7 Eco-friendly event venues: Navigating sustainable choices for gatherings

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Introduction

Sustainability is an essential part of event management (Jones, 2017), which starts with the choice of an eco-friendly venue. There are many typologies available but essentially, events and meetings are get-togethers where people congregate to inspire attendees, transact business, exchange ideas, and acquire knowledge. Events are short, targeted gatherings of people; temporary crowd gatherings that frequently feature rituals and are one-of-a-kind experiences that can happen physically or virtually (Convention Industry Council, 2004; Bladen et al., 2023).

Events affect their host communities and stakeholders both positively and negatively. Along with promoting inter- and intragenerational equity, sustainable events aim to minimize negative effects while leaving an excellent impression on the host community and stakeholders (Chirieleisona et al., 2020).

At present, with heightened worldwide attention towards environmental issues, the event sector has faced scrutiny due to its substantial negative environmental impact. Events have both positive and negative impacts since they take place in a specific economic, political, social, and environmental context. Negative consequences may result in negative publicity and losing community support, as well as significant financial and legal implications. An event cannot be sustained if its adverse effects outweigh its positive ones (Holmes et al., 2015). Sustainable, or 'green', events initially aimed to minimize environmental harm, but their concept has evolved to encompass economic and social impacts across the triple bottom line (Holmes et al., 2015).

As an example of the environmental impact of events, during one five-day conference with 8,500 attendees, 210,800 plastic plates, 297,500 paper napkins, 255,000 plastic cups, and 306,000 water bottles were used, resulting in 24 tons of garbage and consuming 88,461 kWh of electricity (Gracan et al., 2010). Events such as weddings and conferences generate waste, consume power, and produce carbon emissions (Hottle et al., 2015). These events frequently leave a significant