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SUSTAINABILITY AT MEETINGS:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GREENING OF MAP MEETINGS

UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2010

SUSTAINABILITY AT MEETINGS:

Recommendations for the Greening of MAP Meetings

MEETING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH THE	CORE RECOMMENDATIONS	WHAT WE CAN DO
Selection of venue	– Headquarters of IGOs, offices of regional commissions etc. should be chosen for the venue, rather than ad hoc locations or commercial establishments, thus reducing the need of staff to travel. – Venues certified with a recognized green building rating system or another recognized environmental management system should be preferred wherever possible. – The venue should have an environmental policy and action plan, ideally covering: sustainable procurement, energy saving, catering services, transportation, and waste. – The venue should have good access (ideally within walking distance) to the main public transport connections and town centre. – The venue should be near to hotels where participants and speakers can stay or even provide accommodation facilities in the venue itself. – If possible locally, all waste produced at the venue should be separated (e.g. paper, plastic, metal, organic) at source and sufficient, well-marked bins should be provided in both participant and staff areas. – It should be possible to regulate the temperature within the building, adapted to the local seasonal conditions.	When a meeting is organized by MAP, the first thing to take in consideration is the necessity of a meeting: is it possible to do a video-call or videoconference instead of a meeting? If a meeting is necessary, then considerations will be taken as to: location: In major cities in order to minimize travel; also accessibility to town centre and major hotels; energy: ensuring meeting room, offices have maximum use of natural day-light and efficient energy lighting; waste: ensuring recycling of paper used, ensure recycling bins availability at venue for participants; ensure water is served in jugs or water coolers and not in bottles; ensure water-saving appliances in kitchens and toilettes. Constraints: Since many of MAP's meetings are organized by Contracting Parties, an environmentally friendly venue cannot always be secured.
Accommodation of Participants	– Hotels certified with a recognized Ecolabel or another recognized environmental management system should be preferred wherever possible. – The hotel should have an environmental policy and action plan, ideally covering green procurement, energy saving, catering services, transportation waste, and communication to guests. – The hotel should provide information in guest rooms about the green aspects of the hotel to inform and encourage guests' participation. – The hotel should be located near public transportation and near conference facilities (preferably within walking distance). – Guests should have the option of no second-day sheet and towel change to save laundry energy and water. – Guests and staff should be encouraged to reduce water use and turn off lights and other energy consuming devices with well-located signs. – Energy efficient light-bulbs and systems should be	When meeting is organized by MAP then considerations will be taken as to: location: accessibility to town centre and proximity to venue of meeting; energy: preferences should be given to hotels with energy and water efficient devices installed as well as hotels applying environmental practices; waste: hotels with efforts to reduce waste (i.e. no disposable products but rather bulk refillable dispensers) and a waste collection recycling policy. Constraints: As most MAP meeting are organized in cities around the Mediterranean sea and not necessarily big cities, chances of finding hotels that abide by environmentally sound

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	Energy standard, and lighting levels should be set to provide the minimum necessary for comfort, safety and accessibility. The use of natural light and ventilation when possible should be promoted. – The staircases in the hotel should be visible and have signs inviting guests to walk instead of taking the elevator. – Guests should be able to open windows and not be forced to use a technical air condition system. – Heating and air conditioning systems should be easy for guests to operate (and thus turn down). – Hotel rooms should not be heated to above 20°C, or cooled to more than 6 degrees below the outside temperature. – Products should be purchased in bulk and provided in refillable dispensers. If not possible, consumable amenities should not be replaced daily unless they are empty. – Provided appropriate recycling systems are in place, single-use products for guests	practices is not always feasible.
Food and Drink Catering	– Use locally grown and produced seasonal food and drinks. Use organically produced food and drink if possible. Products should be certified as meeting regional or international organic standards to the extent possible. – Provide fair trade labelled products (If working with a private catering contractor, set a specific percentage of products which should be local, organic, and/or fair trade). – Minimise the quantity of meat products offered, and always offer a vegetarian option (the production of meat produces considerably more CO2 than non-meat products). – Use drinking water from the tap when possible. It is recommended that drinking water be served in carafes/jugs instead of single-use bottle (also for juice). – Avoid the use of disposable items by using reusable dishes, cutlery, glassware and linens (i.e., no paper, plastic or polystyrene cups, no paper napkins or table cover, no plastic cutlery, and no disposable doilies); avoid aluminium foil. If disposable items are essential, try to ensure they contain a high content of recycled or plant-based material, are recyclable, and appropriate recycling systems are in place. – Avoid single-serve containers for food and condiments – Provide numerous, well-located bins for the separate waste fractions with clear signs/instructions – particularly in kitchens and in	When meeting is organized by MAP then considerations should be taken as follows: Discuss with caterer or hotel where coffee-breaks and/or reception is to be held that recommendations need to be taken into consideration in order to lower the environmental impact of the intake of food and beverages by the event. Consideration to the waste produced by avoiding the use of disposable items and ensuring proper recycling and disposal of waste generated. Constraints: Catering companies with sustainable practices are not widely available in the developing countries of the region. Therefore this may not always be possible depending on the venue of the meeting.

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	dining areas. – Inform caterers of the exact number of participants and re-evaluate quantity needed during the meeting to help avoid waste.	
Setting up the meeting (Before the meeting)	**A. Communication with participants and registration** – Use electronic means (e.g. email, website), if they are appropriate and available, rather than printed materials for pre-meeting (and follow up) communications. – Set up an electronic registration system that allows participants to submit forms and pictures, if needed, via email or through a web service.	When meeting is organized by MAP then considerations should be taken as follows: All pre-session documentation as well as information on the venue and surrounding hotels for the meeting to be communicated to participants through e-mail; An effort can be made in order to receive all registration for meetings on-line before the meeting in order to reduce use of paper; Constraints: Electronic registration may not be always the best solution as many participants advise their participation very late.
	B. Materials for the meeting (conference secretariat) – Any paper used (promotional material, programme, signs…) should be 100% recycled, with a minimum of 65% of post consumer waste content, and totally or elementary chlorine free. Also print in double side papers. – Any necessary material should be printed at the venue/ location of the meeting rather than shipping it from the headquarters. – Participant bags/packs, banners, gifts and other relevant items should, as far as possible, be produced locally, using sustainably harvested organic or recycled material, and should be reusable. PVC should be avoided as well as products containing potentially harmful chemicals. – Pens provided should be made of a high content of recycled material and be refillable Only strictly necessary material should be included in participants packs. – Send relevant documentation by email beforehand (see above), and have either a restricted number of spare copies of documents available, or printing/copying facilities available on request only at the venue for participants- Provide participants with CDs or USBs with all conference documentation – Participants should be encouraged to keep their conference material until the end of the meeting; asking them to sign upon receipt of the material can serve as incentive. – All materials produced for the meeting (such as	When meeting is organized by MAP then all recommendations for material for meetings should be taken into consideration. If 100% recycled paper is not available, then paper with high proportion of recycled content. Material should be reduced to what is strictly necessary; meeting should be as paperless as possible, favoring electronic devices (CDs and USB sticks). Constraints: Additional costs will burden the meeting in an effort to use recyclable organic stationery material and 100% recyclable paper

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	banners, posters, signs, place cards) should be designed and written in a generic way instead of specific way, to allow them to be reused for other meetings. – Provide information to the participants about the green aspects of the venue to inform and encourage guests' participation, prior to and after the meeting. – Provide the emergency plan to the meeting participants or assure that it's hanged in all the rooms of the venue.	
Setting up and running the meeting (during the meeting)	**Setting up and running the meeting:** – Adjust the start and end time of a meeting/meeting to the schedules of environmentally sound transportation means. – At the beginning of the meeting remind both staff and participants that they should follow certain rules to help to green the meeting, and ensure the minimum environmental impacts, including: Print and photocopy on both sides, and keep font size to a minimum (whilst ensuring readability), and minimise the use of colour copies. – Collect paper that has been used on one side only in collector trays, and reuse for printing and notepaper. – Turn off lights and equipment when not in use. – Where separated waste collection/disposal systems are in place locally, all waste produced by the secretariat should be collected separately according to the appropriate fractions (e.g. paper, plastic, metal, organic) using the bins provided. This should include the separated collection of used photocopier and printer cartridges and batteries. – Ensure that the energy saving features of all electronic equipment are enabled. – There should be numerous, well-located bins for the separate waste fractions with clear signs/instructions – in both participant and staff areas. – Provide a dedicated area for participants to return material that can be re-used (such as delegate badges). – Minimise the use of decorative elements such as flowers, banners etc. – Reduce paper waste at participant registration - e.g., short registration forms, computerised systems (see 'Communication with participants and registration'). – Signs should be posted reminding speakers and participants to turn off equipment (such as projectors and laptops), and lighting when not in	When meeting is organized by MAP then all recommendations for running the meetings should be taken into consideration especially the following: print on both sides; collect waste paper for re-use as scrap; turn off lights and equipment when not in use; ensure recycling bins are available; Remind staff and participants at the beginning of the meeting that they should follow recommendations to help green the meeting Constraints: Extra staff may be needed to assist in setting up and maintaining a green meeting which may involve extra costs of travel and DSA paid to staff.

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	use	
Local transportation	– Consider proximity and public transport connections when selecting the venue and hotels, as this has a major bearing on local transportation impacts (see "Selecting the venue" and "Accommodation" sections). – Provide clear instructions 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. Also provide public transport maps. These should be provided by email before the meeting and can be included in participants' packs, and displayed in the venue. – If public transport is not available organize a shuttle service or car-share scheme for travel between the hotel, venue and/or point of arrival/departure (railway station, airport). – If organising shared transport is not feasible ask the hotel to organize joint pick-up of participants. – Participants could be provided with complimentary public transport tickets.	If the venue of the meeting is far from the hotel where participants are staying, discuss with hotel the possibility of ensuring a shuttle bus to take participants to/from the venue. Constraints: Some venues/hotels provided by organizers may be far from the city centre with sporadic or non-existing local transportation. Organising shuttle bus service will add to the costs of the meetings.
Travel and offsetting	– Long distance travel can be reduced by avoiding unnecessary trips and favoring tele- and video conferencing, – Ensure the city of the meeting has an easy access (direct flights, trains) for transport of staff and participants from major Mediterranean cities – Encourage participants to use more sustainable ways to travel to the meeting for the reduction of Greenhouse gas emissions or offset their CO2 footprints – Reduce energy consumption of the venue, accommodation sites, and office facilities (used in meeting preparation and implementation), including waste and water management, – Offset the "carbon footprint" of products and services used in putting on the meeting by either a payment directly by the participants, in a mandatory or voluntary way; or a payment by the meeting organizer on behalf of the participants	MAP needs to explore ways of calculating GHG emissions during their meetings and find ways of offsetting their CO2 footprints accordingly. Cities were meetings take place should have access to direct flights from most Mediterranean capital cities; participants are requested to fly economy class and a donation system can be put in place to offset greenhouse footprints for participants This can be done in a number of ways including the collection of offsetting money voluntarily or mandatory and purchase carbon offsets either through the UNEP Climate Neutral trust fund, established by UNEP or by donations to the local society's greening efforts (i.e. NGOs, local initiatives, etc..) Constraints: As many meetings take place in cities on the sea, it is many times impossible to avoid long distance travel with many connections.