

Check list for Sustainable Events



Introduction

For several years now, EPFL has been committed to integrating sustainability into all its practices, including events management.

At EPFL Innovation Park, we follow the same strong ambition and support our companies with programs and tools to incorporate sustainability in their strategy and operations such as events.

As part of this strategy, Mediacom Events, the EPFL sustainability team and the Catering and Shops Unit (RESCO) have created a checklist to help you organise sustainable events. It is regularly updated based on experience reports collected by a monitoring group. This actual document is adapted from the checklist created by EPFL.

The measures and recommendations set out in this document can apply to events organised by EPFL Innovation Park companies either on or off the Park.

Prior considerations

A sustainable event is an event that **adopts practices aimed at minimising its environmental impact and works towards diversity, social and cultural inclusion.**

A sustainable event plays a direct or indirect role in raising awareness or educating people about sustainability.

Key Steps

Defining Objectives, Measures and Actions

Using the checklist, set SMART objectives (see box below), measures and sustainable actions for your event. Based on the number of objectives, break them down into obligatory, achievable and ideal categories. Sustainability must be taken into account by organisation teams at all stages of the project life cycle (see Figure 2 below). Do not forget to conduct a debrief after your event to assess whether the objectives, measures and sustainable actions were achieved. Identify approaches for improvement to build into your future events and share your findings.

SMART goals

Specific	Mesurable	Attainable	Realistic	Time-bound
The goal is simple and easily understood	The goal is quantifiable and tied to a performance indicator	You have the resources to reach the goal	The goal can be reached within the various constraints	You have set a deadline for reaching the goal

Figure 1



Figure 2

Appoint an Officer

If your organisation allows, appoint a sustainability officer for your event to the committee or organisation team.

Consult your Suppliers and Partners

Let your various suppliers and partners know you wish to hold a sustainable event and work closely with them so they can assist you in this approach.

Identify Resources

Research and consult the different internal and external resources at your disposal – such as:

1. [Kitmanif for the canton of Vaud](#) in french
2. [Manifestation verte](#) in french
3. [EPFL Innovation Park sustainability website](#)
4. [ADEME sustainability documents](#)
5. [Our commitment](#)



1. Purchasing, Partnerships, Infrastructure and Energy

It is important to consider the impact of every purchase or consumable involved in your event. Your event location should also be accessible to all potential audience members. With regard to access for people with reduced mobility, the [EPFL site plan](#) will help you indicate appropriate access routes.

- Carefully assess your needs in terms of purchasing and infrastructure to avoid overconsumption or unnecessary purchases; prioritise borrowing or hiring ([the 5 Rs approach](#)).
- Compare supplier bids taking into account their environmental impact ([label](#), transport, origin of raw materials such as for T-shirts, waste produced).
- Consider the profile of your audience and adapt associated services accordingly (rest spaces, breastfeeding room, facilities for people with reduced mobility, bicycle parking, etc.).
- Opt for electronic equipment that consumes little energy and limit its use.
- Choose companies or establishments to assist with your event that share the same values in terms of social and environmental responsibility.
- Ask your partners to supply reusable banners or promotional materials or to appear on your website to limit the use of single-use promotional materials.

Did you know?

- Only a fraction of EPFL's electricity is sourced from its solar power station (3%). So it is important to limit consumption as much as possible.
- EPFL's proximity to Lake Geneva does not just have a visual and aesthetic impact. The lake's waters help heat and cool the campus using no fuel and almost no gas.



2. Waste Management

At EPFL Innovation Park, waste management is based on two approaches: reducing the amount of waste produced and increasing recycling rates.

- Aim for a zero-waste and zero-plastic event (i.e. for reusable tableware).
- Request stands and layout materials that are reusable or made using recycled or recyclable materials.
- Set up waste sorting spaces, including during installation and dismantling and in the staff areas. Use the ecopoints supplied by EPFL Innovation Park.
- Reduce packaging and material distributed to audiences to the absolute minimum necessary.
- Collect, reuse or recycle objects given out to the audience (pens attendees do not wish to keep, notepads, badges, lanyards). Keep them for a forthcoming event or donate them.

Did you know?

- By 2025, we aim to recycle 65% of the waste generated on the EPFL Innovation Park site, compared to 30% in 2022.



3. Food

Food is one of the main sources of CO₂ emissions and has an impact on many different areas of the environment (climate, water, biodiversity, soil, etc.). Several actions taken by the Catering and Shops Unit (RESCO) promote the adoption of sustainable food-related practices.

Obligatory measures

- Apply the measures set out by the 20/30 strategy:
 - Requirement to make 50% of the dishes on offer vegetarian.
 - No single-use tableware.
 - Food origin requirements :
 - Swiss fruit and vegetables, apart from exotic fruits
 - 100% Swiss meat
 - Certified marine fish (MSC, ASC or Friends of the Sea)
 - Provide allergy information and details on where the food was sourced.
 - It is not permitted to use force-fed duck and goose products, including foie gras, duck breast, thighs, gizzards, etc.
 - Only use eggs or egg-based products from Swiss free-range hens.
 - Follow the seasonal produce [calendar](#).
 - Do not use products containing monosodium glutamate (MSG) (such as sauce, stock, soups or crisps, etc.) or palm oil (such as spreads).
- When available, provide free drinking water fountains.
- Depending on the size of the event, prioritise bottle refill dispensers rather than single-use bottles.
- Plan quantities in advance to keep leftovers to a minimum. Arrange service in a way that avoids food waste (e.g. buffet service, reduce plate size, plan predefined portions).
- Plan a strategy for managing any food waste (such as [Too good to go](#), involve social initiatives and associations such as [Castor Freegan \(EPFL\)](#), [Table suisse](#), or give it to the student community).

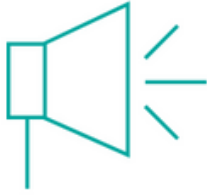


Optional measures :

- Offer vegan alternatives, offer vegetarian/vegan meals only.
- Offer local craft drinks.
- Document your choices and experiences – purchases, sales, waste – and share the information.

Did you know?

- EPFL has committed to increasing its vegetarian and vegan food offering. [Find out more.](#)
- Campus restaurants are required to apply the 20/30 strategy. Their teams can help you offer outstanding sustainable catering. [Check out the campus restaurants.](#)



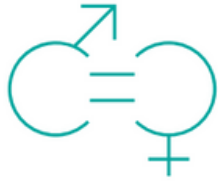
4. Communications

Communications are a key aspect of any planned event. Here, efforts can be introduced in substance (communicating on actions put in place and raising partners' awareness on sustainability challenges) and in form (developing more eco-friendly and inclusive communications).

- Use more inclusive language in your written materials ([documentation](#)).
- Use your event as a platform for raising awareness by openly communicating the measures you take and the behaviour you wish your audience to adopt.
- Highlight exhibitors or attendees who get on board. Offer more visibility (on the website, for instance) for people who have specifically adhered to these measures.
- Use sustainable communications: limit yourself to the absolute minimum required (undated banners can be used from year to year, no staff T-shirts, or if necessary: second-hand T-shirts, or if this is not possible, T-shirts made with organic or Fairtrade cotton, etc.).
- Take an understated editorial approach on your website (limit the use of videos and excessively large images online, etc.).
- Inform your communications partners that you wish to reduce your use of print materials and ask for advice.
- Choose suitable means of communication while considering their environmental impact.
- If a competition or prizes are planned, prioritise sustainable gifts that are sourced, for instance, from local makers or highlight specific sustainability initiatives, certified products or green gifts. Even better, prioritise intangible awards based on an experience (a meal, visit, class, etc.).
- Consider environmental and social criteria when choosing products (publicity gifts, fabrics, promotional items, print materials, signs, etc.).

Did you know?

- Some innovative and sustainable campaign materials can also complement your communications plan, such as [Working Bicycle](#).



5. Equality and Diversity

At EPFL, people from a very wide range of cultural, social and academic backgrounds work and study together. Diversity is a strength. Diversity and equal opportunities are a key aspect of EPFL’s development and excellence policy. This requires a respectful environment of mutual understanding that allows everyone to achieve their full potential, whatever their gender, sexual orientation, ethnic background or disability. This is the only way for members of the EPFL community to interact, collaborate and achieve outstanding results together and individually. Events organised at EPFL Innovation Park must guarantee that this approach will be part of the planned activities.

- Ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are entrenched in your event objectives.
- Use your event as a platform for raising awareness by openly communicating the measures you are taking.
- Use [inclusive language](#) principles in your communications.

Did you know?

- The [EPFL Compliance Guide](#) contains a chapter called “Equality, diversity, respect” that goes into more detail on these issues, including legal definitions.



6. International and Domestic Mobility

Mobility is usually the main source of an event's greenhouse gas emissions. Reduce the impact of events-related mobility by promoting sustainable modes of transport.

- Prioritise or promote appearances via video conference.
- Assess the possibility of centralising international conferences at continental hubs to avoid long-haul flights.
- Ask attendees and presenters in Europe to avoid flying whenever possible.
- Take the train to destinations in Europe and across Switzerland.
- If air travel cannot be avoided, prioritise:
 - Direct flights over indirect flights
 - The most environmentally efficient airlines based on the [Kayak](#) ranking
 - Economy or economy+ classes over business and first class
- Set up a carbon offsetting system with local players.

Did you know?

- A short-haul flight produces an average of 394.5g CO₂ emissions in comparison to a train journey, which generates around 5.4g of CO₂ for the same trip.
- The EPFL Innovation Park developed a Smart Guide Mobility to inform the EPFL Innovation Park community about offers, infrastructures and events related to commuting or professional mobility on campus.



7. Local Mobility and Accommodation

Several sustainable modes of transport for reaching EPFL Innovation Park are available. As revealed by the results of the 2021 survey on EPFL mobility habits, around 80% of commuters use public or non-motorised transport.

Mandatory measures

- Encourage the use of public transport or sustainable modes of transport such as cycling or walking to the event.
 - Some bike hire or sharing services offer a temporary subscription for the duration of the event.
 - You'll find self-service [PubliBike bike stations](#), the EPFL Innovation Park collaborators can benefit from 50% discount on the B-Quick subscription. Reach out to us at sustainability@epfl-innovationpark.ch.
- For large-scale events, set up partnerships with public transport, train and/or bus operators.
- Check that specific bicycle parking (permanent or temporary) is available and inform attendees.
- Some cities offer public transport tickets when booking a hotel room. Find out if this applies to your location. In Lausanne, for example, you can check the Mobilis website or go to the TL counter on campus.
- Plan your schedule around public transport timetables.
- If appropriate, set up a car-sharing system.
- Also assess the impact of transporting materials and equipment for your event. To reduce this, you can use the fleet of [cargo bikes](#) available on campus.
- Prioritise accommodation close to the event location or near a public transport connection. (The two hotels near the Lausanne campus are the [SwissTech Hotel](#) and [Starling Hotel](#)).
- Prioritise use of public transport instead of bus or motor vehicle hire.



Did you know?

- The SwissTech Hotel has put in place the “[Cause We Care](#)” program of the myclimate Foundation, which allows clients to make a voluntary contribution towards a climate-neutral stay. With a contribution of CHF 1 per overnight stay, clients support their sustainability measures and offset the CO2 emissions of their overnight stays and the SwissTech doubles the contribution.
- The SwissTech Hotel is also a member of the [OK:GO initiative](#) of the Swiss Barrier Free Association which makes accessibility information available to customers in order to facilitate travel planning for people with disabilities and seniors.
- It also participates in Switzerland Tourism’s sustainability program [Swisstainable](#) and meets the criteria for Level II - Engaged.



Do you have any questions or other tips or issues to share with the EPFL Innovation Park community?

**Feel free to get in touch by email at
sustainability@epfl-innovationpark.ch**

