Sustainable Event Management at GIZ

Minimum standards for sustainable event management at GIZ South Africa, Lesotho and Eswatini

September 2023

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Preamble

1. GIZ holds numerous events that have great potential for showcasing the three dimensions of sustainability – environmental, social, and economic – and thus for making our corporate values visible through concrete action.

2. These minimum standards for sustainable event management have been developed, based on and adapted from the minimum standards applied in Germany and at our Brussels representation. They are intended to provide guidance and help ensure our events are of a consistently high quality.

3. While based on our employees' practical experience, these minimum standards are also aligned with existing standards for sustainable event management.[1]

4. These minimum standards apply to all internal and external events in South Africa, Lesotho, and Eswatini. If a client or commissioning party expresses special requests that diverge from the norm, do your best to cater for them. However, always do so in compliance with the principles of sustainable event management.

5. Every GIZ employee[2] who organises events must be familiar with these minimum standards and take care to implement them. If, after sufficient examination, it is determined that individual aspects of the handouts cannot be implemented, the deviations must be approved and documented by the manager at least at group leader level (CGL). For those operational areas that do not have a GL structure, the individual exception must be approved by the AL in the domestic structure and by the LD in the external structure. If individual requirements result in a conflict of interest, event organisers apply the underlying sustainability principles of 'avoid – reduce – compensate'[3] when deciding how to move forward, weighing up the various solutions that present themselves.
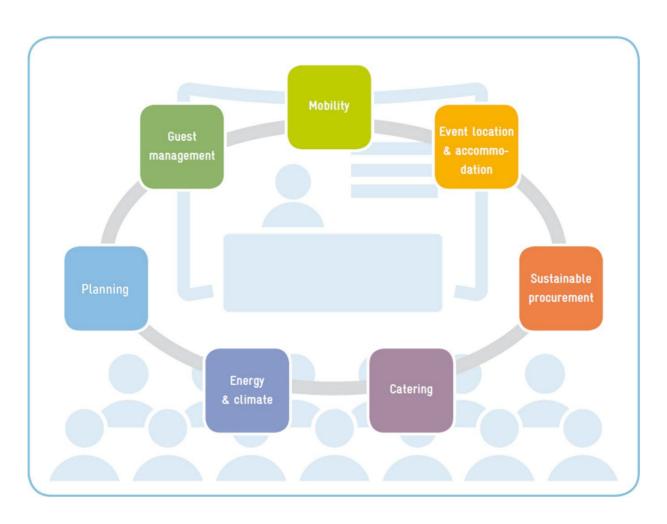
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[1] German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) and German Federal Environment Agency (UBA): Guidelines for the Sustainable Organisation of Events.

[2] The minimum requirements also apply for development workers if they organize such events in South Africa, Lesotho, and Eswatini.

[3] Starting in 2020, events with 100 or more participants can be compensated. Firstly, confirm with Commissioning Party if offsetting is permitted using project funds. Guidance for GIZ service providers on avoiding, reducing and offsetting GHG emissions is available on the DMS Handreichung zur Kalkulation von CO2-Kompensation (giz.de)

Areas of action

1 | Planning

2 | Guest management

3 | Event venue and accommodation

4 | Mobility

5 | Energy and climate

6 | Sustainable procurement

7 | Catering

1 | Planning

- Before planning the event, first create a **stakeholder map** (e.g., participants, speakers, facilitators, and service providers) in order to get a general idea of which groups of individuals will be involved in the event. This is also a good way of determining whether a face-to-face event is actually even necessary.

- The stakeholder map should also include service providers. This will make it possible to determine at the outset which measures regarding sustainable event management need to be communicated to all stakeholders.

- When planning the agenda, make sure the event starts and finishes at a **family and travel-friendly time**. This also includes keeping the number of nights away to a minimum while still allowing for environmentally friendly travel. If in doubt, environmentally friendly travel takes precedence.

- **Diversity aspects**: Make sure that panels have a diverse representation (race, (dis)ability, gender, age). Use gender-sensitive language.

- Ensure **barrier-free accessibility** as far as possible in line with target-group needs. To do this, you will need to enquire about any special requirements at the time of registration and organise appropriate assistance (please factor this into the budget).

Inform participants about measures that help make the event even more **sustainable** before (guest management, invitations, etc.), during (information signs, etc.) and after the event (evaluation, documentation).

- Events are **evaluated digitally**. The evaluation also compares the measures scheduled as part of sustainable event management with those that were actually implemented. This helps organisers of future events to address potential problems early on and to look for suitable solutions.

2 | Guest management

- As far as possible, guest management for all events should aim to be **paper free**.

- Before submitting confirmation of the number of attendees to the caterer at the arranged deadline, you must send registered participants a **reminder email**, including an option for cancelling their registration. This reduces the no-show rate and allows for more precise requirements planning. You are obliged to document registrations and no-shows in writing to ensure reliable figures for future planning.

- Make **conference materials** (invitations, PowerPoint presentations, information signs) as accessible as possible. Key issues to pay attention to include:

  - Clear colour contrasts
  - A minimum font size of 10 (0.35) for flyers
  - Where possible, use pictograms for information signs
  - Add 2 cm to the character size for each metre of distance
  - Do not use slanted fonts or serifs
  - Line spacing should be at least 1.2.

- **Name tags** must be reusable. Therefore, remember to plan a return station for them. We suggest using reusable plastic-free lanyards/chains made from recycled material produced under fair working conditions (use paper cards rather than plastic). Textile adhesive labels are a good alternative for one-day events. Pin-on badges are not yet available in plastic-free versions, so it is particularly important to ensure as many as possible are returned.

3 | Event venue and accommodation

Select the event venue and/or hotel based on the following criteria:

- Easily reachable by public transport, where available, practical, and safe.
- Few barriers, i.e., wheelchair accessible at least. If you are informed of any additional requirements (see assistance enquiries), make sure to plan other individual measures.
- Comfortable room climate and natural lighting, if possible.
- To keep the delivery of equipment to a minimum, give precedence to venues that have appropriate equipment (furniture, technology, decorative elements, and catering) over ones that must source these items from external suppliers. The list of equipment forms part of the ToRs. Request a list of the equipment on site when tendering an offer.
- Plenty of different seating options need to be planned for to ensure full accessibility (e.g., standing desks combined with low desks, etc.).
- The applicable limits for overnight accommodation are stipulated in the regulations governing the reimbursement of travel expenses.

4 | Mobility

- GIZ sends information about **environmentally friendly travel options** to all participants, where available, practical, and safe. These practical tips are intended to ensure they have a smooth door-to-door journey (e.g., mobility apps, rental bike stations, public transport offers, etc.).

- **Provide information on barrier-free** public transport options close to the conference location.

- In the run-up to the event, supply information on special travel offers (to speakers, participants, colleagues).

- Avoid short haul [4] **flights** to events **within South Africa, Lesotho, and Eswatini**.[5]

- When organising shuttle or taxi services, **always choose environmentally friendly mobility providers** (electric vehicles, hydrogen-powered taxis, bike rickshaws, etc.) over conventional modes of transport.

- Where possible, point out opportunities for car sharing.

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[4] Short haul is defined as a 4.5-hour drive (approximately 450km) distance, subject to security.
[5] The regulations governing the reimbursement of travel expenses form the binding legal framework for all travel. For sustainability reasons, it must be assessed whether these aspects can be fulfilled. If fulfilment is not possible, this must be documented for the manager.

- **Provided they can be filled to capacity**, buses are the preferred mode of transport.

5 | Energy and climate

- Ensure **energy-optimised** heating or cooling in conference rooms:
    - Do not heat above 24 °C.
    - When using air conditioning, the temperature indoors is no more than 6 °C lower than the outside temperature.

- When not using electrical devices, switch them off or activate **energy-saving mode**.

- The **CO_2 emissions** produced by the event (for events with more than 100 persons) must be calculated.

- The costs of **compensating** for the CO_2 emissions (for events with more than 100 persons) must be included in the project budget.[6]

6 | Sustainable procurement

- **Gifts (giveaways) should be avoided**.[7] If they are used where possible, they must consist of upcycling products (e.g. old GIZ roll ups and banners) or renewable raw materials and have been produced under fair working conditions.

- Take care to use **reusable decorative elements** (if possible, no cut flowers, no banners or roll ups that can only be used once, etc.).

- If roll ups are decommissioned, send them to a company that specialises in materials upcycling (vocational training schools, etc.).

- Sustainability is the **key criterion** when procuring **event materials**, such as lanyards/chains, presentation materials, etc. (add to ToRs and assessment grid).

- In general, the **re-use** or repurposing of existing materials takes priority over the production of new materials.

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[6] Firstly, confirm with Commissioning Party if offsetting is permitted using project funds. Guidance for GIZ service providers on avoiding, reducing and offsetting GHG emissions is available at www.giz.de/en/workingwithgiz/74359.html.

[7] Please observe the regulations on gift-giving in P+R.

7 | Catering [8]

Food and drinks are:

- Above all, regionally sourced and seasonally appropriate.

- Organic, as far as possible.

- Products that cannot be procured regionally should be ethically sourced (coffee, tea, chocolate, etc.).

- Use **tap water** instead of bottled water, where possible and safe (filtered).
The quality of tap water in South Africa, Lesotho, and Eswatini is regulated. If people do have any concerns about drinking tap water, the only appropriate alternative would be to use large glass bottles with filtered water.

- All foods must be labelled **with regard to intolerances**.

- Preference should be given to **vegetarian and vegan foods**.

- Meat products should be organic, regionally sourced, and sustainably farmed, where used.

- Fish products must be from sustainable fishing or farming.

- Endangered animal species are prohibited.

- Food wastage must be avoided through prior confirmation of attendance, and sustainable disposal of leftover food in line with food safety regulations (e.g. to farms for animal consumption, composting, etc.).

- After event, if required, **leftover boxes** are provided to enable guests to take leftover food with them (only foods that were already on the buffet and do not pose any risks). Leftover boxes must be biodegradable.

- Use of the following is not permitted: disposable packaging, very small packaging units or disposable cutlery and glasses.

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[8] Please observe the regulations on hospitality in P+R.

Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Registered offices
Bonn und Eschborn

Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 32 + 36   Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5
53113 Bonn, Germany   65760 Eschborn, Germany
T +49 228 44 60-0   T +49 61 96 79-0
F +49 228 44 60-17 66   F +49 61 96 79-11 15

E procurement.pretoria@giz.de
   info@giz.de
I www.giz.de