

BERGEN MEETINGS



SUSTAINABLE MEETINGS GUIDE
VERSION 1.1
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visitBergen.com/meetings



1. BERGEN SUSTAINABLE MEETINGS GUIDE

Hotel Norge by Scandic



1.1 ABOUT THE GUIDE

Everything we do as individuals or organizations leaves a footprint. If we are to reach the sustainable development goals, we must change our usual ways of conducting business. This is also true when organizing meetings.

The goal is simple, but also demanding. It is about creating a better life and a better society for both us and future generations.

This guide is created to serve as a tool and aid for planners of conferences, meetings and congresses in Bergen and The Bergen region. For simplicity we will refer only to conferences throughout this guide, although it applies to all the forms of meetings mentioned. The aim is to give organizers a tool they can use to minimize environmental footprints and strengthen the local benefits from meetings.

The guide is developed by Bergen Convention Bureau/ Visit Bergen in cooperation with stakeholders and partners at the destination.

Following this guide will not make your conference fully sustainable. The goal of this guide is to create a more systemic and goal-oriented way of working with sustainability when planning a conference. Some action points listed in this guide might not be relevant for all types of conferences, but by follow-

ing most of bullet points in the guide, your conference will be well on its way towards more sustainability.

Why choose Bergen and The Bergen region?

Organizing a conference in Bergen gives you many possibilities. On visitbergen.com/meetings you can find a venue suited to your exact needs. Perhaps one of the many museums in Bergen or the top of the tallest mountain in Bergen, Mount Ulriken, would be a suitable venue for your next conference?

The conference city of Bergen has come far in dealing with environmental challenges. 89 percent of hotel beds in Bergen are for instance environmentally certified. This makes it easy for guests and participants to choose eco friendly accommodation in Bergen. The largest conference and congress venues in Bergen are also environmentally certified.

As a destination, Bergen are among the top performers on [The Global Destination Sustainability Index](#). And Bergen is also labelled as a [Sustainable Destination](#).

A big advantage by choosing Bergen is the short distances between conference venues and hotels in the city center, making walking the most popular form of transportation. If you are in a rush, city bikes are also easily available.

From the airport to the city center you can travel by the Bergen Light Rail (Bybanen) or make use of the fossil-free airport express bus. And did you know that the public transport in Bergen runs on fossil-free fuel?

DESIGNING AND PLANNING

Start the planning of the conference early, and map out different needs. Doing this saves both time and money, as well as minimizing the potential negative environmental impact.

- The conference is held at a sustainability certified conference venue.
- A person responsible for the sustainability of the conference has been appointed.
- The conference venue has a universal design.
Through facilitation for people with visual impairments, hearing impairments, mobility impairments and/or allergies.
- Customers, partners and conference participants are well informed about the conference's environmental measures, both in advance of, and during the conference.
- We have evaluated whether or not the conference should be sustainability certified.
This is especially relevant for larger or reoccurring conferences.
- We have evaluated whether or not we should make a climate account for the conference.
Remaining emissions from the conference are then evaluated for climate compensation or carbon removal.

PROCUREMENT

To make better procurements, get an overview of the number of participants and their needs. It might be a good idea to collaborate with someone who has experience of arranging a green conferences.

- Key partners and suppliers of the conference holds a sustainability certification or has begun a process of certification.
- Purchase of single-use products is avoided.
Buy used, reusable or recycled/recyclable products. Consider renting equipment or décor.
- The conference utilize eco-labelled products.
For example products labelled by The Nordic Swan Ecolabel.
- Local suppliers are used as far as possible.
- We have investigated if we can return packaging and unused products to our suppliers.
- Local products or donations to non-profit organizations are chosen as gift for speakers at the conference.
- If you are organizing accommodation for participants, make sure to use sustainability certified accommodation.
- Usage of renewable power with a guarantee of origins has been requested from the conference venue.

TRANSPORTATION

Facilitate so that transportation to and from the conference venue can be done as environmentally friendly as possible

- It is easy to walk, cycle, or use public transportation to reach the conference venue.
Are there, for example, city bikes and/or bicycle parking available nearby?
- Participants and speakers are provided with comprehensive information on how to travel to the conference in an environmentally friendly manner. *For example details about relevant bus routes, options for purchasing biofuel for air travel, bicycle parking facilities, and more.*
- Det er gitt insentiver for bruk av miljøvennlig transport for publikum.
F.eks. gjennom avslag i konferanseprisen dersom gjesten reiser kollektivt, sykler eller går.
- Zero-emission vehicles are used for internal transportation.
- We have required emissions-free delivery of goods, services, and/or artist transportation for the conference.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

The consumption of food has a significant environmental impact. During conferences, catering services can also pose challenges related to material use and waste. Try to promote food with a low environmental footprint, avoid unnecessary packaging and create a good system to avoid food waste.

- We know how many participants who will actually attend the conference
- We have investigated the environmental profile that the conference venue can offer regarding food service.
For example, can they provide plant-based food with a low carbon footprint?
- When using our own food and beverage suppliers, we have chosen environmentally certified providers.
- We have used local, seasonal, organic, and/or vegetarian food and beverages.
- The possibility of serving surplus food in connection with the conference has been explored.
For example, sourcing surplus food from farms, wholesalers, grocery stores, or similar sources.
- The need to serve meat at the conference has been assessed as low.
If meat is to be served, it is recommended to serve poultry, sheep, or other meat products that would otherwise go to waste.
- We will not serve seafood flagged with a red light in [WWF's seafood guide](#), or any other food listed on [The Norwegian red list of species](#). *Links in norwegian language only.*
- Guests have been provided with information about the environmental profile of the food and beverages served at the conference.
- Good solutions have been found to handle surplus food from the conference.
For example, is it possible to donate surplus food to charitable organizations?
- If the conference is free, a "no-show fee" has been implemented to limit potential food waste
- The use of disposable items for food service has been avoided.
Whenever possible, reusable tableware and utensils are preferred.
- If disposable items need to be used for food service, renewable materials that can be recycled and/or are biodegradable have been utilized.
- Suppliers and the conference venue have been challenged to reduce the amount of packaging used and/or to switch to more climate-friendly packaging options.
- There are water stations available in the conference venue where participants can refill their own bottles. Guests have been informed about this opportunity prior to the conference.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Proper waste management prevents littering and helps keep the conference area tidy. Maintain a good dialogue with the venue regarding waste management and to set necessary requirements to ensure effective waste handling.

- Prior to the conference, an overview has been created to identify the types of waste expected to be generated during the event. Plans have been developed to minimize the amount of waste produced.
- There is a well-implemented and universally designed system for recycling throughout the venue. Waste bins are clearly labeled, making it easy for participants to recycle.
- Guests has been well informed about the recycling options at the venue, both prior to and during the conference.
- The use of product samples and promotional items at booths and similar activities has been minimized. Ideally, their use has been eliminated altogether.
- We have made plans for what materials can be reused after the conference. *For instance, materials that have printed dates are avoided if they can be used for future events.*
- The use of balloons, lanterns, confetti, glitter, or any other materials that contribute to unnecessary littering has been avoided.
- The necessity of using name tags has been carefully evaluated. *When name tags are used, they should be made from degradable materials. After the conference, the name tags are collected and reused.*

IMPACT AND LEGACY

Attempt to create further positive effects for the local community where the conference takes place.

- Describe how the conference contributes to increased societal benefits and share the story with the world. *Does it contribute to promoting new innovation, creating a sense of community, or have similar impacts?*
- We have explored the possibility of engaging conference attendees, speakers, or volunteers in local community projects as part of the conference program. *Bergen Convention Bureau/Visit Bergen can assist in this endeavor.*
- A proposal for a pre- and/or post-conference program has been developed for participants who wish to explore more of the Bergen region as part of their conference participation.

DIGITAL AND/OR HYBRID CONFERENCES

Digital solutions can be a good way to reduce the footprint of a conference, but even digital conferences have a footprint. The larger the amount of data used and stored, the more energy is required. It is also important that digital services are designed in a way that they can be accessed by everyone.

- The conference website and streaming platform are universally designed. *Many websites are for example difficult to read and navigate for individuals with visual impairments.*
- The technical provider for the conference is environmentally certified.
- The IT provider for the conference stores the content on server farms powered by renewable energy. *Request a proof of the guarantee of origins.*
- Choose a streaming platform that is quick to load. The less content that needs to be loaded, the less energy is consumed.
- A time limit has been set for the availability of conference content on the streaming platform.
- The files intended for internal use or to be shared after the conference are compressed.
- Duplication of files stored has been avoided.
- Unnecessary files that are no longer needed are deleted.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sustainability certifications for conferences

[ISO 20121 - Sustainable events](#)

[Eco-lighthouse - Green conferences](#) (full criteria set available in Norwegian language)

Here are some examples of handbooks and resources on sustainable conferences that can provide inspiration:

1. [Aarhus' Handbook for Green Conferences and Events](#) provides practical advice and tips for implementing sustainable practices.
2. #MEET4IMPACT is a non-profit organization promoting ideas of using meetings and events as a platform for creating positive impact and driving sustainable change. Read more here: <https://www.meet4impact.global/>

