EASY GUIDE TO GREEN EVENTS
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ESTORIL CONGRESS CENTER: B GREEN – THE ONLY OPTION

Certified as a Green Venue by EarthCheck, the Estoril Congress Center (ECC) offers you the chance to ‘Green’ your events on an easy understanding process, improving your company’s social and environmental responsibility and strategic objectives.

The Estoril Congress Center has a strong commitment to economic, environmental and social responsibility. By taking advantage of its existing green facilities and programs, the ECC is an ideal venue for hosting a green event. Some of our best practices and building features already in place include:

- A long-standing and extensive recycling program;
- Energy management systems to control and reduce energy consumption;
- The offer of zero-carbon events in collaboration with clients and their suppliers;
- The use of eco-certified products (cleaning products, recycled paper, etc.);
- The offer of freshly-prepared meals using locally grown and produced products;
- Staff trained in green meeting plans and procedures;
- The offer of local social responsibility actions, wellness activities and health-safety programs.

ECC has been recognized for its effort to incorporate an innovative sustainability policy. ECC is proud to have been recognized and presented with the following SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS:

2007 – Foremost European Venue – EIBTM
    Leadership in Sustainable Business Tourism - AMFORHT
2009 – Environmental Sustainability (Honorable Mention) - Tourism of Portugal
    Green Exhibition Award - IMEX
    Best Venue – Event Gala
2010 – Event Sustainability (Honorable Mention) – Event Gala
THE GREEN EVENT CONCEPT

Any gathering has environmental implications. It consumes energy, produces waste and results in air emissions such as the greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. One area where an organization can reduce its environmental footprint is by hosting a green meeting or event.

Many of us have had the task of organizing a meeting – setting the agenda, inviting participants, arranging facilities, and ordering food and equipment. However, few of us are environmental experts. ECC wrote this guide with that in mind. It uses plain language and an easy-to-follow format to help make your meeting a green and successful event.

Faced with time and budget constraints, you might feel that greening the session would be a lot of added work for limited benefit. But the fact is that a green event does more than simply help the environment. It makes good economic and social sense, it is good public relations, and it will help others learn by your example.

SO, WHY HOLD A GREEN EVENT?

It reduces costs and saves time
Something as simple as reducing paper and using electronic documentation avoids the costs and time associated with purchasing, printing and distributing event collateral. Several small changes can lead to significant overall cost savings for your event.

It saves resources and reduces waste
Eliminating or reducing the use of items such as disposable glass, dishware, napkins and brochures saves paper and reduces landfill waste.

It fosters the local economy
A green event adds value to the local economy and is a unique opportunity to showcase local selections. Opting for locally grown, seasonal products and local suppliers fosters the community's economic and social development.

It enhances brand and public image
A green event says a lot about the values of your organization. It signals that your organization is aware of environmental impacts and is willing to take action. It also shows that your organization is willing to meet the increasing demand for sustainable options.
It educates and motivates, and encourages market transformation
Holding a green event may encourage others to implement these same technologies and practices in their own homes and businesses, and it provides an opportunity to educate participants, organizers and suppliers about the benefits of green events, emphasizing the need for a new, responsible attitude.

GREEN EVENT PLANNING

This chapter was carefully written to provide an easy-to-use checklist for all types and sizes of meetings and events, ranging from small half-day meetings to large international conferences. This checklist was designed according to the green guidelines recommended by the Convention Industry Council's Green Meeting Task Force (www.conventionindustry.org).

Before using the checklist:

1. Create an overall sketch of the event program and participant information.
2. The event configuration will determine which green practices on the checklist can be applied or not and what your green event will look like.
3. Be certain that all team members of the organization, as well as suppliers, contractors and hosts, know of your greening requirements and needs.

GREEN EVENT CHECKLIST

1. PLANNING AND COMMUNICATION

Before the event:

☐ Send an e-mail to all suppliers, organizers and attendees, stating your commitment to a green event, and send reminders.

☐ Minimize paper usage by registering participants and accrediting media electronically.

☐ Evaluate past events of a similar scope and size to forecast the amount of materials and hand-outs needed.

☐ Rather than printing the event’s materials, put them on a CD and post it on the Web or e-mail it to participants.

☐ Any printing done for the conference or for the conference/registration package should be printed on recycled paper and be double-sided.
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☐ Use a digital screen to display the daily program.

☐ Make all information, including conference hand-outs, available online.

☐ Provide a space where left-over items (signs, gifts/goodie bags, flowers, etc.) can be donated to local schools or other social institutions.

☐ Develop a reward program (such as a “green exhibitor award”) that encourages responsible behavior from event participants, staff and committee members.

☐ Create a local volunteer program to support the organization of the event.

2. PARTICIPANTS’ MATERIALS AND GIFTS:

Greening your event:

☐ Provide the registration package in a re-usable holder (e.g., a re-usable cotton bag, or a durable binder or folder made from recycled plastic or paper).

☐ If name cards are required, print them on recycled paper, and use re-usable plastic name card-holders and lanyards, and recycle them after use.

☐ Limit distribution of brochures, hand-outs and session notes to those with a genuine need or interest.

☐ Encourage speakers/guests to provide electronic copies of handouts and post the materials on the event/organization website, while periodically reminding participants of the website’s content.

☐ Ask participants to return card-holders at the end of the meeting, and provide convenient receptacles.

☐ If you give away promotional items, try to use ones that are made from recycled materials, produced locally if available or generic, and undated so that they can be used again at other events.

3. EXHIBIT/DISPLAY AND LOGISTICS

Reduce, Re-use, Recycle:

☐ Indicate participation conditions to exhibitors beforehand and inform them of best-practice tips and sustainable suppliers to ease exhibitors’ selection and practices.

☐ Use recycled materials to construct your exhibits.
☐ Re-use your exhibits for each show you participate in.

☐ Use exhibits carpet of at least 25% recycled materials.

☐ Request decorations that are organic, such as flowers, or that can be re-used for future events.

☐ Rent exhibits and pop-ups locally rather than shipping them to avoid fuel consumption.

☐ Signage can be rented. If purchased, it should be durable, generic and undated so that it can be used again at other events.

☐ Use eco-efficient light-bulb solutions for exhibits.

☐ Keep reduced lights and thermostat during move-in/move-out.

☐ Request rooms with windows that open for ventilation and natural lighting.

☐ Use dry-erase white boards instead of paper flip charts.

☐ Ask exhibitors to collect and re-use publications discarded by attendees.

☐ Use only recycled paper boxes or bio-degradable materials for packing.

☐ Avoid bringing large quantities of promotional materials. Send them, on request, after the show.

☐ Once you are done with exhibit components, recycle the used parts by donating used carpets/materials to the community, local schools or charitable institutions.

4. AUDIOVISUALS

Don’t forget to:

☐ Check that all batteries, print cartridges and other toxic waste is handled correctly and carefully recycled.

☐ Choose LCD technology over plasma, which will reduce energy consumption by nearly 50%.

☐ Opt for LED lighting, which reduces energy consumption by 50% and has a low thermal output.
□ Turn off lights, air conditioning and other electronic equipment when not in use.
□ Advise delegates to enable sleep mode on laptops and any other equipment at the event.
□ Consider video conferencing options for those delegates who cannot travel to the event.

5. TRANSPORTATION

Provide and encourage:

□ A web platform for participants to organize car sharing and taxis.
□ Shuttle or car-sharing transportation, to and from the airport, hotel and venue.
□ Information about local public transport or local eco-transport.
□ Time to cycle or walk to events, and provide mobility maps.
□ A supply of free or rental bicycles with parking location at the venue and hotels.

6. FOOD AND BEVERAGES

When contacting caterers:

□ Confirm the guaranteed number of event participants in order to reduce food waste.
□ Give preference to re-usable glassware and dishware.
□ Use cloth napkins, table-cloths, or at the very least, bio-degradable napkins.
□ Avoid bottled water by requesting water served in jugs.
□ Use purified tap water whenever possible.
□ Use alternative bio-degradable lunch packaging or nothing at all.
□ Avoid single-serve containers for food and condiments (e.g. milk, cream, sugar, artificial sweeteners, butter, ketchup, vinegar, mustard, jams, salt, pepper and breakfast cereal). Provide these in bulk, unless unacceptable to local health authorities.
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□ Ask for Green Menus or choose typical local dishes using local ingredients, subject to seasonal availability.

□ Request that the caterer buys products at the local organic market or from wholesalers located within a 30 km radius, giving preference to products produced inside a 100km radius.

□ Offer vegetarian meal selections, as vegetables require less energy input compared to meat selections.

□ Feature locally sourced alcoholic beverages.

□ Give preference to re-usable cork or ceramic coasters over disposable paper coasters.

□ Encourage caterers to list sustainable products used in menus.

□ Use local flowers or other locally made decorative items, opting where possible for re-usable decorations.

□ Donate surplus usable food to charities where possible, subject to local health regulations.

□ Ensure that all bottles and cans are properly recycled.

7. ACCOMMODATION

When contacting hotels:

□ Select local accommodation situated within walking distance from the event or accessible by public transport.

□ Check whether the hotel has an environmental policy and an environmental action plan, conveys its environmental policy to guests (e.g. through videos, publications, signage), and encourages guest cooperation.

□ Don’t forget to bring your own shampoo and other toiletries.

□ Check whether signs encourage guests to turn off lights and cooperate towards the hotel’s environmental policy.

□ Ensure that guests have the option of asking housekeeping to avoid changing sheets and towels every day to save energy and water.

□ Ask whether newspapers are delivered to rooms only if requested and are not wrapped.
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8. MEASURE AND COMPENSATE

And don’t forget to:

☐ Partner with a local offset company to record and report measurable sustainability data.
☐ Provide carbon-offset programs for shipping and transport.
☐ Provide carbon-offset compensation programs for participants.

9. AFTER THE MEETING

Spread the “Go Green” Message:

☐ Thank your staff, suppliers and clients for their contribution to the greening effort.
☐ Recognize greening efforts in post-event communications such as new releases, proceedings and reports.
☐ Consider preparing a separate report or brochure about the event’s green aspects (describing lessons learned and encouraging others to follow suit), to be placed on the conference website or distributed electronically to participants and media.

We hope you found this guide to be a friendly desk assistant. Start planning your GREEN EVENT at the Estoril Congress Center today!

For more information, please don’t hesitate to contact our Green Team:

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