



Conference Design & Management

AFRICAN AGENDA GREEN POLICY

I. AFRICAN AGENDA GREEN POLICY

African Agenda recognises that our conference organising work can have direct and indirect impacts on the local, regional and global environment. We at African Agenda are committed to reducing any harmful effects on the environment that our conference work may cause – both in our office and at our conferences – and are dedicated to promoting the understanding of sustainability in its broadest context to both our local and international clients and delegates. We understand that some of our green policies are not regular practice for our suppliers and service providers and African Agenda pledges to take responsibility for making the green difference wherever possible.

African Agenda aims to Rethink | Refuse | Reuse | Reduce | Recycle

- **Rethink** the way African Agenda operates as an organisation.
- **Refuse** to implement practices in our office and conferences that are harmful to the environment.
- **Reuse** products and supplies wherever possible rather than sourcing new.
- **Reduce** waste through careful planning.
- **Recycle** as much waste as possible and choose only products made from recyclable materials.

CONTENTS

1. African Agenda's green policy
2. Benefits of a green conference for your company and conference
3. Proposed policies for a green conference
 - Destination and venue
 - Accommodation
 - Transport
 - Food and beverage
 - Exhibition
 - Communication and marketing
 - On-site procedures
 - Post-conference
4. Existing green policies in the African Agenda office
5. Proposed green policies in the African Agenda office

2. BENEFITS OF A GREEN CONFERENCE FOR YOUR COMPANY AND CONFERENCE

A greener conference can mean a lighter ecological footprint, a healthier and more productive event, and good news for the bottom line. By hosting a green conference, your organisation is showcasing your commitment to social responsibility and environmental sustainability, allowing for a positive impact on your organisation's image and brand.

Organising a green conference is often more cost-effective and can lead to lower operating costs in areas such as transport, individually packaged catering items, paper, ink cartridges, packaging and water and electricity.

A green conference can be used as a marketing point to encourage delegates to attend.

With "going green" at home and at the office becoming non-negotiable, delegates may be more inclined to participate in a green conference knowing that their industry is thinking sustainability. Delegates who attend a conference that shares their ethos are likely to respond well to the conference, increasing participation and satisfaction and encouraging positive impressions of the event.


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3. PROPOSED POLICIES FOR A GREEN CONFERENCE

African Agenda looks at each of these categories and evaluates which are feasible and applicable to the conference. These categories are based on the Convention Industry Council's Green Meeting Report guidelines.

DESTINATION AND VENUE

ACCOMMODATION

TRANSPORT

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

EXHIBITION

COMMUNICATION AND
MARKETING

ON-SITE PROCEDURES

POST-CONFERENCE

Destination and Venue

Destination and venue selection are the result of many factors and it is overly idealistic to believe that a conference organiser can or should recommend or choose a venue using environmental sustainability as the only criterion.

However, a larger range of buildings that conform to the Green Building Council of South Africa's standards are now available, giving environmentally aware clients more of a choice in destination and venue selection. And simple things like setting up a recycling centre, carefully choosing a seasonal menu and serving water in jugs can contribute to making the venue greener.

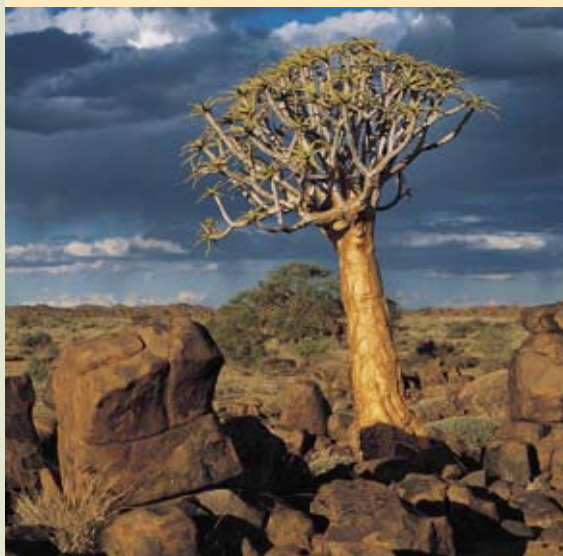
African Agenda's venue of choice in Cape Town where our head office is based, The Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) already follows many environmentally-friendly policies and practices, including the use of an automated electricity savings programme to prevent unnecessary waste by lights, air conditioning and escalators; water use-minimisation systems with drip-flow irrigation and dual flush toilets; an in-house recycling system; biodegradable cleaning agents; and the sourcing of local supplies to promote job creation and the sustainability of local farms and producers. The CTICC building itself achieves 77.1% compliance with the South African Energy and Demand Efficiency Standards and on completion of their new expansion, a Six Star rating from the Green Building Council of South Africa will be sought.

African Agenda can also facilitate the purchasing of Tradable Renewable Energy Certificates (TRECs) so that the event can be powered wholly or in part by green energy generated from renewable sources including wind farms; biomass wastes from the sugar, wood and paper industries; and from micro-hydro plants (small hydroelectric installations).

Accommodation

As the accommodation choices depend on the destination and venue selection, it can be difficult to only consider environmental sustainability when selecting accommodation for delegates. African Agenda proposes:

- Determining whether the hotel has a green policy and if their staff are trained in following green procedures. If not, encourage them to adopt greening practices for the duration of the conference.
- Selecting accommodation that is close to the conference venue so that delegates can walk, bike or use public transport instead of car trips. Where car trips are necessary, encourage ride sharing.
- Arranging for the selected hotels to only change sheets and towels on request to save water, electricity and cleaning supplies.
- Implementing an outsourced recycling programme throughout the hotel for the duration of the conference.
- Requesting that the hotel use paper-less registration, check-in and communication methods with the delegates.
- Assessing whether the hotel uses energy-saving light bulbs and that the hotel implements an energy use-minimisation procedure.
- Checking whether the bathrooms have dual-flush toilets, low-flow shower heads, refillable toiletry dispensers and air-dryers or cloth instead of paper towels.
- Checking if the hotel uses biodegradable and non-toxic cleaning supplies.
- Considering using a hotel that makes use of solar water heating rather than electric heating.



Transport

Providing green transport in South Africa is hindered due to inadequate reliable public transport. To counteract this, African Agenda will:

- Discourage car trips through hotel selection and by providing maps to encourage walking.
- Assist delegates to share rides or rental cars and encourage the use of public transport where possible.
- Use appropriately-sized buses (no empty seats) for airport, hotel and other transfers where possible, through careful planning.
- Use local suppliers and products to minimise packaging, shipping and transport requirements.
- Offer delegates a system to purchase carbon off-sets for their travel through the registration system.

Food and beverage

African Agenda insists that caterers use local and seasonal ingredients when developing conference menus wherever possible. We also propose:

- Serving water from jugs only or distributing sponsored water bottles that can be refilled at water stations, instead of disposable plastic water bottles. Similarly for coffee and tea, sponsored travel mugs can be refilled at each refreshment break to minimise washing.
- Implementing a food redistribution programme to avoid food waste by arranging a service to distribute leftovers to food banks.
- Collecting food waste unsuitable for redistribution for composting.
- Selecting a catering company that considers environmental sustainability in its purchasing procedures, e.g. purchases condiments in bulk to minimise packaging waste, chooses local suppliers and products, uses organic and seasonal ingredients, etc.
- Serving condiments, sauces, milk, sugar, etc, from refillable containers instead of individual packages.
- Serving beverages from jugs instead of individual bottles and not using disposable cups.
- Using cutlery, crockery and glass, etc, instead of plastic or paper. When disposable is necessary, using recyclable, biodegradable or compostable items.



- Using cloth or recycled paper napkins.
- Minimising the use of tablecloths and unnecessary linens that need to be laundered after use.
- Choosing seasonal living plants instead of cut flowers and indigenous plants and flowers instead of imported.

Exhibition

The exhibition element can be made greener through small changes, but special attention needs to be paid to the set-up/breakdown procedures as disorganisation and unnecessary packaging can waste electricity and resources. African Agenda recommends the following:

- Ensure that all stands use energy-saving light bulbs and require that all lights and electrical appliances and equipment are turned on/plugged in only when needed, and only when the exhibition is open.
- Place recycling bins throughout the exhibition hall for easy access.
- Ensure that all signs and handouts are recycled and that leftover stationery is donated.
- Place sustainability restrictions on the exhibitors, e.g. prefer use of recycled paper and soy-based ink on handouts, use recycled eco-friendly giveaways such as pencils made from reclaimed wood, minimise use of cardboard boxes, plastic and shipping during the set-up/breakdown process.
- Ensure that the exhibition stands are made using sustainable building materials, paint, carpets, etc.
- Offer an incentive for the exhibitors to have the most environmentally-friendly stand.

Communication and marketing

While most delegate communication and marketing is already done electronically, there are other communication methods that can be improved. African Agenda hopes to have your organisation's support with the following:

- Using the conference website as the main tool of communication to minimise printing and the transport required for posted materials.
- Making all conference materials and handouts available online and encouraging delegates to print only what they need, instead of indiscriminately printing or publishing copies for all delegates. Includes papers, slides, delegate lists, etc.
- Giving memory sticks with all conference materials pre-loaded (this is also a sponsorship opportunity).
- Discourage sponsors from distributing printed marketing materials.
- Ensure that any unavoidable printing uses recycled paper and soy-based inks and is recycled after the event.
- Use directional signage without dates or sponsors where possible, encouraging reuse.
- Bring a "green sponsor" on board to financially support the event's greening initiatives. Potential sponsors include organisations related to the conference that have a green profile, or renewable energy or resources companies, or organisations and associations recognised as frontrunner in the process of business greening.
- Evaluate the success of the event using a paperless online survey and get a better response to more detailed questions in the process.
- Keeping all participants informed of the green policy and all the ways they can assist in reducing the event footprint as well as the footprint of their personal participation in the event. Registration forms to include carbon calculator and a selection of offsets to purchase and newsletters to keep community up to date on greening progress and goals.

On-site procedures

Small procedures that are followed on-site during the conference can make a big impact. The following are standard African Agenda practices:

- We have a dedicated Greening Manager on-site to ensure that greening strategies are implemented throughout the conference, ensure compliance by suppliers, and assess the success of specific greening initiatives by supervising the weighing of waste, the packaging of leftovers for donation, etc.
- Choosing recycled content for conference proceedings and paraphernalia, e.g. name tags, handouts, programme handbooks, exhibition binders, etc.
- Ensuring that conference bags are made from recycled material, or using cloth bags that can be reused, and sourcing locally.
- Placing a box at the exit for delegates to donate conference bags and unused stationery to a school or charity if they do not wish to keep them. African Agenda will facilitate the recycling, reuse or donation of this.
- Encouraging delegates to return their conference lanyards, name tags and plastic pouches for reuse and recycling.
- Giving promotional and speaker gifts that are made using sustainable materials, have no or minimal packaging, and are sourced locally (e.g. beadwork, wire crafts etc).
- Encouraging the purchase of carbon offsets or the taking of other green measures by indicating the “green participants” with a special lanyard. Reinforce the community aspect of greening by creating a visual representation of how many people are involved, and encourage those that don’t get involved at first through gentle “peer pressure”.

Post-conference

Execution of the greening policy doesn’t end at the last day of the conference. Keeping track of progress made and goals achieved is an important step and helps to develop better systems and discover new ways of going green. The post-conference reporting process can include:

- Electronic analysis and distribution of survey/evaluation results.
- Reporting on the actual weight of recyclables, number of delegate bags donated, etc.
- Reporting on amounts of leftover food donated to food bank.
- Reporting on total monetary amount of carbon offsets purchased.

To showcase our commitment to our green policy, and embodying the “practice what you preach” philosophy, have a look at the green policies that African Agenda currently uses in our own offices, and what we have planned for the future!

4. EXISTING GREEN POLICIES IN THE AFRICAN AGENDA OFFICE:

- **Sustainable procurement: where possible all office supplies and kitchen stock are locally sourced, made from sustainable materials and recyclable.**
- **Recycling and composting: Paper, plastic and tins are separated and recycled and food waste is composted.**
- **Recycling printer cartridges**
- **Printing: Documents are printed double-sided where possible and 1-sided prints are reused.**
- **Building construction: the building was specifically designed to receive as much natural light and ventilation as possible, minimising consumption of lights and air conditioning and therefore electricity. Additionally, fluorescent lights and CFLs are used in all light fixtures and the geyser is also turned off for the majority of each day.**
- **Transport: Employees that live near the office cycle to work in good weather, using bicycles provided by the company.**

5. PROPOSED GREEN POLICIES IN THE AFRICAN AGENDA OFFICE:

- **Increasing use of laptops rather than desktop workstations: laptops typically use 10% less energy than regular desktop computers**
- **Choosing biodegradable and non-toxic cleaning products, and buying in bulk.**
- **The installation of a geyser timer to negate the need for it to be turned off manually.**



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