



**Center  
of Excellence  
for Sustainability**

# **Sustainable Events Guidelines**

## **The American College of Greece**

## Introduction

The Sustainable Events Guidelines acknowledge and fully support the American College of Greece's commitment to sustainable development across all of its divisions. As public expectation for lower carbon emissions and less environmental and financial impact increases, Sustainable (or sometimes labeled as "Green") Events are globally becoming commonplace. Working towards sustainability best practices, the following document provides a set of guidelines that can help reduce the environmental and financial cost of an ACG event, while maintaining quality and ensuring that the event caters to cultural and social diversities.

## Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

1. Policy: the first step towards the organization of a Sustainable Event is to establish a written or unwritten connection to sustainability through policy. Setting a sustainability policy outright--and then amplifying this policy across all planning areas--will help minimize resource consumption, maximize reuse of materials, and spread awareness of the event's commitment to sustainability.
2. Materials and waste: Successful sustainable waste management diverts materials from landfills and incineration by minimizing resource consumption and maximizing reuse.
3. Catering: Promoting sustainable food practices is integral to the resilience of our planet, its economies, and its people. We can improve human, social and environmental health by making well-informed, sustainable decisions, maintaining diverse nutritional requirements and habits.
4. Energy: More sustainable energy and transportation can help lower event costs, reduce negative ecological impact, and create a healthier, more comfortable event space.

## The Basics of organizing a "green" event

- Think Social, Environmental, Economic – right from the start
- Take a whole event approach – energy, water, waste, transport, and procurement
- Choose the right site
- Influence your supply chain – factor sustainability clauses into contracts and tender specifications

## Status of an Event

In an attempt to implement the guidelines, the Center of Excellence for Sustainability, Office of Public Affairs, will be awarding Sustainability Status Certificates (in three categories after assessment) than can be displayed on promotional materials of the event. Through an attempt to gamify the process (and allow for an objectivity of the assessment), a voluntary reporting tool ([link here](#)) is being provided not only to assess how sustainable an event is, but to enable event planners to have access to a quick checklist of what constitutes a Sustainable Event.

These categories are listed in order of precedence as follows:

Gold; “Sustainability Excellence”: This status honors events that have taken measures to address sustainability and excelled in the implementation of the concept during the planning process. This certification marks the highpoint of sustainability awareness and practice.

Silver; “Sustainability Best Practices”: Within this status, event planners have ensured that best practices have been followed and most objectives have been met. In this category events have been planned with thorough consideration of sustainability.

Bronze; “Sustainability Awareness”: This certification is awarded to events that have met the requirements towards sustainability and have taken important steps to reduce the cost (environmental, social and financial) of their event.

### Scoring Criteria:

Bronze Level, "Sustainability Awareness" = Minimum 40% of applicable points

Silver Level, Sustainability Best Practices" = Minimum 55% of applicable points

Gold Level, "Sustainability Excellence" = Minimum 75% of applicable points

*You are only scored on actions that are applicable to your event. If the action is not applicable, choose N/A.*

## Process of Certification

Event planners are encouraged to answer and submit to the CES the results of their self-assessment through the corresponding tool, in the weeks prior to the event. The reporting tool uses drop down menus and selections that can be used in order to self-assess ~~in~~ (hard-earned points) the Sustainability status of the event. The deadline for the assessment is a week prior to the particular event. The CES will process, review the report and award one of three possible rankings if the event meets the criteria.

In addition to the certification, your event will be promoted by the CES (through the Sustainability at ACG website, social media and other platforms).

## Monitoring actions

If requested by the event planner, the CES assistants and/or the (under consideration) Sustainability Ambassadors will provide administrative assistance in the collection of data regarding:

- Amount of waste recycled vs. amount disposed in conventional bins.
- Monitoring the composting efforts of Deipnosofistirion.
- Monitoring the actions of the participants of the event (recycling, food disposal etc.)

## Stages of the Event Cycle (General tips)

## 1-Plan before the event

- Assess impact: Assess potential level of overall impact based on size (how many attendees). Potential areas of impact are the following:
  - Electricity use
  - Water use
  - Marketing materials
  - Catering
  - Waste and recycling
- Engage stakeholders: (including participants)
  - Communicate to them all the aspects you wish to reduce to all the parties involved
  - Identify minimum standards and communicate them to all the stakeholders to set a precedent
- Measure success:
  - Prepare questionnaires to be distributed online after the event

## 2-During the event

- Assess the impact:
  - On site monitoring and implementation of the aforementioned and decided reduction measures
- Engage stakeholders:
  - Gauge behaviors and reactions to the sustainability requirements implemented
- Measure success:
  - Same as above.

## 3-Completion of the events

- Assess the impact:
  - Return the place of the event to its initial state (cleanup)
- Engage stakeholders:
  - Distribute the online questionnaire that was made prior to the event
  - De-briefing session with people involved in the organization of the event to go over the goals achieved during the event