

At the request of Meetings, the Event Greening Forum (EGF) has compiled a comprehensive checklist for sustainable event management standards that are aligned with ISO 20121:2024.

The MICE industry in South Africa has a critical role in promoting sustainability. By aligning practices with the ISO 20121:2024 Sustainable Events Management standard and incorporating insights from the Global Net Zero Carbon Events Initiative, South Africa can lead the way in sustainable event management while benefiting from international best practices. This checklist outlines best practices across various event components, designed to be practical, actionable, and aligned with global standards.

**STEP #1 - GENERAL SUSTAINABLE EVENT MANAGEMENT STANDARDS**

**1. Define a sustainability policy:**

- » Establish clear sustainability goals for the event, addressing environmental, social, and economic aspects.
- » Engage stakeholders in the policy development process.

**2. Assess impact:**

- » Conduct a pre-event sustainability impact assessment, identifying potential risks and opportunities.
- » Use tools like carbon footprint calculators to quantify emissions.

**3. Implement a sustainability management system:**

- » Align operations with ISO 20121 by implementing a plan-do-check-act cycle.
- » Regularly review processes to ensure continuous improvement.

**4. Promote diversity and inclusion:**

- » Ensure the event provides equitable opportunities for local suppliers and marginalised communities.
- » Incorporate universal design principles for accessibility.

**5. Monitor and evaluate:**

- » Collect data on sustainability outcomes during and after the event.
- » Publish a post-event sustainability report to showcase achievements and lessons learned.

**STEP #2 - CATERING AND FOOD & BEVERAGE**

**1. Source locally and seasonally:**

- » Prioritise local and seasonal produce to reduce food miles.
- » Partner with South African farmers and small-scale producers to support local economies.

**2. Reduce food waste:**

- » Plan catering quantities based on accurate attendance forecasts.
- » Donate surplus food to local charities.

**3. Offer plant-based options:**

- » Highlight plant-based menu items to reduce the event's carbon footprint.

**4. Use sustainable packaging:**

- » Avoid single-use plastics; opt for compostable or recyclable alternatives.
- » Provide clearly labelled waste bins to encourage proper disposal.

**STEP #3 - TRANSPORT SERVICES, LOGISTICS AND OPERATIONS**

**1. Encourage low-carbon transport:**

- » Promote carpooling, shuttle buses, and public transport for attendees.
- » Provide bicycle parking and pedestrian-friendly access.

**2. Offset transport emissions:**

- » Partner with certified carbon offset programmes to neutralise emissions from attendee and organiser travel.

**3. Utilise eco-friendly fleet options:**

- » Use electric or hybrid vehicles for event logistics.

**4. Optimise logistics:**

- » Consolidate deliveries to minimise trips and emissions.
- » Schedule off-peak transport to reduce traffic congestion.

**STEP #4 - MICE EVENT MANAGEMENT**

**1. Sustainable planning:**

- » Integrate sustainability criteria into event RFPs and vendor contracts.
- » Require suppliers to adhere to green practices.

**2. Engage stakeholders:**

- » Host pre-event training sessions to educate staff and vendors on sustainability standards.
- » Involve attendees in green initiatives, such as waste sorting or tree planting campaigns.

**3. Digital alternatives:**

- » Replace printed materials with digital programmes and QR codes.
- » Use virtual platforms for hybrid events to reduce the need for physical travel.

**STEP #5 - EXHIBITIONS**

**1. Eco-friendly booths:**

- » Use modular, reusable, or recyclable booth materials like aluminium systems or paper fibreboard.
- » Design booths that can be repurposed for future events.

**2. Energy efficiency:**

- » Use LED lighting and energy-efficient equipment.
- » Power exhibition areas with renewable energy sources where possible.

**3. Reduce waste:**

- » Limit giveaways to sustainable items, such as seed paper or reusable products.
- » Provide recycling stations for booth waste.

**STEP #6 - VENUES**

**1. Certifications and policies:**

- » Choose venues with green building certifications (e.g., Green Star SA).
- » Ensure venues have energy, water, and waste management policies.

**2. Energy efficiency:**

- » Partner with venues that use renewable energy or have energy-saving measures like smart lighting and efficient HVAC systems.

**3. Water conservation:**

- » Use venues with water-saving features, such as low-flow taps and greywater recycling systems.
- » Encourage the use of refillable water stations.

**4. Waste management:**

- » Confirm that venues provide waste sorting, recycling, and composting services.
- » Conduct a waste audit post-event to measure success.

**STEP #7. COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING**

**1. Green messaging:**

- » Communicate the event's sustainability goals clearly to all stakeholders.
- » Highlight green achievements in marketing materials.

**2. Digital first:**

- » Utilise digital platforms for marketing, reducing reliance on print materials.
- » Use social media, email campaigns, and event apps to share updates and information.

**3. Engage attendees:**

- » Create an interactive sustainability pledge for attendees to sign.
- » Offer incentives for attendees who participate in green initiatives.

**STEP #8 - AV AND PRODUCTION**

**1. Energy management:**

- » Use energy-efficient AV equipment, such as LED screens and projectors.
- » Schedule power-down periods for equipment not in use.

**2. Reusable sets:**

- » Design stages and backdrops that can be reused for future events.

**3. Offset AV footprint:**

- » Invest in carbon offsets for energy-intensive production elements.

**4. Virtual integration:**

- » Stream events to reduce the need for large physical audiences.

**LEVERAGING THE GLOBAL NET ZERO CARBON EVENTS INITIATIVE**

The Net Zero Carbon Events initiative provides a framework to reduce carbon emissions across the events industry. South African organisers can adopt its principles by:

- » **Setting carbon targets:** Commit to achieving net-zero emissions by a specific date.
- » **Collaboration:** Engage with international partners to share knowledge and innovations.

- » **Transparency:** Report on progress publicly to build trust and accountability. By implementing this comprehensive checklist, South Africa's events and MICE industry cannot only meet but exceed sustainable event standards, while contributing to a greener and more resilient future. 4

**ABOUT THE EGF**

The EGF is a registered non-profit organisation that promotes sustainable event management, also known as 'event greening', where sustainability refers to the triple bottom line of people, planet and prosperity. This encompasses social, environmental and economic considerations.

The industry segments that the EGF supports extend to:

- PCOs and DMCs;
- Exhibition and events organisers;
- Suppliers, service providers and sub-contractors (infrastructure, AV, transport, products, etc);
- Venues, including conference and exhibition facilities, as well as accommodation.

For more information, visit [www.eventgreening.co.za](http://www.eventgreening.co.za).

