

Recommendations for sustainable events at PSI

Introduction

Events generate excessive amounts of waste and greenhouse gas emission and require a lot of energy. This guide's purpose is to facilitate tips when organizing PSI events so that they are as sustainable as possible. On the last page you will find a checklist that summarizes the content of this document, you are invited to use it when organising the event. The rest of the document contains more detailed information and also useful links when organizing sustainable events.

If you have any comments, suggestions, questions or need advice organizing your event more sustainably you can contact the Green Team of the PPA at: phdassociation@psi.ch.

Keep in mind that if you need recycling bins, foldable tables, benches, lights, a fridge, etc., you can contact the Logistic center at PSI using the following email: christian-david.mueller@psi.ch.

Outreach and communications

1. Advertisement: Go paperless
 - Go for digital communications instead of printed ones.
 - Print only what is strictly necessary. If you need to print anything (e.g. posters to advertise the event) think about how many you really need and try to minimize size or quantity.
 - If you decide to print a poster or other materials that could be repurposed for other events try to do so, an option could be to laminate them and use them for multiple events.
 - Use sustainable materials when printing, such as recycled paper or sustainable inks.
 - You can provide digital programs instead of printed ones, or give the options to the attendees to request a printed one but don't make it the default.
2. Communications
 - Consider providing QR codes during the event instead of printed leaflets or posters.
3. At the event
 - Communicate openly that you are trying to follow green event standards. Lead by example.
4. After the event
 - Don't provide printed surveys about the event, instead send them to the attendees by email or provide a link or QR they can access at the event to fill it up.

Food and catering

1. Choose sustainable food
 - The most sustainable option is to go for vegan / vegetarian menus. If you don't want to do that, at least make sure you are offering vegan / vegetarian options and always try to offer local / seasonal products.
 - Offer local food instead of products that have to travel great distances.
 - When organizing catering, be clear about food restrictions / allergies. You should always communicate openly about it at the event.
 - If you want your event to be more inclusive, you could ask attendees before the event about their food restrictions. It's important to provide good catering options for all food restrictions. Keep in mind that a menu that takes into consideration a certain food restriction it's also a menu everyone else can eat, it's not that you are designing a menu just for that guest.
 - For making labels for food you can find paper leftovers at the PSI print shop.

2. Choose sustainable serving options

- Try to avoid single use items, such as cutlery, plates or glasses made of plastic, paper or other non-reusable materials. A good alternative is to rent these items from OASE. You can do that by contacting OASE at oase@psi.ch. You can find the price of each item on their catering offer document: **Catering-Broschüre** in the right column of <https://intranet.psi.ch/de/psi/oase-menuplan>.
- Minimize the number of items that come in plastic and if you purchase plastic bottles, go for large containers instead of small bottles.
- Make sure there is an option for tap water closeby so that participants can refill their glasses or bottles.
- A good option to avoid single use items all together could be to offer finger food or types of food that don't require the use of cutlery or buffet options.
- Implement a 'Use Your Own Cup Event'. Guests can bring their own cup and, this also avoids cups being confused all the time as each cup is likely to be unique.

3. Deal with food waste

Planning food quantities as well as possible is the best way to avoid food waste. By requiring event registration you can plan better quantities. But there are a few actions you can take to reduce the unavoidable waste:

- Repurpose the foods that don't perish fast for the next event at PSI.
- Offer party bags for guests who want to take leftovers home.

OASE has a lot of experience with catering for events at PSI so partnering with them could be a good option for catering at PSI, whenever suitable.

Reduce waste

A sustainable event should have produced minimal waste. But there is always some unavoidable waste and it's important to manage it properly and fast.

1. Recycling

- Set up a recycling station to have different waste products sorted out: glass, PET, aluminium, paper, compost and general waste. There are recycling points at PSI where you can take them after.
- Make recycling easy, guests will recycle more if it's easy to do so. Make clear signs and explain where bins are.

2. Avoid food waste

- As mentioned before, plan well what you buy and find a solution for leftovers.
- You can also ask attendees to pre-order their food when they register for the event.

3. Repurpose devices

- If devices are required for the event, e.g., headphone sets, use reusable alternatives that can be used for other events or that guests can take with them.

Conference materials

1. Conference badges

- Items such as badges can be repurposed from other events. There is no need to put a date on it and you can collect the badges after for other events or guests can keep them. All PSI employees already carry daily a badge with their name on it so think if an extra badge is necessary.
- Conference ribbons are not washable and, therefore, not reusable. Provide badges without the ribbon, for example with a clip on, people can always bring their own ribbon if they really want to use one.

2. Giveaways for participants

- Avoid single use or not very practical gifts: pens, pins, etc. They are usually not really used and accumulated. Did you know that 1 in 3 freebies go in the bin the same day?
- Instead, you can go for reusable gifts: reusable metal bottles, tote bags, etc. You can get ideas from: <https://www.psi.ch/en/psiforum/psi-shop>
- Another option could be to gift experiences, food or vouchers.
- You can also avoid gifts all together and invest the money you would have spent on gifts in making a donation in name of the guests to an organization related to the values of the event, or with sustainability purposes.

Utilities

1. Location

If you are organizing an event in warmer months, consider hosting an outdoors event, that will reduce electricity consumption, heating/cooling required, among others.

When organizing an indoors event, keep in mind heating and electricity consumption:

- Try to reduce heating if not needed (remember PSI has a rule of heating being limited to 20°C currently).
- Choose a venue with windows and natural light.
- Choose a venue that is accessible to everyone.

2. Transport

For small size events, if you need to transport goods for the event within PSI, consider taking cargo bikes instead of cars.

Travel

1. Public transport information

Inform participants about public transport options to reach the event and to move around in the area.

<https://www.psi.ch/en/visit/how-to-find-us>

<https://intranet.psi.ch/en/uem/mobility>

2. Long distance travel

Promote that people come to the event by train over flying. And, in case of flying, choose direct flights over multiple flights with layover.

3. Online / hybrid events

Consider organizing a hybrid event. It will reduce the number of people coming in person and with it emissions from their travel and onsite consumption and more people might actually join your event. PSI has a great infrastructure for online meetings:

<https://intranet.psi.ch/en/computing/meeting-rooms-equipment>

4. Local travel

Inform participants about bike options at PSI:

- Velospot for moving around PSI / Villigen / Wurenlingen, an employee PSI badge and registration is required. <https://intranet.psi.ch/en/uem/velo-spot>
- For external participants, bikes can be booked via the Guesthouse/User Office (max. 20 bikes).

5. Awareness

Encourage participants to offset emissions caused by their travel. This could also be a good gift as an organizer, offset the emissions caused by your event (see section “Conference materials / Giveaways for participants”).

<https://www.atmosfair.com>

<https://www.myclimate.org/>

Checklist

Outreach and communications

- Go paperless with communications.
- Print only what is strictly necessary.
- Don't provide printed programs by default.
- Provide QR codes during the event instead of printed leaflets or posters.
- Communicate that you are trying to follow green event standards.

Food and catering

- Provide vegan / vegetarian menus (at least as an option).
- Offer local / seasonal products.
- Avoid single use items.
- Avoid plastic or go for large containers.
- Provide tap water.
- Plan well to avoid few waste.
- Have a plan for leftovers: offer party bags or repurpose for other events.

Reduce waste

- Set up a recycling station.
- Make recycling easy, make clear signs and explain where bins are.
- Avoid food waste.

Conference materials

- Repurpose badges or avoid them.
- Don't provide badge ribbons.
- Avoid single use, unpractical giveaways: instead go for reusable or donations.

Utilities

- Host an outdoors event if possible.
- If indoors, keep heating and electricity to a minimum.
- For transport of goods in PSI for small events, rent a cargo bike.

Travel

- Inform participants about public transport options.
- Promote the use of train over plane and direct flights over layovers.
- Consider organizing an online / hybrid event.
- Inform participants about bike options at PSI: velospot / Guesthouse bikes.
- Encourage participants to offset emissions caused by their travel or offer it yourself.