The guide to Sustainable events
Preface

This guide has been created to help organizers hold sustainable events based on the City of Stockholm’s vision and governing document “The City of Stockholm’s events program”. The guide to sustainable events is based on the the ISO 20121 standard “Event sustainability management systems”. This guide is intended to help organizers and permit issuers.

It is currently common for events to have an explicit sustainability profile. Examples include major international events like the London Olympics in 2012, O-ringen or Stockholm Culture Night.

It all started around the time of the Olympic Games in the early 1990s, where society and the audience began making environmental demands on the games. The organizers listened and in 1994 the Lillehammer Olympic Games became one of the first truly major, green events. The event was given an award by the UN’s environmental program thanks to the environmental work standards it instituted.

Other types of events followed suit and the standards instituted by the 1994 Olympics have now evolved to also include social aspects. The City of Stockholm’s Culture Administration’s Events Department was last certified according to the ISO 20121 standard, Event sustainability management systems, in the autumn of 2017.

The sustainable events guide can be read in its entirety or in separate section. The first section, eleven pages in total, has three steps to guide you to creating a sustainable event and also includes a check-list. The other sections go into some depth, explain and suggest measures to improve the sustainability of events. The guide is a living document and is continually updated.

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# Table of contents

## Preface

## Summary

## Guide to sustainable events

- An overview
- Planning the event
- Carrying out the event
- Following up on the event
- Check-list

## About events and sustainability

- Why is sustainability work important to events?
- What does Sustainable development mean?
- What does Sustainable events mean?

## Suggested sustainability measures

- Environment
- Finance
- Social

## Closing words
Summary

In this Guide to sustainable events we go through what the best options are for your particular event and what you should be considering in Step 1: Planning, Step 2: Execution and Step 3: Follow-up.

Below are some general tips that you can use regardless of what type of event you are planning.

→ Organize the sustainability work
  Appoint sustainability coordinators before, during and after the event. It is important that key actors understand the event’s sustainability profile. Determine what legislation applies to your event. Train all staff, internally and externally, including volunteers.

→ Choose a site based on environmental factors, safety and accessibility
  Choose a site based on transport options, as transports constitute a large part of climate impact. Also consider safety and accessibility from a social perspective; and rent and working environment from a financial and social sustainability perspective. Choose a site that is suited to the event, which is considerate of local ecosystems like land and water, and of nearby residents who might be exposed to noise and traffic disruptions.

→ Talk to local residents
  Maintain a good dialogue with local residents to avoid annoyance and complaints. It helps both you and the City of Stockholm carry out the event.

→ Make demands of suppliers and co-organizers
  Impose sustainability requirements on materials and products from suppliers. It is important that they do not contain hazardous substances and they should be as recyclable and reusable as possible. Avoid disposable items and try to use products with ecolabels such as Svanen, Bra miljöval, the EU flower, GOTS etc. Try to cooperate with local actors to minimize environmental impact and promote local employment.

→ Communicate sustainability
  Communicating the sustainability work means positive marketing for the event, while acting as a good example for other organizers. Marketing sustainability also strengthens the City of Stockholm’s brand while attracting more visitors to the event as well as the region. Prioritize digital information and avoid print material if possible.

→ Food and drink
  Try to choose locally sourced and organic food. If meat is served, game and poultry have the least environmental impact. By choosing the right food and drink, the event’s environmental impact can be reduced significantly. Avoid serving bottled water and set requirements regarding food labelling such as KRAV, Fairtrade, MSC etc.

→ Evaluate the event
  Evaluate what has been working well and where there is room for improvement. Explain how you have contributed to increased sustainability and contact the City of Stockholm to share your views and experiences.
The Guide to Sustainable Events
Guide to sustainable events – an overview

The Guide to Sustainable Events integrates responsible social and environmental requirements to ensure that all events are carried out in a sustainable way. It contains tips and suggestions which concern all functions in the event organization.

This guide helps organizers carry out events with special consideration to sustainability aspects. Over time this creates long-term thinking and cost efficient events, and makes the events more attractive to participants and audiences.

The Guide is divided into three steps: planning, execution and follow-up, and includes a check-list.
STEP 1
Planning the event

The foundation for the sustainability goals of the event is laid during the planning step. Having the right organization, purpose, requirements, and communication will get you far. Below are a number of tips to keep in mind when planning the event. For more tips, see the links on page 11.

1 Purpose and goals of the event
   - Define the purpose and set goals for the whole event.
   - Set sustainability goals that are realistic, measurable and achievable.
   - Obtain permits.

2 Organize the sustainability work
   - Appoint a coordinator for the sustainability work.
   - Make sure that the work has support within the organization.

3 Select the place and date, taking into consideration:
   - The purpose and goals of the event.
   - Safety and security.
   - Accessibility.
   - Communications.
   - Transportation.
   - Other events happening before, during and after the planned event.
   - Local area, residents, nature and animal life.
   - Noise levels.
   - Access to power sources.
   - Budget.

4 Set sustainability goals and comply with laws and regulations
   - Formulate measurable goals which can be evaluated.
   - It is important that the goals can be achieved.
   - Make sure that the goals and results are highlighted once the event is over.

5 Booking and ordering
   - Carry out a sustainability analysis of suppliers regarding:
     - Construction materials, sound, lighting, stages, fences.
     - Marketing materials; programs, banners, apparel.
     - Food and drink.
     - Program – artists, speakers.
     - Transportation.
     - Travel.
     - Lodging.

6 Marketing and communication
   - Prioritize digital marketing whenever possible.
   - Follow the City of Stockholm's instructions for exposure to utilize the City's opportunities for exposure.
   - Use environmentally friendly materials for event design; banners, fence covers, program information. Avoid years and dates to allow material to be reused in future events.
   - Use storytelling, explain how and why you work with sustainability.
   - Maintain a dialogue with local residents before the event begins, give them one or more contact persons.
   - Maintain manned information spots at the event – it is a good idea to open one shortly before the event itself begins to give visitors the best service.

7 Cooperation
   - Conduct a sustainability analysis of companies and organizations that the event plans to cooperate with.
   - Create together, with sustainability as a goal.
   - Prioritize travel-free meetings with partners or hold meetings online if possible.
   - Highlight the cooperation and how the sustainability work has created added value for both parties.
STEP 2

Carrying out the event

During the event itself, it is important to follow up on set sustainability goals and requirements when placing orders and bookings with suppliers and participants.

1 Information
- Prioritize digital information and manned information spots.
- Tell visitors about your sustainability work and follow up on the sustainability work during the event, addressing issues as they arise.

2 Establishment
- Make sure that the site is safe to work on and that there is information and staffing where necessary to facilitate the establishment phase.

3 Registration
- Provide information about the event’s sustainability work to create understanding and make the right choices more obvious.

4 Information during the event
- Provide information digitally, avoid materials such as brochures, schedules and programs.
- Be inclusive with your information (multi-lingual, hearing loops, sign language interpretation etc.).
- Give clear information for increased efficiency.
- Inform visitors about safety measures and emergency exits to increase security.
- Inform visitors about accessibility and possible adaptations.

5 Safety and security
- Provide information about the event’s safety and security work to staff and other affected parties during the event.

6 Accessibility
- Follow up on how accessible the event is while it is taking place. Address any issues and include this in the upcoming evaluation.

7 Food & drink
- Make sure that the people serving food and drink are working according to sustainability perspectives agreed upon.
- Make sure that permits and rules for handling of food and drink are complied with.
- Waste management is often a major issue during events. Make sure that it works as agreed and make adjustments to address any issues that arise during the event.

8 Waste management
- During the planning phase, a waste management structure is drawn up. This structure is then adhered to during the execution phase.
- Make sure that the structure is adhered to and make adjustments and address any problems.
- The City of Stockholm has local provisions regarding how waste should be sorted – adapt your management to the event’s goals to minimize waste.

9 Measure and estimate
- Compile measurements specified in the event plan in the upcoming evaluation and report.

10 Cleanup
- Make sure that the site is safe to work on during cleanup and that work runs according to schedule.
- Waste management can become a major issue once the event is over. Make sure that there is a plan for transport, storage and management of left-over material.
# Step 3: Following up on the event

By marketing good sustainability results, the event brand can be further strengthened, and more participants can be attracted to recurring events. Examples worth mentioning include reduced climate impact, number of jobs provided, local business and storytelling about how the audience perceived the event (can be measured through a follow-up survey).

## 1 Planning
- Were goals and the purpose of the event fulfilled?
- How did the planning phase work out?

## 2 Execution
- Was the event carried out as planned?
- Information.
- Establishment.
- Registration.
- Safety and security.
- Accessibility.
- Food & drink.
- Waste management.
- Measuring tools.
- Cleanup.

## 3 Measurements
- Processing of collected materials.
- Conclusions from measurements.
- Potential for improvement.
- Proposed measures for a more sustainable event.

## 4 Dialogue with the City of Stockholm
- Feedback regarding the results of the event.
- Dissemination of experiences for future events.

## 5 Communicating the results
- Be clear about what went well and what did not.
- Communicate in order to constantly develop events in a more sustainable direction!
Check-list

Plan
- Organize the sustainability work.
- Draw up goals and a strategy for your sustainability work.
- Apply for the necessary permits from the police and the City of Stockholm.
- Consider the local environment, transports, safety, accessibility and work environment when choosing a site.
- Consider holidays, other events and the surrounding area when choosing a date.
- Offer and communicate sustainable alternatives for travel and lodging. Carbon offsetting can be a good idea.
- Talk to local residents.
- Include the event’s sustainability profile in your marketing.
- Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation.
- Ban on doping and drugs.
- Diversity and equality.
- Cooperation with local actors.
- Smallest possible climate impact.
- Lowest possible resource use.

Execute
- Make sure that all information is up to date and available.
- Make sure that all establishment work is done before the event opens.
- Welcome participants/visitors/organizers/partners and provide information to help the sustainability work.
- Inform all parties about safety, security, and accessibility.
- Make sure that permits for serving food and drink are valid and that they comply with all other agreements.
- Waste management is followed up on throughout the event according to the City of Stockholm’s provisions.
- During the execution phase, goals and outcomes set in the planning phase are measured and estimated.
- The cleanup is part of the execution phase. Plan it carefully to have a good, sustainable end to the event.

Follow up
- Measure and note how requirements and goals have been fulfilled.
- Send out surveys or questionnaires for follow-up.
- Plan to communicate the results of the follow-up.
- Hold a dialogue with the City of Stockholm after the event.
- If the intention is for the event to be recurring, plan to produce, prioritize and communicate improvements.
About events and sustainability
Why is sustainability work important to events?

An event is a planned gathering at a certain point and time, to create an experience or communicate a message. Due to the broad contact surfaces created by an event, it can often become widespread and have an effect on different areas of society.

An event can actively work with sustainability in order to reinforce ecological, economic, social and democratic aspects.

A good sustainability profile indicates the ambition to develop, include and contribute to a better social climate, which in turn increases attractiveness and builds the brand, not only of the event but that of the City of Stockholm as well.
What is sustainable development?

Sustainable development was established as a concept with the 1992 Rio Declaration, defined by the Brundtland Commission as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Sustainable development requires a long-term and comprehensive view along with a global perspective.

Sustainable development links three interlinked perspectives: environmental, economic and social.

**Environmental sustainability** is a matter of economizing with human and material resources.

**Economic sustainability** is a matter of combating poverty and ensuring that everyone can afford to fulfill their basic needs in relation to the finite resources of the earth; in other words, an economic development that does not entail negative consequences for the ecological or social sustainability. The second perspective of economic sustainability provides the basis for being able to reach the other goals. For this reason, the City of Stockholm needs to maintain a strong economy in order to provide good welfare also in the future.

**Social sustainability** is a matter of striving towards a society that fulfills the basic human rights.

**Sustainability aspects**

- **Environment**
  - Framework of growth and development
- **Economy**
  - Means of growth and economy
- **Social**
  - Goal of growth and development
What are sustainable events?

**Event**
A planned gathering at a certain point and time, to create an experience and/or communicate a message.

**Sustainable development**
Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

It is a matter of integrating the goals of a high quality of life, health and prosperity with social justice – and preserving the earth’s ability to sustain life in all its forms.

This requires a good balance between economic activity, environmental responsibility and social progress.

**Sustainable events**
The degree of sustainable development within the scope of the event.

In order to organize an event focusing on sustainable development, organizers must look at the whole picture to coordinate all measures. For this reason, there should be a focus on the sustainability aspects already at the conceptual stage, which includes all participants, visitors, volunteers, suppliers, sub-suppliers, etc. It is also important to choose the location from a sustainability perspective.

**A sustainable event:**
- leads to better implementation,
- creates longevity,
- reduces resource consumption and
- increases attractiveness.
Proposed measures
Environment

Important measures for an environmentally sustainable event

To reduce the climate impact of the event:

Transport

→ Choose a location, date and time based on access to public transportation and/or pedestrian and bike lanes.
→ Facilitate and encourage climate-smart travel (e.g., agreement with SJ, SL, vicinity to public transport).
→ Coordinate goods transports to the greatest extent possible.
→ Make it easier for visitors to reduce emissions during longer travel.
→ Consider whether physical meetings are necessary and prioritize travel-free meetings during planning.
→ Make sure that people can follow the event from a distance online.
→ Buy locally and comply with the applicable procurement regulations.
→ When renting a vehicle, choose electric or environmental class.

Energy

→ Set requirements for the facility’s energy supply.
→ Make sure to use green and eco-label electricity, or to apply carbon offsetting for other electricity.
→ If possible, set requirements for energy-efficiency in terms of accommodation or provide information about sustainable accommodation.
→ If it is necessary to use a diesel generator, use green diesel.
→ Use green light sources. If possible, have the event during daylight hours (reduces the need for lighting).

Food and drink

→ Serve vegetarian food rather than meat.
→ Choose meat with a small impact on the climate, such as game, poultry or fish.
→ Serve seasonal food.
→ Serve tap water.
In order to minimize the direct and indirect impact on land, water, ir, animals, humans and other local environment:

**Food**
- Choose suppliers who work actively with environment/sustainability.
- Serve sustainability-certified food.
- Serve locally produced food in accordance with applicable procurement regulations.

**Noise and other disturbances**
- Contact the Stockholm Environment Administration if you have any questions on environmental considerations.
- Maintain a dialogue with the neighbors for increased convenience and understanding.

**Land and water**
- Organize the event in a location suitable to the purpose and avoid interference with nature and the local environment as far as possible.

In order to minimize the use of resources and increase ecocycle adaptation:

**Use of resources**
- Rent quality-assured equipment: tents, sound, lighting, fences, tables, benches and mobile toilets.
- Consider the need for give-aways and other event materials.
- Avoid printed materials, use digital information.

**Design and material choices**
- Use an event design that can be reused, for example by avoiding dates and years.
- Only use reusable and recyclable products.
- Avoid disposable products.

**Waste management**
- Make sure that all waste is recycled in accordance with the City of Stockholm’s local waste disposal regulations.
- Minimize food waste.

In order to avoid the effects of hazardous substances:
- If possible, choose eco-label products.
- Construction material. Please use the BASTA database when choosing construction materials.
- It is important to store chemical products (cleaning, paint, fuel) safely and to keep a list of such products.

In order to maintain a good working environment at indoor events:
- Consult with the City of Stockholm in regard to the applicable regulations for rented premises.
The right environmental mindset

Think energy efficiency!

**Tips!**
- Events in **daylight**
- **Compare** several facilities
- **Carbon offsetting** CO2

**Lower emissions at a reduced energy consumption**

**Green/eco-label electricity**

**Lower emissions**

Think more efficient transportation!

**Reduce car transport**
- **Adapt in terms of time and place**
- **Contract and offer travel services**
- **Travel-free meetings**

**Reduced emissions**

**Where does the product come from?**
- Particularly large CO2 emissions when the product is transported by air
- **Lower emissions using fruits from the Nordic region**

**cont.**
Consider how the event impacts on air, animals, water, land, human beings and the local environment!

As the organizer you have a responsibility in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Environmental Code to ensure that the impact on the environment and on human health is as small as possible.

- **Exclude the use of hazardous substances**
- **Good indoor environment**
  - Consult with the City of Stockholm
  - Make demands!
  - lower impact on the climate
  - Choose vegetarian, poultry, game or fish
- **Choose the right food**
  - Serve food that has a small impact on the climate
  - Choose products with sustainability certification
  - Animal welfare
  - Sustainable stock
  - No harmful substances
- **Footprints**
  - Minimize noise
  - Emissions to air and water
  - Talk to local residents
  - Choose the location considering content/purpose
- **Lower the use of resources and increase the eco-cycle adaptation**
  - Reusable or recyclable cups
  - Focus on reusability in the event design
  - Digital marketing and information
  - Avoid bottled water
- **Choose the瑞典**
  - Use products and materials labelled as GOTS, BEST, Svanen or Öko, for example. Check the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation’s website: www.naturskyddsforeningen.se
  - Minimize the use of products and materials
  - Avoid bottled water

→ As the organizer you have a responsibility in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Environmental Code to ensure that the impact on the environment and on human health is as small as possible.
The waste ladder

Minimize the use of resources and increase ecocycle adaptation

- Avoid bottled water.
- Reusable or recyclable cups.
- Digital marketing and information.
- Focus on reusability in the event design.
Important measures for an economically sustainable event

In order to increase employment, promote enterprise and create positive economic effects
- Cooperation with local actors.
- Buy locally.

For a stronger brand
- Disseminate information on why you have chosen Stockholm.
- Highlight values such as knowledge, a smart city and education.
- Highlight how sustainability contributes to stronger brands.
- Highlight if the event has any other companies involved.
- Highlight the number of jobs created by the event.
- Provide information on your sustainability profile.
- Feel free to use storytelling.
- Publish and/or provide information about online sustainability reports.

To function in the long term
- Set prices so that as many people as possible can participate.
- Make estimations and calculations for the long term (life-cycle perspective).

In order to attain a positive economic result
- Adapt contents to demand.

To promote competition
- Make sure to comply with the City of Stockholm’s procurement regulations.

To counteract bribery and corruption
- Have explicit anti-corruption requirements.
- Take great care with transparency and ethics.
- Expose problems/faults immediately.

In order to increase the region’s market presence
- Recommend the City of Stockholm as an event location.
- Provide feedback on what has been good and bad (continuous improvement).
  Link to the city’s event strategy: professionals.visitstockholm.com
The right economical mindset

Think brand!

> Branding is an important key to attractiveness and development.

- **BRANDING AND IDENTITY**
  - Branding
  - Stockholm

- **CREDIBILITY**
  - Transparency and ethics
  - Laws and regulations
  - Longevity
  - Anti-corruption

- **MORE ENTERPRISE**
  - More enterprise
  - Cooperation with local actors
  - Buy locally

- **SUSTAINABILITY ATTRACTS STAKEHOLDERS**
  - Sustainability
  - Attracts stakeholders
  - Conscious international travelers
  - Informed citizens

- **INCREASED EMPLOYMENT**
  - Increased employment
  - In conjunction with the event and in the region
  - Increased employment

Sustainability creates positive associations and attracts inhabitants, newcomers, investors and international travelers.
Important measures for a socially sustainable event

To create a sustainable event, you need knowledge, awareness and anchoring

- Ensure that the sustainability work is anchored at the managerial level in the organization.
- It is always good to have a function that works with sustainability.

To create a good workplace environment

- Take care to create a good working environment and good working conditions for internal and external personnel. Be attentive to how suppliers and sub-suppliers work with sustainability.
- Monitor the working environment during the event – be aware of legal and regulatory requirements.

To have knowledgeable and informed personnel

- Make sure that the people who represent the event are informed and work consciously to provide a sustainable event.
- Make sure that the people who work for and with the event treat everyone equally and work actively to prevent discrimination.

To maintain a high level of security and safety, both actual and perceived

- Carry out a general risk and safety analysis for the whole event in good time
- Maintain a good dialogue with the neighbors, tell them about the content and purpose of the event.
- Plan in order to avoid noise and traffic disruptions in and around the event area.
- Provide information about the risk and safety analysis and produce a contingency plan. Inform the personnel of this and make sure to communicate it in a suitable way to visitors and also ensure compliance with it throughout the event.

cont.
To rule out discrimination and work to include vulnerable groups

→ Make sure that the event combats discrimination and promotes equal rights and opportunities regardless of gender, cross-gender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, functional variation, sexual orientation or age (in accordance with the Discrimination Act).

→ Facilitate registration for the event.

→ Offer food that is suitable for the majority of people and make sure that there are alternatives for those in need of a special diet.

→ Consider accessibility for everyone, hearing loops, sign language interpreters and wheelchair access.

→ Serving of alcohol requires a valid permit and a cordoned-off area with surveillance.

→ Set requirements for and provide information on the zero tolerance of sexual offences and exploitation.

To keep a clear focus on diversity and gender equality

→ Promote diversity and acceptance of this focus when planning the event, applies to both staffing and programming.

To work against drugs and doping

→ Provide information and demand zero tolerance of all use of drugs and doping substances in conjunction with the event.
The right mindset Society

Think inclusion!
Inform all parties involved of the event’s approach and what goals have been set.
Closing remarks

The City of Stockholm hopes that this guide to sustainable events has helped in the work with planning, execution and closing of your event.

The guide is continuously updated and we would be happy to receive your suggestions for improvements.

It is our hope that this guide will inspire you to continue organizing sustainable events.

If you have any questions, please contact

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