



TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE EVENTS

AN INTRODUCTION TO
HERITAGE ECO CERTIFIED
EVENTS



Heritage Eco Events



Only after the last tree has been cut down;
Only after the last fish has been caught;
Only after the last river has been poisoned;
Only then will they realise that money cannot be eaten.

Cree Indian Prophecy—1800's

A Moral Imperative

With Africa now enjoying a renaissance in business and tourism arrivals, and with over seven million visitors arriving in South Africa every year*, the events sector of our economy plays an increasingly important role in the development of South and southern Africa.

From single meetings, to multinational conventions, sporting events and exhibitions, this sector has an enormous impact on the limited resources of the region and on the wellbeing of local communities, their cultures and traditions. PCO's and event organizers are often called upon to develop, manage and coordinate events on behalf of their clients, but how many actually look at the long-term impacts that these have on the environment.

In response to this, more and more companies, organizations and clients are beginning to question their responsibility in ensuring that their events leave as little impact as possible. Internationally, the move towards certifying the environmental status of events, meetings, conferences and exhibitions has established a moral imperative for local event managers and it is now expected that steps are taken to reduce and manage the 'footprint' created by events.

As a professional, the role you play in promoting your products, services or destinations can influence the long-term sustainability of your business and your choices and the way in which you operate on behalf of your clients will determine the legacy we leave future generations.

The Marketing Edge

Internationally, the demand for more responsible and sustainable products and services grows almost daily. In the United Kingdom, a recent survey indicated that as many as 52% of all consumers supported environmentally responsible businesses, while more British citizens hold membership of eco- organisations and associations than political parties.

In the United States, outbound tour operators have begun requesting destination owners to explain the 'trickle' effect that their Dollar spend has on the local community and in the German speaking countries of Europe, more and more consumers are becoming environmentally active and demanding answers to simple questions related to the way in which you do business.

This all points towards a growing demand for environmental responsibility, and current concerns for global warming, desertification and resource depletion have had the effect of focusing the world's attention on sustainable and responsible business practice. The demand for environmentally responsible events will continue to grow dramatically and soon, more and more 'non-environmental' businesses will start battling to attract the growing environmentally aware and concerned business market in the coming years.

Going Green - a Strategic Tool

By committing yourself to the principles of sustainable and responsible event management, you will be seen as playing an active part in the protection of our environmental heritage for future generations. The African Continent is enjoying a renaissance in international exposure and the field of environmental certification of tourism products and services is relatively uncharted. By promoting and managing events and activities that care for the environment your business can benefit from the growing international awareness of responsibility.

The media love a good story and environmental irresponsibility makes good reading. By committing to a greener approach to your clients or business's events, the reputation and good name that you have developed over many years can be protected and enhanced.

Greening your event or conference is not simply a process of switching lights off. It requires a commitment to identify every aspect of the project that could impact on the environment or local community and then, taking meaningful steps to mitigate and manage these impacts and to leave a lasting legacy. Going Green is about making a difference!

Introducing Heritage Eco Events

Heritage Eco Events is a unique initiative designed to recognise meetings, conferences, concerts, sporting events and exhibitions that have been developed and held in a sustainable and responsible manner.

The programme has been developed to recognise and encourage responsible and sustainable event management. It encourages event organisers and companies to address the environmental impacts that their activities will have. From resource use to waste, noise, construction material, publications, promotions and visitor or delegate access, each event makes certain demands on the environment and local community and Heritage Eco Events aims to raise awareness of these and efforts made to mitigate the impacts.

Heritage Eco Events measures the extent to which you consider the impacts that events will have on the destination chosen. It considers the strategies and planning that is undertaken to minimise environmental impacts; the products and services select; the transport and accommodation needs of visitors and delegates; efforts that you take to protect the environment, local communities and cultures of the destination and ways in which you encourage and recognise environmental responsibility in general.

Certification of your event is more than just a matter of talking about change. It requires visible and demonstrable commitment to the goals of responsible business practice, and to the long-term sustainable development of the destinations you select.



One of the most difficult things is not to change society,
but to change yourself

Nelson Mandela



The difference between animals and humans is that animals change themselves for the environment, but humans change the environment for themselves

Ayn Rand

Towards Responsible Events

In order to achieve certification of your event, you would be expected to establish and adopt an *environmental policy* as a business and on behalf of your client, and to give effect to its aims and objectives by your activities and operations. It seeks to encourage you to act with greater awareness of your impacts on the economic, environmental and social aspects of the event being planned and the legacy that your efforts will leave after the event.

Heritage Eco Events aims to instil a sense of responsibility in the way that events are planned; developed and undertaken. By making your clients or company aware of the need for environmentally and socially responsible practice – and by insisting on minimum performance standards, PCO's and event management professionals not only positively influence the environments in which they operate, but they also add to the range of benefits and experiences their clients achieve.

Heritage Eco Events is about changing the way that you manage events and activities. It's about ensuring sustainable use of our resources and about leaving a legacy of responsible and economically sustainable development that will ensure future generations both experience and benefit directly from your actions.

Becoming Part of the Solution

Certification by Heritage Eco Events can be achieved in two categories - **Green Events** and **Carbon Neutral Events**.

- **Certified Green Event**

The Certified Green option is aimed at those events or activities that wish to demonstrate their commitment towards reducing and managing their social and environmental impacts. It requires effective and demonstrable reductions in energy, water and emissions and management of waste, waste recovery and recycling practices. All aspects of the planning, management and operations of the event are considered during the certification process.

- **Certified Carbon Neutral Event**

The Certified Carbon Neutral option is aimed at those events or activities that wish to demonstrate their commitment towards reducing and managing their social and environmental impacts and at offsetting their impacts as part of a legacy initiative for the event. The organisers would be required to either allocate a budget for offset initiatives, or include a delegate/participant/visitor fee to ensure that the carbon impacts associated with the event are mitigated after the event.

In both cases, certification focuses on the planning and management of any event and on the manner in which the event itself is undertaken.

In meeting the certification standards of Heritage Eco Events, certain minimum performance standards will be required in respect of the economic, environmental and social impacts of the event under consideration.

Once application is made for certification, the Heritage team becomes an active partner in all stages of the planning and development process. The event itself is permitted to make use of the Heritage Eco Event logo for its marketing and promotional activities and may claim to be '*working towards*..' certification. Our team assists in the development of strategies and systems to monitor and record resource use; waste and other environmental impacts and during the event they will be on-site to monitor the application and implementation of the steps that have been taken towards certification.

Once an event has been completed, Heritage will collate the data and compile an environmental report from information gleaned throughout the process before determining and certifying the status of the event itself.

In our experience – and based on the existing models that we have established with other members of this environmentally responsible products and services, the actual certification status achieved will depend on the extent to which internal management systems are applied and managed.

Environmental certification has become the way of the future and whether your decision to participate is based on marketing or cost-savings benefits, the long-term benefits that you will achieve for your clients, your business, your community and ultimately, your children, makes your decision to certify all the more worthwhile.

Certification Criteria

The Heritage Eco Event standard has been developed to recognise environmentally responsible practice by event organisers and companies. The performance criteria that have been established reflect a number of key elements of sustainable and responsible business practice and include:

- Event Management and Development
- Business Associates, Suppliers and Service Providers
- Operational Management Systems
- Supply Chain Management
- Customer Relations
- Event Management
- Community Relations

The certification criteria are aimed at obtaining certain information on event planning and management performance aspects and of impacts on the environment, communities and cultures as a result of the event itself.

Applicants are required to complete an extensive questionnaire that covers all of the criteria in terms of the life-cycle of the event.



The moral imperative to make big changes is inescapable...that what we take for granted may not be here for our children

Al Gore



Humans merely share the Earth. We can only protect the land, not own it

Chief Seattle

The Cost of Recognition

Certification by Heritage Eco Events carries a per event fee in addition to a 'Legacy Fee' for those seeking Carbon Neutral Certification. For more Info and cost please contact one of our consultants.

Evaluating Your Performance

Heritage Eco Events aims to achieve four objectives. These are:

- *To reduce the effect that the event has on its environment and on surrounding communities;*
- *To increase awareness and sound management systems that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the business and it's surrounding environment;*
- *To reduce the operating costs and expenses of the operation and thereby improve the profits through sound environmental practices and;*
- *To realise the full potential of sustainable business activities for future generations*

To run a sustainable event requires leadership from the top management. The event organisers and host venue must be fully committed and be prepared to drive the programme forward from the earliest stages.

Environmental management must be an integral component of the event management, not an after thought, and both human and financial resources must be committed at this early stage. Organisers must have early dialogue with all key stakeholders and commitment to openness about environmental activities at all times. They need to take full account of their contractual obligations with sponsors, media, host venues and local authorities as the case may be. They must ensure that the environmental management activities do not detract from the primary objectives of the i.e. sporting competition or display.

The Heritage Eco Event Commitment

In undertaking this event, we the organisers - on behalf of our client, recognise the impacts that our activities may have on our environmental and on the communities affected by this project.

We recognise the need to conceptualise, plan, manage and execute this event in ways that make a positive contribution to the natural, social and cultural legacy of our communities.

We accept our responsibility to manage this event in ways that will:

- reduce our environmental, social and cultural impacts;
- create sustainable benefits or opportunities for the local community;
- create a basis for sustainable economic activity; and
- ensure the protection of the destination or location of this event to the benefit of future generations.

In achieving our objectives, we undertake to:

- protect the environment and cultural heritage of the venue and location of the event;
- select and support companies, products and services that share our concerns and ideals;
- ensure that local communities share in the economic benefits of the event through the equitable and fair distribution of receipts;
- respect and protect the integrity of local customs, cultures and social activities;
- oppose and actively discourage illegal, abusive or exploitative forms of business activity;
- share information on our sustainable practices and achievements and encourage our business partners to adopt similar actions;
- promote greater awareness of the environmental, social and economic impacts of our activities and
- encourage our clients, business partners and suppliers, visitors and delegates to support our efforts in meeting this commitment.

A Commitment and Shared Vision

No greening initiative can work without commitment and focus by all those businesses and participants involved. Heritage Eco Events is about encouraging and guiding you and your team to ensure your own sustainable management systems.

After all... don't future generations have the right to expect nothing less than our total commitment today?



Poverty eradication, changing consumption and production patterns, and protecting and managing the natural resource base for economic and social development are overarching objectives of, and essential requirements for sustainable development

"The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development"



Heritage Eco Events

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