

CARBON NEUTRAL EVENT CHECKLIST

PROMOTION

- Minimize printed materials by **going digital**
 - Use for example email, cursor, break-slides, monitors on the university campus, mobile app, newsletter, etc.
- If you do want to use printed materials than use highest possible % of **recycled paper** or at least use paper that is **FSC-certified** (favourable a certificate that is even stricter and considers the whole life cycle of paper)
- Post printed materials in a **centralized** location to reduce waste related to your event
- Use **organic and biodegradable ink** rather than conventional ink products
- Advertise your sustainability efforts to participants in event materials and also remind them to recycle the promotion item after they are done with it
- Name badges are **reusable** and collected at the end of event for recycling and/or re-use
- Exhibitors are informed of sustainability policy and encouraged to use sustainable materials, such as recycled paper, etc.

EVENT SETTING

- Event location**; choose a location based on its energy efficiency and transportation access
 - Choose a naturally-lit indoor location (outdoors is even better)
 - Choose a building that is LEED-certified
 - Choose a location that is easily assessable by alternative transportation
 - Include alternative transportation information in the event promotion like bus routes and schedules, bicycle routes and park and ride locations
 - Encourage and incentivize alternative transportation in the information event material
 - If participants are anticipated to use conventional transportation means, offer a travel offset option (small donation)
 - Visitors should be able to attend virtually
- Event time**: organize your event during a time when there is enough natural light

PURCHASE OR RENT SUSTAINABLE SUPPLIES

- Make a purposeful evaluation of vital event details versus potentially non-essential items to reduce extraneous event costs and waste
- Borrow necessary items
- Cut event costs by choosing reusable supplies that can be reused in future events
- Purchase supplies with recycled content and reduced packaging material
- Sustainable alternatives as giveaways
- Buy in bulk
- Sustainable choice in event clothing
- Buy local
- Use environmentally responsible centerpieces and decorations (if any at all)

FOOD AND CATERING

- Food choices
 - Healthy food choices
 - Variety of menu options (include delicious options for vegetarians, vegans and visitors with special dietary requirements)
 - Local (or otherwise fairtrade), organic and in-season produced
 - Buy in bulk
 - Switch up meal plan to celebrate food culture from a different region
- Resource consumption
 - Use reusable dishware
 - For example choose a sustainable alternative to plastic forks and knives such as compostable tableware.
 - Minimize packaging
 - Serve all dishes in bulk as opposed to single-serving options
 - Use recycled napkins
 - Use tap water, no bottled water
 - Beverages should be served in reusable cups instead of disposable cups
 - Ask attendees to register for meals to better estimate quantities and reduce potential excess
- Communication
 - Food is clearly labelled
 - In case the amount of attendees changes shortly before the event, see if caterer is flexible enough to adjust to the new numbers

- Food disposal
 - Do not let extra food go to waste
 - Ask the caterer if they have an already existing partner to donate the left-overs
 - Find your own partner
 - Encourage attendees to take left-over home
 - Compost
 - Ask if the caterer or the university can provide composting services

DECORATION

- Use natural décor
 - In-season and grown locally or fairtrade
 - Allow attendees to take home natural centrepieces and donate whatever isn't taken to hospitals, nursing homes, etc.
- Use décor that can be reused for future events
 - Avoid using specific dates on the signs/banners to be able to reuse them again
- Use sustainable materials for banners and signage or material that can be recycled or composted after the event
- Use signs to communicate the importance of sustainability and promote the sustainable aspects of the event

REDUCING WASTE

- Evaluate your waste and recycling needs
- Separate your waste
- Set waste goals (preferably zero waste goals)
- Clear signage for disposable items at each waste station
- Communicate zero waste goals to volunteers and attendees
- Notify vendors at event about zero waste policy
- Minimize food-waste

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Benefit the **Community/Society**
 - Find a way to give back (for example by supporting local non-profit organizations)
 - Gear the event towards the local community
 - Include physical activity to encourage attendees to move and be more healthy
 - Partner up
- Increase **human capital**
 - Offer sessions or panels that teach practical skills or provide resources to your attendees
- Be **inclusive**
 - Reach out specifically to organizations that you think can benefit the most from your event but also publicize to the entire university
- Compensate the remaining CO2 impact of the event** (by for example donating to CO2 compensation projects or setting up your own compensation project)

We got our inspiration for this checklist from experts and universities that have their own sustainable event certification system such as MIT, NC State University, University of Florida, Yale University and UC Berkley.