



# Sustainable site visits

**A guide for event planners**

**Positivity. Creativity. Trust**

## Introduction

As the world becomes increasingly aware of the environmental and social impact of events, there is a growing demand for sustainable practices to be incorporated within the event planning process. One crucial aspect of event planning is the site visit, where event planners assess the suitability of different venues and suppliers and work out the logistics of an event. Site visits allow event planners to visualise the theme, setup, and practical arrangements required to build the delegates' experience. In this step-by-step guide, we will delve into the concept of sustainable site visits, providing you with tips, checklists, and strategies to source sustainable options effectively.

By adopting sustainable practices during site visits, you can align your events with your corporate social responsibility goals, reduce the carbon footprint, and inspire positive change amongst delegates, as well as within the industry.



## Pre-site visit research

To maximise the impact, sustainability needs to be woven into your planning from the very start of your process. Our event assistants do a fantastic job of researching hotels, venues, and suppliers prior to a site visit. To ensure a sustainable event, it is important to research venues with established sustainability ratings and initiatives. Sometimes a venue will be shouting out about their environmental efforts across their webpages. Other times it will be less obvious, even if they do have a green certification. It is important to be aware of “greenwashing”, where companies deceptively use green marketing and PR to promote their organisations services, without having credible actions and strategies in place to reduce emissions and address the climate crisis.

Here are some initial tips you can use during the research stage of the event planning process:

- Look for certifications such as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) or ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability Management Systems).
- Don't be afraid to request data, benchmarks, and successes from a venue or supplier to corroborate their claims.
- Ring or email the venues or suppliers and ask them about their sustainability initiatives.
- Look at their social media to see what other people are saying.



## During the site visit

We recently interviewed Simon Kromer, Corporate Manager at the Vienna Convention Bureau. He shared a fantastic first question to ask any potential supplier before moving on to more specific questions, as outlined within our [Dynamic Sustainability Strategy](#):

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What does sustainability mean to you?

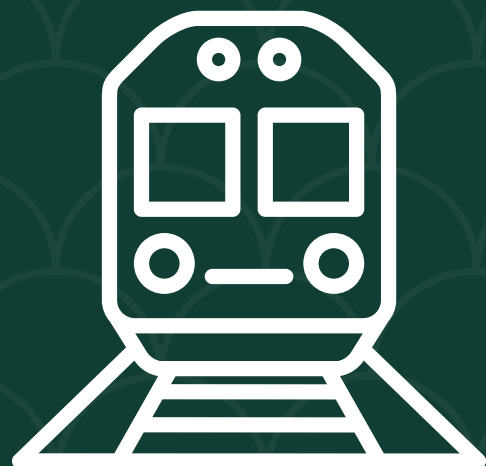
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It may be that some of the venues and suppliers don't have a sustainable certification yet, however this does not necessarily mean that they haven't taken any action yet. We are all at different stages of our sustainability journey, and showing interest in your clients', suppliers', and partners' progress is a good conversation starter to encourage a collaborative approach to building a better future for the world we live in.



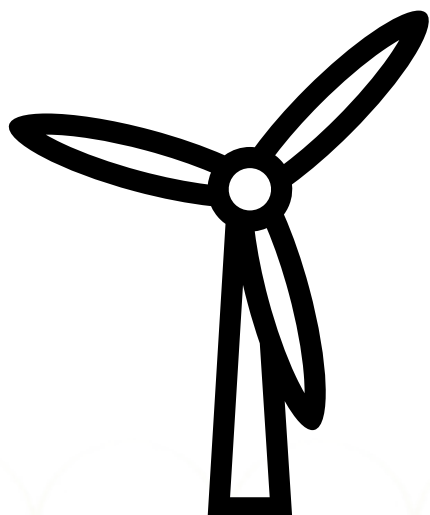
## Transportation

Our event managers maintain a tight schedule during site visits, which includes frequent travel between meetings. By considering the distances and proximity to public transport when designing your schedule, you can incentivise or “nudge” the event planner to use public transport or walk between venues. This not only avoids any unnecessary back-and-forth, but also reduces the use of taxis. E-bikes, particularly prevalent in Europe, offer a rapid and environmentally friendly means of city travel, presenting a viable alternative. Furthermore, considering venues within walking distance of one another could encourage delegates to walk, therefore reducing the transport emissions generated during the actual event.



## Energy efficiency

Accelerating the transition to a low carbon economy and embedding sustainable decision-making requires collaborative action from all involved. An effective way to measure emissions is to use a carbon calculator. At Dynamic we are using **TRACE by isla** to measure, track, and report our energy and transport emissions. This includes measuring our energy usage at venues to gain data and track improvements year on year. During the site visit, it is important to ask the right questions to find out more about a venue's energy usage:



- Does this venue use renewable or sustainable energy sources?
- Are we able to take an electricity meter reading before and after the event to find out how much electricity we use?
- What water-saving measures are in place such as low-flow faucets and toilets?

## Waste management

Waste is one of the biggest challenges for events, which is why it is important to incorporate circular design thinking into the planning of your site visits. Beyond looking at how a venue can fit the forecasted number of delegates, what do you notice as you walk around the venue? Are recycling bins clearly labelled and easily visible? Do you notice the use of single-use plastics and other non-recyclable materials? You could also discuss options for donation or repurposing of event materials to reduce waste.



## Sustainable catering

Food production accounts for almost 30% of all greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (Ritchie, Rosado and Roser, 2022). It is astounding then that over a third of food produced is subsequently wasted annually. Site visits are a great opportunity to work with caterers to offer low-impact menus, enforcing the offering of locally sourced, organic, and seasonal menu options. Discuss sustainable catering practices such as reducing food waste, using reusable tableware, and providing vegetarian or vegan meal options.





## Social responsibility

It is important to ensure an equal focus is given to both environmental and social impact. Therefore, do your research and ask questions to determine the suppliers' commitment to fair labour practices and community engagement initiatives. Ask them how they support any local communities through partnerships with non-profit organisations or social enterprises. Make sure to verify that all your suppliers treat their staff fairly, ensuring they are paid minimum wage, take regular breaks, and work in a safe environment.

On your site visit, enquire about diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and accessibility (DEIBA) policies and accessibility requirements for guests with disabilities:

- Does the venue have wheelchair access with ramps, lifts etc?
- Is there a designated quiet space?
- Are there accessible toilets?
- Does the AV provide captioning?
- Is the meeting room carpeted?
- Are there adjustable heights for chairs, tables, and lecterns?



## Post-site visit

After a site visit, our event managers produce a site visit report to relay their findings to the client, providing insights into the venues and suppliers they think would work best for the event. It is important to document the sustainability criteria for every venue or supplier, as well as the observations made during the site visit to justify the final options to your stakeholders.

### Recap checklist:



- Research and select venues with established sustainability initiatives.
- Prioritise transportation options that minimise carbon emissions.
- Evaluate energy and water efficiency measures at the venue.
- Enquire about waste management practices and sustainable catering options.
- Consider the venue's commitment to social responsibility and community engagement.
- Document sustainability criteria and observations during site visits for future reference.

## Summary

Embracing sustainable practices during site visits provides event planners with a chance to weave environmental and social responsibility into their event planning strategies. Prioritising sustainability criteria during venue selection and site visits enables the reduction of environmental footprints and sparks beneficial innovations for your business and the world we live in. By following the advice outlined in this guide, you can uncover the essential questions to ask during site visits. This will help you to effectively procure sustainable options, which in turn plays a crucial role in shaping a more sustainable future for events.

Book a call to find out how we can help you plan your sustainable event

