

**WWF-PHILIPPINES**

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## LET'S MEET SUSTAINABLY! GREEN MEETINGS AND EVENTS GUIDELINES

### Rationale

Meetings and events contribute to the increasing greenhouse gas emissions generated today. As with any form of gathering, most of the meetings and events, from the preparation up to post event activities would entail resource usage and carbon footprint.

WWF Philippines is one with its stakeholders in creating solutions that promote betterment of the people and the planet through collaborative approach. True enough, our motto of "Together Possible" has been evident in our implementation of projects and meetings and events are no exception. Though it is observed that remote meetings are available and creates possibilities to reach people from the other parts of the globe, personal or face-to-face meetings, especially in the local setting are still a must.

As one of the leading organizations promoting environmental responsibility, it is fitting that WWF set measures to ensure resource efficiency and prevent wasteful practices. Furthermore, setting standards in visibility efforts such as having green meeting guidelines can help promote the vision of an organization as a herald of protecting our one and only planet.

### What is a SUSTAINABLE MEETING/ EVENT?

As defined by the Sustainable United Nations (SUN) unit of the UN Environment Program (UNEP), a green event is one organized in such a way that:

- emissions of greenhouse gases, such as CO<sub>2</sub>, are minimized, and unavoidable emissions are compensated for, natural resource consumption (including water and energy) is minimized and demand is adapted to available local resources,
- waste generation is avoided where possible and remaining waste is reused and/or recycled,
- biodiversity, water, air and soil resources are protected,
- minimal environmental damage is caused while preparing and implementing the meeting,
- the local community benefits economically, socially and environmentally both during and after the meeting, with local sustainable development encouraged to the extent achievable,
- the above principles are applied in purchasing goods and services for the meeting, the selection of the venue, transportation, catering and accommodation arrangements,



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- the awareness of participants, staff service providers and the local community in sustainability issues are increased, with the greening aims and measures communicated clearly to all,
- local hosts, regional and national authorities, sponsors, citizens groups, NGOs, business and
- technical experts are involved to the extent possible in order to comply with and support the above - stated principles.

## **GUIDELINES:**

### **1. VENUE SELECTION**

The type and location of venue selected will clearly depend on the size and length of the meeting and its participants. A small meeting for up to 30 people will probably use basic meeting facilities. On the other hand, a meeting for 100 participants will likely require some form of conference room with specialized meeting equipment and this should be chosen under careful scrutiny.

- When selecting a venue, strive to use venues and suppliers that have environmental practices in place. You may request for a list of environmental and even social initiatives being done by the establishment such as:
  - ✓ A sustainability plan;
  - ✓ A program that support its community, e.g. livelihood, clean-up program;
  - ✓ A food waste management system;
  - ✓ An established food safety and safe food handling protocols;
  - ✓ Programs to recycle and otherwise reduce solid waste e.g. plastic waste;
  - ✓ Programs for the conservation of energy and water, e.g. use of renewable energy;
  - ✓ Environmentally responsible systems to handle to treatment of solid and liquid wastes;
  - ✓ A food donation program;
  - ✓ A composting mechanism; and
  - ✓ Environmental initiatives above and beyond those listed herein.
- In addition, the proximity of the venue is also a consideration in terms of carbon footprint coming from transport. Choose location and venue with local and minimal distance transportation needs for participants and products. Access to public transport is also a consideration.



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- Controlling the air conditioning of the venue is also one way to reduce the carbon footprint by lowering the temperature by one to two degrees especially if it is only a small meeting or if there are only few attendees.

As organizers of the event, one should be able to communicate to their respective service providers, the initiative of “greening” your meetings and events. Through this effort, there is also a conduit to make partners continue and highlight their sustainability efforts and environmental initiatives.

## **2. HOSTS/ MASTER OF CEREMONIES/ FACILITATORS ETC.**

Should the event need hosting, it is imperative that the host provides a background on what the initiative of the green meeting practices are and should be communicated to the audience from time to time.

## **3. GOING PAPERLESS**

Several resources are used during meetings and events and one of the most common material used is paper. Below are some of the practices that would lessen its use during meetings and events.

- Use banners that are reusable to avoid frequent printing on paper/ plastic tarpaulins.
- Use online registration if possible.
- For event invitation, provide e-invites to participants.
- Use the right size of paper in creating nametags.
- Use recycled papers.
- if it is necessary to print in papers, such as handouts or briefers, they should be produced in a way that even printing is less harmful, reducing the text and the number of pages, choosing fewer colours etc.
- No papers and pencils available on top of the tables. Papers and pencils will be available only upon request or will be placed in the registration area for the participants to get.

## **4. FOOD AND BEVERAGE**

Most meetings require food and beverage services, may it be light snacks to full-course meals. Catering include all aspects of the provision of meals and refreshments for participants and staff, including procurement of food, handling of the waste produced by catering services and the traffic generated by their transportation. The environmental impacts of the food and drink we consume can vary hugely depending on what it is, where and how it was produced. Here are some of the guidelines for selecting menus for your catering.



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- Carefully plan the event. Make sure to provide the exact number of participants to avoid overproduction of food to be served.
- As much as possible, avoid food high in carbon footprint. Veal and beef are the top two kinds of meat that has the highest carbon footprint followed by pork.
- Special attention should be given to local and seasonal produce, e.g. serve seasonal fruit juice or seasonal fruits for dessert.
- Indicate name of dish or menu item. If possible, indicate the basic ingredients and potential allergens.
- Encourage plant-based dishes and organic products as well as sustainable healthy food and fair-trade ones.
- For drinking water, have a provision of water dispensers and let the participants get them by themselves. Avoid using bottled containers. For those having difficulty getting water for medical reasons, water will only be available upon request.
- Encourage participants to get only what they can finish to avoid food waste. Table cards can be placed in the buffet or tables to spread the message to the participants.
- Encourage the participants to bring their reusable containers should they decide to take their leftovers.
- Provision of a takeout containers made from recycled materials is necessary for participants who would want to take their food out.
- Table napkins are served upon request only.

## **5. SINGLE USE PLASTICS**

Single-use plastics are frequently used on a common and day to day basis, especially in the hospitality businesses. They generate a large volume of non-biodegradable waste which contributes to the pollution in our environment. Plastic waste can end up in various places, such as landfills, waterways, and even in our oceans. Since plastics are not biodegradable, the microplastics produce when plastics are broken down can enter our food chain and can pose as a potential health hazard.

- **STRICTLY** no single-use plastics (straws, stirrers, spoon, fork, knife, cups, plates etc.) Please use glassware, porcelain, or any reusable wares for all cutlery and tableware;
- As much as possible, ask the provider to avoid using plastic cling wraps when covering the food.



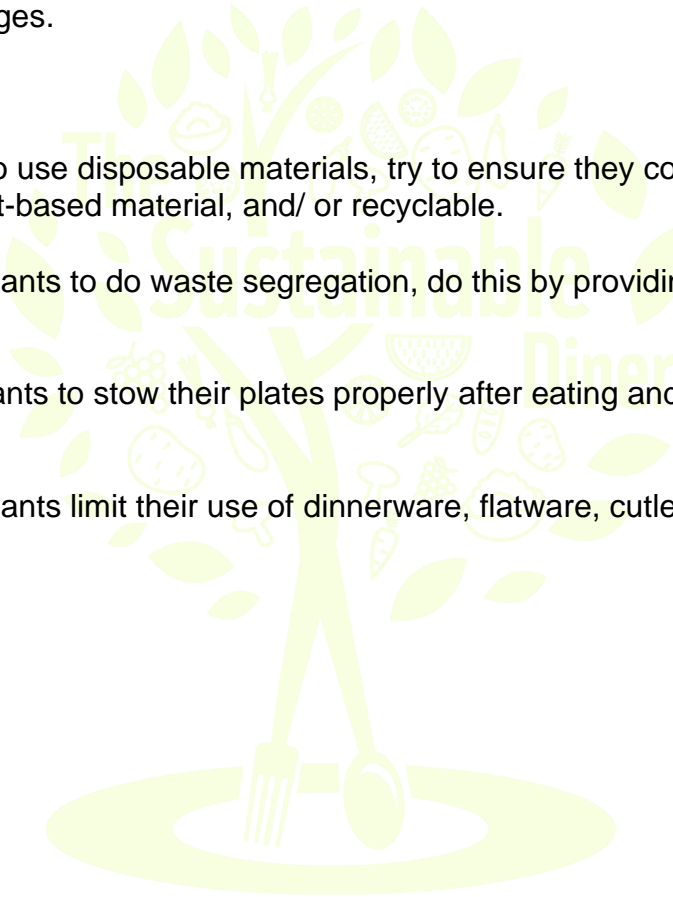
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- For coffee, creamer, and sugar, **STRICTLY** no sachets. Please have it in jars or any reusables; no need for stirrers);

## 6. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Here are other considerations for keeping your sustainability efforts alive in your meetings and events:

- Reuse pins or badges.
- Reuse papers.
- If there is a need to use disposable materials, try to ensure they contain a high content of recycled or plant-based material, and/ or recyclable.
- Encourage participants to do waste segregation, do this by providing trash bins that are properly labelled.
- Teach the participants to stow their plates properly after eating and segregate their food waste.
- Encourage participants limit their use of dinnerware, flatware, cutleries and drinking glasses.



A Key **Ingredient** For Sustainable Tourism