

Green Events Guide



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Introduction

All events, big or small, use resources and have negative impacts on the environment. The planning, preparation and conducting of events tend to consume water, energy and materials, and produce waste and gas emissions. We understand that event organisers and venue managers would like to reduce their impacts on the environment and go green, but they are not sure how to start.

This Green Events Guide aims to provide a framework of principles and practical tips on how event and venue managers can start creating greener events by identifying and reducing the various environmental impacts in its process.

If you are organising an event or managing a venue for an event, we hope that you will take the first step in making the event green. The tips in this guide are not exhaustive but the more tips you implement, the greener is your event.

The following key areas are considered for a green event and will be discussed in the following chapters:

- Venue and Transport
- Food and Catering
- Energy and Water
- Materials and Waste

Venue and Transport

The right venue for your event plays an important role in making the event successful. A green event is usually held at a venue that is recognised for its environmental commitment and where the management is supportive of environmental efforts. The venue location is also conducive and accessible for the event participants.

Green Event Tips

- ✓ Make sure that the venue and its management is environmentally responsible. This could be evident through the venue's environmental management system certification or through its environmental awards and contributions. The venue management should also be practising energy and water conservation, waste minimisation, and educating staff about environmental issues.
- ✓ Choose a venue that is easily accessible by public transport such as buses and the trains. This will help to reduce the need for participants to travel by cars.
- ✓ For international conferences, opt for a venue that offers accommodation for your participants or where the accommodation is within walking distance from the venue. This will also help to reduce their need for travelling and saves time.



- ✓ Encourage participants to use public transport instead of driving their cars. Provide a map of the venue location and the nearby public transport options available. You can also indicate that there is no or limited parking lots for cars.
- ✓ Advise participants on carsharing if they have to drive their cars and take taxis to the venue. Help to get participants to contact others staying in the same areas to share their cars or taxis and travel together.
- ✓ Offer a shuttle bus service that brings participants from certain locations to the venue. You can also use environmentally friendly buses such as those running on compressed natural gas (CNG) that emits less gas emissions.



Food and Catering

Food is usually provided to the participants through the venue's in-house kitchen or through an external catering service. A green event should aim to provide healthy and natural food to the participants and create less waste in the process.

Green Event Tips

- ✓ Confirm the number of participants attending the event and their dietary requirements. This would help you to prepare or order the right amount of food. It might also be good to cater slightly less food (about 10 to 20 percent) than required so as to avoid unnecessary wastage.
- ✓ Choose healthy, natural or organic food for your participants, and source for locally produced food where possible. This helps your participants to have a healthy meal and also reduces the use of chemicals during food production. Sourcing for local produce will help to reduce gas emissions and the energy used during its transportation.
- ✓ Choose vegetarian food or include more vegetarian dishes for your participants. This helps to reduce the amount of food, water and energy resources needed for meat production.



- ✓ Switch to non-disposable plates, cups and cutlery for your catered food. Ask the caterer to use chinaware or glassware instead. This helps to reduce the amount of waste from paper or plastic disposables.
- ✓ When serving hot beverages, avoid the use of disposable stirrers and individually packaged sugar, milk and creamer. Use a spoon for stirring and place the food in reusable containers or in jugs.
- ✓ Avoid serving bottled water or using water dispensers with disposable cups. Provide participants with glass cups for their water. This helps to reduce the amount of plastic bottles and plastic waste.
- ✓ Arrange for any leftover food to be given to the venue staff, event organiser or donate it to a charity. The leftover food should not be wasted.
- ✓ Consider sending the food waste for composting if the venue has a composting facility or if there are such services available nearby.

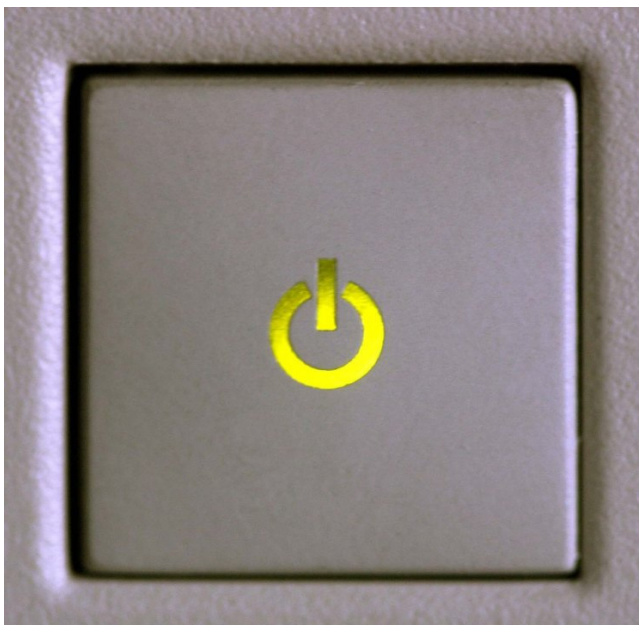


Energy and Water

The venue usually consumes large amounts of energy and water for conducting the event and other activities. A green event involves identifying and reducing the energy and water usage.

Green Event Tips

- ✓ Conduct energy and water checks at the venue. Ensure that there is no unnecessary energy and water consumption and wastage, or water leaks.
- ✓ Ensure that the air-conditioning in the rooms is set at a comfortable temperature (between 24°C to 26°C) so that the participants will not find it too cold or hot.
- ✓ Check that the lights and equipment in the rooms are switched off when they are not in use. Remind the participants to switch off the lights and equipment or place a small reminder at the switches.
- ✓ Use energy efficient lightings, appliances and equipment for the event and venue. This will help you reduce the energy usage and also save costs.



- ✓ Use water efficient taps and toilet flushing cisterns. You can also install thimbles, aerators or flow restrictors to reduce the water volume used. This helps to save water and costs.
- ✓ Consider offsetting the event's carbon dioxide emissions due to the energy usage, transportation emissions and other sources. The carbon offset could be through the planting of trees locally or through the buying of carbon credits from companies that fund renewable energy or reforestation projects.



Materials and Waste

The preparation, promotion and conducting of an event usually uses large amounts of materials such as paper and plastic, and generates large amounts of waste. A green event practises the 3 “Rs” – Reduce, Reuse and Recycle (in order of sequence). Reduce by not creating the waste or minimising the waste in the beginning. Reuse by using the waste several times or for another purpose. Recycle by collecting and sending the waste to be processed as a resource. The sequence is important as source reduction is usually the best way to minimise waste while recycling still has some impact on the environment and should be done last.

Green Event Tips

Reduce

- ✓ Avoid paper printing during the planning stage and store the documents and correspondences online or on your computer.
- ✓ Promote the event through electronic media such as websites or email, and avoid printing posters or banners.



- ✓ Place the handouts and printed materials online or send them by email so that the participants can decide whether to print them.
- ✓ Adjust the layout of the printed materials by reducing the border size and fitting more content into one page.
- ✓ Use double-sided printing for promotional and event materials.
- ✓ Use the whiteboard instead of flipchart paper during the discussions before and at the event.

Reuse

- ✓ Reuse display and exhibition materials such as banners, backdrops and signage. Design the materials to be made of reusable materials and that the content would stay relevant.
- ✓ Choose welcome gifts that are practical and reusable.
- ✓ Rent appliances and equipment instead of buying them.
- ✓ Reuse name badges and lanyards by collecting them back after the event.



- ✓ Donate the materials that are not needed after the event to other organisations or charities that want them.

Recycle

- ✓ Set up recycling points at the venue with clear signage and encourage participants to recycle.
- ✓ Ensure that the event and venue staff is aware of the recycling facilities and that they recycle all the materials after the event.
- ✓ Use recyclable or recycled materials for your event. Recycled paper can be used for printing event materials.



Resources

Publications

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Sustainable Events Guide, 2007.

Government Office for the South West, Greener Events: A Guide to Reducing the Environmental Impacts of Conferences and Seminars, 2007.

Manchester City Council, A Guide to Greening your Event, 2007.

UK Sports Council, Practical Environmental Guidelines, 2002.

Photos

Chance Agrella, freerangestock.com (pages 3 and 6)

Kerry A Adamo, freerangestock.com (pages 4 and 5)

Petr Kratochvil, publicdomainpictures.net (page 9)

Green Future Solutions (cover page; pages 2, 7, 8 and 10)

Environmental Challenge Organisation (Singapore)



ECO Singapore is the leading youth-led Non-Governmental Social Enterprise on sustainable lifestyle. Swinging into full action end 2005, ECO Singapore aims to challenge youth of age 17-35 to adopt a more sustainable lifestyle by being more informed consumers and embrace environmental issues holistically. ECO Singapore actively drives and supports local and global environmental initiatives involving other environmental stakeholders such as the government, the corporate entities and the civil society movements.

For more information, please visit www.eco-singapore.org.

Green Future Solutions



Green Future Solutions provides environmental consultancy services to help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) go green. We also manage AsialsGreen - an online green resource guide for the people in Singapore and Asia to learn more about the environment and take action. Learn more. Take action. Spread the message. Do what we can.

For more information, please visit www.asiaisgreen.com.

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