



ICOMOS

international council on monuments and sites

Responsible Meetings & Events Checklists In-Person Meetings Checklists

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In-person Meetings Checklist

In-person meetings can be important; they offer an opportunity for member countries across the globe to invite visitors and to showcase their countries and heritage; they can provide a convivial forum and format, for both formal and informal exchange and in-person contact, both during and around scheduled meetings; during the global lockdown precipitated by COVID 19, the lack of in-person contact was acutely felt by many and it affected well-being and relationships.

Where in-person meetings are selected, hybrid options should always be available and required in Terms of Reference (ToR), to ensure inclusion, provide an appropriate record and facilitate succession. Venues and service providers should be carefully selected for their sustainability track record. The checklist for this section also applies to hybrid meetings, which should also be focused on zero waste and maximum sustainability.



a Checklist for organisers | Before the event

1.	Necessity of an in-person meeting	Roles	Deadlines	Notes
1.a.	Did you reflect on the need to hold an in-person meeting/ event?			
1.b.	Did you use a sustainable event management system (e.g., ISO 2012 ¹) or environmental scheme (e.g., EMAS ²) internally or by suppliers/ contractors?			

Is an in-person meeting / event necessary?

The preliminary stage, before planning any Commission event, should include a short reflection on whether an in-person meeting is really necessary, and the optimal duration of the event. Many meetings can easily be replaced by audio/ video conference alternatives. There are several corporate solutions for collaborations available³ (e.g. My IntraComm Collaboration, CONNECTED, Yammer, Wikis, CIRCABC) offering multiple possibilities for exchanging documents and working together on the compilation of a common document, and holding virtual meetings which can also include external participants (e.g. webinars through the BT software).

Once the need for an in-person meeting has been assessed and confirmed, consider using a sustainable event management system (e.g. ISO 2012¹) or environmental management system (e.g. EMAS²), via the contractors/suppliers who are organizing the event for you. All steps listed in the rest of this guide should be followed either internally or by the contractor.

The “Digital Workplace of the Future” could actually be here already.

1 <https://www.iso.org/iso-20121-sustainable-events.html>

2 https://green-business.ec.europa.eu/eco-management-and-audit-scheme-emas_en

3 <https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/together/Pages/welcome.aspx>





2.	Sustainability of the venue	Roles	Deadlines	Notes
Minimum requirements				
2.a.	Is the venue easily accessible by public transport, bike, walking; is there a secure bike parking facility?			
2.b.	Is the building for the event energy efficient?			
2.c.	Is there a waste collection and recycling system in place?			
2.d.	Is additional ICT (Information and Communications Technologies) facilities available to allow virtual participation?			
2.e.	Is there limited transportation necessary for equipment and persons? How much can this be reduced?			
Advanced Options				
2.f.	Is the venue equipped with an environmental management system (e.g., EMAS ¹)?			

1 https://green-business.ec.europa.eu/eco-management-and-audit-scheme-emas_en



Is the venue sustainable enough?

Selection of the right venue is of paramount importance for the overall environmental impact of the event. The location should be easily accessible by public transport and other less-polluting modes like cycling and walking and should have adequate secure bicycle parking facilities. Preference should be given to energy efficient buildings that maximise the use of daylight and are managed in an energy-efficient manner. Ideally advanced waste collection and recycling systems should already be in place. Additional ICT facilities, such as video conferencing and web streaming, to permit hybrid involvement can significantly reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and save time and money.

When organising an event the first decision concerning the venue should be taken with care. If an existing venue does not require any customisation at all, it should be selected as a preference. Customisation of spaces for very short events requires intensive use of transport and removal companies, leading to additional environmental impact.

Lastly, consider the overall management of the venue, for example procurement and cleaning policies, including the responsible disposal of waste including food waste. If the venue is within EMAS registered premises, this should ensure that actions are in place to reduce its environmental impact.

The 'Digital Workplace of the Future' could actually be here already.



3.	Sustainable material	Roles	Deadlines	Notes
Minimum requirements				
3.a.	Did you use online promotional tools (e.g., online registration, online communication material resources)?			
3.b.	Did you limit the use of printed promotional material (e.g., eco-friendly design and printing)?			
3.c.	Did you avoid the distribution of promotional gadgets and gifts? Did you minimise them, using eco-friendly criteria?			
3.d.	Did you request minimum office supply, choose recycled, rechargeable, made of natural materials and collect after the event for future use?			
3.e.	Did you reuse conference materials from past events (e.g., stands, banners, etc.)?			



Are the promotional materials sustainable?

Less is more! The design of the communication of your event should include a reflection on the optimal use of natural resources. This means avoiding or limiting the use of printouts, and thinking well in advance about what printed promotional material (brochures / leaflets / posters) is really needed to ensure that it is really effective. For example, on-line registration and electronic pre- and post-meeting communication and resources are recommended, as well as the use of reusable banners (use generic title and space to add removable stickers with more specific information). If it is really necessary to print documents, try to use eco-friendly printing, e.g. use ecolabel paper, print double-sided, and try to reduce the text and number of pages as much as possible.

The distribution of gadgets, promotional material, bags and gifts should be avoided if possible, or minimised, and they should be produced with sustainable materials (recycled or organic) and serve a useful purpose. If possible, you should also consider products from local social economy projects. Lastly, conference materials from past events could be re-used for the same purpose (e.g. stands, general banners) or a different purpose (e.g. old banners made into bags).

Similar rationales apply to office supplies: consider „What are my real needs?“ and request as few articles as possible and with the least impact on the environment. Priority should be given to reusable and fully recyclable articles, such as rechargeable recycled marker pens, to solvent-free glue and correction fluid, and consumables made of natural material rather than plastic (pencils rather than ball pens). In case supplies are provided internally you should collect them after the event and return them to the office supply stock of your service for future use. When paper and printouts are supplied externally, remember to request recycled paper or paper made of a mixture of recycled fibres and virgin fibres originating from sustainable forests.

You would create a bigger impression on your participants if they were „less“.



4.	Waste reduction	Roles	Deadlines	Notes
Minimum requirements				
4.a.	Did you minimise waste? (e.g., reduce printed materials, packing, gadgets, single-use items, single-use water and food containers, food waste)			
4.b.	Did you organise an appropriate system to collect and recycle waste?			
4.c.	Did you organise a system to redistribute unused food? Are there existing mechanisms you can use?			
4.d.	Did you request the minimum office supplies, preferably recycled, rechargeable and made of natural materials? Did you collect them after the event?			
Advanced options				
4.e.	Could you organise an “zero waste” event?			



Are the “3Rs” applied: reduce - reuse - recycle?

The principle of the 3 Rs: (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) should be considered in all aspects of the event's design, organisation and follow-up communication. This easy-to remember summary of the waste hierarchy sets the order of priority to consider: first reduce, i.e. avoid (where possible) or minimise material throughout; then reuse, i.e. find a second useful life; and finally, ensure the materials are recycled. For example, minimising printed material, reducing packaging and single-use items, and avoiding ordering more food and drink than is actually needed are among the key recommendations that help minimise waste generation.

As regards recycling, an appropriate system of waste sorting, collection and recycling should be in place, while promotional materials made of recycled goods are highly recommended. Lastly, you may set the bar even higher by trying to organise a 'zero waste' event. Zero Waste is a philosophy that encourages redesign of resource life cycles so that all products are reused. No trash is sent to landfills or incinerators and no food waste is generated.

The 3Rs are the roadmap for waste-conscious events.



5.	Sustainable catering	Roles	Deadlines	Notes
Minimum requirements				
5.a.	Did/will you choose seasonal and/ or organic food and drinks.			
5.b.	Did/will you offer a large choice of plant-based food?			
5.c.	Did/will you prevent food waste and avoid single-use items (e.g., reusable cutlery, crockery, water jugs, bulk containers)?			
5.d.	Did/will you provide a full vegetarian or vegan menu?			
5.e.	Could you get local caterers who apply to environmental management schemes (e.g., EMAS)?			
5.f.	Could you donate leftover food in collaboration with the catering sub-contractor?			



Is the catering sustainable?

The significant environmental impact of our food choices is becoming more and more evident, since the environmental impacts of meat and dairy are higher than of plant based dishes (see FAO report 2013¹). When planning the menu for your event, the first meaningful choice is to opt for a healthy and balanced diet, with moderate meat content and seasonal (and/or organic) products. A well-planned menu with a wider variety of plant-based food can be nutritionally balanced and tasty, while having a reduced impact on climate change and offering benefits for participants' health, as evidenced by several international studies (including EPIC²). Moreover, all health guidance documents (such as from the World Health Organisation) are underlining the need to eat more fruit, vegetables, legumes, nuts and whole grains while reducing saturated and hydrogenated fats.

If possible, opt for drinking tap water by choosing refillable carafes and glass containers and/or ask your participants to use water fountains where these are available (these are gradually being installed in most buildings in Brussels), thus avoiding needless disposable plastic bottles and unnecessary waste. Avoid wasting food by determining the exact number of participants a few days before the event, by sending a reminder to all participants to confirm their presence at any lunch/social activities. Donating leftover food that has not been served is a complex issue owing to the need to respect the health and food safety standards³. However, such options may be further explored by the event organisers in close collaboration with their catering subcontractors on a case-by-case basis.

Overall, considering other types of waste, avoid single-use disposable items and opt for reusable dishes, cutlery and crockery. Lastly, if possible, while choosing your caterer you may consider organic, and Fair Trade products and/or whether they implement specific environmental management schemes (e.g. EMAS). To avoid having no candidates to the call of tender, you may simply add this criterion as bonus point in the award criteria. The catering contractor should also manage food waste responsibly (i.e. separate recyclable items, to be sent for recycling, and food waste, to be sent for anaerobic digestion or composting). Terms of reference for bigger events are the right place to define what you expect in terms of catering, e.g. sustainable and a wider variety of plant-based, which will in turn define the choice of caterer.

What event participants put on their plates tells a lot about what kind of host you are/ how sustainable your event is.

- 1 The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the [United Nations report on Livestock's Long Shadow](#)
- 2 The European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition ([EPIC-Europe](#))
- 3 EU Food Donation Guidelines by [DG SANTE](#)





6.	Transport, accomodation	Roles	Deadlines	Notes
Minimum requirements				
6.a.	Are you recommending accommodation close to the venue and/ or easily accessible by public transport, walking or cycling?			
6.b.	Are you providing information on sustainable commuting (maps, timetables, smartphone apps)?			
Advanced options				
6.c.	Could you choose certified hotels that apply sustainable operations or an environmental management system (e.g., EMAS)			
6.d.	Did you recommend that participants compensate (offset) the offset their carbon footprint attributable to this activity?			



Is the accommodation and transport for participants environmentally friendly?

The accommodation recommended for your participants should be close to the venue or well connected by public transport. Ideally, it should be possible for participants to walk or cycle to the venue, so the hotels you recommend should make bikes available to their guests or be located close to a public bike sharing station. Unfortunately, this is more complex for the sites (e.g. Ispra). In this case, a combined shuttle service could be organised for the event participants to minimise the environmental impact from their transport.

Participants should be provided with clear and visible information about how to reach the conference venue on foot, by bike or by public transport, or even by carpooling and car sharing (ideally of hybrid and electric cars), including maps, timetables and practical information. You could suggest that they choose more sustainable modes of transport wherever possible, for example, train instead of air travel. They should also be encouraged to compensate for the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from their travel. Several schemes such as [Atmosfair](#) calculate the amount of GHG emissions generated by flights and determine a monetary amount that the travellers can pay to compensate them. There are different ambition levels when it comes to GHG emissions' compensation schemes, the CDM¹ gold standards being the strongest. The donations are used to finance ecological projects, which compensate for their emissions. Links to various offsetting options are available at the end of the ICOMOS Tool: Carbon Footprint Counter².

Hotels that implement energy and natural resources efficiency policies, advanced waste management schemes, sustainable catering and ecological cleaning practices should be preferred. International and EU standards, such as the EU Ecolabel for Tourist Accommodation, EMAS or Green Key³ may provide further guarantees that the accommodation meets high environmental standards. Large hotel chains may more easily accommodate a large number of guests and provide high-quality and often environmentally certified services. However, smaller hotels that have good environmental performance and implement corporate social responsibility policies may have an additional important benefit to both the environment and local community

Getting to the venue is as important as being there.

- 1 The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) is one of the Flexible Mechanisms defined in the Kyoto Protocol (IPCC, 2007) that provides for emissions reduction projects which generate Certified Emission Reduction units (CERs) which may be traded in emissions trading schemes.
- 2 We are exploring the establishment of an ICOMOS Climate Action Fund, to which members could contribute, as one of the choices of offsetting available to them; the fund could be available to assist committees to underwrite the opportunity cost of hybrid meetings, amongst other carbon offsetting projects; this fund would also be available to applications for assistance on the basis of criteria yet to be defined. In the near future, we hope that an ICOMOS Carbon Fund will have been established, which will be available to members and committees as a repository for their offsetting contributions, to support efforts by members, committees and working groups to help neutralise the carbon footprint of the organisation
- 3 The [Green Key award](#) is a leading standard of excellence in the field of environmental responsibility and sustainable operation





7.	Social aspects	Roles	Deadlines	Notes
Minimum requirements				
7.a.	Could you sign up companies that apply eco-friendly procedures?			
7.b.	Could you employ staff in a socially conscious manner (e.g., complying with safety and labour rules, employing disadvantaged/ long-term unemployed) even among sub- contractors (e.g., catering, accommodation)?			
Advanced options				
7.c.	Did you select fair trade and local products for food, promotional materials, gadgets, etc.?			



Are social aspects considered?

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is about organisations taking responsibility for their impact on society and acting in an ethical and transparent way that contributes to the health and welfare of society.

During the organisation of conferences and events, socio-economic aspects could be considered in addition to environmental ones. For example, select local eco-aware companies or social economy enterprises among the sub-contractors that employ staff in a socially-conscious manner (e.g. complying with safety and labour rules, employing disadvantaged/long-term unemployed) for your event organisation (e.g. catering, family-run accommodation); request food that is seasonal (and/or organic), preferably plant based; make sure that any seafood served is properly labelled, and ethically sourced; if possible, prefer organically farmed seafood and select fair trade products as comestible or promotional material and gadgets, thus empowering small-scale producers with limited market access.

Caring about local communities is also part of organising an event.



8.	Environmental awareness	Roles	Deadlines	Notes
Minimum requirements				
8.a.	Did you communicate the sustainability of your event? If so, how?			
8.b.	Did you involve participants and stakeholders? Could you establish a follow-up communication on sustainable events?			
Advanced options				
8.c.	Did you implement a sustainable event management system (e.g., ISO 20121) or environmental management scheme (e.g., EMAS), directly or via suppliers/ sub- contractors?			



Are you sharing environmental awareness?

If you have introduced environmental and sustainability criteria into the design and organisation of your event, you should further promote it! Inform your participants and other stakeholders about your practices via your usual communication channels in order to promote the sustainability of your event and engage those involved.

It is important to provide information during the event itself on why and how it is made more sustainable; this could be by means of short speeches by the host or organisers, or promoting all sustainable initiatives on the event's website. It is also a good idea to ask participants for feedback about their participation in making the event more sustainable, for instance how many of them returned their badges at the end for reuse/recycling. This may be done either via a quick feedback station at the exit or a questionnaire asking if they were aware of / supportive of / enthusiastic about / or (even) annoyed by the greening efforts. Ideally, monitoring and reporting indicators should be set in advance, in order to quantify achievements, benchmark weaker areas, and set targets for future improvements. Following the event, your success stories should be shared (e.g. post a 'sustainable' conference report on the website). By promoting the 'sustainable' service providers involved, you offer them visibility, which acts as an incentive for them to continue acting sustainably, while inspiring others to follow their example.

Lastly, as already presented in the first step, in order to further enhance the validity of your sustainability statement, you may choose to implement a sustainable event management system (e.g. ISO 20121), either directly or via relevant contractors/suppliers responsible for the organisation of your event. As an alternative to the event management system, suppliers and accommodation providers can also utilise an environmental management system (e.g. EMAS).

Promoting your sustainable event may inspire others to follow your example



2 ICOMOS Responsible Practice Toolkit | Content

Part 1: ICOMOS Carbon Reduction Strategy

Part 2: ICOMOS Responsible Practice Toolkit Introduction

2 A: Online Meetings Checklist

2 B: Hybrid Meetings Checklist

2 C: In-person Meetings Checklist (this part)

Part 3: ICOMOS Carbon Calculator and Registration Template

Appendix 1: References and sources



3 ICOMOS Responsible Practice Toolkit | Team

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