As we observed in our 2016 and 2018 surveys, there continues to be a gap in expectations about including sustainability in RFPs and proposals. A third of organisers are not including questions about sustainability in their RFPs but are expecting to see the information in their proposals. The difficulty is that only 36% of suppliers are including it in all proposals, with another 40% waiting to be asked. The good news here is that we've seen an increase in the number of suppliers that are automatically including it, from 25% to 36% since last year.

In keeping with previous years findings, the survey showed that for the majority of event organisers, sustainability practices need to be either cost saving only (19%) or cost neutral / cost savings (51%). Fortunately, many sustainable practices fit this description. Everything from reusing signage, to opting for vegetarian meals, to cutting back on waste hauls can improve the financial bottom line.

We also asked for the first time about disaster readiness. 88% agree or strongly agree that climate related risks, including extreme weather events are increasing, and 86% agree or strongly agree that large venues will be expected to provide emergency support, but only 31% agree or strongly agree that venues are prepared for climate risks.

Another new area that we examined this year was in respect to human trafficking awareness and training. 82% say it is important that event professionals be trained on identifying and reporting but only 19% have trained staff.

Just over half of the respondents (55%) indicated that their organisations do not have a sustainability mandate. Of those that indicated that their organisations do have a sustainability mandate, 37% are missing an opportunity to underscore this by implementing sustainable practices for their events.
Creating welcoming and inclusive events

Areas where organisations are making intentional efforts to create welcoming environments that support diversity and inclusion

1. Race and ethnicity 72%
2. Gender 72%
3. Disability 70%
4. Age and generation 68%
5. Religion and spirituality 61%
6. Sexual orientation 55%
7. Gender identity 51%
8. Gender expression 44%

Note: 12% do not have a diversity and inclusion policy or programme

Top measures being taken to promote gender equality

1. Gender inclusive language on registration forms 34%
2. Pay equity for team members and speakers 33%
3. Require gender balanced panels 30%
4. Require gender neutral washroom

Note: 31% are not taking measures to address gender equality

Top measures being taken to create welcoming environments for participants with disabilities

1. Ensure all meeting spaces are accessible 83%
2. Collect information and make accommodations as required 65%
3. Provide accessible transportation options 39%
4. Provide sign language interpretation 21%
5. Require scent-free environments 9%
6. Other 4%

Note: 3% are not making accommodations at this time

Benefits of creating more welcoming and inclusive events

Intentionally designing events to be welcoming and inclusive for everyone is beneficial not only for growing audiences, but also to enrich the event by ensuring that diverse perspectives are represented and to help reduce inequalities. Review all aspects of your event strategy, including marketing, programming and logistics to ensure equal, full and dignified participation for all.

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**Greatest barriers to implementing sustainable practices**

1. **More funds needed**: 30% view it as a moderate barrier and 29% as an extreme one
2. **More education needed**: 30% view it as a moderate barrier and 29% as an extreme one
3. **Difficulty measuring**: 35% view it as a moderate barrier and 16% as an extreme one

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**Sustainable event priorities**

### Top five food-based sustainability priorities (based on weighted average)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allergy-responsible options</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetarian/vegan options</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy food choices</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimising food waste</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filtered water with reusable glassware</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Top five waste management priorities (based on weighted average)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recycling option in public spaces</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimising food waste</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back of house recycling sorting</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filtered water with reusable glassware</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycling option in each meeting room</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Top 10 sustainable event practices (and change from 2018)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>Change from 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Vegetarian menus</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>↓ from 86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Allergy-responsible menus</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>↓ from 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Water glasses &amp; filling stations in lieu of bottled water</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>↓ from 76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sorting recyclables</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>↑ from 49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Local food sourcing</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>↑ from 47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Diversity and inclusion policy</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>↑ from 42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Donation of event materials</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>↓ from 58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Paperless meetings</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>↓ from 47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Health and wellness programme</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>↓ from 43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Food rescue programme</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>↓ from 40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Awareness and activation of the Sustainable Development Goals

- 17% are aware of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their organisations are incorporating them into their operations
- 30% are aware of the SDGs but their organisations are not incorporating them into their operations
- 56% are not aware of the SDGs

Need inspiration to start activating the SDGs?

Events can support the Sustainable Development Goals by:

1. **No Poverty**
   - Providing training and employment opportunities in addition to charitable giving and community service programmes.

2. **Zero Hunger**
   - Implementing a food rescue programme for surplus event food as part of an overall food waste reduction strategy.

3. **Health and Well-being**
   - Ensuring workers in our supply chains have access to health and safety programmes, and incorporating health and wellness factors into event design.

4. **Quality Education**
   - Supporting local schools by collecting supplies, books or other needed resources.

5. **Gender Equality**
   - Joining the UN Global Compact Panel Pledge, a global effort to help put an end to all-male panels.

6. **Clean Water and Sanitation**
   - Ensuring that partially used hotel amenities, such as soaps, are recycled and donated to communities in need.

7. **Affordable and Clean Energy**
   - Using renewable energy sources, or investing in renewable energy projects to offset unavoidable emissions through programmes such as the UN’s Climate Neutral Now.

8. **Decent Work and Economic Growth**
   - Verifying that our supply chain does not use child labour by purchasing certified fair trade products, including coffee, chocolate and textiles.

9. **Industry Innovation and Infrastructure**
   - Strengthening the demand for safe, reliable public transportation options by encouraging participants to use them, and by including them as criteria for destination selection.

10. **Reduced Inequalities**
    - Creating welcoming, inclusive and accessible environments for everyone to be able to fully participate, with dignity, in our events.

11. **Sustainable Cities and Communities**
    - Encouraging sustainable tourism practices that protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage.

12. **Responsible Consumption and Production**
    - Using less single-use materials, and by supporting a circular economy approach through donations, reuse, recycling and upcycling of event materials.

13. **Climate Action**
    - Encouraging lower-emission transportation and food choices, and compensating emissions with carbon offset programmes such as those available from the UN’s Climate Neutral Now.

14. **Life Below Water**
    - Only purchasing seafood from responsible fisheries, and reducing the use of single-use plastics to keep them out of the oceans.

15. **Life on Land**
    - Supporting healthy bee populations with rooftop beehives and pollinator gardens in venues or as legacy projects to help promote healthy ecosystems and biodiversity.

16. **Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions**
    - Taking action against human trafficking by training hotel, transportation and event professionals on how to recognise the signs and report instances.

17. **Partnerships for the Goals**
    - Activating the power of face-to-face events to achieve the global goals by convening global thought leaders for the purpose of solving the world’s greatest challenges.

Looking for resources to accelerate sustainability in your events?

Visit our website:
events council.org/CSE

For infographics, how-to-guides, access to the EIC Sustainable Event Standards and the Principles for Sustainable Events.

Or subscribe to our newsletter:
events council.org/subscribe

Thank you to our Centre for Sustainable Event partners:

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