



How to organize a sustainable meeting in Krakow?

With a few simple steps, you can significantly reduce your event's carbon footprint and make the most of your city's local potential. Learn how to make your event more environmentally friendly - and for its participants! Organize a sustainable meeting in Krakow!

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Set sustainability goals for the event

- To begin, identify and answer the question, what aspects of sustainability are priorities for you - reducing CO₂ emissions, reducing waste, educating participants, promoting localism? Set measurable goals, such as “100% digital handouts” or “no single-use plastic.”
- Share your conclusions with your entire team - it's crucial to be clear at every stage of event planning that the environmental aspect is as important as budget planning or efficient logistics.
- Remember to involve delegates in your activities. Keep them informed on your event website, app, social media. Before the congress, remind delegates about environmentally friendly solutions that are easy to implement during a conference in Krakow, such as the fact that the city is compact and distances are convenient to travel on foot or by public transportation; also encourage them to pack their water bottle and to drink tap water on site.

Choose the right place

- Choose facilities in areas well connected to the city center and the airport, making it easy to get to by public transportation. Ask if there are bike rentals and bike racks nearby.
- Make sure the facilities are accessible to people with disabilities and limited mobility. Verify entrance options for people with limited mobility, location and operation of elevators.
- Prefer newly constructed or modernized buildings. Check for green amenities (e.g., LED lighting powered by renewable energy, rainwater harvesting tank, energy-efficient heating and cooling systems). Pay attention to whether the facility has green certifications. In Krakow, many hotels are already implementing green solutions; you can find an updated list on [our website](#).
- Check if the property has a waste recycling system, promotes the use of reusable crockery and cutlery, reduces the use of plastic and printing materials, cooperates with a food bank and local suppliers.

Pay attention to accommodations

- When selecting and recommending accommodations, pay attention to their environmental standards, environmental policies, certifications, abandonment of single-use plastics and low-carbon performance of the building. It's worth asking about ESG66 reporting.
- Promote facilities that are close to meeting venues to minimize commuting.
- Whenever possible, promote alternative accommodations, such as university dormitories, or facilitate sharing accommodations among participants.

Choose low-carbon transportation

- Promote low-carbon modes of transportation: when providing information about getting to Krakow, include ground public transportation (rail, buses). Provide examples of high-speed rail links from other European cities and their associated environmental benefits.
- Encourage participants to use public transportation, bicycle infrastructure, and walking. Inform on the website about the high-speed train that connects the Krakow airport to the Main Station, which is located in the city center, and the city bus that runs from the airport.



- Krakow is an ideal city to travel by foot - consider this option in lieu of transfers to evening events. The walk from the conference facility to the venue of the gala or dinner is climate-neutral, and you can use the time to take in the history of the city, with the help of local guides.
- Remember that in Krakow, organizers of conferences, congresses, cultural and sporting events can take advantage of special rates for public transport travel. Under a 2014 resolution, the Kraków City Council introduced the possibility of purchasing so-called "conference ticket" - entitlement to travel on public transport at preferential rates. For example, for a conference lasting 4 days and attended by 2,000 people, the fare for public transportation during the entire event is about PLN 9 per person.
- To encourage the use of public transportation, Kraków Convention Bureau can provide a conference ticket during your event. Contact us convention@um.krakow.pl for details.
- Offer opportunities to offset the negative impact of transportation on the climate, such as by supporting local environmental organizations or offering a reduced fare for green travelers.

Through the stomach to the heart? Or catering with the head?

- Minimize food waste. Rational meal planning and avoiding food waste is key. Adjust the amount of food to the real number of participants.
- The way meals are served also matters - consider portioning meals so that there is one serving per delegate, and any "extra" is on request. It's worth going out to organizers and delegates with information about not wasting food and a rational approach to catering at events, e.g. informing them that 5 million tons of food are wasted annually in Poland - such a figure gives food for thought!
- Distribute surpluses; plan what to do with unused food, e.g. by making it available to staff, students, volunteers or allowing participants to take it away. Inform delegates that they will be able to take the remaining food home; encourage them to bring their reusable boxes.
- Promote vegetarian and vegan meals, such as setting them as a default option on the registration form. Meat meal choices are then offered at the delegate's request. You can choose to cater entirely vegan and vegetarian meals - this can be an opportunity to convince delegates of plant-based cuisine, as well as an expression of openness to other cultures in the case of international congresses. If you feel it's too early for "daring" solutions, remember that at least 50% of the meals should be vegetarian or vegan.
- Local and seasonal products: Use catering based on local, seasonal foods. This is the healthiest of diets, and what's more, it will allow delegates to get acquainted with products typical of Krakow and Malopolska. It is worth supporting local cooperatives or community initiatives. Be sure to properly sign local products, what their tradition is and where they come from. In addition, by choosing local suppliers you will reduce transportation.
- By choosing vegetarian and seasonal options - you generate a smaller carbon footprint.
- Avoid disposable packaging: Serve food and beverages without using single-use plastic packaging. Use reusable dishes and cutlery, and if disposable, choose biodegradable. Pay attention to details - many products can be purchased in a larger package, e.g., cubed butter, jams, sugar, and served in an elegant and creative way, getting away from disposable packaging.
- Provide access to free drinking water from the tap, informing about its high quality in Krakow. It's a good idea to indicate the location of water dispensers and make water available in reusable dishes.



Waste management

- Minimize waste generation. Consciously and responsibly plan the use of materials, reducing them to the minimum necessary. Introduce the 4Rs principle: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.
- Rethink and facilitate segregation. Provide participants with easy access to waste segregation garbage cans and clear instructions, preferably in multiple languages, especially for international event participants. Train staff and volunteers on segregation.
- Avoid gadgets and printed materials: Refrain from giving away unnecessary promotional materials and low-quality gadgets. Consider inviting local artists to sell original souvenirs from Krakow at a hand-made booth. Replace paper programs, tickets and invitations with electronic versions. If possible - organize a paperless event.
- Recycled and reusable materials: Choose products made from recycled (e.g., bags made from banners) and reusable (e.g., badges, food containers) materials. Choose local suppliers to reduce transportation. Allow reusable materials to be returned after the conference for reuse.
- Composting: If possible, use the potential for local composting of organic waste. Ask the conference facility if a composting facility is maintained on site.

DEI (Diversity, Equality, Inclusivity) - a must-attend point for every even

- Pay attention to anti-discrimination and equality aspects. Pro-environmental activities should include anti-discrimination and equality issues, as well as countering social exclusion, discrimination and hate speech.
- Ensure that the event is accessible to all participants, including those with limited mobility. Ensure maximum digital, architectural and communication accessibility. Verify the accessibility of facilities and public transportation.
- Support parents of young children who are participants in the event. Provide rooms for breastfeeding mothers, consider childcare areas.
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- Consider financial or non-financial support (e.g., cheaper dormitory accommodations) for the economically disadvantaged, including those from countries with lower levels of development.
- Pay attention to inclusive language. Plan to use non-exclusive phrases and ask participants about their preferred forms of address (pronouns).
- Create added value for the local academic and neighborhood community, such as through popular science lectures, practitioner panels, or volunteering. Promote volunteerism for the older generation.
- Foster integration and deeper relationships among delegates. Provide space for networking and integration, including in less formal, active forms.

Comfort and well-being - this can set you apart

- Take care of the participants' well-being, avoid overloading the program, offer opportunities for movement and relaxation. It is advisable to create conditions for working or resting in silence, such as a room or quiet zone.



- Consider the risks posed by climate change (heat waves, heavy rains) and plan activities to support participants.
- Use the green areas around the facility for active breaks, walks (walking meetings) or outdoor activities. Promote Krakow's available green areas like Planty, Błonia, city parks in the center of the city, as well as outside - like Zakrzówek or Przylasek Rusiecki.

Education and communication - measure high

- Communicate sustainability values and goals honestly and transparently, avoiding greenwashing. Explain the reasons for adopted solutions, such as drinking tap water or opting out of conference materials.
- Promote good practices. Use the conference as an opportunity to promote pro-environmental behavior that attendees can implement in their daily lives. Information can be conveyed on the website, in the program, through posters or mini-guides.
- Collect information on sustainability goals achieved (e.g., transportation choices, nutrition choices of participants) and share it with participants, sponsors and supervisors after the conference.
- Share lessons learned, difficulties encountered and solutions applied, which may be helpful to other organizers.

While some solutions may require an initial investment or a change in habits, the long-term environmental, social and image benefits are significant. Working with local partners, such as the city or social economy entities, can facilitate these goals. You can count on the support of the Krakow Convention Bureau in all your activities - as a local partner with over 20 years of experience and knowledge of the Krakow meetings industry market, we will be happy to help you organize your sustainable event!

A well-planned sustainable conference means not only a lower environmental impact, but also a better image and greater involvement of participants.

