



Events

SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES

Practical Guide to Implementing Sustainable Practices



FOREWORD

The guidelines have been developed to provide best practice recommendations for sustainability initiatives in key sustainability areas. These are recommendations and the sector is responsible for assessing the feasibility of adopting each initiative and making progress to develop their individual sustainability strategy and policy.





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1. Introduction

The world is changing, and so are the needs of tourists and travellers. Sustainability has become a significant concern for many. According to Booking.com, in the published Sustainable Travel report 2022¹, 71% of global travellers want to travel more sustainably. In addition, the United Nations World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) vision for its 2030 Agenda firmly positions the need for sustainable tourism. Harnessing tourism's contribution to sustainability will be instrumental in fulfilling this vision.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has joined the global shift towards sustainability. Key examples include the UAE strategy for Domestic Tourism, the UAE circular economy policy and the UAE Net Zero 2050 initiative, as shown in Figure 1. There are many national and local sustainability strategies and initiatives driving the change towards countries' sustainable development.



World

UN World Tourism Organization Vision - 2030 Agenda



UN World Tourism Organisation aligned to 17 SDGs.

¹ Booking.com, "Sustainable Travel Report", 2022 (www.globalnews.booking.com)

Some of those are:



1.8 B

of average annual growth of international tourist arrivals is expected in Middle East until 2030

5%

of average annual growth of international tourist arrivals is expected in Middle East until 2030

2020

tourist arrivals decreased by %74 while market recovered by %120 in 2021



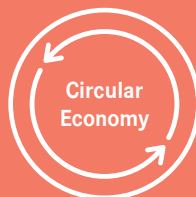
United Arab Emirates



UAE Net Zero Initiative

Launched in 2020 with an aim to unify local and federal efforts to harness the UAE's tourism resources:

- Building capabilities, developing policies, plan and programme based partnerships.



UAE Circular Economy Policy

2021: UAE framework for determining the approach to achieving sustainable governance: Promotion of environmental, adoption of clean methods and reduction of environmental stress.



UAE Strategy for Domestic Tourism

2021: UAE sector entities to update their sustainability approach: Investment AED600 Billion in clean and renewable energy sources expected by 2050.

Figure 1: World and UAE trends towards sustainability and eco-tourism

2 Sustainability in the Abu Dhabi Tourism Industry

As the UAE moves towards sustainability, it is imperative to establish and promote Abu Dhabi's leading position as a global destination in eco-tourism and sustainable tourism.

As the tourism industry's regulator, the Department of Culture and Tourism (DCT) is committed to providing a sustainable and responsible tourism industry tailored to the regional climate, culture, and available resources. The tourism industry is instrumental in supporting the evolution of Abu Dhabi into a world-class destination.

DCT has established a comprehensive sustainability framework for the tourism industry (Figure 2) based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is a long-term and forward-looking framework aiming to manage the tourism industry's economic, social, and environmental impacts. It is built upon six destination principles for sustainable development. These have formed the basis for the development of the Sustainable Tourism Guidelines.



Sustainability Framework & Implementation Plan Abu Dhabi Tourism Sector



















Principle	Initiative		
 Transparent Destination	 Capacity Building	 Sustainable Tourism Award	
 Sustainable Destination	 Sector Commitment	 Sustainable Guidelines	 Event Impact Management
 Unique Destination	 Eco-tourism Marketing	 Local Experience App	
 Safe, Accessible Destination	 Experience for tourists with disabilities	 Improving Site Accessibility	 Tourists Site Connectivity
 Inclusive Destination	 Stakeholder Engagement	 Marketing for residents	
 Adaptive, Diverse Destination	 Low-Season Marketing	 Climate Change Assessment	

Figure 2: DCT sustainability framework

As a result, the **Events Sustainability Guidelines** have been developed to enhance knowledge and encourage the implementation of sustainability practices and procedures into the day-to-day operational activities across the value chain. The guidelines are the foundation that will shape the future of the tourism industry and establish Abu Dhabi as a leader in sustainable tourism. The guidelines are aligned with the key sustainability areas that are related to the tourism industry.

3. Context and Objectives

The guidelines have been developed to help Events in defining their sustainability roadmaps. It outlines initiatives and best practices for the Event Organisers, including Leisure Events and Business Events (collectively referred to as “Event Organisers” henceforth) as well as Venues, and equips them with a goal-based sustainability approach. Definitions for Leisure Events and Business Events are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Definitions for Event Organisers and Venues:

Event Organisers	Leisure Events	Any Event for pleasure, relaxation, or other emotional satisfaction. Leisure Events include sports events, recreation events, entertainment events. It also involves managing or organising a celebration or festival, sporting contest, concert or similar.
	Business Events	Any public or private activity with a common interest or vocation, held in a specific venue or venues, and hosted by an organisation/s. A Business Event may include (but is not limited to) conferences, conventions, symposia, congresses, incentive group events, marketing events, special celebrations, seminars, courses, public or trade shows, product launches, exhibitions, company general meetings, corporate retreats, study tours or training programmes.
	Venues	Venues are defined as a designated space for an event and provides and is responsible for facilities like electricity, water, waste management against some financial collaboration.

As per the 2022 Sustainable Travel Report², 81% of global travellers confirm that sustainable travel is important to them, while 57% of travellers would prefer staying in an accommodation with a sustainability certification. Keeping in tune with these global perceptions of sustainability, it is recommended that Event Organisers and Venues use these guidelines to benefit from successful business practices and contribute to Abu Dhabi’s vision of a sustainable tourist destination.

The Events Sustainability Guideline is a non-binding set of recommendations and initiatives aiming to improve responsible tourism development. The guideline is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) criteria, and other leading industry initiatives to provide Event Organisers and Venues of Abu Dhabi a roadmap towards achieving a more sustainable and inclusive business while providing tourists with an enriching local and authentic Abu Dhabi experience.

To develop this document, 18 different guidelines from global leaders were assessed and benchmarked, including GSTC Criteria, Green Key, Green Globe, and UNWTO. Standards from Dubai Sustainable Tourism were also studied for more understanding on the Middle East region. These guidelines and standards were studied to understand the sustainability requirements in the global tourism industry and evaluate gaps and opportunities for sustainability in the Abu Dhabi Tourism industry. A survey with different players, including Events, Hotel Establishments, Cultural and Heritage Sites, Food and Beverage Establishments, Leisure and Entertainment Attractions, and Travel Agencies and Tours Operators, was conducted in January 2022 by DCT to understand the current sustainability practices implemented within their operations as a baseline. These studies helped in understanding the gaps and opportunities of how these players can facilitate sustainability practices across Abu Dhabi as a tourism destination.

² Booking.com, “Sustainable Travel Report “. 2022 (www.globalnews.booking.com)

To develop the Sustainability Guidelines, the following key steps were undertaken to understand the current state of sustainability in the tourism industry of Abu Dhabi. This is shown in Figure 3.

1.	Benchmarking and Research	Research was conducted on selected sustainability policies, guidelines and certifications from around the world. Key conclusions and best practices were highlighted to understand the sustainability in operations of tourism industry.
2.	Sector Stakeholder Selection	6 sector stakeholder categories for selection were developed based on the targeted sectors: events, hotel establishments, food and beverage outlets, culture and heritage sites, leisure and entertainment, and travel and tour operators
3.	Survey Development	A survey was developed to gain an understanding of the current state of sustainability in the Events sector.
4.	Workshops & Survey Launch	Selected stakeholders from the Events sector were invited to participate in 6 different workshops and fill in the survey.
5.	Survey Analysis	A total of 24 sector stakeholders participated in the survey. Results from the survey were analysed, and the main challenges and opportunities were identified.
6.	Guideline Development	The findings from the benchmarking, surveys and workshops were used as the foundation for the development of the six sector-specific guidelines.

Figure 3: Guideline development process

Key sustainability elements, challenges and opportunities related to sustainable growth and development were identified through the survey. It was structured around the key findings from the benchmarking exercise, whereby an assortment of guidelines was benchmarked against criteria such as voluntary versus mandatory guidelines, international and national guidelines, other applicable guidelines and certification schemes and key sustainability elements (e.g., energy management, water management, carbon emissions etc.). All the surveyed Event Organisers in Abu Dhabi consider sustainability to be important, as shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4: Key Survey Findings

Based on the data from the survey conducted for the Events sector, the results indicate that there is a crucial need for solutions to support the establishments in their journey towards sustainability. The most important focus areas identified were environmental risk management, controlling carbon emissions, protecting and preserving biodiversity, prioritising visitor and employee health and safety, adopting sustainable procurement, and enhancing energy, water, and waste management.

The results highlight the challenges to implementing sustainable practices, related to sustainability awareness and expertise, sustainability monitoring, high utility bills, access to sustainable goods, and guest sustainability awareness. These findings can be considered as baseline aspects and initiatives that currently exist within the sector, which emphasises the need for the sector to improve the sustainability performance of the tourism industry.

The focus areas, challenges, and opportunities gathered from responses aided the development of the guideline (Figure 5). The aim of the guideline is to encourage Event Organisers and Venues to be more self-sustainable and emerge as a pioneer in Abu Dhabi's journey to become a sustainable destination.



Figure 5: Survey Analysis

4. How to Use This Guideline?

This section of the guideline will provide clear steps on how to ensure a successful implementation of the sustainability strategy through the day-to-day operations to contribute towards sustainable development. A summary of the steps is presented in Figure 6, and it is recommended to follow steps 1-5 annually to ensure that the sustainability strategy remains relevant, robust, and aligned with the Venue's current sustainability progress.

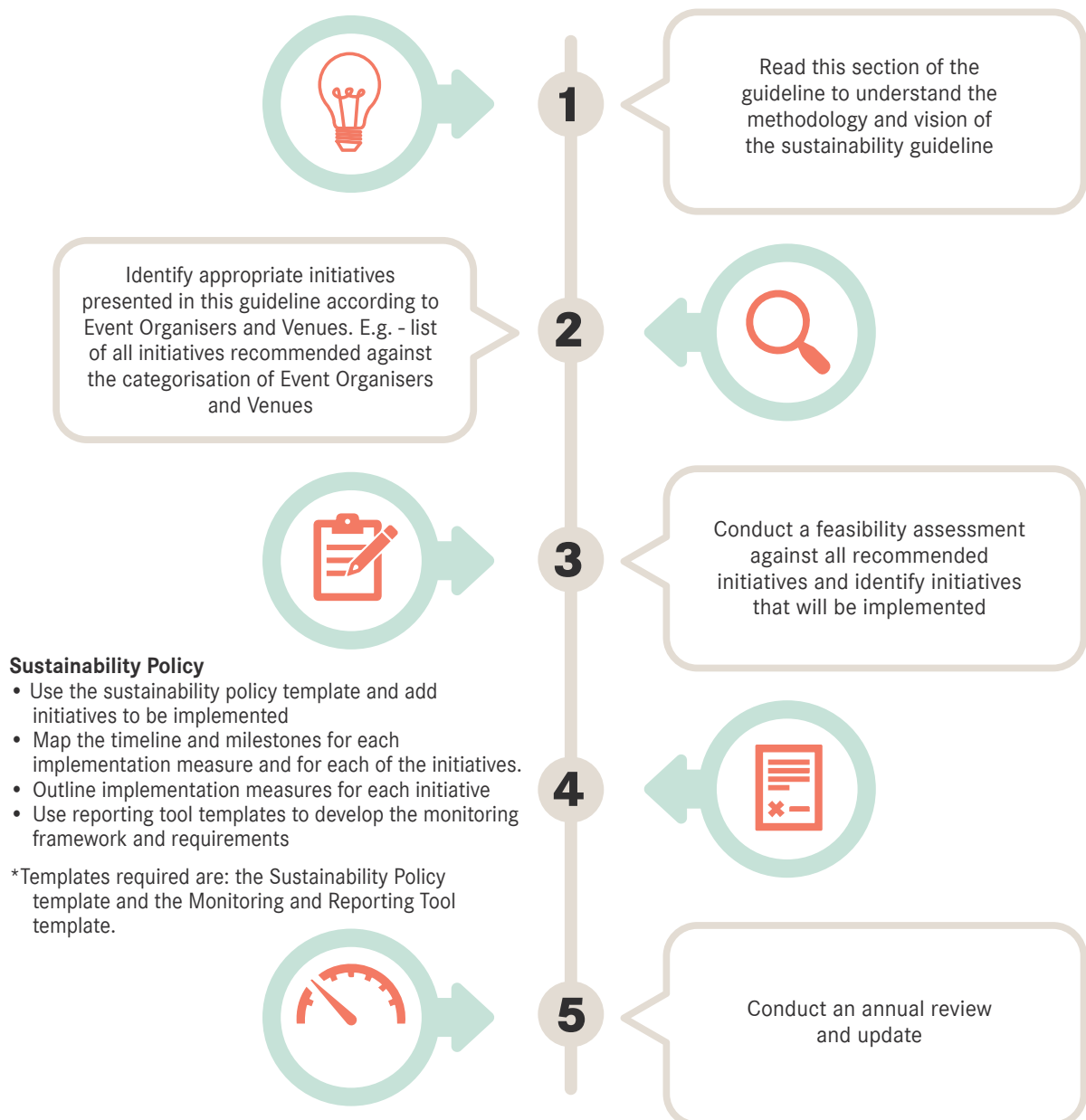


Figure 6: Steps to use the guideline

5. Sustainability Categories and Key Initiatives

There are five different sustainability categories: Energy and Environment, Sustainable and Local Procurement, Social and Culture, People, and Risk and Resilience Management. These are defined in Table 2.

Table 2: Five Sustainability Categories

Sustainability Category	Definition
A. Energy and Environment	Sustainable energy and environment management initiatives to provide solutions for sustainable energy, water and waste management, environment protection and carbon management.
B. Sustainable and Local Procurement	Sustainable procurement initiatives that give preference to local and environmentally-friendly goods.
C. Social and Culture	Initiatives to promote the social and cultural heritage of Abu Dhabi through the tourism industry.
D. People	Initiatives focusing on empowerment of employees in the tourism industry.
E. Resilience and Risk Management	Initiatives focused on identifying and managing the risks associated with the Event Organisers and Venues in the tourism industry.

Key initiatives under each sustainability category

The key initiatives presented in Figure 7 were comprehensively identified and developed, ensuring alignment with Abu Dhabi's sustainability pillars and agenda. This guideline covers holistic sustainability development and specific measures for environmental and social pillars, whilst considering under each applicable category the key vision for Emiratisation, financial stability and growth and governance (including data collection, monitoring, and reporting). Initiatives have been carefully tailored based on the Event classification and business type. This document provides guidance on implementing the suggested initiatives based on the classification and is designed to provide cost-effective solutions that can positively impact the overall sustainability performance.



A. Energy and Environment



Energy
Management



Water Management
System



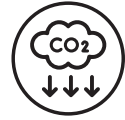
Waste Management
System



Green and Sustainable
Transportation



Environmental
Protection



Carbon
Management



B. Sustainable and Local Procurement



Sourcing of Local,
Sustainable Goods



C. Social and Culture



Promoting local Heritage,
Culture and Art



Promoting Sustainability
with Visitors and Local
Community



Engaging in Educational
Programmes



Improving
Accessibility



D. People



Staff Empowerment



Diversity
and Inclusion



E. Resilience & Risk Management



Health and
Safety

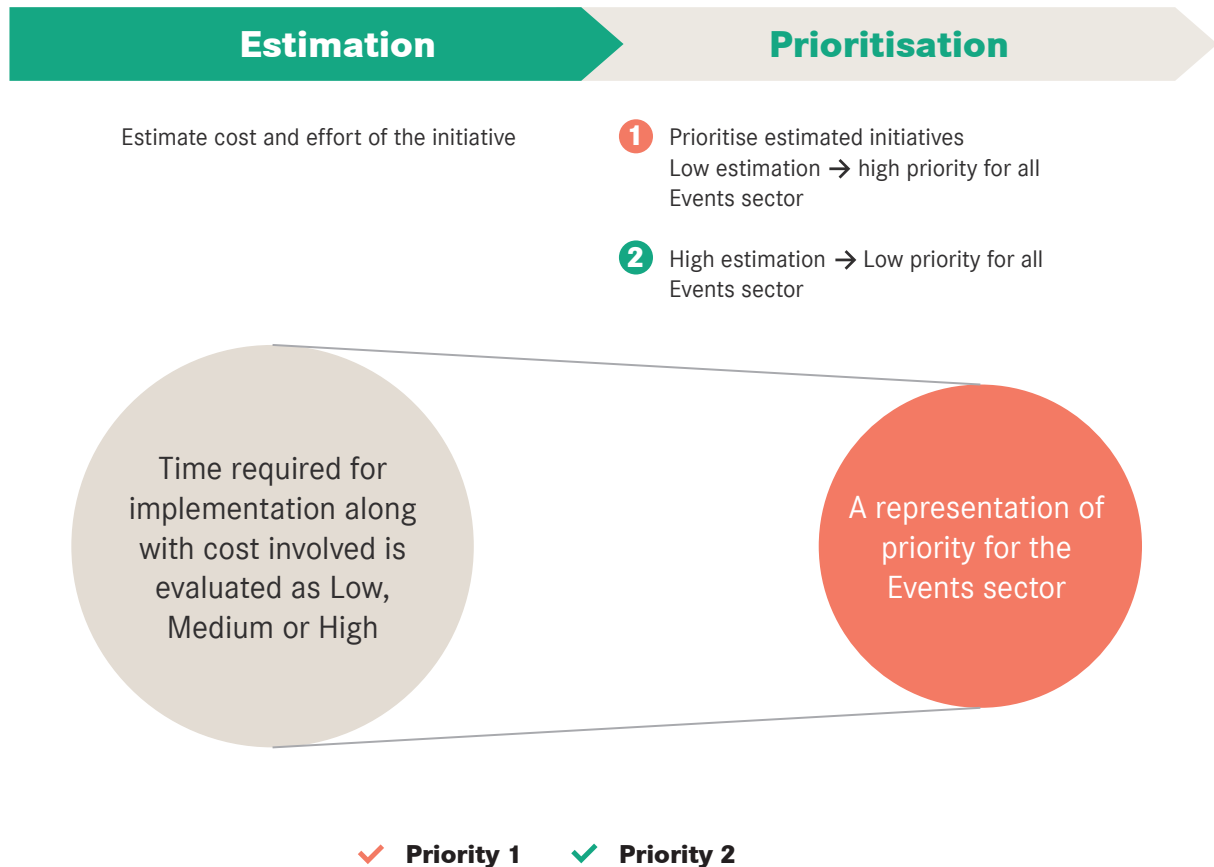


Risk Mitigation
and Resilience

Figure 7 Sustainability initiatives

The following sections provide further detail on the above-mentioned key sustainability measures and detail the opportunities and benefits resulting from implementing these practices.

6. Estimation and Prioritisation Process



Events Establishments

Time	Cost	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
LOW	LOW	✓	✓	✓
LOW	MEDIUM	✓	✓	✓
MEDIUM	LOW	✓	✓	✓
LOW	HIGH	✓	✓	✓
HIGH	LOW	✓	✓	✓
MEDIUM	MEDIUM	✓	✓	✓
MEDIUM	HIGH	✓	✓	✓
HIGH	MEDIUM	✓	✓	✓
HIGH	HIGH	✓	✓	✓

Figure 8: Initiative priority mapping for Events' categories

To determine if an initiative is Priority 1 or Priority 2:

- **Estimation:** The cost and effort of each initiative was estimated as Low, Medium, or High.
- **Prioritisation:** A priority matrix was developed based on the cumulative scores from the Estimation stage and initiatives were prioritised for each Event category.

For detailed information on cost and effort estimation, please refer to ***the Annexure document for the Events guidelines.***

The recommended sustainability initiatives are categorised as “Priority 1” and “Priority 2”. It must be emphasised that the sustainability guidelines are not mandated and aim to present a framework on how the industries can progress on their sustainability journey. The two categories are defined below:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| ✓ Priority 1 | All Event Organisers and Venues identified in orange should aim to target and implement the identified initiatives |
| ✓ Priority 2 | Where the Event Organisers and Venues have been identified in dark green, it is encouraged that the stakeholder investigates the feasibility of implementing the initiative to surpass expectations |
| ✗ Not Applicable | |

All Event Organisers and Venues should aim to target Priority 1 initiatives for their classification as indicated in ✓ and implement them. Initiatives marked in ✓ in their category are Priority 2 initiatives and it is encouraged that they are investigated for the feasibility of implementation to surpass expectations.

To calculate the estimations on time and cost, assumptions were applied considering the uniqueness of Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Dhafra areas.

1. An average Event in Abu Dhabi has 55,000 attendees, based on DCT figures and calculated following a ratio.
2. An average Event size is 275,000 sqm, based on DCT info and calculated through a fraction.

To calculate the benefits, market research was conducted to establish average prices for mid-range scenarios.

7 Sustainability Initiatives Prioritisation



A. Energy and Environment.



A.1 Energy Management

How can Event Organisers and Venues achieve energy and environmental sustainability?

Event Organisers, site managers, production managers, artist liaisons, technical production managers, vendor management and anyone that plans for or uses power at events has a role to play in achieving energy efficiency and environmental sustainability. Outdoor music Events commonly use a temporary power supply provided by diesel-fuelled generators. Indoor Events in the UAE also require substantial HVAC cooling loads. There is a remarkable opportunity within the events sector to substantially reduce the consumption of energy through the implementation of conservation measures and through energy efficiency improvements.

Initiatives applicable to Event Organisers

Sustainability Initiatives

Events Categories

1.	Install or use efficient lighting solutions (wherever applicable).	Events Categories		
		Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	1.1. Install LED lights depending on the desired brightness (a 9W LED is equivalent to a 45 W incandescent bulb output).	✓	✓	✓
	1.2. Use efficient portable lighting for night Events and exploit daylight during the day for temporary setup Events.	✓	✓	✓
	1.3. Install motion sensors and timers for lighting. For instance, in regularly occupied spaces install motion and daylight sensors to automatically adjust lighting levels to reflect the daylight levels and use of the space (e. g., if no one is utilising the space the lights will switch off).	✓	✓	✓
2.	Conduct energy efficiency awareness campaign.	Events Categories		
		Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	2.1. Conduct annual training for staff on energy efficiency (e.g., turn off lights in empty rooms, reduce water consumption, unplug electronic devices after usage, etc.).	✓	✓	✓
	2.2. Create digital and reusable training materials, such as guidebooks and leaflets, depending on the type of event (e.g., how much energy can be saved by using energy efficient lighting for business events, or how to make use of daylight for a daytime leisure event.).	✓	✓	✓
	2.3. Place reusable energy usage signage throughout the event venue (e.g., Turn off lights by the light switch, Switch off computer after usage.).	✓	✓	✓
	2.4. Utilise digital tools (such as eTEACHER) to increase efficiency in energy management and highlight energy consumption reduction areas.	✓	✓	✓

3. Enhance cooling efficiency in permanent Event setups.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
3.1. Venues should install efficient chillers, while Event Organisers can rent efficient chillers.	✓	✓	✓
3.2. Venues should install temperature controls for central cooling and ventilation.	✗	✗	✓
3.3. Event Organisers should check the thermostat temperature regularly and maintain it at 24 degrees. It is recommended that in guest-only areas, the temperature is set within this range before the visitors arrive and monitored during breaks.	✓	✓	✗
3.4. Venues should inspect ductwork and windows for leakage bi-annually.	✗	✗	✓
3.5. Venues should install a digital management solution that monitors energy consumptions.	✗	✗	✓
4. Purchase efficient appliances and equipment, such as ESMA 5- and 4-star appliances.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
4.1. Water cooler.	✓	✓	✓
4.2. AC split units.	✓	✓	✓
4.3. Television.	✓	✓	✓
5. Purchase more efficient appliances, based on their catalogue rating and Venue design specifications. Event Organisers can rent/partner with vendor for more efficient appliances.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
5.1. Projectors, loudspeakers and other equipment.	✓	✓	✓
6. For online Events, promote sustainability through conference calling by using servers that have green components in their value chain. This would minimise the energy consumption.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
6.1. Partner with green data centres like Google and Microsoft.	✓	✓	✓
7. Use sustainable options to generate power for Events in remote or off-grid areas.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
7.1. Opt for sustainable options instead of diesel generators e.g., hybrid solar battery generators or Portable PV array coupled with energy storage solution (power bank).	✓	✓	✓
8. Engage in innovative energy generation.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
8.1. Opt for innovative energy production technologies (e.g., energy dance floors, giant hamster wheels and bicycle generator). Responsive meters can show the amount of energy available.	✓	✓	✓
8.2. Partner with energy supplier for hydrogen fuel power for low energy applications as they have zero carbon and nitrous emissions.	✓	✓	✓
8.3. Partner with Smart grid providers. Smart grids control the generation, distribution, and storage of electricity using multiple energy sources. The environmental impact is therefore reduced because supply is generated through renewables, and it makes for a much more efficient use of energy. Energy metering provides Event Organisers with real time monitoring and data, and it is a more centralised energy production model.	✓	✓	✓
9. Invest in renewable energy solutions.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
9.1. Install solar water heaters.	✓	✓	✓
9.2. Install solar PV wherever possible, like rooftops and garden area.	✓	✓	✓
9.3. Purchase renewable energy certificates from Emirates Water and Energy Company (EWEC) by contacting the EWEC Clean Energy Certificates team.	✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

*As ESMA expands its energy efficiency programme, Event Organisers are advised to keep checking the updates for inclusion of more appliances.

Benefits:

- Installing efficient lighting systems (including LED bulbs), daylight harvesting systems and motion sensors can save between AED 1 and 2 million per year for an average 300,000 sqm or 55,000-person Event^{3 4}.
- Providing sustainability training aims to achieve energy efficiency, cost saving, improve reputation, and increase awareness.
- Installing cooling systems equipped with efficient chillers and temperature control systems, coupled with regular ductwork inspection, can result in savings of up to 35%.
- Using ESMA-rated appliances can save anywhere between 30% - 75⁵ .
- Solar heaters and Solar PV systems can have a payback period of 5 years post-installation. These systems can cover a significant portion of the energy bill, depending on the size of the solar array installation.
- Purchasing Renewable Energy Certificates can be accomplished to develop a clean energy portfolio. (This should be a consideration especially when renewable energy installation is not feasible or when there are emissions that can be difficult to decarbonise and offset⁶).

Local References:

- Estidama Pearl rating system: Estidama is a building design methodology for constructing and operating sustainable buildings. Under Estidama, energy management is a key factor in obtaining the Pearl rating.
- Abu Dhabi Stock Exchange Guidance (ADX): ADX has developed guidance on the adoption of Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) among its listed companies and investors alike. Event Organisers and Venues can use the monitoring framework for the initiatives presented in these guidelines as part of ADX sustainability reporting.
- Abu Dhabi Environmental Vision 2030: Achieving sustainable energy management will support the sustainable development of Abu Dhabi's economy.

³ Based on AESG research: Studies made using data from several online retailers and bulk suppliers to create market average.

⁴ Based on AESG research: Done considering AED %90 ,25 efficiency LED bulbs combined with motion and daylight sensors, with efficiencies of up to %40.

⁵ Based on AESG research: Study of ESMA-rated products to achieve an average.

⁶ Based on AESG research: Scheme operates as an auction and price points cannot be disclosed in these guidelines.

Tips:**ESMA energy efficiency standards:**

As part of the UAE Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technologies, ESMA (Emirates Standardization and Metrology Authority) issues the Energy Efficiency Labels for appliances. Event Organisers and Venues should ensure that all appliances have high ESMA star rating (5 or 4 stars). The list of the approved appliances can be found here: <https://moiat.gov.ae/en/>



Clean Energy Certificates:

Clean Energy Certificates are an innovative programme that allows Abu Dhabi consumers to certify the source of their clean energy usage and empowers them in achieving their sustainability goals. EWEC owns and sells all Clean Energy Certificates for solar and nuclear generated electricity in Abu Dhabi, supporting the UAE's climate change goals as part of the UAE Energy Strategy 2050.

How can I purchase Clean Energy Certificates?

To track and verify clean energy consumption, please contact the EWEC Clean Energy Certificates team at: CleanEnergyCertificates@ewec.ae

Further Reading:

1. OneClick LCA [information](#) and [pricing](#)
2. [eTEACHER](#)
3. Clean Energy Certificate from [EWEC](#).



A.2. Water Management System

Developing a water conservation plan and purchasing water-efficient appliances reduces both operating costs and overall environmental impact. In the UAE, where water is scarce due to its geographical location, it is very important for sectors to conserve water wherever possible. Venues should strategise and implement sustainable water management initiatives, while Event Organisers should explore sustainable Venues and implement sustainable measures to control water usage and conservation.

Initiatives applicable to Event Organisers

Sustainability Initiatives

Events Categories

1. Permanent venues should incorporate maintenance and prevention inspections.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	✗	✗	✓
2. Conduct water conservation awareness campaign.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓
3. Venues should install efficient and smart water fittings.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	✗	✗	✓
	✗	✗	✓
	✗	✗	✓

4.	Provide portable drinking water stations.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
		✓	✓	✓
5.	Introduce smart and efficient irrigation system for permanent venues with gardens and lawns.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
		✓	✓	✓
5.	5.1. Install drip irrigation system controlled by time sensors and with leak detection. This can be enhanced further by installing a smart system that reacts to real-time weather detection, has an automatic irrigation schedule, etc.	×	×	✓
	5.2. Install subsurface irrigation system.	×	×	✓
	5.3. Utilise recycled water for irrigation.	×	×	✓
	5.4. Practice xeriscaping: use soil additives and native/adaptive trees, plants, shrubs, and artificial surfaces to conserve water.	×	×	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

*This initiative is applicable only if the property has a pool.

Benefits:

- Regular inspections, monitoring, and installing efficient water fixtures and fittings can result in up to 20% savings on water⁷.
- Smart and drip irrigation systems can offer savings of around AED 100 for every 1,000 sqm of irrigable land⁸.
- Regular inspection reduces risks of scaling, corrosion, contamination, and other problems which could rupture pipes, inhibit your water flow, or damage equipment that requires a certain water quality.

UAE and Abu Dhabi Regulations:

- Estidama Pearl rating system: Estidama is a building design methodology for constructing and operating sustainable buildings. Under Estidama, water management is a key factor in obtaining the Pearl rating.
- ADX: If Event Organisers and Venues are listed on the ADX make sure that it follows ESG guidance. They can use the monitoring framework for the initiatives presented in these guidelines as part of ADX sustainability reporting for water management.

Local References:

- Abu Dhabi Environmental Vision 2030: Achieving sustainable water management will support the sustainable development of Abu Dhabi's economy.
- ESMA EESL programme-certified products: all water fixtures and water-consuming appliances must be approved by ESMA in order to operate them in the UAE.

Further Reading:

1. [Estidama Water Consumption Calculator](#) – follow this link for further information and instructions on how to calculate indoor and outdoor water consumption and how to improve on water consumption.

⁷ Based on AESG's research: Efficient/low flow appliances with efficiencies ranging from %10 to %20.

⁸ Based on AESG's research: Calculation based on industry average irrigation rate of 20 L/sqm, system cost of around AED 600 with an efficiency of up to %60 and the latest (ADDC, www.addc.ae, 2020) utility price of water.



A.3. Waste Management System

Event Organisers and Venues are one of the major contributors to generating waste, which in turn results in severe implications on the environment. To manage waste efficiently, it is essential to have a robust waste management system that focuses on reducing waste, reusing useful materials, and recycling.

Initiatives applicable to Event Organisers and Venues

Sustainability Initiatives

Events Categories

1. Start by designing a waste management strategy and establish a sustainable waste disposal system.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
1.1. Understand the the type of event and make a list of action points, like how long the event would be, how many people would attend, how much waste is likely to be produced and what kind of waste it will be.	✓	✓	✓
1.2. Appoint an onsite waste operations manager.	✓	✓	✓
1.3. Monitor and reduce set-up/pack-down waste. For instance, a multi-day music event will have more set-up/pack-down waste than an hour-long business event at a permanent venue.	✓	✓	✓
1.4. Encourage reduce, reuse, and recycle practices (targeting paper, plastic, organic).	✓	✓	✓
1.5. Plan a waste management strategy focused on areas where there is likely to be waste generated (e.g., F&B areas, live performance areas, etc.).	✓	✓	✓
1.6. Hire waste disposal services or companies to collect all types of waste. Choose services that dispose of waste through sustainable methods (e.g., recycling, composting, etc.).	✓	✓	✓
1.7. Consider bulk packaging/containers to transport goods, as it reduces packaging material needed.	✓	✓	✓
2. Place waste segregation bins across Venue for different waste streams (e.g., glass, paper, cans, plastic, organic).	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
2.1. Place segregation bins throughout the venue and in areas visible to the public.	✓	✓	✓
2.2. Place a bin for organic waste in the F&B area.	✓	✓	✓
3. Conduct waste management awareness campaign.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
3.1. Train staff annually on waste management and segregation, reducing food waste, advantages of recycling and reuse.	✓	✓	✓
3.2. Develop training materials - e.g., guidebook and leaflets on waste management explaining the importance of waste segregation, creative ideas for reusing waste etc.	✓	✓	✓
3.3. Put adequate waste segregation signage on bins for recyclable materials, glass, paper/cardboard, cans, plastic, organic etc. Outline the purpose and proper use of the segregation system and request Event participants to use the right segregation bin to reduce contamination.	✓	✓	✓
4. Reduce paper waste at Events.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
4.1 Discourage providing notepads and pens. Instead, provide charging outlets so that participants can bring their own gadgets for taking notes. If you are providing notepads, consider using chemical-free recycled notepads and pencils.	✗	✓	✗
4.2 Consider paperless options for tickets and transactions.	✓	✓	✓

5. Minimise food waste if Event is providing food and beverages to visitors.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
5.1. Provide options for smaller portion sizes/half portions.	✓	✓	✓
5.2. Encourage pre-measured servings for dips, salads, desserts etc. to avoid over-use or over-consumption when serving buffet meals at Events.	✓	✓	✓
5.3. Buckets can be used to collect food scraps at smaller Events. Scraps can later be given to a community garden to compost.	✓	✓	✓
5.4. Raise awareness of the implications of food waste printing a message, key facts, or other relevant information on food menus and packaged food, or producing digital or printed ads, etc.	✓	✓	✓
5.5. Provide takeaway options for visitors and use eco-friendly packaging.	✓	✓	✓
5.6. Partner with a food bank to donate excess food.	✓	✓	✓
6. Reduce and gradually eliminate the use of single-use plastic.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
6.1. Reduce use of plastic cups, cutlery, containers and bags, and replace with plastic-free alternatives such as ceramic or metal cutlery and glassware or biodegradable or compostable materials.	✓	✓	✓
6.2. Request food vendors to collect empty beverage bottles and other containers.	✓	✓	✓
6.3. For frequently organised Events, reuse badges and ID cards and encourage visitors to reuse the same for their next visit.	✓	✓	✓
7. Promote the use of refillable amenities.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
7.1. Place water refill stations in the area, with recyclable/disposable cups. This would reduce consumption of packaged drinking water.	✓	✓	✓
7.2. Place refillable soap and sanitiser dispensers at strategic places.	✓	✓	✓
8. Engage in creative recycling initiatives.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
8.1. Consider using upcycled waste to design interiors, e.g., transforming waste into a décor item or furniture.	✗	✗	✓
8.2. Use upcycled waste from every Event to create new eco-friendly products and materials to be reused for future Events.	✓	✓	✗
8.3. Coordinate with Tadweer on waste recycling and composting initiatives.	✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

Benefits:

- Placing waste segregation bins will provide the option to recycle waste through the correct streams, which will lead to landfill diversion. Additionally, the waste can be sold for additional revenue or reused in a waste-to-value scheme.
- Installing water filling stations can save up to 95% on water costs⁹.
- Switching to refillable amenities such as shampoo and soap dispensers can offer savings of up to 92%¹⁰.
- Proper waste removal helps improve air and water quality as well as reduces greenhouse gas emissions.
- Managing waste smartly will help conserve natural resources, including minerals, water, and wood.

Local References:

- Estidama Pearl rating system: Estidama is a building design methodology for constructing and operating sustainable buildings. Under Estidama, waste management is a key factor that Event Organisers and Venues can develop in order to obtain the Pearl rating.
- ADX: Event Organisers and Venues can use the monitoring framework for the initiatives presented in these guidelines as part of ADX sustainability reporting for waste management.
- Abu Dhabi Environmental Vision 2030: Achieving sustainable waste management will support the sustainable development of Abu Dhabi's economy.

⁹ Based AESG's research: Wholesale bottled water prices at 0.3AED/L, latest utility prices of water by ADDC in 2020.

¹⁰ Based on AESG's research: Price of the bottled soap estimated at 131/L, the price of refill soap estimated at 10.6/L.



A.4. Green and Sustainable Transportation

Transportation remains one of the biggest emitters of carbon dioxide emissions in the UAE. For the Event Organisers and Venues, managing transport emissions is crucial, as transportation is providing a means for visitors to reach their destination.

Initiatives applicable to Event Organisers and Venues

Sustainability Initiatives

Events Categories

1.	Promote use of alternative transport.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	1.1. During the event planning stage, consider venues that are accessible via public transport.	✓	✓	✗
	1.2. Promote the use of public transport and provide visitors with a map of public transport and directions on how to use them to get to the Venue.	✓	✓	✗
	1.3. Organisers of large events can provide electric buses to shuttle attendees around a venue or transport those arriving and leaving via public transport to train or bus stations.	✓	✓	✗
	1.4. Utilise electric buggies like, golf carts, bicycles, electric scooters, within the premises.	✓	✓	✓
2.	Promote individual use of green and sustainable transportation.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	2.1. Provide visitors with a list of ride-hailing apps that provide cleaner options.	✓	✓	✓
	2.2. Promote employee carpooling and use of public transport.	✓	✓	✓
3.	Install EV chargers in parking.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	3.1. Venues should install EV chargers in the parking areas.	✗	✗	✓
	3.2. Event organisers can arrange Mobile EV charging for short-term, temporary Events.	✓	✓	✗
4.	Purchase or lease electric/hybrid vehicles as part of your fleet operations where appropriate.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	4.1. Purchase or lease electric/hybrid vehicles as part of fleet operations where appropriate.	✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

Benefits:

- Purchasing a six-car fleet of hybrid vehicles can save Event Organisers and Venues up to 80% on fuel costs.
- Promoting the use of public transport, employee carpooling and individual use of green transportation will significantly reduce the carbon footprint across Scope 1 and Scope 3 (as transportation accounts for 49% of the tourism industry's emissions according to the World Travel & Tourism Council) .
- Sustainable public transportation is ten times safer per mile than driving a personal vehicle into the city. Moreover, commuters can reduce their chance of being involved in a crash by more than 90% by taking public transit.

Local References:

- ADX: Use the monitoring framework for the initiatives presented in these guidelines as part of ADX sustainability reporting for sustainable transportation.
- Abu Dhabi Environmental Vision 2030: Achieving sustainable transport management will support the sustainable development of Abu Dhabi's economy.
- Abu Dhabi sustainable transport mobility strategy.

¹¹ Based on AESG's research: Average fuel cost in Abu Dhabi in the last 3 months is 3.7AED/L – to account for volatility – as well as average miles per gallon or MPG value for cars in the industry (24.2 mpg), average energy consumption per range figures of EVs at 0.2 kWh/km, ADDC's EV tariff of 0.3AED/kWh.

¹² World Travel & Tourism Council, "A Net Zero Roadmap for Travel and Tourism", 2021 (www.wttc.org)

¹³ Environment.co, "8 Main Benefits of Sustainable Transportation", 2020 (www.environment.co)



A.5. Environmental Protection

Protecting the local environment and native ecosystems is critical for the tourism industry in Abu Dhabi, given the large number of vulnerable plants, animal species and habitats¹⁴. According to Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD) experts, Abu Dhabi is home to 436 native plants¹⁵ and 34 different types of hard corals. The sector should ensure the protection of the local environment across all their operations and value chain.

Initiatives applicable to Event Organisers and Venues

Sustainability Initiatives

Events Categories

1. Ensure protection of local flora and fauna.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
1.2. Ensure that no pollution or spillage in the local environment is caused during the retrofit activities of the Venue or during the Event operation.	×	×	✓
2. Promote environmental protection awareness campaign.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
2.1. Train staff on environmental protection (e.g., how to reduce environment pollution, mobilising people for beach clean-up, etc.).	✓	✓	✓
2.2. Provide information and training materials (e.g., guidebook and leaflets on flora and fauna protection, planting native trees of UAE, etc.).	✓	✓	✓
2.3. Place leaflets and signage on littering and tampering, endangered species and plants protection etc.	✓	✓	✓
3. Plant native trees and plants in the surrounding area to promote biodiversity.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
3.1 Plant native trees and plants in the surrounding area to promote biodiversity.	×	×	✓
4. Develop a climate resilience action plan if the Event runs over a year or more, which outlines measures on how to adapt to climate change issues.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
4.1 Can be conducted through a third party, or alternatively, LEED has an established Climate Change Action Plan template.	×	×	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

Benefits:

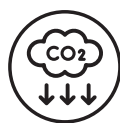
- Ensuring the protection of flora and fauna can enhance local biodiversity and species. This is a long-term investment in the environment to keep it resilient and attract more visitors in the future.
- Planting native trees can preserve and enhance the biodiversity of Abu Dhabi.
- Planting trees has the direct effect of reducing atmospheric CO₂ since each individual tree directly sequesters carbon from the atmosphere through photosynthesis.
- A balanced ecosystem results in rainfall and slows down climate change since large forests have the tendency to influence weather patterns and create microclimates, hence increasing tourism.

Further Reading:

1. Abu Dhabi's [native plant](#) species.
2. There are several more laws relating to environmental protection that Event Organisers and Venues are expected to comply with; read [UAE legislation on environmental protection](#)

¹⁴ Earth's Endangered Creatures, Endangered species (www.earthsendangered.com)

¹⁵ Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, Discover our biodiversity (www.ead.ae)



A.6 Carbon Management

The global tourism industry accounts for around 8% of global carbon emissions¹⁶, and this is set to increase. Reducing the sector's carbon footprint contributes towards mitigating the devastating effects of climate change, which has a positive cascade effect on public health and the environment. Abu Dhabi's arid climate makes it vulnerable to extreme weather changes such as an increase in temperature, which in turn leads to a reduction in the number of visitors travelling to Abu Dhabi. Carbon management has significant importance and investing in carbon management results in innovative and more environment-friendly solutions that will boost the planet's health.

Initiatives applicable to Event Organisers and Venues

Sustainability Initiatives

Events Categories

1.	Calculate footprint through monitoring operations and outlining the emissions related to each operation.	Events Categories		
		Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	1.1 This can be done through digital tools (such as OneClick LCA, IES).	✓	✓	✓
2.	Identify carbon hotspots in the operations.	Events Categories		
		Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	2.1. Emissions related to visitor arrivals, departures and pickups or sourcing of materials for the event operation.	✓	✓	✗
3.	Develop a pathway to Net-Zero.	Events Categories		
		Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	3.1. Identify carbon reduction measures.	✓	✓	✓
	3.2. Set carbon reduction targets.	✓	✓	✓
	3.3. Offset residual emissions.	✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

Benefits:

- Calculating a carbon footprint through a digital tool can identify GHG hotspots, thus enabling carbon emission reduction and reporting.
- With the rise of eco-tourism, carbon-conscious Event Organisers and Venues would attract more visitors and potentially benefit from carbon taxes.
- Benefit of long-term partnerships with local and government bodies that are working towards a net-zero economy.

Local References:

- UAE Net-Zero 2050: The UAE has pledged to have net-zero emissions by the year 2050. Event Organisers and Venues can be aligned with this strategy by aiming to reduce their emissions.
- Whilst there are no laws mandating carbon reporting at the date of writing these guidelines, it is expected that there will be requirements in the future. Therefore, we recommend that Event Organisers and Venues should establish procedures to report their carbon emissions.

Further reading:

1. GHG protocol – for further information and definitions of GHG Scope emissions and classifications and methods of calculation.

¹⁶ Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, Our Work / climate action (www.sustainablehospitalityalliance.org)



B. Sustainable and Local Procurement



B.1 Sourcing of Local, Sustainable Goods

Sustainability should not be considered solely within the company itself but must go beyond its boundaries throughout the entire supply and value chain in which it operates and collaborates. Research has shown that customers are having increased consideration of the products they consume, including environmental and social sustainability¹⁷. The sector in Abu Dhabi can respond to this by applying the key procurement initiatives outlined below.

Initiatives applicable to Event Organisers and Venues

Sustainability Initiatives

Events Categories

1. Design a sustainable procurement plan and policy to support sustainable purchases.	Events Categories		
	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
1.1. Create a requirements checklist for identifying sustainable suppliers (within the sustainable procurement strategy) and partner with contractors that meet the sustainability criteria for radical maintenance work or infrastructural changes.	✓	✓	✗
1.2. Request vendors/suppliers to use materials that can be recycled or composted in the public bin provided.	✓	✓	✗
1.3. If Event Organiser is sourcing food from a vendor, request them to use biodegradable packaging for food and drinks.	✓	✓	✗
2. Wherever possible, purchase products with less disposable packaging and opt to purchase products that are packaged more sustainably (reusable/recyclable cardboard packaging or recycled packaging).	Events Categories		
	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
2.1. Avoid buying products with heavy outer plastic packaging and opt for biodegradable options.	✓	✓	✗
3. Purchase eco-friendly products that do not contain a high amount of hazardous chemicals.	Events Categories		
	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
3.1. Partner with vendor to provide eco-friendly cleaning products (e.g., soaps, floor cleaners, etc.) that do not contaminate water when flowing through sewage.	✓	✓	✓
4. Partner with local suppliers for food and raw material sourcing.	Events Categories		
	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
4.1. Purchase groceries, food items and other goods from local suppliers (wherever possible).	✓	✓	✓
5. Choose a sustainable venue to host an event.	Events Categories		
	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
5.1. When partnering with a third party for venues, look out for venues that have implemented sustainable initiatives like efficient lighting, refillable water options, correct waste disposal etc.	✓	✓	✗
5.2. Consider venues that use renewable energy sources (e.g., solar energy).	✓	✓	✗
6. Source environmentally preferable products that contain recycled content (pre- and post-consumer content), renewable materials or are compostable/ biodegradable.	Events Categories		
	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
6.1. Source compostable or recyclable products, such as napkins, food containers and other packaging.	✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]
[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

¹⁷ Deloitte, "Shifting sands: How consumer behaviour is embracing sustainability" (Available: www2.deloitte.com [accessed: 22/08/2022])

Benefits:

- Purchasing locally-sourced products yields multiple benefits, such as support of local businesses, reduced emissions from product transport and reduced damage during transportation.
- Purchasing environmentally preferable options would reduce carbon emissions and waste and encourage sustainable behaviour.
- Seasonal menus created by sourcing local produce can save on transport, food waste and spoilage. It would also create partnerships with local farmers.
- Sourcing fresher produce will ensure higher quality products.
- Growing local varieties of food preserves local genetic diversity.

Local References:

- ADX: Event Organisers and Venues can use the monitoring framework for the initiatives presented in these guidelines as part of ADX sustainability reporting for sustainable procurement.
- Supporting suppliers who are committed to the development of UAE Nationals





C. Social and Culture



C.1 Promoting Local Heritage, Culture, and Art

Abu Dhabi is the cultural heart of the UAE. Rapid urbanisation and modernisation have had considerable impacts on the culture and built environment of the Middle East, which has impacted cultural sites and resulted in the need to place higher significance on celebrating cultural heritage. Highlighting the best the region has to offer will create an authentic experience for visitors, while the local community benefits from tourism in the region.

Initiatives applicable to Event Organisers and Venues

Sustainability Initiatives

Events Categories

	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
1. Celebrate and support national events and holidays.			
1.1. Plan celebrations for UAE National Day, Ramadan, Eid etc.	✓	✓	✓
2. Play local music, serve local food and drinks, and put up traditional decorations and arts to promote local artists and artisans.			
2.1. Put up local decorations and crafts in visitor areas, play local music in F&B or waiting areas, serve complimentary local snacks to visitors.	✓	✓	✓
3. Promote cultural and heritage sites as tourist destinations.			
3.1. If an Event is taking place at or near a cultural and heritage site, provide leaflets and maps with information about the and organise tours if possible.	✓	✓	✗

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]
[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

Benefits:

- Raising awareness of the value and importance of Abu Dhabi's cultural heritage contributes to wards a sustainable future by maintaining and preserving the rich cultural heritage.
- Promoting local culture and heritage strengthens the relationship between visitors and the local community.

Local References:

- UAE law on the preservation of cultural heritage.



C.2 Promoting Sustainability with Visitors and Local Community

As more travellers seek unique and local experiences, it will be important to provide the visitors with an experience at the heart of these efforts through engagement with local communities, local artists, etc. It is important that Event Organisers and Venues engage with the local community and visitors to facilitate the diffusion of knowledge covering sustainability initiatives and where these measures contribute towards the well-being of people and the planet.

Initiatives applicable to Event Organisers and Venues

Sustainability Initiatives

Events Categories

1.	Partner with non-profit associations to organise Events that raise money for local causes and charities.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	1.1. Obtain the required license from a competent authority like the Ministry of Community Development to organise a fund-raising Event.	✗	✗	✓
2.	Utilise Events to raise awareness of sustainability.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	2.1. During the promotion of the Event, utilise different channels or platforms to raise awareness of sustainability among audiences.	✓	✓	✗
3.	Raise visitor awareness of how they can add value to the sustainable initiatives of the Event.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	3.1. Share a vision of a sustainable Event and what they need to do to be a part of the sustainable change. Raise awareness through reusable leaflets and signage, promotional TV channels and other platforms.	✓	✓	✗
	3.2. Raise visitor awareness of sustainable practices at the event (e.g., how to dispose of waste in segregation bins, picking up leftover trash especially in green areas, etc.).	✓	✓	✗
4.	Collaborate with local performing artists and artisans for different kind of Events.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	4.1. Collaborate with artists and artisans to showcase their crafts or a local musician to play music for the visitors.	✓	✓	✗
5.	Align with local initiatives and NPOs to design programmes to engage visitors and locals on sustainability.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	5.1. Align with UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment to design programmes on climate change.	✓	✓	✓
	5.2. Align with guidelines and seek support from Emirates Environmental Group for engaging guests on sustainability initiatives.	✓	✓	✓
6.	Conduct visitor surveys.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	6.1. Conduct surveys with visitors to understand their satisfaction and expectations on sustainability initiatives.	✓	✓	✗
7.	Ensure integration of international programmes and certifications to attract visitors who prefer attending sustainable Events.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	7.1. Ensure integration of international programmes like ISO 140001 Environmental Management System, Green Key, Green Globe, Earth Check, ISO 20121 Sustainable Events, ISO 50001 Energy Management System, SMPP, LEED.	✓	✓	✓
8.	Co-develop and co-design products inspired by local crafts in collaboration with local artisans and artists.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	8.1. Hire local artists and craftsman to decorate the venue.	✓	✓	✓
	8.2. Promote and sell local souvenirs by partnering with local artists and artisans.	✓	✓	✗

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

Benefits:

- Research¹⁸ shows that people look for more sustainable options; hence, informing the community, local guides, artists, and artisans about sustainable initiatives will lead to mutual benefits while building the Event's reputation.
- Creating partnerships with local artists and artisans will give them exposure and generate revenue while also contributing to the community's wellbeing.
- Collecting visitor feedback would allow Event Organisers and Venues to undergo continuous improvements and encourage recommendations and attending the Event again.
- Raising awareness in local communities of environmental concerns will encourage people to protect the environment and wildlife.

¹⁸ Booking.com, "2022 – Sustainable Travel Report". (www.globalnews.booking.com)



C.3 Engaging in Educational Programmes

Today's generation places a higher significance on mitigating climate change and being aware of the environmental impacts of their choices and activities. Therefore, it is especially important for the Event sector to engage in educational programmes on sustainable practices as they drive the cultural, social, and environmental outlook of tourists and surrounding communities.

Initiatives applicable to Event Organisers and Venues

Sustainability Initiatives

Events Categories

1.	Partner with educational institutions to organise lectures and conferences on topics related to sustainability.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
		✓	✓	✗
2.	Provide a designated space for educational institutions to host workshops and lectures.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
		✓	✓	✓
3.	Organise workshops/classes for the community.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
		✓	✓	✗

Benefits:

- Educating students and the local community about local culture reinforces the importance of preserving Abu Dhabi's cultural heritage.
- Through educational programmes, tourists and the younger generation (including residents) will become more aware and enthusiastic about sustainability and local culture.
- Hosting workshops/classes on local art, craft, and cuisine can help build a stronger relationship with visitors and improve revisits and recommendations.
- Environmental learning prepares students for future careers and prepares them with the required skills to become professionals in the sector.



C.4 Improving Accessibility

Despite the global population of People of Determination, the lack of awareness and information is one of the major obstacles visitors face whether they are a Person of Determination or a companion or family member. Universal access is a key factor in social sustainability to ensure the needs of People of Determination are addressed and fulfilled.

Initiatives applicable to Event Organisers and Venues

Sustainability Initiatives

Events Categories

1. Ensure provision of lactation room for women and gender-neutral baby changing stations.	Events Categories		
	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
1.1. Provide nursing mothers with a private lactation room and baby-changing stations should be gender-neutral.	✓	✓	✓
2. Organise staff training on accessibility provisions for visitors.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓
2.3. Ensure that staff working during the Event are aware of the adaptations and accessibility resources available at the Event and have received basic training on providing support.	✓	✓	✓
3. Improve provisions for People of Determination.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓
	✗	✗	✓
	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓
	✗	✗	✓
	✓	✓	✗
	✓	✓	✗
	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

Benefits:

- Enhancing accessibility within the Event or Venue will create customer loyalty and distinguish the brand.
- Lactation rooms provide a private, relaxing space for nursing mothers during their visit to the Event or Venue.
- Staff training would enhance customer service, especially when dealing with a Person of Determination.
- Enables people with disabilities to move around independently and access day-to-day services through the Event, improving their trust in the business.

Local References:

- Event Organisers and Venues must also comply with Abu Dhabi building codes and the requirements set out in chapter 11 on building accessibility (and appendix E).
- UAE national policy for empowering People of Determination
- UAE People of Determination protection from abuse policy





D. People



D.1 Staff Empowerment

Securing a workforce for the future has long been a challenge for the tourism industry. Research has shown that lack of career progression is one of the main reasons people leave the sector, and although training and development cannot always combat this directly, investment in employees and a robust training and development strategy can go a long way.

Initiatives applicable to Event Organisers and Venues

Sustainability Initiatives

Events Categories

1. Conduct annual trainings for employees for their personal and professional development.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	✓	✓	✓
2. Provide career path and milestones for employee professional development and promotion.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	✓	✓	✓
3. Conduct a human rights awareness training for employees.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	✓	✓	✓
4. Develop a policy for anti-harassment and discrimination and conduct trainings to promote a healthy working environment to increase efficiency, employee well-being, and work quality	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	✓	✓	✓
5. Provide an employee reporting channel to raise issues related to sustainability and develop a process to resolve these issues.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	✓	✓	✓
6. Incentivise employees to perform on sustainability (by setting it as a KPI) via appropriate tools like a staff award system.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
	✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

Benefits:

- Employee engagement initiatives and programmes will contribute towards improving staff performance and reducing absenteeism and increasing the Event stakeholder's ability to attract and retain talented employees.
- Developing an anti-harassment and anti-discriminatory policy will establish a safe working space for employees.
- Staff empowerment helps create a positive, open environment that leads to maximum productivity.
- It improves employee morale, so they act as brand ambassadors and present the company in the best light possible.
- It flattens the company's hierarchy, eliminating micro-managing and excess management layers to improve communication and increase transparency in the workforce.

Local References:

- All UAE employment laws



D.2 Diversity and Inclusion

Hiring a diverse workforce consisting of different genders, nationalities and religions brings new perspectives and values to Events companies and Venues. According to research, tourists conform to different regional and cultural backgrounds and diversity of staff composition can lead to better problem-solving, higher occupancy and profits¹⁹. Employees at all levels need diversity training to address their own biases and to learn to work side by side with people who are different from themselves.

Initiatives applicable to Event Organisers and Venues

Sustainability Initiatives

Events Categories

1.	Have a representative workforce of women, different nationalities, and People of Determination via hiring and retaining policies that encourage diversity.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
		✓	✓	✓
2.	Encourage Emiratisation and train the local population, especially women, to join the hospitality industry.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
		✓	✓	✓
3.	Ensure equal pay for equal work.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
		✓	✓	✓
		✓	✓	✗
4.	Encourage representation of women and People of Determination in senior leadership and board.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
		✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

¹⁹ McKinsey & Company, "Diversity wins: How inclusion matters", 2020, (www.mckinsey.com)

Benefits:

- A diverse and gender-balanced workforce enables the Event Organisers and Venues to have a wider talent pool with varied perspectives, improving productivity, company image and overall management.
- According to survey research, 66% of organisations believe that diversity enhances innovation²⁰.
- According to research, diverse teams make decisions 60% faster than non-diverse teams, and teams marked by age, gender, and geographic diversity made the right decision 87% of the time, compared to 58% for all-male teams²¹.

Local References:

- Emiratisation programmes and initiatives in Abu Dhabi, including:
 - “Training for Work” initiative, launched by Human Resources Authority, aims at developing job seekers’ skills by providing training opportunities in government entities and companies.
 - Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation - The Ministry aims to provide more than 15,000 suitable jobs for Emiratis in the private sector by the end of 2018.
 - “Absher” initiative is supervised by the Ministry of Presidential Affairs and implemented by the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation to encourage Emiratis to work in the private sector.
 - Khebraty programme attracts Emirati students who wish to explore the tourism sector and are able to work for 20 hours per week in a tourism company.
- Federal Decree-Law No. (2) of 2015 regarding Combating Discrimination and Hatred and its amendments

²⁰ ew group, “The benefits of diversity and inclusion in the workplace”, (www.theewgroup.com)

²¹ ew group, “The benefits of diversity and inclusion in the workplace”, (www.theewgroup.com)





E. Resilience and Risk Management



E.1 Health and Safety

Health and safety is an important consideration for any workplace as it is a significantly high priority to keep both workers and visitors safe. To improve health and safety measures, it is important to have a health and safety checklist based on below-mentioned initiatives to perform checks quickly and efficiently.

The DCT health risk matrix and Abu Dhabi Occupational Safety and Health System (OSHAD) Framework is mandatory for all Event Organisers and Venues. These suggested initiatives are additional to the mandates and would surpass expectations to drive Event Organisers and Venues towards having a strong and sustainable health and safety system.

Initiatives applicable to Event Organisers and Venues

Sustainability Initiatives

Events Categories

1.	Employee engagement and workshops to improve physical and mental health of employees.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
		✓	✓	✓
	1.1. Organise health and wellbeing events/retreats.	✓	✓	✓
	1.2. Promote annual health check-ups for all employees.	✓	✓	✓
2.	Provide medical assistance.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
		✓	✓	✓
	2.1. Align with OSHAD COP4 and provide medical rooms, first aid kits and assistance like CPR. Train staff on providing first aid and CPR.	✓	✓	✓
3.	Develop a robust health and safety system.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
		✓	✓	✓
	3.1. Develop a future pandemic/epidemic action plan that can be easily tailored to the instructions from Abu Dhabi Public Health Centre.	✓	✓	✓
	3.2. Align with standard health and safety certifications like Board of Certified Professionals (BSCP) Certificates.	✓	✓	✓
4.	Install sensors and periodically check noise, water, and air quality for visitor and employee safety at permanent Venues.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
		✓	✓	✓
	4.1. Ensure a quarterly quality check of the mentioned for safety.	✓	✓	✓
5.	Enforce Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) and formaldehyde content limits wherever applicable.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
		✓	✓	✓
	5.1. Look for alternatives with low VOC content in paint/coatings, adhesives/sealants, cleaners and fragrant products. Store such products in containment areas and dispose of them correctly.	✓	✓	✓
6.	Provide mental health counselling for employees.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
		✓	✓	✓
	6.1. Have provisions for employees to reach out for mental health help and take assistance from mental health counsellors to ensure a safe and healthy workspace.	✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]

[Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

Benefits:

- Providing health and safety support would reduce the cost associated with accidents.
- Providing physical and mental health support to employees would improve employee well-being and business efficiency.
- Demonstrating commitment to sustainability and corporate social responsibility, which includes health and safety, will attract investors to the company.
- Having a robust health and safety plan keeps all staff aware of current legal requirements, which improves the company's regulatory compliance and lowers the risk of being fined.

Local References:

- UAE laws on health and safety at the workplace
- Electronic Public Health Pest Control Services- DCT and Tadweer direct all tourism and Event Organisers and Venues to use Pest Control E-contract system to ensure effective and safe public health.
- Circular No. 33/2021 - Updated preventive measures for attending Events and exhibitions
- Circular No. 40/2021 - Updated measures for hosting indoor and outdoor social Events



E.2 Risk Mitigation and Resilience

Risk management ensures that a business is prepared for any potential threats and Events; this covers health and safety, as well as any global Events (e.g., Covid). Resilience refers to the development, preparedness and mitigation measures considered for scenarios such as climate change, pandemics, health and wellbeing and sustainable growth. It is important to provide benefits and empower the employees/staff across multiple financial and non-financial dimensions to create value and manage the risks and opportunities associated with economic, environmental, and social developments.

Initiatives applicable to Event Organisers and Venues

Sustainability Initiatives

Events Categories

1.	Develop an ethics and anti-corruption policy.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
		✓	✓	✓
2.	Identify risk and have management and escalation procedures, covering at least people, assets, community, and environment.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
		✓	✓	✓
3.	Develop a risk register for the four categories (people, assets, community, and environment) and a system to monitor performance based on short-term and long-term risks based on Event duration.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
		✓	✓	✓
4.	Invest in artificial intelligence, financial and climate related models to better predict the future.	Leisure Events	Business Events	Venues
		✓	✓	✓

[Note: Please refer to Annex A for higher level cost, effort, and responsibilities for each initiative]
 [Note: Please refer to Annex B for monitoring KPIs]

Benefits:

- Having an ethics and anti-corruption policy will lead to better staff engagement and enhanced reputation.
- A risk management strategy will help identify risks that are not apparent and protect the business from unforeseen liabilities.
- According to McKinsey's survey about the pandemic's impact on corporate resilience, a better risk governance model is key for efficient and effective decision-making and crisis management²².
- Having a resilience plan reduces stress within the organisation, and this, in turn, improves job satisfaction and productivity.

²² McKinsey & Company, "From risk management to strategic resilience", 2022 (www.mckinsey.com)



8. Conclusion

The guidelines aim to provide a roadmap and approach for the industries to contribute towards making tourism in Abu Dhabi more sustainable. By becoming a sustainable tourism destination, Abu Dhabi will maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to all visitors and tourists. In conjunction with raising tourist awareness about sustainability issues, tourists will also get an authentic local experience of UAE culture and heritage. Furthermore, sustainable practices positively impact visitors and increase their likelihood of returning. Going green leads to better loyalty, word-of-mouth marketing and higher customer satisfaction.

Sustainable tourism can collectively be achieved through applying the recommendations and sustainability initiatives presented in these guidelines. Event Organisers and Venues should use these guidelines and develop their own sustainability journey/roadmap towards the vision of making Abu Dhabi a sustainable destination. Moving forward, the sector should refer the Monitoring and Measuring templates provided in annexure B with this guideline for supporting metrics and KPIs for suggested initiatives. The template would help monitor initiatives, analyse the gaps, and track progress towards the set targets to achieve sustainable excellence.

