

CHECKLIST FOR SUSTAINABLE EVENTS



Introduction

Being sustainable is about doing things with minimum long-lasting damage to our ecosystem. As scouts, we always strive to do our best and we hope that this checklist will motivate you and spark new ideas on how to create more sustainable events. Because events are one area where we can do the most harm, it is important to organise them differently. Together, let's create a better world now and for all future generations.



Principles

Sustainability comes first in your planning

Thinking about sustainability should be part of your planning process. People usually think of sustainability only after they have made most critical decisions (like procurement, venue selection, supply contracts, waste management and budget,) and at that point it might already be too late to do some things. You can eliminate many frustrations if sustainability is not the last, but the first thing you think of.



Think seasonal

Seasons follow the rhythm of nature and so should we. It starts with offering meals with local and seasonal products but an event in the summer can also be partially hosted outdoors, saving energies and spicing up your event. Seasons influence the amount of heating/cooling and electricity we need. If flexible, find dates at moments of good weather, at a time when your venue will need less energy to run.



Think quality, not quantity

It is not about how much you get; it is more about what you get. So, think about the quality of what you are buying. Is it ethically made? Is it eco-friendly? Can you support a local business? Is it reusable? Will people benefit from receiving this?



Think experiences, not things

Unique and interesting experiences are more memorable than a bag full of goodies. A cool evening to discover the local culture, a folk dancing lesson, a tour of the old nearby castle. These are the things we really take with us when we come home, not to mention that they make us culturally richer. Take that into consideration while planning a budget.

CHECKLIST FOR SUSTAINABLE EVENTS



Compensate for what you pollute

There is no amount of planning that will allow you to make a truly carbon neutral event. There are going to be compromises to be made, you won't always find a new way. Do your best, that's all anyone can ask and for what pollution you won't be able to prevent, prepare a compensation scheme. Organise a tree-planting, find a local green organisation to support, use a trusted carbon-compensation organisation.



Choose as local as possible

Local doesn't mean right next to you. It means as close to you as possible. By choosing something close by, you minimise the transportation of both goods and people. By choosing the local option you will also support the local community.



Support local businesses, not large corporations

Local, independently owned businesses are creating quality jobs and stronger communities everywhere, at a faster rate than large corporations. Very often local businesses donate more to local non-profits, events and sport teams compared to big chains and are more invested in the community's future.

RRRRRRRR's



We encourage you to always work with the 4 Rs principle Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. If you need to buy something for an event, take a second to look at your options. Can you borrow it from a local school, scout centre or maybe someone you know? Could you recycle something and make what you are missing? or do you have the option to find it second hand either online or in a shop?

CHECKLIST FOR SUSTAINABLE EVENTS



Checklist

Transportation

- ☐ When possible, favour alternative ways of transportation than flying. Train is better than bus which is better than carpooling which is better than driving alone.
- ☐ Limit the distance between the accommodation, the venue and the points of arrivals, and use public transportation as much as possible.

Food/beverages

- ☐ Buy local, organic and seasonal products as much as possible. If not, favour ecologically and/or fairly-traded certified products.

Accommodation and venue choice

- ☐ Ordering bottled water by session organisers should be discouraged. Organisers are encouraged to opt for tap water instead of bottled water where the quality of drinking water is ensured and otherwise favour water fountains for people to use to refill their own reusable water bottles.
- ☐ Have at least one quality vegetarian meal per event with local and seasonal products.
- ☐ If possible the accommodation and the event venue should be in the same building.

Materials/equipment/products and services

- ☐ Favour local providers over big international chains if possible, otherwise, favour a venue with an environmental certification or at least high environmental standards.
- ☐ Reduce the amount of goodies in the welcome pack to a minimum. Prefer cultural experiences to giving people things, or choose good quality goodies with environmental standards
- ☐ Only create the absolutely necessary visual materials for your event, try and create materials that can be reused for other events, the same applies to goodies, otherwise make sure they are recyclable.
- ☐ Rent instead of buying (except if you can have a long term use for it), otherwise buy second-hand instead of new
- ☐ Using certified eco-products (BIO food and cosmetics, eco-friendly products, FSC wood and recycled paper, Fairtrade etc.) and suppliers wherever possible;
- ☐ Information/Communication and requirements for participants
- ☐ Ask participants to bring their own water bottle, cup, reusable napkin, teaspoon, shampoos and soaps

CHECKLIST FOR SUSTAINABLE EVENTS



Reimbursement policy

- ☐ Develop a reimbursement policy that inspires sustainable behaviors among participants

Community Engagement

- ☐ Incorporate community service as a part of the program
- ☐ If you give out “goodies” make sure there is an option for the participants to give the things back so they can be donated to people who could benefit from them (schools, homeless, afternoon clubs).
- ☐ See if you can get locals to join the event, maybe showcasing something for the international evening or planning an activity.

Compensation

- ☐ Calculate the carbon footprint of the transports at your event and give participants guidelines on how to compensate for it.

Sustainable Guidelines for hosting receptions/stands/ international evenings

- ☐ Ensure that receptions and events hosted by participants followed the same standards as your event.

Awareness-raising of participants

- ☐ Sustainability is better spoken with stories. Use some of the morning meditation time to present interesting videos about sustainability. There are a lot to find on the Internet.

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Are you ready to take more steps towards a sustainable event? Great! Below you will find the same categories as the original checklist, you will also find a couple of new ones. In each of the categories we have found a few suggestions for you to look at when planning your event. Hopefully these suggestions will spark great conversations and new ideas in your planning team. Happy planning.

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Transportation

From your hometown to the town of the event and back

- ☐ Create systems to facilitate the joint organisation of transportation among participants.

Within the town of the event

- ☐ Offer sustainable options for transportation for the participants during the event i.e. bike or scooter rental.
- ☐ Check the possibility of having walking distance between the venue and accommodations and from the main points of arrivals (airport/train/bus station)

Food/beverages

- ☐ Limit the use of buffet by allowing participants to pre order their meals or by only having table serving.
- ☐ Prioritize non-processed, organic, fair-trade, MSC, Palm oil and GMO-free food, snacks and beverages wherever possible.
- ☐ The contracted caterer (if applicable) has an environmental policy in place.
- ☐ Food leftovers, untouched, are redirected to food banks, rescue apps or similar.

CHECKLIST FOR SUSTAINABLE EVENTS



Accommodation and venue choice

Try to find a hotel or resort:

- ☐ That has a sustainability policy
- ☐ That is certified sustainable (Green Globe certification, LEED, green building certification)
- ☐ Venue that is supporting local communities, by sourcing and purchasing locally, providing employment, especially to disadvantaged community members.

If at a scout centre/campsite

- ☐ Prioritise SCENES centers.
- ☐ Your venue has a wastewater treatment system in place or is connected to the municipal wastewater treatment system.

Materials and services

- ☐ Find subcontractors that have environmental standards.
- ☐ Try to find technical suppliers that are using energy efficient modern technology.
- ☐ Purchase or rent equipment powered by renewable energy, such as solar or human-powered to supply power to the event.
- ☐ If you want to use floral arrangements for your event, use living decor and purchase local and indigenous plants.

Information/Communication for participants

- ☐ Consider not having any welcome gifts and make sure all information is available digitally only. Alternatively, create a sign-up form for participants to get their welcome pack and give them the option to only take what they need. Set up your order accordingly.
- ☐ Make sure most of the signs and displays you create are reusable event after event. - If not possible, maybe recyclable. Keep it generic. Use phrases such as “this way” or simply use arrows that can be used in any event.
- ☐ Offer participants educational opportunities to learn about sustainability.

Reimbursement policy

- ☐ Encourage people to take the train, bus or car-pool by ensuring the full refund even if it's a more expensive option.

CHECKLIST FOR SUSTAINABLE EVENTS



Community Engagement

- ☐ Have a community project where participants can help with, for example fixing a playground, planting a forest, painting a kindergarten, picking up trash in the local area or at the local beach etc.

Impact measurement

- ☐ Create a sustainability report after the event to handover to the next team.
- ☐ Organise regular reviews on sustainability and make correcting measures if needed during the planning phase.

Compensation

- ☐ Set up a carbon compensating activity during the event. Try to see if it can be combined with community engagement activity.
- ☐ Set up a carbon compensation fund for participants to fund green scout activities.

Hosting receptions/stands/international evenings

- ☐ Make sure that your giveaways are not produced by people in unfair working conditions.
- ☐ Purchase your giveaways from local, reputable sources, especially those with sustainable accreditations.
- ☐ A great idea for your printed promotional materials is plantable seed paper. Eliminate waste by blooming your information into vegetables or flowers!
- ☐ Make your printed materials with printing processes that eliminate solvents or use waterless ink.

