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YEARS 1947-2022



**BRITISH SOCIETY
OF SOIL SCIENCE**



Delivering Sustainable International Events

**CONSIDERATIONS FOR EVENT ORGANISERS,
THE EVENTS INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENTS**

Set against the backdrop of climate change and other environmental issues, how can event organisers and the wider industry deliver environmentally sustainable events?



FOR EVENT ORGANISERS

› Set targets

Whether a one-off or regular event, set objectives, targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), to see how you performed and if it is a regular event, ensure that you are making sustained progress over time.

When setting your targets, aim for 'real zero' rather than 'net zero' by first avoiding your impacts, then reducing them and as a last resort, compensating or offsetting for them. This will have a greater overall impact than committing money to plant trees for example.

› Does the event need to take place?

Having a fully online event instead of fully face to face, decreases greenhouse gas emissions by 95%. The biggest environmental impact for most face-to-face events will be travel: consider whether the event needs to take place face-to-face and whether it needs to be an international event?

Consider your audience and whether the following options could also support knowledge sharing and networking:

- a number of smaller 'regional hub' events, with linked hybrid sessions and opportunities for networking within your region
- choosing the optimal location based on the expected attendees, thereby minimising travel and accommodation requirements.

› Reducing and Reusing

Following the circular economy principles of reducing, sharing, maintaining, reusing, refurbishing and recycling, there are a range of options to reduce your impact including:

- conference apps to avoid printing
- reducing the amount of carpet used in the exhibition hall
- using permanent signage in the venue, rather than printing new
- offering reusable coffee cups and water bottles.

› Recycling

Waste is inevitable at an event: but can you be confident that your conference venue can recycle the waste you produce? You may opt for sustainable products and packaging, but does the local area have the facilities to recycle this or will it end up in landfill?

FOR GOVERNMENTS AND THE EVENTS INDUSTRY

➤ Agree a common tool for analysing impact

Many organisations and event organisers will increasingly undertake environmental impact assessments. However, the tools which would allow an event organiser to understand their environmental impacts are not available to the average event organiser. There is an opportunity to provide an accurate tool which would allow organisations to bring their analysis in-house, leading to a better understanding of their impacts. Any tool created must include the full range of activities which event organisers deliver and be based on a range of environmental impact factors (greenhouse gases, water and others) as many activities, such as abstract book printing, have a high impact on water usage despite there being a comparatively low greenhouse gas impact.

In developing this tool, preparing a common methodology for reporting and comparing energy usage, refrigeration leakage and food ingredients lists, amongst others, will ensure a common reference point is used.

➤ International Cooperation

Cross-governmental working to implement environmentally friendly transport across national boundaries will provide international congress delegates with a genuine alternative to flying.

➤ Subsidies for the eco choice

More often than not, the most environmentally friendly choice is also the most expensive. Governments and the event industry can consider subsidising the most environmentally friendly options. This could include subsidising local public transport for conference delegates or providing discounts on services which would support the reduction or recycling of congress waste.

➤ Raise Awareness

Governments and the events industry should also work closely to raise awareness to event organisers, delegates and their local communities on environmental awareness and sustainability. Engaging the general public in the issues will lead to global systems thinking and action which does not stop with the conference.



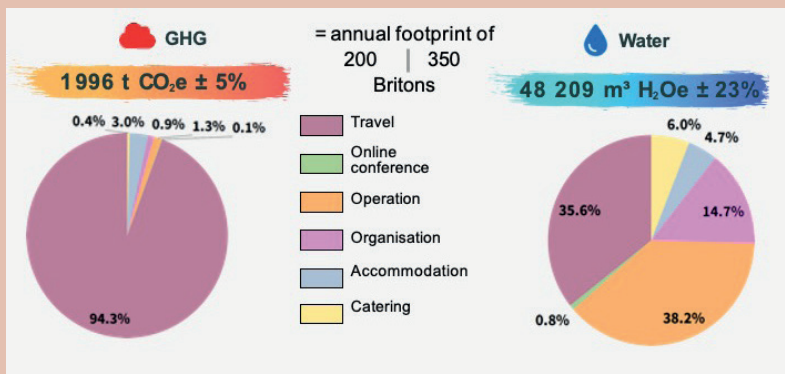
CASE STUDY

When hosting the World Congress of Soil Science, organisers considered how to limit the amount of food wastage. Working with the Scottish Exhibition Centre (SEC), the British Society of Soil Science considered plated lunches, the most sustainable option, but the cost for the additional seating required did not fit in the budget. Organisers explored the option of lunch bags, but the packaging could not be recycled locally.

Organisers settled on bowl food which could be eaten standing up and delegates could limit their food wastage by only taking the number of bowls needed. Daily food wastage monitoring took place and delegates **reduced their wastage by 84%** between day one and day three of the Congress.

CASE STUDY - Greenhouse gas and water impact at the World Congress of Soil Science 2022

One of the core pillars of the World Congress of Soil Science 2022 was to manage the environmental impact and the sustainability of the congress. The British Society of Soil Science believe that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) commissioned for WCSS22 was one of the first ever for an international congress. Delivered by Masters student Alexandre Couvez, the EIA indicated that the event used an equivalent of 200 UK peoples' Greenhouse Gas Emissions and 350 UK peoples' water consumption for the year. Findings showed that travel was the main cause of GHG emissions (94%) and of water emissions (36%).



Main findings - Life Cycle Assessment

CASE STUDY - UN Green Events Tool

The Green Events Tool (GET) is an integrated web-based programme developed and maintained by the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), UN Frameworks Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Gulf Organisation for Research & Development (GORD) to promote and evaluate the sustainability of global meetings and events. GET targets decarbonisation and sustainable development by focusing on environmental impacts of conferences, meetings, exhibitions, trade fairs and sporting events. Through its all-encompassing approach, GET identifies ways to host an eco-friendly event by encouraging and facilitating actions to reduce the carbon footprint at the planning and implementation stages.

To find out more, visit <https://greeneventstool.com>

CASE STUDY - ISO Sustainable Event system

The International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) developed ISO 20121, offering guidance and best practice to help manage an event's social, economic and environmental impact. ISO 20121's flexible approach means it can be used for all types of events addresses all stages of an events' supply chain. The International Standard has also been developed to relieve the strain on local infrastructure and utilities, reducing the potential for conflict in communities where events are hosted.

To find out more, visit <https://www.iso.org/iso-20121-sustainable-events.html>



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