



Sustainability Toolkit for Chapters

Developed by the MPI Sustainability Advisory Council

Introduction: Why Sustainability in Events Matters

As leaders in the global events industry, MPI Chapters have a unique opportunity—and responsibility—to design experiences that drive positive environmental, social, and economic outcomes. Events bring people together, but they also use resources, produce emissions, and impact communities. This toolkit helps you embed sustainability and inclusion into every stage of your event, creating spaces that respect people, protect the planet, and contribute to thriving local economies.

Sustainable events are not only better for the world, but they are also better for attendees, sponsors, and the MPI community. Let's lead by example.

1. Integrating Sustainability from the Start: RFP & Supplier Selection

The Request for Proposal (RFP) process is your first opportunity to align your event with sustainability and social impact expectations.

Venue & Supplier Questions to Include in RFPs:

- ☐ What sustainability certifications or policies does the venue hold? (e.g., LEED, ISO 20121, Green Key)
 - ☐ Are recycling, composting, and food waste reduction programs in place?
 - ☐ Is energy efficiency implemented (LED lighting, smart controls, renewable energy)?
 - ☐ Does the venue source food, materials, and staff locally?
 - ☐ Are surplus food donations supported? If not, can we add this contractually?
 - ☐ Are gender-neutral bathrooms, accessible facilities, and lactation rooms available?
 - ☐ Can the venue provide impact data post-event (waste, water, energy, emissions)?
 - ☐ Do suppliers demonstrate ethical labor practices, diversity, and community benefit?
 - ☐ Are accessibility and inclusion priorities reflected in their operations?
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2. Social Impact & Community Legacy

Your event can uplift communities, support inclusion, and create lasting benefits:

- ☐ Partner with local charities, schools, or social enterprises (e.g., donate food, materials, or time).
- ☐ Prioritize hiring local, minority-owned, Indigenous, or underrepresented suppliers.
- ☐ Incorporate authentic cultural experiences that respect local traditions.
- ☐ Create volunteer opportunities or community give-back projects linked to the event theme.

- ☐ Ensure fair pay and safe working conditions for all event staff, including temporary workers.
 - ☐ Provide skill-building opportunities for local residents (e.g., student involvement, mentorships).
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3. Event Operations: Sustainable Practices for BEOs & Onsite Logistics

Food & Beverage:

- ☐ Right-size portions to reduce waste; donate surplus food where possible.
- ☐ Provide water refill stations—eliminate single-use plastic bottles.
- ☐ Use reusable or certified compostable serve ware when necessary.
- ☐ Offer vegetarian and plant-based meals as the default, with protein options available.
- ☐ Prioritize inclusive, nutritious menus that accommodate dietary needs.
- ☐ Donate floral arrangements or décor after the event.

Operational Best Practices:

- ☐ Choose energy-efficient AV and lighting setups; avoid overuse of screens or excessive lighting.
 - ☐ Utilize digital signage and reusable materials over printed collateral.
 - ☐ Implement accessibility measures (ramps, quiet spaces, sensory-friendly zones).
 - ☐ Minimize branded giveaways unless items are reusable, recyclable, or have lasting value.
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4. Accessibility, Inclusion & Wellbeing

A sustainable event prioritizes the dignity, comfort, and participation of all:

- ☐ Ensure venues are fully accessible to people with disabilities.
 - ☐ Provide quiet rooms, sensory zones, and wellbeing spaces.
 - ☐ Offer materials in multiple formats (large print, high contrast, captioned videos).
 - ☐ Communicate accessibility options clearly pre-event.
 - ☐ Provide gender-neutral bathrooms, prayer rooms, and lactation spaces.
 - ☐ Engage diverse speakers, performers, and suppliers.
 - ☐ Foster a welcoming, inclusive environment where all identities feel respected and valued.
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5. Attendee Engagement: Inspire Participation & Behaviour Change

Empower attendees to be part of your sustainability efforts:

- ☐ Pre-event communications: bring reusable bottles, no plastic provided.
 - ☐ Encourage opting out of daily hotel housekeeping to reduce water and energy use.
 - ☐ Replace printed programs with apps, QR codes, or digital screens.
 - ☐ Provide clear, visible recycling and composting instructions onsite.
 - ☐ Share sustainability initiatives and goals at the start of the event.
 - ☐ Offer workshops or sessions that highlight sustainability, community projects, or wellbeing.
 - ☐ Celebrate achievements publicly (e.g., “Together, we diverted 80% of event waste from landfill!”).
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6. Measuring Impact: Track, Report, and Improve

Transparent measurement ensures accountability and drives progress:

Suggested Metrics to Track:

- ☐ Total carbon footprint (travel, venue, suppliers, AV, F&B)
- ☐ Percentage of plant-based meals served
- ☐ Waste diversion rates (recycling, composting, landfill)
- ☐ Reduction of single-use plastics
- ☐ Energy and water consumption
- ☐ Attendee travel modes and class (offset options provided)
- ☐ Engagement with sustainability initiatives (surveys, pledges)
- ☐ Local economic contributions and community impact
- ☐ Accessibility and inclusion actions implemented

Measurement Tools:

- ☐ Carbon calculators (e.g., TRACE, ClimatePartner)
 - ☐ Venue and supplier sustainability reports
 - ☐ Pre/post-event surveys capturing attendee choices and feedback
 - ☐ Public sustainability impact report shared with attendees and stakeholders
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7. Pre-Event Data Collection Examples

Optional Questions During Registration:

- ☐ What transport mode will you use to attend?
 - ☐ If flying, what class? (Note: higher classes have greater emissions)
 - ☐ Will you offset your travel emissions? [Provide resources]
 - ☐ Do you require specific accessibility accommodations?
 - ☐ What pronouns would you like on your badge?
 - ☐ Do you identify as part of any underrepresented group? (Optional, confidential; supports inclusion efforts)
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8. Legacy & Continuous Improvement

The most sustainable events leave lasting benefits:

- ☐ Document lessons learned and areas for improvement post-event.
 - ☐ Build ongoing partnerships with local organizations and suppliers.
 - ☐ Track sustainability progress year-over-year.
 - ☐ Share outcomes, challenges, and next steps with your chapter and MPI community.
 - ☐ Explore opportunities for long-term legacy projects or skills development in host communities.
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9. Beyond the Basics: Innovation & Systemic Change

To be an industry leader, think beyond checklists:

- ☐ Explore circular economy solutions—reuse, recycle, and reduce across operations.
 - ☐ Test low-carbon tech and virtual integrations responsibly.
 - ☐ Address digital carbon footprint from hybrid or online components.
 - ☐ Embed human rights and ethical labor standards in your supply chain.
 - ☐ Incorporate mental health, pacing, and wellbeing into event design.
 - ☐ Regularly assess power dynamics and decision-making processes to promote equity.
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Conclusion: Leading with Purpose

Sustainable events don't happen by accident—they are built through intentional choices, collaboration, and leadership. MPI Chapters can demonstrate how events can unite people, respect the planet, uplift communities, and drive long-term impact.

With this toolkit, you are empowered to lead events that align with MPI's values and set a global standard for sustainability and inclusion. Together, we create events that matter.