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Article

TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE EVENT PLANNING: CURRENT STATE OF PLAY, BEST PRACTICES, AND CHALLENGES CREATING SUSTAINABLE EVENTS

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TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE EVENT PLANNING: CURRENT STATE OF PLAY, BEST PRACTICES, AND CHALLENGES CREATING SUSTAINABLE EVENTS

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Abstract. *The topic of sustainability has gained widespread acceptance in many areas of society, with significant claims for the benefits of adopting the principles of sustainability in business and management. According to the United Nations, a sustainable event is one designed and organized to meet two main objectives: to minimize all potential negative impacts on the environment and leave a beneficial legacy for the host community and all involved. In the last few years, the concept of sustainable event planning has been incorporated also into the event industry, turning the attention of event management to issues of environment, social, and governance (ESG) as well as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The author will elaborate on the current state of sustainable event planning, outline some best practices in this sector, and deriving from the results of different studies make recommendations as to how the industry can and should make sustainability core to activities in event management.*

Keywords: *sustainable events, event management, sustainable event planning, events industry*

Introduction

Sustainable, ecological, green, eco-friendly, etc. are terms used in our everyday lives, practically on a daily basis. These terms are all synonyms of each other. Sustainability is often referred to as “sustainable development” (EC, 2022), which means meeting our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It includes three pillars: economic, environmental, and social. Sustainability more in detail implies a link towards environmental impacts; in other words, the consumption of natural resources and the deliberation of pollution and energy use, the concern of economic themes of growth and durability, additionally connected to social inclusion and distribution of wealth (Musgrave and Raj, 2009). To achieve sustainability, the following contemporaneous achievements are necessary (Holmes et al., 2015):

- *Environmental sustainability* refers to the conservation and responsible management of natural resources (primarily non-renewable as well as vital for the maintenance of life, such as air, water, and land) where it is important to minimize pollution and protect the environment.
- *Economic sustainability* refers to creating prosperity at different levels of society, through the long-term sustainability of enterprises and other related economic activities.

- *Social sustainability* implies an equitable distribution of benefits, as well as respecting human rights and maintaining and strengthening local communities.






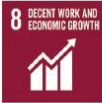







The term sustainability is used in the media, by consumers and companies, in politics, etc. Sustainability has gained a lot of interest among people and even earned the title of “mega-trend” of our time (Mittelstaedt et al., 2014). Since sustainability is present in all aspects of life, sustainability has also found its way to the event industry. Sustainability for events means acting towards preserving our natural environment, as well as promoting a healthy, inclusive society and in addition supporting a thriving economy. According to the United Nations (UNEP, 2012), a sustainable event is one designed and organized to meet two main objectives: to minimize all potential negative impacts on the environment and leave a beneficial legacy for the host community and all involved.

In 2015, world leaders agreed on Agenda 2030, which includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets proposed by the United Nations (EC, 2022). Based on these 17 sustainable development goals also four principles of event sustainability were designed by Eventcouncil (2022):

- Event organizers and suppliers share responsibility for implementing and communicating sustainable practices to their stakeholders.
- Environmental practices include the conservation of resources (including water, energy, and natural resources), waste management, carbon emissions reduction and management, supply chain management and responsible purchasing, and biodiversity preservation.
- Social considerations include universal human rights, community impacts, labor practices, respect for culture, safety and security, and health and well-being.
- Economic practices are included through collaboration and partnerships, local support (including small and medium enterprises), stakeholder participation, equitable economic impact, transparency, and responsible governance.

As mentioned, the principles for sustainable events address all 17 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, where the connection to each of the goals to the mentioned principles is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. The Principles for Sustainable Events addressing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Environmental practice			Social practice			Economic practice		
								
								
								

Source: Adapted from Eventscouncil, 2022.

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I. The development of sustainable event management theories

Events can model examples of a harmonious balance between human activity, resource use, and environmental impact, instead of being seen as hedonistic, resource-gulping, and garbage-producing happenings. Events have the power to leave a lasting and positive legacy and social outcomes, by inspiring supply chain and attendees to action (Jones, 2018).

The concepts of sustainability in the event sector are not new, but in recent years more and more attention has been paid to it, and research, analysis, and comparative studies are often carried out and presented to the public. As Musgrave and Raj (2009) state, sustainable event management has evolved over several years. It is not just a concept born out of government strategies or academic posturing. For example, in February 1994, Lillehammer, Norway presented the first so-called green games in the history of the Olympics. The Sustainable Exhibition Industry Project (SEXI) was set in 2002 in the UK to reduce waste as a first step towards sustainable development within the exhibitions sector of events. It has led to a commitment to action and the adoption of new standards and practices that drive waste out of the exhibition industry in the future (SEXI, 2002).

Applying the notions of sustainability in the event sector is a necessity for a responsible events profession operating within the 21st century (Musgrave and Raj, 2009). Hediger (2000) proposes that a component of sustainable principles is to induce cultural change within society, and thus within the events sector. In connection with this thought, Foley, McGillivray, and McPherson (2009) state that events must be used to engage and empower community groups to contribute to community building long after the event itself has moved on. Looking at the wider picture, practitioners and supporters of sustainable practice are aware of the need to pay attention to the triple bottom line of economy, society, and environment, but in practice, this is a difficult balancing act (Griffin 2009).

Smith-Christensen (2009) argues that the concept of sustainable events does not necessarily indicate a clear reference to the management of an event or its ability to contribute to sustainable development. That is why she proposed different definitions of this concept. Here are 2 most often applied (Smith-Christensen, 2009):

1. “Sustainable events are events managed as an autonomous cyclical process through the interaction between event management, host community, and event-goers, providing human resources, infrastructure, and funds.”
2. “Sustainable events: events efficiently utilizing available resources (human resources, infrastructure, and funds), thereby being self-sustaining without, or, in the case of externalities, with a minimum of, public sector support.”

Also addressing the topic of culture to sustainable development is relevant to the event industry, as Mair and Smith (2021) view, since events play a crucial role in cultural activity, not only encouraging cultural development, but visibilising cultural forms and enabling a wider range of people to participate. As such, cultural festivals and cultural events are regarded as ways of making places more inclusive.

1.1. Benefits of sustainable events

Managing sustainable events not only reduce their environmental impact but can also benefit the main actors involved. Concrete benefits are (EC, 2018; meetinghand, 2016):

1. *Environmental benefits and financial savings*

By saving energy, going paperless, and cutting down on unnecessary resources, you

can cut down on unnecessary expenditures - simply consuming less can eventually save money and reap environmental benefits. One example is online events, which help to reduce carbon emissions as it reduces the need for participants to travel and additionally save costs as you do not have to spend on venue rental. Applying sustainability principles will in the long term reduce costs (e.g. less printed material, less waste to be collected) and, most importantly, help reduce our collective carbon/climate footprint. On the other hand, increasing demand for more sustainable products can bring down prices and stimulate the market for more sustainability.

2. *Reputation and public image*

Organizing a sustainable event, it will help to raise awareness about this issue to the audience. You can encourage the target audience to make decisions that will be beneficial to the environment and society since conference participants and the public are becoming increasingly aware of environmental issues.

3. *Multiplier effect and triggering innovation*

Organizing sustainable events can inspire others to follow and further promote innovative green techniques and serving seasonal (and/or organic) food and drinks. With sustainable events, you drive the demand. Requesting more sustainable products will trigger as well as promote the development of innovative technologies and techniques, leading to more efficient use of resources and the improvement of the delegate experience.

4. *Social benefits*

An event can provide benefits to the region by creating jobs, encouraging local investment, involving regional Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and can promote better working conditions and social inclusion as well as having a huge impact on tourism. It can also act as a catalyst for encouraging environmental and sustainable best practices across the region.

Festa, Metallo, and Cuomo (2009) state, that there is a close link between events, brand image, and reputation, in an interdependent vision of reciprocal influence. This means that the modality of event proceedings has a significant influence on the participating brand image and, on corporate reputation. But this also works the opposite way: corporate reputation and brand image can determine the value of the event and its sustainability.

1.2. The current state of play

In their paper already in 2009, Musgrave and Raj presented some sustainable event guides and principles, like DEFRA Sustainable Events Guide, SEXI: The Sustainable Exhibition Industry Project, Hannover Principles, UK Sport, The Sustainable Music Festival – A Strategic Guide. Based on an analysis of existing models and other sustainable guides, Musgrave and Raj presented a framework below that introduces the fundamentals of sustainability, coherence, and integration within the events industry. By their definition, a sustainable event policy must respect all ten elements of the framework as stated below:

1. Organizational structure (defining roles and procedures that foster positive attitude).
2. Design for duality (new technologies and search for innovative approaches).
3. Avoidance (plan to reduce damage to surrounding ecological systems, disruption to surrounding communities, and economic disparity).
4. Engagement (create local partnerships and alliances, increase participation and access

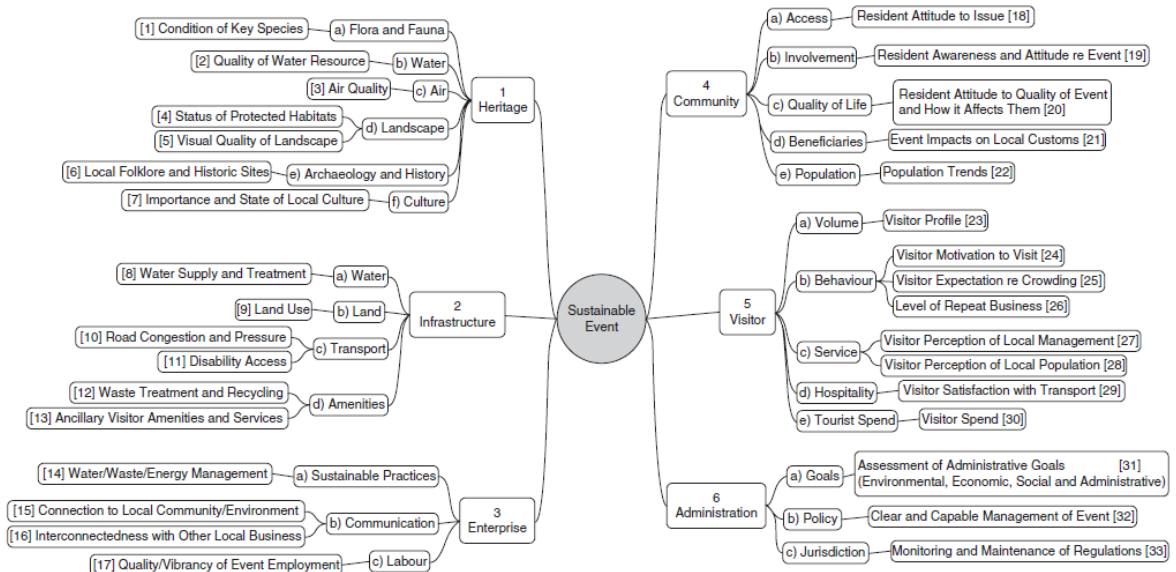
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for all).

5. No trace (elimination of waste, reduction of energy consumption).
6. Legacy, longevity, and transparency (measure, evaluate and inform all stakeholders of performance and future investment).
7. Incentivize (strategic alliances to offer savings for compliance towards sustainability principles from all stakeholders).
8. Strategic management (creating critical path and value chain analysis).
9. Education (educating participants, suppliers, employees, and the surrounding community about the purpose and principles of sustainability).
10. Location, location, location (deciding on a venue that provides accessibility, convenience, flexibility, and/or compliance with sustainability principles).

Based on the DIT-ACHIEV Model (which is an environmentally integrated destination management model) Griffin (2009) proposed that it could be employed in an event's context. Herby, the major issue confronting the selection of indicators is the poor availability of many data sets. However, the model with its content can be used as a guideline or framework, which event managers have to consider while managing sustainable events.

Figure 2. The DIT-ACHIEV Model is employed in an event context.



Source: Griffin (2009).

By Jones (2018) the key operational areas an event focuses on when identifying its sustainability issues are:

- Site and/or venue
- Local environmental impacts
- Supply chain
- Waste
- Energy
- Transport
- Water and sanitation

- Workforce conditions
- Engagement and communications

It is important to incorporate these issues in the event management phases (initiation, planning, execution, monitoring, and closure). Jones (2018) introduces a practical, step-by-step guide covering all the key aspects of how to identify, evaluate and manage event sustainability issues.

Also, different event management companies, leading event managers as well as event organizers give advice on their websites and blog posts about how successfully manage or more specifically how to plan a sustainable event. All the above-mentioned academics and scholars, as well as experts from the event industry, cover the topic by giving guidelines and explaining the concept, which results in the multiplier effect and inspires others to learn and follow this in the execution of innovative, sustainable events. Even the United Nations published *Sustainable events guide* with the aim of enabling others to adopt its good practices. The guide includes information on how to keep large-scale meetings as green as they can be and is a great tool for those responsible for the planning and conduct of large-scale conferences and other events (UNEP, 2012).

In 2018 the EU Commission published *Guidelines on organizing sustainable meetings and events at the Commission* to offer advice to EC staff on how to organize more sustainable meetings and events and seek to reduce the environmental impact. The purpose of the guidelines is to maximize the positive environmental impacts and minimize the potential negative ones while planning and delivering meetings and events (EC, 2018). The following steps and actions can be summarized according to the mentioned guidelines:

- *Step 0: Is a physical event necessary?*
It is important to reconsider if we need to hold a physical event or if can it be organized online.
- *Step 1: Is the venue sustainable enough?*
The decision of a venue should be considered factors like easy access by public transport, bike, or walking, as well as the availability of secure bike parking facilities; the energy efficiency of the building, and the waste collection/recycling systems.
- *Step 2: Is the printed and promotional material sustainable?*
We should consider using online promotional tools (e.g. online registration, online communication material, and resources, apps). Also, the printed promotional material should be limited (e.g. eco-friendly design & printing) and it is important to avoid or limit the distribution of promotional gadgets and gifts.
- *Step 3: Are the 3Rs applied? (Reduce, Recycle, and Reuse)*
This includes minimizing waste (e.g. reducing printed material and gadgets, packaging, single-use items, and food waste) as well as recycling waste via an appropriate system of waste sorting, collection, and recycling.
- *Step 4: Is the catering sustainable?*
While planning the catering it is important to choose seasonal (and/or organic) food and drinks, to offer a larger choice of plant-based food options, and most importantly prevent food waste. Also, avoiding single-use items is important (e.g.

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use reusable cutlery and crockery, drinking water in jugs).

- *Step 5: Are the accommodation and transport environmentally friendly?*

When planning the event and inviting participants, it is crucial to think also about the accommodation and recommend accommodation close to the venue and easily accessible by public transport, walking, and cycling. For the participants also the information on sustainable commuting should be provided (e.g. maps, timetables).

- *Step 6: Have social aspects been considered?*

While organizing and sustainable event the organizer should require companies to apply eco-friendly procedures when performing the contract or to employ staff in a socially conscious manner.

- *Step 7: Are you sharing environmental awareness?*

It is important to communicate the sustainability of your event (e.g. involve participants and stakeholders, follow-up communication should emphasize the positive, sustainable effects of your event).

Following these simple steps, or better said “the checklist”, can significantly contribute to improving the environmental performance and deliver significant benefits of an event. In the following chapter, we will present some examples of sustainable event management and events considering all or some of the above-mentioned steps toward managing a sustainable event.

II. Methodology

Throughout the first chapters of the article, we looked at the development of the sustainable event management theory, to the benefits of sustainable events and discussed the current state of sustainable event management and planning. These are all references prior to our research in the field and show how academics and event industry experts situated the methodology in established practices, mostly with case study research, record keeping, and qualitative observations. In this chapter, we discuss the qualitative research of our article, involving collecting non-numerical data, observations, and case study research.

Based on the beforementioned content analysis and thematic analysis of the field of sustainable event management, we analyzed several different events with the note "sustainable or green" which are described and presented online (enhancemententertainment., n.d., City of Melbourne, n.d., Event Academy, 2018, The Adriatic, 2022) and based on the expert experience as well as firsthand experience of the author, who is also working in the field of event management and attended as well as organized several sustainable events. Together we looked at 22 different events, which have an emphasis on sustainability, and used the methodology of sustainability in event management in practice. Based on that we decided to present the following 5 events (describing the preparation of samples for analysis):

1. We chose the example of the world-famous event EXPO 2020 Dubai, which was organized in a Middle Eastern country where there is not so much emphasis on sustainable development and sustainable event management to show that even where there is not much interest in this topic, one can achieve excellent, top-notch performance results. The event itself was promoted as sustainable and is one of the largest events in the world (both in terms of the number of visitors, the size of the venue, and the duration). Also, the author attended the event and has firsthand experience.

2. Presentation of excellent practices of sustainable event management in the case of an international sports event was chosen (example of Wimbledon) to demonstrate in a practical example, the possibility of applying sustainable principles not only in events at the European, or governmental level, supported by EU funds but also at a commercially, international, large sports event, such as Wimbledon is.
3. URBACT City Festival 2022 is an event that the author attended and was able to observe and research first-hand. At the same time, this event is organized under the auspices of the EU, which in its long-term goals emphasizes sustainable development and circular economy. As already presented, the EU Commission has its guidelines for organizing sustainable events and meetings and the mentioned event is so suitable for analyses, examining if the EU is “leading by example” in the field of sustainable event management.
4. If we hierarchically move from the European level to the national or the local level, specifically to the level of municipalities, it is important to show an example of sustainable event management also at that level. We can encourage the sustainable management and planning of events at the municipal level with examples of sustainable public procurement for purchasing materials for events (such as the example of the municipality The Haag).
5. The fact that even small business entities and institutions can work sustainable and manage and organize events in such a manner is demonstrated by the example of the event The Local Street Food Festival 2023 in Maribor, organized by the Regional Development Agency for Podravje - Maribor (RRA Podravje - Maribor), which organized a sustainable event at the local level, in a small town (Maribor, Slovenia) and was extremely successful doing it. Again, the author attended the event and has firsthand experience.

III. Results - Best practices of sustainable event management

In this chapter, we will look at some examples of events that integrate sustainability concepts and strategies to save the planet.

III.1. EXPO 2020 Dubai

Expo 2020's delivered one of the most sustainable World Expos in history align with national and international drivers. The key sustainable objectives of the event were: (1) leaving a legacy of sustainable infrastructure and future-oriented sustainable practices, (2) catalyzing sustainability efforts in Dubai and the UAE, (3) increasing public awareness by engaging society on sustainability principles and sustainable living, (4) developing sustainability solutions that are scalable, extending their benefits to the wider economy. Below are listed all the activities that the organizers run that lead to a great organized sustainable event (EXPO 2020 Dubai, 2020):

- Encourage the use of sustainable, low-carbon transport by providing alternative transport options, i.e. Dubai Metro and the Expo Rider bus service.
- Ensure efficient energy use and sustainable energy production across Expo 2020 by applying (1) passive design solutions and appropriate “active” industry-standard solutions and (2) innovative technological solutions and renewable energy systems.

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- With respect to the public realm people-centric, comfortable, and walkable spaces (with shading).
- Enhance the ecological value of the site, protecting and promoting biodiversity and local species.
- Reduce the demand for potable water systems by applying a water efficiency hierarchy, followed by the substitution of potable water with non-potable supplies (for example recycled water was used for 100% of non-potable applications (e.g. irrigation, cooling); 95% of condensate water recovered from buildings was collected and reused).
- Expo 2020 Dubai’s Sustainable Materials Guidelines and the RISE Guidelines for Sustainable Operations provide guidance on the selection of appropriate materials.
- Minimize the amount of waste produced throughout all stages of design, construction, and operation; minimize the amount of waste that goes to landfill by incorporating a circular economy approach; reduce the use of single-use products and packaging; and plan for a sustainable legacy transition.
- Demonstrate global leadership, innovation, environmental stewardship, and social responsibility by achieving high levels of third-party green building and site certification.
- Communicate sustainability progress and achievements in a transparent and stakeholder-responsive way.
- Ensure carbon emissions at Expo 2020 are accurately measured and minimized, with unavoidable emissions managed in a responsible manner through appropriate offsetting programs.

EXPO is an excellent example of how versatile, detailed, and careful event management and the integration of sustainability concepts lead to an excellent implementation of a sustainable event, which is considered an example of good practice and a learning example for future similar events.

III.2. Wimbledon

Wimbledon is the oldest tennis tournament in the world and is widely regarded as the most prestigious. Wimbledon is a signatory to the UN Sport for Climate Action Framework and works alongside the UN, Sport, and our partners in achieving positive environmental impacts. They are ensuring positive impacts by pursuing the set goals (Wimbledon, 2023):

- *Reducing emissions from our operations to “net zero” by 2030.*

They are buying renewable electricity to power operations, measure, and report operational emissions, have embarked on a program of lighting upgrades installing high efficiency LED lights around the estate, use electric lawnmowers and horticulture equipment around the Grounds, have 20 electric iPace vehicles in the vehicle fleet during The Championships, ... these are just a few of the measures they made.
- *Being a resource-efficient organization by 2030.*

Following this goal, none of day-to-day business or Championships waste goes to landfill, recyclable materials are separated from general waste which generates

electricity for the National Grid, food waste is collected for anaerobic digestion producing high-quality fertilizer for agriculture and horticulture purposes, ... these are only a few of the activities done in that segment.

- *Contributing to a “net gain” in biodiversity by 2030.*

This is accomplished through different tasks, like prioritizing planting and horticulture across the site, showcasing “heritage” varieties in the food and drink offering, and donating plants to local community groups, ... etc.

- *Using influence to inspire wider action.*

Wimbledon is using its influence to reach beyond its boundaries through partnership, leadership, and collaboration with other major events and bodies in the sports industry and beyond.

Wimbledon is committed to playing its part in embracing the opportunities for regeneration and innovation, together with its partners, players, members, guests, and fans. This sports event is a great model for other sports events on how to successfully manage a sustainable sports event.

III.3. URBACT City Festival 2022

URBACT promotes integrated development to support cities implement horizontal and vertical policy integration. Inspired by European cities’ actions for climate and sustainable integrated urban development, the festival in 2022 was the first carbon-neutral URBACT program-level event. The mentioned event was in a live format from 14 to 16 June 2022 in Pantin / Greater Paris, under the label of the French presidency in the Council of the European Union. In practice, the City Festival’s carbon-neutral approach involved (URBACT, 2022):

- Decision on an eco-friendly venue powered by renewable energy (La Cité Fertile), with recycling bins and composting systems.
- Serving vegetarian and vegan dishes made from fresh, local, and seasonal produce, dishes from fresh and seasonal products. There was a great collaboration with catering companies with a sustainable approach as well as using non-disposable plates and encouraging all the participants to bring personal lunchboxes (if possible). Preventing significant food surplus and offering the possibility of composting meal leftovers. Also offering tap water throughout the event and reusable cups.
- Proposing a list of more eco-responsible accommodations in the area for the participants of the event.
- Working with suppliers who are committed to sustainability.
- Reusing existing furniture and materials for venue branding.
- Using primarily digital communication (mobile Festival website). There were no prints or goodies at the festival.
- Encouraging the participants to choose more sustainable means of travel to the festival, and during the festival use public transportation and rent bikes.
- A carbon simulator was prepared. The goal was to collect data from the different carbon emission categories to enable the calculation of the whole carbon footprint of the URBACT City Festival 2022 and to assess the impact and know which number of emissions needed to compensate for.

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The events sector contributes significantly to carbon emissions and has a responsibility to address that and contribute to the climate neutrality goals. All the different components of event preparation and delivery (from catering, accommodation, venue, and participant travel, to transport of goods and waste) account for hundreds or even thousands of tons of carbon emissions over a short period of time. That is why the URBACT City Festival 2022 is a great example of how a large event, with more than 450 participants, can make a great impact on reducing carbon emissions if well managed from the point of sustainable event management.

III.4. Purchasing materials for events in a sustainable way by the Municipality of Hague

The city of The Hague, Netherlands is working towards becoming a climate-neutral municipality by 2030. In compliance with its policies, the city imposed sustainability requirements in the purchase of materials for events and related services as part of the tenders the municipality is having for materials for events. In practice this means tenderers had to describe their role in achieving sustainability and innovation, covering at least the topics listed below (GPP Good Practice, 2022):

- The choice of materials and products when purchasing new materials.
- Emission-free transport.
- Handling of the materials at the end of the depreciation period.
- Materials used for disposable items.
- How the tenderer would ensure a sustainable and innovative approach to the implementation of the contract.

The most difficult part of the procurement process based on the city's experience was verifying bidders' claims about social and environmental criteria. They put emphasis on the hard evidence rather than on what tenderers would plan to do (requirement to show experience and to illustrate what they did in previous contracts). This is also a good example and a suitable basis for other cities when following The Hague's lead in imposing sustainability requirements in the purchase of materials for events.

III.5. The Local Street Food Festival 2023 in Maribor

The Local Street Food Festival 2023 in Maribor, Slovenia took place under the framework of the European Food Wave project, which aims to improve the quality of life for the world's population through circular economy projects and addresses the issue of economic sustainability. The festival connected local food producers and culinary lovers. Sustainability concepts were achieved through the following aspects (RRA Podravje Maribor, 2023):

- The food was prepared exclusively from locally grown food and products.
- A huge emphasis was on reducing waste: deposit for glasses and only glass materials for glasses were used, as well as reducing food waste due to real-time food preparation (according to the needs and the demand of the participants of the event).
- Eco-friendly materials were used: paper and wood utensils (spoons, forks, plates).
- Also, the reduce on-site water use was addressed: together with Maribor Water Supply Company water dispensers were put on the event location.

The event also had a social aspect: upon entering the Local Street Festival, visitors purchased coupons at a symbolic price, with which they then paid for prepared food and drinks.

This was donated to the Zveza prijateljev mladine (The Friends of Youth Association) for the education of children from socially disadvantaged families. This event shows that even small, local events can fulfill the sustainability in event management through environmental sustainability, economic sustainability, and social sustainability.

Discussion and Conclusion

Sustainability as a mega trend occurs also in the event industry. Organizations that hold or manage meetings, or different events (from conferences, business meetings, concerts, fairs, to any other large get-together) need to consider the impact these events have on the environment, society, and economy and have to be using an effective sustainable event management strategy. Sustainable events not only reduce their environmental impact but can also have some benefits, like (1) environmental benefits and financial savings, since saving energy, going paperless, and cutting down on unnecessary resources can cut down on unnecessary expenditures; (2) positive impact on reputation and public image, since conference participants and the public are becoming increasingly aware of environmental issues; (3) multiplier effect as well as triggering innovation, from promoting the development of innovative technologies and techniques, leading to more efficient use of resources and inspiring others to follow and further promote innovative green techniques and serving seasonal food and drinks; not to forget are also (4) social benefits, since sustainable event management promotes better working conditions and social inclusion; additionally (5) modality of event proceedings has a significant influence on the participating brand image and, on corporate reputation.

Sustainable concepts and issues should be incorporated in all event management phases (from initiation, planning, execution, monitoring, and closure). There are several step-by-step guides covering all the key aspects of how to identify, evaluate and manage event sustainability issues. It starts with the simple question "Is a physical event even necessary", since we need first to consider, whether should we need to hold a physical event or can it be organized online. While managing a sustainable event furthermore we need to think about the venue (from the energy efficiency of the building to accessibility by public transport, bike, or walking distance) and if the printed and promotional material is sustainable (including eco-friendly criteria) or if can we use online promotional tools. While managing a sustainable event all the time we have to ask ourselves are the 3R applied (reduce, recycle, reuse). Moreover, the catering has to be sustainable (from locally grown and plant-based food options to preventing food waste). Furthermore, the accommodation options need to be close to the venue and easily accessible by public transport, walking, or cycling. In managing sustainable events social aspects need to be considered (from eco-friendly procedures applied by employed companies and employing staff in a socially-conscious manner) as well as sharing and rising environmental awareness.

With the paper we want to advance the understanding of sustainable event management, the way events research has advanced with this specific topic. It is important to think about how events contribute to sustainable development, rather than thinking about how to make individual events less damaging to the environment. We presented also examples of sustainable events (some good practices: from very big events like the Expo to small local events). However, there is some empirical and data research missing in this field as well as the challenge of measuring the sustainability of an event, which is a good starting point for further research.

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