

Guide to organising sustainable events

Key elements to reduce the environmental impact of the event and promote the social and economic development of the area in which it takes place.

ACCIONA Producciones y Diseño is a company that designs, organizes and produces events in a sustainable manner, trying to maximize the reduction of its ecological footprint.

This guide outlines the key elements to successfully organise this type of event, taking into consideration requirements such as preparing the programme, the venue, the catering, accommodation, mobility and transport, and technical services.

The aim is to offer all participants in the event (organisations, clients, participants, speakers, suppliers...) a series of sustainable good practices to reduce environmental impact and promote the social and economic development of its surrounding area.

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Most events consume an important amount of materials at every phase of development. Some of the most recurring and whose consumption is usually disproportionately high is paper, cardboard and plastic for use in information, promotions or distribution. In the era of 2.0 these practices are not only obsolete, but there are now new and efficient alternatives that can be used to organize an event. Nevertheless, and conscientious that there is still a long way to go to “0 paper” events, it is important to realize that measures of sustainability are applicable in creating these materials.

Good sustainable practices

- Maximum reduction in the quantity of materials used in tasks for communication, diffusion and promotion, thereby reducing the consumption of raw materials, water and energy necessary for their manufacture and transport.
- Encouraging the re-use of materials for dissemination and promotions in similar future events or other uses.

- Reduce the use of toxic products in the development of materials for communication, dissemination and promotion.
- Use recycled materials whenever possible, with approved environmental quality (for example, FSC for paper and cardboard) or that permit re-use (rechargeable batteries instead of disposable ones, white boards instead of blocks).
- Establish policies of printing on both sides of the paper, in black and white and in economy mode to reduce consumption of paper and toner.
- Selective retrieval of wastes, paying special attention to those that have special treatment like toner and print cartridges or batteries, and those that can be recycled such as paper or cardboard.
- Facilitate the recording and access of the event's information through new technologies.
- Substitute, whenever possible, printed documents for information in electronic format.
- Substitute sign-boards and other signage for digital screens.
- Encourage eco-design of materials for communication, dissemination and promotion.
- Guarantee access to all people of all elements of communication of the event, trying to eliminate any type of sensory barriers that may exclude the handicapped.
- Promote a culture of respect for diversity and non-discrimination in elements of communication of the event, avoiding the use of sexist language or images.
- Develop and apply innovative elements in communicating the event, giving an overall positive impact that can be re-applied in similar events.
- Facilitate the return of accreditations at the end of the event, providing an identification access point at the exit of the event, together with a cord to hold the accreditation for other events.

- Use a kind of accreditation card that can be re-used and/or recycled, and whose composition not contain any PVC.
- Carry out planning that adjusts to what is strictly necessary in printing out of materials for dissemination.
- Take into account the basic recommendations for eco-design in the design of materials such as: avoiding blank sheets of paper and unnecessary margins, not use inks other than what is strictly necessary, not exceed in the grain of the paper and reduce the area covered by ink.
- Inform all participants in the event (speakers, assistants, suppliers, the media...) of actions for sustainability of the event and make them participate in the practices and measures put in place.

VENUE OF THE EVENT

Selecting the venue or venues where an event is to take place is one of the organization tasks with the greatest potential for intervention in matters of sustainability, given that later questions will depend on this decision such as mobility, accessibility, energy and water consumption, waste management, etc. The installations where the event is to be celebrated are crucial for all activity and present the greatest challenge in terms of sustainability. They are, moreover, where most activity is concentrated and is the most intense, so applying measures of sustainability for each of the actions carried out is of utmost importance.

Good sustainable practices

Energy:

- Select rooms which adjust to the number of assistants thereby avoiding wasted space and resources.
- Select space that provides natural lighting for meeting areas, coffee breaks, meals, etc.
- Keep temperature and climate controls in the rooms between 20° and 26°, depending on the time year (In Winter, the optimum temperatura is between 19° or 20°; in Summer it is 25°).

- Control energy consumption by turning off lights in empty areas and devices not being used, avoiding “stand by”.

Water:

- Use measures that improve water efficiency (in cisterns, faucets, kitchens, etc.).

Accessibility:

- Choose spaces and rooms that are accesible to persons with disabilities, eliminating any type of physical or sensory barrier that limits their access and enjoyment.
- Provide signage along pathways and accesses for persons with reduced movility.

Sanitary and cleaning product:

- Reduce the use of toxic substances used in cleaning and maintenance where the event is held.
- Use cleaning and sanitary products such as toilet paper with a European ecological certification (EcoLabel or similar).

Work security:

- Avoid any kind of security accident, guaranteeing conditions that permit a proper celebration (crowd capacity, accesses, lighting, signage...).

Waste:

- Install containers for separating waste (paper, organic, containers...).

CATERING

Catering or restaurant service is essential in an event. The selection of products and services that take into account certain criteria to help minimize environmental and social impact is fundamental. Encouraging the consumption of local products means a decrease in emissions associated with the transport of food, while consumption of ecological products favorably impacts the production process by avoiding the use of fertilizers, pesticides and, therefore, the use of contaminating substances that affect

air and water quality, and of course, end user who cannot avoid ingesting toxic substances that accumulate in his body. Impacts to be considered within the work area:

- Impacts from food production processes.
- Generation of waste (above all from containers, packaging and organic material), without their proper management.
- High consumption of water and energy in centers for the elaboration and preparation of food.
- Consumption of fuel and contaminating gas emissions from the transport of food to the place where the event is held.

Good sustainable practices

- Offer and promote products of responsible consumption such as local products, seasonal produce from ecological cultivation or Fair Trade.
- Minimize the generation of waste, fundamentally in the number of containers and packaging, and support an adequate separation in origin and advanced final management.
- Disminish waste generated by the use of plates, cutlery and tableclothes.
- Guarantee access to and enjoyment of the restaurant services of the event to all those present, eliminating any type of physical or sensory barrier.
- Prioritize the use of kitchen appliances that are energy efficient.
- Serve tap water in glass pitchers with reusable glasses.
- Carry out a selective gathering of wastes and manage them correctly.
- Prioritize the use of reusable articles (plates, cutlery, glasses), avoiding those of a single use, for example, glasses that are not made of paper, plastic or polyesterine, napkins and tableclothes not made of paper, non-plastic cutlery and small napkins to be laundered.

- In case reusable articles are not available, prioritize the use of products manufactured with recycled materials or those of vegetable origin that can later be managed in selective recycling.
- Prioritize the use of bulk dispensers or pitchers for food and beverages.
- Avoid the use of overly packaged products.
- If using products coming from ecological agriculture, make sure they are certified by the Norm CEE 834/2007, concerning ecological production, or the Norm CE 1804/1999, referring to products of animal origin.
- If using Fair Trade products, verify that they have been supplied by an Organization for Fair Trade accredited by the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) or have the FAIRTRADE certification (stamp FLO), which guarantees that during production phases “Fair Trade” principles were respected.
- Reduce to a minimum level the quantity of meat products offered and provide vegetarian products as alternatives.

ACCOMMODATIONS

When selecting accommodations, where the event is to take place is an important consideration. In many cases, they can be one and the same, as in the case that concerns us. The selection of accommodations will affect the distance the participants and speakers move to arrive at the event and, therefore, in the transport and its possible impact. Moreover, the management of accommodations entails a series of environmental impacts associated with water and energy consumption, as well as to the use of potentially toxic cleaning products such that preference should be given to accommodations that have environmental policies, management systems and/or environmental plans of actions, including communication between personnel and the guests to encourage collaboration in this matter.

Good sustainable practices

- Reduce the use of energy in lighting, air-conditioning and transport, as well as the cost of same, and the global warming resulting from gas emissions.

- Reduce the consumption of water, as well as the possible environmental impact from waste water generated by the guests, and from maintenance and cleaning of accommodations.
- Use measures to improve water efficiency (in cisterns, faucets, kitchens...).
- Use well-placed cards and signs to encourage guests and personnel to consume water in a responsible manner.
- Install systems to take advantage of grey water and/or rainwater.
- Use climate control systems that are easily operated by the guests (easy to turn off).
- Offer the guests the possibility to decide if their sheets and towels need to be changed everyday or not, in order to save water.
- Fit out the rooms and other installations with well-placed signs to encourage the guests and personnel to turn off the lights and other electric devices when not being used.
- Reduce the use of toxic substances used in the cleaning and maintenance of the installations.
- Use cleaning and sanitary products like toilet paper with a European ecological certification (EcoLabel or similar).
- Minimize the use of air-fresheners, tablets or perfumed substances for urinary bowls, spray products, disinfectants or with disinfectants (such as bleach) for general cleaning, except in bathrooms and those surfaces that require it.
- Ensure that cleaning equipment such as vacuum cleaners or floor polishers do not generate noise above 70 dB(A).
- Offer bathroom products (shampoo and soap) in rechargeable dispensers.
- Reduce the quantity of waste derived from services to accommodate the guests and promote the efficient management of same: selective recycling and the appropriate treatment of each.
- Guarantee access to all persons, eliminating any physical or sensory barrier.

- Guarantee the compliance of the rights and obligations of the workers.
- Carry out selective recycling of waste that is generated by placing appropriate and easily visible signs in both communal areas and in the guests' rooms, as well as in the areas for use of personnel.

MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT

In a generic manner, one of the principal environmental impacts from the celebration of an event is usually caused by transport. The very definition of event, as an important and programmed occurrence, whether if be of a social, academic, artistic, sports or other type, implies that in a determined space there will be a concentration of people and merchandise that has had to arrive at said location and that will have to be moved back to their origin once the event has finished. The transport of the mobility associated with the celebration of an event must be considered from different points of view:

- Travel to and from the venue of the event: made by the assistants and the transport of materials and logistics.
- Mobility in the place where the event is celebrated.
- Infrastructures of mobility in the place of the event.
- Management of traffic in the place of the event.

Good sustainable practices

- Reduce the number of movements necessary and the distance travelled to same.
- Offer the assistants the most precise information possible about the means of transport in the city and about the ways to get to the venue of the event, the accommodations, airport, train station, etc.
- Encourage the use of shared transport.
- Use vehicles with more fuel-efficient motors and mess contaminating emissions.

- Guarantee access to all persons to all means of transport, selecting or recommending those that do not have access barriers.
- Provide correct attention to the assistants and/or participants in the event, with the intention of providing their maximum satisfaction in relation to the activities carried out in the event.

TECHNICAL SERVICES

The work of the companies supplying logistic and technical services implies the use of different materials and equipment and their transport. The transport of technical equipment and their use during the event entails the consumption of resources which contaminate the environment, such as fuel and electrical energy, that generate gases which cause global warming.

These very suppliers have the possibility of incorporating criteria of sustainability, as much in the selection and use of materials and equipment as in the packing and transport of same. They also have the responsibility of correctly managing all materials once the event is finalized.

Good sustainable practices

- Use energy-efficient equipment (computers, projectors, sound equipment, etc.).
- See that electricity consumption comes directly from the general supply network instead of from generators.
- Install and preferably use LED lights on stage, instead of conventional lighting.
- Turn off devices when not in use, avoiding “stand by”, which can significantly lower consumption of electricity.
- Reduce the number of necessary movements when providing transport services.
- Use vehicles with more energy-efficient motors and less contaminating emissions.

OFFSETTING CO₂ EMISSIONS

CO₂ is an atmospheric component of the greenhouse gas category, released through the burning of fossil fuels such as oil, gas, and coal.

In the field of events, the term carbon neutral means that CO₂ emissions associated with a specific event equal zero, by offsetting those that are unavoidable. The importance of neutralising emissions lies in the fact that they represent the greatest environmental impact of any event. By taking responsibility for the emissions, we contribute to the improvement of the environmental legacy.

Sustainable Good Practices

- Analyse the sources generating CO₂ emissions that are associated with the organisation and celebration of the event. We recommend that you consider, at least, the following sources of emissions: transport of materials and equipment, staff travel and accommodation, waste production, and consumption of electricity and fuels (boilers, auxiliary machinery, etc.).
- Make calculations and count unavoidable emissions, based on the guidelines and recommendations of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the ISO 14064:2006 standard and the GHG Protocol of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBSCD) and the World Resource Institute (WRI).
- Offset the emissions by purchasing carbon credits from a project that meets the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) to guarantee that the carbon credits are real and measurable.

ACCIONA Producciones y Diseño

sustainability.apd@acciona.com
www.acciona-apd.com