

# Sustainable Event Planning

*When planning an event, please consider the following checklist to ensure that your event is as sustainable as possible.*

Sustainable development is development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland Commission, 1987). Thinking sustainably means considering the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental impacts. Sustainability is an important focus at Queen’s; the university has a Sustainability Office (QSO) and the AMS has a Commission of the Environment and Sustainability (CES).

Participants of events are increasingly interested in sustainable products, ideas, and services. Ensuring that your event is sustainable may take more time, but it also gives you an edge! Students are often drawn to events that promote sustainability.

- Understand the concept of sustainability!
- Appoint one of your organizers to consider how all aspects of the event could be more sustainable as you plan
- Use sustainability to your advantage! Students are often drawn to sustainable events, or expect them exclusively
- Have clearly marked, separate bins for waste, organics, plastic/glass recycling, and paper recycling at your event
- Consider the tips below re: water, waste, energy, transportation, advertising, and food
- Apply for the Sustainability Action Fund

## Water

- Plastic water bottles are banned from being sold on campus as of September 2012
- Encourage participants to bring reusable water bottles to your event, or provide reusable cups
- The QSO lend out water coolers that you can use at your event
- Make sure your event organizers know where water fill-up stations are on campus

## Waste

- Have clearly marked, separate bins for waste, organics, plastic/glass recycling, and paper recycling at your event
- If you need a lot of something, order it in bulk rather than individual wrappers
- Avoid printing the year or a year-specific logo on materials you get printed, so that they can be re-used in the future
- The Waste/Information Coordinator from the QSO (currently Llynwen Osborne - [lrao@queensu.ca](mailto:lrao@queensu.ca)) can get you waste bins for your event and arrange pick up of regular or hazardous waste (batteries, aerosol cans, paint, etc.)

## Energy

- Turn all lights, projectors, etc. off when they are not being used
- Keeps doors and windows closed to prevent heat or cool air from escaping

### Transportation

- Try to hold your event within walking distance of participants, or have it be accessible by public transit
- Look for opportunities to make sustainable transportation novel, like valet bike parking

### Advertising

- Avoid posters whenever possible – they are overdone, and non-paper alternatives can be much more effective (e.g. social media, websites, class talks, list-serve emails, etc.)
- Promote the fact that your event is sustainable – it will draw people in!

### Food

- Investigate whether your caterer serves local, sustainable food (for example, Windmills, Common Ground, and Sodexo do)
- Have green bins available for food waste
- Make use of any leftover food (give it to your organizers/volunteers, take it home in containers, give it to passers-by, donate it to a local shelter or food bank, etc.)

Be aware of the Sustainability Action Fund! This fund has three granting periods (due in June, October, and February), and is here to help you make your event more sustainable. If you have an idea to reduce waste or energy usage that will cost a bit extra, apply to the SAF to get that cost covered! For more information, contact Peter Liberty at [ces@ams.queensu.ca](mailto:ces@ams.queensu.ca)