



FactSheet

No. 4.8

Project greening

Why project greening?

One of the three horizontal principles stated in the cooperation programme of Interreg Alpine Space is “sustainable development”. It is considered carefully in the evaluation of project proposals, which means that all co-financed Alpine Space projects develop sustainable development solutions to common Alpine challenges. Nevertheless, the daily project implementation itself has an impact on the environment.

In line with Article 8 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, the Alpine Space programme strives to adopt eco-friendly practices for all its daily activities, especially concerning events and meetings. Both for the programme and for its projects it is a matter of credibility to get aware of the environmental impact of their activities and to reduce their ecological footprint. Project participants are thus strongly encouraged to apply energy efficient and sustainable principles to their activities. In fact, reducing the impact on the environment can not only add value to a project in terms of credibility, but it can also result in lower costs.

This factsheet provides guidance on simple greening measures projects should apply to contribute to sustainable growth in the European Union. Its contents are based on the United Nations Environment Programme’s (UNEP) publications on the topic, namely the UNEP guide to climate neutrality: “kick the habit” and the UNEP Green meeting Guide (see reference documents at the end of this factsheet).



How to green your project?

Simple measures can make your project greener! They only require coordinated action and a “green approach” to project activities.

All project participants should share the same **sustainability objectives** and should cooperate on how to reach them. Project staff and observers should be made aware of the purpose and benefits of greening and be encouraged to act responsibly.

Sustainability should be **considered for all decisions** taken during the project’s lifetime (e.g. by systematically using green public procurement, or applying greening principles in event organisation).

In particular when purchasing services or goods, the environmental effects should be taken into account in the **procurement procedure**, i.e. in the specification of services or technical requirements, the definition of selection or award criteria, or the formulation of respective clauses in the contract (e.g. regional products to be used in catering), see also factsheet “public procurement”. Labels can help organisers identify providers that apply sustainable production methods.

Once the process is running, **measuring and quantifying the achievements** of the greening activities will build credibility, provide data for comparison with later activities, as well as figures for communication purposes. Project participants can measure the ecological footprint of their organisation or of the project by using the European green office eco-footprint calculator for example (cf. reference documents). Many calculators exist online. A list can be found in the UNEP guide to climate neutrality: “kick the habit” - chapter “count and analyse” (cf. reference documents).

Last but not least, **communicating all greening efforts and results** of the project is a very important step which contributes to a positive reputation, better visibility and an increased interest from the EU and the public.



Practical hints for project greening

Below are some practical hints for incorporating sustainability into project activities (i.e. events, meetings, and travels). Project participants are invited to implement all or as many as possible of these simple actions and to communicate this accordingly.

Project publications and dissemination products

- Publications can be disseminated electronically. Printing of publications should be foreseen only if strictly necessary and only if following a sound dissemination plan.
- Short, clear and “to-the-point” publications should be preferred to long ones and images should be reduced to save printing space.
- Publications should be printed for external communication purposes (if needed only) on both sides and on recycled paper. For electronic publications, a “printer-friendly” version (less colours, more compact text, less pages) should be made available.
- Recycled or natural material should be preferred for the production of promotional products. Only useful products should be produced.
- Publications should be printed where they are going to be distributed in order to minimise transportation distances.

Events and meetings

Applying greening principles for the organisation of meetings and events (cf. Checklist for organising green meetings/events at the end of the factsheet) provides high visibility for the project’s commitment to sustainability and climate change mitigation. It is important to communicate effectively what kind of greening measures the project applies, so that the event participants are made aware of the results achieved in this domain.

Some countries offer a green meeting certification (e.g. in Austria: <http://en.umweltzeichen-meetings.at>) for venues and event organisation companies. Certified service providers should be preferred in the meeting preparation phase. You will find a checklist, which could help facilitate the organisation of green project events and meetings in line with the programme eligibility rules, at the end of this factsheet.



Going further: Environmental Management Systems

To go further in their greening strategy, project participants can establish a plan defining specific objectives, actions and evaluation methods for their organisations. This can be done by adopting an Environmental Management System (EMS), which allows assessing whether proper sustainability procedures are in place, and helps the participants show their commitment to environmental issues as well as European sustainability objectives.

Reference documents

[UNEP guide to climate neutrality: “kick the habit”](#)

[UNEP green meeting guide, 2009](#)

[Factsheet 4.2: Public procurement](#)

[EU eco-management and audit scheme \(EMAS\)](#)

[EU ecolabel and green public procurement](#)

[ICLEI sustainable events guide and checklist, 2012](#)

[European green office website](#)

Further information

[5 alternatives to Skype](#)

[The ecolabel catalogue by country](#)



Checklist for organising green meetings/events

Before the meeting

- + Explore if a phone or a video conference could be organised instead of a meeting.

Setting up and running the event/meeting

- + Electronic means (e.g. e-mail, website) are used rather than printed materials for pre-meeting and follow-up communications.
- + Participants are encouraged to use sustainable ways of travelling by providing the following information:
 - o For short trips favour train to coach/plane and if train is not an option, favour car/coach to plane.
 - o Participants are encouraged to share the drive with other participants: a platform is provided for them to communicate and organise ride-sharing.
 - o Website addresses to offset the environmental costs of travel are provided.
- + Information on the greening efforts made at the meeting/event is provided electronically prior to, and after the meeting.
- + Paper used is recycled paper and any necessary material is printed at the local venue rather than shipped from elsewhere.
- + Participants' bags/packs are avoided or produced locally using recycled material, and are reusable.
- + Pens are provided only upon request, are made of a high content of recycled material, and are refillable.
- + In case participant's packs cannot be avoided, only strictly necessary material is included. Copying/printing is available upon request at the venue for the participants to print the information received by e-mail beforehand. Recycled or certified paper is available.
- + All material produced for the event (such as banners, posters, signs, etc.) is designed and written in a generic way to allow them to be reused for other events.
- + The start and end of the meeting are adjusted to the schedules of environmentally sound transportation means.
- + A dedicated area is provided for participants to return material that can be re-used (such as badges).
- + The use of decorative elements such as flowers, banners etc. is minimised.



Venue

- + Priority is given to locations available in the premises of one of the project participants in order to reduce the need for staff to travel.
- + The venue gives clear indications on the use and handling of the environmental duties in place (reduction of waste, use of reusable dishes instead of disposable ones, tap water etc.).
- + The venue has good access to the main public transport connections and town centre.
- + If possible, all waste produced at the venue is sorted for recycling and sufficient, well-marked bins are provided in both participants and staff areas.
- + It is possible to regulate the temperature within the building. Use of natural light is preferred and the use of stage lights is kept to the strict necessary.

Accommodation

- + The hotels are located near public transportation and as close as possible to the conference facilities (preferably within walking distance).
- + Hotels certified with recognised green building system or EMS and/or having environmental policy and action plans are preferred.
- + The hotel should give clear indications on the use and handling of the environmental duties in place (reduction of waste, use of reusable dishes instead of disposable ones, refillable soap dispenser etc.).

Catering

The following aspects are taken into account when procuring services, in the specification of services, the criteria for selection or award, as well as in clauses of the contract to be concluded with the caterer.

- + The use of reusable dishes, cutlery, glassware and linens is ensured and aluminium foil avoided.
- + If disposable items are essential, it is ensured that they have a high content of recycled or plant-based material, are recyclable and that appropriate recycling systems are in place.
- + Paper products used for catering have a high recycled content and are totally or elementary chlorine free (TCF or ECF).
- + The use of single-use bottles for beverages is avoided.
- + If possible, all waste produced is sorted for recycling and sufficiently numerous, well-marked bins are provided in catering areas.



- + The caterer is informed on the exact number of participants and is able to re-evaluate the quantities needed to avoid waste.

Food and drinks

- + Locally grown and produced food and drinks are used and menus reflect the seasonal products of the region.
- + The use of organically produced food and drinks is preferred.
- + For products like sugar and coffee, the use of fair trade labelled products is preferred.
- + The quantity of meat products offered is minimised and at least one vegetarian option is offered (as the production of meat produces considerably more CO₂ than non-meat products).
- + Tap water is used and served in jugs instead of in single-use bottles.

Local transport

- + Clear instruction is provided to participants on appropriate public transport and/or walking arrangements from point of arrival/departure (railway station, airport) to the venue, accommodation, town centre, etc. This is provided by e-mail shortly before the event and can be additionally displayed at the venue.
- + A member of staff or local volunteer is provided to accompany the participants from hotel/station to the venue on foot or public transport. If public transport is not available, a shuttle service is organised.