

# 10 POWERFUL WAYS TO MAKE YOUR NEXT EVENT MORE SUSTAINABLE

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Sustainability is no longer a “nice-to-have” feature but rather has turned into “table stakes” – especially for the meetings and events industry. This means that decision makers and planners are faced with a challenging balancing act that involves designing in-person events that are sustainable, inclusive and meaningful, while also keeping costs down and attendees satisfied.

To help guide your efforts, Team Canada through its industry research, is sharing its own take on 10 simple, yet powerful ways to make your event more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.



## 1. Set sustainability goals

The first step is to put achievable and realistic goals in place. To do this, we recommend setting five to ten measurable goals aligned with three to five United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (UN SDGs). Once you have these goals, it's a great idea to create a dedicated team that can help track them and ensure you're making progress.



## 3. Go local

Today's business travellers don't want their trip to have a negative impact on the environment or local communities. One way to help give attendees a feel-good factor is through using local products and sourcing from local vendors whenever possible.



## 2. Choose the right partners

It's also important to align with partners that can help reduce your event's impact, whether that's venues and hotels with strong green initiatives or activities that minimize attendees' carbon footprint. As one suggestion, consider working with suppliers of green electricity or generating energy on-site via solar panels.



## 4. Eliminate food waste

Planners should take the time to understand proper food management, including disposal and donation options for surpluses. They can also partner with charities, food banks and innovative companies that help sustainably process leftovers.



## 5. Make attendees accountable

Provide attendees with insights on how they can reduce their own impact while attending your event. For instance, you can highlight the power of sustainable practices like using public transport, choosing vegetarian meal options, being mindful about water usage and opting out of daily hotel laundry services. You can also use an app instead of paper printed copies of programs. Small steps like these can make a big difference collectively.



## 6. Calculate and lower carbon emissions

Carbon emissions calculators are excellent tools in helping to provide an accurate view of an event's environmental impact, as they allow you to see the impact of different choices in the planning process. With that information, you can then take steps to travel differently: use trains or public transport, take direct flights and travel light.



## 7. Check your potential suppliers

Sustainability goes beyond eliminating plastic water bottles and straws. It also requires buy-in from industry suppliers and partners. When planning, vet potential partners' commitments to sustainability and choose suppliers whose sustainability goals align with your event.



## 8. Weave sustainability into contracts

When negotiating contracts, think beyond rates and dates. Food donations, purchasing local, composting and post-event reporting are a few of the items on a list of negotiable items. After negotiating with suppliers about sustainability terms, make sure they are included in your contract as well.



## 9. Measure success

Ask all suppliers to gather and provide post-event data on all the sustainable initiatives outlined in your contract. Then, meet with them to debrief, measure your results and talk through what worked and what needs improvement. After your event, consider producing a report to show how it was handled from a sustainability standpoint – and use those insights to elevate your next one.



## 10. Baby steps

It's important to recognize that progress won't happen overnight. Every small step you take today will gradually add up to significant changes, which can have an enormous impact on the sustainability of your events in the long run.

### The path forward

Sustainability measures are fundamental for business events now and will remain so in the future. Real progress in sustainability will come when the entire industry – planners, venues, destinations and other suppliers – work together to find solutions to achieve their goals.

### Let's connect!

Insights, inspiration, a simple introduction— our team is eager to share the benefits of meeting in Canada.



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