

Advantages & Management Principles of Sustainable Events

What is a sustainable event?

A sustainable event defined by the United Nations is an event, designed and organised in a way that minimises potential negative impacts and leaves a beneficial legacy for the host community and all involved. By taking sustainability into consideration, event organisers have the opportunity to not only minimise potentially negative impacts but also, given the large number of stakeholders involved, influence, change and hopefully inspire those involved to live more sustainably.

Any gathering of a large number of people can have a potential negative impact on the air, soil, water, resources and people. This includes not only the location where the event takes place but also far beyond. But by taking sustainability planning into consideration, event organisers have the opportunity to not only to minimise potential negative impacts but also, given the large number of stakeholders involved, concretely influence change by leaving a positive legacy and hopefully inspiring those involved to live more sustainably. That's why we should urge organisers to include sustainability into their planning process.

International and national expectations are that world-class events must have a greening events policy.

Organising sustainable events not only reduces their environmental impact, but can also benefit the main organisers involved. This is not only good for the environment, but also good for business and public relations.

Why ?

An effective transport management plan, which includes a thorough public transport component, and the provision of bike parking facilities, has a beneficial impact on the running of a special event. In addition to providing an adequate options for transport service for event patrons, it helps to alleviate both traffic and parking congestion (a benefit for non-users of public transport to an event) as well as reduce large crowds (and the associated noise and possible antisocial behaviour) from a venue that is often in a residential area.

Sustainable events can also be more attractive to sponsors, grants and other sources of funding. A sustainable event can be leveraged to gain more financial support.

BENEFITS :

Financial advantages

Conserving energy, reducing waste, purchasing local products and simply consuming less – all can result in money saved. Despite a sometimes higher investment of resources (financial or human) to research new systems or invest in new tools, applying sustainability principles can bring immediate savings (e.g., by printing less material and having less waste to collect). They can also have long-term financial benefits, due to the more efficient use of resources and easier access to credit lines and sponsors.

Positive reputation and improved image

Promoting the fact that you are organising or hosting a sustainable event will raise the profile of the event, attract participants that are becoming increasingly aware of sustainability issues and potentially engage the media's attention. It may also be appreciated by the general public as well as partners and potential donors.

Social benefits

If planned and implemented carefully, the event can provide benefits to the region by creating jobs, encouraging local investment, involving regional Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) and can promote better working conditions and social inclusion. It can also act as a catalyst for encouraging environmental and sustainable best practices across the region, as well as improving the relationship between the organiser and the local community.

Trigger innovation

As an organiser of large, sustainable events, you drive the demand: your request for more sustainable products will both trigger as well as promote the development of innovative technologies and techniques, leading to a more efficient use of resources and the improvement of the delegate experience.

Raising awareness and inspiring change

Your event is an excellent opportunity to raise awareness among your participants, staff and colleagues, service providers, the local community, the wider events community and the general public on the theme of sustainability and sustainable events. Leading by example, you motivate them to take responsible decisions and introduce environmental and social improvements into their own events and organisations.

Management principles of sustainable events

Organising a sustainable event is a process that starts long before the event takes place and continues after its conclusion. If you decide to integrate sustainability into your event, make sure you start early and develop your strategy well in advance – any sustainably ambitious event might fail simply because of late planning.

'Going green makes breathing easier on two fronts- helping out the environment, plus the image given off to clients will be a socially responsible one' (bedouk.com)