An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

DTCAGSM Sustainable Events Charter

This document has been prepared in line with the requirements of the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate to provide a framework for event organisers to ensure that events hosted by the Department represent best practice in sustainability and to promote the use of sustainable event management across the wider sectors of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sports, Gaeltacht and Media. It is also made available to other Government Departments and Agencies as a resource for their own event planning.

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Introduction to the Sustainable Events Charter:

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) defines an event as a "Planned gathering with respect to time and a place where an experience is created and/or a message is communicated" (ISO 20121-2012). The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport, and Media regularly organises events such as stakeholder events, policy launches, conferences and conventions. Such events are standard business practice, potentially causing a significant carbon impact, while also possessing the capacity to positively influence society by promoting and addressing global sustainability challenges. From consuming energy, water and other natural resources, to generating waste and causing air pollution, events can have negative effects regarding climate change and the production of greenhouse gases. The aim of this charter is to advise event organisers as to practical and actionable considerations which can ensure events in Ireland have a reduced carbon footprint, championing true sustainable development.

This Charter has been created as part of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media's commitment to leading by example in climate action. It is a resource that can be utilised by event planners, organisers, and stakeholders to embed sustainability into a range of events. This Charter focuses on the following dimensions of event management, providing guidelines and best practice on greening practices for each dimension:

- **Mobility:** Promoting sustainable transport methods and choices suitable for events of all scales.
- **Event Venue and Accommodation:** Embracing sustainable infrastructure, whether it be community halls or international venues, along with exploring sustainable accommodation choices for event participants.
- **Energy:** Advocating for energy efficiency and sustainable sources, tailored for events both big and small.
- **Procurement of Goods and Services:** Prioritising ethical and sustainable sourcing of goods and services, in line with the Government's Green Public Procurement guidelines.
- **Catering:** Outlines sustainable sourcing, waste reduction, and nutritional guidelines for food and beverages served at the event.
- **Waste Management:** Ensuring minimal waste generation and maximising recycling, be it at a local crafts fair or an international arts festival.
- **Water Management:** Valuing our water resources, regardless of event size.
- **Communication:** Ensuring that sustainable practices are communicated and understood by all, from local communities to global audiences.
- **Social Aspects:** Upholding community engagement, inclusivity, and cultural integrity at every level.

The annex of the Charter contains comprehensive checklists that can be used for pre-event planning, on the spot monitoring and post-event reporting.

The checklists have been developed to allow event organizers to track the success of efforts to embed sustainable practices in their events. The checklists cover three stages of the event management process; the pre-event/goal setting stage, the procurement stage, and the post-event stage. The checklists consist of measures to be undertaken, an interactive 'status' column where the measure can be marked as 'Complete', 'In-progress' or 'N/A', and a column for relevant comments. These checklists represent the broad range of points which event organisers should consider; however, **not all considerations described here will be necessary, feasible, or appropriate for all events**, and organisers should exercise their own discretion in determining which items require their attention. For smaller events, some of the extensive considerations detailed below may not be applicable. That being said, smaller events have their own unique opportunities to prioritise certain aspects of sustainability, such as extensive community engagement.

Context

Ireland is committed to global and European aspirations for sustainable development and emissions reductions. Globally, the urgency to address environmental and sustainability challenges has never been more palpable. The Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015, has set forth a unified global commitment to combat climate change and keep global temperature rise to below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, thus limiting damaging impacts and the frequency of extreme weather events. Ireland must also adhere to the European Green Deal which has set out cross-sectoral actions and targets needed for 2050 carbon neutrality. As part of the European Green Deal, a "Fit for 55 package" has been introduced containing legislation to achieve a 55% emissions reduction by 2030.

This Charter falls in line with national policy including the Climate Action Plan and Carbon Budgets Programme. The Climate Action Plan sets out a roadmap to reduce emissions in order to achieve a 51% overall reduction in carbon emissions by 2030, and carbon neutrality no later than 2050. Additionally, the Carbon Budgets Programme has set a target of a 45% reduction in emissions from commercial buildings by 2030 when compared to 2018. In this context, the Sustainable Events Charter emerges as a synthesis of international best practices and Ireland's own national commitments. Designed to cater to the diverse spectrum of events held on Irish soil, this Charter aligns Ireland's dedication to its cultural roots with the imperatives of a sustainable global future.

Additionally, the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasise the need for a holistic approach, integrating economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. Sustainable event management is uniquely positioned to accelerate progress towards these goals, given its expansive reach into sectors including transportation, energy, catering, waste management, and more. By their very nature, events have the power to impact:

- **Goal 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy:** Highlighting the importance of energy efficiency and the usage of renewables, minimising reliance on fossil fuels.
- **Goal 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work.
- **Goal 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure**: Advancing innovative methods to diminish environmental impact.
- **Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities:** Aiding cities and government in making sustainable adjustments to their infrastructure and services in line with hosted events.
- **Goal 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production:** Adopting sustainable materials, renewable energy, and endorsing organic food, all while reducing waste and promoting recycling.

- **Goal 13 – Climate Action:** Elevating the discourse on renewable energy utilisation, reducing energy wastage, and offsetting unavoidable impacts.

Furthermore, in 2012, the International Organisation for Standardisation introduced ISO 20121. Developed with the underlying principle that every action counts, from utilising tap water instead of plastic bottles to encouraging the increased use of public transport, this flexible approach can be adapted to all types of events, from arts festivals to small gallery viewings. This guideline serves as a beacon for best practices in event management, focusing on social, economic, and environmental impacts. ISO 20121 was developed to improve the sustainability of events and their related activities, products and services. Adopted by global events such as the Rio 2016 Olympics and Paralympics, Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, and even platforms such as the World Economic Forum, this standard emphasises the sustainability of events in their entirety.

Figure 1: Minister Catherine Martin at Dunamaise Arts Centre, Co. Laois, announcing new funding and plan to support cultural organisations in reducing carbon emissions. Sustainable management of such events is key to supporting their messaging.

1. Event Venue and Accommodation for Participants:

The objective of this section is to outline the responsibilities, strategies, and protocols for choosing a sustainable venue and accommodation options for participants that align with the sustainability goals of the event. Several factors influence the sustainability of event venues and accommodation, including waste management, procurement, energy consumption, mobility, catering, water consumption, and cost-effectiveness. Each of these plays an important role in selecting venues and accommodation for events, with each topic discussed separately in corresponding sections. Additionally, a checklist is provided below to support a holistic approach to decision-making.

Additionally, there are a number of eco-labels and certifications for event venues and accommodation that can be invaluable to organisers of sustainable events. These include ISO 20121, ISO 14001, Green Tourism, Green Hospitality and Sustainable Travel Ireland, which provide a third-party verification that the venue or accommodation meets specific environmental standards. Fáilte Ireland are currently developing an umbrella certification programme which will allow businesses in Ireland to showcase their sustainability credentials. In conjunction with this certification programme, Fáilte Ireland are utilising their Climate Action Road Map toolkit in order to aid businesses in reducing their carbon footprint across areas such as energy, food, water and waste. The use of venues and accommodation with such certifications could reduce the need for event organisers to personally investigate each individual sustainability factor, except where an event has identified more specific goals. Utilising venues and accommodation which hold enviro-labels or certifications can then boost an event's reputation and credibility in this area, attracting stakeholders who value sustainability.
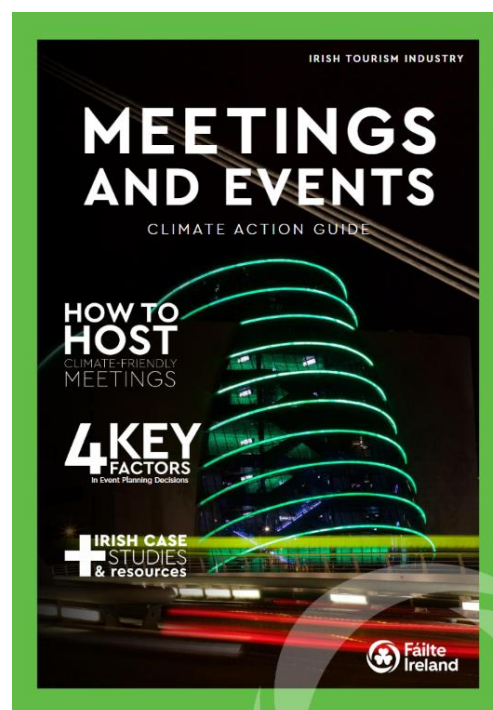

Figure 2: Further guidelines are available in the Fáilte Ireland Meetings and Events Climate Action Guide.

<u>Guidelines and Best Practices:</u>

Venue and Accommodation Selection:

Prioritise venues and accommodation that have sustainable certifications or a recognised environmental quality label. Venues easily accessible by public transport reduce travel emissions, while car sharing and the use of shuttle services for less easily accessible venues should be encouraged.

Energy Efficiency:

The event venue should strive to reduce the use of fossil fuels without compromising indoor comfort. Implement, or select venues with, energy-efficient lighting and encourage the use of renewable energy sources.

Sustainable Building and Infrastructure:

Check Building Energy Ratings (BERs) where possible and opt for buildings with a higher rating. Key environmental factors should also be considered, such as materials used, water and waste systems, and impact on local biodiversity.

Waste Management:

Opt for venues and accommodation that possess efficient waste management systems, prioritising recycling and composting.

Water Conservation:

Choose venues and accommodation with water-saving facilities like low-flow toilets, in addition to water-efficient kitchens and laundry systems. For events taking place at temporary venues, such as festivals, sustainable solutions should be considered for water management processes, such as temporary toilet facilities.

Local Economy and Community:

Any events or side-events should be beneficial to the local economy and consider local environmental and social criteria. The Department has the opportunity to set an example to wider society and communities affected by the hosting of events, demonstrating governmental commitment to sustainability.

2. Mobility

Mobility relates to all questions concerning participants' travel to and from an event, as well as transfers at the event venue. The urgent need to address climate change makes it imperative for us to rethink how we manage transportation in relation to both small and large-scale events. The gravity of this issue was demonstrated by a study of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, revealing that spectator travel accounted for 86% of the event's total emissions. It was similarly reported that in 2005, 90% of the emissions resulting from German sporting events were the result of spectator transportation. It is therefore critical to tackle this aspect of event planning in order to improve the overall sustainability of events.

Given the availability of virtual meeting platforms and lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, in the initial planning stage of an event, organisers should consider if face-to-face meeting is absolutely necessary. Videoconferencing through platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Webex may reduce the need for in-person events or meetings. The benefits of such include money and time savings, and avoiding environmental impacts associated with transportation.

Some events cannot be hosted virtually, and as such, the first step in developing a comprehensive sustainable transportation plan is to understand the preferred modes of transport.

Private cars, especially when not filled to capacity, have one of the highest per-person carbon footprints. The problem is often exacerbated where venues offer extensive parking facilities that encourage car use, or where private cars represent the only viable transport option for venues with limited public transport links.

Public transport such as buses and trains usually have a lower per-person carbon footprint and should be encouraged. However, as previously mentioned, the accessibility of public transport is often a barrier to its use. The timing of transport services and associated public attitudes may also limit its utilisation in travelling to/from an event.

Walking and cycling represent the most sustainable transport modes, with both producing zero emissions and providing additional health benefits. However, these options are viable only where participants are located within a reasonable distance of the venue.

For international events, air travel is often unavoidable and is the highest contributor to carbon emissions. While it may be necessary for guest speakers and VIPs to attend events in person, videoconferencing and virtual attendance should be strongly encouraged for international participants whose physical attendance is not deemed strictly necessary.

Guidelines and Best Practices:

Strategic Venue Selection:

Venues that are easily accessible via public transport can significantly reduce the need for private car use and should be prioritised. When not easily accessible by public transport, car

sharing via platforms such as Liftshare.com, swiftcommute.ie, or travelsmart.ie can increase vehicle occupancy rates, thus reducing private car related emissions.

Virtual Participation Options:

Offer live streaming or virtual reality experiences as an alternative to physical attendance, particularly for meetings or workshops held alongside a main event.

Combined Event and Transport Tickets:

In order to encourage public transport use and reduce the transport carbon footprint per attendee, event organisers could partner with local public transport agencies to offer combined tickets including both event entrance and transport to the venue.

Enhanced Shuttle Services:

Operate shuttle services not just from major transport hubs but also from key urban centres and related accommodation, ensuring shuttle use becomes more convenient than private car use or car hire.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations:

Prioritising venues which provide fast-charging EV stations could encourage the use of electric vehicles, while also providing them with access to priority parking.

Comprehensive Travel Information:

Pre-event communication should include both details of the event and recommended sustainable transport options to reach the venue. Creating easily accessible guides for public transport routes, schedules, and cycling/pedestrian pathways will encourage more sustainable transport and thus a more sustainable event.

Figure 3: Eileen Gibbons, Electric Bike Trails, Leitrim Village, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim, pictured unveiling the organisation's new website. Active and sustainable travel benefits both event sustainability and the health of participants.

3. Energy:

It is important to understand that the challenge does not solely rest on reducing energy consumption, but also hinges on utilising cleaner, more efficient sources of energy. As research and existing guidelines suggest, changes both big and small —from the type of light bulb used to the sourcing of renewable energy— can collectively contribute to more sustainable event management. However, it is important to note that while event organisers should make a concerted effort to improve the energy efficiency of events, in most cases it is not possible to make structural alterations.

This section outlines effective guidelines and best practices for energy management, accompanied by a supporting checklist. By adhering to these recommendations event organisers can take meaningful steps towards hosting more eco-friendly and energy-efficient events.

Guidelines and Best Practices:

Energy Consumption Monitoring:

Unchecked energy usage can lead to wasteful practises. Monitoring consumption allows for setting benchmarks that can improve overall efficiency, isolating areas where energy may have been wasted or where consumption can be reduced. In most cases it is best practice to visually monitor light and power consumption for the duration of each event, reducing usage where possible. For larger events, it may also be possible to request electricity meter readings before, during, and after the event to obtain more comprehensive data. Energy usage information can then be used to inform future decision-making and to set reduction targets where necessary.

Lighting Solutions:

Lighting can account for a significant portion of energy consumption. Where possible it is best to utilise natural lighting or select venues with significant natural lighting. When artificial lighting is required, look for energy-efficient alternatives such as LED technologies and motion sensors in little-used areas to ensure lights are only active when necessary.

Audio-Visual Equipment:

Presentations conducted by organisers or invited guest speakers represent a crucial element of most meetings and events. However, AV equipment can be energy-intensive and may increase an event's overall energy consumption. In order to reduce consumption, it is best to consider energy-efficiency along with performance features. For example, the brightest projector may not always be the best choice —look for options that have a higher contrast ratio but use less energy.

Heating and Cooling:

While climate control at events is important to ensure guests are relaxed and comfortable, it also represents an area where energy can be wasted. To avoid wastage, it is recommended to follow temperature guidelines, where rooms are not heated to above 20°C and not cooled more than 6°C below the outside temperature. Seasonality is also an

important factor; ideally heating should not be used in summer, nor cooling during winter months. Where possible, energy-efficient Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems should be utilised to effectively control both climate and air quality.

Renewable Energy Sources:

A shift towards renewable energy sources can play a crucial role in reducing an event's carbon footprint. While it is important to acknowledge this may not always be possible, event organisers can select venues which utilise renewable energy. Additionally, and particularly for outdoor events, coordination with venue management can allow the temporary use of green energy during the event.

Equipment Efficiency:

Appliances may not seem like the largest source of energy consumption, yet inefficient appliances can covertly increase consumption and energy wastage. As such, it is advisable that all equipment be energy-star rated or have high-efficiency ratings. Consultation with suppliers may be required to request the use of efficient appliances when renting or leasing.

Attendee Engagement:

Sustainable practices are most efficient when everyone participates, and this is particularly true for energy management. It is best practice to inform participants of the event's energy-saving measures and encourage their active participation, which may require as little as turning off lights in empty rooms.

Vendor and Supplier Requirements:

When selecting suppliers for an event, it is important to remember that third-party services can contribute to an event's overall energy consumption. By incorporating requirements into contracts with vendors, such as type of equipment used, waste management, and energy sources, it is possible to take a more holistic approach to sustainable event management and reduce overall energy consumption at each event.

Offsetting Carbon Emissions:

Despite best efforts, some carbon emissions may be unavoidable. In order to achieve true event carbon-neutrality, total carbon emissions could be calculated per-event using carbon calculator tools and then offset through various certified climate projects, such as Atmosfair, Climate Friendly, and MyClimate.

4. Procurement of Products and Services:

The procurement of products and services is an integral part of planning and executing any event. It is important that we recognise the significant impact that our procurement choices can have on the environment, society, and the economy. To this end, event sourcing and purchasing should comply with Green Public Procurement (GPP) and Socially Responsible Public Procurement (SRPP) practices.

The following procurement guidelines and actionable checklist steps balance environmental stewardship with cost-effectiveness and remaining within the framework of applicable legal provisions. In following these guidelines event organisers can lead by example, inspiring participants, stakeholders, and future event organisers to practice sustainable procurement.

Guidelines and Best Practices:

Governmental Guidelines:

Governmental guidelines provide a standardised approach to sustainable procurement which can be adopted in the hosting of all types of events. It is advisable to always refer to and comply with the most up-to-date governmental guidelines for sustainable procurement, such as the Green Public Procurement guidelines. Please follow the below link to access the Government's GPP guidelines: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/efa12-green-public-procurement-gpp/

Paper and Printed Materials:

The production and disposal of paper and ink can have significant environmental impacts, contributing to deforestation and increased waste. Organisers should aim to limit the use of paper by encouraging the digital distribution of event material, while utilising double-sided printing when absolutely essential. When printing is necessary, opt for recycled paper and eco-friendly inks that are low in volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

Cost-Effectiveness:

Balancing sustainability and budgetary constraints is an essential element of any event. When purchasing equipment or related goods, conducting a life-cycle cost analysis can aid event planners in making cost-effective choices that also align with sustainability goals. Additionally, while cost-effectiveness is an important consideration in choosing vendors, potential vendors should also be evaluated on past performance and sustainability practices.

Sustainable Gifts:

It is commonplace for the host organisation or participating organisations to give gifts to event participants. However, it is important that these should not be at odds with the event's sustainability objectives.

Staff Training, Monitoring and Reporting:

An informed team is crucial to the effective implementation of sustainable procurement practices. It is suggested that all staff involved with procurement be provided with training

on GPP and relevant sustainability criteria. As regular checks ensure procurement remains aligned with the sustainability goals of an event, organisers should implement a system for regular monitoring, auditing, and reporting on procurement activities.

5. Catering:

Catering refers to more than just the provision of meals and beverages for event participants, while also encompassing related decisions on material use, menu development, transportation, and vendor selection. By making informed decisions, event organisers can not only satisfy the dietary needs and tastes of event participants but also positively contribute to the welfare of our planet and communities. The following guidance aims to provide event organisers with a comprehensive outline of sustainable catering practices.

Guidelines and Best Practices:

Sourcing and Procurement:

It is best to select suppliers who prioritise seasonal, organic, and Fair Trade products. Caterers should be able to verify the origin of their produce. It is advisable to create a list of preferred suppliers which meet the sustainability criteria, updating the list regularly based on performance and new market entrants.

Menu Development:

In line with sourcing and procurement, menu development should prioritise seasonal produce, when applicable. Coordination with suppliers can ensure the availability of seasonal produce and minimise food waste. Given the likelihood of dietary restrictions, vegan, gluten-free, and other allergy-friendly options should also be made available. To prevent allergy-related complications, all food should be appropriately labelled where allergens may be present, and it is good practice to communicate the menu to participants prior to the event.

Resource Consumption:

Where feasible, reusable dishware should be used. Where this is not possible, recyclable or compostable options should be considered. Food should be served in family-style platters or in bulk to minimise packaging waste. Drinks also should not be served in single-use containers such as plastic bottles; here participants can also be encouraged to bring their own reusable drink containers. Disposable linens and tablecloths should be avoided in order to minimise waste.

Waste Management:

Compost and recycling bins should be provided at event venues to ensure the appropriate disposal of waste. As such, caterers who provide composting and manage recycling as part of their overall service should be prioritised. Where this is not possible, a 'Waste Monitoring Committee' should be established for each event, overseeing the sorting and disposal of waste. In order to reduce food wastage, event organisers should coordinate with local food banks or shelters in order to donate excess food. Additionally, event organisers should keep an open line of communication with caterers to adapt to changes in attendance or menu requirements, thus minimising food waste.

6. Waste and Water Management:

Events, regardless of size or nature, have a considerable impact on both waste and water consumption. As we become increasingly aware of the urgent need to shift towards sustainable practices, it is paramount that event management incorporates responsible waste and water management strategies.

Waste Management:

The cornerstone of waste management approach lies in the "Three R's" model: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. While each "R" plays a vital role, the order is indicative of the desired approach.

- **Reduce:** The key to effective waste management begins with reducing consumption at its source. This involves accurate prediction of resource needs and smart material choices.
- **Reuse:** Reusing items, whether for their original purpose or otherwise, not only gives items a second life but also avoids the energy costs associated with waste disposal or recycling.
- **Recycle:** Although eliminating waste entirely is unfeasible, recycling is essential for reducing the dependence on virgin materials and minimising waste. Yet, it is important to consider the feasibility of recycling particular items in your local context.

Special attention must also be given to the type of waste that is produced, ensuring that there is no potential for environmental damage. Many forms of 'biodegradable' packaging require particular handling and disposal; in using these materials it is the responsibility of the event organiser to ensure they are disposed of appropriately.
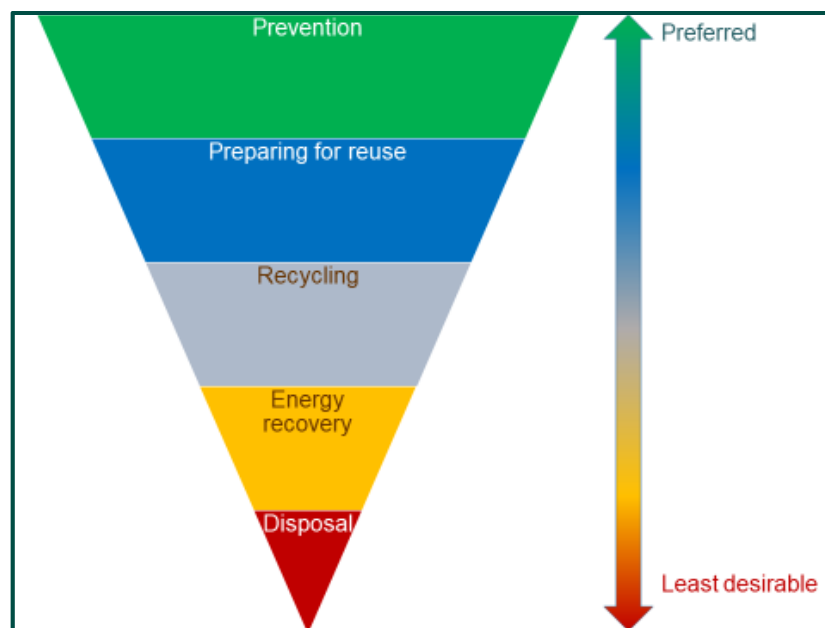

Figure 4: The hierarchy of waste management. Further details are available in Fáilte Ireland's Festivals Climate Action Guide.

Water Management:

The responsible management of water resources is a key element in planning sustainable events. For event organisers, there are several ways to reduce water usage, ranging from simple behavioural choices and inexpensive retrofit solutions to more advanced water-saving technologies. Water usage includes the direct use of water at the event (e.g. for drinking or cleaning) and indirect use through product choices (e.g. cleaning products that are not harmful to waterways). In addition to minimising usage, attention must be given to avoiding pollution and, where possible, harvesting rainwater for various applications.

This section of the charter will elaborate on actionable strategies, key challenges, and metrics that can be employed to ensure waste and water management are integrated effectively into the event's operations. By adhering to these principles, we aim to significantly minimise the environmental footprint of our events, thereby contributing to a more sustainable and responsible industry.

Guidelines and Best Practices:

Waste and Water Assessment:
A detailed waste and water assessment should be conducted to identify the types of waste produced, along with quantities of both waste and water consumption. In order to accurately predict consumption, it may be necessary to hire a sustainability consultant to survey all types of waste at your event, as well as a professional that can perform a water audit and set benchmarks.

Incorporate the Three R's:
To minimise the waste generated by an event and limit water usage, events planners should incorporate the principles of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle into all event planning and operations.

Waste Sorting and Disposal:
Improper waste disposal exacerbates environmental issues. In order to avoid this issue, all waste bins should be clearly labelled and signage should be present to remind participants of proper disposal methods.

Beverage and Hydration Stations:
Single-use plastic bottles represent a major source of waste. To address this issue, beverage and hydration stations should be set up to allow guests to refill their own water bottles. Alternatively, beverages may be provided and served in large reusable containers alongside reusable cups.

Eco-friendly Cleaning Procedures:
As previously mentioned, cleaning products have the potential to pollute water supplies threatening human health. To minimise potential harm, biodegradable cleaning agents, or cleaning products with environmental accreditation, should be used.

Data Monitoring and Post-Event Impact Assessment:

Data monitoring is necessary to ensure that set targets for water and waste management are met. Real-time data helps in immediate corrective action, however, where unfeasible, post-event impact assessments are needed to investigate whether sustainability objectives have been accomplished. These assessments are also valuable in providing lessons and reference for future events.

7. Communications:

In the age of digital and social interconnectivity, effective communication stands as the linchpin of any sustainable event. Whether it's conveying the event's environmental goals, being transparent regarding business operations, or engaging with diverse stakeholders, communication is essential in fostering a culture of sustainability.

The core aims of this section are:

- To ensure that the goals and practices of sustainable event management are clearly communicated to all relevant parties from the earliest planning stages.
- To build transparency into every facet of the event, from operations to stakeholder relations.
- To outline key measures for both internal and external communication in order to avoid pitfalls such as "greenwashing" and promote genuine, measurable action.

The underlying principle here is that well-informed stakeholders are more likely to contribute positively to the sustainability of an event. This applies to everyone: from event planners and suppliers to participants and the wider general public. Therefore, the guidelines in this section and accompanying checklist are intended to be comprehensive, actionable, and geared towards fostering a sustainable event environment.

Guidelines and Best Practices:

Setting Communication Goals and Objectives:

Without clear goals and objectives, communications can become disjointed, leading to misunderstandings and poor execution of sustainability goals. It is recommended to identify primary and secondary audiences early on, clearly stating what each target audience should know, feel, or do as a result of your communication efforts. Additionally, it is imperative communication goals align with the overall sustainability goals of the event.

Internal Communication: Staff Training & Support:

A lack of awareness among staff can lead to poor implementation of sustainability measures. Staff should be provided with comprehensive training on sustainability guidelines and protocols, while a designated sustainability coordinator can support and answer staff questions. Furthermore, regularly updating staff on new sustainability initiatives using newsletters, staff meetings, or a dedicated intranet portal helps to ensure that staff effectively contribute to achieving the event's sustainability goals.

Public Relations and General Public Awareness:

Unquestionably, failure to communicate sustainability goals and measures to the general public can result in a lack of support and awareness. In order to combat this, event planners can develop a comprehensive PR strategy which not only announces the sustainable event, but also educates the public on why sustainability matters. As part of this PR strategy, highlighting case studies and best practices can encourage more sustainable event planning within communities. Additionally, ineffective communication can lead to pitfalls such as

greenwashing, where the event appears more sustainable than it is. This can be avoided by being clear and specific regarding sustainability claims, using credible sustainability accreditations and avoiding exaggerated claims.

Stakeholder Communication:

Similarly, incomplete or unclear communication with stakeholders can lead to misunderstandings or a lack of engagement. It is important to first define who the stakeholders are. Next, planners should develop tailored communication strategies for each stakeholder group. These strategies can be implemented through various channels such as direct emails, stakeholder meetings, and social media platforms to keep broader audiences informed and engaged.

Transparency and Ethical Considerations:

A lack of transparency can create mistrust and scepticism, undermining the credibility of sustainability efforts. Event organisers should clearly outline their approach to commissions, sponsorships, and any other financial incentives related to the event. It is also advisable to publish annual sustainability reports which include measureable outcomes, challenges, and future steps. Finally, adopting a "plain English" policy to avoid jargon can make communications more accessible to non-experts.

Technical Solutions for Green Communications:

Traditional methods of communication can often be resource-intensive and environmentally unfriendly. Organisers should utilise digital platforms for distributing invitations, agendas, and other event materials. Additionally, participants should be encouraged to download event materials onto their own devices instead of offering printed versions.

Post-Event Communications:

Post-event communication provides an important opportunity to reinforce the sustainability message and gather feedback that may otherwise be missed. Post-event surveys can gather feedback on sustainability initiatives to inform future efforts. Event organisers can also prepare a post-event report focusing on their sustainability objectives and outcomes, sharing their findings with stakeholders and the wider public. Finally, successes should be celebrated and areas for improvement acknowledged, while maintaining a dialogue with the wider public that can be used to build on achievements across future events.

8. Social Aspects:

Sustainable events transcend environmental considerations; they are a holistic endeavour that embraces social and ethical responsibilities towards a wide range of stakeholders. As organisers plan and execute events, it is vital to consider their social implications, from accessibility and inclusion to community and cultural impacts, as well as educational enrichment. A sustainable event is one that is welcoming to all, minimises negative impacts on its host community, and leaves a positive legacy.

This section of the charter aims to amalgamate diverse guidelines into a cohesive framework for socially responsible event planning. The aim is to provide concrete steps and best practices for considering and incorporating the social aspects into the planning and execution of sustainable events.

The next sections will delve into these areas more explicitly, providing a multi-faceted approach to social sustainability in events. Topics will include: Accessibility and Inclusion, Community and Cultural Impact, Equality and Diversity, and Educational Enrichment.

The overarching goal is to move beyond mere compliance or "neutrality" and strive for events that enrich communities and to celebrate diversity, thus leaving a lasting positive impact.

Guidelines and Best Practices:

Ensuring Universal Accessibility:

Without adequate facilities and planning, some individuals may find it challenging to participate in events. Event organisers should first conduct an accessibility audit for each potential venue, making sure venues are universally accessible. Additionally, features should be implemented for visual and hearing-impaired participants, and may include sign language interpreters, Braille or audio materials.

Engaging with and Impacting Local Communities:

Pre-event consultation with local communities, including town hall meeting or surveys, can avoid the potential negative impacts of large events. Sourcing materials and services from local suppliers whenever possible builds ties with local communities while boosting the local economy. Furthermore, developing a system for gathering community feedback post-event is an important step in developing a relationship with the local community and learning lessons which can be adopted by future events for greater community impact.

Promoting Diversity and Inclusion:

Lack of attention to diversity and inclusion can result in a narrow, potentially biased planning perspective and missed opportunities to enrich the event. Staff should be provided with diversity training, while recording the demographics of event participants will help assess if you are reaching a broad audience. If the audience is skewed toward one demographic, actively seek to broaden participation.