

# MINIMUM STANDARDS 2017



## Sustainable Venue and Facility Selection

Minimum standards for evaluating and providing sustainable venues and facilities for meetings, events, trade shows, and conferences (events). This standard applies - but is not limited to, the selection of sustainable venues and facilities when planning a sustainable event or activity.



# Minimum Standards 2017

## SUSTAINABLE VENUE AND FACILITY SELECTION

### Overview:

These minimum standards are intended for venue selection for meetings, events, trade-shows, conferences or exhibitions (events). This includes the research, evaluation and selection of a location and facilities required for an event.

### Interpretations

For the purpose of this standard, the following interpretations apply:

“demonstrate”	to provide verifiable evidence of compliance
“organiser”	the person or organisation responsible for the overall event. Not necessarily the Client.
“primary event facility”	the main physical venue of the event
“RFP”	Request for Proposal – an invitation for suppliers, often through a bidding process, to submit a proposal on a specific product or service
“sustainable event”	an event management strategy in which the organiser and client take responsibility to protect and conserve the natural environment, respect and conserve local cultures and ways of life, and contribute to stronger local economies and a better quality of life for local communities
“venue”	the physical place where an event, meeting, conference, concert or sports activity takes place.

### Minimum Standards for Sustainable Venue Selection

The following standards are considered the minimum necessary to consider the venue(s) associated with an event as sustainable (Green). In all instances, service providers should strive to exceed this standard.

#### **I. Sustainable Operations and Management**

- a) The organiser shall:
  - i. document a policy that includes definition of the event sustainability expectations, responsibilities and objectives;
  - ii. ensure that all appropriate personnel are made aware of, and can communicate effectively, about the environmental objectives of the event;
  - iii. distribute a written copy of the sustainability policy and objectives, and provide the venue with such information;
  - iv. include a clause in the Venue RFP that:
    - a. requires the venue to meet a minimum prescribed waste management practice and environmental performance;
    - b. requires the venue to meet a minimum prescribed energy management practice and environmental performance;
    - c. requires the venue to meet a minimum prescribed air quality management practices and environmental performance;
    - d. requires the venue to meet a minimum of responsible procurement practice and environmental performance.

- b) The venue shall have:
  - i. a published and accessible sustainability policy;
  - ii. recycling facilities for paper, cardboard, plastic, glass, wood and food waste;
  - iii. access to sustainable transportation options which may include:
    - a) alternate fuel or fuel efficient shuttle services
    - b) Hybrid shuttle or Taxi services
    - c) Bicycle share / rental services
    - d) Public transport facilities between the facility, local hotels and airport;
  - iv. if applicable, hotel accommodation with sustainable practices that meet the requirements of a recognised sustainability / responsible tourism certification system.

**II. Social and Cultural Criteria**

- a) The venue shall demonstrate a commitment to or support for a local sustainable community initiative;
- b) The venue shall provide the event organiser with opportunities to provide additional support or benefits in its sustainable community initiative or information on alternate initiatives that support the local community.

**III. Economic Criteria**

- a) The primary event facility shall;
  - i. demonstrate a commitment to responsible procurement with a formalised policy and the provision of environmentally and socially sustainable goods or services ;
  - ii. demonstrate a commitment to the use of local community members for staffing and other event services;
  - iii. demonstrate a commitment to meeting or exceeding the applicable minimum wage for employees and casual staff.

**IV. Environmental Criteria**

- a) The venue shall provide documentation to support any environmental claims it may make;
  - b) The venue shall provide evidence of responsible waste management practice which shall include waste minimisation, avoidance and recovery and a means by which the waste associated with the event can be measured or quantified by waste category;
  - c) The venue shall provide recycling/diversion facilities for at least:
    - i. Cardboard
    - ii. Paper
    - iii. Glass
    - iv. Plastics
    - v. Food Waste
  - d) The venue shall demonstrate a commitment to energy efficient practice and provide a means by which the energy consumption of the event can be measured.
  - e) Where available, the venue shall identify and make available alternate, sustainable energy sources.
  - f) The venue shall demonstrate a commitment to water conservation and water quality management and provide a means by which water consumption of the event can be measured.
  - g) The venue shall:
    - i. meet the requirements of a recognised, independent sustainability certification system;
    - ii. have a published environmental policy, available for stakeholder review;
    - iii. identify a designated member of staff responsible for the implementation of sustainability initiatives;
    - iv. communicate the event organisers written environmental objectives and performance criteria to staff;
    - v. provide the organiser with information on how it intends to meet the event environmental performance objectives;
    - vi. establish baseline energy and water readings prior to the event and provide another reading post-event for evaluation purposes.
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## Interpretation Guide to the Standard

Implementing the Standard is in many instances a simple, organisational process, but the following interpretations of the Standards will assist in this regard. In all instances, these are for illustrative purposes and should not be regarded as the definitive practice.

### 1. Sustainable Operations and Management

Many event facilities, meeting venues and exhibition halls have been constructed or established using 'green building' standards or they have facilities such as recycling bays; low-energy lighting and even water management systems in place. But a large part of being a sustainable venue is based on the ability of the Team at the facility to actually implement sound sustainability practice. This is often where sustainable events either stand or fall, and the following should be 'in-place' to ensure the sustainability of the facility and its operating practices.

- a. The Organiser is the person that sets the sustainability vision and objectives of the event, and it is important that they develop a Sustainable Event Statement or Policy that incorporates their vision and expectations. Once this has been developed, it is their responsibility to make these objectives – and the vision, known to the venue management team. This must be done at the outset of negotiations and discussions, so that there are no surprises later in the planning stage.

In some instances, the venue is selected by the Client in advance of the event and contractual terms may have already been concluded, but the Organiser must nevertheless ensure that the sustainability targets and objectives are met by the venue.

- b. In order to be regarded as a sustainable venue, the business must have:
  - i. a published and accessible sustainability policy that expresses managements' commitment to managing the impacts of the business and its' activities in a sustainable and responsible manner. The Policy should address the following commitments specifically:
    - a) to the responsible use and management of water, energy, waste and emissions
    - b) to the use of sustainable and responsible products and services and service providers;
    - c) to the use of local community members and
    - d) to a process of continual improvement.
  - ii. The business must have physical storage and handling facilities for the effective management, disposal and recycling of paper, cardboard, plastic, glass, wood and food waste. Where the business makes use of a third-party for waste management, it must demonstrate what measures have been taken to ensure that the service provider meets this requirement. Where off-site recycling and waste separation takes place, the business must demonstrate what measures have been taken to reduce contamination of recyclable waste.
  - iii. Sustainable venues are not specifically responsible for the provision of sustainable transport systems or facilities, but they should be aware of what alternate transport systems are available in their area. For example:
    - a) Where the local authority provides sustainable transport systems, the venue should encourage the authority to use the venue as an official stop, thereby making it possible for delegates and attendees to travel to the venue from their respective accommodation in a sustainable manner.
    - b) Where it comes to allowing taxi's and other services to use the venue as a pick-up point, preference should be given to recognition and priority for service providers that make use of hybrid or low-energy transport systems.
    - c) If the venue arranges or provides transport for delegates as part of any agreement with the Organiser, it must ensure that it selects and contracts service providers that offer low-emission services firstly – and then only non-compliant service providers.
    - d) The provision of bicycles and other sustainable transport for delegates and guests could be an advantage in urban centres within close proximity to accommodation and hotels.
    - e) Any vehicles used by the venue for guest transport or transfers should include low-emission, hybrid or battery vehicles as far as possible.
  - iv. If the venue forms part of a hotel or other accommodation establishment, then the establishment itself must adhere to and practice sustainable practices as a norm. This means that where a hotel does not have a sustainability or environmental management system in place, the venue itself cannot be regarded as sustainable.

## 2. Social and Cultural Criteria

Sustainable venues and facilities are aligned or associated with local community initiatives that have been established to address social, educational, health or job-creation opportunities in the local community. This association entails the business providing support for – or contributing to these initiatives (some or all) in some manner. This can include financial support; donation of material or supplies; mentorship initiatives; food donations and other non-financial support. Many event Organisers look for ways in which to add to the work being done by venues that they use, so it is important to make this information known to your clients and Organisers at the time that they contract your services.

Where an Organiser chooses to support one of your existing social activities, give them all the contact details that they need. Also, advise them of the impacts that their support will have on the initiatives in the area and guide them towards community initiatives that leave a legacy in the community.

## 3. Economic Criteria

The economic benefits of events are well-known, and sustainable events are those that ensure all role-players associated with the event contribute to the local economy (local to the event itself). As part of this overall process, your business should be able to demonstrate that it takes sustainability seriously by sourcing products and services from local communities and service providers – and to the use of sustainable products as far as possible.

This could include the use of local service providers for services such as cleaning; décor and design; technical services and other event-related services that the Organiser is not providing themselves. It extends to committing your company to (and demonstrating

actual practice) sourcing sustainable products when it comes to items such as packaging; bottled water; food and beverage items and general procurement items that increase the potential for waste minimization.

The economic impact of casual workers on local communities can sometimes be significant, and your business must demonstrate how its payroll (permanent and casual) contributions are focused on local staff. This includes using local community members for casual jobs such as waiters, barmen and cleaners rather than bringing staff from other areas to do these tasks. It includes a commitment to training this workforce and maintaining the same standards expected of your permanent staff.

Sustainable businesses meet (or exceed) the minimum sectorial minimum wage, and if you are not then you can't expect to be regarded as a sustainable business. This extends to the services that you contract through brokers or third-party suppliers on behalf of your clients. For example, if you make use of a sub-contractor for waiters and hosts, it is your responsibility to ensure that the sub-contractor you select pays their staff in accordance with the prescribed minimum wage as part of your due-diligence process before their appointment.

## 4. Environmental Criteria

Sustainable events cannot take place without the involvement and contribution of sustainable or environmentally responsible service providers. These standards are designed to ensure that companies associated with the event are equipped and structured to minimise and manage their impacts on the natural environment.

In this regard, you should have the following in place to meet the requirements of this standard:

- a. Documented (formalised and printed/published) standards relating to the company's commitment to reducing or avoiding environmentally irresponsible practices related to at least water, energy, air quality, waste management, pollution and responsible procurement. Each Policy should address and explain measures that are being taken to minimise impacts and avoid environmentally sensitive impacts during normal operational activities. These Policies must be available for review or consideration by interested or affected parties in terms of the Access to Information Act.
- b. Evidence of the sustainable management and disposal of all waste materials associated with the venue must be made available. The venue must provide information on the type and volumes of waste that are being – or have been generated by the event. Data related to type (glass; plastic; paper; cardboard; wood; metals; food/organic) must be provided to the Organiser. If your venue contracts this service to a third-party, it still needs to provide this information to the Organiser and should ensure that when contracting the service provider, this forms part of the contract.

- c. Waste separation facilities must be provided. In the actual venues, this will include separation bins in public areas (to separate the types of waste typically expected) and visible communication about recycling and encouraging participation.
- d. Energy consumption is an important part of any sustainable event, and the venue must be able to demonstrate what measures have been implemented to minimise consumption. This could include:
  - i. standard procedures related to lighting use during set-up and strike phases of the event;
  - ii. the use of low-energy lighting;
  - iii. the management of air-conditioning systems during the event and
  - iv. the operation of lifts and escalators out of business or event operating times.

The standard also requires the venue to take pre-event energy readings and either interim or a final energy consumption reading to determine the exact energy use of the event itself. The actual means by which this is done can vary from obtaining data on consumption from computerised building management systems (BMS) to physical readings of energy meters associated with the venue. Unless you are able to read and calculate the energy used at an event, you cannot manage consumption or the impacts fully, so either install venue-specific meters or a means to accurately determine proportional consumption from a single meter.

- e. Where possible, the venue should source its energy from more sustainable sources than the standard coal-based electricity found in South Africa. This could include making use of the venues own solar or wind generators or other sustainable energy source, or to purchasing 'green energy' off-sets through recognised programmes and generating systems. In South Africa, this option is available in cities such as Durban and Cape Town, but investigate what is available in your area. Another option to consider is to offer carbon off-set opportunities to your clients that would reduce the impacts associated with their event energy consumption.
- f. Water consumption at an event is unavoidable, and the venue must be able to demonstrate what measures have been implemented to minimise consumption. This could include:
  - i. standard procedures related to the management of water during the event which need to be made known to the client. This includes managing water associated with food preparation; cleaning and facility preparation; toilets and public facilities; irrigation and other event-related activities;
  - ii. minimisation of waste which could include water capture and reuse systems;
  - iii. effective use of equipment including dishwashers; air-handling systems and other operational activities.

The standard also requires the venue to take pre-event water readings and either interim or a final consumption reading to determine the exact water use of the event itself. The actual means by which this is done can vary from obtaining data on consumption from computerised building management systems (BMS) to physical readings of water meters associated with the venue. Unless you are able to read and calculate the water used at an event, you cannot manage consumption or the impacts fully, so either install venue-specific meters or a means to accurately determine proportional consumption from a single meter.

Becoming a responsible business should be the priority for any company. With rising costs associated with resources such as water, fuel, energy and even waste disposal, becoming more responsible has become a strategic differentiator in most companies today. Unfortunately, many companies still pay 'lip-service' to issues such as these, and simply assume that they are 'green' or responsible. To be considered sustainable, you will require the following:

- a. Certification or recognition of compliance to an internationally recognised standard of environmental performance such as ISO 14001 or ISO 2021 (or a national/local equivalent) by an independent body or certification company. It is important to understand that certification to international standards is a voluntary practice, but in order to be recognised as such, your activities and performance to these standards must be evaluated by an independent organisation to carry any credibility. Self-certification or claims is not accepted as meeting the EGF standard.
- b. A published (freely available and accessible) environmental sustainability policy that is appropriate and relevant to your business and its activities. The statement or Policy must recognise and identify the environmental impacts associated with its operations and make a commitment to minimise, avoid or manage such impacts.

- c. A designated member of staff that is responsible for the implementation of sustainability initiatives in the company or organisation. This person must be empowered with the necessary authority to ensure all personnel comply with the organisations' sustainability standard.
- d. A process by which the environmental objectives and performance of the business is communicated to your staff and associates. This could be through a notice-board, memo, training course, awareness posters and other internal communication systems. Proof of the process must be available, so if you are using an electronic system, ensure you have a printed copy for verification.
- e. Ensure that the Organiser of the event is provided with details on how and by what means your company will be striving to meet the sustainability objective so the event. This may include a providing with details around your fleet; consumption statistics; off-sets and any other measure that you may take to comply.
- f. Before the event, a baseline water and energy reading must be recorded for each of the venues being used. This baseline would then need to be compared against interim or a 'closing' reading to determine actual consumption. The end result should allow the Organiser to effectively calculate and incorporate your overall impacts and carbon footprint for the event.