

Destination Canada

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITMENT

The future of business events is sustainable and it's time to make a change. As the meetings and events industry, it's our responsibility to create a positive impact and leave a lasting legacy for generations to come.

CANADIAN BUSINESS EVENTS SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Destination Canada's Business Events Sustainability Plan is a first-of-its-kind national program aimed at improving the economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability practices of business events hosted in Canada. The plan cements Destination Canada's position as a global leader in business event sustainability and positions Canadian destinations as changemakers accelerating progress toward the industry's 2050 net zero targets.

Canada

In destinations from coast to coast to coast, Canada leads the way in hosting culturally, environmentally, and economically sustainable events. That commitment was recently demonstrated by Destination Canada's "Canadian Business Events Sustainability Plan," launched in 2022 to provide turnkey programs embodying all those values for groups. It's only natural, then, that organizers for associations and corporations with a sustainability ethos can expect that their host Canadian destination will work with them to make their own events as sustainable as possible, as easily as possible.

1 In 2022, Destination Canada launched a first-of-its-kind nationwide sustainability initiative, the "Canadian Business Events Sustainability Plan."

2 16 Canadian destinations have signed up for the Global Destination Sustainability Index, as part of the Canadian Business Events Sustainability Plan.

3 Palais de Congrès de Montréal, a carbon neutral venue, has instigated a "Eco-Conditionality Policy" that offers discounts of up to 10% to organizations that take tangible actions relating to sustainable development.

4 99.2% of Prince Edward Island's power comes from renewable sources, which makes it simple to host events that are easy on the environment.

5 The Vancouver Convention Centre is the world's first double LEED Platinum-certified convention center, making it one of the most sustainable centers in the world. Among its eco-friendly features: a 6-acre living green roof, home to 400,000 indigenous plants and grasses.

6 35% of the food at the Edmonton EXPO Centre comes from local suppliers, representing an investment — which visiting events contribute to — of more than \$400,000 in the local economy.

7 Giving back to the local community, which includes working with nonprofits Mealshare and FoodRescue to provide food to those in need, is part of Ottawa's Shaw Centre's approach to business.

8 At Aurora Village near Yellowknife, an Indigenous-owned resort in the Northwest Territories, incentive groups can enrich the awe-inspiring experience of viewing the northern lights with cultural education.

9 Tourism Victoria was the first major North American DMO to earn a carbon-neutral designation from climate advisory services company Offsetters. Through these offsets, Tourism Victoria supports The Great Bear Rainforest Project.

10 Metro Toronto Convention Centre's South Building is home to six beehives — each hive's 50,000 bees support pollination throughout the city. The center also redirects 90% of its event-produced waste away from landfills.

11 Calgary's light rail transit system is powered entirely by renewable energy, making travel on the C-Train as sustainable as getting around on foot.

12 In Banff, groups can enjoy a medicine walk through Canada's oldest national park, learning about traditional medicines from an Indigenous guide.

13 At the Quebec City Convention Centre, there is no extra cost to groups to manage waste and biodegradable material collection from their events.

For more information, visit businesseventscanada.ca

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GLOBAL DESTINATION SUSTAINABILITY INDEX

From coast to coast to coast, 16 Canadian destinations have embarked on the Global Destination Sustainability (GDS) Index annual benchmarking process — The GDS-Index is a global leading destination-level program that promotes scalable sustainability and responsible practices among tourism destinations globally. It measures, benchmarks and suggests improvements for the sustainability strategy and performance of tourism and events each year. Using 69 indicators as its guide, the index evaluates destinations across four key areas from environmental and social progress to supplier and destination management performance.



LEGACY IMPACT STUDY

In order to host sustainable and purposeful meetings, we're not only studying the environmental impact of our events. We're also looking at the social and economic impacts through the legacy they leave.

In conjunction with its Canadian Business Events Sustainability Plan, Destination Canada has commissioned a Legacy Impact Study. The multi-year study will evaluate the beyond-tourism benefits international business events generate in host communities aligned with the core sustainability pillars of economic, social and environmental enrichment.

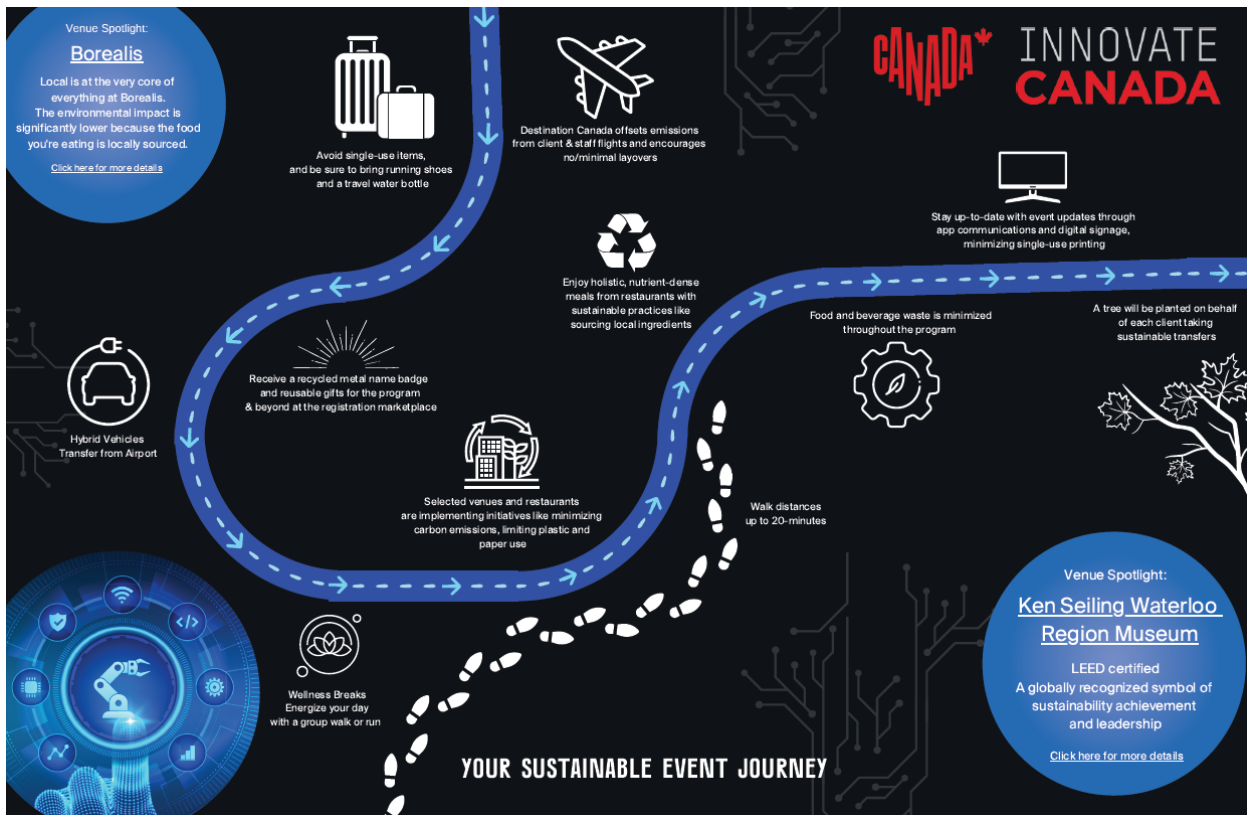


SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Innovate Canada – Our Carbon Neutral Event Journey

At Destination Canada, we put sustainability at the forefront of our operations in a variety of ways — such as by making this year’s Innovate Canada a carbon-neutral event for the first time. Focused on the advanced manufacturing sector, Innovate Canada 2023 prioritized venues with sustainable practices, provided digital communications whenever possible, and used products from recycled and other sustainable material. And that’s only the start.





10 POWERFUL WAYS TO MAKE YOUR NEXT EVENT MORE SUSTAINABLE

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Sustainability is no longer a “nice-to-have” feature but rather has turned into “table stakes” – especially for the meetings and events industry. This means that decision makers and planners are faced with a challenging balancing act that involves designing in-person events that are sustainable, inclusive and meaningful, while also keeping costs down and attendees satisfied.

To help guide your efforts, Team Canada through its industry research, is sharing its own take on 10 simple, yet powerful ways to make your event more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.



1. Set sustainability goals

The first step is to put achievable and realistic goals in place. To do this, we recommend setting five to ten measurable goals aligned with three to five United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (UN SDGs). Once you have these goals, it's a great idea to create a dedicated team that can help track them and ensure you're making progress.



3. Go local

Today's business travellers don't want their trip to have a negative impact on the environment or local communities. One way to help give attendees a feel-good factor is through using local products and sourcing from local vendors whenever possible.



2. Choose the right partners

It's also important to align with partners that can help reduce your event's impact, whether that's venues and hotels with strong green initiatives or activities that minimize attendees' carbon footprint. As one suggestion, consider working with suppliers of green electricity or generating energy on-site via solar panels.



4. Eliminate food waste

Planners should take the time to understand proper food management, including disposal and donation options for surpluses. They can also partner with charities, food banks and innovative companies that help sustainably process leftovers.



5. Make attendees accountable

Provide attendees with insights on how they can reduce their own impact while attending your event. For instance, you can highlight the power of sustainable practices like using public transport, choosing vegetarian meal options, being mindful about water usage and opting out of daily hotel laundry services. You can also use an app instead of paper printed copies of programs. Small steps like these can make a big difference collectively.



6. Calculate and lower carbon emissions

Carbon emissions calculators are excellent tools in helping to provide an accurate view of an event's environmental impact, as they allow you to see the impact of different choices in the planning process. With that information, you can then take steps to travel differently: use trains or public transport, take direct flights and travel light.



7. Check your potential suppliers

Sustainability goes beyond eliminating plastic water bottles and straws. It also requires buy-in from industry suppliers and partners. When planning, vet potential partners' commitments to sustainability and choose suppliers whose sustainability goals align with your event.



8. Weave sustainability into contracts

When negotiating contracts, think beyond rates and dates. Food donations, purchasing local, composting and post-event reporting are a few of the items on a list of negotiable items. After negotiating with suppliers about sustainability terms, make sure they are included in your contract as well.



9. Measure success

Ask all suppliers to gather and provide post-event data on all the sustainable initiatives outlined in your contract. Then, meet with them to debrief, measure your results and talk through what worked and what needs improvement. After your event, consider producing a report to show how it was handled from a sustainability standpoint – and use those insights to elevate your next one.



10. Baby steps

It's important to recognize that progress won't happen overnight. Every small step you take today will gradually add up to significant changes, which can have an enormous impact on the sustainability of your events in the long run.

The path forward

Sustainability measures are fundamental for business events now and will remain so in the future. Real progress in sustainability will come when the entire industry – planners, venues, destinations and other suppliers – work together to find solutions to achieve their goals.

Let's connect!

Insights, inspiration, a simple introduction— our team is eager to share the benefits of meeting in Canada.



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