



# SUSTAINABLE EVENT GUIDELINES





Elaborated by:	Office of Sustainability				
Published on:	08/07/2023	09/27/2023			
Version:	1.0	2.0			





# Scope



Don't miss the SDGs! Throughout the guideline categories, see which SDGs you will be supporting by performing the recommended actions.

These guidelines aim to provide event organizers with a comprehensive framework for planning and executing sustainable events that contribute to the university's sustainability goals. As a global research university, KAUST organizes over 7,000 small to large-scale events every year, making events an important area of operations where sustainability practices should be implemented. Given the current sustainability challenges we face, such as climate change, resource depletion, pollution, inequality, and social justice, we should consider best practices aligned with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to provide a roadmap for achieving a sustainable future.

It is important to note that being sustainable does not require compromising the quality of the event. In fact, sustainable event practices can enhance the overall attendee experience by promoting a sense of community and responsibility. Furthermore, these practices can serve as a model for other industries and individuals to adopt sustainable practices in their own lives and work.



# Why Make an Event Sustainable?

Events worldwide consume considerable resources and generate a significant amount of waste, including food waste, single-use plastics, paper products, and packaging materials. Additionally, events also contribute to greenhouse gas emissions through the transportation of materials, air travel of attendees and staff, and the types of food consumed.

By adopting conscious event practices, organizers can significantly reduce these emissions and the event's impact on the environment, while also minimizing waste generation. In addition to environmental benefits, sustainability in events also includes social and economic benefits.

For example, events can serve as platforms to promote equality of opportunities, a sense of community, and shared responsibility towards sustainable development among attendees, while also supporting local businesses and economies. By following the below sustainable event guidelines, organizers can successfully plan and execute events that are environmentally responsible, socially beneficial, and economically viable.



*These events can serve as models for other institutions to adopt sustainable practices and contribute to global sustainability goals.*



# Remember your GOALS

- Reduce the carbon footprint of the event;
- Reuse as many resources as you can;
- Repurpose any materials already available;
- Avoid the generation of any waste;
- Spend wisely considering the environmental impact of your choices;
- Maximize positive social impact;
- Use your event to champion KAUST's sustainability vision;
- Ensure your event enriches the Kingdom's Vision 2030 agenda;
- Contribute to the dissemination of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);



SDG 1 SDG 2 SDG 3 SDG 4 SDG 5 SDG 6 SDG 7 SDG 8 SDG 9 SDG 10 SDG 11 SDG 12 SDG 13 SDG 14 SDG 15 SDG 16 SDG 17



# Guideline Categories

The guidelines for sustainable events are divided into eleven categories, each focusing on a specific aspect of the event planning and execution process. These categories include transportation, material sourcing, food, waste, use of digital tools, accessibility, material reuse, offsetting, among others. Each category offers actionable steps that event organizers can take to minimize their events' environmental impact while championing social and economic benefits.

	<b>PAGE</b>
Planning and Budgeting	<b>5</b>
Material Sourcing	<b>7</b>
Material Reuse	<b>9</b>
Printed Material	<b>10</b>
Energy and Infrastructure	<b>11</b>
Use of Digital Tools	<b>12</b>
Food	<b>14</b>
Waste	<b>16</b>
Transportation	<b>18</b>
Accessibility	<b>20</b>
Equality and Inclusivity	<b>22</b>
Carbon Offsetting	<b>24</b>
Communication and Accountability	<b>26</b>
Checklist	<b>28</b>



# Planning and Budgeting

Sustainability should be considered since the genesis of an event, starting with budgeting. By embedding sustainable practices in the pipeline of the event, organizers can significantly reduce the environmental impact of events while also promoting social and economic benefits.

## HERE ARE SOME ACTIONS TO CONSIDER:

### 01 CONSIDER THE PURPOSE, RESOURCES, TARGET AUDIENCE, AND OUTCOME OF YOUR EVENT:

Before following up with an event, write down what is your aim, the required human and material resources, your target audience, and what you expect to obtain from the event. Evaluate if there are similar events already on the agenda and consider creating tracks on existing planned events before driving one independently. By sharing an event, considerable savings in terms of human and material capital can be made.

### 02 ENSURE YOUR EVENT IS ALIGNED WITH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY GOALS:

Make sure you align the purpose and outcomes of your events with national sustainability frameworks such as Vision 2030 and map it to the UN SDGs.

### 03 CONSIDER THE LIFE-CYCLE COST OF MATERIALS:

Materials that are more durable and reusable may have a higher up-front cost but can save money in the long run. For example, if the event is recurrent, consider making contracts with vendors that consider multi-year updates on structures, which significantly reduces the cost per use.



## 04 INCORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY INTO BUDGET PLANNING:

Include sustainability considerations in budget planning. This includes allocating funds toward all the categories of this guideline.

## 05 PARTNER WITH ORGANIZATIONS THAT SHARE SIMILAR SUSTAINABILITY GOALS:

Prioritize and partner with organizations and vendors that share similar sustainability goals and standards when budgeting for events. This can help you negotiate costs and promote strategic collaborations that benefit both vendor and client.

## 06 REWARD SUSTAINABLE VENDORS:

Consider offering incentives such as loyalty schemes or recurring business at subsequent events for their outstanding green performance.

## 07 COLLABORATE WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO ACHIEVE YOUR SUSTAINABILITY GOALS:

Meet with your stakeholders to let them know about your goals, invite their input, and inform your expectations and requirements.





# Material Sourcing

The materials used for event decoration, signage, displays and giveaways can have a significant impact on the environment if they are of single usage and are made of non-recycled or non-recyclable materials. By choosing sustainable and locally sourced materials, event organizers can contribute to local economies while reducing associated emissions from transportation.

## HERE ARE SOME ACTIONS TO CONSIDER:

### 01 USE SUSTAINABLE AND LOCALLY SOURCED MATERIALS FOR EVENT DECORATION:

Choose materials that are sustainably produced, such as bamboo or recycled materials. Also, consider sourcing materials locally to reduce transportation-related emissions. Many local businesses have a sustainability focus and will usually use less packaging than larger retail outlets.

### 02 CHOOSE REUSABLE AND RECYCLABLE MATERIALS FOR EVENT SIGNAGE, DISPLAYS AND GIVEAWAYS:

Use materials that can be reused or recycled instead of single-use materials. If the event happens periodically, avoid introducing dates or themes in big communication materials, so they can be reused for the next event.



### 03 AVOID SINGLE-USE PRODUCTS AT ALL LEVELS:

Use alternatives to single-use plastics and other disposable items wherever possible to reduce waste generation. Prioritize recyclable materials.

### 04 USE BIODEGRADABLE AND COMPOSTABLE FOOD PACKAGING MATERIALS:

If unavoidable, choose compostable takeaway food containers and packaging made from plant-based materials or other green sources.

### 05 DEMAND ECO-FRIENDLY CLEANING PRODUCTS:

Use cleaning products that do not contain harmful chemicals or pollutants, and that are non-toxic, in line with HSE recommendations.



# Material Reuse

Material reuse is an important aspect of sustainable event planning. By reducing waste generation and promoting sustainable practices through material reuse, event organizers can significantly reduce the environmental impact of events.

## HERE ARE SOME ACTIONS TO CONSIDER:

### 01 REUSE EVENT MATERIALS FROM PREVIOUS EVENTS:

Reuse materials from previous events organized by your or other departments, particularly bulky and costly structures such as booths or panels that can be rebranded for multiple different events. Contact the FM Event Management team for the list of reusable materials for events.

### 02 REPURPOSE MATERIALS FROM SIMULTANEOUS EVENTS:

Repurpose materials from other events happening simultaneously that can serve both events (e.g. KAUST generic branding, indications to main venues such as the dinner or any campus landmark).

### 03 COLLECT REUSABLE MATERIALS FROM PARTICIPANTS:

Place a clearly identified collection box next to the registration counter for participants to drop off reusable materials, for example, their lanyards, after the event. Inform them about the recollection upon registration.

### 04 USE RENTED OR BORROWED MATERIALS:

Use rented or borrowed materials instead of purchasing new ones.



# Printed Material

Printed materials generated from events can have a significant impact on the environment. By implementing sustainable printing practices, event organizers can reduce the event's environmental footprint and promote sustainable practices.

## HERE ARE SOME ACTIONS TO CONSIDER:

### 01 USE DIGITAL SIGNAGE INSTEAD OF PRINTED MATERIALS:

Use digital signage to reduce the environmental impact of printing and paper waste. Request vertical screens to IT, use TV screens and large LED screens throughout the campus.

### 02 PRINT EVENT MATERIALS ON RECYCLED PAPER:

Choose recycled paper or try printing on the back side of spare/scrap paper for any necessary printed materials to reduce the environmental impact of paper production.

### 03 MINIMIZE THE AMOUNT OF PRINTED MATERIALS USED:

Use digital materials whenever possible to reduce the environmental impact of printing and paper waste. Print any necessary handouts double-sided. For posters, consider laminating the posters with fillable sections for event details.

### 04 AVOID EXCESSIVE BRANDING AND PROMOTION:

Be strategic about where to advertise your event, and consider the costs and materials, longevity, and utility of having printed branding such as banners and stickers on walls, tables, and elevators. If they do not serve a purpose after the event, choose less "permanent", reusable, materials.

# Energy and Infrastructure

Efficient use of resources and sustainable infrastructure are key components of responsible event planning. By prioritizing energy conservation through responsible choices of equipment, lighting, and venues, event organizers can ensure the energy efficiency of their event. The following steps will support responsible energy and infrastructure usage.

## HERE ARE SOME ACTIONS TO CONSIDER:

### 01 CHOOSE THE RIGHT SIZED VENUE:

Choose a venue that is adequate for the type of event, and amount of guests and visitors. Bigger spaces that are underused will have higher energy demands in terms of lighting, cooling, screen sizes, and other electrical equipment, which are unnecessary if occupancy is not adequate.

### 02 SOURCE ENERGY-EFFICIENT EQUIPMENT:

Choose vendors who prioritize energy-efficient equipment such as screens or speakers. Ask for equipment with the highest energy efficiency rating according to SASO or international energy-efficiency frameworks.

### 03 PRIORITIZE LED LIGHTING:

Whenever possible, and when in control of lighting equipment, choose LED lighting options.

### 04 BE MINDFUL OF COOLING NEEDS:

When in control of the cooling needs of a venue, ensure the temperature set point is adequate and not too cold. Comfortable room temperature should range between 23 and 25 °C.



# Use of Digital Tools

Digital tools can significantly reduce the environmental impact of events. They allow for a user-friendly experience, increase the reach of the event and allow for considerable savings in materials.

## HERE ARE SOME ACTIONS TO CONSIDER:

### 01 CONSIDER MAKING THE EVENT ONLINE:

Use video conferencing and live streaming options and prioritize online events whenever possible. If you opt for a face-to-face event, try connecting the speakers, especially international speakers, online. Give participants the option to attend via Zoom or other video communication services instead of traveling significant distances. This reduces energy consumption of physical venues and emissions associated with both energy generation and traveling

### 02 USE DIGITAL REGISTRATION AND TICKETING SYSTEMS:

Use digital registration, invitations, and ticketing systems to reduce waste generation.

### 03 ENCOURAGE ATTENDEES TO USE DIGITAL EVENT MATERIALS:

Encourage attendees to use digital event materials, such as digital schedules, maps, brochures, or reports.

**04 FOR POSTER SESSIONS, ALWAYS OPT FOR SCREENS TO AVOID PRINTING:**  
When hosting poster sessions, prioritize the use of screens over printed posters. They have the added bonus of allowing for video playing. For more information on these screens, contact the KAUST Library team.

**05 PROVIDE CHARGING STATIONS AND WI-FI ACCESS FOR ATTENDEES:**  
Provide charging stations and Wi-Fi access to promote the continuous use of digital tools.

**06 USE DIGITAL COMMUNICATION TOOLS FOR EVENT PROMOTION:**  
Use digital communication tools, such as social media and email, to promote the event and reduce waste generation.





# Food

When organizing events, it's important to consider their environmental impact, with food waste being one of the major contributors. According to estimates by Lime Venue Portfolio, an average event wastes between 15% - 20% of the food it produces. By adopting the following measures, event organizers can ensure they are avoiding unnecessary food waste.

## HERE ARE SOME ACTIONS TO CONSIDER:

### 01 CONSIDER THE REAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FOR CATERING:

When placing your catering order, ensure you are providing the closest number as possible to the participants registered. If you need to inform the catering services in advance, consider this when setting the deadline for registration for the event.

### 02 OFFER VEGETARIAN AND VEGAN FOOD OPTIONS:

Opt for a meat-free menu and provide vegetarian and vegan options. Talk with your food service provider about offering vegetarian options, which can also be cheaper! If serving non-vegetarian options, choose sustainable or local seafood and free-range chicken. Avoid beef or any other red meat, as this type of meat has higher associated greenhouse gas emissions, water consumption, and land use. Make appealing labels to signal these foods/dishes to encourage their consumption.

### 03 OFFER PRE-PORTIONED DISHES OR FINGER FOOD:

When possible, opt for easy-to-portion dishes or finger foods that can satisfy an average adult. This avoids overfilling plates, reduces food waste, and helps attendees make nutritionally balanced meal choices.

## 04 CHOOSE LOCALLY SOURCED AND SUSTAINABLY PRODUCED FOOD:

Choose food that is locally grown, prioritizing local, followed by national sources. Whenever possible, choose vendors or suppliers that have sustainable production practices (e.g. do not use depletable groundwater sources, do not use heavy pesticides, and grow produce fit for the local climate). Support local farmers and family-owned small businesses when you can. Make appealing labels to signal these foods/dishes to encourage their consumption.

## 05 PROVIDE AND PROMOTE REUSABLE DISHWARE, CUTLERY, AND ECO-FRIENDLY CONTAINERS:

Always ask for reusable dishware and cutlery, such as ceramics and metal, and refuse any disposable items. Serve beverages in coolers or large pitchers instead of single-use bottles. Provide compostable or paper takeaway containers at the end of the event to encourage leftover takeaway. Clearly signal water stations and dispensers in the events vicinity.

## 06 AVOID INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED FOOD ITEMS:

Provide condiments, sauces, seasonings, dressings and toppings in bulk instead of individual packets or sachets.

## 07 DONATE LEFTOVER FOOD TO LOCAL FOOD BANKS OR SHELTERS:

Donate any leftover food to local organizations to reduce food waste and support those in need. KAUST is a partner of the Saudi Food Bank. For further details contact Community Life.

# Waste

Events can have a significant impact on the environment by generating a large amount of waste, such as single-use plastics, food waste, and paper products. This waste can contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, water pollution, and other environmental issues. However, event organizers can take steps to reduce the environmental footprint of events by implementing sustainable waste management practices. KAUST FM Waste Management team can provide assistance in this regard.

## HERE ARE SOME ACTIONS TO CONSIDER:

### 01 IMPLEMENT A "ZERO-WASTE" POLICY FOR THE EVENT:

Aim to generate as little waste as possible by implementing a "zero-waste" policy for the event.

### 02 PROVIDE RECYCLING AND COMPOST BINS THROUGHOUT THE EVENT SPACE:

Encourage attendees to properly dispose of waste by providing designated bins for recycling and composting. Ensure to place the bins in a visible location and to place signages with guidelines to segregate the waste. Refer to the local composting facility at KAUST.



### 03 ENCOURAGE ATTENDEES TO BRING REUSABLE WATER BOTTLES AND PROVIDE WATER REFILL STATIONS:

Provide water refill stations, with ceramic or glass cups, to encourage attendees to bring their own reusable water bottles or mugs. Display the signage for water stations and refer to them in the information provided to attendees.

### 04 CHOOSE REUSABLE AND RECYCLABLE MATERIALS FOR EVENT GIVEAWAYS:

Avoid providing not useful or single-use items for event giveaways and instead, provide reusable or recyclable items. Consider their portability for traveling.

### 05 DONATE LEFTOVER MATERIALS TO LOCAL CHARITIES:

Donate any leftover materials to local organizations to reduce waste generation and support those in need.



# Transportation

Transportation, both land and air, is a contributor to both direct and indirect carbon emissions and has a significant impact on the environment. Therefore, the means of transportation for attendees to access the event should be considered by the organizer as it will impact the carbon footprint of the event.

## HERE ARE SOME ACTIONS TO CONSIDER:

### 01 ENCOURAGE ATTENDEES TO CARPOOL OR USE KAUST'S PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:

You can promote carpooling between attendees or the use of KAUST's public transportation by providing information on routes on the event website or registration materials. You can also incentivize attendees to use the electric micro-mobility options available on the campus (e-bikes and e-scooters).

### 02 ALWAYS PRIORITIZE MORE SUSTAINABLE TRAVELING:

While making travel arrangements for guests and speakers, consider what means of transportation affect the environment the most:

Airplanes > Cars > Bus > Train > Bicycles > Walking.

Also, the class of transportation affects the associated carbon footprint since different classes, have increased space availability and less passenger capacity:

1st Class > Business Class > Premium Economy > Economy.



### 03 PROVIDE SHUTTLE SERVICE FOR ATTENDEES/SPEAKERS FROM THEIR ACCOMMODATION:

You can arrange for shuttle services to transport attendees from the KAUST Hotel or other accommodations to the event venue to avoid the use of personal transportation. Always consider distance to the venue as a factor for the choice of the hotel (e.g. KAUST Hotel - Thuwal - KAEC - Jeddah).

### 04 PROMOTE BIKING AND WALKING TO THE EVENT VENUE:

You can encourage attendees to bike or walk to the event venue by providing information on local bike routes, racks, pumping stations, and walking paths.





# Accessibility

Accessibility is an important aspect of event planning that ensures that all attendees, regardless of disabilities, are able to participate fully in the event. By providing accommodations and resources for attendees, event organizers can create an inclusive and welcoming environment. The following recommendations offer actionable steps to ensure accessibility for all attendees.

## HERE ARE SOME ACTIONS TO CONSIDER:

### 01 ENSURE THE EVENT VENUE IS ACCESSIBLE TO ATTENDEES WITH DISABILITIES:

Choose an accessible venue and ensure specific access points are operational and unobstructed.

### 02 PROVIDE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE SERVICES:

Collect any language requirements during registration and, if possible, provide sign language interpretation, closed captioning services, or live translation services as needed. If posting recordings online, include captions.

### 03 OFFER ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS:

Provide accessible transportation options for attendees with disabilities.

## 04 PROVIDE INFORMATION IN ACCESSIBLE FORMATS:

Consider the height of touch screens, texts, and hands-on experiences to accommodate people in wheelchairs.

## 05 TRAIN EVENT STAFF ON ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

Train event staff on accessibility and ensure they are aware of the nearest adapted restrooms, elevators, and ramp accesses.

## 06 INFORM ATTENDEES OF KAUST'S NON-SMOKING POLICY:

Ensure attendees are aware of KAUST's Non-smoking policy and that smoking is not allowed outside of designated areas



# Equality and Inclusivity

To promote equality and inclusivity at events, the following guidelines offer actionable steps that event organizers can take. Event organizers are responsible for creating a safe and inclusive environment for all attendees regardless of their gender, ethnicity or social background, promoting diversity and inclusion. There are a few considerations while planning your event to ensure it fosters inclusivity and diversity.

## HERE ARE SOME ACTIONS TO CONSIDER:

### 01 ENSURE GENDER BALANCE AMONG THE EVENT'S GUESTS AND SPEAKERS:

Ensure that a balanced gender ratio of male and female speakers is considered during guest and speaker selection.

### 02 USE GENDER-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE IN ALL EVENT MATERIALS AND COMMUNICATION:

Use gender-inclusive language across all materials and communication to promote inclusivity and respect for all attendees.

### 03 ENSURE ETHNIC AND GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY ARE AMONG THE CRITERIA FOR SPEAKER AND GUEST SELECTION:

Consider the ethnic and geographic diversity of your guests and speakers, making sure to be inclusive of participants from developing countries or representing institutions or organizations that foster diversity and inclusivity.



## 04 INCLUDE TRAVEL GRANTS AS PART OF YOUR EVENTS' BUDGET:

Allocate a part of your event's budget towards travel grants, and open a call to sponsor the attendance of students or attendees from developing countries or from local regions with reduced opportunities.

## 05 PROVIDE GUIDELINES ON LOCAL CULTURAL NORMS:

Provide participants with information regarding local cultural norms and etiquette.



# Carbon Offsetting

Even though emission reduction should be the priority when considering the carbon footprint of an event, all events have unavoidable associated carbon footprints that can only be addressed through offsetting. To offset the environmental impact of the event, organizers need to calculate the carbon footprint of the event and take one or several steps including the purchase of carbon offsets, donations to sustainability initiatives and projects on campus (or nationally), planting trees, mangroves or vegetation, or encouraging attendees to offset their own travel footprint. There are some measures to offset the emissions of your event.

## HERE ARE SOME ACTIONS TO CONSIDER:

### 01 CALCULATE THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF YOUR EVENT:

Calculating the event's carbon footprint involves assessing the event's emissions for mobility, accommodation, catering, materials used, transport of goods and services, and waste generated. There are several tools online that allow organizers to calculate the carbon footprint of several activity streams individually or for an entire event (e.g.: myclimate's event calculator).

### 02 INCLUDE OFFSETTING COSTS AS PART OF THE EVENTS' BUDGET:

Allocate a part of your event's budget to offset the carbon footprint of the event.

### 03 OFFSET THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF SPEAKERS AND GUESTS:

Offset any traveling of speakers and guests during flight booking by choosing airlines with implemented offsets schemes (e.g KLM's CO2ZERO).



## 04 ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO OFFSET THEIR OWN TRAVELING:

Raise awareness about the carbon footprint of traveling in invitations and encourage participants to offset their own travel emissions by donating directly to projects following the Verified Carbon Standard, Clean Development Mechanism, or Gold Standard, either during flight purchase or using available online tools (e.g, atmosfair).

## 05 ORGANIZE A TREE-PLANTING SIDE EVENT:

As one of the activities of the event, organize a tree, shrub, or mangrove planting activity to offset the remaining projected carbon emissions of the event. KAUST holds a Nature Conservation Area where mangroves can be planted as part of offsetting campaigns. Please contact HSE Environment Protection team for more information on mangrove planting campaigns. You can also contact the National Center for Vegetation Cover for inquiries on how to partner for a tree planting event at [Info\\_ncvc@ncvc.gov.sa](mailto:Info_ncvc@ncvc.gov.sa).

## 06 PROVIDE INCENTIVES OR REWARDS TO ECO-CONSCIOUS PARTICIPANTS:

Create a reward scheme or give exclusive opportunities to participants that provide proof of offsetting their travel carbon footprint or that join online. For example, in- person attendees who offset have a dedicated lunch or activity with guest speakers, and attendees joining online have an exclusive QA and networking opportunity with selected speakers.



# Communication and Accountability

Transparency is a key aspect of sustainable event planning and execution. By actively communicating sustainable practices, event organizers can increase awareness and instill accountability in all stakeholders. As such, organizers should communicate the event's sustainability goals and practices to attendees, seek feedback from attendees on how to improve sustainability practices, share information on the event's environmental and social impact, and work with the Office of Sustainability to document the event's impact. For any inquiries on how to present your event's impact, reach the Office of Sustainability. There are a few actions organizers can take to champion sustainability at their events.

## HERE ARE SOME ACTIONS TO CONSIDER:

### 01 COMMUNICATE THE EVENT'S SUSTAINABILITY GOALS AND PRACTICES TO ATTENDEES:

As a part of invitations and marketing campaigns, include information on the sustainability goals of the event and what measures will be taken to reduce its negative environmental impact and increase its social impact.

### 02 PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE EVENT'S ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

Provide an estimate of the event's environmental impact and state what can participants do to reduce it.

### 03 SEEK FEEDBACK FROM ATTENDEES, STAKEHOLDERS, AND VENDORS ON HOW TO IMPROVE SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES:

Seek feedback from attendees, stakeholders, and vendors through digital surveys to understand people's sustainability expectations for future events.



## 04 REPORT THE SUSTAINABILITY METRICS OF YOUR EVENT ON THE EVENT'S WEBSITE:

Share the sustainability indicators of the event on the event's website, or other media channels, for increased transparency and awareness. State basic metrics such as the total carbon footprint of the event, total waste generated, carbon offsetting, feedback from the participants on sustainable practices, and the social impact of the event. Use this analysis as a benchmark to set baselines for future events.

## 05 SHARE YOUR EVENT'S SUSTAINABILITY SUCCESSES:

Use your department's social media and KAUST official channels to share met goals during your event. Examples: "Our event donated 10 kilos of uneaten food to the local community!", "Our guest speakers planted a mangrove with their name as their souvenir!", "70% of our guests arrived by sustainable forms of transportation!", "We said NO to bottled water during our event!"

# Conclusion

“

As a global research university, KAUST is committed to sustainability and has set ambitious goals to achieve a sustainable future. Organizing sustainable events is an essential part of our sustainability efforts, and these guidelines provide a comprehensive framework for event organizers to plan and execute events that align with our sustainability roadmap, Vision 2030's sustainability agenda, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Moreover, sustainable events can serve as a model for other institutions and individuals to adopt sustainable practices in their own lives and work. By following these guidelines, event organizers can create events that are not only environmentally responsible, socially beneficial, and economically viable but also inspire positive change beyond the event itself.

SEE YOU AT YOUR NEXT EVENT!





# Checklist

To support your organization, here is a checklist of what you should consider:

## STAGE: BEFORE THE EVENT

### Planning and Budgeting

- Consider the purpose, resources, target audience, and outcome of your event
- Ensure your event is aligned with national and international sustainability goals
- Consider the life-cycle cost of materials
- Incorporate sustainability into budget planning
- Partner with organizations that share similar sustainability goals
- Collaborate with stakeholders to achieve your sustainability goals

---

### Material Sourcing

- Use sustainable and locally sourced materials for event decoration
- Choose reusable and recyclable materials for event signage, displays, and giveaways
- Avoid single-use products at all levels
- Use biodegradable and compostable food packaging materials
- Demand eco-friendly cleaning products

---

### Material Reuse

- Reuse event materials from previous events
- Repurpose materials from simultaneous events
- Use rented or borrowed materials

---

### Printed Materials

- Use digital signage instead of printed materials
- Print event materials on recycled paper
- Minimize the amount of printed materials used
- Avoid excessive branding and promotion

## Energy and Infrastructure

- Choose the right sized venue
  - Source energy-efficient equipment
  - Prioritize LED Lighting
- 

## Use of Digital Tools

- Consider making the event online
  - Use digital registration and ticketing systems
  - Encourage attendees to use digital event materials
  - For poster sessions, always choose screens and avoid printing
  - Provide charging stations and Wi-Fi access for attendees
  - Use digital communication tools for event promotion
- 

## Food

- Consider the real number of participants for catering
  - Offer vegetarian and vegan food options
  - Offer pre-portioned dishes or finger food
  - Choose locally sourced and sustainably produced food
  - Provide and promote reusable dishware, cutlery, and eco-friendly containers
  - Avoid individually wrapped food items
- 

## Waste

- Implement a "zero-waste" policy for the event
  - Provide recycling and compost bins throughout the event space
  - Encourage attendees to bring reusable water bottles and provide water refill stations
  - Choose reusable and recyclable materials for event giveaways
- 

## Transportation

- Encourage attendees to carpool or use KAUST's public transportation
- Always prioritize more sustainable traveling
- Provide shuttle service for attendees/speakers from their accommodation
- Promote biking and walking to the event venue

- Accessibility**
- Ensure the event venue is accessible to attendees with disabilities
  - Provide inclusive language services
  - Offer accessible transportation options
  - Provide information in accessible formats
  - Train event staff on accessibility considerations
  - Inform attendees of KAUST's Non-smoking policy
- 

- Equality and Inclusivity**
- Ensure gender balance among the event's guests and speakers
  - Use gender-inclusive language in all event materials and communication
  - Ensure ethnic and geographic diversity are among the criteria for speaker and guest selection
  - Include travel grants as part of your events' budget
  - Provide guidelines on local cultural norms
- 

- Carbon Offsetting**
- Include offsetting costs as part of the events' budget
  - Offset the carbon footprint of speakers and guests
  - Encourage participants to offset their own traveling
- 

- Communication and Accountability**
- Communicate the event's sustainability goals and practices to attendees
  - Provide information on the event's environmental impact



## STAGE: DURING THE EVENT

Energy and Infrastructure  Be mindful of cooling needs

---

Carbon Offsetting  Organize a tree-planting side event

## STAGE: AFTER THE EVENT

Planning and Budgeting  Reward sustainable vendors

---

Material Reuse  Collect reusable materials from participants  
 Implement a material reuse program for future events

---

Food  Donate leftover food to local food banks or shelters

---

Waste  Donate leftover materials to local charities

---

Transportation  Offer incentives for attendees who use environmentally friendly transportation

---

Carbon Offsetting  Provide incentives or rewards to eco-conscious participants  
 Calculate the carbon footprint of your event

---

Communication and Accountability  Seek feedback from attendees, stakeholders, and vendors on how to improve sustainability practices  
 Report the sustainability metrics of your event on the event's website  
 Share your event's sustainability successes