



Green Festivals and Events Guide, a How To...

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Affordable tourism that doesn't cost the earth

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INTRODUCTION

Sustainability has come to the forefront of global issues. Businesses are increasingly concerned about the impact of their activities and can affect change by adopting a culture of corporate sustainability. Planning and executing a green event and festival is an area which can be easily adopted as a way to begin on the path to sustainability.

In fact, according to IMEX, 2007, “73 percent of all meeting and incentive buyers would deliberately avoid a destination or venue with a poor environmental record!”

WHY GREEN YOUR FESTIVAL OR EVENT?

Events and festivals around the world create enormous amounts of waste. Some festival and event organizers are beginning to green their events to minimize their impact to the environment.

Much of the materials to aid businesses or organizations green their events is more strongly focused to green meetings and conferences rather than events and festivals. In principle, many of the initiatives can be applied to both types however little in Canada is being done to reduce waste at festivals and major events.

Culture.ca, Canada’s culture portal, lists festivals and events in all provinces and territories. There are more than 860 events posted currently on this website, an initiative by the Department of Heritage (www.culture.ca, 2008). Not to mention all the meetings, conferences and other events held throughout Canada!

WHAT IS A GREEN, EVENT OR FESTIVAL?

A green festival or event incorporates environmental considerations to minimize its negative impact of the environment. Such examples on minimizing environmental considerations include:

- Reduction of waste, water and energy, use of fair trade or organic food, using local suppliers and locally sources products, providing education about environmental impacts and more! *Keep reading!*

SO WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF AN EVENT ON THE ENVIRONMENT?

There are many impacts on events. Economically, events can bring thousands of people who will contribute to the local economy but socially and environmentally, events and festivals create thousands of tons of waste, use exorbitant amounts of electricity, damage lands due to overuse and increase Co2 emissions.



According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2008, currently tourism's contribution to climate change equals approximately 5% of all Co2 emissions. As festivals and events can be considered part of the tourism industry – we need to do our part to reduce our contribution to Co2!

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF GREEN FESTIVALS AND EVENTS?

Music Fans Actually Want Green Events!

- Over 80% think noise, waste and traffic have a negative impact
- Growing awareness of Co2 contribution of festivals
- 48% would pay more for greener events
- 36% say green is important when buying a ticket (www.GreenerFestivals.com)

Green Events Can Save Money!

A green event can save money! For example, collecting name badge holders for reuse at an event of 1300 attendees can save approximately \$975 for the event organizer (Source: www.conventionindustry.org).

Green Events Can Save Resources!

Using recycled materials, reusing items and reducing materials used can significantly lessen the environmental impact of an event. For example at a 2200 person event, using biodegradable cups and plates instead of styrofoam or plastic can prevent nearly one tonne from going into a landfill.

It also provides other benefits such as:

- Cost Saving
- Customer Motivation
- Company Loyalty & Engagement
- Supplier Benefits
- Regulatory Requirements
- Risk Management

AND it's The Right Thing to Do!

In the UK, Greener Festivals Awards have given 18 British and International festivals an award based on their environmental credentials.



HOW TO PLAN A GREEN EVENT OR FESTIVAL

PRE-PLANNING

Once you have decided you will be holding a festival or event, a series of decisions will need to be made regarding the number of participants, the location of the festival and the venue. In order to green this event, certain considerations must be factored in. The following provides a quick checklist that must be undertaken prior to planning the event.

Participants

- How many people will be participating?
- What is the impact of each person?
- What are the food requirements for each person?
- What are consumer expectations?
- What is the size of the event/festival?

Location and Modes of Transport

- Where will the needed participants come from?
- Is the selection of the venue the most convenient location for all?
- Is public transportation to the venue accessible?
- Can public transportation replace private transportation such as cars?
- Are there any incentives offered to participants to use public transportation?
- Are there various choices for transportation modes available?

Sourcing of Materials

- Is it necessary to have paper flyers/information?
- Do all rides or transport have to idle; can solar or other alternative power be used?
- Where are suppliers from? Could they be locally sourced?
- Where is food sourced from – locally? Organic? Are healthy choices available?
- Is educational information on the impact of the environment available and readily displayed?
- What recycling is available?
- What supplies are being reduced where possible?
- Can biodegradable or reusable items be considered instead of plastic or other non-renewable sources?

Accommodation and Venue

- Is accommodation for the participants in a convenient location in relation to the mode of transport (airport, train station, etc.)?
- Does the accommodation need to include a music or event center and/or other recreational facilities?
- Can the event be done in another location which has less impact on the environment?
- What recycling and renewable energy sources are available to the location?
- Does the local council help reduce waste or collect garbage regularly?

Once these questions are answered, the planning of a greener event can occur.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The main objective is to think green every step of the way! Key questions to ask during the planning process are:

Is this product or service green?

How can I find out?

Is there a substitute for a non-green product?

Where can I find it?

What is the cost benefit of the green choices?

Transportation

Transportation has the highest carbon footprint and careful consideration should be giving to how participants will travel to the venue.

- Air travel has the highest carbon footprint and if possible, an alternative should be considered.
- Rail and coach travel are less intensive and as the terminals are centrally located, it further reduces the need for taxi transfers.
- Try to reduce the use of on-site vehicles and use electric or bio-diesel powered vehicles.
- Consider using shuttle buses powered by green energy to get participants to the venue.
- Car pooling should be encouraged for local participants.
- Minimize the need to commute by choosing a venue convenient to most local participants.
- Provide information about how event goers can use public transit by showcasing maps, bus and subway routes for participants.
- Encourage alternate human-powered transportation, such as walking or cycling. Make it fun by giving a prize to the most eco- friendly participant.
- If your event is large, consider contacting your local public transportation provider and see if you can negotiate a transit pass for the event or at least ensure regular service.

Try to incorporate these guidelines when promoting your event.

Venues

The accommodation sector has been making great strides in greening their facilities and the event organizer should research the property's environmental practices in advance of booking. This can be done through asking for their environmental policy and finding information on their green strategy.

- Hold the festival or event at the same location where the majority of participants can access from where they will be staying (for tourists and locals).
- Hold the event at a central location, within walking distance of local points of interest.
- Choose a venue that has an explicit environmental policy and green strategy.
- Meet with a senior manager and discuss your needs before you make the selection.
- If the services you are asking for are not available, encourage them to adopt.
- If your event is outside, ask the city or community hosting it what are their waste and energy reduction policies.
- Look into the amount of noise you will create. Work with the local community to ensure they are aware of the impacts and how you can reduce them.

Food, Beverage and Catering Services

Meet with the venue's catering manager to ensure that all the food services meet your requirements for a green event.

- Ensure all beverage trucks use full food containers where possible (e.g. bottles rather than individual serving sizes).
- Use ceramic or other packaging instead of Styrofoam or individual packages.
- Ensure recycling as well as litter containers are available close to food trucks.
- Avoid bottled water where possible. In some cities, local water trucks are available and will come to your event to promote local tap water.
- Ensure suppliers use only eco friendly cleaning products.
- Offer suggestions on how to reduce water consumption.
- Ask suppliers to use renewable energy sources rather than diesel generators where possible.
- Use cloth rather than disposable cloths if applicable.
- Use biodegradable cups. These are preferred over recyclable plastic.
- Purchase products and services that meet environmental specifications wherever these are available such as fair trade coffee, organic and locally grown foods.
- Offer foods according to seasonal fruit and vegetables available locally.
- Use domestic liquor brands if possible.
- Consider what type of food service would have the least waste – buffet, sit-down, a-la-carte.
- Provide information on the source of all food and beverages, especially if fair trade or local.
- Donate leftover food to a charity.
- Compost all used food. Ensure that compost bins are visible to all participants.

Registration

- Print all documents on both sides of the page – if not possible, provide environmental education on back sides of paper.
- Minimize the registration form or use electronic registration.
- Use recyclable or re-usable name tags for volunteers and staff where possible.
- Work with sponsors to promote eco-friendly awareness.

Venue Equipment and Furniture

There are numerous ways to reduce your environmental footprint in your head office or event facility headquarters.

- Photocopiers should have the “double-sided” function and the use of this function should be encouraged.
- Provide wireless for participants to use on-site and email presentations or information in advance if applicable.
- Use recycled paper wherever possible.
- Only offer fair trade, organic and locally sourced food stuff for your venue.
- Use renewable energy generators rather than electric generators.
- Have recycling as well as composting bins available for all staff and volunteers.
- Ensure your environmental policy is clearly available for all to see.
- Work with local environmental and wildlife charities and organizations to ensure minimal land and wildlife disruption.



- Post information about being environmentally friendly – giving reminders to your participants is a good way to encourage recycling and waste reduction.

Exhibits, Presentations and Event Materials

- Provide venue summaries or other materials electronically wherever possible, on a disc or through a web page.
- Print all documents double-sided on non-bleached, non-de-inked paper.
- Use reusable tokens rather than disposable paper tickets for rides or other selling of services if possible.
- Make available electronic presentation formats rather than paper information flyers.
- Remind participants, as part of festival introductions or wrap-ups, that recycling and waste reduction opportunities are available for them.
- Reuse envelopes and paper wherever possible.
- Encourage sponsors to provide promotional material through environmentally sound ways.
- If bags or other gifts are being distributed, use biodegradable, recyclable and ethically sourced goods.

Energy and Water

- Promote energy and water efficiency to participants while attending and staying at the venue.
- Buy green power for the event if available in the area.

Waste Reuse, Recycle and Reduction

- Include venue participants in the waste reduction process by promoting environmental awareness and informing them of the waste reduction and recycling programs available.
- Minimize paper use and maximize reuse of any paper handouts.
- Ensure that any waste is separated at the source for future recycling. Provide visible bins.
- Use appropriate recycling bins in all areas, located in central locations, readily available and clearly marked.
- Format any distribution handouts so as to minimize the amount of paper used.
- Give purchasing priority to recyclable and post-consumer recycled products.
- Determine the number of participants of the venue prior to printing documents, so as to avoid the surplus.



MAKING THE EVENT CARBON NEUTRAL

Going carbon neutral is a way of demonstrating that steps have been taken to measure and reduce the emissions associated with the event's activities. What cannot be reduced, can then be offset against a project.

Offsetting the event with a reputable carbon management organization which also has a well known brand and transparent auditing standard could lend credibility to a carbon neutral event.

Measure/ Reduce

This process entails the gathering of information regarding the venue's use of energy, the participant's mode of transport and the number of nights in a venue.

- Direct Emissions from the venue.
- Transportation of attendees, organizers, presenters to and from the accommodation.
- Emissions associated with disposal of waste products (if any).

A report outlining the emissions footprint will give you an idea of what areas could be reduced further. This may include energy use such as the purchase of green power, switching transportation mode and waste management by using biodegradable disposables.

Offset

The emissions which are unavoidable can be offset against projects around the world and may include forestry, renewable resources and fuel switching.

It is vital that the process of becoming carbon neutral as well as identify how the offset projects are verified, are clearly explained in your environmental statement. This will provide a high level of transparency and avoid the dreaded "green wash" labeling.

ENGAGING EMPLOYEES FOR EFFECTIVE OPERATIONALIZATION

- Set up a committee and ensure someone is delegated responsibility for implementing the green initiatives for the events.
- Allocate time and resources toward implementing the green initiatives for large festivals and events.
- Set goals, objectives and targets for the greening initiative, e.g. zero waste.
- Begin environmental initiatives early; environmental goals and procedures established at the outset ensures an integrated approach to planning.
- Provide a briefing and, where necessary, specialized training to organizers or staff. After objectives have been established, it will be necessary to provide specific operational guidance to all employees on how to implement these objectives, within the context of festival and event management.

- Ensure that all aspects of routine operations are addressed in relation to the principles of the environmental management program.
- Implement a program of accountability for environmental decision-making, together with formal recognition for responsible decisions at all levels.
- Ensure the environmental initiative is a priority at the highest managerial levels, and communicate this commitment to all employees, contractors and suppliers.

Make it business as usual!

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT – COMMUNICATE YOUR EFFORTS

Developing and issuing an environmental statement informs the participants and other stakeholders the efforts made to make the event green. It also provides a road map for future event planning.

SAMPLE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

(Name of Organization) is committed to having an environmentally responsible event and we are working closely with our partners to plan and implement a festival/event which will reflect green event best practices.

The key actions being undertaken are: *(use past tense if it is published prior to the event)*

Venue

The event/festival is taking place at *(venue name and website)*. We are working together to achieve the following environmental objectives:

Zero Waste. This will be done through the reduction of waste such as no single serving containers, composting of organic matter, recycling and reusing of paper, metal, plastic and glass.

Food and/or material which are left over from the event are to be donated to a charitable organization.

Catering. The environmental impact of food production will be minimized through the use of seasonal produce which may be organically grown and/or locally sourced.

Energy Efficiency Initiatives *(ask venue if they have taken any action in this respect)*

Carbon Emissions

All activities related to the event create a Carbon Dioxide (Co2e) footprint. Our environmental engineers *(name and website)* will conduct an emissions' assessment which will include:

- Direct emissions from the venue.
- Transportation of attendees, organizers, presenters to and from the accommodation.
- Emissions associated with disposal of waste products (if any).

Carbon Neutral Event/Festival

The emissions' assessment report will give us with the approximate amount of Co2e generated by the event.

Following strategies to further reduce the environmental impact of the event, we will offset what cannot be eliminated. Our carbon offset partner and sponsor, is XX and will allocate the equivalent Co2e in offset projects such as renewable energy. Project types and location are:

Distribution of Event Material

We are committed to using paperless technology as much as it is possible and this will include the distribution of speakers' presentations and event information. The event's program and speakers' biographies, which will be distributed the day of the event, will be printed on recycled paper and vegetable based inks.

Event bags and/or any other items which may be distributed to the delegates will follow a green procurement strategy and will include materials made of natural fibers which can be recycled and are biodegradable.

We encourage our sponsors to also distribute their promotional material in a paperless manner and/or on recycled paper where possible.

Staff, Delegates and Sponsors' Transportation

Although we aim to make this event carbon neutral, we encourage all the participants to find the most environmentally friendly way to come to the venue. This may include taking public transportation, sharing car rides, taking a non-stop flight, coming by train or coach if time and distance allows, and why not walk or bike if nearby.

Please help us to make (*event name*) a truly environmentally responsible event. Do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or suggestions.

CASE STUDY EXAMPLES

WINNIPEG FOLK FESTIVAL

In 1997, Winnipeg Folk Festival was the first event to be certified by Canada's Environmental Choice Program. Since then, this festival has taken on different initiative to lessen its impact on the environment. For the past few years, the Winnipeg Folk Festival along with the Edmonton and Vancouver Folk Festivals, have operated a plate program, where washable plates are being reused. Both of these festivals have also have a no Styrofoam policy and use Poly Lactic Acid (PLA) beer cups, which are compostable. The 2008 Winnipeg Folk Festival attracted 45,325 paid attendees, the Edmonton Folk Festival drawing 20,000 people per day of the 4 day event. Also, local & fair

trade food were utilized. In 2007, the Edmonton Folk Festival installed solar panels to power merchandising then, lights and cash register. Ottawa's Folk Festival conducts environmental workshops at the EnviroTent during the event.

LONDON, ONTARIO FESTIVALS

In London, Ontario, three of its festivals: *Home County Folk Festival*, *London Rib-Fest* and *SunFest*, are partnering with the City of London and Waste Free World to green these events. The events attract 150,000 to 200,000 people in 3-5 days. Areas to be targeted at all or some of the three festivals are:

- More recycling
- Introducing composting and the use of compostable food and beverage containers
- Accessible & free City water to replace the reliance on single-use plastic water bottles
- Bring-Your-Own picnic ware, reusable water-bottles, and shopping bags
- Dish lending and dishwashing services

These greening initiatives implemented this year will hopefully become policy by 2009. Both Sunfest and Home County festivals have been able to put these sustainability initiatives due to the funding of TD – Canada Trust Friends of the Environment ([www.WasteFree World](http://www.WasteFreeWorld.com), 2008).

The City of London has supplied green drums for compostable food waste. The purchase of 1,000 stainless steel plates and cutlery will reduce the one-time use paper plates and plastic cutlery. With the help of volunteers, the dishes will be washed and reused. The three festivals are sharing resources which important to this project of greening these events.

OTTAWA CISCO BLUESFEST

The Ottawa Cisco Bluesfest, for the second consecutive year has won the “Gold Award for Waste Minimization” by the Recycling Council of Ontario. It recognized the need to reduce the environmental footprint of such an event (Ottawa Cisco Bluesfest, 2007).

Bluesfest greening strategies involve things such as:

- The use of compostable beer cups, disposed of through the novel use of ‘Cupsuckers’
- Encourage people to bicycle to the event by providing supervised bike parking
- Use of bio-diesel to power generators

Last year, approximately 300,000 compostable beer cups during the 12 day event were disposed of without having an impact on the environment. Recycling programs have been implemented at the festival and “green team” volunteers are key in informing festival goers of these initiatives. Another initiative is the “Cupsucker” which helps separate beverage cups from the rest of the garbage, therefore reducing what is sent to the landfill.

HARVEST JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL

The Harvest Jazz & Blues Festival has not only measure their ecological footprint but are trying to reduce from year to year the amount of waste is created at this event. The goal for the 2008 festival is to reduce 32 tonnes of Greenhouse gas emissions produced in connection with last year's festival. The organizers of this festival have implemented green initiatives in the office as well as on the festival site. In the office these include: eliminating plastic bags, replacing all light bulbs with energy efficient ones, paperless meetings, recycling, energy audit etc (Harvest Jazz & Blues Festival, 2008).



Here are the green initiatives implemented at the Harvest Jazz & Blues Festival, 2008)

- Recycling! Printed materials are on post-consumer recycled paper!
- Outfitting volunteers with 100% organic cotton tees.
- Created a new Park & Ride program for volunteers.
- Provided musician shuttles for all visiting performers.
- Carbon neutral event.
- Composting biodegradable cups.
- Purchased Cup Suckers—tubes that attach to garbage bins for efficient storage and recycling of cups. Cup Suckers reduces the amount of plastic garbage bags the Festival uses to help reduce the carbon footprint.
- Used electronic signage to recognize Sponsors during the Festival week to eliminate the waste created by using traditional “one-off” signage.
- Providing recycling bins for vendors.

Events such as Glastonbury's Green Fields use only solar, wind and gas power. Not only does this improve environmental efficiency, such things as solar panels can be an attractive addition to the overall aesthetics of your event.

(www.agreenerfestival.com/Co2.htm)

GLASTONBURY GREEN FIELDS

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SOURCES

Some sources used to put together this guide include:

www.agreenerfestival.com

www.conventionindustry.org

www.culture.ca

www.greenerfestival.com

www.harvestjazzandblues.com

www.imex-frankfurt.com

www.ottawabluesfest.ca

www.unwto.org

www.wastefreeworld.com

<http://www.greeninggovernment.gc.ca>

AFFORDABLE TOURISM THAT DOESN'T COST THE EARTH

ABOUT THE ICARUS FOUNDATION

The Icarus Foundation is a not-for-profit environmental, policy, research and education organization focused on sustaining a climate friendly tourism industry. We provide practical information, programs and research that encourage and enable hosts and guests to minimize the greenhouse gases generated by tourism activity.

How can we help you?

Our suite of services includes:

- Sustainability assessments – evaluating all areas of your workplace and providing advice on how to reduce YOUR environmental footprint.
- Integrated management plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and implement and exceed environmental targets.
- Mitigation planning - A four phased approach to reducing your carbon footprint.
- Audits (energy, water, waste, carbon) – conducting a gap analysis and measuring key metrics with a certified engineer.
- Benchmarking – starting a benchmarking strategy for measurement in order to measure what you manage and reach targeted objectives.
- Risk assessments – identifying and plans to manage associated risk.
- Team development – for building green teams within the workplace.
- Training workshops – for staff and managers.
- Greening – your meetings, your events, your workplace.
- Research – targeted research to determine external industry and stakeholder standards and trends.
- Environmental manuals – toolkits or training manuals for reducing your footprint.



www.theicarusfoundation.com