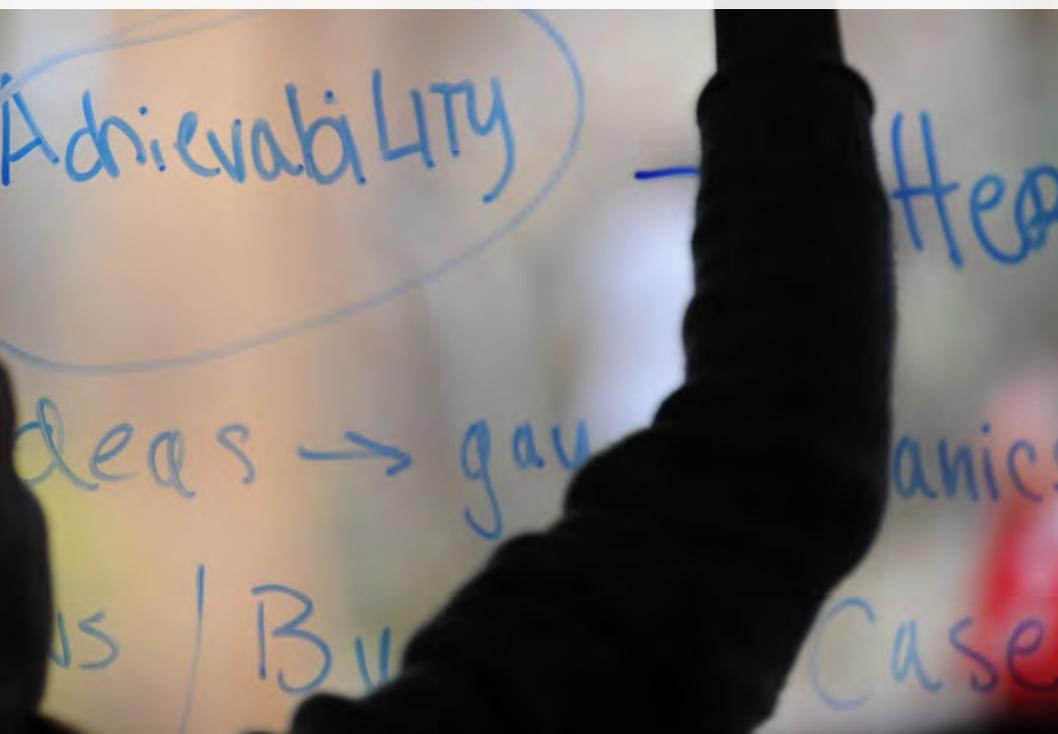




Sustainable TEDx Event Toolkit

Simple tools for organizing more sustainable events,
created for TEDx organizers, by TEDx organizers.





Sustainable TEDx Event Toolkit



This Sustainable TEDx Event Toolkit is an initiative of TEDx organizers to help lessen the negative environmental impacts and inspire a positive legacy for TEDx events. These resources include this first version of the Sustainable TEDx Event Toolkit, and an interactive wiki for event organizers.

Please visit our wiki and post comments, share stories, and challenge other TEDx organizers to contribute their local and regional knowledge in an open and collaborative online environment:



<https://tedxcommunity.pbworks.com>

Login and click “Join a regional workspace” and select the Sustainable TEDx Events Community. To get in touch with us, please contact:



sustainability@tedxamsterdam.nl





Introduction



TEDx event organizers believe passionately in the power of ideas to change attitudes, lives and ultimately, the world. This booklet was created to help you empower the people involved in the organization and delivery of your event – from venue managers, to suppliers, to partners – to lessen the impacts of events on the planet’s environmental, social, and economic resources. This booklet is a first step in rethinking how we can manage TEDx events to leave a positive impact.

Sustainability is not all or nothing - you can start with a single initiative and build from there. There is an incredible variation in what TEDx organizers can do in their home countries. We hope to continue to build upon our collective regional knowledge.



After reading this booklet you will be able to:

Plan

Establish an effective plan for integrating sustainability into your event.

Set Goals

Set overall sustainability goals, and understand objectives, performance indicators, and actions.

Take Action

Take your first steps towards hosting a more sustainable TEDx event using our examples and resources.

Share

Share what you’ve learnt about hosting a sustainable TEDx event with other organizers, and learn from their experiences.







Why should I make my TEDx event more sustainable?

TEDx spreads great ideas every day, and organizing a more sustainable event demonstrates leadership and brings your event into the global realm of responsible action.



What do you mean by “Sustainable Event”?

Sustainability is a broad term. By “sustainable event” we mean an event that is taking measures towards being “climate neutral”, where actions you take reduce the negative environmental, social, and ecological impacts of your event.



What does it cost?

There are many pathways towards a more sustainable event, and the associated costs depend on your priorities. Once you have evaluated which strategies will deliver the most impact, you can estimate the cost to implement them and then readjust your plan to accommodate your budget.



Where do I begin? →

The first thing to know is that you are not alone: there are many resources out there for organizing a sustainable event, anywhere in the world. Whether you are in San Francisco, Doha, or Tokyo, the considerations are often very similar: food, energy, location of venue, waste and recycling, etc.



The biggest variables are: the **impacts** that each aspect has locally (for example, water is a bigger issue than energy in Abu Dhabi), your sphere of **influence** (you might not be able to procure much food locally in Doha), and the degree to which you are **documenting** your sustainability efforts (BS 8901 certification vs. creating a sustainability section on your website).

There are many options down the pathway towards hosting a sustainable event, and here we try to present the most universal steps, building on what others have done before us (a full list of resources can be found further on in this booklet).

→ Sustainability is not black and white - even small efforts at small events make an impact!



Identify the issues

Think big and be creative! Brainstorm and identify key issues under the three pillars of sustainability: environmental; social; and economic issues. Consider the sustainability strategies and resources in this toolkit. Explore what is available in your area (venues that have a “green” certification) and other resources for local procurement.

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Define the scope of your activities

Narrow it down. What elements of your event planning do you have direct control over? (gift bags, location) What elements of your event can you influence? (venue managers, hotel choices) What elements of your event do you have no influence over? At this stage you should have a clear vision of the overall goals, and the purpose of your sustainability initiative.

Identify and engage stakeholders

TEDx events rely heavily on other people - venue management, venue staff, caterers, suppliers, sponsors, and volunteers. Identify resourceful people within your team, and team up with suppliers and sponsors who will help you achieve your goals. Also, your initiative can leave a legacy for other events by influencing direct and indirect stakeholders.

3



Steps

Create objectives

Taking your overall goals, define objectives for your sustainability initiative - this will be your compass for assessing whether your vision is becoming a reality. These can be organized under the seven themes presented in the “sustainability strategies” section of this toolkit. Create “SMART” objectives that each have measurable targets associated with them.

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Set priorities

You can't do it all! Sustainability is about prioritizing certain issues over others, based on your local or regional circumstances. What small changes make big impacts? What big influences do you have?

Execute

Many strategies for executing your sustainability initiative are included in the next section of this toolkit. The most important impact TEDx events can make is to work with and influence your suppliers. Build your relationships, communicate with your venue, caterers, sponsors, other suppliers, and internal staff about making sustainability a priority.

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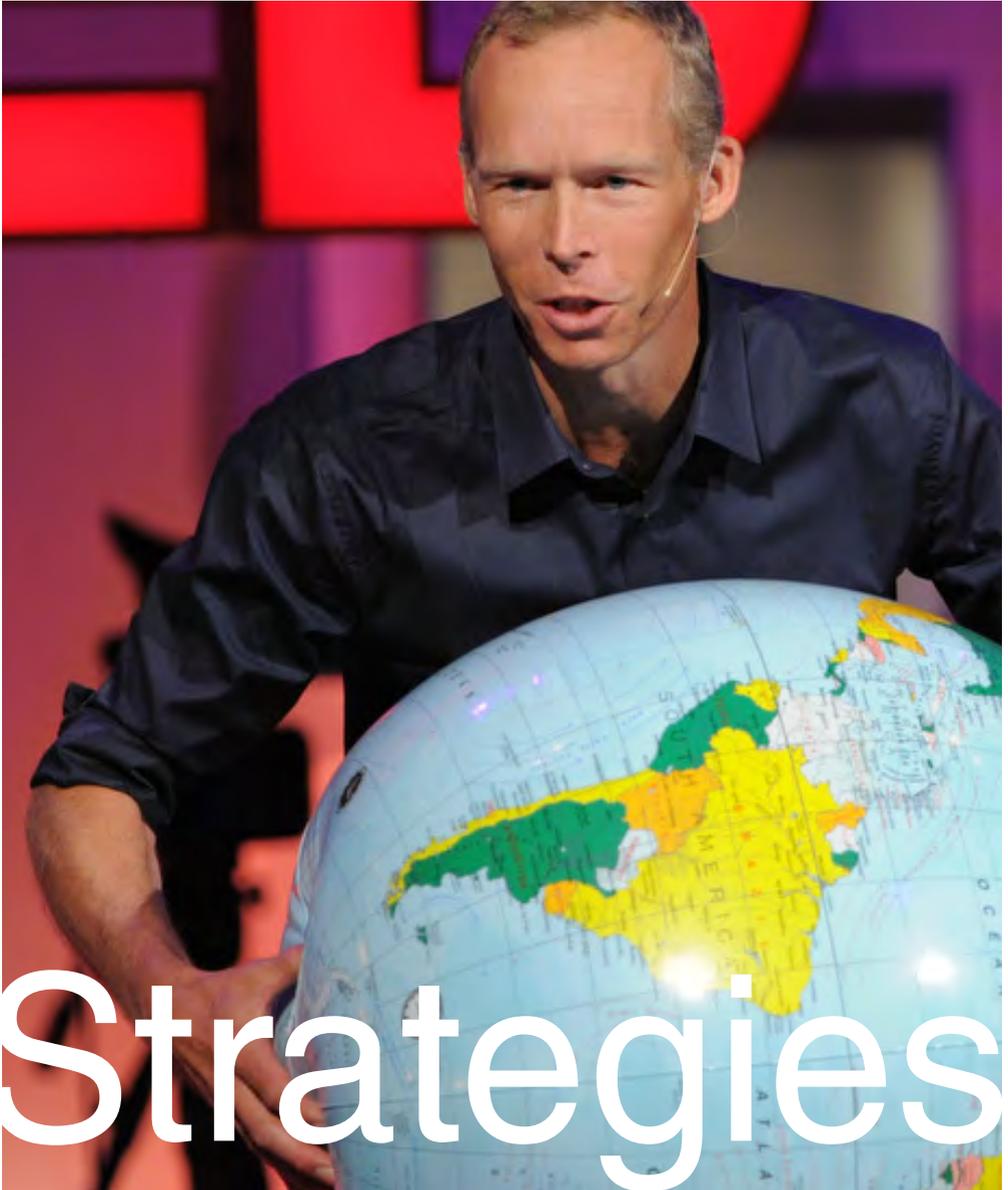
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Learn from your experience

An often neglected but essential part of any event is evaluation. Try to monitor if you are meeting your objectives throughout the planning and execution stages of your event. Report back on what you have learnt through your website, a sustainability report, or by sharing lessons learnt with other TEDx event organizers. Make an impact by sharing.

Sustainability Strategies

Here is a framework of strategies we have created tailor-made to the needs of TEDx events. For each category we provide examples of key issues, possible objectives, actions, performance indicators, and examples based on other successful sustainable events and standards.



Food & Beverage

Key Issues:

Food and beverage choices impact your event's carbon footprint, the health of participants, and their dietary needs.



Possible Objectives:	How to do it:	Performance Indicators:
Reduce footprint of food	Provide vegetarian-only meals, source from local, fair-trade, organic, seasonal sources.	% of food sourced
Provide healthy food options	Provide fresh food options, preservative-free foods, and reduce high fat /sugar. Provide healthy snacks to reduce food consumption.	% of healthy food
Provide for allergy / religious / vegetarian options	Consider local religious needs, provide options for vegan, vegetarian, nut / dairy / gluten free options.	Presence of food options
Manage surplus	Provide foods in bulk rather than individually wrapped. Offer doggy-bags and consider giving surplus back to those in need.	% of food sourced locally % of food surplus redistributed
Use non-bottled water	Provide reuseable cups and try to avoid single-use plastic water bottles at all times. If you must use bottled water, try to source it locally and use large water dispensers.	% non-bottled water

Example:

"The catering department realized they could reduce the costs of organic foods by simply changing the mix of meat, vegetables and starch within the meal menu." (COP 15, United Nations Climate Conference)



Energy



Key Issues:

Choice of venue has the largest impact on energy consumed, but you can also consider how to power equipment you bring in such as audio/visual equipment.

Possible Objectives:	How to do it:	Performance Indicators:
Choose a “green” venue or “green” management system	Hold your event at a venue that already has a “green” event certification (BS 8901, Green Globe) or in a “green” certified building (LEED, BREEAM). This can reduce waste, water, and energy consumption in areas like heating / cooling, lighting, and use of green energy.	Presence of “green” building certification Presence of “green” event certification
Reduce energy consumption	Consider energy efficient appliances and equipment. Appoint a volunteer during the event to switch off lights, equipment, and air-conditioning in rooms not being used.	kWh of energy consumed



Example:

“We use solar power in a variety of areas including our cell phone recharging stations and some art installations.”
(Rothbury Festival, USA)

Waste & Materials

Key Issues:

Materials are a key component to your event's footprint, and it is easy to reduce or even eliminate the amount of waste from an event. Before your event, choose the right materials to use, purchase, or rent, and understand what happens to them when the event is over. During your event, clearly label recycling, compost, and other bins and actively encourage participants to use them. After your event, ensure composting, recycling, and reuse is happening, and measure the non-recyclable and non-reusable wastes.



Possible Objectives:	How to do it:	Performance Indicators:
Reduce material waste	Define all materials required for and during your events. Determine how they can be reused and recycled. Consider renting rather than buying. Ensure signage is reusable by not adding dates or years.	Kg of waste produced
Reduce food waste	Cook made-to-order meals, connect to composting services, and have dedicated organic waste bins. Give surpluses to charity.	Kg of waste composted
Reduce packaging waste	Reduce food packaging by working with your caterer to avoid individual packaging. Biodegradable bioplastic packaging (requires industrial composting) reduces carbon footprint.	Kg of waste produced
Provide a responsible gift bag	Use recycled materials for gift bags and showcase gifts from organizations that offer innovative and sustainable "tools." Consider eliminating gift bags all together.	% of recycled materials % of "practical" gifts

Example:

The TEDxSummit 2012 giftbag is made from recycled airbags and seatbelts. The few presents in your gift bags are practical and eco-friendly gifts that you can use for a long time when you go home.



Travel and Transportation



Key Issues:

How your attendees arrive to your city, and within your city arrive at your event, often has the biggest impact on the environment. Facilitating alternative modes of travel is key to reducing your footprint.

Possible Objectives:	How to do it:	Performance Indicators:
Promote public transportation and other eco-friendly transportation options	Liaise with local transit authorities to enable effective use of public transportation services. Clearly communicate to participants how to take advantage of public transportation. Set up programs that enable the use of bikes, shuttle vehicles, and electric vehicles, and subsidize public transport. Choose a venue that is easily accessible by foot / bike / public transportation and promote nearby hotels.	% of non-automotive travel
Offset carbon emissions for travel	Consider supporting green initiatives by purchasing carbon offsets to balance travel footprint.	% of travel offset

Example:

The Dutch National Railways (NS) offered TEDxAmsterdam attendees free first class return tickets from their homes to the TEDx venue.

Example:

At TEDxTombo, hand-written badges indicating attendees' travel destinations were used to encourage spontaneous carpooling.



Communications, Education & Outreach

Key Issues:

Promote your event while raising awareness on sustainable issues, educating participants and the community on sustainable practices, and executing marketing campaigns with the appropriate use of materials and limited waste.



Possible Objectives:	How to do it:	Performance Indicators:
Practice sustainable marketing and communications	Consider using electronic or paperless communication. Look for suppliers that offer “green” promotional materials such as FSC or recycled paper, environmentally safe printing dyes and banner material. Be careful not to over-promote your “green efforts” (AKA “greenwashing”).	Kg of marketing materials used % waste
Educate the community on sustainable efforts	Ensure attendees are aware of your sustainable efforts by ensuring recycling bins are accessible and clearly labelled. Include sustainability considerations in all of your event announcements, correspondences with visiting guests, and on your website.	% of communications including sustainability awareness Execution of an awareness campaign
Use green hosting	Choose an internet hosting company that uses green technologies to reduce environmental impact	Use of green web hosting

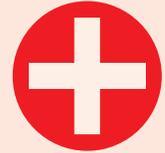


Example:

TEDxAmsterdam had an awareness campaign for its catering called “Food for Thought”. It promoted recycling of organic waste, biodegradable food packaging, and sustainable food options. The crown jewel was a chocolate letter in the shape of “TEDx” made of organic chocolate and packaged in biodegradable wrapping.



Employee and Community Health



Key Issues:

TEDx events can have extended impacts on the local community by ensuring local staff are benefitting from the event, and by raising awareness for local charities or community groups.

Possible Objectives:	How to do it:	Performance Indicators:
Hire local staff members / volunteers	Recruit local staff members, volunteers, and speakers from the community.	% of local staff / volunteers
Involve local speakers	Actively search for local speakers with ideas worth spreading, or link an international speaker with a local initiative.	% of local speakers
Contribute to local charity groups	Require sponsors to make a contribution to a local charity group, either through a gift bag or cash donation and/or have collection bins for local charities at your event.	Sponsorship and collection support of local charity group
Provide space for participant diversity	Dedicate space and invite people from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds from the local community to attend your TEDx event, and help spread great ideas to new audiences.	% of seats saved for local outreach
Provide space for community groups	Provide space at your event for local community groups to promote their work.	% of space provided for local community groups
Ensure your venue is responsible	Hold your event at a venue that has a CSR policy, employee health policy, or “green” certification that includes a social component.	Presence of CSR / occupant and employee health policies

Example:

Green Globe certification includes standards for community development, local employment, equitable hiring, and employee protection.





Hotel & Accommodation



Key Issues:

By actively supporting sustainable accommodation, you will improve your event’s footprint and promote sustainable accommodation in your host city.

Possible Objectives:	How to do it:	Performance Indicator:
Support hotels with a “green” certification	Partner with sustainable and responsible accommodation close to the event. Look for accommodation with “green” building or “green” event certification.	% of sustainable rooms used
Locate guests / speakers in hotels next to the venue	Find hotels near your event, and have all guests / speakers stay at the same hotel. It builds community, creates synergies, and makes it easy to organize activities.	Distance travelled between venue and accommodation
Consider accommodation along public transport / bicycle / walking paths	If there are no hotels or “green” hotels near your venue, then the next best option is for guests / speakers to use public transport, walking, or cycling to get to the venue.	% of guests / speakers taking non-automotive transportation to event
Accommodate guests in homes	Billeting guests in local homes is a great way to spread ideas and reduce impacts.	% of guests staying in homes



Example:

As a result of COP 15 United Nations Climate Conference’s sustainability policies, 63% of Copenhagen’s hotels have met criteria to be awarded either Green Key, Green Globe, EU Flower or Nordic Swan certification. (COP 15, United Nations Climate Conference in Copenhagen)



Action Plan

Use this template to fill in your own objectives and performance indicators. Then identify actions required to achieve your objectives and delegate them. It often helps to build up your actions towards your objectives in small, achievable steps. This will help you keep momentum in executing your plan.

	Objective:	Action:	Delegate it:	Performance Indicator:
				
				
				
				
				
				
				



Plan



How do I take my next step?

Here is a list of resources to help you take your next steps down the pathway to hosting a more sustainable TEDx event. Check our web version of this document for updated web links.

Other Sustainable Event Toolkits

Sustainable Events Toolkit <http://pre.set.pwp1.com/>
10 step checklist to organizing a more sustainable event, by the Regional Activity Centre for Cleaner Production and the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture, and Sustainable Development.

Sustainable Sport and Event Toolkit http://www.aists.org/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/SSET/SSET_v1.4.1_english.pdf
Although specifically designed for sport events, this toolkit includes helpful tips, an interactive wiki web platform, and a checklist for organizing sustainable events worldwide, from the International Academy of Sports and Technology, prepared for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Committee.

Carbon Footprint / Emission Calculators

Greenhouse Gas Protocol
<http://www.ghgprotocol.org/calculation-tools/service-sector>
Suite of emission calculators for service sectors, including calculation tools for direct and indirect emissions.

Terrapass Event and Conference Carbon Footprint Calculator
<http://www.terrapass.com/businesses/events-conferences-carbon-footprint-calculator/>
Simple 6-question calculator designed to calculate the carbon footprint of flights and car trips to events and conferences, and hotel stays.

Resources

Carbon Offsetting Programs

Comparison of Carbon Offset Standards http://www.wwf.de/fileadmin/fm-wwf/pdf_neu/A_Comparison_of_Carbon_Offset_Standards_lang.pdf

World Wildlife Federation (WWF) report that compares the most common voluntary carbon offset standards worldwide.

About Carbon Offsets <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/issues/climate-change/science/climate-change-basics/carbon-offsets/>

Resource on what to look for from carbon offset programs, explaining why some carbon offset programs are better than others.

Sustainable Event Certification

BS 8901 Sustainability Management System for Events

<http://www.bsigroup.co.uk>

The British Standard specifically created for sustainability in the events industry, and one of the few global standards for sustainable event management certification.

Green Globe Certification Standard <http://greenglobe.com>

Worldwide assessment of the sustainability performance of travel and tourism businesses and their supply chain partners.

ISO 20121 <http://www.iso.org>

The International Organization for Standardization's event sustainability management system (still under development in April 2012).

“Green” Building Certification

List of “Green Building” initiatives worldwide

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_building

Growing list of over 30 countries' green building standards, across six continents. To help you encourage venues in your area gaining “green” credentials, whether they be via refurbishment of existing buildings, construction of new buildings, or achieving “green” interior certification.

“Green” Hotel Certification

The Green Key <http://www.green-key.org/>

A European-based eco-label for hotels, campsites, attractions, and restaurants in 28 countries worldwide.

Green Leaf Eco-Rating Program <http://greenleaf.auduboninternational.org/>

US-based rating program that audits hotels, motels, resorts, conference centers, inns, bed & breakfasts, and tourist destinations for water quality, water conservation, waste minimization, resource conservation, and energy efficiency.

Share



Where can I share my experience with other TEDx event organizers?

We have created a wiki version of this document available online for TEDx organizers. Please post comments, share your experiences and stories, and build upon our collective knowledge on sustainable event management.

<https://tedxcommunity.pbworks.com>

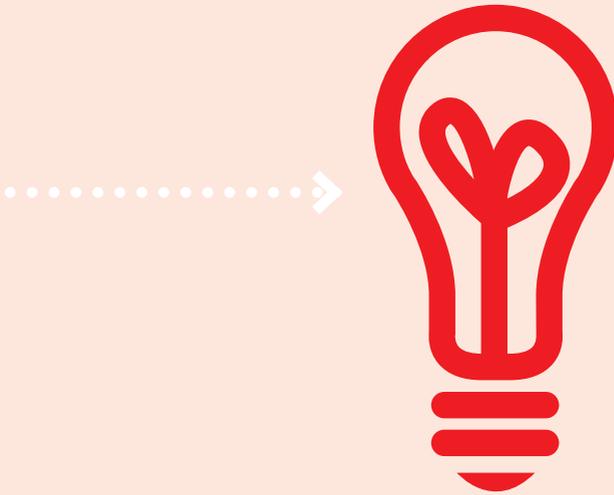


Login and click “Join a regional workspace” and select the Sustainable TEDx Events Community.

For further information on how to “green” your TEDx event, please contact:

sustainability@tedxamsterdam.nl





Contributors:

This toolkit was developed with TEDx by Lia Gudaitis, Reinier Halbertsma, and Irene Rompa. We would like to thank Leticia Menger, Eiso Vaandrager, Christopher Silva, Lauren Cucinotta, Guy Bigwood, and Jim Stolze for their support in the creation of this toolkit.

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