



EARTHCHECK

GREEN CONFERENCING & EVENTS

EARTHCHECK'S TIPS FOR PLANNING ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY EVENTS ON SUSTAINABLE BUDGETS.

Business conferences and events are renowned for their excesses, which – when you think about it – is half the fun of attending. So when a client decides they want to go green with their planning, it's hard to know where to start.

For organisers and planners the challenge is *how* to achieve the desired results within the approved budget.

Doing so without downgrading the delegate experience need not be as daunting as it first appears. Remembering that going green doesn't have to be an all or nothing exercise. It's possible to start with a single initiative and work on from there.

ROLE PLAY

To make conferences more sustainable, we all have a role to play. Delegates, PCOs, clients, venues, and each supplier should all be part of the "greening" process.

PCOs are encouraged to select products, suppliers or procedures that have sustainability policies in place and can provide third party, independent verification to back up their "green" claims. All facets of an event and its consumption of resources should be measured, managed and monitored; particularly those that involve waste, water, energy, air, transport, and procurement.

A little forward planning goes a long way to quickly get a handle on where

resources may be conserved, where waste is being generated and where greater efficiencies may be gained.

As with all efforts, aim to help others adopt new habits by communicating your intention and educating delegates

through signage to encourage participation.

TRANSPORTATION

Some cities have better infrastructure in place than others, making the use of public transport more feasible. There are ways though to encourage its use and to supplement or streamline where weaknesses may exist.

Consider including the cost of public transport into the price of entry tickets.

Link to scheduling information online and create a page online to assist those keen to car pool from the airport, hotels or to events. Better still, if the nearest public transport hub requires delegates to taxi in, then consider using shuttle buses to ferry groups across and take into account peak travel times.

Remote delegates may prefer to attend in the virtual sense, so offer Online Delegate rates and provide services such as podcasting, webcasting and video conferencing.

Use hybrid cars and alternative fuels whenever possible.

Organise truck pools to help reduce the number of vehicles that go on site and encourage suppliers to pool resources so that one truck collects all equipment from them. This is not only far more efficient, but will also help share the costs.

Encourage those catching flights to fly direct flights where possible; and to go economy class rather than business to lower the emissions ratio per seat.

Consider the age of the aircraft, as new aircraft are more efficient. Choose airlines with younger fleets, as they're more

WHAT IS VOLUNTARY CARBON OFFSETTING?

Carbon offsetting is a relatively simple and socially responsible way for businesses to compensate for all or some of their GHG they emit.

However it is essential that businesses only offset those emissions that are unavoidable.

You should first look for opportunities to avoid or reduce emissions before considering carbon offsets. This will ensure your financial investment and the environmental benefits are maximised.

CALCULATING YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

A carbon footprint is a measure of the impact your business's activities are having on the environment in terms of the amount of GHG produced.

There are many online carbon calculators available - including the EarthCheck ones - that have been specifically designed for use by travel and tourism operators and are consistent with international standards for GHG accounting methodologies.

These can help your business calculate your annual GHG emissions and assess your progress towards achieving best practice.

efficient, and opt for those with higher load factors and active green policies.

Don't be a stooge. Pay a little extra to offset the carbon emissions produced by travel.

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

Creating a waste-reduction policy is a great step in conserving materials and minimising waste output.

Ensure the waste-management plan addresses all types of waste and clearly mark collection stations so they can be found and used as intended.

Separate food waste into containers to allow for composting and arrange for a charity to collect portions that have been prepared but not served.

Keep an eye on attendance so that collateral, products and catering supply is tailored accordingly. Try and go paperless by using touch-screen displays.

Supply as much delegate and supplier information as possible via electronic channels, rather than in printed form, and send post-event information on memory stick or make it available online.

Harness mobile phone technologies to distribute seating and registration detail.

If you must print, then do so on recycled paper using vegetable ink and default all printers and photocopiers to the double-sided setting.

If gift bags must be used at the event, then ensure they are reusable or multi-purpose.

Research and prioritise the purchase of supplies and equipment, giving preference to procuring from companies that use recycled materials or have end-of-life recycling potential, and those suppliers that are appropriately certified and independently audited.

Arrange for the return of unwanted or unused products, name tags and materials to suppliers (this may include such goods as printing cartridges, gift bags and packaging).

Ensure the use of non-toxic cleaning products at the venue or with cleaning contractors.

HOT TIP

Ask for a copy of the venue's Sustainability Policy and to see their most recent benchmarking report, as well as evidence of their certification/ audit results.

POWER AND WATER

Buy 100 per cent accredited Green Power and request proof that your suppliers are doing likewise.

Select toilet suppliers that use "grey water" and urinal technologies, and Ask for a copy of the venue's sustainability policy, most recent benchmarking report and evidence of certification/ recent audits.

Correctly dispose of "black water".

If using generators, select the more modern, fuel-efficient models and minimise running time where possible.

Ensure all equipment is turned off overnight at the switch.

Use reusable crockery and cutlery, as well as napkins that can be washed and reused. But should disposable cups, plates and cutlery be essential, then source ones that are made from recycled fibres and corn starch or sustainable woods such as bamboo.

Use fridge units for the minimal amount of time and don't chill products in cardboard as it requires a longer chilling time.

Last, but not least: offset any emissions you can't mitigate.

If the weather permits, keep the air-conditioning turned off during set-up and break-down periods. Check that air-conditioning can be independently controlled for each room.

LOCATION, LOCATION

When selecting a venue, inquire about their Green Star accreditation rating (based on construction criteria and running requirements of the building). Six-star is currently the highest.

Ask for a copy of the venue's sustainability policy, most recent benchmarking report and evidence of certification/ recent audits.

Ensure your venue has waste-reduction procedures that align with your policies.

CATERING

Opt for water glasses and jugs of filtered water rather than bottled or imported water.

Don't use individually packaged items such as mints, salt and pepper, jams or sugar sachets.

Request catering ingredients are sourced locally and if fish is on the menu, ensure it's from sustainable supplies, that chicken is free range (not cage fed), and that organic fruits, vegetables and juices are considered

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

www.EarthCheck.org
www.sustainabletoursimonline.com
www.greenfleet.com
<http://www.lucien.com.au>
<http://www.paperlessevent.com.au>