

SUSTAINABLE EVENT PLANNING MADE EASY



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TIPS FOR RESOURCE-CONSERVING, ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY AND ECONOMICAL EVENT MANAGEMENT

Sustainability has become an integral part of the planning and implementation of events. For us in Hamburg, sustainability is not a trend, but an indispensable facet of every event. There are numerous ways in which you can make your own event a little better. And in all dimensions: ecological, economic and social.

We would like to give you a few helpful tips on the ways and opportunities that exist in general and specifically in our city to act more sustainably and leave a positive handprint in the host destination. We're sure there's something for you too!



AN EVENT FOR EVERYONE!

Hamburg is a [city with an attitude](#). A city that thinks inclusively and is home to people who are **proud of their open attitude**. We are all the more pleased when event organizers also think along these lines. Even small actions can have a big impact here: The event should be designed to be **accessible** (e. g. by using signage in easily understandable language and/or clearly recognisable pictograms). Appropriate information should be communicated to participants in advance. It is also a good idea for event organizers to have an **awareness team** or at least one person who can be contacted at any time by the team, service providers and participants with questions about social or inclusive aspects. In the same way, social and respectful interaction with one another includes one thing above all: [consideration for others](#). For us, this also means, for example, that smokers have designated areas where they can smoke without disturbing or endangering others through

passive smoking. Sufficient opportunities for hand hygiene and disinfection should be part of this anyway, at least since Corona.

Solidarity is a fundamental aspect of our Hamburg attitude and an integral part of our port city. That's why we like the idea of levying a **solidarity surcharge on tickets** in order to be able to finance cheaper or free tickets for other potential participants who have less financial means.

The decision to forego giveaways or to offer sustainably produced giveaways with real added value for users, as well as sustainably produced merchandise and staff clothing, shows that the planners are taking sustainability into account in a comprehensive manner.



SERVICE PROVIDERS, HOTELS AND LOCATIONS SELECTION

When you start planning a congress, event or meeting, you are usually spoiled for choice. As always and everywhere in life, people, companies, providers... differ. In addition to the classic factors such as value for money, it is also worth taking a **look at the sustainable aspects of the companies** involved in the implementation of the event. Does the service provider have an eye on **social commitment**, does it work with charitable organizations, projects or initiatives? These are initial questions that you can ask yourself during the selection process.

The [choice of location](#) also plays a decisive role in making your event more sustainable. We are talking about obvious points here, but also about little things that make the world a little better. One of the aspects that comes to mind all by itself is **good public transport connections** so that participants can travel sustainably. It is also easy to see whether a **location is operated in a resource-saving manner** - for example, by using energy-saving lighting or saving water in the sanitary facilities. It is also worth checking whether the location is powered by **renewable energy**.

Other aspects are not immediately obvious. Because honestly, who immediately thinks about **waste separation**, the use of environmentally friendly cleaning products or **designated smoking areas** to protect the adjacent natural or green spaces from pollution when planning an event? From now on, we all do! Because even these seemingly small things make a significant difference.

Of course, the social aspect is also part of a sustainable event. That's why many people already take it for granted that the location is at least accessible.

However, if you are still unsure, you can use **internationally recognized certifications** as a guide. We recommend paying attention to the following:



Sustainable decisions can also be made when [choosing a hotel](#). Here too, certifications provide an initial overview. Look out for Green Sign, EMAS, Green Globe, Green Key or Earth Check, for example. In any case, you should **choose a hotel** that has a **transparent sustainability concept**. Quite apart from certificates, every organizer also has the option of considering the **location of the hotel** and choosing the accommodation accordingly. We recommend choosing a hotel that is within 5 km of the location and no more than 500 m from public transport. This gives you the opportunity to make the [journey between the location and the accommodation climate-friendly](#).



ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

As a Hanseatic and traditional trading metropolis, we know what we are talking about when we say that good bookkeeping is the salt in the eel soup. It is therefore essential to keep records to **validate the measures implemented**. [Costs and savings resulting from the more sustainable orientation of the event](#) should be documented as far as possible in order to evaluate which measures lead to additional costs and which to **cost reductions**.

It is often also worth finding out about any **funding** available in order to [apply for subsidies](#) for the sustainable organization of the event.

We all know that: There can also be a small windfall if you make an effort to find **sponsors**. But be careful, because when deciding on sponsorship, you should also pay attention to **compatibility with sustainability criteria**. Ideally, you should only approach and select sponsors who can demonstrate concrete sustainability efforts and, for example, source their beverages exclusively from sustainable sources or ensure that their suppliers comply with social standards when producing advertising materials.



SIDE PROGRAM AND CONCEPT

In addition to the ideal location, one of the most important points for a successful event is **the content and the supporting program!** We are pleased to be able to tell you that there is great **potential for sustainability** here! The program in particular can focus on the social aspect: a good approach is to design the event program in such a way that it reflects **social diversity** (e.g. different backgrounds, gender, orientation), for example through a diverse selection of speakers. In addition, social regional projects and initiatives can be actively integrated into the [supporting program](#) - either through their own stand during the event or actively as speakers. This also ties in with another point that is often easy to implement and enriches the content of the event: **Sustainability content in the context of the event** focus can, for example, be presented as separate agenda items.

An insightful event day is often followed by an evening supporting program. This can also be designed with sustainable added value. Especially when it comes to culinary delights, emphasis can be placed on **regionality or the selection of seasonal dishes** when recommending restaurants or an evening dinner. The aspect of social sustainability can be taken into account, especially in the supporting program, by choosing program items that pursue an inclusive approach or deal with the topic of sustainability. You can find good examples of this on our website.

Hamburg also has a lot to offer when it comes to **sustainable gastronomy**. First and foremost, we would like to mention our [OPEN MOUTH partners](#).



CLIMATE PROTECTION MEASURES

Climate protection is probably the first major aspect when you think of sustainability. This is obvious, even if we don't ignore the other two facets - economic and social. Of course, we also touch on this topic in many other tips, but here we would like to take a closer look at [one or two tricks](#) on how to make your own event more sustainable.

The first point here is to **record** the direct and indirect **greenhouse gas emissions** generated. Firstly, this gives you an overview, secondly, such a measurement sheds light on **potential savings** and thirdly, it gives you the **opportunity to offset unavoidable emissions** through providers such as the Gold Standard.

There is a lot of potential here in terms of mobility: Do you offer participants the option of offsetting the CO₂ emissions of their arrival and departure by paying a surcharge during the registration process? Or can your guests **book a discounted or free public transport ticket** directly when they register? As an event organizer, you have many opportunities to make savings, especially when it comes to public transport: If all the organized [trips of the participants are made on site by public transport](#) or low-emission vehicles - and this is very easy in Hamburg - you have already made the world a little bit better.

If you want to actively tackle the issue of sustainability, air travel should generally only take place in exceptional cases anyway. However, if this is not possible, there are, as mentioned above, numerous providers that can be used to reliably offset the emissions generated.



DO GOOD AND TALK ABOUT IT!

We don't really need to say any more than this headline. Because just like in a good relationship, it's the same when it comes to events: [Communication is key!](#)

So **tell all** participants, the team and the service providers **about the event's sustainability standards and measures**. Sustainability goals and measures should also be communicated to participants in an attractive and transparent way to **encourage them to get involved**.

Incidentally, communication only becomes really cool when it goes in two directions! All participants should therefore be given the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions on the event's sustainability measures. Feedback is the key to being able to keep improving in the future.



AT THE EVENT: RETHINK!

We live in a digitalized world. It is therefore obvious that **participant management should also be carried out digitally**. This not only saves resources, but ideally also nerves. The use of gender-sensitive and/or simplified language is also noticeable here. Some event material, such as a **program booklet**, can also be implemented **digitally**. If it is unavoidable to offer a printed version, care should be taken to ensure that the **material is produced in a resource-saving manner**. This also applies to bouquets of flowers or **floral decorations**: these can be used sparingly or sourced from sustainable production. When it comes to other **room furnishings**, care should be taken to select them in such a way that they can be **used several times**.

An essential part of any business event: **lanyards** and name badges! Collecting them at the end of the event and **reusing them** at other events is just as sensible as producing them from environmentally friendly materials.

Unfortunately, one thing that is not missing at any event is waste. Even if we believe that waste avoidance and recycling have already reached the center of society and do not need to be mentioned here, we still want to include these points for the sake of completeness. The greatest potential lies in catering, food and restaurants, as it goes without saying that **disposable tableware should be avoided** and **packaging waste reduced**, which works extremely well in direct coordination with the service provider.



GASTRONOMY & CATERING

The topic of food and nutrition is a very complex one when it comes to sustainability. According to the WWF, 37% of global greenhouse gas emissions are attributable to the global food system. The potential for savings is correspondingly large. We have a few ideas on how you can make a **positive impact** at your own event.

It starts with the **caterer or restaurant**: do the service providers act sustainably? Is the food regional, organic and fair? Do the meat and fish products come from species-appropriate husbandry? Questions upon questions! But it's worth asking them if you want to make a contribution. Speaking of meat and fish: if you want to be more sustainable - and healthier - there should be **more vegetarian**

and vegan dishes than meat dishes on the menu. The most sustainable approach is to avoid meat altogether when it comes to catering and food. How about a **veggie day** at a conference lasting several days, for example?

In addition to a positive handprint, a **needs-based food calculation** also has economic effects and the recycling of surplus food through initiatives such as **"Too good to go"** or **"Rebowl"** contribute to a sustainable event.

Of course, there are also the social components. In addition to **intolerances and allergies, cultural aspects also play a role in catering** and restaurant selection. If possible, participants should be asked about these in advance.



ANY QUESTIONS?

We would be delighted if our recommendations and sustainability tips have perhaps inspired you to make your event more sustainable. Especially when it comes to sustainability, the motto is "a lot helps a lot". But even the quiet notes make melodies: a few or smaller points can make a difference.

You are welcome to send us your questions or suggestions to sustainability@hamburg-convention.com.