



**THE
INTERNATIONAL
CENTRE**

Sustainable Event Guide

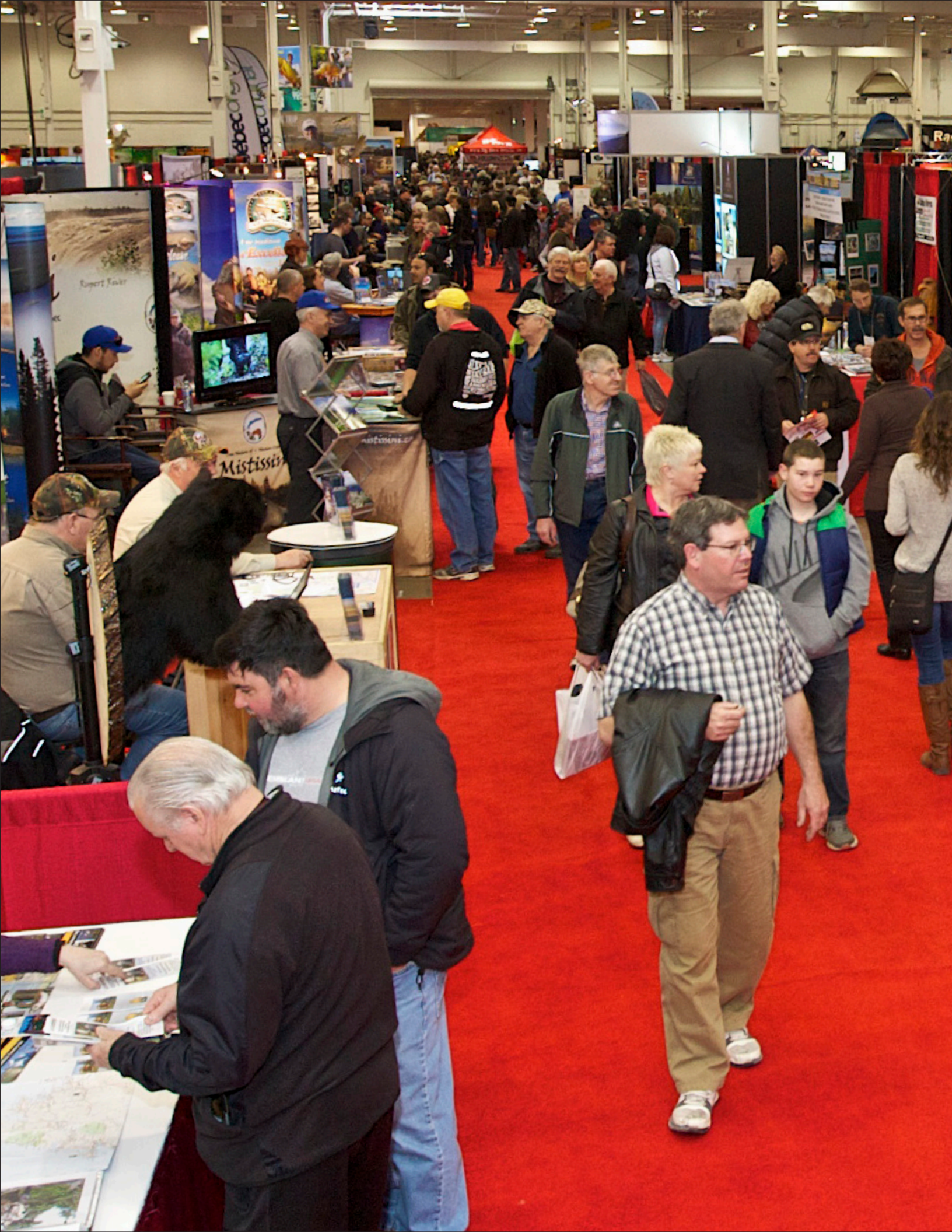
FOR THE SOCIALLY MINDED PLANNER



The popular Cottage Life Show, which is a leader in sustainable event planning

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Our Commitment

The International Centre is committed to being a sustainable environment, providing a quality service in a manner which minimizes our impact on the environment. We recognize that our business may have social and environmental effects and are committed to mitigating these implications by adopting best practices through continuous improvement. We aim to set high standards of environmental stewardship, employee engagement and community service integrating Corporate Social Responsibility into our organization and business practices with a goal to become the leading venue of choice for socially-minded businesses and individuals.

We invite you to take full advantage of this guide as a resource and tool for your next event. We've done all the heavy lifting because we understand that achieving a more sustainable event may seem daunting. The guidelines listed are fully scalable for events of all sizes and varieties as are the helpful tools and ideas to make your journey that much easier. Remember, it's not a race, so take small meaningful steps.

The International Centre Team

Our Sustainability Certifications



Level One ASTM Standard pertaining to the Evaluation and Selection of Venues for Environmentally Sustainable Meetings, Events, Trade Shows and Conferences.

Achievement of four Green Keys for accomplishments in environmental management and Corporate Social Responsibility from Green Key Meetings.

Thank You to Our Sustainability Partners



The International Centre staff enjoying a team building and development day at Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery

What is a Sustainable Event?

A sustainable event is one designed, organized and implemented to minimize negative environmental and social impacts which then create a more positive affect on the host community and attendees.

Sustainable events involve incorporating socially justifiable principles into all levels of the event's organization and implementation; from the early planning stages, through the event and even into the follow up after the event has occurred.



Why Should You Make Your Next Event Sustainable?

PEOPLE

- By sharing the results of your sustainable event, you will encourage other decision makers to implement environmental and social improvements in their own organizations.
- Socially responsible organizations can better attract and retain employees.
- A sustainable event is a visible representation of your company's commitment towards the environment. A public relations strategy surrounded by this commitment is a great way to raise the profile of your event and attract participants.

PROFIT

- Conservation and reduction initiatives are an easy way to drive profit to your bottom line. Implementing the small changes will work to reduce overall costs.
- With experience hosting sustainable events, more doors may be opened to new clients who are interested in holding a more environmentally aware event, creating market opportunities.

PLANET

- Each sustainable event is an opportunity to raise awareness about environmental issues and encourage sustainable behaviour and responsible choices.
- Following the principles of reduce, reuse and recycle, less overall can significantly decrease the environmental impact of an event.

The International Centre is continuously striving towards energy efficiency, including the Conference Centre's lighting upgrade to LEDs resulting in annual savings of over 290,000 kWh's of energy.



The International Centre has upgraded lighting to LEDs in more than 63,000 square feet of space, including the Conference Centre, pictured here



Six Instrumental Steps for Success

1. Set goals and targets for your initiatives, then measure and monitor progress; report lessons learned for continuous improvement.
2. Set up a committee and ensure someone is delegated responsibility for implementing the sustainability initiatives.
3. Begin environmental initiatives early; establish environmental goals and procedures at the outset to ensure an integrated approach to planning.
4. Ensure products and service providers are selected according to their compliance with your criteria and that they are on board with your sustainability goals.
5. Make staff, service providers and participants aware of the sustainable nature and priority of your event and why it is important, so they are prepared to act responsibly and are motivated.
6. Implement a program of accountability for environmental decision-making, and recognize those who went above and beyond in supporting your goals at all levels.



Award-winning Executive Chef
Tawfik Shehata nurturing the herbs
and vegetables on our rooftop garden

The International Centre has a rooftop garden where fresh herbs including oregano, basil, sage, mint and coriander are grown in addition to a selection of vegetables.

What Does a Sustainable Event Look Like?

A sustainable event begins with reviewing the different planning stages and varying areas of hosting an event. This guide includes 9 specifications planners should assess when hosting a sustainable event:

- Communications and Marketing
- Food and Beverage
- Exhibits and Exhibitors
- Accommodation
- Transportation
- Information Technology
- Procurement
- Event Decorator/Production
- Operations: Energy Efficiency

The degree to which sustainability is implemented is up to the event planner and may be affected by costs, convenience and availability of products and services. The checklist below will help to illustrate the steps that can be taken on the path towards sustainability and serve as a tool to guide you along your way.

Communications and Marketing

REDUCE

- Always use double sided copying and printing.
- Minimize print material by using electronic and on-line advertising and promotion whenever possible.
- Utilize social media forums to get your message out i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Gamification.
- Format material accordingly to minimize the amount of paper used.

SELECTING THE RIGHT MATERIALS

- Use post-consumer recycled content paper whenever possible.
- Print all material using Energy Star certified printers and with vegetable based inks.
- Use mailing labels with water based adhesives.
- Limit the use of paper that is difficult to recycle, such as glossy paper, goldenrod and florescent.

EVENT DAY

- Use biodegradable or recyclable badge holders and collect them for reuse at all registration, exhibit and exit areas.
- Encourage online registration to reduce paper usage.
- Encourage the use of reusable signage. Do not post date specific information on signs so they can be reused year over year. Non reusable signs should be recyclable and made from recycled or biodegradable material.
- Ask sponsors and any others who are providing materials to follow your guidelines.
- Encourage speakers to provide electronic copies of handouts and any visual presentations to post on your website.
- Use water-based, non-toxic markers on reusable white boards instead of traditional paper flip charts.
- Consider organizing a paperless meeting by providing participants with laptop use.
- Provide participants with a USB flash drive or access to Cloud based platforms with all of the conference material, to avoid printing.
- As part of session introductions each day, remind participants of waste reduction and other environmental opportunities.

Food and Beverage

DISPOSABLE VS. REUSABLE

- Request the use of china service instead of disposables. If china cannot be used, request the use of biodegradable disposable service.
- Provide attendees with mugs or reusable water bottles and ask them to use them each event day for coffee and water service.
- Use cloth napkins and table cloths rather than disposables. If these are not available, ensure a compostable item is used.
- Request that the venue use less or no linens in your meeting rooms.

RECYCLE & REDUCE

- Ensure appropriate recycling receptacles are in place and well identified, especially if using disposable products.
- Encourage the elimination of bottles and all food packaging.
- Ensure all packaging is recyclable, or encourage suppliers to use reusable containers to help reduce excess waste.

MENU

- Meet and discuss your menu options with the Chef – ask about local sustainable options.
- Ensure any claims of local or sustainable food options can be tracked back to the source.
- As an option, all condiments (butter, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, salad dressings, creamers, etc.) can be served in bulk containers rather than individual packages.
- Ensure all food garnishes be edible and not simply used for décor.
- Request your menus to be made up of local, in season organic foods.
- Options to customize meal portions (ie. smaller plates).
- Select foods that are less resource intensive (ie. water and energy).
- Use fairly traded products such as coffee, tea, cocoa and chocolate.
- Use water coolers or jugs instead of individual water bottles.
- Consider offering vegetarian options alongside meat products to ensure menus have alternative choices for guests.
- Serve only seafood that was harvested in a responsible manner (www.seachoice.org, www.oceanwise.ca).
- Feature locally made alcoholic beverages.
- Encourage the use of water and energy efficient kitchen appliances (i.e. Energy Star).
- Shift to more health-focused menus.

FOOD WASTE

- Confirm the guaranteed number of event participants in order to eliminate excessive food waste.
- Whenever possible, plan for leftover food to be donated to a local shelter or soup kitchen and/or turned into biofuel.
- Offer healthy food options to attendees and re-design your food menu to reflect this.
- Confirm that kitchen waste is being composted.
- Track your food waste and attendees' eating patterns – enlist your venue partner to assist with conducting food waste audit.

Exhibits and Exhibitors

GIVEAWAYS

- Suggest exhibitors focus on ‘experiential’ activities as giveaways, rather than waste creating giveaways.
- Encourage exhibitors to select giveaways that are made from post-consumer materials and are recyclable or reusable items.
- Request that exhibitors minimize giveaway packaging and create accountability guidelines for the recycling or discarding of any excess materials.
- Source locally-made, unique products made from communities with stories or give-back programs.

PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

- Provide exhibitors with guidelines for sustainable communications and marketing alternatives, such as digital signage and online communications.
- Communicate the expected number of attendees in advance in order to minimize waste.
- Suggest exhibitors avoid printing dates on exhibit materials so they can be reused.
- Encourage exhibitors to reduce the quantity of promotional materials they use, and instead direct attendees to their website to access electronic material.
- Use technology to gather attendee information and distribute promotional materials.

PACKAGING

- Encourage exhibitors to reuse boxes for event set up and take down.
- Enforce a pack-in/pack-out or zero waste policy to ensure exhibitors leave with everything they brought to the event.

RECYCLING DURING THE EVENT

- Allow for exhibitors to have a positive recycling experience by providing a simple but effective process for recycling.
- Provide each exhibitor with a desktop recycling bin and have volunteers empty them daily or have exhibitors empty them at a central recycling station.
- Work with The International Centre to include all recycling stations on floor plans clearly labelled so they can be easily located by exhibitors and attendees.
- During set up and tear down provide central recycling stations and maps of where they are located for exhibitors with a variety of recycling options.

EVENT CLOSING

- Develop a check-out procedure that requires exhibitors to interact with event staff to ensure that the exhibitor is leaving with everything they brought in.
- Enforce fines for exhibitors that leave excess material, trash, waste or anything not properly discarded.
- Work with the on-site cleaning and waste removal service, to provide large recycling stations throughout the event that will not be in the way during move-out.

REWARD AND ACKNOWLEDGE GREEN EXHIBITORS

- Provide criteria to exhibitors in advance and reward them at the end of the event, ensuring to recognize them in front of other exhibitors and in post event material.
- Create a special exhibitor list highlighting your sustainable business partners.
- Allow exhibitors who meet the criteria to post signage or provide qualifying exhibitors with signage to be posted in the exhibit area for future events.

SPONSORSHIP

- Find ways to bring sustainability into your event through sponsorship such as alternative energy, waste bin advertisements, refill water stations or custom reusable coffee cups and water bottles.
- Showcase your sustainability commitments and partnerships at your events.

PHILANTHROPY & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Support local academia with volunteer or mentoring programs.
- Find out which community organizations and charitable groups your venue supports and allow for on-site donations or partner with a community group that aligns with your event.
- Donate any leftover materials, from packaged foods to pens, notepads and reusable bags, there are so many community groups willing to take these items.
- Build an outreach/sustainable program into your budget to help support the local community – make it part of your event program and encourage attendee participation.

“Thank you to The International Centre for your generosity and support. This scholarship will push me further than I could ever dreamed in my career path and education. I can’t wait to one day be able to look back on this incredible opportunity.”

Devon Dempster, Event Management at Humber College
The International Centre/MPI Foundation Scholarship Recipient

Accommodation

- Use hotels that are certified by an eco-labeling program such as ASTM/APEX, Green Key or LEED.
- Highlight any accommodation providers that subscribe to specific industry environment code of practice such as the Tourism Canada's Code of Ethics and Guidelines of Sustainable Tourism.
- Ensure the hotel has a comprehensive environmental policy and that this policy is in line with your events goals.
- Require that the hotels food service abide by the same criteria listed in the food and beverage section.
- Ensure all rooms and meeting space have appropriate recycling and organic composting units.
- The hotel should provide information in guests rooms about the green aspects of the hotels to inform and encourage guests' participation.
- The hotel should offer and coordinate group pick-up service for participants.
- Guests should have the option of no second-day sheet and towel change to save laundry energy and water.
- Newspapers should be delivered to rooms only if requested.

Transportation

- Information regarding different public transit options, including the availability of public transport should be included in the registration package, event promotions and exhibitor kits.
- Arrange for shuttle service to and from hotels for exhibitors and attendees.
- Provide a carbon offsetting option to attendees during registration.
- Use alternative fuelled vehicles.
- Establish idle free zones around the venue.
- Minimize the need for transportation through use of tele-conferencing and video-conferencing.
- Schedule event opening and closing times around the public transit systems hours of operation.
- Consider off-setting emissions by partnering with local offset companies and request they set up information at the event to communicate this to attendees
- Include off-set options in exhibitor kits to encourage participation.
- Encourage car-pooling by dedicating a section of the events website that permits local participants and car rental users to make arrangements.
- Partner with car rental companies to offer a hybrid vehicle option for those who require a car rental.
- Allocate designated premium parking spaces for those car-pooling or using energy efficient vehicles.
- A zero emission alternative is to coordinate bicycle rentals that give participants the option to ride between their hotel and the event.

Information Technology

- Request that the venue post a link on their website to the organizations website.
- Post all event materials on the organizations website in order to reduce printed copies.
- Use liquid crystal display (LCD) monitors rather than cathode ray tube (CRT) monitors.
- Activate sleep mode on any equipment used in the event's production, including projectors and computers.
- Give preference to Energy Star products if equipment purchases for the event are necessary
- Ensure all print cartridges are recycled and contain vegetable based inks where possible.
- Optimize social media and app-based technology to communicate to attendees.



The International Centre has two full time staff who are dedicated to sustainability, and a group of staff volunteers as part of the CSR Taskforce who meet monthly to discuss ideas surrounding employee engagement, environmental stewardship and community outreach.

Procurement

- Create a green procurement policy for sourcing event materials.
- Service suppliers that demonstrate their environmental commitment should be used wherever feasible.
- Supplies that are certified by credible environmental standards should be a preference.
- Use local suppliers to reduce the environmental impact of emissions created during transportation and importing.
- Request that event related products are purchased in bulk.
- Give preference to products that are easily recyclable or reusable.
- Request verification from suppliers supporting claims of sustainable products/services.
- Find out if packaging can be reduced. If not, find out if the supplier can take the excess packaging away with them.
- Avoid hazardous materials, however, if used, ensure hazardous materials are properly handled, stored and disposed of.

Event Decorator/Production

- Use decorations, carpets and display materials made from recyclable or reusable materials that can be reused for future meetings.
- Work with the decorator to post the decorator kit on the website instead of paper copies.
- Request centerpieces and decorations that are organic or that can be reused for future events.
- Request that reusable containers are used to transport items to and from the event.
- Consider charging a fee for excessive waste left behind.
- Make a request to the venue to set the thermostat to a minimal, but comfortable temperature in order to decrease energy consumption.
- Take advantage of any naturally lit areas in order to reduce the use of the venues lights and decrease energy consumption.
- Ask the venue if they have move-in/set up lighting and energy settings.

Operations: Energy Efficiency

- Plan for the equipment being used at your event to be energy efficient, including lighting, sound and stage equipment.
- Promote the use of low energy booth lighting.
- Ensure that equipment not being used is turned off, and that all of the lights are not turned on during daylight hours in areas with natural lighting.
- Ask your venue that the HVAC will be reduced during move in/move out times to avoid excess energy use.
- Set lighting to lower levels during move-in and move-out.

Recognized Associations & Certifications

There are many recognized standards when it comes to measuring sustainability, and they vary based on criteria and specifications. Within the hospitality industry there are two main standards, Green Key Eco-Rating and ASTM International Ratings.

ASTM INTERNATIONAL

ASTM International's standard is for evaluation and selection of destinations for environmentally sustainable meeting, events, trade shows and conferences. It is a tool for event planners and suppliers to understand the attributes of an environmentally sustainable event. This specification identifies environmental sustainability criteria to be included in exhibits and expositions by planners, general service contractors, exhibitors, exhibit builders and exhibit appointed contractors.



There are nine specifications covering the following areas of event planning:

- Destination Selection
- Accommodations
- Food and Beverage
- Audio Visual
- Onsite Offices
- Communication and Marketing Materials
- Transportation
- Exhibits
- Venues

For more information on ASTM International, please visit www.astm.org

GREEN MEETING INDUSTRY COUNCIL

Green Meeting Industry Council (GMIC) is a membership based professional organization providing educational resources to planners, suppliers and venues who are seeking more sustainable meetings. GMIC has chapters worldwide helping to spread and inspire sustainability within the meetings industry.



For more information on Green Meeting Industry Council, please visit www.gmicglobal.org



A behind the scenes look into The International Centre kitchen during an event preparation

PARTNERS IN PROJECT GREEN

PPG is a growing community of businesses surrounding the Pearson Airport working together to green their bottom line. This consortium encourages business to business collaboration, and assists with programming to help companies reduce their energy consumption and resource costs, uncover new business opportunities and address everyday operation challenges in a sustainable, cost effective manner. The International Centre is a proud Ambassador of Partner's in Project Green.

For more information on PPG, please visit www.partnersinprojectgreen.com



GREEN KEY MEETINGS PROGRAM

Green Key Global first launched a program to recognize hotels, motels and resorts that are committed to improving their environmental and fiscal performance. They have now launched v2.0 of its Green Meetings Certifications Program which is focused on events, from small meetings to large scale conventions.

Co-created by Green Key Global and The MPI Foundation Canada, this assessment is a comprehensive tool to determining a facility's level of commitment to sustainability. The Green Key Meetings Program focuses on activities that will ultimately lead venues to align with the ASTM/APEX Standard for Environmentally Sustainable Meetings, Events, Trade Shows and Conferences.

The areas assessed include:

- Core Areas (Energy, Water Waste)
- Communication (Information, Training, Policies & Management)
- Activities (Community, Procurement, Auditing)
- Health (Wellness Activities, Air Quality, People)
- Exhibitions
- Audiovisual

For more information on Green Key, please visit www.greenkeyglobal.com



Follow Up

Sustainability is an on-going process of continuous improvement. The following steps are specific to wrapping up your event and ensuring your success' are carried forward and challenges you may have come across can be met for the next event.

- Recognize and thank staff, exhibitors and attendees for their efforts
- Ask your team to provide a post event report with comments about lessons learned and suggestions for improvement for future events.
- On event evaluation forms, ask attendees and exhibitors to comment on your sustainability efforts and offer suggestions for future events.
- Prepare a sustainable event report to share the success' of your green initiatives (share the results of all of the items you've checked off of this list). Include both positive and negative impacts. Be sure to share the results with all stakeholders.
- If any of the selected guidelines were measured, communicate the results to event participants.
- Begin preparation for your next event by creating an action plan to tackle challenges from previous events.

Reference and Further Information

David Suzuki Foundation

How to Host a Sustainable, Carbon Neutral Conference or Event

Convention Industry Council

Green Meetings Report

Environment Canada

Green Meeting Guide

CSA Standards Z 2010

Requirements and Guidance for Organizers of Sustainable Events

United Nations Environmental Program Sustainable United Nations

Green Meeting Guide 2009

The Icarus Foundation

Green Festivals and Events Guide, a How to...

National Recycling Coalition

The National Recycling Coalition's Green Meeting Policy

Concern, Inc.

How to Plan a Sustainable Event

Recycling Council of Ontario

Zero Waste Community Event Toolkit

It's Easy Being Green!

A Guide to Planning and Conducting Environmentally Aware Meetings and Events

Green Meeting Industry Council

About Us

ASTM International

Standard Specification for Evaluation and Selection of Venues for Environmentally Sustainable Meetings, Events, Trade Shows, and Conferences

Green Key Global

About Us

Live Earth

Green Event Guidelines



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