

Guidelines for sustainable events

Introduction

The European Magnetism Association (EMA) is concerned with the environmental sustainability of its activities. EMA feels responsible for its own impact on climate change, greenhouse gas emissions, and overexploitation of nonrenewable resources. The association thus engages to make its events (conferences and schools, such as [JEMS](#) and [ESM](#)) as sustainable as possible and to foster the same at other events organised by the magnetism community. This includes events supported by EMA's [technical sponsorship](#). Addressing sustainability measures is a compulsory item when making a bid for these events. The organisers should consider and propose actions to keep waste and greenhouse gas production under control during the event and, after the event, evaluate how successful these actions have been. This document suggests a series of measures in this direction.

Organisers of events not related to EMA may also find inspiration from these guidelines. We are always interested in learning from other event organisers, participants, and communities.

Recommendations

Organisers should focus on actions that can have an immediate and practical impact. To do so, a series of measures should be considered to limit waste, the emission of greenhouse gases induced by the event, and the use of resources on site. These objectives can be achieved by identifying the sources of waste and emissions, proposing measures to address them, and monitoring the outcome for each event, as well as the progress in the long run. Here is a summary of general principles and practical recommendations. Useful checklists and advice provided by the European Commission can be found [here](#) and [here](#), and provided by the German Ministry for the Environment [here](#). These checklists can be used to both plan sustainability actions and evaluate their effectiveness after the event.

General principles (MEAWW)

- **Mobility:** avoid unnecessary transportation, encourage the use of trains, car sharing and clustering, online streaming
- **Energy:** be aware of energy consumption associated with heating, air conditioning, ...
- **Awareness:** raise awareness among the participants and explain your sustainability actions
- **Water:** be aware of water consumption
- **Waste:** be aware of waste management and recycling associated with printed programme and goodies, food, ...

Practical measures

- Transportation
 - # Implement video streaming, remote participation (LAN internet connection in the conference rooms, cameras, ...), and video recording to comply with the requirements of hybrid events. Besides sustainability, remote participation will benefit researchers with childcare/caregiver duties or physical disabilities.
 - # Remote participation in local hubs should be encouraged. This fosters local interaction and favours global online participation while keeping the carbon footprint to a minimum.

- # Encourage low-emission transportation for participants attending on site (favour ground and shared means of transportation, and if flights cannot be avoided, avoid multiple flights, e.g. by combining train/bus and plane). Encourage carsharing when possible.
 - # Select a reasonably central location for the sake of reducing commuting during the event. Provide discounted or free tickets for public transport or access to electric vehicles to the participants.
 - # Encourage walking. Help the participants find their way by providing timetables and directions.
 - # At registration, suggest tools to compare the impact of different transport means (<https://egg.civil.auth.gr/> or similar) and easily plan a sustainable trip (<https://rail.cc/> or similar).
 - # Consider existing [resources](#) to identify the best measures to limit the carbon footprint of conference travels.
- Practical organisation
 - # Reduce as much as possible the use of resources and energy on-site. For example, limit or avoid the use of air conditioning altogether and avoid organising events during hot seasons or in hot locations. Prioritise energy-efficient buildings.
 - # Promote recycling and proper waste separation. Waste must be collected in proper, clearly recognisable containers.
 - # Avoid goodies and giveaways or keep them to the bare minimum. Select sustainable and local products if you cannot do without them.
 - # Avoid printing the programme on paper or ask a fee to print it on recycled paper.
 - # Reduce the production of plastic waste and promote recycling. For example, do not use disposable tableware and ask participants to bring their own reusable water bottle and a cup for coffee breaks. Provide tap water instead of bottles or go for water dispensers. If reusable items are not possible, choose compostable and biodegradable alternatives.
 - # Encourage vegetarian and local sustainable catering with EU or national labels (such as “Blauer Engel” or “AB” labels). If meat or fish cannot be avoided for cultural reasons, favour local sustainable producers. At registration, inquire about the diet of participants to plan the catering accordingly. Favour on-site catering (local cafeterias, university’s canteen) over external catering services for regular meals, coffee breaks, and event dinners.
 - Recommend sustainable accommodation

Give priority to hotels that have been certified as environmentally friendly. Look for Green Labels on their website or use the [EU Ecolabel Tourist Accommodation](#) catalogue or similar online tools to identify them easily.
 - Foster awareness
 - # Consider the organisation of social and societal interactions, such as round tables, workshops, and public lectures, to promote sustainable science among the participants.
 - # Consider and encourage carbon compensation for flights.
 - # Consider alternative social events, such as cleaning of public areas, followed by the event dinner or get-together activities.

- # Communicate on the event’s sustainability measures.
- # Let participants provide feedback on the event’s sustainability.

Annexe – Normative considerations

All measures above derive from common sense. For information, the ISO14001 sets the guidelines for *Environmental management systems*. It was established in 1996, modified in 2004 and 2015. The details of the norm can be found online:

<https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:14001:ed-3:v1:en>

Several sources providing a summary of the norm are also available online on the site of the European Commission or the United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON). The method envisioned in the Norm ISO14001 is shown in Figure 1. It supposes three steps, which are decomposed as follows:

- **The area of influence of the event organisers:** the organisers must identify areas of influence where realistic goals could be established to reduce GHG or spare resources. Do not aim for something complicated; keep things simple.
- **The communication of the policies to the participants:** the goals must be communicated to stakeholders and participants to ensure that they are understood, thus promoting endorsement of the proposed measures. This can also contribute to the visibility of the event.
- **Reporting:** To enforce an improvement in the sustainability of the events in the long run, the organisers should monitor and report on the goals and targets under their area of influence. Weaknesses in improvements should be identified. Achievements and targets should be reported to the stakeholders, the participants, the subcontractors and the public.



Figure 1: Schematic view of the method encouraged in the norm ISO14001. Organizers should identify their area of influence, communicate the policies and the changes and monitor and report the changes.