



GLASGOW CONVENTION BUREAU

Go Greener: Sustainable conference ideas



GLASGOW
CONVENTION
BUREAU

GO GREENER!

Glasgow Convention Bureau aims to encourage sustainable business tourism in the city. By providing information and resources for conference organisers and suppliers, we hope to inspire initiatives to go greener. This guide pulls together a range of ideas and suggestions from the industry on existing good practice to encourage sustainable conference planning and delivery.

TRAVEL



You may wish to encourage delegates to consider more sustainable travel options on their journey to the conference destination and also within the city during the event.

Some ways to encourage more sustainable travel include:

- Provide information on your conference website on different travel options for getting to the destination
- Provide information on getting around the city
- Add a journey planner widget to your website
- Consider delegate public transport passes
- Encourage taxi sharing for delegates
- Encourage walking and cycling around the city
- Share information with delegates on the city bike hire scheme
- If using multiple venues, consider venue options within walking distance to cut down on transfers and provide walking instructions / maps between venues.
- Launch a pedometer challenge to encourage delegates to walk between hotels and venues

OFFSET CARBON EMISSIONS



As we become more aware of our own carbon footprint, we may wish to consider the carbon emissions from our journey to a conference.

You can use an online carbon calculator to get a better idea of the impact of your journey on the environment. If you wish to offset your carbon emissions, you could contribute to a local environmental project, such as the Clyde Climate Forest.

Some options for this include:

- Make a donation to a carbon offsetting project by including this in your conference budget, or encouraging delegates to donate a small amount at registration
- Organise a social activity where delegates plant trees or volunteer with a local project

Clyde Climate Forest

The Clyde Climate Forest will see 18 million trees planted in both urban and rural parts of Glasgow City Region over the next decade.

Trees, woodlands and forests are recognised as essential if we are to address the Climate Crisis by reducing damaging atmospheric emissions and are crucial to assist in a recovery for nature.

Goals by 2030:

CANOPY

increase the average tree canopy cover in urban glasgow to 20%

CONNECTIVITY

increase the average broadleaved woodland network area to 142 ha – an increase of 20%

CARBON

increase forest and woodland cover in glasgow city region to 20%

Learn more about this project [here](#).

VENUES, SUPPLIERS AND HOTELS

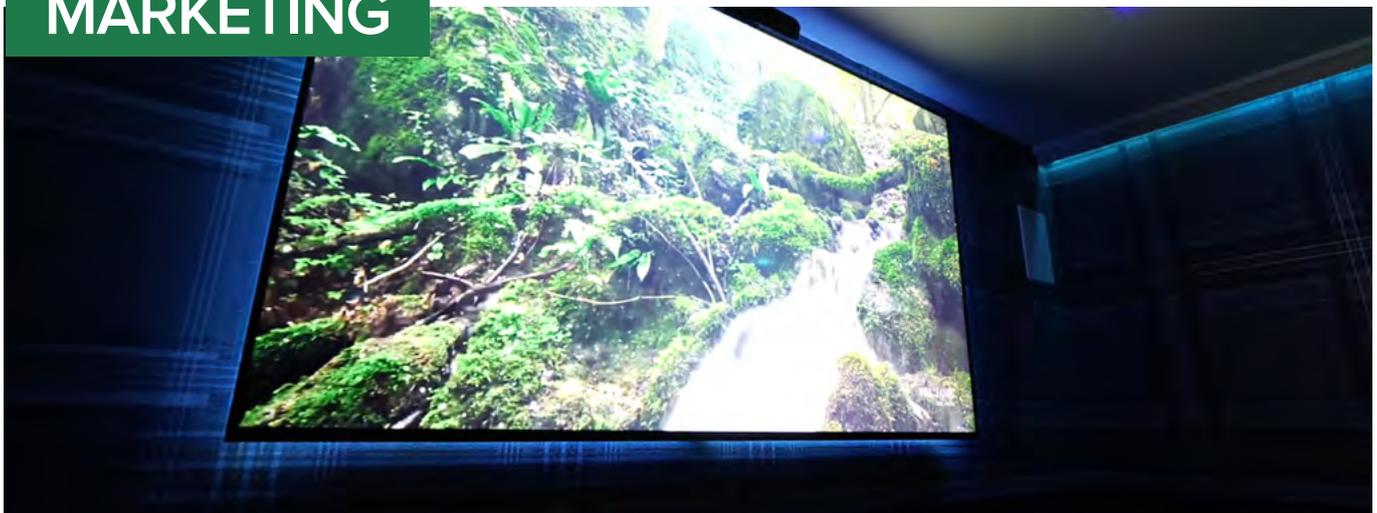


Help to raise industry standards by selecting venues with sustainable credentials. Ask your selected venues, suppliers, restaurants and hotels about their green accreditations and sustainability policy. We encourage businesses in Glasgow to join an accreditation scheme, such as Green Tourism, Green Key or Taste Our Best.

Those businesses who don't yet have an accreditation may have their own initiatives and policies which they can share.

You can search for venues and suppliers on the Glasgow Convention Bureau website, with the option to filter sustainable businesses.

MARKETING



When pulling together your promotional plan for the conference, the following suggestions may be useful:

- Consider reducing paper promotional materials and flyers in favour of digital newsletters
- Promote the event via social media channels
- Where promoting at other events, consider digital signs, competitions, eye-catching videos and PowerPoint presentations instead of give-aways and flyers
- If using roller banners, consider whether the hardware can be reused after the event or donated
- Build information on your green measures into your delegate communications and conference website

FOOD AND DRINK



Think about ways to reduce food waste and food packaging waste for your meeting, working closely with your venues and suppliers.

Some ideas for reducing the environmental impact of your conference include:

- Where possible, choose local produce with fewer food miles for your conference catering
- Invite delegates to bring a food container for any food they can't finish on-site
- Consider reusable coffee cups and water bottles
- Ask your venue about water points to refill bottles and point these out to delegates
- Ask your venue about waste procedures
- Consider crockery for coffee breaks instead of single use items
- Only use straws where necessary
- Check if your venue has options for recycling food packaging and food waste bins
- Consider increasing the percentage of vegetarian and vegan food on offer
- Find out more about meat sources and look for ethical and low impact farming
- Consider whether excess items can be donated to local food banks or charities (packets of biscuits etc.)
- Communicate your green practices to your delegates in advance to manage expectations on site

ACTIVITIES



As you organise activities outwith the conference sessions, such as tours and social programme events, the following suggestions may help you to go greener:

- Consider organising walking and cycling tours, instead of traditional tours - Glasgow has great options!
- If your delegates would enjoy a green activity, consider volunteer gardening or seed planting in a community garden or local park
- If you are arranging transport for your social programme, consider suppliers with sustainable credentials
- [Kaleyard Cook School](#) offers cookery classes with local produce & a zero waste policy
- If you have time to do some charity work, we can put you in touch with a local organisation to volunteer time or donations

REDUCE PAPER WASTE



Many conferences are now considering going paper-free or reducing overall volumes of paper waste.

Some good practice examples include:

- Reduce printed materials by considering digital alternatives, such as a conference app and e-posters
- Printed programmes provided as needed, rather than issued one per delegate
- Abstracts available online or via USB drive
- Online digital voting options instead of voting by paper
- Condensed programme to use less paper
- Use white boards instead of flipchart paper where possible
- Eco-friendly and vegetable based inks for print
- Printing on recycled paper
- Look for paper and wood products with the FSC logo - this label ensures that the trees that are harvested are replaced or allowed to regenerate naturally
- Ask your printing supplier about sustainable options

REUSE & RECYCLE



Opportunities for reusing and recycling in the planning stages and during the conference include:

- Order lanyards made from recycled plastic bottles or biodegradable material such as bamboo
- Have a visible return point at registration for conference badges and lanyards
- Discuss recycling provision at the venue and encourage exhibitors and delegates to use the facilities available
- Use stationery (pens, pencils, paper etc.) from recycled / sustainable sources
- Consider conference bags made from sustainable materials which can be reused by delegates

DONATE EVENT MATERIALS



At the end of an event, you might be faced with leftover materials, which have to be couriered, stored or simply thrown away.

Measure the waste which is sent to a skip at your event and set your team a challenge to reduce this volume at your next event.

Many materials can be reused, recycled or donated to charities or community groups, via companies such as Event Cycle.

Donations can include:

- Furniture and textiles
- Pens, pencils, boxes and stationery
- Household electrics & AV equipment
- Conference bags, non-perishable food, mugs, water bottles and notebooks
- Exhibition materials, building materials and decorations

You may have the opportunity to send materials where they are needed most and have a great social impact story for your conference.



Event Cycle

Event Cycle take unwanted event waste and give it a second life. They repurpose and redistribute items you no longer need to charities and community groups, as well as back into the events industry.

From graphics to giveaways, planks of wood to plants, there's a new home waiting for them all. Event Cycle aims to lead the events industry into a circular economy where landfill waste is reduced and by doing so a social impact is made.

As well as finding a home (as local as possible) for your unwanted items, Event Cycle offer a consultancy service for organisers looking to plan early and cut down on event waste. You can include their details in your exhibitor manual to cut down on exhibition waste and even have an on-site presence if required.

Find out more [here](#)

Tells us
what you
have

We will
find a
home

We will
tell you
where it
went

EXHIBITORS



Provide a green checklist for your exhibitors in the exhibitor information or conference website. Make sure your exhibitors are aware of venue and conference recycling facilities and have a plan for any leftover materials.

Ask your exhibitors to consider QR codes instead of printed flyers and to follow your own policies on sustainable giveaways.

GIFTS



If you provide a giveaway for your delegates or offer conference souvenirs for sale, consider environmentally-friendly options and materials.

Practical items which are useful for daily life are more likely to be reused, rather than discarded.

Some ideas for greener gifts / souvenirs include:

- Reusable water bottle or coffee mug
- Give-aways made from recycled and biodegradable materials
- Gift to charity on behalf of delegates e.g. sponsor a local beehive or fundraise for a green cause
- Greener seed planters for delegates to plant wild flowers
- Locally produced/crafted gift

FURTHER INSPIRATION



The UN Sustainable Development Goals are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

As a business or event, you might be inspired by these goals and select several to focus on while planning your event. Ask us for handy flashcards, which can be used as a workshop tool to incorporate sustainability actions in your project.

RESOURCES AND FEEDBACK



Find more information about our People Make Glasgow Greener campaign on [our website](#) and in our [Sustainability Toolkit](#).

Search for local venues and suppliers in Glasgow in our [online database](#).

Browse a full range of marketing tools to promote your conference on our [Meeting Planners' Toolkit](#).

We are always happy to hear from conference organisers about ways to go greener!

If you have feedback from your delegates, exhibitors or conference team, please [get in touch](#).

