



**C h a n g e  
the World,  
one Step  
at a Time**

# Planning an eco-friendly event

In its "Change the world, one step at a time" campaign, Desjardins promised to implement 12 corporate actions as part of its commitment to sustainable development. If you are interested in organizing an eco-friendly event, the checklist below will take you through all the necessary steps.

If this is your first time organizing an eco-friendly event, don't try to make the world a greener place all at once. Set realistic sustainable development goals and do everything you can to achieve them. For some useful tips and advice, refer to the "Guide d'application pour la réalisation d'un événement écoresponsable" created by the Chaire en éco-conseil de l'UQAC at the following address:

[http://dsf.uqac.ca/eco-conseil/chaire/documents/guide\\_00.pdf](http://dsf.uqac.ca/eco-conseil/chaire/documents/guide_00.pdf). (available in French only).

*May your event make everyone "green" with envy!*

## Section 1 | Reducing Waste

**This part involves designing and organizing the event with a view to reducing both the amount of waste materials and the waste slated for the landfill.**

**Where to begin?**

**We recommend that you start by analyzing all aspects of your event in order to find ways of keeping the amount of residual waste your activities generate to a minimum. When waste is unavoidable, find ways to reuse, recover and recycle.**

### FOR EXAMPLE:

**Think of greener ways of communicating information to event participants:**

- ☐ Reduce your use of paper, cardboard, envelopes and any other disposable materials
- ☐ Use digital data or electronic media (email, Internet, e-documents)
- ☐ Print only when necessary and using recycled post-consumer paper (100% if possible)
- ☐ Print double sided and in black and white<sup>1</sup>
- ☐ Limit the number of copies you print
- ☐ Choose reusable and recyclable signage and name tags, etc.)
- ☐ Offer green promotional gifts<sup>2</sup> (local, recycled, recyclable, eco-friendly, organic, fairly traded, manufactured by a cooperative, etc.)

### Reduce the waste generated by the event:

- ☐ Work with the venue and the caterer<sup>3</sup> to ensure that only reusable dinnerware (plates, water pitchers/dispensers, butter dishes, sugar bowls, teaspoons, linen table cloths and napkins, etc.) are used
- ☐ Reduce or eliminate the use of disposable containers (cans, glass bottles, packaging, etc.)
- ☐ Remind your caterer that buying in bulk reduces overpackaging

### Recover and recycle waste products:

- ☐ Select a venue that has a waste management system (selective sorting) or ask your host to ensure the recovery and recycling of various materials:
  - Paper, cardboard
  - Plastic, glass, metal
  - Putrescible (organic) matter
- ☐ If certain materials cannot be recovered, see if the venue is willing to organize the collection of these materials for your event and then find local companies that will recover or recycle them
- ☐ Ask your caterer or head chef to keep any leftover food, using Health Canada hygiene guidelines, for redistribution to charitable organizations<sup>4</sup>

### Measure your results:

- ☐ With the cooperation of the venue, collect information about the amount of waste materials sorted<sup>5</sup> at your event, i.e., the total weight of:
  - Paper, cardboard
  - Plastic, glass, metal
  - Putrescible (organic) matter
  - Residual landfill waste
- ☐ Evaluate your event's "green" performance using the recommended method, by calculating the amount of residual waste from the various materials recycled and the amount slated for the landfill. You should be aiming for a high percentage of recycled materials and a low percentage of landfill materials
- ☐ Improve your "green" performance from year to year by comparing these percentages.



## Section 2 | Reducing greenhouse gas emissions

This part focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions generated by the participants' use of motorized vehicles and on offsetting those that can't be avoided.

### 1 Suggest greener travel options to your event participants:

- ☐ Organize group transit<sup>6</sup>
- ☐ Encourage participants to use public transportation with incentives (e.g., prizes, gifts, draws, etc.)
- ☐ Make participants aware of alternative types of transportation, such as:
  - Public transportation
  - Carpooling
  - Taxi sharing
  - Walking (if possible)
  - Bicycling (if possible and if equipment is available)

### 2 Collect information about the participants' travel arrangements when they register for the event.

Examples of questions to ask:

#### a How will you be coming to the event?

Bus ☐ Plane ☐ Car ☐ Train ☐ Other (on foot, by bike) ☐

#### b If you are coming by car, will you be travelling alone?

Yes ☐ No ☐ If you are not travelling alone, how many people will be travelling with you? \_\_\_\_\_

#### c What will be your approximate travel distance (return trip)? \_\_\_\_\_ km

### 3 Offsetting greenhouse gas emissions generated by participants travelling in motorized vehicles:

- ☐ Plant trees: they will absorb carbon dioxide gas as they grow and help slow down climate change. To calculate the number of trees to plant, you can refer to the "*Feuille de calcul des émissions CO<sub>2</sub>*" prepared by the Chaire en éco-conseil de l'UQAC at the following address: <http://dsf.uqac.ca/eco-conseil/> ("Chaire/documents" section) (available in French only)
- ☐ Offer your event participants some native tree seedlings to plant when they get home<sup>7</sup>
- ☐ Partner with other accredited greenhouse gas emissions offset projects. Professionals who work in this field can help you with this

The sustainable development advisors of the Secretariat General<sup>8</sup> can refer you to local organizations or professionals.

## General

In your calls for tenders, clearly explain your event's green needs to suppliers. With a clear understanding of your objectives, they can become your allies and even come up with creative solutions of their own.

To make sure your event is successful and to challenge your teams, suppliers and partners to think green, **don't be afraid to inform, communicate and educate them**

on the nature of an eco-friendly event. You can appoint a volunteer "ambassador" to raise team awareness, explain what you are trying to accomplish and help them out when necessary.

Use every opportunity to communicate your objectives directly and indirectly to the event participants, employees, managers and the media. For example: in the event program, in the event program introduction, through volunteers, newsletters and in local and regional daily newspapers.



- 1 To facilitate de-inking during the recycling process.
- 2 See the Axidata Buro Plus ([www.axidataburoplus.com](http://www.axidataburoplus.com)) Promotional Items Catalogue and its "Responsible Purchasing Section". You can also refer to the "Buying environmentally responsible promotional items" checklist.
- 3 For meals and snacks, choose a caterer in your area who uses local, regional, seasonal and, if possible, organic, and fairly traded produce, etc.
- 4 Contact La Table des Chefs, an organization partnering with Desjardins, and they will make arrangements with Quebec food banks: <http://www.tabledeschefs.org/>
- 5 If some of the waste materials are not managed by the city's waste removal system (e.g., putrescible (organic) or hazardous materials), you can dispose of them by calling the city or a local organization that will look after their disposal. In exchange for their services, offer to mention their name in your communications.
- 6 Depending on the number of participants and where they are coming from, coming from, make bicycles available, rent a van to shuttle people from a meeting point or work out a partnership with local public transit organizations (trains, buses) and negotiate special rates for the event in exchange for visibility, etc.
- 7 Placing an order with a local nursery will make it easier to find native trees that do well in your area.