
- Use LEDs or LCDs rather than plasma for flat panel monitors.

### TRANSPORTATION

- Provide designated bike parking at the event venue, and provide designated space for parking for low emitting and fuel efficient vehicles. Vehicles can include hybrid, electric, compressed natural gas (CNG), or roughly 35 MPG.
- Provide attendees with information about rail travel and other alternatives to air travel pre-conference.
- Provide attendees with information about alternative transportation options located within the conference city (including bus routes, multi-use trails, taxis, shuttles, bike rentals, and rideshare services).
- Consider renting hybrid or alternative fuel vehicles for conference related travel.
- Use carbon off-sets for air travel to and from the event.
- Select hotels within walking distance.
- Event staff should use a form of transportation other than driving alone to and from the event venue, e.g. walking, biking, car pool, public transit.

### AIR QUALITY/GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) EMISSIONS

- Establish a no-idling policy and post signage at the event venue.

### GREEN RIBBON EXHIBITS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

- Implement a program to recognize exhibitors that implement a minimum of sustainability practices in their exhibit.

# Venue Management

Venue management represents the organization charged with representing the specific venue and helping the event planning team implement the event. The event planning team should work closely with the venue management staff to ensure sustainability goals of the event are met.

## STAFF APPAREL

- Purchase items made of sustainably grown fibers, organic fibers or recycled materials.
- Avoid clothing designs (printed or otherwise) that are only relevant for a single event.

## RECYCLING

- Determine a baseline for waste generation and diversion at the facility, and set a measurable recycling rate. ASTM suggests 40%, and a zero waste event goal is at least 90%.
- Offer training upon request to conference center or appropriate staff to ensure success.
- Offer digital signs for client usage at each meeting room/area.
- Provide means to recycle during set-up, conference and take-down.
- Provide clear signage to direct attendees to collection areas, which should be located next to trash cans.
- Provide for the collection of plastic bags and other film plastic.

## FOOD SCRAPS AND COMPOSTABLE ITEMS

- Donate food leftovers to local organizations.
- Collect pre-consumer food scraps and related non-food compostable items.
- Collect post-consumer food scraps and related non-food compostable items.
- Recycle fats, oils and greases (FOG).

## ENERGY CONSUMPTION/LIGHTING

- Conduct an energy audit and prepare lighting and energy efficiency plan if one is not in place.
- Obtain a detailed schedule of events from the event planner to allow for adequate scheduling of lighting, HVAC systems and escalators.
- Use a motion sensor lighting system to avoid unnecessary lighting.
- Unplug all electric equipment at the close of each day (except for refrigeration of perishable products).
- Use LEDs and LCDs rather than plasma for flat panel monitors.
- Use LED and/or fluorescent lighting.

## FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROCUREMENT

- Vendors should procure foods and beverages that include any or all of the following attributes: organic, locally grown and produced, environmentally sustainable, fair-trade, cage-free (as defined by ASTM).
- Offer vegetarian and vegan options.

# Venue Management

Venue management represents the organization charged with representing the specific venue and helping the event planning team implement the event. The event planning team should work closely with the venue management staff to ensure sustainability goals of the event are met.

- Purchase food and beverages that are sourced locally, such as produced within 100 km of the event location. In addition, a minimum percentage can be set for local sourcing.
- Utilize reusable service items such as china, cloth napkins and tablecloths, and bulk condiments.
- Ensure that any single-use serviceware or food containers are compostable and napkins/paper products are processed chlorine-free.
- Offer garnishes, centerpieces and decorations that can be eaten, donated, recycled, reused, planted or composted.
- Print paper menus and other printed materials on a single sheet, double-sided page made of recycled content with preference for paper with post-consumer content and processed chlorine free paper, and soy or EcoSmart certified inks.
- Procure coffee for events that is at least one of the following: certified organic, Bird Friendly, Rainforest Alliance, Fair Trade Certified or other similarly certified product.

## FACILITY CLEANING/OPERATIONS/MAINTENANCE

- Use cleaning supplies that are certified environmentally preferable products (ex. Green Seal, Eco-Logo, Design for the Environment or other).
- Purchase cleaning, laundry, and other supplies in bulk to minimize the amount of packaging.
- Use reusable cloth towels, mops, gloves, etc. for cleaning and maintenance instead of single-use products.
- Use environmentally friendly landscaping practices, which include preserving or planting native species, using drought tolerant plants, using organic fertilizers, and reducing or eliminating toxic pesticides.

## WATER CONSUMPTION

- Use water efficient fixtures, toilets and urinals such as those meeting the WaterSense certification. For details on WaterSense certification refer to the Resources page in the back of this guide.
- All sinks should have motion sensors to reduce the amount of water sent to the drain.
- Establish a graywater or rainwater collection system for irrigation.

## TRANSPORTATION

- Venue staff should use a form of transportation other than driving alone to and from the event, e.g. walking, biking, car pool, public transit.
- Provide designated bike parking at the event venue, and provide designated space for parking for low emitting and fuel efficient vehicles. Vehicles can include hybrid, electric, compressed natural gas (CNG), or roughly 35 MPG.

## AIR QUALITY/GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) EMISSIONS

- Use natural gas, propane or electric powered fork lifts, scissor lifts, and other heavy equipment.
- Utilize fuel-efficient fleets.
- Establish a no-idling policy and post signage at the event venue.

# Venue Vendors

Venue vendors can include any business that provides services needed by those attending the event. The event planning team should allow sufficient time to coordinate with vendors to ensure the sustainability goals of the event are met.

## GRAPHICS/SIGNAGE

- Use display graphics/signage that do not need frequent content updates or use easily updatable signage for those requiring only printable inserts.
- Utilize reusable graphics/signage.
- Repurpose or recycle graphics/signage after use.
- Use paper and card stock made of recycled content with preference for paper with post-consumer content and processed chlorine-free. Consider using paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council and the Chlorine Free Products Association.
- Use biodegradable foam board.
- Use soy or EcoSmart certified inks. Consider additional green printing certifications such as Green Globe.
- Purchase materials that are sourced locally, such as produced within 100 km of the event location. In addition, a minimum percentage can be set for local sourcing

## PRINTED MATERIALS

- Reduce the amount or replace printed material.
- Use paper and card stock made of recycled content with preference for paper with post-consumer content and processed chlorine-free. Consider using paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council and the Chlorine Free Products Association.
- Use soy or EcoSmart certified inks. Consider additional green printing certifications such as Green Globe.
- Distributed materials should be recyclable and include the recycling logo.
- Purchase materials that are sourced locally, such as produced within 100 km of the event location. In addition, a minimum percentage can be set for local sourcing.

## IDEAS TO REDUCE OR REPLACE PRINTED MEDIA

- Use a computer or electronic display to share information.
- Include a QR code on signage linking to a website.

## RECYCLING

- Utilize the venue's recycling facilities or independently establish a recycling program.

## FOOD SCRAPS AND COMPOSTABLE ITEMS

- Donate food leftovers to local organizations.
- Collect pre-consumer food scraps and related non-food compostable items
- Collect post-consumer food scraps and related non-food compostable items.
- Recycle fats, oils and greases.

# Venue Vendors

Venue vendors can include any business that provides services needed by those attending the event. The event planning team should allow sufficient time to coordinate with vendors to ensure the sustainability goals of the event are met.

## ENERGY CONSUMPTION/LIGHTING

- Unplug all electric equipment at the close of each day (except for refrigeration of perishable products).
- Use LEDs or LCDs rather than plasma for flat panel monitors.

## FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROCUREMENT

- Vendors should procure foods and beverages that include any or all of the following attributes: organic, locally grown and produced, environmentally sustainable, fair-trade, cage-free (as defined by ASTM).
- Offer vegetarian and vegan options.
- Showcase and promote local food and beverage products where possible. Purchase food and beverages that are sourced locally, such as produced within 100 km of the event location. In addition, a minimum percentage can be set for local sourcing.
- Utilize reusable service items such as china, cloth napkins and tablecloths, and bulk condiments.
- Ensure that any single-use serveware or food containers are compostable and napkins/paper products are processed chlorine-free.
- Offer garnishes, centerpieces and decorations that can be eaten, donated, recycled, reused, planted or composted.
- Print paper menus and other printed materials on a single sheet, double-sided page made of recycled content with preference for paper with post-consumer content and processed chlorine free paper, and soy or EcoSmart certified inks.
- Procure coffee for events that is at least one of the following: certified organic, Bird Friendly, Rainforest Alliance, Fair Trade Certified or other similarly certified product.

## FACILITY CLEANING/OPERATIONS/MAINTENANCE

- Use cleaning supplies that are certified environmentally preferable products (ex. Green Seal, Eco-Logo, Design for the Environment or other).
- Purchase cleaning, laundry, and other supplies in bulk to minimize the amount of packaging.
- Use reusable cloth towels, mops, gloves, etc. for cleaning and maintenance instead of single-use products.
- Use environmentally friendly landscaping practices, which include preserving or planting native species, using drought tolerant plants, using organic fertilizers, and reducing or eliminating toxic pesticides.

## TRANSPORTATION

- Event staff should use a form of transportation other than driving alone to and from the event, e.g. walking, biking, car pool, public transit.
- When shipping equipment to a venue ensure every trailer is loaded to its capacity to avoid unnecessary trips. This should also apply to the company in charge of decorations.

## AIR QUALITY/GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) EMISSIONS

- Use natural gas, propane or electric powered fork lifts, scissor lifts, and other heavy equipment. If products are trucked in, once the vehicle is parked in a dock, turn off the engine to reduce emissions from idling.

# Exhibitors

Exhibitors can include any organization that promotes their business, services or mission in a designated space during the event.

## REGISTRATION MATERIALS

- Donate reusable leftover registration and exhibit materials.

## GRAPHICS/SIGNAGE

- Use display graphics/signage that do not need frequent content updates or use easily updatable signage for those requiring only printable inserts.
- Utilize reusable graphics/signage.
- Repurpose or recycle graphics/signage after use.
- Use paper and card stock made of recycled content with preference for paper with post-consumer content and processed chlorine-free. Consider using paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council and the Chlorine Free Products Association.
- Use biodegradable foam board.
- Use soy or EcoSmart certified inks. Consider additional green printing certifications such as Green Globe.
- Recycle signage after use if it cannot be reused.
- Purchase materials that are sourced locally, such as produced within 100 km of the event location. In addition, a minimum percentage can be set for local sourcing.

## DISPLAY STRUCTURE

- Utilize a display made from sustainable materials (recycled content, sustainably produced, biobased, compostable).
- Purchase materials that are sourced locally, such as produced within 100 km of the event location. In addition, a minimum percentage can be set for local sourcing.
- Use a reusable structure.

## PRINTED MATERIALS

- Use paper and card stock made of recycled content with preference for paper with post-consumer content and processed chlorine free. Consider using paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council and the Chlorine Free Products Association.
- Use soy or EcoSmart certified inks. Consider additional green printing certifications such as Green Globe.
- Distributed materials should be recyclable and include the recycling logo.
- Purchase materials that are sourced locally such as produced within 100 km of the event location. In addition, a minimum percentage can be set for local sourcing.

## IDEAS TO REDUCE OR REPLACE PRINTED MEDIA

- Use a computer or electronic display to share information.

## Exhibitors

Exhibitors can include any organization that promotes their business, services or mission in a designated space during the event.

- Include a QR code on display signage linking to a website.
- Collect email addresses and follow up with electronic files or links.
- Provide information on a CD.
- Have information available for immediate transfer to a flashdrive or e-mail.
- Use single sheet, double-sided pages for printed material.
- Make generic business cards featuring company website address, QR codes linking to information or appropriate instructions to access information .

### PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

- Limit the number of items distributed.
- Select items that have a use or purpose.
- Select items made from sustainable materials (recycled content, sustainably produced, biobased, compostable).
- Purchase materials that are sourced locally, such as produced within 100 km of the event location. In addition, a minimum percentage can be set for local sourcing.

### STAFF APPAREL

- Purchase items made of sustainably grown fibers, organic fibers or recycled materials.
- Avoid clothing designs (printed or otherwise) that are only relevant for a single event.

### SHIPPING

- Ship minimum necessary quantities.
- Use no, minimal, or recycled packaging.
- Use efficient low-carbon footprint freight carriers, such as SmartWay certified or equivalent programs.
- Use shipping containers that are reusable and/or recyclable, such as rotomolded (recycled) plastic containers, cardboard boxes, and green packing supplies (no polystyrene).
- Save boxes after set-up for reuse for packing upon leaving the event. Recycle boxes you don't need.
- Plan single shipment well in advance and avoid multiple shipments via express shipping.
- Transport display/supplies on a single vehicle or trip.
- Ship from and/or to another event to reduce transport to/from home office.

### ENERGY CONSUMPTION/LIGHTING

- Unplug all electric equipment at the close of each day (except for refrigeration of perishable products).
- Use LEDs or LCDs rather than plasma for flat panel monitors.



## Exhibitors

Exhibitors can include any organization that promotes their business, services or mission in a designated space during the event.

- Use LED and/or fluorescent lighting.
- Consider no lighting or Non-AC lighting (no electric connection required).

### TRANSPORTATION

- Consider renting hybrid or alternative fuel vehicles for conference related travel.
- Use carbon off-sets for air travel to and from the event.
- Event staff should use a form of transportation other than driving alone to and from the event venue, e.g. walking, biking, car pool, public transit.

### AIR QUALITY/GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) EMISSIONS

- Use natural gas, propane or electric powered fork lifts, scissor lifts, and other heavy equipment.

### GREEN RIBBON EXHIBITS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

- Participate in a program that recognizes exhibitors for implementing a minimum of sustainability practices in their exhibit.

# Hospitality

Hospitality includes lodging (hotels, motels, guest houses), commercial food service (restaurants, room service and catering) and event specific transportation services (tour bus services).

## PRINTED MATERIALS

- Reduce the amount or replace printed material.
- Use paper and card stock made of recycled content with preference for paper with post-consumer content and processed chlorine-free. Consider using paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council and the Chlorine Free Products Association.
- Use soy or EcoSmart certified inks. Consider additional green printing certifications such as Green Globe.
- Distributed materials should be recyclable and include the recycling logo.
- Purchase materials that are sourced locally, such as produced within 100 km of the event location. In addition, a minimum percentage can be set for local sourcing.

## IDEAS TO REDUCE OR REPLACE PRINTED MEDIA

- Use a computer or electronic display to share information.
- Offer digital signs for client usage at each meeting room/area.
- Include a QR code on display signage linking to a website.
- Use single sheet, double-sided pages for printed material.
- Make generic business cards featuring company website address, QR codes linking to information or appropriate instructions to access information.

## PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

- Limit the number of items distributed.
- Select items that have a use or purpose.
- Use items made from sustainable materials (recycled content, sustainably produced, biobased, compostable).
- Purchase items that are sourced locally, such as produced within 100 km of the event location. In addition, a minimum percentage can be set for local sourcing.

## STAFF APPAREL

- Purchase items made of sustainably grown fibers, organic fibers or recycled materials.
- Avoid clothing designs (printed or otherwise) that are only relevant for a single event.

## RECYCLING

- Determine a baseline for waste generation and diversion at the facility, and set a measurable recycling rate. ASTM suggests 40%, and a zero waste event goal is at least 90%.
- Offer training to appropriate staff to ensure success of recycling efforts.

# Hospitality

Hospitality includes lodging (hotels, motels, guest houses), commercial food service (restaurants, room service and catering) and event specific transportation services (tour bus services).

- Provide means to recycle in common areas and hotel rooms.
- Provide clear signage to direct guests to collection areas, which should be located next to trash cans.
- Provide for the collection of plastic bags and other film plastic.
- Donate unused hotel soap and shampoo to people in need.

## FOOD SCRAPS AND COMPOSTABLE ITEMS

- Donate food leftovers to local organizations.
- Collect pre-consumer food scraps and related non-food compostable items
- Collect post-consumer food scraps and related non-food compostable items.
- Recycle fats, oils and greases.

## SHIPPING

- Ship minimum necessary quantities.
- Utilize smallest packaging possible.
- Use no, minimal, or recycled packaging.
- Use efficient low-carbon footprint freight carriers, such as SmartWay certified or equivalent programs.
- Use shipping containers that are reusable and/or recyclable, such as rotomolded (recycled) plastic containers, cardboard boxes, and green packing supplies (no polystyrene).
- Save boxes for reuse and recycle boxes you don't need.

## ENERGY CONSUMPTION/LIGHTING

- Conduct an energy audit and prepare a lighting and energy efficiency plan if one is not in place.
- Obtain a detailed schedule of events from the event planner to allow for adequate scheduling of lighting, HVAC systems and escalators.
- Use a motion sensor lighting system to avoid unnecessary lighting.
- Unplug all electric equipment at the close of each day (except for refrigeration of perishable products).
- Use LEDs and LCDs rather than plasma for flat panel monitors.
- Use LED and/or fluorescent lighting.

## FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROCUREMENT

- Vendors should procure foods and beverages that include any or all of the following attributes: organic, locally grown and produced, environmentally sustainable, fair-trade, cage-free (as defined by ASTM).
- Offer vegetarian and vegan options.

## Hospitality

Hospitality includes lodging (hotels, motels, guest houses), commercial food service (restaurants, room service and catering) and event specific transportation services (tour bus services).

- Showcase and promote local food and beverage products where possible. Purchase food and beverage products that are sourced locally, such as produced within 100 km of the event location. In addition, a minimum percentage can be set for local sourcing.
- Utilize reusable service items such as china, cloth napkins and tablecloths, and bulk condiments.
- Ensure that any single-use serveware or food containers are compostable and napkins/paper products are processed chlorine-free.
- Consider garnishes, centerpieces and decorations that can be eaten, donated, recycled, reused, planted or composted.
- Print paper menus and other printed materials on a single sheet, double-sided page made of recycled content with preference for paper with post-consumer content and processed chlorine free paper, and soy or EcoSmart certified inks.
- Procure coffee for events that is as least one of the following: certified organic, Bird Friendly, Rainforest Alliance, Fair Trade Certified or other similarly certified product.

### FACILITY CLEANING/OPERATIONS/MAINTENANCE

- Use cleaning supplies that are certified environmentally preferable products (ex. Green Seal, Eco-Logo, Design for the Environment or other).
- Purchase cleaning, laundry, and other supplies in bulk to minimize the amount of packaging.
- Use reusable cloth towels, mops, gloves, etc. for cleaning and maintenance instead of single-use products.
- Use environmentally friendly landscaping practices, which include preserving or planting native species, using drought tolerant plants, using organic fertilizers, and reducing or eliminating toxic pesticides.

### WATER CONSUMPTION

- Use water efficient fixtures, toilets and urinals such as those meeting the WaterSense certification. For details on WaterSense certification refer to the Resources page in the back of this guide.
- All sinks should have motion sensors to reduce the amount of water sent to the drain.
- Establish a graywater or rainwater collection system for irrigation.

### TRANSPORTATION

- Staff should use a form of transportation other than driving alone to and from the event, e.g. walking, biking, car pool, public transit.
- Provide designated bike parking at the event venue, and provide designated space for parking for low emitting and fuel efficient vehicles. Vehicles can include hybrid, electric, compressed natural gas (CNG), or roughly 35 MPG.

### AIR QUALITY/GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) EMISSIONS

- Use natural gas, propane or electric powered fork lifts, scissor lifts, and other heavy equipment.
- Utilize fuel efficient fleets.
- Establish a no-idling policy and post signage.

## GLOSSARY

List of selected terminology as defined by ASTM International in the standards for environmentally sustainable meetings, events, trade shows and conferences. (Designation: E2741-11, E2742-11, E2743-11, E2745-11, E2746-11, E2747-11, E2773-11, E2774-11) <http://www.astm.org/standardization-news/update/green-meeting-standards-ma12.html>

**Alternative Fuel, n**—a fuel that is substantially nonpetroleum based conventional liquids (for example, non-gasoline or non-diesel), yields substantial energy security benefits, and offers substantial environmental benefits. These fuels can include: pure methanol, ethanol, and other alcohols; blends of 68 % or more of alcohols with gasoline; natural gas and liquid fuels domestically produced from natural gas; liquefied petroleum gas (propane); hydrogen; electricity; biodiesel; fuels, other than alcohol, derived from biological materials; and P-Series fuels.

**Biobased, adj**—a product determined by USDA to be a commercial or industrial product (other than food or feed) that is composed, in whole or in significant part, of biological products or renewable domestic agricultural materials (including plant, animal, and marine materials) or forestry materials.

**Biodegradable, adj**—capable of decomposing under natural conditions into elements found in nature.

**Cage Free, adj**—birds not confined to cages.

Discussion—Generally, this means that the birds live on the floor of a large barn. Birds may have access to the outside.

**Compost, n**—the stable humus material that is produced from a composting process.

**Compostable, adj**—capable of undergoing biological decomposition in a compost site as part of an available program where facilities exist, such that the material breaks down into carbon dioxide, water, inorganic compounds, and biomass, at a rate appropriate for such program.

**Diversion Rate, n**—the rate or percentage of waste materials diverted from traditional disposal such as landfills or incineration to be recycled, composted, or reused.

Discussion—The diversion rate includes contamination in the recycling or composting stream that is sent to the processor. The recovery rate is the amount of acceptable recyclable or compostable material recovered after the contamination has been removed.

**Environmentally Preferable Products, n**—products or services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose.

Discussion—This comparison applies to raw materials, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, use, reuse, operation, maintenance, and disposal. These products may possess biodegradable, organic, reusable, recycled, or recyclable attributes.

**Environmentally Sustainable, adj**—environmental focus on components, functions and systems that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Exhibitor, n**—an exhibitor is someone who organizes an exhibit for others to see.

**Fair Trade, adj**—fair trade principles include the following:

- (a) Fair prices,
- (b) Fair labor conditions,
- (c) Direct trade,
- (d) Democratic and transparent organizations,
- (e) Community development, and
- (f) Environmental sustainability.

## GLOSSARY

Discussion—Fair trade certification empowers farmers and farm workers to lift themselves out of poverty by investing in their farms and communities, protecting the environment, and developing the business skills necessary to compete in the global marketplace.

FOG, n—acronym for animal and vegetable fats, oils, and grease; which are natural by-products of the cooking and food preparation process.

Hybrid Vehicle, n—vehicles which use a mixture of more than one power source, such as electric and petroleum. Hybrid-electric vehicles (HEVs) combine the benefits of gasoline engines and electric motors and can be configured to obtain different objectives, such as improved fuel economy, increased power, or additional auxiliary power for electronic devices and power tools.

Local, adj—relating to or applicable to a city or town or district rather than a larger area.

Discussion—The exact distance for purposes of sourcing goods (including food and beverage), services, and personnel will be determined by the planner or supplier, or both, and be based upon the event location adjusting for location size and season. No standard definition exists to define local, inherent in this practice is the philosophy to use sources geographically proximate to the event and be practical given wide dispersion of services and products across geographic areas.

No-idling Policy, n—a written statement that sets limits on the maximum idling time for engines or motors of all vehicles.

Planner, n—person whose job it is to oversee and arrange every aspect of an event; an employee or hired ad hoc by large companies, professional associations, or trade associations to plan, organize, implement, and control events, conventions, and other events.

Post-Consumer, adj—refers to materials that are reclaimed from products that have already served their intended end-use as consumer items.

Pre-Consumer Material, adj—refers to material that are reclaimed from manufacturing and other industrial processes and products which have not served their intended end-use as a consumer item.

Discussion—Pre-consumer materials include: culls, trimmed materials, print overruns, overissue publications, and obsolete inventories.

Recycle, v—recovering or reprocessing materials for use in the form of raw materials in the manufacture of new products other than fuel for producing heat or power by combustion.

Discussion—The use of the word recycle used in this specification applies to planners and their suppliers which provide event products and services Recycling, as defined, does not extend to the activities of the suppliers' vendors or suppliers.

Recycled Content Products, n—products that contain pre-consumer or post-consumer materials as all or part of their feedstock.

Discussion—Recycled-content products may contain some pre-consumer waste, some post-consumer waste or both. A product does not have to contain 100 % recovered materials to be considered "recycled," but clearly the higher the percentage of recycled content, the greater the amount of waste that is diverted from disposal.

Shade Grown, adj—coffee grown under a canopy of a minimum height, with a minimum percentage of shade cover, and a minimum average number of species of shade trees per unit of area (also known as "bird-friendly").

Discussion—Current certifications which include shade grown are Rainforest Alliance and Bird Friendly.

Supplier, n—purveyor, provider, vendor, or contractor offering facilities, products, or services, or any

## GLOSSARY

combination thereof (for example, a convention and visitor bureau [CVB]).

Discussion—For the destination sector, suppliers will be understood to be destination professionals. Destination professionals may include destination marketing organizations (DMOs), CVBs, third-party site-selection companies, destination management companies (DMCs), chambers of commerce, and economic development departments or regional authorities.

Sustainable Food, n—food which is produced with in a way that is healthy for consumers and animals, does not harm the environment, is humane for workers, respects animals, provides a fair wage to the farmer, and supports and enhances rural communities.

Discussion—For purposes of this specification, sustainable food includes food which is:

- (a) Protected Harvest Certified, Food Alliance Certified, Rainforest Alliance Certified, Bird Friendly, shade grown, and certified biodynamic;
- (b) Animal based products labeled as: Raised Without Antibiotics/No Antibiotics Administered, Certified Humane Raised and Handled, Animal Welfare Approved, American Humane Certified, raised without antibiotics that cause antibiotic resistance in humans, raised without added hormones/no hormones added, grass-fed, free range, and cage free;
- (c) Seafood identified as sustainable by the following organizations or certifications: Salmon Safe, Marine Stewardship Council, Friend of the Sea, Monterey Bay Seafood Watch, Shedd Aquarium, Ocean Friendly, and Aquaculture Certification Council;
- (d) Socially responsibly produced food include: Directly Purchased, Fair Trade Certified, Rainforest Alliance Certified, and Food Alliance Certified;
- (e) And includes food which meets other recognized, second-party, or third-party certified standards for socially responsible products, environmentally preferable, or sustainability standards.

Sustainability, n—the maintenance of environmental, economic, and social components, functions, and systems for future generations.

Vegan, n or adj—food which excludes all forms of animal products including meat, fish and poultry, eggs, dairy, and their derivatives, such as gelatin and whey.

Vegetarian, n or adj—food which excludes meat, poultry, game, fish, shellfish or crustacean, or slaughter byproducts.

Waste, n—discarded residue for disposal or recovery.

## REFERENCED RESOURCES

### Bird Friendly Coffee

The Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center (SMBC) has developed the only 100%-organic shade-grown coffee certification. SMBC encourages the production of shade-grown coffee, and the conservation of migratory birds, through its "Bird Friendly®" seal of approval.

Learn more at: <http://nationalzoo.si.edu/scbi/migratorybirds/coffee/#>

### Chlorine Free Products Association (CFPA)

CFPA is an independent not-for-profit accreditation and standard setting organization. Their focus is to promote sustainable manufacturing practices, implement advanced technologies free of chlorine chemistry, educate consumers on alternatives, and develop world markets for sustainability produced third party certified products and services.

Learn more at: <http://chlorinefreeproducts.org/>

### Design for the Environment (DfE)

The U.S. EPA's DfE program helps consumers, businesses, and institutional buyers identify cleaning and other products that perform well, are cost-effective, and are safer for the environment. For more than 15 years, DfE has evaluated human health and environmental concerns associated with traditional and alternative chemicals and processes in a range of industries.

Learn more at: <http://www.epa.gov/dfe/>

### EcoLogo

EcoLogo provides customers with assurance that the products and services bearing the logo meet stringent standards of environmental leadership. The EcoLogo Program compares products/services with others in the same category, develops rigorous and scientifically relevant criteria that reflect the entire lifecycle of the product, and awards the EcoLogo to those that are verified by an independent third party as complying with the criteria.

Learn more at: <http://www.ecologo.org/en/>

### EcoSmart Certified Inks

The EcoSmart certification program gives printers, print buyers and end users the ability to easily identify environmentally friendly ink products. EcoSmart ink products can be easily identified by the EcoSmart seal. Upon purchasing EcoSmart products, printers are allowed to use the EcoSmart seal for their own marketing purposes. Customer documents printed with EcoSmart certified inks may also carry the seal, alerting consumers that a safe ink has been used.

Learn more at: <http://www.bsink.com/ecosmart.html>

### Fair Trade

The FAIRTRADE Certification Mark is a registered trademark of Fairtrade International. It certifies that products meet the social, economic and environmental standards set by Fairtrade. The Mark certifies products not companies. It does not cover the companies or organizations selling the products. There are strict rules governing the use of the Mark. When a product carries the FAIRTRADE Mark it means the producers and traders have met Fairtrade Standards.

Learn more at: <http://www.fairtrade.net/361.html>

### Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

FSC is a global, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of responsible forest management worldwide. FSC enables businesses and consumers to make informed choices about the forest products they buy. FSC facilitates the development of standards, ensures monitoring of certified operations and protects the FSC trademark so consumers can choose products that come from well managed forests.

Learn more at: <http://www.fsc.org/index.htm>



## REFERENCED RESOURCES

### Green Globe

Green Globe is the global travel and tourism industries' certification program for sustainable tourism. The Green Globe Standard is a structured assessment of the sustainability performance of travel and tourism businesses and their supply chain partners. Businesses can monitor improvements and document achievements leading to certification of their enterprises' sustainable operation and management. Green Globe Members save energy and water resources, reduce operational costs, positively contribute to local communities and their environment and meet the high expectations of green leisure and business travelers.

Learn more at: <http://greenglobe.com/>

### Green Seal Certified

Green Seal is a non-profit organization that uses science-based programs to empower consumers, purchasers and companies to create a more sustainable world. Green Seal develops life cycle-based sustainability standards for products, services and companies and offers third-party certification for those that meet the criteria in the standard. Green Seal actively identifies and promotes sustainability in the marketplace. Over the years the reputation of the Green Seal brand has grown to symbolize environmental leadership.

Learn more at: <http://www.greenseal.org/>

### Rainforest Alliance

The Rainforest Alliance works to conserve biodiversity and ensure sustainable livelihoods by transforming land-use practices, business practices and consumer behavior. They work to ensure millions of acres of working forests, farms, rangelands and hotel properties are managed according to rigorous sustainability standards. The Rainforest Alliance uses the power of markets to arrest the major drivers of deforestation and environmental destruction: timber extraction, agricultural expansion, cattle ranching and tourism. Programs help to link businesses to conscientious consumers, who identify their goods and services through the Rainforest Alliance Certified™ seal and Rainforest Alliance Verified™ mark.

Learn more at: <http://rainforest-alliance.org/>

### SmartWay Certified Carriers

SmartWay is a public/private collaboration between the USEPA and the freight transportation industry that helps freight shippers, carriers, and logistics companies improve fuel-efficiency and save money. The SmartWay Transport Partnership also helps to increase environmental performance, and increase supply chain sustainability. Participation in SmartWay helps carriers identify opportunities to improve efficiency, demonstrate efficiency to potential customers and reduce fuel costs. The program also helps shippers and logistics companies choose more efficient carriers, assess optimal mode choices and reduce their transport carbon footprint.

Learn more at: <http://www.epa.gov/smartway/>

### WaterSense

WaterSense, a partnership program by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, seeks to protect the future of our nation's water supply by offering people a simple way to use less water with water-efficient products, new homes, and services. The program seeks to help consumers make smart water choices that save money and maintain high environmental standards without compromising performance. Products and services that have earned the WaterSense label have been certified to be at least 20 percent more efficient without sacrificing performance.

Learn more at: <http://www.epa.gov/watersense/index.html>

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**A Guide to Running Green Meetings and Events. National Tourism Development Authority, Fáilte, Ireland.**

[http://www.failteireland.ie/Failteireland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/2\\_Develop\\_Your\\_Business/1\\_StartGrow\\_Your\\_Business/Guide-to-Running-Green-Meetings-and-Events-OBT-12LTB-GME-G1-11-12-3.pdf](http://www.failteireland.ie/Failteireland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/2_Develop_Your_Business/1_StartGrow_Your_Business/Guide-to-Running-Green-Meetings-and-Events-OBT-12LTB-GME-G1-11-12-3.pdf)

**Convention Industry Council's Green Meetings Report.**

[http://www.conventionindustry.org/Files/CIC\\_Green\\_Meetings\\_Report.pdf](http://www.conventionindustry.org/Files/CIC_Green_Meetings_Report.pdf)

**Green Event Resource Guide. University of California, Berkley.**

<http://sustainability.berkeley.edu/os/pages/gcerts/index.shtml>

**Green Meeting Guide 2009: Roll out the Green Carpet for your Participants. United Nations Environment Programme.**

[https://www.unep.org/sustainableprocurement/toolsUN/Green%20Meeting%20Guide\\_March%2009.pdf](https://www.unep.org/sustainableprocurement/toolsUN/Green%20Meeting%20Guide_March%2009.pdf)

**It's Easy Being Green! A Guide to Planning and Conducting Environmentally Aware Meetings and Events.**

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.**

<http://www.epa.gov/osw/wycd/grn-mtgs/>

**Simple Steps to Green Meetings and Events: The Professional's Guide to Saving Money and the Earth. Amy Spatrisano, CPM & Nancy J. Zavada, CPM**

**ZIP Zero Waste Certification. Zero Waste Pittsburgh.**

<http://www.zerowastepgh.org/>