



Florida
FESTIVALS&EVENTS
Association

Sustainability Report

2022



**Florida Festivals & Events
Association**

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Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as Global Goals, are a set of 17 integrated and interrelated goals to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that humanity enjoys peace and prosperity by 2030.



Festivals, fairs, expos, and other special events bring communities together and help raise money for other organizations across the state. Although they are a major contributor to economic growth, they are often incredibly wasteful, carry high carbon footprints, and put a strain on local resources such as water and energy. FFEA has set out to be a thought leader in this space through its commitment to sustainable lodging, materials reduction, circularity, education and community impact. In addition to its iconic theme parks, Florida is home to many beautiful natural resources, such as parks and beaches. It is our duty to protect these resources so future generations may enjoy them.

Working with Green Girl Events, the FFEA built upon the observations from previous conferences and implemented a sustainability program aligned with the Event Industry Council (EIC's) Sustainable Event Standards. These standards encourage continual improvement of an organization's practice as well as improved environmental performance and stakeholder engagement through a checklist of best practices and benchmarks. Additionally, we have aligned our initiatives with the priorities outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). The United Nations defines sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". These global goals help provide a roadmap towards a more sustainable future. Our ties with these goals will be highlighted throughout this report.

Priority SDGs

There are 17 SDGs and 169 targets in total. While they are all important and interrelated, our primary targets were to reduce landfill waste, provide education on sustainability, and support our local community through donation of food and supplies. These targets align with our own internal strategy and goals by developing a roadmap for others in our industry to create a more sustainable future.



Prior to the conference, we partnered with Samaritan Resource Center to donate any leftover meals. Samaritan Resource Center is an organization designed to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty. We ended up with 50 meals from our plated lunch that were donated after the event as well as one box of supplies.



A total of 29 educational sessions were offered over the course of 3 days. Specific content on Sustainability and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) were included in our education sessions aimed at improving the knowledge and skills of our members.

Priority SDGs

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



- Reduced single use plastics by eliminating 2,200 plastic water bottles and provided attendees with reusable bottles
- Eliminated the use of most paper by allowing exhibitors to upload brochures and exchange business cards using mobile event app
- All award submissions, exhibitor packets and marketing were done digitally to avoid printing and shipping, resulting in 12,700 fewer printed pieces of paper and collateral
- Eliminated 400 welcome bags and 18,000 pieces of sponsor collateral
- Used primarily digital signage throughout conference
- Printed banners were donated to be up-cycled into reusable totes
- Most exhibitors opted in for a drawing to give away a few high quality items rather than hundreds of small tchotchkes that are typically thrown away
- Opted for sustainable speaker gifts
- All meal functions used china instead of disposables
- Used hotels in-house linens and centerpieces to avoid waste and shipping



Priority SDGs

13 CLIMATE ACTION



- A central location was chosen which reduced the number of miles attendees had to travel.
- Attendees were encouraged to carpool with others from their region.
- 93% of the attendees stayed at the hotel and all events remained on-property which eliminated the need for transportation once on-site.
- Digital marketing, exhibitor packets and award submissions eliminated the need for shipping

15 LIFE ON LAND



- Requested venue to recycle aluminum, paper, plastic, and cardboard
- Switched all products to recyclable containers and avoided glass as this is not collected from venues in Orange County
- Partnered with O-Town Compost to establish a compost program to collect and divert food waste
- O-Town Compost uses the community's food scraps to make compost and return nutrients to the soil. They donate a portion of that finished compost to local farms and community gardens.



The average person generates 30+ pounds of waste per week, and 40-50% of that can be composted. Once at the landfill, it produces potent greenhouse gases like methane and takes up precious landfill space.

Sustainable Event Standards

The EIC Sustainable Event Standards are a collection of eight (8) specific standards that assess events and industry suppliers on a wide range of sustainability criteria in support of environmental and social responsibility.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of criteria that was met during the 2022 Level Up Conference. The standards we have chosen to highlight address conference waste.

Vision

Accelerating the adoption of environmental and equitable event strategies to create a society where people, the planet and economies thrive.

Mission

The EIC Centre for Sustainability & Social Impact empowers and inspires the event industry to advance the Sustainable Development Goals through advocacy, research, guidance and education.

Four Pillars and Overarching Goals



Advocacy

Champion the events industry as a key enabler of global economic, environmental and social development, and empower collaborative action in the industry on priority topics.



Research

Understand the current state and future direction of sustainability and social impact of the events industry.



Guidance

Ensure a shared understanding of the core concepts of sustainability and social impact among event industry stakeholders worldwide.



Education

Accelerate adoption of sustainability and social impact practices among event industry stakeholders worldwide.

SES Targets

Code	Criteria	Assessment	Action
EO.SP.20.	Set waste goals	Establish objectives and numeric targets for increasing waste diversion, per event.	Our aim was to achieve at least 50% waste diversion target.
EO.SP.21.	Increase waste diversion	Demonstrate that per event waste diversion reaches the following targets: 30% (1 point), 50% (2 points), 75% (3 points), or 90% (4 points).	The baseline was established using the MeetGreen national average of 4.18 pounds of waste per person per day. Waste diversion calculations were performed and our final diversion rate was 81.67%.
EO.SP.22.	Waste Auditing	Conduct a waste audit for the event.	Waste audits for recycling were performed by our internal team. O-Town Compost took daily measurements of food scraps and provided a report at the end of the event. We arranged for the hotel to provide a separate dumpster for our landfill waste and a measurement was taken at the conclusion of the event.
EO.SP.19.	Waste Measurement	Measure waste and recycling per event and calculate event rate of diversion from landfill or incinerator.	Waste diversion report by weight has been established and is included in our performance goals.
EO.IP.21.	Eliminate plastic water bottles	Eliminate plastic bottled water unless specifically requested by attendees or guests.	Single-use bottled water was replaced by water stations. Reusable water bottles were offered to attendees at registration.

SES Targets

Code	Criteria	Assessment	Action
EO.AC.3.	Single-use plastic reduction	Implement a reduction of single-use plastics in guest rooms during the event.	Hyatt is committed to reducing single-use plastics through various efforts across properties. Large-format bathroom amenities such as bulk shampoo, conditioner, and body wash were provided in each of the guest rooms.
NEW	Paper reduction	Set all copiers/printers to default modes for double-sided printing and 'save toner'.	All award submissions, exhibitor packets and marketing were done digitally to avoid printing and shipping, resulting in 12,700 fewer printed pieces of paper and collateral. Exhibitors were encouraged to use the conference app for digital uploads and to exchange business cards.
EO.AV.8.	Reduce packaging	Reuse and reduction of packaging materials to an appropriate minimum and to optimise shipping.	Eliminated 400 welcome bags and 18,000 pieces of sponsor collateral. Award submissions, exhibitor packets and marketing were done digitally to avoid printing and shipping, resulting in 12,700 fewer printed pieces of paper and collateral
EO.IP.20.	Event credentials	Use plastic free event credentials (for example, badges, lanyards, etc.) and/or collect and recycle or reuse event credential waste.	A collection bin was established to collect and recycle attendee credentials after the event.

SES Targets

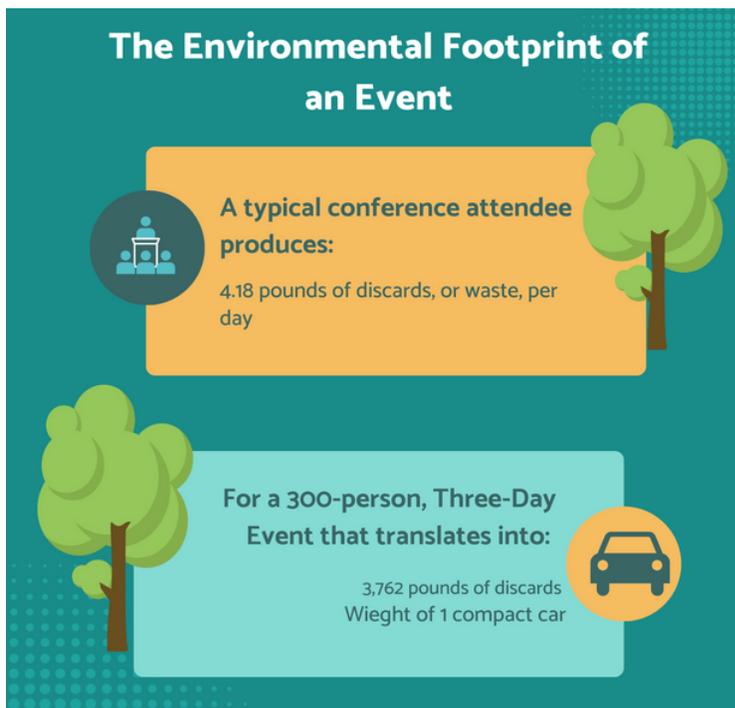
Code	Criteria	Assessment	Action
EO.IP.18. EO.EX.19. EO.EX.18.	Event signage	Manage the impact from event signage materials.	65% of sponsor signage switched to digital / LED format. Banners that were used were donated to be up-cycled into reusable totes.
EO.AV.5.	Scenic material reduction	Reduce scenic materials by offering scenic component rentals versus one-time builds.	All AV components were rentals provided by FFEA sponsors
EO.EX.12.	Reuse carpet	Carpet will be reused, repurposed, or donated upon the conclusion of the event.	No carpet was provided for this event. Many exhibitors chose not to use carpet at all. Those who did use carpet brought their own and took it with them when they left.
EO.MV.18 EO.SP.16	Sustainable décor	Organiser uses sustainable décor options, such as linenless tables and reusable centrepieces.	In house linens and centerpieces were used to cut down on waste.
EO.EX.11.	Banners and signage	Select reusable or recyclable signage and/or banners.	65% of signage was digital. The banners used were donated.
EO.EX.7.	Minimize scenic and décor waste	Minimise waste from scenic and décor elements through reuse, donations, upcycling and recycling.	Scenic décor elements were rentals that are able to be reused many times over.

SES Targets

Code	Criteria	Assessment	Action
EO.DE.7.	Local recycling and composting	Destination has local options for recycling and composting.	Scenic décor elements were rentals that are able to be reused many times over.
EO.FB.9. EO.EX.16. EO.MV.7.	Compost programme	Maintain a composting programme in kitchen areas, including clear directions for sorting waste, and in composting stations in meeting rooms and on the show floor. 1 point for kitchen program; 1 point for composting stations outside of kitchen area.	Compost bins were provided back of house and on the tradeshow floor. Wait staff had been instructed to clear food scraps from awards lunch into compost bins located back of house. As a result of this program, we were able to divert 513 pounds of food scraps from the landfill.
EO.MV.14.	Recycling programme	Venue offers a recycling programme in public spaces, meeting rooms, and back of house, including clear directions for sorting waste.	Hyatt offers a recycling program that accepts aluminum, plastic, paper, and cardboard. The only glass used was from wine and liquor bottles. These were taken off-site by the conference planner to be recycled at a residential property where glass is accepted.
EO.AC.10.	In-room recycling	Accommodations offer in-room recycling.	Hyatt provides its properties with guidance materials that focus on waste reduction, while also advancing diversion options such as recycling. Recycling bins were provided in all guest rooms.

Measuring Progress

Key Indicator	Activity / Project	Data / Outcome
Establish waste diversion rate of 50% or 1,563 lbs	Donate any leftover supplies & meals, establish compost & recycling program	Our biggest area of impact was through the reduction of materials used or not creating waste in the first place. We achieved an 81.67% diversion rate for a total of 3,564 lbs of waste that was diverted. Our second area of impact was through composting. By collecting food waste, we diverted an additional 513 lbs. of waste.



Source: Wallinger, Eric. Corporate Sustainability Policy & Report. MeetGreen. 2021

Measuring Progress

Key Indicator	Activity / Project	Data / Outcome
Improve the Sustainability knowledge and skills of our members and participants	Incorporate sustainability and social impact topics into events educational content	68% of the survey respondents were aware of the sustainability program. 32 people attended the Zero Waste breakout and 8 people attended the Food Waste peer discussion.
Create social impact in local community through donation programs	Donate surplus food and supplies to Samaritan Resource Center, adhering to local food safety guidelines.	50 meals and one box of supplies donated for a total of 32 lbs.
Reduce paper usage by 50%	Eliminate mailing printed binders for award submissions and replace with e-submission. Reduce number of printed brochures and business cards distributed by using conference app for digital uploads.	80% of tradeshow exhibitors used mobile app to upload brochures. All award submissions, exhibitor packets and marketing were done digitally to avoid printing and shipping, resulting in 12,700 fewer printed pieces of paper and collateral

Measuring Progress

Key Indicator	Activity / Project	Data / Outcome
Reduce plastic usage by at least 50%	Eliminate use of plastic water bottles and encourage attendees to use reusable water bottles.	Replacing water bottles with water stations reduced plastic usage by 86%. The only drinks served in plastic was wine, which made up roughly 15% of the beverages served. Mixed drinks were served in biodegradable cups made from plants. No straws, plastic cups or utensils were used. Condiments were served in bulk.

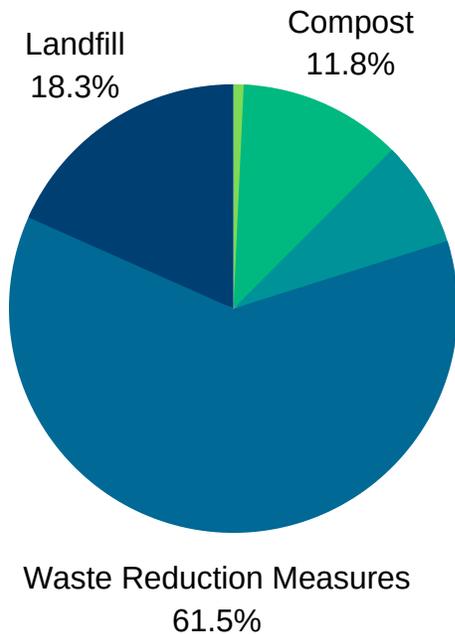


One million plastic bottles are sold every minute. Of those, only 12% are recycled.

The goal of diverting at least 50% of our waste was at the forefront of planning our program. Our key actions were: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse (or donate), Recycle, and ReEarth (compost). As we worked towards this goal, we looked at elimination and reduction as our primary action items and waste diversion (composting and recycling) as our last resort.

Waste Diversion Statistics

The charts below shows the areas where waste was diverted from the landfill.



Total Weight of Compost	513
Total Weight of Recycling	333.5
Total Weight of Donations	32
Total Weight of Banners	
Waste Reduction through planning	2685.5
Total Weight of Trash	800
Total Weight of Waste	4364
Total Weight of Waste Diverted	3564
Waste Diversion	81.67%

From a national standard, this conference typically would have produced 4,363 lbs. of waste (348 attendees x 3 days x 4.18 lbs of waste per attendee, per day).

Key statistics - It is important to look at the waste reduction measures and quantify the waste that was never created to begin with. In this area alone, we diverted 61.54% of our waste through advanced planning (no plastic water bottles, swag bags, awards binders, tradeshow setup/teardown, etc).

Key findings - We discovered that a majority of our waste came from discarded food (approximately 300 lbs. per day)

2,685.5 lbs.

Was the amount of waste that was never created to begin with

Next Steps

Although we had great success with our first year program, we have identified challenges and opportunities below that can be addressed for additional areas of improvement moving forward.

1

Recycling

Challenges/Opportunities

- Lack of volunteers
- Communication with hotel on when, how, where recycling should be stored for measurement

2

Composting

Challenges/Opportunities

- Continuous communication with hotel on compost program. Day 1 compost was thrown out with the trash. Cleaning crew was not aware of compost program. Chef Manny clarified the process with them after 1st day.
- Due to thin staff, O-Town was not able to collect compost from Thursday night.
- Estimated 400 - 500 pounds of food waste thrown out with trash from day 1 and Thursday night dinner.
- Collection bins placed front of house were under utilized. Only 20 pounds of waste was collected FOH, 300 pounds was collected BOH. Can adjust strategy accordingly next year.
- This is our biggest area of impact and largest source of waste. It is estimated that 300 pounds of food waste per day is thrown out.

3

Materials/Supplies Donation

Challenges/Opportunities

- Collection bins for event credentials were confused with trash. Using a smaller clear bin for collection next year may help.
- Using plastic free event credentials would also help with event credential waste.
- Tradeshow: Potential opportunities for donation of unused supplies/materials for donation after event

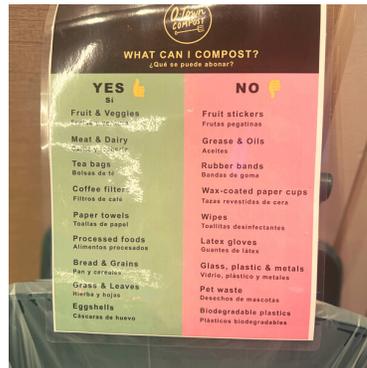
Next Steps

4

Food Donation

Challenges/Opportunities

- The number of leftover lunches was unusually high and not typical for this program.
- During lunch, salads, desserts, and drinks were pre-poured. To minimize the potential for food waste, meals should not be pre-set on tables, or only pre-setting a maximum of 80%. Servers to bring food to guests who are seated which would allow any unused meals to be donated vs discarded.
- Few opportunities for food donation because most meals are buffet. The plated lunch program may be one potential area for food donation.
- Morning Refreshments: Can these be covered and left out for additional use after AM sessions?



Committee Highlights

We achieved outstanding results in just one year. Below are the areas of impact made by each committee.



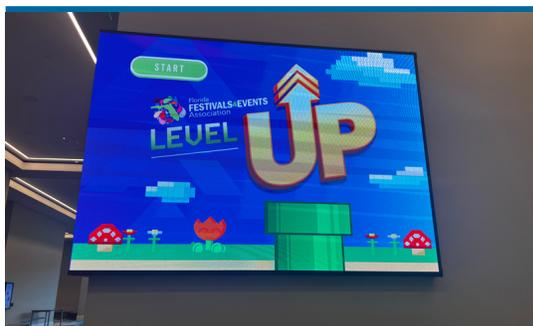
Tradeshow

- Trade Show Exhibitors encouraged to use mobile app profile to upload brochures and videos to cut back on printed materials. 52 did this, 13 did not
- Lead Retrieval system in app eliminated need for business cards. 838 leads generated using this feature
- Printed exhibitor packets usually mailed in advance - instead we sent digital packets and did a Zoom orientation to go through the details. 42 exhibitors attended, would typically mail 60 packets with 10 pages in each packet.
- Individual exhibitor wastebaskets eliminated to encourage use of recycling bins. Approximately 2 pounds of waste for exhibitor per day saved – total of 300 pounds



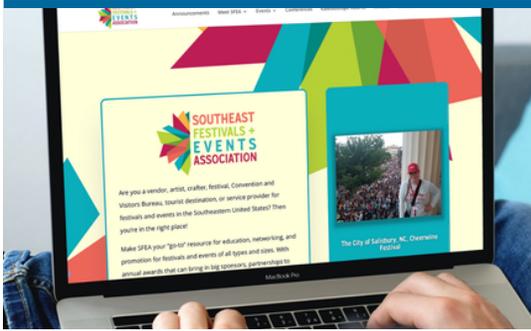
Awards

- All award entries were digital with no mailing requirement
- No binders were printed – saving 65 binders each with approximately 40 pages included and then mailed
- T-Shirt and promo item entries that were on display were donated
- Printed material item entries that were on display were recycled
- All awards were picked up in person or delivered by Board members to avoid shipping
- All award signage was digital and award entry displays are now online for year-round viewing
- No postcards or entry packets mailed – all done digital and reminders by phone. Typically we mail 500 postcards and 500 entry packets (4 pages each)



Sponsorship

- Sponsor welcome bags eliminated. Typically we have 400 and each one is filled with 35-45 pieces of sponsor collateral that is landfill.
- 65% of sponsor signage switched to digital / LED format



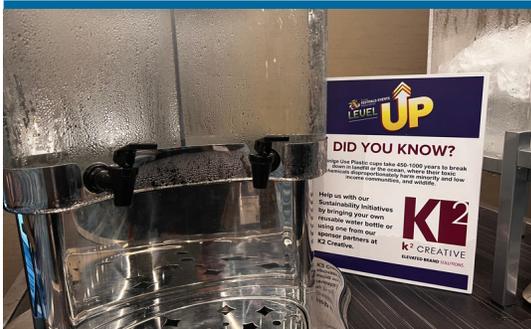
Marketing

- All printed marketing pieces eliminated and replaced with digital/social advertising.
- This would typically include – hotel reminder postcard (3500), Exhibitor promo brochure (1500), Registration brochure (3500)



Auction

- Auction done via online app to eliminate paper bid sheets (we started this 3 years ago but noting it as a best practice moving forward)
- All auction items picked up during the event with the exception of one, so no mailing necessary



Hospitality

- Switched all product to recyclable containers (no glass since it can't be recycled in Orange County)
- Used biodegradable cups made from plants for cocktails
- Eliminated all plastic water bottles (used 1500 in 2021) and used hydration stations from hotel and Anheuser Busch



Program / Speakers

- All speaker agreements were digital
- Eliminated single use speaker arrival gifts and instead opted for functional / sustainable gifts
- Use hotel's in-house linens and centerpieces to avoid waste and shipping

A vision statement, call-to-action or quote from your leaders are powerful ways to conclude your progress report. Leave your audience inspired, and motivated to help your department achieve its SDG-aligned goals!

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the following report contributors:

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A special thanks to all of the FFEA committees who contributed to the sustainability efforts which made this conference a success.

We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to contribute to the SDGs and the EIC's Sustainable Event Standards.



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