

# Accessing and Maintaining the Performance of a Sustainable Event

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**Abstract:** *The sustainability of events has become increasingly important due to the growing need for socially and environmentally responsible activities. From initial planning to post-event evaluation, this essay examines the crucial elements of gaining access to and sustaining the performance of sustainable events. It highlights how crucial it is to establish specific, quantifiable objectives, put sustainable procurement and waste management techniques into practice, and use technology to reduce environmental effect. In order to guarantee long-term sustainability, it also discusses the necessity of ongoing monitoring, stakeholder participation, and data-driven decision-making. This paper offers a framework for event planners to successfully incorporate and maintain sustainable practices by describing doable tactics and emphasising important factors, to promoting a more accountable and significant event sector.*

**Keywords:** Planning, Performance, Monitoring, Sustainability.

## Introduction

In our rapidly evolving world, sustainability has become a paramount concern across numerous industries. The event sector is undergoing a significant transformation as it acknowledges and addresses the urgent need for more environmentally sound practices. Sustainability is increasingly viewed as a fundamental requirement, rather than an optional add-on, driven by a growing, ecologically conscious population that demands events that are socially inclusive, economically viable, and environmentally responsible.

Furthermore, Isakhan (2024) defines an event as a public gathering held for diverse purposes, including celebration, business, education, marketing, and reunion. Events can be categorized based on their context, size, and type. Regardless of scale, events possess the potential to leave a lasting impact on attendees and the broader community. Consequently, there is a burgeoning trend towards sustainable events, which reflects a commitment to minimizing adverse effects and maximizing positive outcomes.

The core principle of sustainability is to meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. Cavalli (2024) posits that a “sustainable event” is one that is planned and executed with a focus on conserving energy, reducing waste, sourcing local materials, promoting responsible consumption, and minimizing its negative environmental footprint, while also considering the social and economic impacts on the host community. Essentially, the aim is to “tread lightly” on the environment throughout the event’s duration.

In addition, Santos (2024) stated that, in a world increasingly aware of its environmental footprint, sustainable events are no longer a luxury but a necessity. However, attaining sustainability without sacrificing performance requires a careful balance. This article explores how to access and maintain the performance of sustainable events, ensuring they are both impactful and eco-friendly.

## Importance of Sustainable Event

The significance of sustainable events is sometimes ambiguous and misinterpreted. But when it comes to event planning, sustainability takes on a very concrete and useful form. In this context, sustainability refers to planning and overseeing events in a way that respects and benefits the environment, society, and economy. In other words, Shahzad (2024) proposed that planners and stakeholders have been becoming more conscious of the significance of sustainability in events, and they are also becoming more interested in evaluating their performance.

Therefore, incorporating sustainability into events entails evaluating every planning component as a potential source of emissions and creating the best feasible solution to meet the event's social, economic, and environmental objectives. It becomes more crucial to establish proper planning and monitor the associated sustainable performance because every event is unique in terms of its nature, size, goals, and other factors, Nickdoost (2024).

Furthermore, Machado (2024) asserted that the “Triple Bottom Line”—a framework that integrates three distinct aspects: economic, environmental, and social sustainability—is the cornerstone of sustainable event planning, making the sustainable event assessment crucial in the event industry as well as in other application areas.

**Economic sustainability** focusses on making sure an event is profitable without sacrificing environmental and ethical standards. It entails giving local suppliers and services priority in order to boost regional economies, promoting fair trade standards, and producing financial gains that are inclusive and have a direct influence on nearby communities.

**Environmental sustainability** focuses on reducing the ecological impact of events is one feature of sustainability that typically comes to mind. This could entail encouraging participants to use eco-friendly modes of transportation, minimizing waste through practices like recycling or composting, maximizing energy use with energy-efficient appliances or renewable energy sources, and obtaining eco-friendly materials and supplies.

**Social sustainability** in event planning takes into account the human element of the event—the effect on the attendees and the community as a whole. This entails making sure the event is accessible to everyone, irrespective of socioeconomic status or physical ability, creating an atmosphere that celebrates diversity and inclusivity, and taking precautions to ensure the safety and well-being of attendees.

Integrating these three pillars into event planning is more than a trend - it's a conscious shift towards a more responsible and future-focused approach to organizing events. The practice brings a multitude of benefits, spanning environmental, economic, and social domains, and as discussed by Mair (2024), There is a significant and growing demand for sustainable events, driven by increasing public awareness about environmental impact, with attendees and organizers increasingly prioritizing eco-friendly options when planning and attending conferences, meetings, and other gatherings; this trend is pushing businesses and venues to adopt sustainable practices to attract environmentally conscious clients.

### Performance of a Sustainable Event

According to Cavalli (2024), the performance of a sustainable event is determined by its effectiveness in reducing environmental impact while maintaining a positive attendee experience. This encompasses elements such as minimized waste production, reduced energy consumption, ethical sourcing, and constructive social interaction. Specific metrics are used to evaluate these elements and determine the event's overall sustainability success.

Mostaghimi (2023) defines minimized waste production as the strategies and actions implemented to reduce the creation of waste materials and maximize resource efficiency, thereby lessening the environmental impact of consumption and production. This approach enhances an event's sustainability by focusing on:

**Resource Efficiency:** This involves optimizing the use of resources (materials, energy, water, etc.), reducing consumption, and extending their lifespan. The foundational principles of waste reduction are the "3Rs": Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. These principles encourage activities that decrease waste generation, prolong the usability of materials, and recover materials for subsequent use.

**Ecological Production and Consumption:** A critical aspect of sustainable practices is minimizing waste production, which strives to meet present human needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own.

According to Ahmad (2023), energy conservation, also referred to as reduced energy consumption, involves using less energy to achieve the same or comparable goals in households, businesses, events, or enterprises. This approach yields several advantages, including:

**Economic Savings:** Individuals and businesses can realize significant cost reductions through lower energy expenditures.

**Environmental Sustainability:** Reduced energy consumption leads to a smaller carbon footprint and fewer greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to environmental protection.

**Resource Conservation:** By consuming less energy, we can preserve finite resources such as fossil fuels and other energy sources.

Purchasing goods and services in a manner that prioritizes social, environmental, and economic responsibility—as well as guaranteeing fair labour practices, sustainable practices, and respect for human rights across the supply chain—is known as ethical sourcing, according to Hughes (2019).

**Fair labour** practices include removing child labour and forced labour, providing safe working conditions, and paying fair wages.

**Environmental Sustainability:** By encouraging resource efficiency and responsible resource management, ethical sourcing seeks to reduce the supply chain's negative environmental effects.

**Respect for Human Rights:** This entails protecting human rights and making certain that every employee is accorded respect and decency.

Positive and fruitful interactions between people or groups that promote growth, understanding, and the formation of wholesome connections are referred to as constructive social interaction. According to Karsim (2023), these interactions entail

cooperation, communication, and teamwork as participants strive towards shared objectives, value one another's opinions, and provide meaningful support to one another, and some of the key elements are:

**Active Listening:** Paying attention to what others are saying without interrupting, showing empathy, and understanding their perspective.

**Respect and Empathy:** Being considerate of others' feelings and viewpoints, and showing kindness

### Strategies for Maintaining Performance

Techniques and routines that people or groups can employ to maintain high performance levels throughout time, according to Jarus (2023). Maintaining performance, whether in a work, school, or personal setting, entails overcoming obstacles and preventing burnout while remaining motivated, focused, and effective. Strategies for performance management are essential for achieving outcomes. Event companies should invest enough resources in their development rather than ignoring them as they are.

Nonetheless, the goal of the performance management process is to encourage candid communication between managers, employees, and HR. It is easier to understand where an employee is now, how they hope to improve, and how they might match their growth with company goals when job responsibilities, expectations, performance, and goals are discussed.

Performance management has historically been akin to an evaluation conducted in a formal or informal meeting between the manager and the employee. The majority of businesses today employ a combination of formal and informal tactics, utilising the four essential phases of performance management:

1. **Planning:** This stage involves setting performance expectations and goals and defining individual success metrics.
2. **Monitoring:** HR and managers track employee performance in relation to the goals set and provide regular feedback.
3. **Developing and reviewing:** At this stage, HR and managers analyze performance data to help employees correct underperformance. Employees performing exceptionally well may be assigned extra projects so they can excel further.
4. **Rating and rewards:** HR and managers regularly track and rate employee performance. Continually underperforming employees could face dismissal while the organization recognizes and rewards top performers.

### Challenges of maintaining performance

Performance management plays a vital role in the success of any organization, but it comes with its own set of challenges, from setting achievable goals to giving effective feedback. According to Xavier & Meneses (2022), finding the right balance is crucial. Often, managers set goals that are either too easy, leading to a lack of motivation, or too difficult, causing employees to feel overwhelmed. Additionally, when goals are not clearly defined or measurable, it can create confusion and a lack of direction.

Another major challenge in performance management is the fear of negative reactions. Managers frequently worry that providing negative feedback could demotivate employees or harm their relationship with them. As a result, feedback may be softened or avoided altogether. Furthermore, not all managers are naturally skilled at giving constructive feedback. Effective criticism requires tact, diplomacy, and an understanding of the employee's perspective (Malis, 2021). Also, Mohammed (2022) added that in performance management, the fear of confrontation by many managers, avoiding addressing underperformance due to concerns that it will lead to conflict.

However, this only allows the problem to persist and potentially worsen. Resistance to change is another significant challenge. Employees often resist new systems, particularly if they perceive them as a threat to their job security or autonomy. This resistance can result in a lack of buy-in and underutilization of the system. The complexity of the system can also pose challenges. If the system is overly complicated or difficult to use, it can lead to frustration and non-compliance. Another key issue identified by Opoku (2024) is the lack of standardized criteria. Without clear and consistent criteria, performance evaluations can become subjective and biased, leading to perceptions of unfairness and demotivation.

Finally, the lack of regular evaluations is a common challenge. Performance management should be an ongoing process rather than a once-a-year event. However, in many organizations, performance reviews are conducted annually or semi-annually, which prevents timely feedback and necessary adjustments.

### Findings and Discussion

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The study on "Accessing and Maintaining the Performance of a Sustainable Event" reveals that sustainability has become a critical component of event planning, driven by the growing demand for environmentally and socially responsible practices. The Triple Bottom Line framework—economic, environmental, and social sustainability—serves as the foundation for creating events that are both impactful and eco-friendly. Economically, sustainable events must remain profitable while supporting local economies and fair trade practices.

Environmentally, the focus is on minimizing waste, reducing energy consumption, and lowering carbon footprints through strategies like the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and the use of renewable energy sources. Socially, these events prioritize inclusivity, accessibility, and community engagement, ensuring that all attendees feel valued and safe. The performance of sustainable events is measured using specific metrics, such as waste diversion rates, energy savings, and attendee satisfaction, which collectively determine their overall success. These findings underscore the importance of integrating sustainability into every stage of event planning, from conception to post-event evaluation.

To maintain the performance of sustainable events, the study highlights the need for strategic planning, execution, and continuous monitoring. During the planning phase, clear and measurable sustainability goals must be established, with a focus on selecting eco-friendly venues, suppliers, and materials. Digital tools, such as event management software and carbon calculators, can streamline processes and reduce environmental impact.

The execution phase involves real-time monitoring of resource use, such as energy and water, and engaging attendees in sustainability efforts like recycling programs or carbon offset options. Training staff and volunteers on sustainable practices ensures consistency and effectiveness. In the post-event phase, data analysis against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is crucial, alongside gathering feedback from attendees, sponsors, and partners. Publishing a sustainability report not only showcases achievements but also identifies areas for improvement, fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation. These strategies demonstrate that maintaining performance requires a proactive and holistic approach, leveraging technology and stakeholder engagement at every stage.

Despite the clear benefits, the study identifies several challenges in maintaining the performance of sustainable events. One major challenge is setting realistic yet ambitious sustainability goals, as overly difficult targets may overwhelm teams or lead to underperformance. Providing constructive feedback can also be challenging, as managers may fear demotivating employees or causing conflict. Resistance to change is another significant barrier, particularly when new systems or practices are perceived as complex or threatening.

Additionally, the lack of standardized criteria for performance evaluations can lead to subjective assessments, resulting in perceptions of unfairness. Infrequent evaluations, such as annual reviews, further hinder timely feedback and adjustments. These challenges highlight the need for clear communication, standardized processes, and regular monitoring to ensure that sustainability goals are met without compromising performance.

The study emphasizes that sustainable events are not just a trend but a responsibility, requiring a commitment to balancing environmental, social, and economic priorities. By setting clear goals, leveraging technology, engaging stakeholders, and addressing challenges proactively, event organizers can create impactful, eco-friendly events that leave a positive legacy.

The findings suggest that continuous improvement and innovation are key to maintaining performance, as is the willingness to adapt to new practices and technologies. Ultimately, the success of sustainable events lies in their ability to meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. This study provides a comprehensive framework for event planners to integrate and maintain sustainable practices, contributing to a more responsible and meaningful event industry.

## **Conclusion**

The study underscores the critical importance of integrating sustainability into event planning while ensuring high performance. As the world grapples with environmental challenges and social inequalities, sustainable events have emerged as a necessity rather than a luxury. The Triple Bottom Line framework—encompassing economic, environmental, and social sustainability—provides a comprehensive approach to creating events that are not only impactful but also responsible. By minimizing waste, reducing energy consumption, promoting ethical sourcing, and fostering inclusivity, sustainable events can leave a positive legacy for both attendees and the planet.

However, achieving this balance requires careful planning, execution, and continuous evaluation, as well as a commitment to overcoming challenges such as resistance to change, lack of standardized criteria, and infrequent feedback. Ultimately, the study highlights that sustainability and performance are not mutually exclusive but can be synergistically achieved through innovation, collaboration, and a proactive mindset.

## **Recommendations**

To effectively access and maintain the performance of sustainable events, event organizers should adopt a holistic approach that integrates sustainability into every stage of planning and execution. During the planning phase, clear and measurable sustainability goals should be established, with a focus on selecting eco-friendly venues, suppliers, and materials. Digital tools, such as event management software and carbon calculators, can streamline processes and reduce environmental impact.

In the execution phase, real-time monitoring of resource use, such as energy and water, is essential, alongside engaging attendees in sustainability efforts like recycling programs or carbon offset options. Training staff and volunteers on sustainable practices ensures consistency and effectiveness. Post-event, organizers should analyze data against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), gather feedback from stakeholders, and publish sustainability reports to showcase achievements and identify areas for improvement. These strategies will help maintain performance while fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation.

Additionally, event organizers must address the challenges associated with sustainable event planning proactively. To overcome resistance to change, clear communication and education are essential, ensuring that all stakeholders understand the value and importance of sustainability. Standardized criteria for performance evaluations should be developed to ensure fairness and objectivity, while regular monitoring and feedback mechanisms should be implemented to facilitate timely adjustments. Collaboration with local communities, eco-friendly brands, and sustainability experts can further enhance the impact of sustainable events.

By leveraging technology, fostering stakeholder engagement, and committing to continuous improvement, event organizers can create events that are not only high-performing but also socially inclusive, economically viable, and environmentally responsible. These recommendations provide a roadmap for achieving long-term sustainability in the event industry, contributing to a more equitable and sustainable future.

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