



Green Tips

for faith community conferences and events

Here's a useful CHECK LIST!

Your plan

You need to have a plan on how you want to go green:

- Start early and get a team together to drive it
- Compile an action plan with responsibilities and timelines
- Get buy-in and support from all the organisers and stakeholders
- Communicate your plans to all involved, partners and media
- Train participants in greening practices
- Monitor progress and evaluate success – keep a record for future events!

Eco-purchasing

Products and services have a big influence on event greening:

- Give preference to locally manufactured products – “local is lekker”
- Give preference to environmentally friendly products or services, such as organic wine
- Consider how you can REDUCE, RE-USE and RECYCLE when purchasing materials and food
- Avoid the use of single use disposable products, such as paper cups, polystyrene food containers and sugar in sachets
- Avoid goods with excessive packaging and buy in bulk whenever possible
- Encourage the use of goods that can be re-used / recycled or have recycled content

Accommodation

Accommodation should be close to conference or event venue to avoid the use of transport. Check if the accommodation centres:

- Have energy efficient lighting or can use natural light
- Have a recycling programme for main waste types e.g. glass, plastic, paper
- Clearly display and implement a towel and sheet re-use policy for guests
- Provide soap and shampoo in bulk refillable dispensers rather than single use sachets
- Provide guests with a key card linked to the lights and air-conditioning in the rooms
- Provide a paperless check-in, check-out and billing process for guests
- Provide environmental training for their staff members
- Inform their guests about their environmental initiatives

Venue

Discuss your greening plan when you have chosen the venue. When selecting your venue check the following:

- Is the venue within safe walking distance from appropriate accommodation
- Is there an option to use natural light in meeting rooms?
- Do all the main access areas have energy efficient lighting?
- Do they provide waste separation; either at source, on-site or off-site?
- Can air-conditioning be kept to a minimum and set according to the season?
- Ensure that the possible negative impact on the environment is minimised when hosting outside open-air events

Food and beverages

Catering has a big impact on event greening:

- Where possible buy local, seasonal and organic products
- Try to avoid too much meat – a low fat vegetarian diet is healthier and has lower carbon emissions than serving meat.
- If fish is served make sure it is approved by SASSI (SA Sustainable Seafood Initiative www.wwfsassi.co.za)
- Provide healthy options to go with tea e.g.fruit platters or health bread
- Consider the food miles when doing catering
- When confirming numbers to caterers, try to establish the exact number of participants to avoid wastage of food
- Use refillable jugs of water instead of bottled water
- Print menus on recycled / environmentally friendly paper or digitally on screen
- Ensure that the run-off water from taps is channelled to appropriate points and disposed of responsibly at open-air events
- Display short notices with explanations why you have chosen to do things the way you have

Exhibitions

The venue, exhibition organiser and exhibitors all have a role to play to ensure that greening is implemented at an exhibition:

- Ensure that the 'green' message is clear and simple to exhibitors
- Ensure that banners and signs are generic whenever possible so they can be re-used in the future
- Ensure that inserts into visitor bags are kept to a minimum

Exhibitors at the event should be encouraged to:

- Choose decorations and display materials that can be reused
- Be innovative with their design and use recycled / recyclable materials
- Keep packaging material and re-use it at the end of the event
- Provide electronic communication instead of printed hand-outs

The venue should:

- Ensure that staff are trained and understand the greening plans
- Implement a multi-bin waste system to encourage recycling

Marketing, PR and production

This is an easy way to include greening elements:

- Avoid glossy full colour publications. Rather print on paper with recycled content and request vegetable or soya based ink for printing
- Avoid printing by providing information electronically (on a CD or USB stick)
- Choose gifts from local suppliers that are durable and useful
- Banners that cannot be re-used should be distributed to small businesses where they make products such as handbags
- Consider an electronic marketing campaign about the greening initiative

Transport

Try to find innovative alternatives:

- Encourage incentives for car-pooling such as free parking and lift sharing
- Provide group airport transfers instead of individual transfers
- Provide and encourage walking options. Provide maps of safe routes between the accommodation and venue
- Ensure that drivers are trained so that they can provide fuel-efficient driving
- Ensure that the parking areas for events do not damage the natural environment

Audio-Visual and equipment

When saving energy you also reduce your carbon footprint so:

- Turn all unnecessary equipment off overnight
- Use laptops instead of desktops because they are more energy efficient
- Use equipment with energy efficient rating such as ENERGY STAR®
- Dispose of old cartridges and IT equipment safely through e-waste initiatives

Décor

- Use energy efficient lights for décor
- Use soya candles instead of normal wax candles
- Use innovative materials such as Xanita board for furniture or partitioning
- Avoid the use of products such as fur that could involve animal cruelty
- When erecting marquees ensure that the natural environment is not damaged

Entertainment

- Choose local entertainers rather than flying in celebrities from other areas
- Involve entertainers in the greening process so they can reflect it in the show
- Use the entertainment as a fun way to get the green message across to the audience

Registrations

- Provide electronic registrations and correspondence
- Advise participants about 'green behaviour' before and during the event
- Encourage delegates / visitors to return their badges / lanyards for re-use

Office

But what happens behind the scenes?

- Ensure that all staff members know about the environmental policy
- Purchase environmentally friendly products with a high recycled content
- Minimise paper use – keep correspondence electronic
- Print double sided, use small margins & consider printing 2 pages per sheet
- Use a multi-bin system for recycling and get staff involved in the process
- Use refillable ink cartridges for printing
- Arrange water coolers or fresh water instead of bottled water
- Encourage staff to switch off lights
- Plan staff shifts according to available bus and train schedules

Rather start small than do nothing!



This document has been adapted from the City of Cape Town Smart Events Handbook

www.capetown.gov.za/environment

www.safcei.org

Please contact Kate Davies to share your Green event experience and to share ideas about how this document can be developed and improved. Thanks!

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