

ICCA & Destination Canada International Sustainability Report





CANADA*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study draws on data collected in the period between the beginning of July and early September of 2023. A total of 248 responses were received globally across all geographic regions, providing a nuanced picture of the status of our industry regarding international meetings and focusing on the efforts in event and destination sustainability. Building on the January survey's deep dive into sustainability, legacy and Diversity/Equity/Inclusion (DEI), this survey dissected organization's efforts in sustainability and potential roadblocks to innovative approaches to business models, longterm sustainability and the diversification of revenue streams.

For the first time, we investigated our member's "toolkits" to gain an understanding of the tools and resources being utilised - and those that are missing, including an in-depth analysis of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and other UN driven or inspired resources in sustainability.

While global recovery is progressing, challenges persist on the horizon. Global economies remain sensitive, Europe grapples with the shadow of conflict, and the United States anticipates another notable Presidential election. Alarming signals from the international scientific community emphasise the urgent need for attention to our trajectory towards a potential global catastrophe. Governments have yet to fully implement their sustainability plans under the Paris Agreement, designed to limit the increase in global temperatures to below 2 degrees.

Innovation, creativity, resilience and a collaborative spirit are needed for the journey ahead. Opportunities in turning challenges into success stories lie ahead, narratives of creating legacies and positive social impact and promoting sustainability for a better future.

INTRODUCTION

The following key questions were aimed to be addressed.

I. How are strategic priorities changing?

II. What is the real level of importance of sustainability in the events and destination management sectors?

III. How are sustainability efforts communicated?

IV. What tools and resources are accessible and being utilized in sustainability?

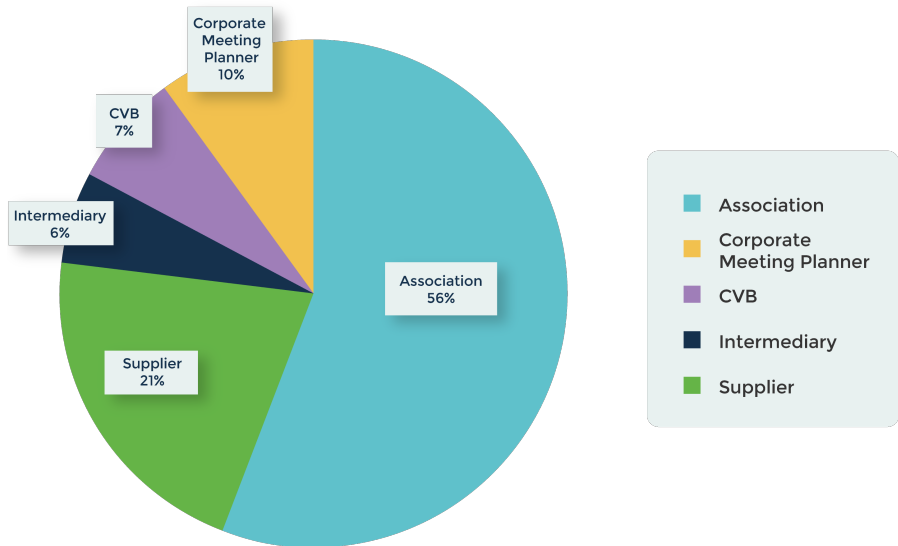
V. What are the perceptions of Canada as a sustainable destination?

As mentioned, this survey was conducted during the period of July to September 2023 in collaboration with Destination Canada. This study draws comparisons with the status of the industry as of October 2023 and follows on from a series of surveys conducted previously in January 2023 and then in March 2023.

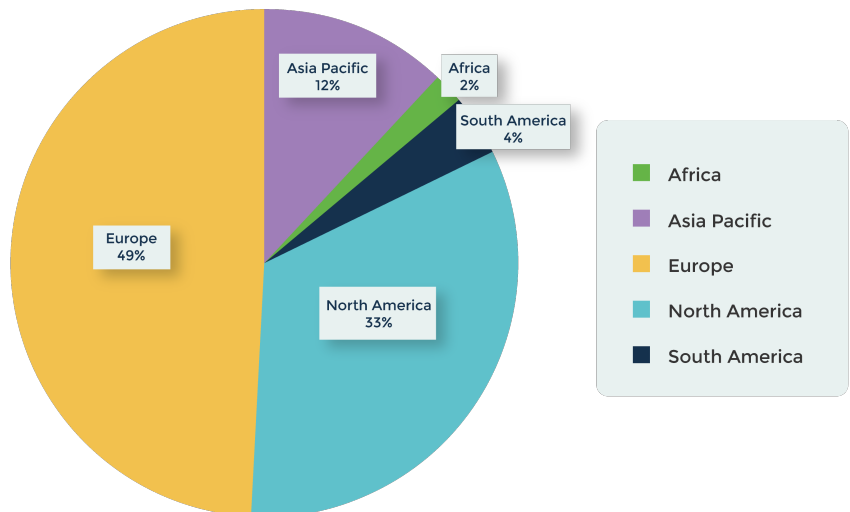
A total of 248 responses were received globally across all geographic regions compared to a total of 177 responses from the previous survey. Responses were received globally from across the regions, with most responses coming from Europe, followed by North America.

A diverse mix of respondents from various professional profiles with more than half being association professionals (56%), followed by suppliers (21%) and corporate meeting planners (10%).

Please specify the type of organisation that you belong to:



Geographic locations of association/organisation.



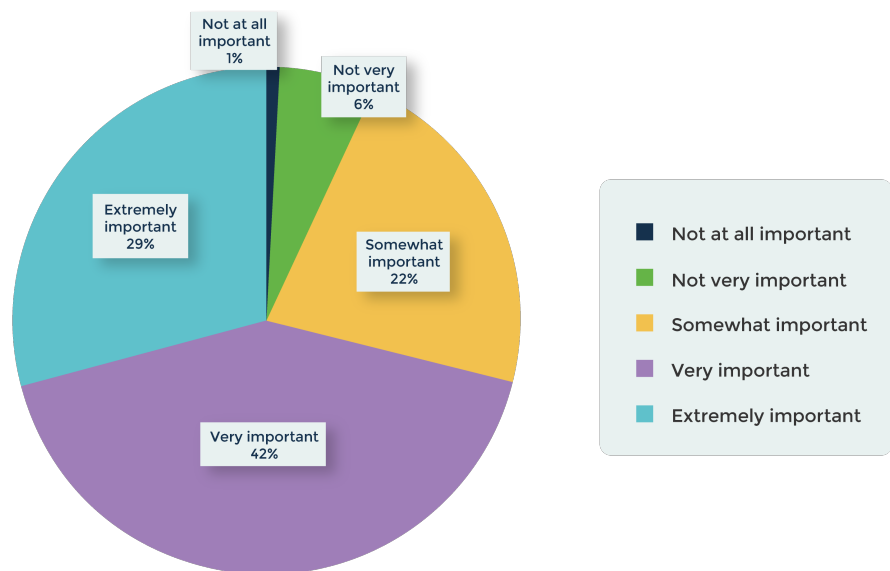
KEY TAKEAWAYS

IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABILITY

The importance of sustainability to organisations has shifted since the last survey early in the year. Those saying sustainability is “very important” or “extremely important” (top two box answers) increased 6%. There were also some increases in those finding sustainability somewhat, not at all or not very important.

This indicates a somewhat notable change of strategic priorities in the sustainability landscape.

How important is sustainability to your association/organisation?



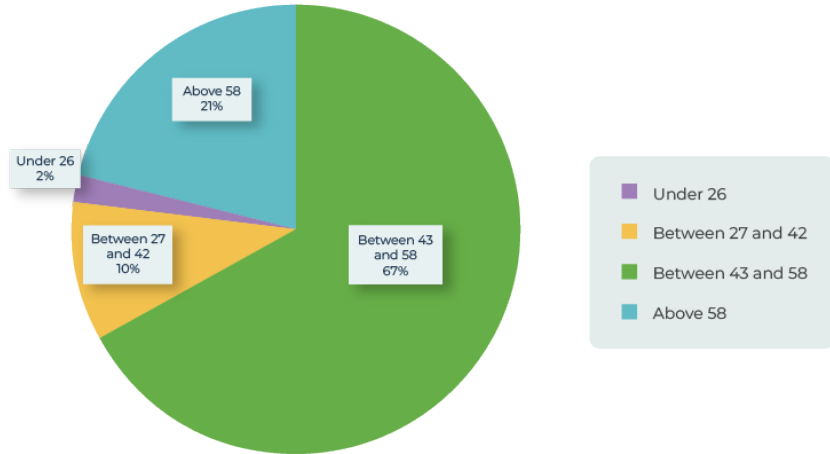
Sustainability is more than a competitive advantage, it's a collaborative one, too.

GENERATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

Important to note, is the first time we are capturing data on the generational make-up of decision-makers in our industry and also of their members.

In this regard two thirds of the decision-makers belong to Gen X as do 59% of the members, which is not surprising for this age group of roughly 43 and 58 years. A fifth of the decision-makers are from the Baby Boomers generation at over 58 years old, but with only 7% of the members. As these generations get older, it is the Millennials, or Gen Y that is of particular interest to us, as their values and attitudes have profound effects. At between 27 and 42 years, they represent 10% of the decision makers and a much larger 30% of members.

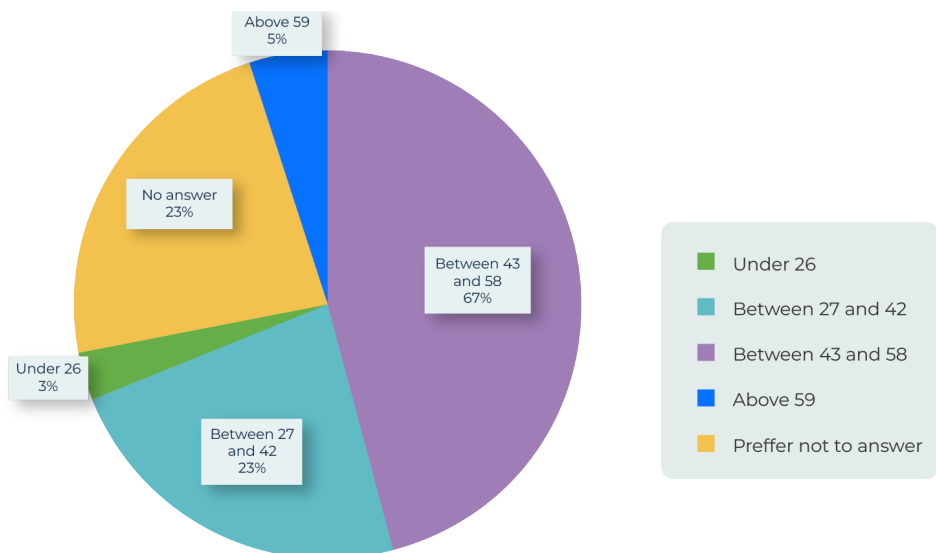
What is the age range of the decision-makers at your association/organisation?



Millennials¹ are more aware of company activity than any other generation and are eager for business leaders to be proactive about having a positive impact on the world. They increasingly expect companies to deliver social and environmental change and work collaboratively to tackle global issues. Millennials are willing to pay more for sustainable brands.

Millennials are also very social media savvy and are drawn to marketing campaigns that promote interaction, create engagement and deepen the experience. The idea of communities being welded together, be that virtually or physically, is an attribute of this generation too.²

What is the average age range of your membership?



ROTATIONAL PATTERNS OF EVENTS

Global rotation from one continent to another emerged as the dominant pattern for the largest and/or annual events (36%). This rotational approach can have implications for sustainability, considering the carbon footprint associated with frequent long-

¹ Changing attitudes to business - why millennials matter. (n.d.). Institute of Business Ethics - IBE. <https://www.ibe.org.uk/resource/changing-attitudes-to-business-why-millennials-matter.html>

⁶ Chatzopoulou, E., & de Kiewiet, A. (2021). Millennials' evaluation of corporate social responsibility: The wants and needs of the largest and most ethical generation. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 20(3), 521-534.

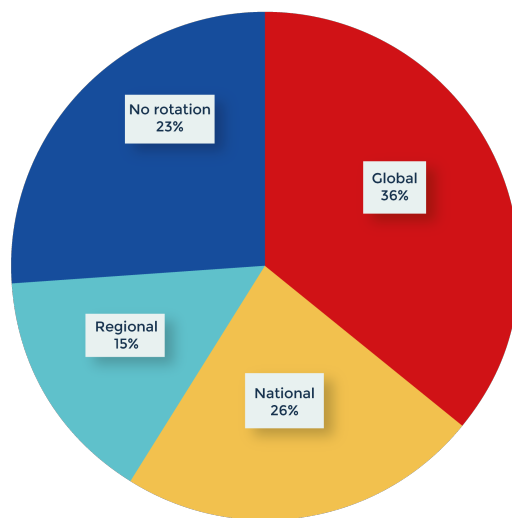
¹ How to sell to Millennials | Business.com. (n.d.). business.com. <https://www.business.com/articles/experience-over-goods-the-millennial-shift-in-spending/>

distance travel. National rotation (26%) and regional rotation (15%) were also common, suggesting the potential for more sustainable options at a smaller scale.

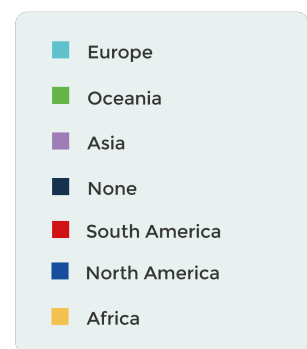
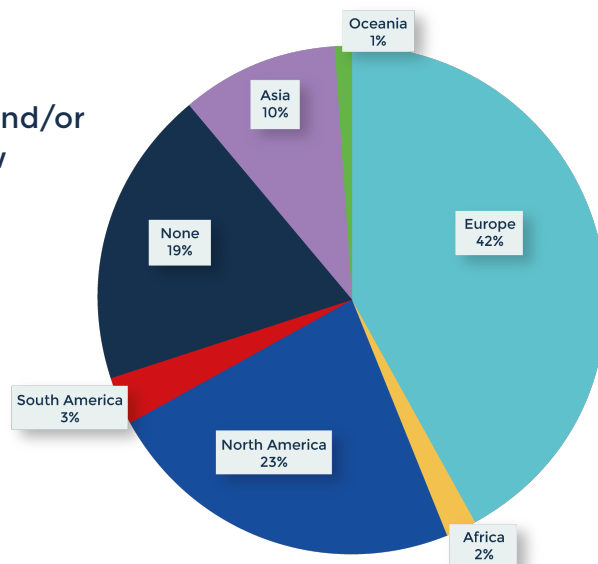


Takeaway: consider the rotation of your events and what effect it has on the carbon footprint.

Does your largest and/or annual event follow a rotational pattern?



Does your largest and/or annual event follow a rotational pattern?



CHANGING RFPs:

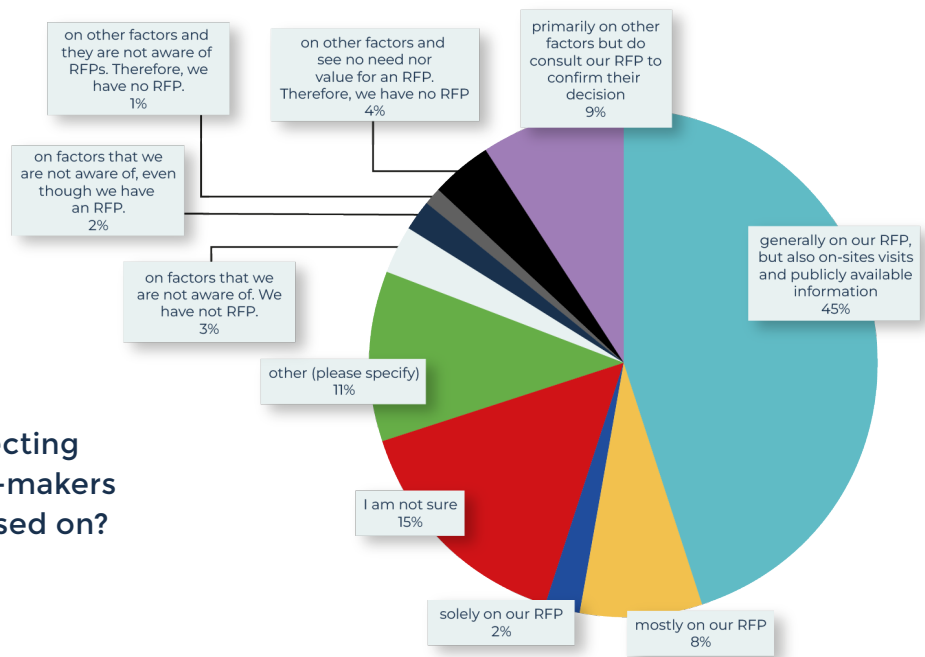
Meeting planners are showing interest in sustainability that encompasses environmental and long-term organisational sustainability. Whilst they are exploring new revenue streams and adapting their service delivery in a post-pandemic world,

they remain committed to their core mission of knowledge enhancement, training, education, and professional standards, with international association meetings serving as vital vehicles for achieving these objectives.

Ensuring the success of the meetings means careful and meticulous planning that starts with the Request for Proposals (RFPs) design. We note several changes since the previous survey.

A third of respondents found that sustainability was not at all or only a little integrated with their RFP design, meeting planning and meeting execution of their future meetings. Sustainability was also found to be only somewhat integrated by 21% in RFP design, 26% in meeting execution and 28% in meeting planning³.

When using rfps in selecting a destination, decision-makers select a destination based on?

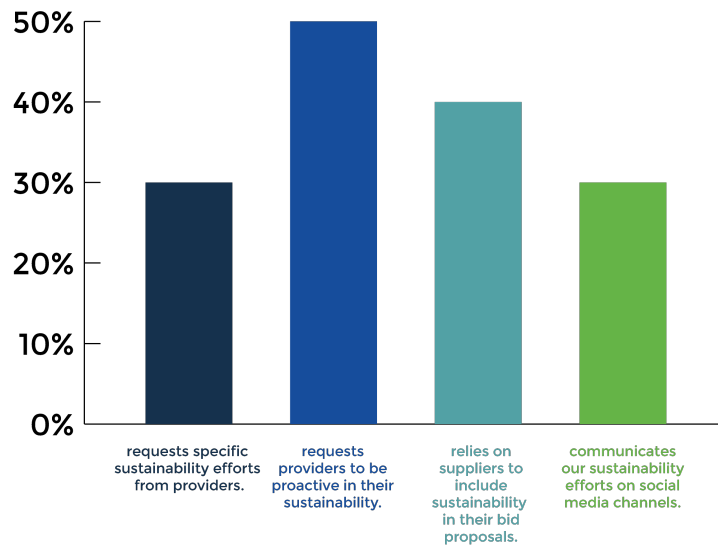


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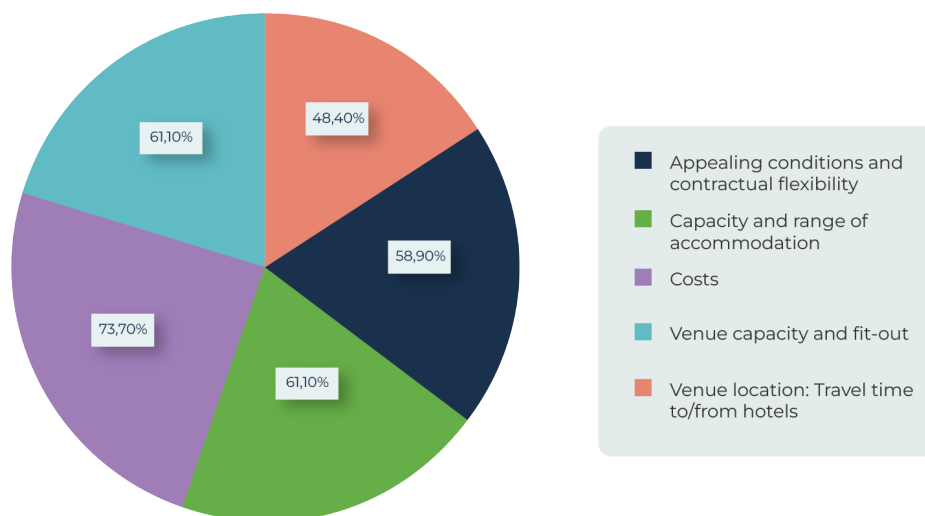
³ When taking about meeting planning we mean the process of organising and coordinating the logistics, agenda, and participants beforehand, while meeting execution is the actual implementation and conduct of the planned meeting, ensuring that the agenda is followed, and goals are achieved.

“OUR ASSOCIATION/ORGANISATION ...



When respondents were asked about their most important criteria for procuring events, venues, goods, and services, a significant finding emerged. **Cost ranked highest**, with 74% of respondents considering it a crucial factor. Following closely, 61% of respondents emphasise the **importance of accommodation, venue capacity, and space**.

When designing your rfp for the procurement of event venue, goods, and services, what criteria must be included so that you can make an informed decision?



INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY

The survey responses pertaining to the integration of sustainability efforts into various organisational and management aspects of associations/organisations offer a nuanced perspective on the depth and breadth of sustainability commitments across various operational dimensions. The respondents' percentages provide valuable insights into the prevalence and priority of sustainability integration in the surveyed entities.

First and foremost, it is discernible that there are observable differences in trends between the general planning efforts made and the more granular, detailed elements within sustainability incorporation and the different dimensions of operations.

Event planning and strategic planning are the highest areas where sustainability is most commonly embedded, with 73% of the respondents indicating that sustainability is incorporated within their event planning and 62% attesting to its incorporation within their strategic planning. These responses are also the only 2 over 50%.

These percentages signify a pronounced emphasis on integrating sustainability within the framework of future initiatives, reflective of an intention to infuse sustainability as a core value into the organisational DNA. These are high-level commitments to sustainability across the macro-dimensions in the planning stages and are considered at the executive level in the long-term goals and vision of the organisation.

Other notable findings include an equal percentage (42%) have sustainability embedded in their mission statement and their policies, with 40% reporting their sustainability information in their annual reports. They do go hand-in-hand and reflect the transparency and accountability needed in the operationalization of the environmental, social, or governance aspects of sustainability.

In contrast, more granular and meticulously structured elements that necessitate increased analysis of operational activities including the level of effort and commitment, such as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Event Code of Conduct, Annual Reports, and Policies, exhibited comparatively lower levels of adoption. For instance, only 31% of respondents incorporated sustainability considerations into KPIs. Likewise, 33% integrated sustainability into their Event Code of Conduct.

These findings point to several noteworthy observations. First, they highlight that general planning, which often involves high-level decision-making and setting the organisational direction, is more amenable to sustainability integration. This might be attributed to the fact that strategic and event planning are inherently

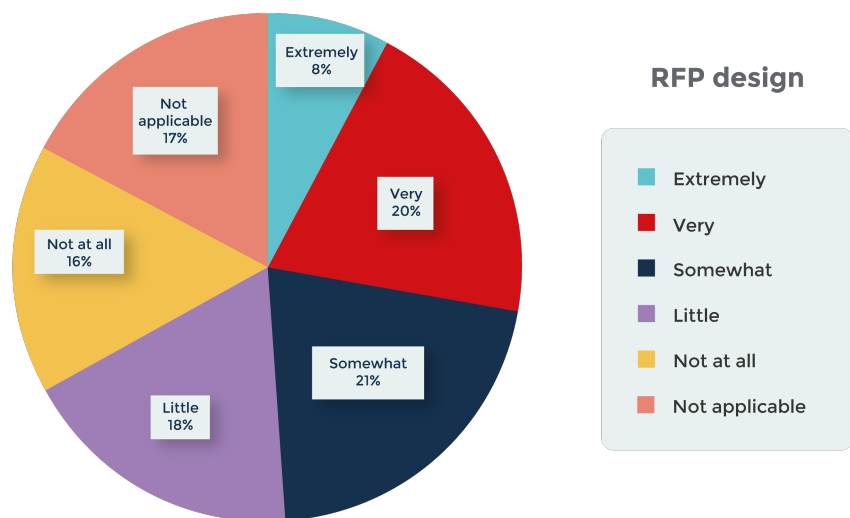
forward-looking, and thus, lend themselves to the incorporation of sustainability as a fundamental element of long-term vision and event execution. This observation is corroborated by the comparatively lower adoption rates of more detailed and operationally specific aspects of sustainability.

The relatively lower percentages of incorporation in KPIs, Event Code of Conduct, Annual Reports, and Policies could also be indicative of the elevated level of effort, commitment and intrinsic dedication needed to these data-driven approaches and change management required in the operational activities to integrate sustainability in these elements.

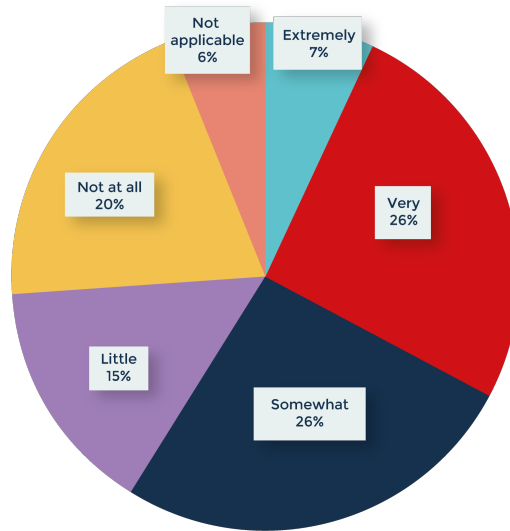
Notably, these elements are also associated with a higher degree of concreteness, transparency, and accountability, necessitating meticulous documentation and adherence to established sustainability standards. They also expose organisations as their efforts are visible for public discretion and hence could impact organisational reputation. This might explain the reluctance to embrace sustainability integration in these facets, as organisations may require more time and resources to align with these rigorous requirements, where the stakes are high leaving organisations volatile and vulnerable.

The results underscore the varied and multifaceted nature of sustainability integration within associations and organisations. While general and strategic planning efforts showcase a higher level of adoption, elements that demand a more comprehensive commitment and meticulous implementation exhibit relatively lower levels of incorporation. The inclination toward sustainability integration appears to be influenced by the comprehensive effort, transparency, and accountability associated with each aspect of the organisation’s operations.

Sustainability is integrated in future meetings rfp design



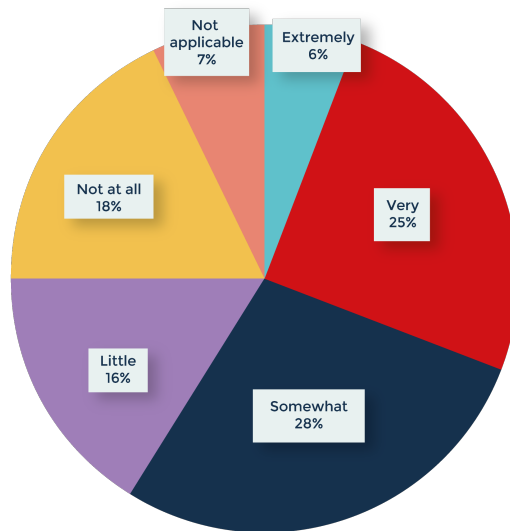
Sustainability is integrated in meeting execution



Meeting execution



Sustainability is integrated in meeting planning



Meeting planning



COMMUNICATION

Areas of missed opportunities lie in the communication and PR efforts of sustainability narratives. Respondents stated that only 19% mention their sustainability efforts and impact in annual reports. 34% communicate their sustainability efforts on social media channels.

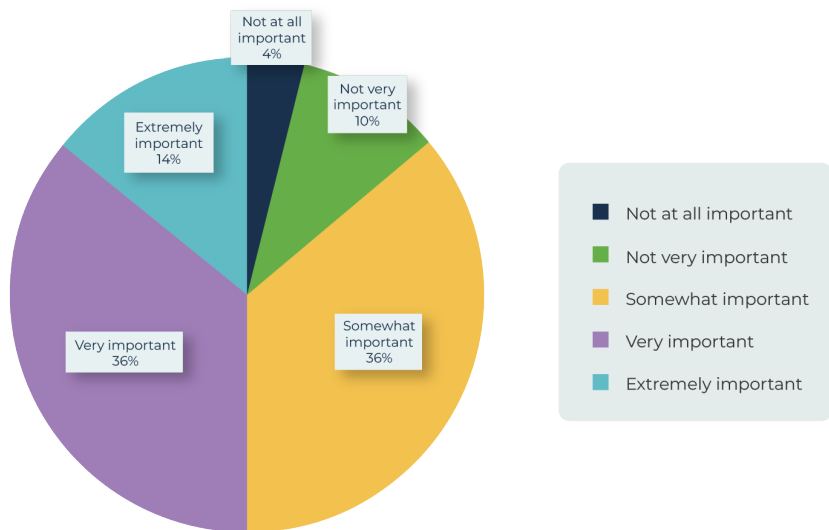
Events could promote sustainability by implementing sustainability criteria. They have the option to explore innovative ways of organisation. They could also serve as a tool for raising public awareness, disseminating knowledge, and promoting values in line with the sustainable development.



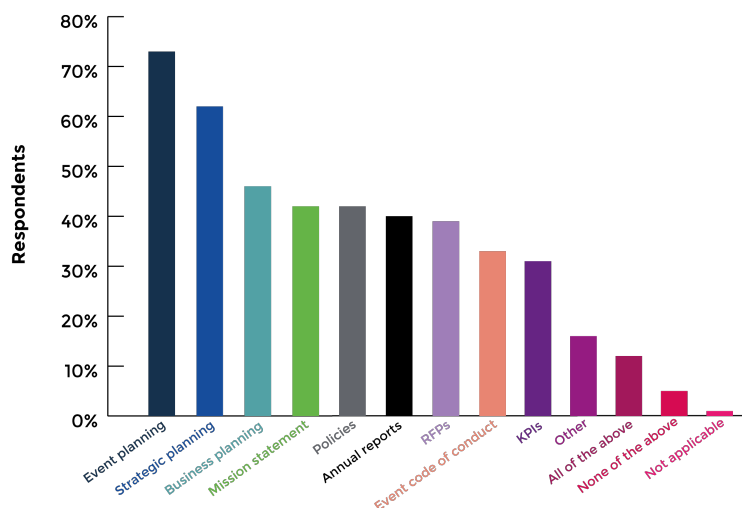
Takeaway: In addition to marketing efforts, organising sustainable city showcases and sharing best practices can significantly contribute to improving a destination’s perception as a sustainable destination. Collaborating with city authorities, industry experts, and sustainability organisations, destinations can host events that highlight the innovative sustainable practices adopted by its cities. These showcases can act as platforms for knowledge exchange and inspire other destinations to adopt similar sustainable initiatives.

To enhance the perception of being a sustainable destination, strategic communication and partnerships are vital. Relevant government bodies and destination management organisations should invest in targeted marketing campaigns that showcase the sustainable practices and initiatives of cities and event venues. These campaigns should leverage various platforms, including social media, conferences, and international events, to reach the global meeting industry audience effectively.

How important is it to you to communicate your event’s sustainability goals to attendees?



Which of the following does your association/organisation have its sustainability efforts embedded into?



3 LEVELS OF SUSTAINABILITY: ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-CULTURAL.

The three pillars of sustainability: environmental, economic and socio-cultural (often referred to as the „triple bottom line“ or the „Three Ps“ - People, Planet, and Profit, offer a holistic approach recognizing that these dimensions are interrelated and interdependent and crucial for creating a sustainable and equitable future for all and a society that can thrive in the long term.



Environmental Sustainability:

- Concerns itself in the conserving and managing of resources needed for economic activity and quality of life, especially non-renewables essential to life support. It involves maintaining essential ecological processes, reducing emissions of pollutants, and preserving biological diversity and natural heritage for the present and future generations.
- The planet's resources are finite, and maintaining the health of the environment is critical for the long-term well-being of society. Issues like climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource depletion are pressing global concerns.



Economic Sustainability:

- Involves responsible management of resources, economic growth, and financial stability. Without a healthy economy, it is challenging to support societal well-being.
- Maintaining the capital stocks required for generating income and improving living standards, ensuring viable, long-term economic operations, with opportunities for residents to gain decent employment and fair earnings.



Socio-Cultural Sustainability:

- Maintaining and enhancing the social fabric of society. This involves ensuring that all members of society have access to basic needs, education, healthcare, and a sense of belonging.
- Involves respect for human rights and equal opportunities for all persons in society to enjoy a quality life. This requires an equitable distribution of benefits to persons in the present and in the future, with a focus on poverty alleviation. Important issues concern the well-being of local communities, preservation of cultural identity and traditional values, respect for cultural diversity, gender, race and religion, maintaining and strengthening social relations, and high levels of trust between individuals and public institutions.

Which of these statements on sustainability are the most important?

Specific areas of social, environmental, economic sustainability		No. of responses
EN	Minimizes the negative impact of its activities on the natural environment.	13
SC	Promotes social equity, diversity, and inclusiveness.	11
EN	Takes into consideration its impact on the environment.	9
EN	Ensures the responsible use of natural resources.	8
ES	Ensures financial stability.	8
ES	Promotes responsible consumption and production.	7
SC	Preserves the cultural identity and diversity of communities and individuals.	6
SC	Maintains or enhances the well-being of communities and individuals.	5
ES	Maintains or improves the overall economic well-being of the association/organisation and stakeholders.	5
ES	Contributes to the sustainable development of society as a whole.	5
ES	Takes into consideration its ability to generate and manage financial resource in a responsible and sustainable manner.	5
SC	Takes into consideration its impact on the social and cultural fabric of society.	5
ES	Creates long-term economic value.	5
EN	Meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.	3
EN	Contributes toward a Net Zero future.	3
SC	Respects cultural heritage and traditions.	2
EN	Environmental sustainability	32%
SC	Socio-cultural sustainability	30%
ES	Economic sustainability	38%

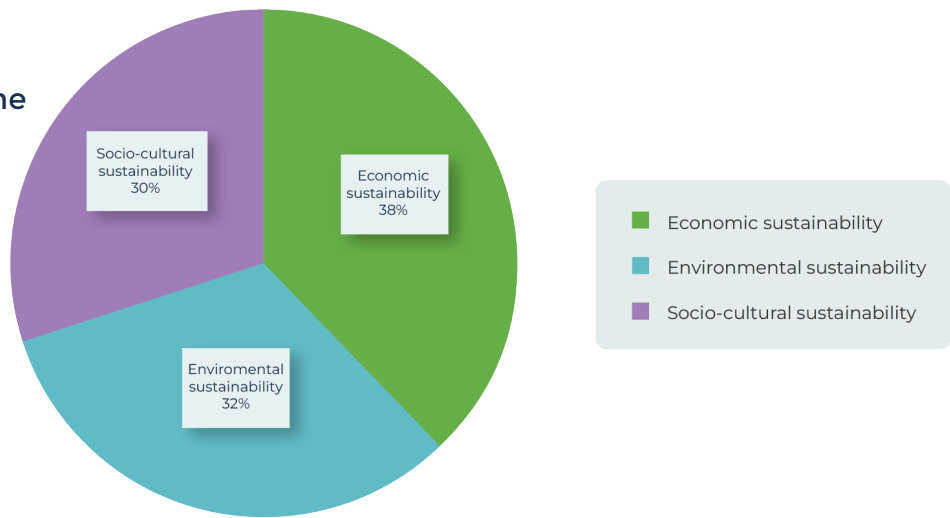
ACHIEVING THE BALANCE OF THE 3 SUSTAINABILITY DIMENSIONS

Unchecked economic growth can lead to environmental degradation and social inequality. Environmental degradation can negatively impact public health and disrupt economies.

In contrast, a balanced approach recognizes that a thriving economy is only sustainable if it is inclusive and environmentally responsible. It also acknowledges that societal well-being relies on economic and environmental stability.

Achieving a balance in economic, socio-cultural, and environmental sustainability practices is crucial for creating a society that can thrive in the long term. This balance requires policies and practices that take into account the long-term impacts of decisions in these three domains.

The importance of the 3 sustainability dimensions



FINDINGS ON THE 3 SUSTAINABILITY DIMENSIONS

Sustainability in the event industry demands equilibrium among the three interrelated dimensions: environmental, economic, and socio-cultural. Imbalances in these dimensions can have far-reaching effects.

The survey results in the distribution of sustainability efforts, show a somewhat balanced pattern, with socio-cultural sustainability being the current, largest focus and environmental sustainability at the end of the scale, namely:



ARE UN SDGS INCORPORATED?

As an industry that connects people, how everyone is treated matters, and accelerating inclusion and belonging is essential to becoming more sustainable. Global sustainability initiatives focus on those making a difference in the business events industry. The stories navigate the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and our aim is that they may inspire you to create your own initiatives to support each goal.

The relevance of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) to the event industry is highlighted through SDGs in shaping the activities of non-profit organisations, conventions, and events. There is a need for innovation in combining physical and digital gatherings, fostering connections, and contributing to a new and improved normal in the meetings industry.

The UN SDGs can serve as a framework for communicating the value that the event

industry brings to society. It provides a common language for industry professionals and clients to align their missions and set specific goals for meetings. It also functions as a partnership-building, reporting, and monitoring tool.

The event industry can align its activities with the UN SDGs, which serve as a global framework for creating value and promoting sustainability. This alignment can help events contribute to broader societal goals.

The challenges posed by health concerns, such as the need for vaccines and health assurance, require the event industry to innovate by combining physical and digital gatherings. This adaptation is relevant for ensuring the industry’s survival and relevance.

The UN SDGs provide a common language for industry professionals, clients, and stakeholders to communicate their mission and goals. This common language can enhance collaboration and partnership building within the industry.

Legacy4 planning is becoming important for events, and it involves considering the broader impact of events on communities, sectors, and organisations. Aligning legacy goals with SDGs can result in more meaningful and sustainable legacies.

The text highlights the importance of using the SDGs as a reporting and monitoring tool. This can help the event industry track its contributions to societal goals and demonstrate its value to stakeholders.

The UN SDGs offer a valuable framework for the event industry to align its activities with broader societal objectives, foster innovation, create meaningful legacies, and communicate its value effectively.

BASIC SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDE:

- Universal human rights
- Community impacts
- Labour practices
- Respect for culture
- Safety and security
- Health and well-being

⁴ 'Legacy' conveys the idea of building something over a long period of time. It refers to something that an organisation leaves behind; its gift to the wider community. ICCASkills Module 7 - Chapter 2 - Creating Economic, Social and Legacy Impacts.

'Legacy is all planned and unplanned, positive and negative, tangible and intangible structures created for and by an event that remain longer than the event itself' - Preuss, 2019



BASIC ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES INCLUDE:

- Conservation of resources, including water, energy and natural resources
- Waste management
- Carbon emissions reduction and management
- Supply chain management and responsible purchasing
- Biodiversity preservation



SUSTAINABLE EVENTS SUPPORT THRIVING ECONOMIC PRACTICES THROUGH:

- Collaboration and partnerships
- Local support, including small and medium enterprises (SMEs)
- Stakeholder participation
- Equitable economic impact
- Transparency
- Responsible governance

Source of graph: [Events Industry Council](#)

CURRENT ALIGNMENT WITH UN SDGS:

In September 2023, the United Nations, a High-level political forum on sustainable development, met. The agenda discussion focused on the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals Report, which was delivered by the Secretary-General.

The findings are to serve as an alarm because the globe is at the midpoint of 2030 and the report states the Sustainable Development Goals are in deep trouble. A preliminary assessment of the roughly 140 targets for which data is available shows that only about 12 per cent are on track; more than half, although showing some progress, are moderately or severely off track; and some 30 per cent have either seen no movement or regressed below the 2015 baseline.

Recommendations for Events:

This is an opportunity for events to promote sustainability by implementing sustainability criteria. They have the option to explore innovative ways of organisation. They could also serve as a tool for raising public awareness, disseminating knowledge, and promoting values in line with the 2030 Agenda and sustainable development. Finally, they could demonstrate positive effects on the society, climate and environment and therefore serve as good practice examples, contributing to the global sustainability goals.

Respondents have indicated alignment with the following SDGs within their associations/organisations:

ORGANISATION GOALS	%	EVENT GOALS	%
GOAL 5: Gender Equality	5%	GOAL 5: Gender Equality	46%
GOAL 4: Quality Education	39%	GOAL 4: Quality Education	46%
GOAL 3: Good Health and Well-being	38%	GOAL 3: Good Health and Well-being	37%
GOAL 13: Climate Action	35%	GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption & Production	34%
GOAL 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal	32%	GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	32%
GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption & Production	30%	GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	32%
GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	30%	GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	29%
GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	29%	GOAL 10: Reduced Inequality	28%
GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	28%	GOAL 13: Climate Action	27%
GOAL 10: Reduced Inequality	28%	GOAL 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal	24%
GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	24%	GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	21%
GOAL 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	22%	GOAL 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	14%
GOAL 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions	19%	GOAL 15: Life and Land	14%
GOAL 15: Life and Land	17%	GOAL 14: Life Below Water	13%
GOAL 14: Life Below Water	16%	GOAL 2: Zero Hunger	12%
GOAL 2: Zero Hunger	16%	GOAL 1: No Poverty	11%
GOAL 1: No Poverty	16%	GOAL 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions	10%
All of the above	8%	All of the above	5%
None of the above	21%	None of the above	13%
Not applicable	17%	Not applicable	21%

TOP 10 GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES AND CAMPAIGNS.

Rank	Name	Count
1	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	57
2	The Paris Agreement	55
3	Net Zero by 2050 (UNFCCC)	39
4	World Water Day	35
5	Net Zero Carbon Event initiative	31
6	World Environment Day (UNEP)	30
7	Earth Hour (World Wildfire Fund)	27
8	Climate Action Network	26
9	EIC Sustainable Event Standards	26
10	United National Global Compact	25

ASSOCIATION STRATEGIES FOR MAKING EVENTS MORE SUSTAINABLE.

It is encouraging to note that the majority of survey respondents (83%) are actively pursuing sustainability in executing their event practices. Only a small segment of respondents falls into the category of having no established policies or sustainability efforts.

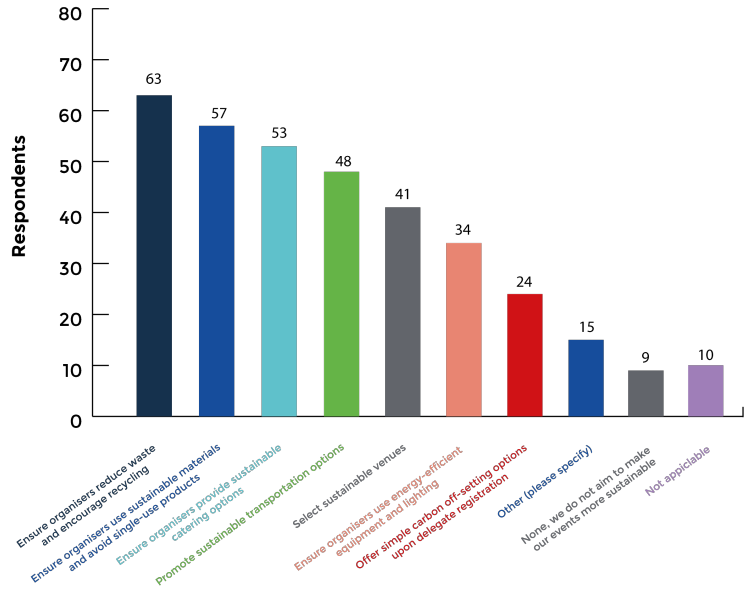
Evidently, associations are at various points along the sustainability spectrum. Some have articulated advanced and well-established sustainability strategies, while others acknowledge that there is still much room for learning and growth.

Commonly cited **barriers** include insufficient funding, limited resources, and challenges in securing support from boards and committees. These obstacles can be effectively addressed through collaboration with event suppliers and by endorsing initiatives like the Net Zero Carbon Events roadmap.

The following **sustainability efforts** were most frequently mentioned by associations:

- Going paperless/digital
- Catering (vegetarian/vegan, food waste, local/seasonal produce etc.)
- Materials (avoid, reduce, recycle)
- Eliminating single-use plastic
- Sustainable travel/transport options
- Providing virtual/hybrid attendance (speakers and/or delegates)
- Conference bags, delegate freebies (avoid, reduce, recycle)

What steps do you currently take to make your events more sustainable?

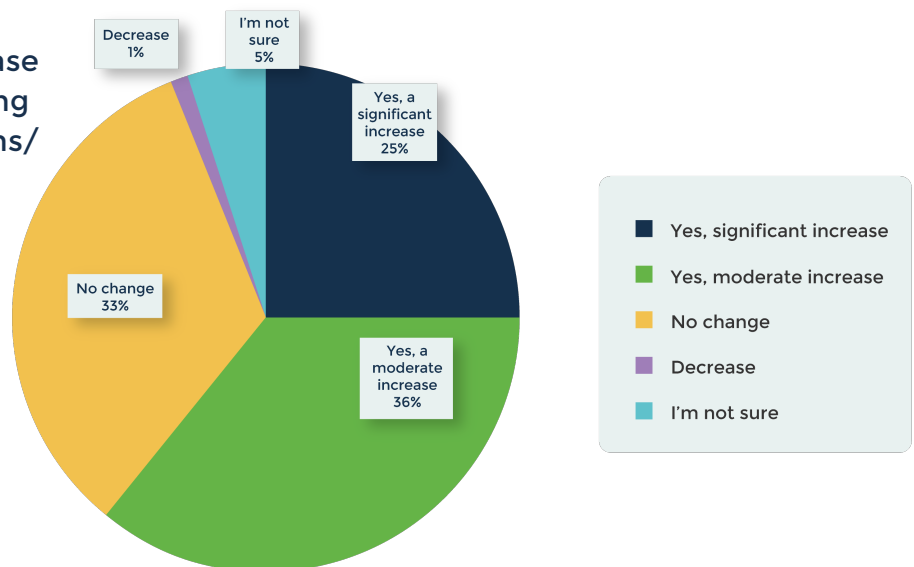


TRENDS IN SUSTAINABLE EVENT PLANNING

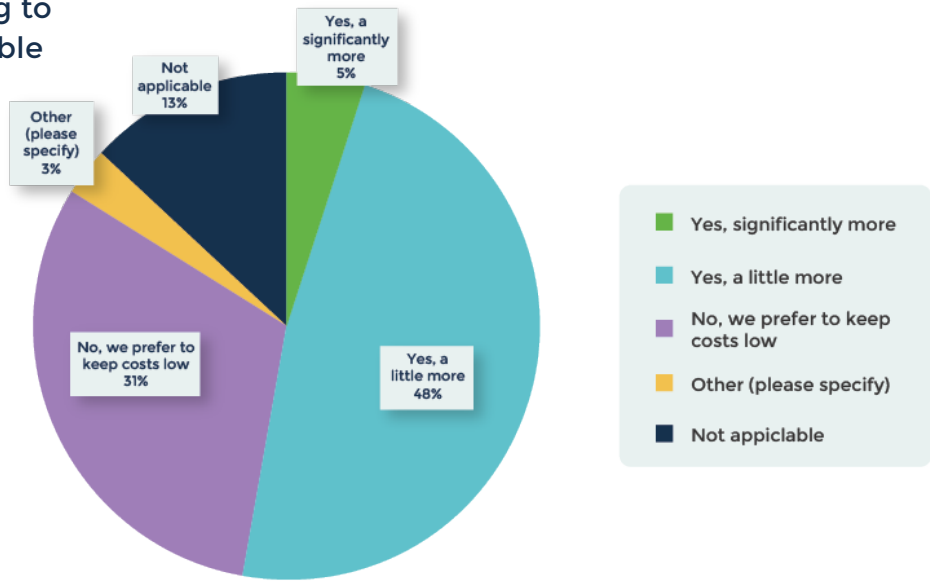
We note that there has been a marked increase in the number of clients requesting sustainable measures in events. 25% noting a significant increase, 36% a moderate increase. Coupled with over 50% of organisations are also willing to pay more for sustainability.

The **growing focus** on sustainability signals a favourable trend within the event industry. **Organisations are increasingly realising the advantages of sustainable practices, which encompass cost savings, bolstered reputation, and positive societal contributions.** As the global shift toward sustainability continues, it is anticipated that sustainability will evolve into an intrinsic element of event planning, catalysing innovation and the adoption of eco-friendly technologies.

Have you seen an increase in participants requesting more sustainable options/initiatives in events?



Would your association/organisation be willing to pay more for sustainable event options?



ASSOCIATION STRATEGIES FOR MAKING EVENTS MORE SUSTAINABLE.

The survey responses underscore the importance of collaboration and partnerships as essential factors in rendering events sustainable and regenerative⁵. While more associations and event suppliers are integrating sustainability as a central strategic goal, it is evident that there remains a knowledge gap and a need for practical expertise in making events more sustainable.

Among the survey responses, the Top 5 prioritized areas for action that partners can take include:

- Provide best practices, resources, checklists etc.
- Offer sustainable catering options.
- Offer digital options to avoid printing.
- Provide financial assistance/affordable and sustainable options.
- Avoid single use plastics and materials.

“More systematic engagement with the private sector goes hand in hand with a renewed social contract anchored in human rights, inclusion, protection and participation.”

UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed

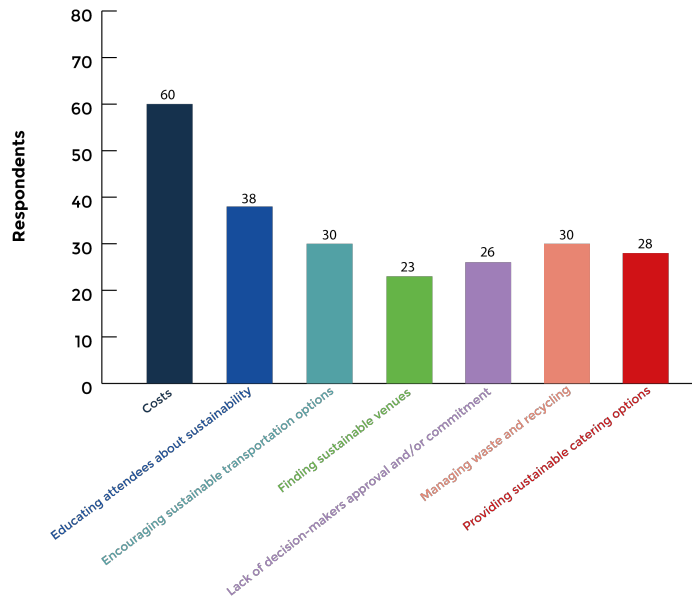


⁵ Regenerative - ‘The word ‘regenerative’ means creating the conditions conducive for life to continuously renew itself, to transcend into new forms, and to flourish amid ever-changing life-conditions.’ Regenerative Leadership, G. Hutchins and L. Storm

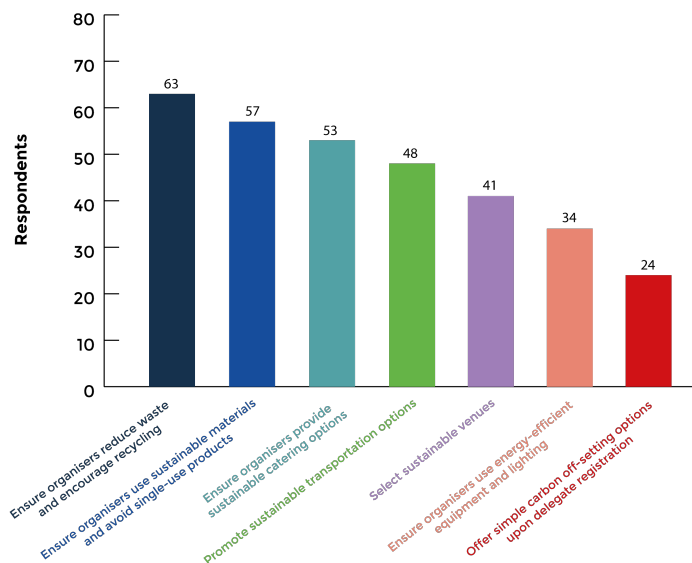
WHAT RESOURCES WOULD BE HELPFUL IN PLANNING MORE SUSTAINABLE EVENTS?

Carbon calculator.	14%
Education and training on sustainability practices.	14%
Guides for reducing waste and increasing recycling.	13%
Sustainable venue directories.	13%
Best practices for energy efficiency.	11%
Government subsidies.	11%
Information on sustainable transportation options.	11%
Recommendations for sustainable catering providers.	11%

What challenges have you faced when planning sustainable events?



Attendees are encouraged in the following sustainability efforts



TOOLS MEASURE CARBON FOOTPRINT

Many organisations and event organisers are increasingly undertaking environmental impact assessments.

Opportunity action step: 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. Many tools exist and have been created to assist event organisers not only measure the potential carbon footprint, but also have access to guidance to sustainable events.

On tools, calculators that estimate carbon emissions for events are not in much use, with 45% saying they don't use one and only 13% using one. Important to note that neither destinations nor meeting planners have not reached the status yet where this is common practice.

WHICH TOOLS DO YOU USE TO CALCULATE/PREDICT THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF YOUR EVENT?

Value	Percent
We do not calculate our footprint	45%
Not applicable	17%
Carbon Calculator for Events	13%
We rely on the event host provide their own calculator and/or calculations	12%
Net Zero Carbon Event initiative	8%
World Environment Day (UNEP)	8%
Earth Hour (World Wildfire Fund)	2%
Climate Action Network	2%
EIC Sustainable Event Standards	2%
United National Global Compact	2%
United Nations Sustainable De	1%
The Paris Agreement	1%
Net Zero by 2050 (UNFCCC)	1%

HOW TO HELP ORGANISATIONS MEET THEIR GOALS

Awareness of any of these global sustainability programs, initiatives, or campaigns is very low amongst respondents, with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) bringing in the highest respondents, followed by the Paris Agreement. The other initiatives are markedly much lower in awareness. These initiatives could provide for inspiration of new avenues in sustainability.

The majority of responses indicate the need for educational support, sharing best practices, resources, guidelines etc. not just from peer-to-peer between associations, but also with destinations and meeting suppliers. Also, the need for building trustworthy partnerships and collaboration around areas such as sustainability and legacy, were also frequently mentioned.

With economic struggles still ongoing for most of the world, it is not surprising that the need for contract and pricing flexibility is still required for associations to continue with their activities.

The Meetings and Business Events industry involves an increasingly networked set of inter-relationships between actors in the public, private and NGO sectors, bringing together tourists, host communities, businesses and government institutions of the state with an interest in tourism, to enable sustainable development.

COLLABORATION WITH INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS

The meeting industry's sustainability efforts can be further bolstered through collaboration among various stakeholders, including hotels, transportation providers, and local communities. Creating a cohesive and unified approach to sustainability will not only enhance the destination's reputation as a sustainable destination but also lead to lasting positive impacts on the environment and local communities.

We are all in this together as we work to reach our industry's target of net zero. This can be achieved through;

- **Innovation**
- **Collaboration**
- **Economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impact**
- **Legacy**
- **Commitment to continuous improvement**
- **Commitment to industry education**

ENGAGING WITH INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND EVENT PLANNERS

Destinations can strengthen their position as a sustainable destination by engaging with international associations and event planners directly.

Collaborating with organisations like the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) can open opportunities to share success stories and lessons learned from hosting sustainable events.

Here are just a few tangible ideas and outcomes that provide a positive environment for developing sustainability practices and collaborating with various partners:

Establish a Knowledge Sharing Platform:

Establish a platform or forum for partners to share success stories and lessons learned from hosting sustainable events. This could be in the form of regular workshops, webinars, or a dedicated online space where partners can exchange insights and best practices in sustainability.

Develop a Recognition and Awards:

Institute a recognition program or awards system to acknowledge and celebrate partners who consistently implement and excel in sustainable practices. This could serve as a powerful incentive for partners to prioritise sustainability and showcase their commitment to environmentally conscious event planning.

Provide Incentives for Sustainable Practices:

Provide financial incentives or discounts for planners who actively choose and implement sustainable practices in their events. This could include reduced fees, complimentary services, or other tangible benefits that make sustainability an attractive choice for event planners.

Develop Educational Resources:

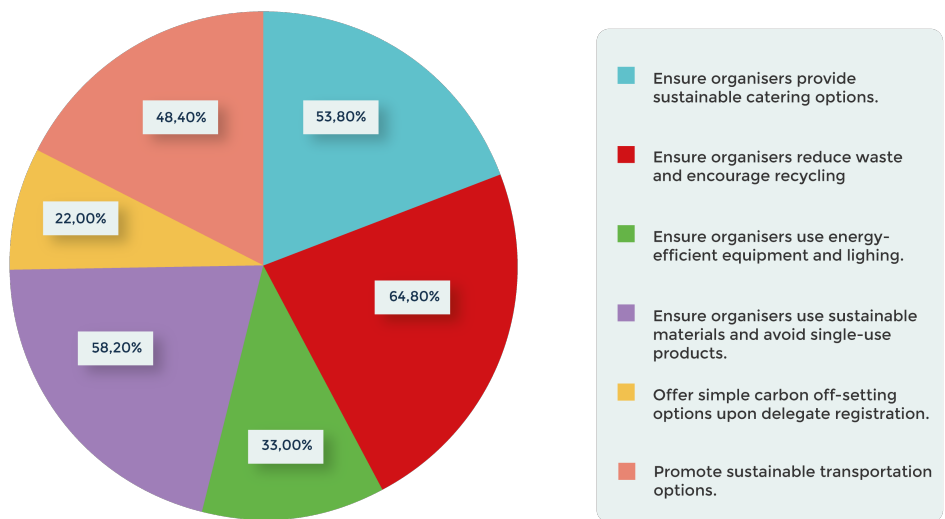
Develop and offer educational resources, guidelines, and toolkits to assist partners in adopting and integrating sustainable practices into their events. This could include information on eco-friendly venues, sustainable catering options, waste reduction strategies, and other practical tips.

Provide Marketing Support:

Provide marketing support for events that prioritise sustainability. This could involve featuring these events prominently in promotional materials, social media, and other marketing channels, thereby showcasing the commitment to sustainability and attracting like-minded participants.

Focus on Collaborative Sustainability Initiatives:

Explore joint initiatives or projects focused on broader sustainability goals within the events industry. This could involve partnering with other organisations, local communities, or government entities to contribute to larger-scale environmental and social initiatives. Offering incentives and support for planners who choose sustainable practices can also encourage more events to prioritise environmental consciousness when selecting a host destination.



COMMENTS

WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU ENCOUNTERED



- In practice, venues determine most sustainable options.
- Limited staff capacity to research and/or implement sustainable practices.
- Providing sustainable catering options for a fair price.
- The flexibility of the association to make changes at all.
- Consideration of sustainability amidst a myriad of other factors that are already limiting/challenging for our decision making and management.
- Input from venue and suppliers.
- Managing food waste.



HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABILITY?



- Green travel award
- Make all materials available electronically, instead of printing.
- Provided sustainable giveaways like pens, water bottles, other recycled/sustainable items.
- Reduce single use products; encourage venues to provide sustainable catering options and reduce waste, promote recycling.
- We are in very early stages of working toward more sustainable events.
- We try to introduce sustainable exhibition options.
- Select destinations/venues that allow participants to use local public transportation; minimise single-use products where possible; donate leftover food, reduce plastics.



HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE CATERING?



- Reuse of catering remaining food.
- We avoid soft drinks for all our staff and internal meetings.
- Collaboration with food banks and shelters.
- Create forward flow menus.



HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY?



- Green Travel Award, only select hotels within walking distance to venue.
- We recommend that options are costed into bids and then rely on the decisions of the organisers.
- Ensure that destination is reachable by train.
- Provide e-bus shuttle between main event locations.
- Use destinations/venues that allow participants to locally use public transportation or walk.



WHAT CRITERIA MUST BE INCLUDED IN RFP DESIGN



- **Socio-economic sustainability: Community and individual well-being through DEI.**
- Catering options
- Event technical equipment (AV, IT/Wi-Fi etc.)
- Accessibility for disabled
- **Economic sustainability: Long-term and overall economic well-being of association/organisation and society.**

- **Capacity and range of accommodation**
- **Appealing conditions and contractual flexibility**
- **Destination: Travel time to/from major cities:**
- **Costs**
- **Venue capacity and fit-out:**



FACTORS IMPORTANT TO DESTINATION SELECTION



- **Preference of local member association.**
- **Accessibility for people with cognitive impairment.**
- **Accessibility for disabled is paramount for our organisation.**
- **Safety and a friendly business environment.**
- **The ability of the destination to attract a large audience primarily related to the scientific strength/reputation of the local/national community, major stakeholders.**
- **Political context.**
- **Reliable local contacts.**
- **Desirability of the destination for attendees.**
- **Variety - we attempt to visit all of our member countries.**
- **Event venue which has sustainability practices.**
- **Integration - how does all the infrastructure work together, from airports inbound flights to the connectivity of venue and hotels.**
- **Stakeholder experience: professional and personal.**
- **Simplicity, time efficient, safety, productive, enjoyable.**
- **Shared values of host destination and academic partners.**



CONCLUSION

Building upon the survey findings and the analysis of challenges, the following recommendations are proposed to improve perceptions of sustainable destinations. By adopting these recommendations, destinations can enhance their standing as a preferred sustainable destination, attract more environmentally conscious events, and contribute to a greener future for the global meeting industry.

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- I. Encourage organisations to develop comprehensive sustainability strategies, including carbon footprint reduction and water conservation.

 - II. Promote sustainable transportation options to reduce emissions associated with travel to events.

 - III. Explore opportunities for waste reduction and adopt circular economy principles.

 - IV. Implement targeted marketing campaigns to showcase the sustainable practices of cities and event venues.

 - V. Organise events showcasing sustainable cities and to exchange knowledge, sharing best practices to inspire other destinations.

 - VI. Engage directly with international associations and event planners to promote sustainable offerings.

 - VII. Foster collaboration among industry stakeholders to create a unified and impactful approach to sustainability.
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We extend our gratitude to all participants who contributed their valuable insights to this research. Your participation is instrumental in shaping a more sustainable future for the meeting industry.

