

# TSEF CAN OVERVIEW



The purpose of TSEF and this moonshot event is to alleviate the workload and provide tools and resources to help you navigate a successful, sustainable event. Please do not add sustainability to the long list of things to overwhelm you in 2021.

Creating and teaching sustainability in the events industry may be one of our industry's saving attributes as we climb out of the lockdown. As of August 2020, over 2300 companies dedicated themselves to a minimum of carbon neutrality. The pandemic seems to have heightened the awareness of our interdependency on one another and the planet. It most certainly has underlined the fragility of these relationships. The events that these companies host—and their employees attend—must reflect and affirm the values of responsibility, community and sustainability.

This overview is the "need to know right now" but is by no means the whole of the moonshot teams' work and findings. The virtual and hybrid teams' complete reports are available for download below

Here are some key findings:

**A sustainable future is likely a hi-tech future:** Innovation and technology will continue to be a big part of low-carbon solutions. We need to be open to new technology and accept there will be a learning curve. As busy people, we prefer our tried-and-true methods, but recent times call for new measures, and we need to embrace them.

- The teams found simple things, such as reducing reliance on email and using other communication tools like WhatsApp, cut emissions. Regularly clearing out our cache of old emails (you know who you are!) also reduces carbon emissions. Emails sit on multiple servers, and those servers use a lot of energy. To read more about exactly how emails emit carbon, click [here](#).
- The same applies when keeping multiple copies of drafts, email conversations and details, which is wise to protect yourself in the event of an issue – but nobody needs those emails from that conference in 2015. Use that delete key!
- In some cases, Apps are an answer over more equipment. One team member, Suzanne Morrell, introduced us to an app that replaces walkie-talkies. No walkie-talkie pickup, return or charging needed!

**Location, Location, Location:** Whether it's the host destination of your live or hybrid event, the location of your broadcasting centres for virtual events or where your virtual platform has its servers, physical location matters. The choices made by the region you pick broadly impact your event's carbon footprint. How specifically?

- **Energy.** The carbon footprint of electricity varies widely and has a significant effect on an event's carbon footprint. Determine how your location gets its power: coal, natural gas, solar, wind or hydroelectric energy generation. The virtual event team used solar and wind generators from AV CANADA, and they are available for rent in most major centres. We also learned that 97% of Quebec's electricity is hydroelectric and avoids burning of fossil fuels. (Hint: These are good questions to ask in the RFP.)
- **Water.** Canada is blessed with an abundance of clean water, but let's waste not, want not. Low-flow plumbing is a crucial element to look for in a venue. Also, reuse processes matter, such as the Edmonton Convention Centre's use of leftover water to water their atrium plants. Average water use in Canada is just over 300L per person/day – one of the world's highest. The treatment and transport of water to the facility and its processing as wastewater uses a lot of energy. Organizations like Lake Ontario Waterkeepers monitor wastewater and cover sexy topics such as "sewage overflow"; you can check out the local [waterkeepers](#) chapter here and see how your next destination measures up.
- **Waste** – the teams stressed sustainable purchasing and keeping materials to a minimum reduce waste, but there will still be waste at your event. Ask how the location you are considering processes waste. No point in securing compostable items if they don't compost. Or like our friend and fellow planner, Landon Logie, discovered, if the composting facility is closed when your garbage trucks arrive, those compostable items go directly into the landfill. Planners know these details matter.
- **Seasonality** affects your carbon footprint – the hybrid team was surprised to find the same event held in northern Alberta in July was much lighter in carbon footprint than the same event held in February. Smart scheduling might be a short term option until our heating and cooling is less carbon intensive.
- **Data** – if you are going to work toward a carbon-negative event or track your event's carbon footprint – you need data specific to your events' municipality. Start asking your DMOs, venues and hotels if they collect data on energy, water and waste. You need data to make your calculations for your carbon accounting.

### **You can't manage what you don't measure.**

Yes, carbon accounting is a thing. Yes, it's how we get to carbon neutral or negative. You will see many examples of carbon accounting in the moonshot reports. Carbon accounting is not complicated, but you need the right data in the correct measurements to calculate it.

- Suppliers need to be better at compiling data on emissions and we need consistent measurements. Information as simple as whether the measurements are in metric or imperial, by weight or by volume – make a massive difference in how easily the event host can do their calculations.
- The moonshot reports list where they obtained regional averages or borrowed statistics, but as the events industry refines carbon accounting, the consistency of the data we get from our supply chain increases in importance. (Hint: you are part of someone else's supply chain!) One of the projects TSEF is working on are the kinks in data collection and helping destinations and suppliers line up the data they collect with what planners need. Getting good local data and carbon calculators for regional emissions, specifically for events, is a crucial next step.

### **Your supply chain is critical, your supplier's supply chain is critical, your supplier's supplier's supply chain is critical.** You get the idea; it's a process.

- Supply chain management is the hot term for companies looking to reduce their carbon emissions. We cover Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions, which address the supply chain, but for a fun and educational video on how scopes translate to events, check out Mel and Marie explaining [them here](#). (With drawings!)
- Choosing carbon-friendly suppliers who track their emissions will go a long way to helping companies determine their carbon footprint and reducing it. Another project TSEF is embarking on is assisting planners in finding suppliers who supply useful data and use calculators to track their emissions. Suppliers that provide transparent carbon footprint data will have a competitive advantage in the future.

**Let it go.** Often during the moonshot challenge process, the teams ran into that meeting planner's friend, the law of diminishing returns. Yes, if we did 6 more hours of research and meetings, we COULD find the carbon emission difference between packaging A and packaging B for the snacks. We can cancel any carbon savings by the emissions of the emails, phone calls and Zoom meetings on the issue. They often had to let smaller issues go and focus on high-return actions such as transportation and electricity. (please note If you were the supplier of packaging B and had your carbon footprint data available and transparent, you would have made the sale!)

### It's all about relationships.

- One of the pillars of TSEF is collaboration – time and time again, the moonshot teams used their networks to find a supplier, get data or ask for help to solve an issue.
- Please do not add sustainability to the long list of things to overwhelm you in 2021. We are here to help; the teams are here to help. One of the reasons climate action has been so slow is people are working in silos. We know you are generous in sharing your expertise and resources – keep sharing and keep asking.

Ashley Stephens, our lead for the hybrid moonshot team, had a saying – *"feel the fire or see the light"* – and on behalf of all of us at TSEF, thank you for seeing the light.



*Candice & Natalie*

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The Sustainable Events Forum (TSEF)



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