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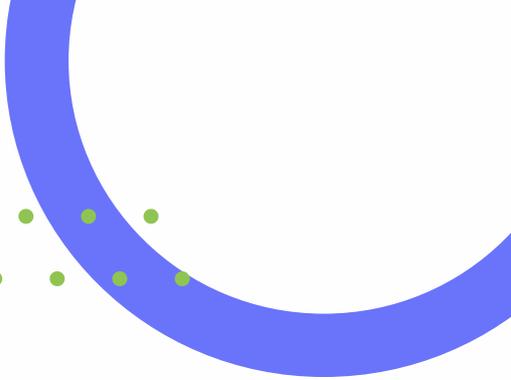
TSEF



# SUSTAINABLE EVENTS ROADMAP

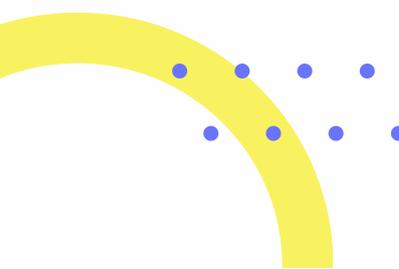
FROM THE HARVEST CELEBRATION





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# WHO WE

# are

What pillars is  
The Sustainable  
Events Forum  
based on?

Education

Inspiration

Collaboration

Action

## Introducing the Sustainable Events Forum

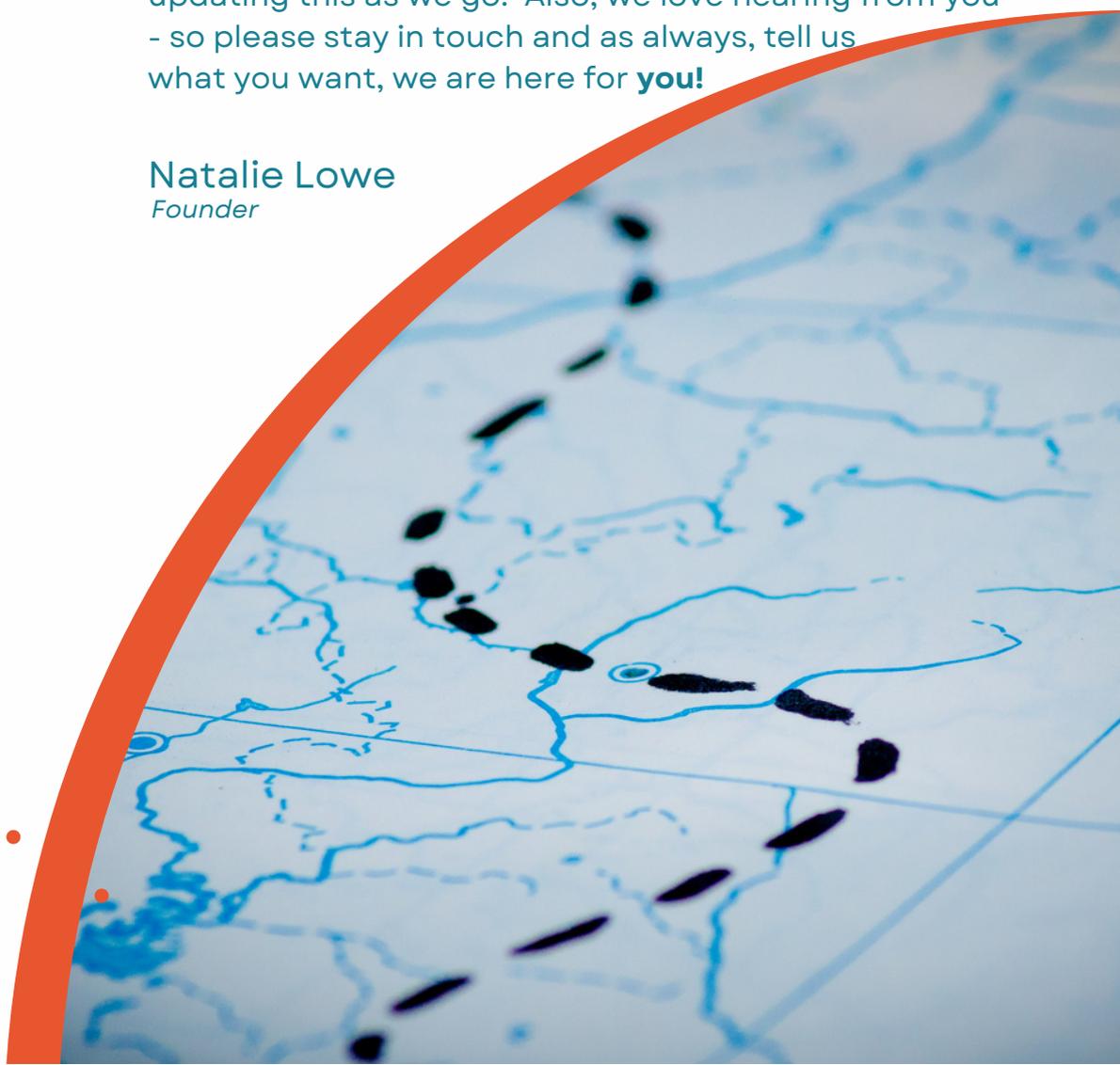
As a meeting professional, I once felt helpless in the face of the climate emergency. That's why I created the Sustainable Events Forum. Our mission is to promote sustainability in the events industry through our four pillars. Our forum is open to everyone, no matter where you are in your climate knowledge - we can all learn from each other.

## Your Sustainable Event Road map

We've created this road map based on your questions. We couldn't answer them all (well, I did but not in this booklet, so watch out for a podcast on the questions we didn't get to!). This is a reference document. It will age badly (because the science and technology is rushing ahead) so stay in touch and we'll keep updating this as we go. Also, we love hearing from you - so please stay in touch and as always, tell us what you want, we are here for **you!**

Natalie Lowe

*Founder*



# SUMMARY

In the following pages we will answer your questions on event sustainability, but there are 3 areas that we need to prioritize if we are going to make progress on the climate emergency. 1) **Food & Beverage** (but mostly food) 2) **Transportation** and 3) **Materials/ Waste**.

Food & beverage is a key solution - and the first place we need to implement changes. Firstly, **we need to reduce our food waste** - and under resources you will see a number of ways to do this. Secondly, we need to **reduce our consumption of animal proteins**. Thirdly, we need to **support agriculture/food systems that support the planet**.

**Transportation** is the single largest source of emissions from events. It's the elephant in the room for most meeting professionals because flying is ingrained in our industry, but we can fly direct and fly light to start to change our travel habits. Inside you will find some smart ideas and best practices that will help you reduce the transportation emissions for your next event.

**Materials** is an area that we can make great strides in - we have all walked the floor on load out and seen the massive piles that go into the dumpsters. How do we change the flow of the supply chain from buy, use, throw out - to reduce, reuse and recycle? We have a few ideas and look forward to hearing from you on what you are doing to reduce and reuse materials at your events.

Now let's move on to your questions!

[Tsef.ca/resources](https://tsef.ca/resources)

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# Q & A

## HOW WE ANSWERED YOUR QUESTIONS

Thank you for all your questions! There were 74 different questions, so we tried to answer each one, but it was a 24 page document, so..... we grouped like questions together. If we missed your question, it will likely be a blog post or a podcast episode For resources check out [tsef.ca](http://tsef.ca)

NOTE:  
most event emissions  
are Scope 3

## HOW TO MEASURE EMISSIONS FROM AN EVENT

Like a financial budget, an emissions calculation compiles all the sources of emissions and adds them together. You can use online calculators for various aspects (see the resources section for links to a few), but expect to create a detailed list of sources and create a spreadsheet just like you do for your budget.

## WHAT NEEDS TO BE TRACKED TO MAKE EVENTS AUDITABLE?

Some jurisdictions have passed legislation (EU and California) requiring your environmental claims be verified, which is sustainable speak for audited. You need to track the main emission sources, transportation, accommodation, F & B,, materials and freight - and you need to provide documentation that an independent auditor can review to ensure the calculations were made correctly. (See ISO 14064)

# Q & a

## OFFSETS?

Offsets started to be treated like the magic potion for carbon neutrality - they are part of the equation for sure, but there are not enough offsets to account for our global emissions - so we need to mitigate. Look for 3 things in offsets - additionality, accounting for leakage and permanence. For more info on offsets check the link in resources on offset



## HOW TO REDUCE THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF AN EVENT?

The quickest way to reduce is to address food waste, food choices and flights.

The best way is to measure the emissions of your event and start to address high emission sources.



## HOW DO I MEASURE FLIGHT EMISSIONS?

Go to The International Civil Aviation Organization will allow you to calculate both passenger and freight emissions.

*Click on the underlined word to go directly to the website anywhere in this document*



## Q & A

DMOs - do you know how excess food is handled in your destination?



### ADDRESSING FOOD WASTE

About 58% of all food in North America is thrown out - crazy, right? What a waste of time, effort and resources. Reduce food waste by using the food waste hierarchy - there is a downloadable graphic at [tsef.ca](http://tsef.ca) under the resources tab.

In Canada, check out [secondharvest.org](http://secondharvest.org) or [foodrescue.ca](http://foodrescue.ca) for food donations.



### COMPOSTING AT EVENTS

We talk a lot about composting but in fact, composting is the 2nd to last option for food waste - it's better than landfill but not by much ( it reduces food waste emissions by about 30%)

Composting needs to happen within the F & B team - so talk to the caterer/Chef, but donations to humans or animals are always better than composting!

### BEYOND WASTE / BEEF

We love to see someone ready for the next step! This attendee already reduces food waste and uses plant based menu items - next? Hit up your supply chain - look for regenerative agriculture and suppliers who have a sustainability plan

# Q & a

## WHY IS BEEF BAD?

Well, actually it's delicious - it's just cows make methane and people cut down forests to raise cattle - so it's like an environmental double knock out.

Methane warms  
36X more than  
CO<sub>2</sub>

## FARM TO TABLE, RECYCLING ONSITE, LOCAL VENDORS

**Farm to table** supports smaller growers who do regenerative agriculture. Some larger events or venues struggle with supply issues with farm to table, so if you can, be flexible about the menus, that allows your chefs to offer more farm to table.

**Recycling onsite** is something you need to do, but it does not greatly reduce the environmental impact of your event. Recycling facilities vary from location to location and recycling rates are quite low - for example only 6% to 9% of plastics are recycled in Ontario. If you can reduce materials and reuse them, this will reduce your event footprint.

Yes, to **local vendors** - but also be mindful that you are accessing local products as well as services. Keeping the supply chain short keeps your environmental impact low.

# Q & a

## DRINKWARE @ EVENTS

Reusable is best, compostable is doubtful (ensure it can be composted in your area), plastic disposable is the worst.

As someone who's been a DMC for almost 20 years, we just use glasses. I can count on one hand the number of times anything has broken and we've never had anyone cut themselves.

## ARE REUSABLES REALLY BEST?

In short, yes - MeetGreen did the math (like a LOT of math...) and despite production, transportation, cleaning and breakage - reusable china, cutlery and drinkware are always the best option for the planet.

## THE VENUE INSISTS WE USE PLASTIC OUTDOORS

Glass & china break inside just as easily inside on a hard floor as they do outside, so this puzzles me?

Plastic takes 400 years to break down and leaves behind a trail of toxic microplastics - so, no, thank you.



# Q & a

## SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

The best way to travel sustainably is to take a leaf out of the tree guide of outdoor enthusiasts: “take only pictures, leave only footprints”. Consider transportation modes other than flying, and think less, not more.



## GENERAL KNOWLEDGE ON SUSTAINABILITY

For general interest, I recommend the following...

[Drawdown.org](https://drawdown.org) - great general content, focused on the science and the math. Easy to digest and understand.

<https://www.storyofstuff.org/> - is a fun, often cheeky look at how we got so much stuff and how silly it all is.

If you want **concise**, relevant meetings industry sustainability information, please consider supporting The Sustainable Events Forums and **take our course.**

It comes with a 30-day money back guarantee and takes about 90 minutes to complete. Over 900 people have taken the course - it's tried and true.





# NEW TRENDS

## Q & A

### WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

1. Measuring emissions
2. Circular economy
3. Green energy
4. Offsets
5. Name and shaming
6. The death of recycling

From our interaction, these are the trends that we see right now in last quarter 2024.

### GREEN ENERGY AT EVENTS

Location, location, location...ask your DMO what % of their energy comes from green options.

If a location is not high in green energy - you can look at solar or wind generators (ask Robert Thompson at AVC about this, he did a whole day event on a green generator!)

We got a LOT of questions on the grid, if you are interested in this, for the US I recommend a podcast called VOLTS and for Canada, Energy vs Climate.

*Did you know Canada's energy grid is 82% green?  
Quebec is 99% green!*

# Q & a

## HOW TO APPROACH YOUR CLIENTS ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY

1. Start the conversation early.
2. Set goals with the client.
3. Highlight the upside
4. Let your enthusiasm sway the client
5. Find an ally - once you speak up you will find others who want to help!

## TALKING TO ATTENDEES

We think Patagonia is the best communicator on sustainability to their clients based on their brand awareness and trust scores. They never preach, brag or complain, it's always action oriented and they highlight activities that align with their purpose of getting you to care more about the planet.

Start small and tell them what they are saving - and using comparable items really helps too - so for example, "last year we used 22, 346 pieces of paper, and this year we used NONE - so we saved 3 trees!" - then because I am goofy, I'd probably name them- and have some fun with it. Yay! We saved Bruce, Allysa and Pierre - and we planted 300 new friends for them. ( we did #BruceTheSpruce for an event... it was fun!)



## TSEF.CA

Under the resources page you will see downloadables, **podcasts** and resources. Check it out.

## OTHER RESOURCES

Check out [drawdown.org](http://drawdown.org), World Resource Institute and Grist for resources - in Canada we like the reporting and info from the Globe Climate Newsletter, The Narwhal and The National Observer.

## BOOKS WE LOVE

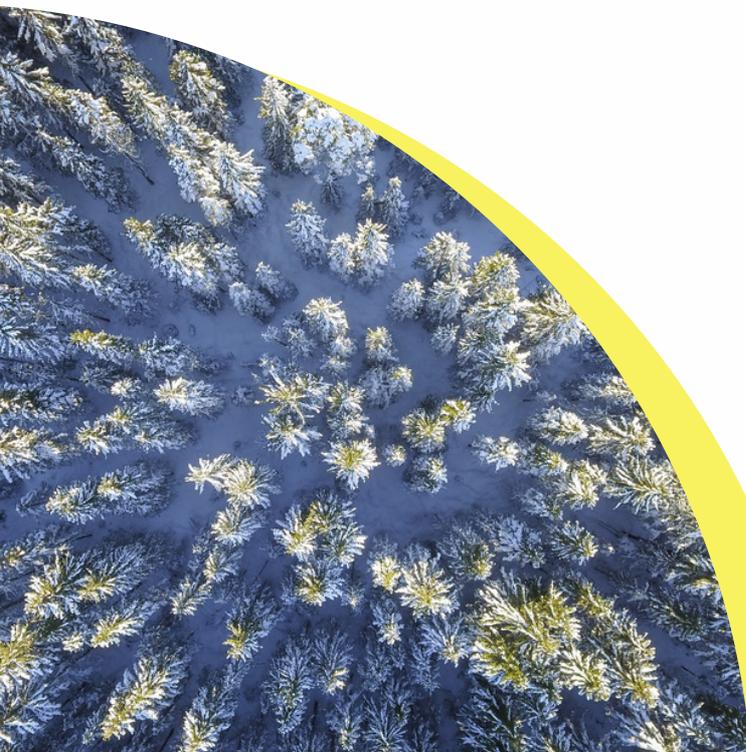
There are two books that we just read that we really enjoyed...

### **Hope Matters by Elin Kelsey**

This is upbeat and appropriate for all ages

### **I Want a Better Catastrophe by Andrew Boyd**

A bit more dark humour, proceed with caution but a worthy read.



# CHALLENGE

This is where the rubber hits the road - what are you going to DO now?

All of our progress depends on each of us taking action - not crazy, drastic action - just the next step. Here we have 10 items that you can try - or come up with your own!

1. Register your next event with Foodrescue.ca or arrange for the leftover food to be taken home / donated.
2. Add a question in your Request For Proposal - do you have a company sustainability plan?
3. Switch to recycled toilet paper at home.
4. Find a water bottle you love, that works with your travel items ( i.e. fits in your bag, etc) and **use it** when you travel.
5. Try the train for a future trip.
6. Choose a reception, a lunch or a break and make it plant based and see if anyone notices.
7. At your next restaurant meal, ask them how they reduce food waste.
8. For your next offsite, ask the DMO or sales rep for options that are walkable.
9. Measure the emissions for your next flight.
10. Mark **Monday, April 22nd, 2024** in your calendar for Earth Day for Event People!

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