

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Guidelines for Sustainable Event Planning and Management

The Chinese University of Hong Kong is committed to sustainable development and recognizes that events could have a substantial impact on the environment. As many events are hosted by CUHK on or off the campus, to help departments/offices/units and student bodies to incorporate environmental considerations into event planning, the following guidelines are provided for event planners' reference.

The Guidelines are categorized into '[Basic Guidelines](#)', which are either widely adopted or can be easily implemented, and '[Advanced Guidelines](#)', which are more challenging and made available for those who would like to do more.

The following are some highlights for special attention. Please always refer to the full list for implementation details and other green actions/ideas. The list can also serve as action checklist to facilitate advance planning and duty assignment.

- Go electronic and reduce paper consumption whenever possible and appropriate
- Limit the amount of handouts and souvenirs
- Do away with single-serving bottled water and avoid individually packed beverages/food
- Minimize disposables like dishware and utensils (e.g. by reminding guests to bring their own mugs, lunchboxes and cutlery); avoid foam/polystyrene containers
- Keep air-con temperature at $25.5^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 2^{\circ}\text{C}$ in summer months
- Turn off lights, air-con and equipment after use
- Purchase fair trade/green products, and choose products without excess packaging
- Reduce food waste; avoid buffets; order a 6-course menu in Chinese banquets
- Avoid consuming/serving the following unsustainable species: shark fin (魚翅); bluefin tuna (藍鱈吞拿); black moss (髮菜); humphead wrasse (蘇眉); Hong Kong grouper (紅斑) and sturgeon caviar (鱈魚魚子醬).
- Adopt measures to reduce waste at source, facilitate waste separation and arrange in advance collection of recyclables and unconsumed food
- Engage services of social enterprises that employ the disadvantaged or minorities

Please note that this set of guidelines was approved by the Committee on Campus Sustainability (CCS) in February 2013 and that the Administrative and Planning Committee (AAPC) at its April 2013 meeting supported these guidelines and also the further recommendation that there would not be single-serving bottled water and corsages for indoor functions/events organized by the University, on the understanding that there would be flexibility given to the organizers to enable them to best handle special situations. The guidelines have been updated accordingly.

Happy green event planning!

Campus Planning and Sustainability Office

Last updated: July 2018

Basic Guidelines

Go electronic

- (i) Use e-flyer for promotion and provide e-registration process.
- (ii) Create an event website that people can visit to download slides, handouts, transportation information and presentations (after the event), to minimize paper handouts.
- (iii) Communicate via email or other e-channels. Use e-fax system to receive fax documents if documents must be received by fax.
- (iv) Provide brochures, handouts and notes only to guests with a genuine need or interest.
- (v) For materials that must be printed, have them printed on recycled/FSC-certified paper using soy ink or other vegetable-based inks, and on both sides. According to the Green Purchasing Guidelines of the University, recycled paper should be used for all in-house printing in A3 or A4 size.
(Most printing companies can offer recycled paper for printing. For printing companies that use vegetable/soy ink, please refer to Business Office's [centralized tenders page](#)).
- (vi) Format handouts to minimize amount of paper required like printing multiple pages per sheet, etc.
- (vii) Use PowerPoint and whiteboards (which can be cleaned and reused) rather than paper flipcharts for discussion and presentations.
- (viii) Conduct online survey instead of paper-based evaluations after the event. They generate higher response rates, produce quicker results, and minimize manual processing.

Purchasing

- (i) When buying goods in large quantity, avoid products with excess packaging. Where possible, choose products with recycled-content packaging.
- (ii) Limit the amount of handouts like free pencils, or provide eco-friendly handouts (e.g. pencils with barrels made of recycled paper).
- (iii) Avoid the use of non-woven polypropylene bag, and if necessary, replace it with one made with recycled paper or recycled/biodegradable plastic. Non-woven polypropylene bags have become abundant at everyone's home but are basically non-recyclable.
- (iv) When purchasing souvenirs, consider environmentally-friendly/ethical products that are minimally packaged, like: crafts made by social enterprise artisans using discarded materials, fair trade products, service coupons, etc.
- (v) Please refer to CUHK's [Green Purchasing Guidelines](#) for a list of commonly-purchased products and their recommended green specifications.

Reuse and recycling

- (i) Reuse name badge holders used at other events and remind guests to return name badge holders after the event.
- (ii) Provide recycling service at the venue. For events of considerable scale, contact Mr. Jimmy Lau (39434049/63376346) of the Estates Management Office 1-2 weeks in

advance for large containers for collection of recyclables (especially plastic bottles and beverage cans) and recycling service.

- (iii) Put used banners at a collection spot (please refer to [this poster](#) for the location)
- (iv) For large events, prepare [signage on recycling](#) in advance and if necessary, print messages on handouts; and make public announcements during the event to promote recycling and to bring the recycling arrangement to participants' attention.

Energy

- (i) Communicate with venue's utilities manager beforehand to ensure that the temperature of air-conditioners is set at **25.5°C +/- 2°C** in summer months.
- (ii) Make sure lights, air-conditioners and equipment in unused rooms/venues are turned off.

Activities/accessories

- (i) Do not provide corsages at events/functions organized by the University under normal circumstances. Flexibility would be given to the organizer for handling special situations.
- (ii) Avoid environmentally harmful activities such as balloon releases, spraying of confetti, water flinging, etc., that will waste resources or produce litter.
- (iii) Avoid excessive decorations.
- (iv) Print badges, placards, etc., on recycled paper.

Food and drink

Disposables reduction

- (i) Do not provide single-serving bottled water at indoor events/functions organized by the University under normal circumstances. Flexibility would be given to the organizers for handling special situations.

Some alternatives to bottled water and individually-packaged drinks are:

- Engage caterer with reusable cups/ glasses for drinks.
 - Arrange supply of water and beverages in a larger container or portable water dispenser and for guests' cups to be filled using a pitcher/container. The University can also provide pumps to offices that can be used with office dispenser-sized bottled water to provide water at major events. For details, contact Ms. Atle Hui of Campus Planning and Sustainability Office at 3943 4299.
 - Where applicable, remind participants in advance to bring their own water bottle. Refilling locations can be accessed via 'CUHK Mobile' app (both iOS and Android versions) or the online campus map in CUHK website (<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/english/campus/cuhk-campus-map.html>) and check them out under *Facilities > Living Essentials > Water Dispensers*.
- (ii) Arrange with caterers to provide reusable cutlery, dishware, napkins, and linens.
 - (iii) If disposables must be used, choose recycled paper napkins and dishware with recycled content. Avoid foam/polystyrene containers.
 - (iv) Provide sugar, salt, pepper, cream and other condiments, beverages, etc., in bulk; avoid individually wrapped packages, straws, coffee stirrers and paper doilies.

Food choices

- (i) Avoid serving shark's fins, bluefin tuna, black moss ('Fat Choi' 髮菜) and other unsustainably-produced seafood (please refer to the ['Green Purchasing @ CUHK' pamphlet](#) and the [Sustainable Seafood Guide](#) recommended by WWF).
- (ii) Offer low-carbon/socially responsible options for snacks/beverages/meals like: vegetarian dishes and fair trade, organic coffee/tea/snacks.
(Growing grains or vegetables requires far less energy, water and other inputs than raising animals; and the production process also generates far less carbon emissions. For fair trade, organic products, more information on suppliers can be found in 'Additional Resources' at the end of the guidelines).

Food waste reduction

- (i) For Chinese banquets, adopt a 6-course menu instead of an 8-course menu.
- (ii) Avoid buffet if alternative arrangement is available.
- (iii) Remind participants who will dine at canteens that they can request canteens to provide meals in smaller portions.
- (iv) If large volume of surplus food is anticipated (e.g. in case of buffet, or when the actual number of guests turning up may be smaller than planned), contact a local NGO in advance so that they will make arrangements to come pick up surplus food (the food must be untouched and packed in boxes for collection).

Transport

- (i) Explore alternatives to face-to-face meeting like: conference calls, video conferencing, web-based meetings, webcasting, etc.
- (ii) Choose a venue convenient for public transport access; provide clear directions for those taking public transport.

Services

- (i) Support social enterprises that employ the disadvantaged or minorities where possible.

Awareness and green image

- (i) Mention your event's green measures in your event website, publications and promotional materials. Share green information during meeting announcements, etc. Not only does this exhibit your commitment to environment protection, it also reminds guests to do their part, like separating wastes for recycling.
- (ii) Add the note 'printed with soy inks on recycled paper' or the FSC Certification No. to the printed matter to help raise awareness and promote your environmental choice.

Advanced Guidelines

Purchasing

- (i) Share common event materials/facilities such as table cloth among offices whenever possible, particularly when your office does not host events too often, to save materials used, purchasing cost and storage space.

Transport

- (i) Arrange for/encourage delegates or guests to carpool.
- (ii) Consider providing low emission or electric vehicles if transport arrangements must be provided.
- (iii) For events held on campus, walking routes allow easy and convenient access to most places. Information on walking routes can be provided to participants to encourage walking. (please refer to [this map](#))
- (iv) Make sure vehicles are fuel-efficient and appropriately sized for the function; plan the transportation route to make most efficient use of vehicles.
- (v) Reserve parking spaces for the handicapped and make sure they are able to access the venue.

Recycling

- (i) Recruit volunteers to assist in providing instructions to event participants in recycling such as giving demonstrations on source separation.

Activities/accessories

- (i) Designate a space for collection of unwanted souvenirs for donation to charity/use at next event.
- (ii) Where possible, borrow potted plants for decoration instead of using cut flowers, or create decorations that can be given away (e.g. fruit bowl).
- (iii) Keep noise levels at reasonable levels to minimize disturbance to people near the venue.

Food and drink

- (i) If applicable, ask attendees to sign up for meals ahead of time (and inform you of dietary requirements) so you can reduce food waste.
- (ii) Check with caterers to use local, seasonal produce as far as possible

Services

- (i) Include environmentally-friendly clauses in contracts (e.g. requirement to avoid using polystyrene containers, recycle waste and record the amount recycled, etc.) where appropriate.

Awareness and green image

- (i) Collect and share figures on estimated amount of recyclables collected and diverted from the landfill, number of trees saved, amount of water or energy saved, etc. These help demonstrate the success of your green event.

(Some statistics and calculators that may be useful for calculating environmental impacts/benefits are listed in 'Additional Resources' at the end of the guidelines).

Overall

- (i) If you want to be a champion in hosting events in a sustainable manner, consider purchasing carbon offsets for the event. CPSO will be happy to discuss with you how to take this forward.

Additional Resources

Resources on campus:

Business Office - Centralized Tenders Page

https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/fno/stf/eng/bus_centralized_tenders.html

Green Purchasing Guidelines

http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/cps/go!/resources/green_purchasing_guidelines.pdf

'No Shark's Fin' Policy

http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/cps/documents/no_sharks_fin_policy.pdf

Walking Trails

http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/cps/documents/walking_routes_eng.pdf

Recycling locations on campus

http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/cps/go!/resources/recycling_locations-Poster.pdf

Tips on waste separation

http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/cps/go!/resources/recycling_tips-Poster.pdf

Locations of water dispensers on campus

http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/cps/documents/Water_dispenser_list.pdf

WWF - Seafood Choice Initiative

<http://www.wwf.org.hk/en/whatwedo/footprint/seafood/sci/>

Social Enterprise/Fair Trade Products and Services

Why support social enterprises/fair trade? Apart from providing products and services, social enterprises help achieve social objectives like providing employment to disadvantaged groups, and reinvest profits into the community and disadvantaged groups. Fair trade offers relatively stable and higher income to small producers of goods with highly fluctuating prices, so that these producers are not ruined by fluctuations and are able to support communities that can flourish in the long run.

Some contacts for event-related social enterprise or fair trade products/services can be found in the 'Social Enterprise Directory' developed by HKCSS-HSBC Social Enterprise Business Centre: <http://socialenterprise.org.hk/en/sedirectory>

Statistics and Calculators

Please note that the following statistics and figures as well as environmental impact/benefits/emission calculators would give you ideas and good reference on the impact of your environmental actions even though some figures or calculators are derived/developed out of Hong Kong or Asia context and adjustment may be required in interpreting them.

Statistics and figures for resource use/recycling

Conservatree - statistics for calculating paper use impacts
<http://conservatree.org/learn/EnviroIssues/TreeStats.shtml>

About.com - Environmental Issues 'The Benefits of Aluminum Recycling'
<http://environment.about.com/od/recycling/a/The-Benefits-Of-Aluminum-Recycling-Why-Recycle-Aluminum.htm>

About.com - Environmental Issues 'The Benefits of Paper Recycling'
<http://environment.about.com/od/recycling/a/The-Benefits-Of-Paper-Recycling-Why-Recycle-Paper.htm>

Environmental impact/benefit calculators

Environmental Paper Network - Paper Calculator
<http://c.environmentalpaper.org/home>

RainforestMaker - Businesses ACT Paper Calculator
<http://www.rainforestmaker.org/lawyer-attorney-1685591.html>

Carbon emission/footprint calculators

SME Carbon Audit
<http://www6.cityu.edu.hk/aerc/sme/>