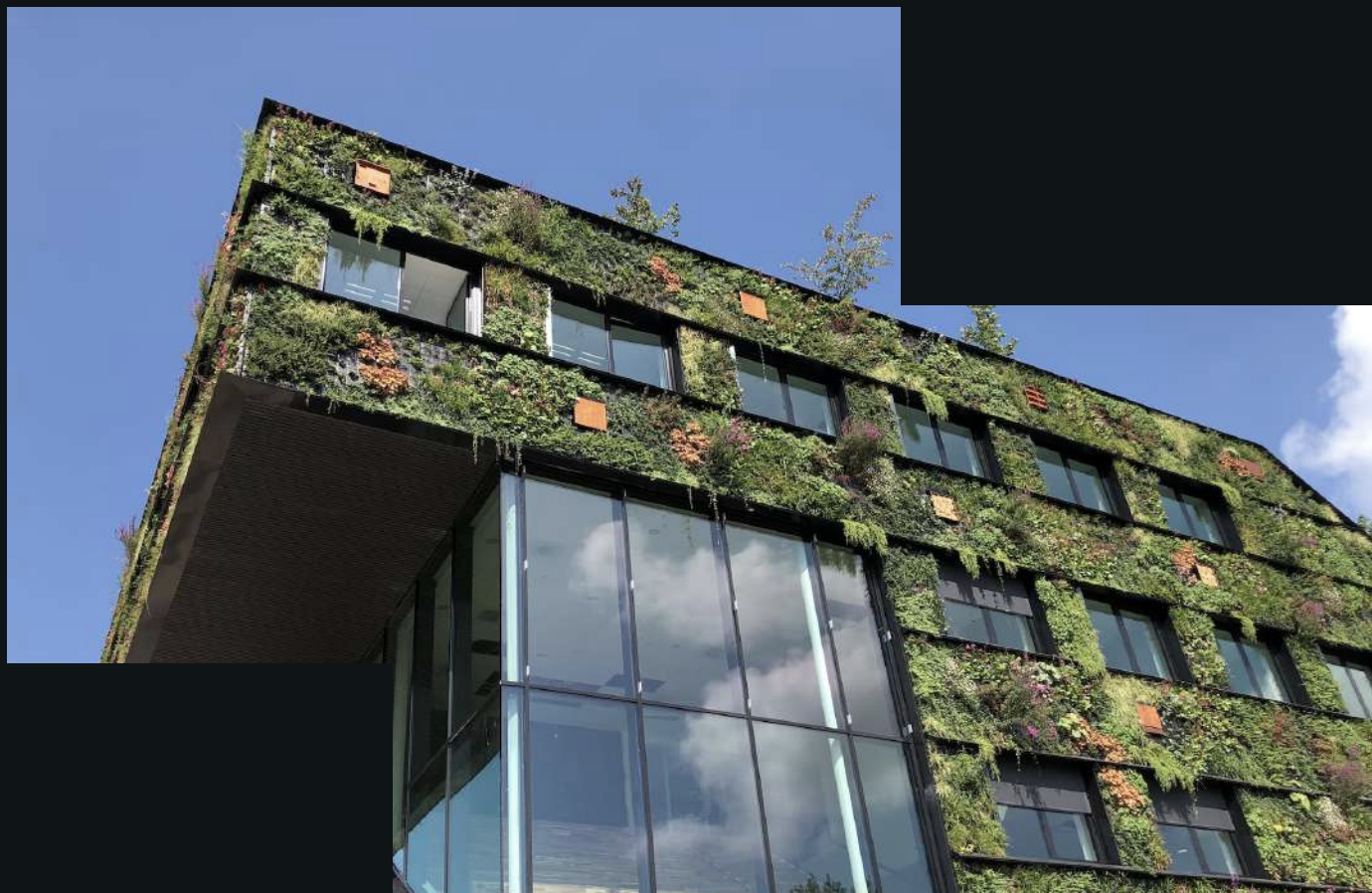


SUSTAIN  LIFE

E-BOOK

Sustainable conference and event checklist



Congratulations

You've taken the first step and decided to host a sustainable conference! Now what? This checklist is meant as a tool to help you think through the aspects of hosting a more sustainable conference or event.

Did you know?

Conferences generate

**2.5 pounds of
landfill-bound
waste**

per person, per day.

A five day conference
with 1,200 people can create over

**15,000 pounds
of waste**[↗]

The same weight as a school bus.

By the end of this checklist you'll:

- Learn important sustainability as it pertains to conferences and events
- Pick the most sustainable city for your event
- Pick the most sustainable venue for your event
- Reduce your overall waste
- Offset what can't be reduced

Pre-conference education

Making sustainable choices starts with understanding sustainability. Here are a couple of links to relevant topics to get you started

Learn about: [Greenwashing](#)[↗] | [Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions](#)[↗] | [Carbon offsetting](#)[↗]

01

Sustainable event location checklist

The city or town where you host your event or conference matters. Here's what to consider when narrowing down the perfect city for your event.

- ☐ **Determine a central location for attendees**
A strategic location reduces travel emissions
- ☐ **Research which cities provide composting and recycling**
Not all cities provide compost, or have adequate recycling facilities
- ☐ **Research public transportation in each city**
Will it be easy for participants to get around via low-emissions transportation options like bus, tram, bike share, etc.?

Other sustainability features worth noting:

02

Sustainable event venue and accommodation checklist

Your venue and hotel or other accommodation decisions can make or break your event. Find a venue that is willing to or already upholds your sustainability standards.

Research sustainable event venues.

Some venues champion sustainability in everything they do.

Does each venue have:

- ☐ **Alternative energy**
 - Solar
 - Wind
 - Other: _____
- ☐ **Sustainable certifications**
 - LEED (O+M) Gold-certified
 - Green Key
 - Other: _____
- ☐ **On-site accommodations**
Reduces travel emissions
- ☐ **Sustainable cleaning practices**
(cleaning every 2+ days)
- ☐ **No or low single-use items**
(refill shampoo vs. tiny plastic bottles)
- ☐ **Accessible via public transportation**
Reduces single-occupancy vehicle emissions
- ☐ **Energy efficient practices**
 - LED lighting
 - Occupancy sensors
 - Demand-controlled ventilation
 - Other: _____
- ☐ **Recycling and composting services**
The venue could offer this, or partner with a third-party service
 - Recycling
 - Compost
 - Provides third-party recycling
 - Provides third-party composting



☐ **Does the facility support zero-waste or waste reduction options?**

- Limited disposables
- Reusable cups
- Reusable silverware
- Reusable plates
- Other: _____

☐ **EV charging stations**

☐ **Bike storage**

☐ **Sustainable landscaping**

- Drought resistant plants
- Native plants
- Pollinator supporting plants

☐ **Write sustainability into your contract**

- Outline each expectation
- Outline how your venue will communicate those metrics with you

Other sustainability features worth noting:

03

Sustainable event waste checklist

To host a sustainable event with minimal or zero waste, look for opportunities to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

- ☐ **Document all the ways you might need paper**
Brainstorm ideas to reduce paper use

- ☐ **Check with venue about reusable meal items**

- Coffee cups
- Water bottles
- Plates
- Cutlery
- Napkins
- Explore third party rentals if needed

- ☐ **Create a sustainable swag bag or ditch swag altogether**

- Reusable, fair trade, durable, bag
- Eco-friendly products for inside the bag
- Create an opt-in for swag bags
- Find a community partner you can donate extra swag to

- ☐ **Make an eco-friendly food plan**

Reduces single-occupancy vehicle emissions

- Local food
- Seasonal food
- Organic food
- Allow attendees to select and customize meals
- 1+ vegetarian meal
- Reusable containers
- Compostable containers
- Find a community partner to donate extra food to if not provided by the waste management team

Additional ways you can reuse, reduce, and recycle:

04

Sustainable event operations checklist

Some additional investments worth considering. From the food, to staffing outfits, and hosting sustainability speakers, there are additional opportunities to make sustainable choices.

- ☐ **Hire a sustainable event planner**
 - Discuss SMART goals for your event
SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-based.
They'll allow you to track and measure your sustainable progress
 - Discuss if your event could qualify for certifications (i.e., ISO 20121)
 - Include sustainability expectations in your contract
- ☐ **Hire food vendors that commit to your sustainable goals**
 - Include sustainability expectations in contract
 - Include report expectations in contract
- ☐ **Confirm purchases are Fair Trade Certified**
 - Flowers • Snacks
 - Tea • Coffee
 - Produce • Other: _____
- ☐ **Sustainable staffing outfit**
 - Something already in their closet
 - Made of reused materials
 - Made of 100% organic cotton, hemp, etc.
- ☐ **Plan times during keynotes or main speeches to mention sustainability practice**
- ☐ **Include sustainability speakers from your industry**

Other sustainable operations opportunities:



05

The extra mile checklist

It's the little touches that we remember from a conference, right? Here are a handful of ways to create a unique, sustainable event.

- ☐ **Purchase public transportation passes if people are traveling to and from the event each day**
- ☐ **Hire a shuttle if people can't stay at your venue**
 - Electric- or hybrid-powered shuttles
- ☐ **Partner with an e-bike or bike share program**
- ☐ **Share sustainable restaurants and cafes**
- ☐ **Share sustainable sightseeing spots**
- ☐ **Plant a tree for each attendee**

Other extra mile opportunities to support sustainability:

06

Post-event checklist

Once the event is over, there are just a couple more steps: Calculate your emissions and get writing. Share the success and opportunities for next year to create transparency and build trust with your conference attendees and sponsors.

- ☐ **Calculate the carbon footprint⁷ of your event**
- ☐ **Connect with venue and vendors to share and confirm impact metrics**
- ☐ **Create documentation around the sustainable impact of your event**
- ☐ **Note opportunities for your next event**
- ☐ **Share out your impact report with conference attendees**

Other sustainable operations opportunities:

- ☐ **Set budget aside for carbon offsets**
- ☐ **Purchase verified offsets⁷ with Sustain.Life**
- ☐ **Reach out to partners to offset the event's carbon emissions**
- ☐ **Some partners will sponsor the carbon offsetting of an event in exchange for PR and marketing**

Other carbon offsetting opportunities:

07

Carbon offsetting checklist

While we wish hosting an event with no waste and a non-existent carbon footprint was an option, this isn't the reality of the world we live in today. Make a plan to offset what you can't avoid.

Measure and offset event-related emissions in minutes with Sustain.Life

Calculate the carbon footprint of your event With Sustain.Life, all you have to is add simple data—location, venue size, number of attendees—to get your event-related emissions tied to lodging, travel, waste, energy, food, giveaways, and more.

[Learn more](#) [↗]

