

Standard Specification for Evaluation and Selection of Destinations for Environmentally Sustainable Meetings, Events, Trade Shows, and Conferences¹

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INTRODUCTION

This specification offers a way to address environmental sustainability in the meeting and event industry. It is a tool for event planners and suppliers to understand the attributes of an environmentally sustainable event. The goal in developing this specification is to establish common benchmarks for environmental performance in events for both planner and supplier sectors. This specification considers the creation of an environmentally sustainable event to be a partnership between planners and their suppliers. Each plays a critical role in the effort.

In this specification, options are addressed for minimizing the environmental impact of face-to-face events. The approach of this specification is to focus on measurable outcomes and policies for planners and suppliers. This maximizes the ability of businesses to select the methods best tailored to their needs to achieve benchmarks and measurable outcomes.

1. Scope

1.1 This specification delineates procedural requirements for destination selection for meetings, events, trade shows, or conferences (hereafter, referred to as *events*). Destination selection is the practice of researching, evaluating, and choosing the location for an event. Destination selection is a core activity to plan an event and bring it to fruition.

1.2 This specification has three categories: planner, supplier, and host destination.

1.2.1 In the planner category, criteria are identified related to environmental sustainability that are considered in destination selection.

1.2.2 In the supplier category, criteria are listed for suppliers, which, in the case of this sector, are called “destination professionals.” Destination professionals may include destination marketing organizations (DMOs or convention and visitor bureaus [CVBs]), third-party site-selection companies, destination management companies, chambers of commerce, economic development departments, or regional authorities.

1.2.3 In the host destination category, a destination may be defined as a city, area, or country that can be marketed to groups or individuals as a place to visit or hold an event.

Although destination selection may consider country, regional, and city attributes, planners most often consider the capacity of a city and its metropolitan area to host their event rather than country or regional capacity. The process of destination selection will, therefore, focus mainly on destination city attributes as opposed to regional or country characteristics.

1.3 Destination selection will include aspects of destination selection as it relates to host cities. This includes the process of evaluating destinations on the basis of how close they are to attendees, as well as the availability of public transit.

1.4 Whereas this specification has three categories described in 1.2 (planner, supplier, and host destination), both the planner and host destination categories will be considered mandatory for an event under this specification. The supplier category will only apply if a professional destination agency (CVB or DMO), as defined in 1.2.2 is used. If a supplier is not used, the requirements in this destination supplier category may be waived.

1.5 In this specification, specific environmental sustainability attributes of the venue (for example, conference or convention center), accommodations, or destination selection contractors will not be considered. Destination selection considers the availability of these in a general sense.

1.6 There are nine specifications covering the following areas of event planning: destination selection, accommodations, food and beverage, audio visual, onsite offices, communication and marketing materials,

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transportation, exhibits, and venues. Within each specification are eight categories' criteria: staff management policy, communications, waste management, energy, air quality, water, procurement, and community partners. Each category is further split into four progressive levels of achievement. Information within each specification is divided as follows: Main Body—Scope, Referenced Documents, Terminology, Planner Requirements for Level 1, Supplier Requirements for Level 1, and Keywords; Annexes—Planner Requirements for Levels 2 – 4 and Supplier Requirements for Levels 2 – 4.

1.7 All areas of performance under this specification may not be relevant for each event or for each facility or provider of meeting services. In some cases, a planner would use this specification in conjunction with other specifications (for example, Specifications [E2774](#), [E2742](#)) or this specification may be used individually. In other words, elements of an event may be separated and considered solely or added together and considered as a unit (for example, venues used individually versus transportation, accommodations, and destination selection used in conjunction). Furthermore, this specification applies separately to each supplier for an event. This means if multiple suppliers are used within the context of a single specification, each supplier shall individually meet the supplier requirements. To be considered an environmentally sustainable event at Level 1, all areas applicable to that event shall be achieved.

1.8 If higher levels are achieved in some sections, the event can only be considered environmentally sustainable at the lowest level achieved.

1.9 The use of levels within this specification recognizes the path to environmentally sustainable events is a multi-stage effort. The idea behind the levels is to provide a coherent baseline for measuring environmental performance, while being flexible enough to adapt to the needs of more advanced planners and establish a performance path that encourages further environmental performance improvement. In addition, evolution of products and services to support events is expected allowing additional advancements and underscoring the dynamic nature of environmental sustainability. This specification primarily focuses on environmental sustainability, while some aspects of economic and social sustainability are included recognizing the complete path toward overall sustainability.

1.10 The values stated in inch-pound units are to be regarded as standard. The values given in parentheses are mathematical conversions to SI units that are provided for information only and are not considered standard.

1.11 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

[E2114 Terminology for Sustainability Relative to the Performance of Buildings](#)

[E2742 Specification for Evaluation and Selection of Exhibits for Environmentally Sustainable Meetings, Events, Trade Shows, and Conferences](#)

[E2774 Specification for Evaluation and Selection of Venues for Environmentally Sustainable Meetings, Events, Trade Shows, and Conferences](#)

2.2 Federal Statutes:

[Federal Hazardous Substances Act Labeling and Banning Requirements for Chemicals and Other Hazardous Substances, 15 U.S.C. § 1261 and 16 C.F.R. Part 1500³](#)
[Americans with Disabilities Act⁴](#)
[Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII Equal Employment Opportunity⁵](#)

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 *alternative fuel, n*—a fuel that is substantially nonpetroleum based conventional liquids (for example, non-gasoline or non-diesel), yields substantial energy security benefits, and offers substantial environmental benefits.

3.1.1.1 *Discussion*—These fuels can include: pure methanol, ethanol, and other alcohols; blends of 68 % or more of alcohols with gasoline; natural gas and liquid fuels domestically produced from natural gas; liquefied petroleum gas (propane); hydrogen; electricity; biodiesel; fuels, other than alcohol, derived from biological materials; and P-Series fuels.

3.1.2 *biodegradable, adj*—capable of decomposing under natural conditions into elements found in nature. **E2114**

3.1.3 *convention and visitors' bureau (CVB), n*—destination marketing organization (DMO), convention and visitor bureaus are not-for-profit organizations charged with representing a specific destination and helping the long-term development of communities through a travel and tourism strategy.

3.1.3.1 *Discussion*—CVBs are usually membership organizations bringing together businesses that rely on tourism and

² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

³ Available from U.S. Government Printing Office Superintendent of Documents, 732 N. Capitol St., NW, Mail Stop: SDE, Washington, DC 20401, <http://www.access.gpo.gov>.

⁴ Available from United States Department of Justice, 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Civil Rights Division, Disability Rights Section - NYA, Washington, D.C. 20530, <http://www.ada.gov>.

⁵ Available from U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 541 Annapolis Junction, MD 20701, <http://www.eeoc.gov>.

events for revenue. For visitors, CVBs are like a key to the city. As an unbiased resource, CVBs can serve as a broker or an official point of contact for convention and event planners, tour operators, and visitors. They assist planners with event preparation and encourage business travelers and visitors alike to visit local historic, cultural, and recreational sites.

3.1.4 *corporate social responsibility (CSR)*, *n*—a policy that functions as self-regulating mechanism whereby the organization monitors and ensures its support of legal and ethical standards, and international norms addressing activities affecting the environment, consumers, employees, communities, stakeholders, and all other members of the public sphere.

3.1.4.1 *Discussion*—CSR is the deliberate inclusion of public interest into corporate decision-making and the honoring of the ‘triple bottom line:’ People, Planet, and Profit. Also known as corporate responsibility, corporate citizenship, responsible business, sustainable responsible business (SRB), or corporate social performance, is a form of corporate self-regulation integrated into a business model.

3.1.5 *destination*, *n*—city, area, or country that can be marketed to groups or individuals as a place to visit or hold an event.

3.1.5.1 *Discussion*—Although destination selection may consider country, regional, and city attributes, planners most often consider the capacity of a city and its metropolitan area to host their experience rather than country or regional capacity. The practices considered in this category will, therefore, focus mainly on destination city attributes as opposed to regional or country characteristics.

3.1.6 *diversion rate*, *n*—the rate or percentage of waste materials diverted from traditional disposal such as landfills or incineration to be recycled, composted, or reused.

3.1.7 *environmentally preferable products*, *n*—products or services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose.

3.1.7.1 *Discussion*—This comparison applies to raw materials, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, use, reuse, operation, maintenance, and disposal. These products may possess biodegradable, organic, reusable, recycled, or recyclable attributes.

3.1.8 *environmentally sustainable*, *adv*—environmental focus on components, functions and systems that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

3.1.9 *hybrid vehicle*, *n*—vehicles which use a mixture of more than one power source, such as electric and petroleum.

3.1.9.1 *Discussion*—Hybrid-electric vehicles (HEVs) combine the benefits of internal combustion engines and electric motors and can be configured to obtain different objectives, such as improved fuel economy, increased power, or additional auxiliary power for electronic devices and power tools.

3.1.10 *local*, *adj*—relating to or applicable to a city or town or district rather than a larger area.

3.1.10.1 *Discussion*—The exact distance for purposes of sourcing goods (including food and beverage), services, and personnel will be determined by the planner or supplier, or

both, and be based upon the event location adjusting for location size and season. No standard definition exists to define local, inherent in this practice is the philosophy to use sources geographically proximate to the event and be practical given wide dispersion of services and products across geographic areas.

3.1.11 *natural fiber*, *n*—made of naturally occurring materials such as plants and animals; can be contrasted with synthetic fibers such as plastics.

3.1.12 *planner*, *n*—person whose job it is to oversee and arrange every aspect of an event; an employee or hired ad hoc by large companies, professional associations, or trade associations to plan, organize, implement, and control events, conventions, and other events.

3.1.12.1 *Discussion*—Planners may include professionals who work for government, association, corporate, or independent agencies. The planner is the buyer of event services.

3.1.13 *post-consumer*, *adj*—refers to materials that are reclaimed from products that have already served their intended end-use as consumer items.

3.1.13.1 *Discussion*—Waste from industrial processes are not considered post-consumer. Post-consumer materials are a subset of recovered materials.

3.1.14 *pre-consumer material*, *adj*—refers to material that are reclaimed from manufacturing and other industrial processes and products which have not served their intended end-use as a consumer item. **E2114**

3.1.14.1 *Discussion*—Pre-consumer materials include: culls, trimmed materials, print overruns, overissue publications, and obsolete inventories.

3.1.15 *recovered materials*, *n*—waste material and by-products which have been recovered or diverted from the waste stream, but such term does not include those materials and by-products generated from, and commonly used within, an original manufacturer process. **E2114**

3.1.16 *recyclable*, *n*—product that can be reprocessed where such facilities exist.

3.1.17 *recycle*, *v*—recovering or reprocessing materials for use in the form of raw materials in the manufacture of new products other than fuel for producing heat or power by combustion. **E2114**

3.1.17.1 *Discussion*—The use of the word recycle used in this specification applies to planners and their suppliers which provide event products and services. Recycling, as defined, does not extend to the activities of the suppliers’ vendors or suppliers.

3.1.18 *recycled content products*, *n*—products that contain pre-consumer or post-consumer materials as all or part of their feedstock. **E2114**

3.1.18.1 *Discussion*—Recycled-content products may contain some pre-consumer waste, some post-consumer waste or both. A product does not have to contain 100 % recovered materials to be considered “recycled,” but clearly the higher the percentage of recycled content, the greater the amount of waste that is diverted from disposal.