

# POSITIVE IMPACT



## TRANSFORMING TOURISM VALUE CHAINS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: WHAT THE EVENT INDUSTRY CAN LEARN

POSITIVE IMPACT



- Positive Impact provides education and collaboration opportunities to create a sustainable event industry.



**ABPCO**  
Association of  
British Professional  
Conference Organisers

- The Association of British Professional Conference Organisers is the UK's leading Professional body for Association Conference & Event Organisation.

On the 30th October 2018, representatives Laura Brown from Positive Impact and Heather Lishman from ABPCO, attended the “Leveraging Sustainable Procurement Practices to Transform Tourism Value Chains” workshop event in Paris, hosted by the UNEP. This report is a summary of learnings from this event in the context of what this means for the event industry.

## WHO IS POSITIVE IMPACT?

Positive Impact is a global not-for-profit that exists to provide education and collaboration opportunities to create a sustainable event industry.

## WHO IS ABPCO?

ABPCO is the association of British professional conference organisers, the UK’s leading professional body for association conference and event organisation.

## WHAT IS UNEP?

The United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. UNEP’s mission is to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.

## WHAT IS UNEP AND THE HOSPITALITY CATERING INDUSTRY FOCUSSED ON AND WHY?

The UN Environment brought together purchasing and sustainability professionals, as well as experts from the hospitality sector in order to share, discuss, and spread the best sustainable procurement practices across the tourism value chain. Participants had the opportunity to discuss or share their success stories, along with the challenges and risks they encountered while implementing sustainable procurement practices and review mitigation solutions. The one-day workshop was interactive and attendees actively participated.

The 4 areas that were focussed on during the event were:

- Phasing out single-use plastics
- Sustainable food procurement
- Refrigeration and Cooling procurement
- Circularity in the supply chain

# WHAT CAN THE EVENT SECTOR LEARN FROM THIS UNEP EVENT?

- There is the opportunity for collaboration with UNEP to address the event industry's key environmental challenges.
- The areas of environmental focus for the hospitality and events sectors are not exactly the same.
- There are opportunities to collaborate with the hospitality sector on:
  - phasing out single-use plastics
  - sustainable food procurement
  - circularity in the supply chain.
- Refrigeration and cooling procurement is of limited relevance to the event sector.
- Sustainability focuses on social and economic issues also, so the event industry will address issues beyond those identified with UNEP.

# UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



The United Nations have 17 sustainable development goals (SDG's) which are a roadmap to a world that works for everyone by 2030.

The UN SDG's are relevant to global businesses and their supply chains. This report relates primarily to UN SDG 12 responsible consumption and production.

The SDGs build on decades of work by countries and the UN, including the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

**12** RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



**7** AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



**11** SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



**13** CLIMATE ACTION



**14** LIFE BELOW WATER



**15** LIFE ON LAND



The following are case studies that were delivered at the Transforming Tourism Value Chains For Sustainable Development event...

# CASE STUDY 1: PLASTIC FREE

## KEY FOCUS

Currently, 50% of plastics in the hospitality industry are single-use, and 15% of this plastic is deemed totally unnecessary or a force of habit.



## CHALLENGES

Key issues of plastic waste included single-use bottles in destinations without clean drinking water, the culture of take-away from dining areas, and hygiene/health & safety is hugely reliant on plastic. A focus of a key hotel chain was to create plastic free meetings and events through reduction of sweet, food/drink packaging, branded pencils and bottled water.

## SUGGESTIONS

It was noted that a key incentive was to be prepared for legislation

- EU to ban single use plastic by 2021
- EU recycling rates for plastic bottles aims to be 90% by 2025
- Best practice already in action involves straw bans



“ABPCO is committed to reducing single use plastics. We have just piloted the use of two reverse vending machines in the SEC Centre, which provides an effective waste solution for plastic bottles and cans. We have also given every SEC team member a Chilly’s water bottle in order to drive down bottled water usage internally.”

- Shelley Spencer, Sales Manager  
Conferences

## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE EVENT INDUSTRY?

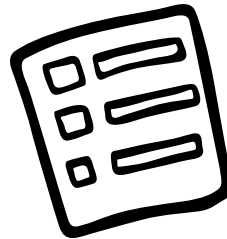
Following the lead of the hospitality sector, the event industry should be ready for increased legislation. A best practice way forward would be to ask in all event tenders what the supplier does to eliminate single-use plastic, what alternatives that they are offering, and how they can help the organiser communicate this to the delegates.

In addition, measuring and understanding disposal options is key. The event industry should be ready for global campaigns to address the challenge of plastic in collaboration with UNEP, and in 2019 Monterey County Convention Bureau will launch a campaign to show leadership in this area with the Positive Impact Team.

# CASE STUDY 2: SUSTAINABLE FOOD PROCUREMENT

## KEY FOCUS

Food sourcing from local amenities allows a reduction in transport emissions and packaging, whilst retaining local cultures and values. It can also provide healthier and less processed food options. A focus on utilising seasonal food and organic food from local providers is best practice.



## CHALLENGES

Decentralised purchasing, event fluctuations, receiving necessary information from suppliers and the lack of a consumer awareness and a common understanding.

## SUGGESTIONS

5 key areas were identified as the dimensions for sustainable food procurement:

- Economy
- Ecological
- Health
- Societal
- Cultural



“ABPCO works with its catering partner, SEC Food, to ensure sustainable food solutions. Food mileage is kept as low as possible, takeaway dining materials are all biodegradable and we are working to make the entire process as carbon neutral as possible.”

- Kathleen Warden, Director of Conferences

## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE EVENT INDUSTRY

Following the lead of the hospitality sector, the event industry should ask in all event tenders what the supplier does to procure food responsibly, whether this is local, certified or fair trade, seasonal, organic, decreasing carbon foot-print or more plant-based.

Influencing factors the events industry could use to change their supply chain could take form in improving the local economy, improving ecology or health, and highlighting cultural or societal collaborations. Ask the supplier how they can help the organiser communicate this to the delegates.

The event industry should ask in all event tenders what the supplier does to minimise food waste through:

- production
- plate sizes
- spoilage and food disposal.

# CASE STUDY 3: REFRIDGERATION/COOLING PROCUREMENT EXPERIENCE IN HOTELS

## KEY FOCUS

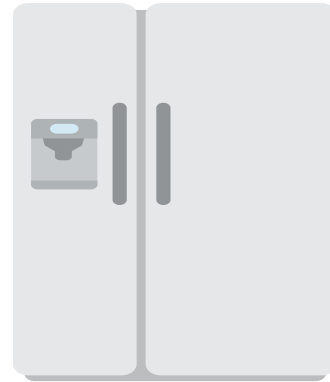
Air conditioning, cooling, and refrigerants are a large cause of pollutants within hospitality through direct and indirect emissions. They are also having a huge cost impact on hotels and restaurants.

## CHALLENGES

The event industry has limited to no influence on the choice of cooling or refrigeration systems. Parts of the event industry supply chain, for example venues can influence this decision.

## SUGGESTIONS

35% of food waste is due to insufficient cooling, which includes transportation.



## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE EVENT INDUSTRY?

Following the lead of the hospitality sector, the event industry could educate event organisers to understand the impacts on the environment of cooling and refrigeration and the positive impacts of renewables.

This could be linked to the transportation of food-stuffs and the positive impact of buying more locally and decreasing the (refrigerated) transportation costs.



# CASE STUDY 4: CIRCULARITY IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN VIA SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

## KEY FOCUS

Sustainable procurement can accelerate the transition to a circular economy. This movement requires the cooperation of public procurers, policy makers, corporate buyers and business leaders.



“When a PCO, supplier and venue all work together to achieve their shared goal of providing the same high level of event delivery, whilst keeping the values of circular economy in mind great things can be achieved. For example, pumpkins and gourds were used as centrepieces and when the supplier was asked if these could be provided free of any chemicals or sprays, it was not an issue. There were no additional costs and these were then able to be safely stored by the venue ready to be picked up the next day by a community kitchen project, with the intention of using them to provide soups and stews.”

- Joanna Martin, Events Project Manager

## SUGGESTIONS

### 2 APPROACHES TOWARDS CIRCULARITY

1. Circular products, materials and services would provide the industry with consumer information tools, life cycle costs, and opportunities for co-operation between suppliers and the industry

2. Focusing on new business models, creates an opportunity for new service systems such as supplier take-back schemes; using shared platforms, collaborative consumption and sharing economy services.

## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE EVENT INDUSTRY?

Following the lead of the hospitality sector, the event industry could:

- specify resource efficiency level
- measure recycled content
- communicate reparability

This could facilitate identifying how to extend a products lifetime through a process of:

- Reuse
- Repair
- Remanufacture
- Recycle



# WE ASKED ABPCO ABOUT THEIR INSIGHT ON THE AREAS OF FOCUS



## ABPCO

Association of  
British Professional  
Conference Organisers

ABPCO's purpose and promise is to be proud to enable human enrichment through face to face gatherings Promoting Excellence in Association Conferences and Events.

### ABPCO's VISIONS & VALUES

- Creating the standard for association event management best practice
- Excellence
- Learning
- Belonging

The procurement process is seen as fundamental in gathering momentum to move towards a sustainable supply chain within hospitality.

The events industry should harness this, and ensure that all those with responsibility for procurement stress the importance of this within their tenders and specifications.

If the venue and accommodation providers have to prove the responsible measures and the associated actions they are taking, then the businesses will prioritise relevant outcomes to ensure that they remain competitive within the industry. This will then accelerate the changes required and drive tangible impact.

# ROADMAP

ABPCO members collaborated to create a roadmap to a sustainable events industry



## Promoting Excellence in Association Conferences and Events

Meeting the needs of today's event professionals' without compromising the needs of future generations

Promote case studies to show sustainable alternatives, e.g. to leaflets in conference bags, printed abstracts, venue food waste, recyclable plastics etc.

Promote options for decreasing one-use signage and paper-usage at events by utilizing wi-fi



### #excellence – responsible production & consumption

Formulate 6 CSR questions that can be included in any RFP – to drive change e.g. Sourcing, waste, advocating healthy practices to encourage physical and mental wellbeing

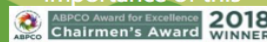
Lead a national initiative with  to highlight how to make association conferences more sustainable

Continue to promote the  and support the work of the BVEP and Events Industry Board

### #learning – quality education & partnerships


Share case studies on how #eventprofs have successfully partnered with organisations on CSR initiatives

Ensure that we publicise the 'legacy' of events and continue to communicate the importance of this



Continue to support  & promote engagement with this industry charity

### #belonging – reduced inequalities

Partner with EventWell  the #eventprofs social enterprise to promote their cause

Promote diversity (race, age, gender etc.) at all events; speakers, panels etc.

Continue to push for the  for all #eventprofs

Proud to enable human enrichment through face to face gatherings

Created by 

# HOW CAN THE EVENT INDUSTRY TAKE STEPS TO ADDRESS THEIR KEY ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES IN COLLABORATION WITH UNEP?

-  This report will be launched at IBTM World and within the ABPCO community.
-  Positive Impact roadmap toolkit is a free resource available to support the global event industry to identify their own challenges and can be used by any event professional to understand how the environmental challenges in this report are relevant to their own unique situation.
-  Positive Impact has a memorandum of understanding with UNEP which will form the basis of collaboration for future work to identify and address.

For more information go to [www.positiveimpactevents.com](http://www.positiveimpactevents.com)