



GREENING COP17

Event Greening Guidelines

Introduction

South Africa will be hosting of the 17th session of the Conference of Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the seventh Meeting of the Parties (CMP) to the Kyoto Protocol (UNFCCC COP17/CMP7, further shortened as COP 17) to be hosted from 28 November to 9 December 2011 in Durban, South Africa.

This document provides a guideline on how to host an event in a responsible manner and all service providers, sub-contractors and participants are encouraged to implement these event greening principles and practices. It is extracted and adapted from the South African National Greening Framework under the guidance of the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA).

Event Greening

Event greening refers to the process of incorporating socially and environmentally responsible decision making into the planning, organisation and implementation of, and participation in, an event irrespective of scale. It requires the application of sustainable development principles and practices to all levels of event organisation, and aims to ensure that an event is hosted in a responsible manner. It represents the total package of interventions at an event, and needs to be done in an integrated manner. Event greening should start at the inception of the project, and should involve all the key role players such as clients, organisers, (which could include meetings, incentives, conferences, events, exhibitions, etc.), sponsors, venues, subcontractors (such as transport, audio-visual, etc.) and suppliers.

These Event Greening Guidelines have been compiled to assist with the practical implementation of event greening and adapted for the greening of COP17 related events.

The anticipated outcomes of a green event can be summarised as follows:

- To improve the resource efficiency of the entire event and supply chain management;
- To reduce negative environmental impacts, such as carbon emissions, waste to landfill, and the effect on biodiversity;
- To increase economic, social and environmental benefits (triple bottom-line);
- To enhance the economic impact, such as local investment and long-term viability;
- To strengthen the social impact, such as community involvement and fair employment;
- To improve sustainable performance within an available budget;
- To present opportunities for more efficient planning and use of equipment and infrastructure;
- To reduce the possible negative impact on local inhabitants;
- To protect the local biodiversity, water and soil resources;
- To apply the principles of eco-procurement of goods and services; where possible
- To raise awareness of sustainability issues among all role players;
- To transfer skills through education and training of staff; and
- To ensure that the aims and objectives are clearly defined and measured.

Aim and Objectives

The aim is to host COP17 as a **low carbon event** based on the following objectives for the planning, preparation and implementation:

- To reduce the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions where possible through the **event greening** initiatives. To measure the event's GHG emissions, including international delegate travel, and mitigate it through local mitigation projects.
- To actively reduce the amount of **waste** generated prior to and during the event. Waste separation should be provided at source to raise awareness and to reduce waste to landfill.
- To ensure that **water** is consumed in a responsible manner. Participants, venues and sub-contractors should be encouraged to implement water conservation principles and protect the country's natural resources.
- To encourage **energy** efficiency through energy saving technologies, management systems and responsible behaviour. The use of renewable energy sources, as well as the use of natural light and ventilation, should be encouraged in buildings.
- To encourage the use of public **transport** (availability, accessibility and efficiency), efficient management of transport and the avoidance of non-essential flights in order to reduce air pollution (greenhouse gases) Consideration should be given to the impact of the transportation of the thousands of delegates on the environment and local communities (for example, congestion, disruption, emissions and pollution).
- To maximise **sustainable tourism** offerings through encouraging venues and accommodation establishments to comply with (or exceed) minimum environmental standards and the minimum responsible tourism standards.
- To ensure that the **procurement** of goods and services is done in a sustainable manner, including the use of local products that have a minimal negative effect on the environment and to deliver increased performance of social responsibility.
- To promote **local economic development and social cohesion** and benefits within the host region. A triple bottom line approach should be implemented through demonstrating fair and responsible spend of government money, as well as using the investment into COP17 wisely for long-term benefit to the host region. The multi-cultural and diverse group of stakeholders should be respected, with special consideration to the host city.
- To encourage local **environmental protection** and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological systems.
- To ensure that the greening of the event is well **communicated and marketed** to appropriate target groups. It needs to encourage participation (exhibitors, visitors and contractors) with the view of behaviour change while also raising the profile of the event. Staff, sub-contractors, key suppliers and sponsors need to receive guidance about implementing event greening in a practical manner.
- To **monitor and evaluate** the greening initiatives so that lessons learnt can be captured and improvements made. An open and transparent reporting mechanism should be made available.
- To ensure that a **lasting legacy** is left behind that has a positive impact on the local people and environment, which can be sustained in a practical way.

Different role players are implementing a variety of **processes** and **projects** to support the aim of hosting a low carbon event. This includes initiatives directly relating to the hosting of the event, as well as mitigation projects that will assist to mitigate unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions. The primary message is that everyone has a role to play in making this event as green as possible.

Greening Practices

Greening requires the incorporation and application of environmental principles and best practice into planning and current practice. It means taking into consideration the environmental impacts of decisions taken and investments made, and ensuring that the negative environmental impacts of these decisions are minimised. In so doing, natural resources are conserved; they are also used more efficiently, and less pollution is produced. Furthermore, it seeks to ensure that the impacts of greening are beneficial from both a social and economic point of view through community involvement and local economic development. Event greening aims to achieve these three objectives simultaneously through responsible event management, where the overarching principle is sustainability.

When hosting a large or small event there are many different areas that could be addressed, however the following **greening practices** are strongly recommended as part of event greening:

- Energy efficiency,
- Waste minimisation and management,
- Water conservation,
- Sustainable procurement,
- Responsible tourism,
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity, and
- Sustainable transportation.

Although the principles and practices can be applied to almost any business scenario, the **high impact areas** for greening the events industry could include the following:

- Accommodation and Responsible Tourism;
- Communications and Marketing;
- Exhibitions, specifically the Climate Change Response (CCR) Expo;
- Events, such as the Provincial Climate Change Summits and COP17/CMP 7 awareness raising events;
- Meeting Venue, specifically the Durban ICC / Albert Luthuli Precinct;
- Safety and Security;
- Transportation, including local, regional and international travel; and
- General event management (food and beverage; on-site offices; audio/visual and production).

Greening Actions

The following are guidelines that provide a brief overview of the main actions that could be implemented as part of greening your event:

Planning

- Consider greening principles from the start of planning your events
- Appoint a greening champion / team to manage, monitor and provide feedback on the implementation of your greening action plan
- Compile an action plan with responsibilities, timelines and budget
- Compile a mechanism to monitor progress and evaluate success.

Eco-Procurement

Include eco-procurement principles into all decision-making, such as:

- Select a venue with an environmental management plan that supports greening initiatives
- Give preference to environmentally friendly products such as re-usable cups, biodegradable packaging, bio-diesel, recycled paper or efficient vehicles for transport
- Give preference to environmentally certified suppliers such as Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) paper, South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) fish or the Biodiversity and Wine Initiative (BWI)
- Apply the rule of: avoid, reduce, reuse and recycle – refer to section on waste
- Give preference to local suppliers and products – “*local is lekker*”

Accommodation

- Ask the accommodation facility about their environmental initiatives and if they have an environmental policy or management plan
- Select accommodation that actively promotes eco-procurement, waste reduction, energy efficiency and water conservation
- Select accommodation that is accessible via public transport, or within walking distance of the conference / meeting / event venue.

Decor

- Consider using decor made from environmentally friendly and/or recycled products
- Use energy efficient lights (such as LED) for décor, if needed
- Avoid the use of products that will have a negative impact on the environment and that will involve animal cruelty or that have not been harvested in a sustainable manner
- Avoid handing out gifts that are just gimmicks.

Entertainment

- Select local entertainers / avoid additional flights associated with entertainment
- Involve entertainers / MC in your green campaign messaging – they need to understand it and help convey the message.

Equipment: Audio-Visual (AV) and Information Technology

- Appoint an AV team that can implement energy efficient principles and has access to energy efficient equipment
- Select the use of energy efficient lights, such as LED lights
- Select the use of equipment with good energy efficiency ratings.

Exhibitions

Also refer to detailed guidelines for exhibition greening for COP17

- Include greening guidelines into the exhibitor packs to provide clear guidance to exhibitors
- Ensure that a waste reduction and management plan is implemented
- Ensure that energy efficiency measures are implemented
- Consider 50% lighting during set-up and strike
- Consider the use of renewable energy certificates.

When building an exhibition stand:

- Consider using environmentally friendly or recycled materials to build and for decor for the stand
- Reduce hand-outs, rather refer visitors to your website or collect their e-mail addresses and forward information to interested parties
- Consider using undated generic branding (i.e. banners) with minimal panels to replace at future events.

Food and beverages

- Request caterers to preferably use local, seasonal and organic food
- Ensure that all fish comply with the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) criteria or SA Sustainable Seafood (SASSI) guidelines
- Avoid the use of disposable crockery / cutlery / glasses / serviettes; rather opt for re-usable products
- If disposable products (cups, cutlery) must be used, consider biodegradable options and ensure that it goes for composting
- Provide fresh water in jugs instead of bottled water. Durban's water has Blue Drop Status, which means the drinking water is of a high standard.

Marketing, Public Relations and production

- Ensure that your marketing and promotions plan includes information on your greening actions as event greening raises the profile of the event and provides positive marketing opportunities (be careful of green washing)
- Consider an electronic marketing campaign with minimum printing to reduce wasted paper
- Avoid printing glossy documents that cannot be recycled
- If printing is required, request environmentally friendly paper with soya based ink and ensure it is printed double-sided
- Select gifts that are locally produced, functional and durable
- Ensure that branding and signage is designed so that it can be re-used – avoid using dates.

Office

- Ensure that your office has an environmental policy that supports the event greening principles
- Implement eco- procurement, waste reduction, energy efficiency and water conservation principles at your office
- Consider your printing needs: Use FSC approved, chlorine free, recycled paper and print double-sided
- Encourage all staff to actively participate in the greening principles and practices
- Consider doing only online invitations and confirmations where possible
- Consider including questions relating to transport during the registration process to enable input into the carbon footprint for the event.

Staff and/or sub-contractors

- Increase awareness and train staff in event greening practices
- Select staff from the local communities to encourage capacity building and local economic development
- Plan staff shifts according to the available bus, shuttle and train schedules.

Transport/Travel

- Use public transport instead of single occupancy vehicles
- Use cycle or walking routes to get to the venue
- Encourage staff to implement car-pooling whenever possible
- Avoid air travel when possible – consider video conferencing or connecting via satellite
- Participate in a local carbon off-set programme to compensate for travel needs
- Request the environmental management plan from the transport supplier.

Venues

- Check if they have an environmental policy and management programme in place
- Check on the status of their waste management and recycling programme as it is best when an on-site recycling waste minimisation plan is implemented:
 - avoid the purchase of unnecessary products
 - request that packaging is reduced to the minimum for products ordered
 - implement a recycling system with clearly marked recycling bins
- Check if they have an energy efficiency plan
- Check if they use energy efficient lights
- Check if you could use natural light and ventilation
- Ensure that HVAC (air conditioning) is used efficiently, if required
- Consider off-setting the energy use by purchasing renewable energy certificates (RECs)
- Consider the use of bio-diesel in generators.

When using an outside venue and erecting marquees check that the possible negative impact on the environment is minimised. For large events or sensitive locations it might be necessary to do an environmental impact assessment (EIA) or an environmental management plan (EMP).

Waste

The recycling of waste is one of the most visible greening actions, and can have a huge impact on your environmental footprint, but is not always easy to implement. The following basic facts need to be considered when hosting events and a few important tips are also provided:

Types of Waste:

- Recyclable – items that can be recycled, such as glass, paper, cardboard, aluminium, steel, plastic, etc
- Non-recyclable – items that cannot be recycled, such as cling wrap, stickers, wallpaper, photographs, dirty or greasy paper or cardboard (pizza boxes) and contaminated waste
- Organic or biodegradable – items that originate from plant or animal sources, that can be broken down by other living organisms, such as leftover food, tea bags, vegetable peels, etc .

A few terms

- Recyclable – when it is possible and practical to recycle a specific product.
- Recycled content – when a product is (partially) made out of recycled material, i.e. a portion of the content of the material has been recycled.
- Cradle to cradle – when a product (and all the packaging it requires) has a complete 'closed-loop' cycle, so that every component will either return to the natural ecosystem through biodegradation, or be recycled indefinitely as is done in nature.

Waste Management:

- Separation at source – when waste is separated at the same place where the public /delegates dispose of it i.e. at the point when a useful item becomes a waste item, different types of bins are provided:
 - A twin-bin system – two bins are placed next to each other for recyclable (dry) and non-recyclable (wet or contaminated) items.
 - A multi-bin system –different bins are provided for different waste types, such as glass, plastic, tin, paper and non-recyclables.
- Back-of-house separation – waste is not separated at source (all the waste is placed into one bin), but the main recyclable items are removed from the waste stream for recycling on-site. This is a messy business, and contamination leads to a lower recovery rate when selling recyclable items, but can be avoided by providing separation at source.
- Off-site separation –waste is neither separated at source nor on-site, but only once it reaches a material recovery facility (MRF). Low recovery rates are achieved, due to contamination and compaction.
- Composting –organic waste is processed in the presence of oxygen, producing a soil conditioner that can be used as a valuable source of nutrients for plants. When this is done in the absence of oxygen (anaerobic), such as in a landfill site, methane gas is produced as a by-product.
- Landfill site – when waste is not reused, recycled or composted, it generally ends up in a landfill site, but the aim is to reduce the amount of waste disposed of at landfill.

A few tips for recycling

- Ensure that a waste bin is always provided together with bins for recycling to avoid contamination
- Ensure that bins for different types of recycling are always placed right next to each other
- Ensure that the bins are well marked with clear instructions, preferably colour-coded
- Ensure that staff members are informed about the recycling, and what the process is
- Ensure that visitors are informed about what is expected from them in respect of recycling

Additional resources

Enviropaedia – www.enviropaedia.com

Event Greening Forum of SA – www.eventgreening.co.za

Department of Environmental Affairs – www.environment.gov.za

Durban / eThekweni Municipality – www.durban.gov.za

Food and Trees for Africa – www.trees.co.za

Fairtrade in Tourism SA (FTTSA) – www.fairtourismsa.org.za

Green Leaf – www.greenleafecostandard.net

Heritage SA – www.heritagesa.co.za

Indalo Yethu – www.indaloyethu.com

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) – www.msc.org

SASSI – www.wwfsassi.co.za or www.wwf.org.za/sassi

The Story of Stuff – www.storyofstuff.com

UN Global Compact – www.unglobalcompact.org

Urban Sprout – www.urbansprout.co.za

Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) – www.panda.org

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