



# ASEAN GUIDELINES ON GREEN MEETINGS



one vision  
one identity  
one community





## **ASEAN GUIDELINES ON GREEN MEETINGS**

The ASEAN Secretariat  
Jakarta

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967. The Member States are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The ASEAN Secretariat is based in Jakarta, Indonesia.

For inquiries, contact:  
The ASEAN Secretariat  
Community Relations Division (CRD)  
70A Jalan Sisingamangaraja  
Jakarta 12110, Indonesia  
Phone : (62 21) 724-3372, 726-2991  
Fax : (62 21) 739-8234, 724-3504  
Email : public@asean.org

Catalogue-in-Publication Data  
ASEAN Guidelines on Green Meetings  
Jakarta, ASEAN Secretariat, June 2020

352.1159

1. ASEAN – Guidelines
2. Meetings – ASCC

ISBN 978-602-5798-61-0

ISBN 978-602-5798-61-0



Supported by:

 **Hanns  
Seidel  
Foundation**



ASEAN: A Community of Opportunities for All  
The map in this publication is only indicative and is not drawn to scale.  
This publication is printed using environment-friendly paper.

The text of this publication may be freely quoted or reprinted, provided proper acknowledgement is given and a copy containing the reprinted material is sent to the Community Relations Division (CRD) of the ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta.

General information on ASEAN appears online at the ASEAN Website: [www.asean.org](http://www.asean.org)

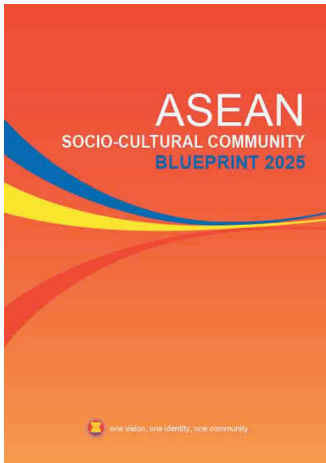
Copyright Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) 2020.

All rights reserved.

## Table of Contents

<b>ASEAN Guidelines on Green Meetings</b>	
<b>Background</b>	2
<b>Purpose and Scope</b>	4
<b>Definition and Guiding Principles of Green Meetings</b>	4
<b>Planning</b>	6
<b>Elements of Green Meetings</b>	7
Venue and Accommodation	8
Transportation	9
Food and Beverages	10
Meeting Materials/ Documents/ Practices	11
Waste Management	12
<b>Communication and Awareness</b>	13
<b>Review and Evaluation</b>	14
<b>Annex 1 - Checklist</b>	15

## Background



Realising the importance of environmental cooperation for sustainable development and regional integration, ASEAN has promoted environmental cooperation among its Member States since 1977. Guided by the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint 2025, ASEAN cooperation on environment endeavours to contribute to sustainable development in the region through coordinated efforts on conservation of sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources and promotion of environmentally sustainable cities, response to climate change, and sustainable consumption and production.

As part of the global community, ASEAN and ASEAN Member States (AMS) have also committed to contribute to the implementation of the United Nation's 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals and other global conventions and targets such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as well as its Paris Agreement.

ASEAN organises up to 1,000 meetings each year ranging from small meetings up to large ones with hundreds of participants. Therefore, it is a growing need for ASEAN and AMS to move towards into a more sustainable and environmentally-friendly meeting setup so as to reduce environmental implications of the meetings

The 18<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting for the ASCC and the 13<sup>th</sup> ASCC Council Meetings in 2015 noted the recommendations by the High-Level Task Force for Strengthening the ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN Organs pertaining to future direction of ASEAN meetings, i.e. the need to simplify the protocol and hospitality arrangements for all ASEAN meetings as well as to tap on information and communications technology (ICT) including the use of video-conference to streamline the meetings and to alleviate resource constraints.

While efforts have been carried out to implement the format of paperless meeting, it would be worthwhile for ASEAN to move further by adopting a “green meeting” scheme which promotes environment-friendly setup beyond the elimination/reduction of paper consumption. Towards this end, the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AWGEE held on 18-19 July 2018 in Da Lat, Viet Nam, identified the need to develop a guideline on green meetings for future ASEAN meetings, starting with meetings under the environment sector. With support from the ASEAN Secretariat, the ASEAN Guidelines on Green Meetings was subsequently developed by AWGEE. The Guidelines was strongly supported and endorsed by the ASEAN Senior Officials on Environment (ASOEN) at the 30<sup>th</sup> ASOEN Meeting in 2019.

## Purpose and Scope

The Guidelines on ASEAN Green Meetings aim to serve as a reference to support AMS/ ASEAN organs/ other entities in organising ASEAN-related meetings that are more resource-efficient and environmentally responsible<sup>1</sup>.

## Definition and Guiding Principles of Green Meetings

**“ There are many existing definitions of a green meeting, but in general, a green meeting is one designed, organised and implemented in a way that minimises negative environmental impacts and leaves a positive impact for the host community.”<sup>2</sup>**

Given the number of meetings that ASEAN organises each year and as an intergovernmental organisation, ASEAN undoubtedly plays a pivotal role in setting a benchmark in this respect and in encouraging its AMS/ organs in becoming green meeting hosts/ organisers within the context of their local circumstances.

Although greening meetings might only be a small positive change on itself for the environment, the initiative may have the potential to inspire broader action and wider organisational change, for example, by creating demand for environmentally friendly services or by raising awareness of individuals and service providers involved in the meetings.

For the purpose of the Guidelines, the following guiding principles should guide the preparation and conduct of green meetings<sup>3</sup>:

---

<sup>1</sup> The recommendations outlined in this Guideline were identified and adapted from the existing widely-known reference documents on green meetings, such as UNEP Green Meeting Guide 2009. The Guidelines may later be further developed to include a more comprehensive approach in organising green meetings

<sup>2</sup> ICLEI, International Symposium on Greening Events, Barcelona, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from the principles developed at ICLEI's Greening Events Symposium in Barcelona, September 2004, excerpted from UN Green Meetings Guide





**Necessity:** One of essential principles is to review the necessity of organising a meeting and to streamline unnecessary meetings as much as possible. Other alternative approaches such as tele-conference and other means of electronic communications should be first considered.



**Procurement:** Sustainability principles are to be integrated in all steps of procurement process (from bidding to contract) and communicated early and regularly to participants and service providers in organising a meeting.



**Material Consumption:** Consumption of natural resources or materials (e.g. water, energy) are minimised.



**Waste Management:** Waste generation is avoided or minimised when possible, and remaining waste is re-used or recycled.



**Public Awareness:** The awareness of participants and service providers in sustainability issues is increased, with the greening aims and measures communicated clearly to all.

The above principles are applied in all key essential elements in organising a meeting, which include among others purchase of goods and services for the meeting, the selection of the venue, transportation, catering and accommodation arrangements.



## Planning

When planning a meeting, it is necessary to firstly consider the necessity of the meeting and consider other possible alternative approaches. For smaller meetings, such as project management/ coordination meetings with participants from fewer than five different cities, the alternative approaches such as teleconference should be highly considered, unless they are organised back-to-back with other meeting(s).

When face-to-face meeting is the only option, it is useful to draw up a plan or strategy as early as to identify the potential greening areas the necessary steps to be taken and the responsible stakeholders to implement the greening measures. The plan should be well communicated as appropriate to all stakeholders involved such as organising committee members, service providers and participants.

It is advisable that organiser/ host notify in advance meeting participants, suppliers and other stakeholders involved in the preparation and conduct of the meeting about the green meeting approach, which should include their positive contributions to the environment and utmost efforts to avoid/ reduce/ minimise negative impacts on the environment and ecosystem, prior, during and post-meeting of their participations.

A Checklist as in Annex 1 can be used as a reference in planning.



Necessity/  
Alternative



Plan/ Strategy



Communication



Contribution

## Elements of Green Meetings

The Guidelines provide important considerations on the following elements of organising green meetings:





## Venue and Accommodation



- » Priority should be given to hotels or other meeting venues with green meeting packages and with environmental policies and practices in place (e.g. regarding energy efficiency, water conservation, and waste management), which may be demonstrated by meeting widely-recognised standards or schemes such as ASEAN Green Hotels Standards/ Award, green building rating system, environmental awards, environmental management system (EMS), and other environmental certifications/ labeling etc.



- » The accessibility of the venue to accommodation by walking or public transport should be highly considered in keeping local transport needs minimised.





## Transportation

Transportation is typically the most significant source of meeting-related emissions.



- » When flying remains the only option, direct flights should be preferred, taking into consideration the costs in comparison with those of other alternative flights, as the number of take-offs and landings increase the emissions.



- » Shared local transportation arrangements for participants for transfer from airport to accommodation/ meeting venue, or for field visits and trips to city centres, should be considered.



- » The use of private cars may be restricted only for Heads of Delegation (HODs) at Ministerial and Senior Officials level meetings. Other delegates may be encouraged to use public transport or shuttle bus provided by the host/ organiser. For group travel during the meeting period, it is encouraged to use shuttle bus instead of private cars (including HoDs).



- » Modes of transportation that are more environmentally friendly or enable carpooling such as public transport, buses or minivans, hybrid or electric vehicles, or those that have received social/ environmental awards or best practice award etc, are highly recommended.



## Food and Beverages

The consumption of food and drinks may generate large amounts of paper, plastics, organic and other wastes.



Efforts should be made to avoid using disposable items and excessive packaging materials (e.g. plastic water bottles, styrofoam, individual wrappers). Drinking water, for instance, may be served in glass water jugs or dispenser, instead of individual plastic water bottles.



Reusable, recyclable, biodegradable materials, equipment, and products are strongly encouraged.



Coordination with the service providers may be necessary to ensure appropriate collection/disposal of food waste.



Communication should be made to all participants and service providers to consider food waste before meals, and to promote zero waste at each meeting.



## Meeting Materials / Documents / Practices

The materials used for a meeting should be limited to what is strictly necessary.



Preference should be given to the use of electronic communication and devices, whenever possible, for the provision of meeting documents.



When printing is necessary for key documents, measures need to be taken to minimise the use of paper as much as possible (e.g. restricted number of printed document sets per delegation, consideration of fonts, spacing, and length of documents, double-sided printing, multiple slides per page printing for presentation slides), and to use paper that is environmental friendly.



The use of materials that are not highly critical for the substantive discussion of the meetings such as multiple banners, delegate bags and souvenirs should be kept to a minimum as much as possible. When necessary, all materials produced or bought for the meeting (e.g. banners, delegate bags, and souvenirs) should be produced using more sustainable materials such as recycled or biodegradable materials, or should aim to promote/ support environmentally friendly lifestyle (e.g. reusable tumbler, reusable shopping bags).



Consideration should be given to enforce or encourage green practices during meetings, which are clearly communicated to service providers and participants before the meetings start. These include: setting appropriate/ reasonable temperature for meeting rooms or turning off lights and equipment when not in use for energy saving, adjusting dress code to local weather to minimise the need to excessively cool/ heat the meeting room, encouraging participants to print only what is strictly necessary, on both sides of paper and reusing paper when possible, minimising the use of meeting room decoration.



## Waste Management

Even after environmentally friendly measures are applied, meetings may still leave behind large amounts of paper, plastics, food and other waste.

- » The use of disposable items or non-essential materials should firstly be avoided.



- » Waste management plans should be made in coordination with service providers and executed accordingly. The plans could include waste collection by or transfer to recycling facilities, food donation to local communities, and proper waste disposal.

**AVOID**

**REDUCE**

**REUSE**

**RECYCLE**





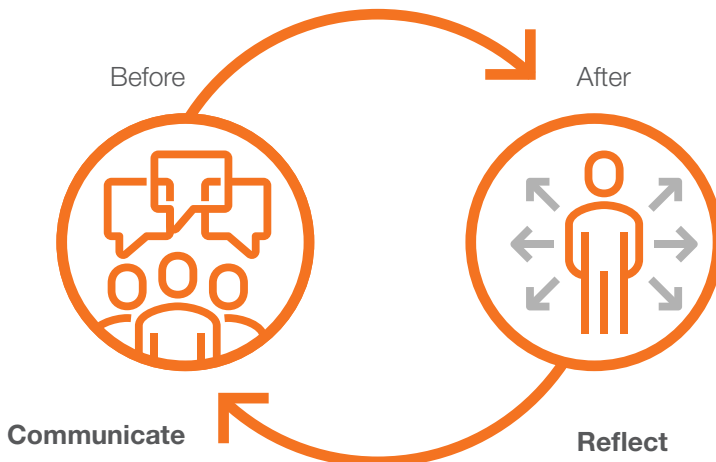
## Communication and Awareness



Communicating the goals and plans for a green meeting to all parties involved, in every step of planning and organising the meetings, is essential. This includes communication with all organising committee members (including co-hosts or co-organisers), service providers (e.g. event organiser, hotel management and staff, catering service provider, miscellaneous vendors), and participants.



Before closing of any meeting, the organiser/ host should provide opportunities for participants to reflect on 1) the positive contributions of the meeting related to environmental protection efforts, and 2) their own experiences, practices, and views on any innovative solutions for continued improvement of the green meeting practice.





## Review and Evaluation

Post-meeting review and evaluation on the effectiveness and impacts of the efforts taken to green meetings are important to provide a benchmark or baseline for comparison with future meetings, and communicating the success to wider stakeholders.

Quantitative data collection should be done when possible for record and thorough evaluation purpose. If this is not possible, evaluation through observation and collection of inputs from all stakeholders is valuable to identify challenges and solutions for future meetings.

The Checklist in Annex 1 can be used as basis for evaluation.

## Annex 1 - Checklist

Ref.	Recommendations	Y/N/Not Applicable	Remarks
<b>A.</b>	<b>General</b>		
A.1	The necessity of organising this meeting and other alternatives such as tele-conference have been considered.		
A.2	The location and time of the meeting have been considered, to the extent possible, to be the most appropriate for environmentally friendly meeting		
A.3	Participants have been informed of the green meeting approach and of their contribution to environment and ecosystem.		
A.4	Environmentally friendly best practices and schemes have been favored, to the extent possible, in preparing and conducting the meeting.		
A.5	Sustainability principles have been integrated to the procurement process related to organising the meeting.		
A.6	Participants have been provided opportunities to reflect and share their experiences and views with regard to the green meeting approach at the conclusion of the meeting.		
<b>B.</b>	<b>Venue and Accommodation</b>		
B.1	Green requirements are incorporated in the procurement process for the selection of venue and accommodation		
B.2	The selected venue and accommodation complies with green buildings standards or demonstrates the implementation of environmental policies and good practices.		
B.3	Due consideration has been given as to the location of the selected venue and accommodation in relation to its accessibility of public transport and proximity to airport and city centres to minimise transportation needs.		

Ref.	Recommendations	Y/N/Not Applicable	Remarks
<b>C. Transportation</b>			
C.1	When flying is the only option, direct flights have been prioritised as much as possible for participants (when applicable)		
C.2	Shared local transportation arrangements (e.g. shuttle buses) have been made to transfer participants from and to airport, field visits, and city centres (when applicable).		
C.3	Participants have been provided with essential information for lower emission local transport options (e.g. walking routes/ maps, public transport timetables, etc)		
<b>D. Food and Beverages</b>			
D.1	Green requirements are incorporated in the procurement process for the selection of catering service provider (when applicable)		
D.2	In coordination with service provider, water dispensers or jugs are made available to serve drinking water for participants during meeting and coffee breaks, instead of plastic water bottles		
D.3	In coordination with service provider, no disposable/ single-use plastic utensils/ cutlery are used in the catering service for participants		
D.4	Coordination and plan has been made with service provider to minimise food waste (e.g. communicating the estimated number of participants in relation to the food portions, plan for food donation to local communities)		
D.5	Advice on recommended sustainable consumption practices has been communicated to participants		

Ref.	Recommendations	Y/N/Not Applicable	Remarks
<b>E.</b>	<b>Meeting Materials/ Documents/ Practices</b>		
E.1	Soft copy of meeting documents are made available to participants through email or online file-sharing services prior to the Meeting		
E.2	Key documents are printed double-sided and produced in a restricted manner (e.g. only 1-2 copies per country).		
E.3	Participants are informed in advance of the paperless nature of meetings and encouraged to access the meeting documents in digital format as much as possible during the meeting instead of printing them.		
E.4	Meeting banners are made in digital format or produced in a restricted manner using recycled or recyclable materials.		
E.5	Delegate bags/ gifts/ souvenirs are eliminated, produced either by using recycled or recyclable materials, or carefully selected to support/ promote environment-friendly lifestyle for participants		
E.6	Communication has been made to service provider(s) before the meeting to implement green meeting practices (e.g. setting appropriate room temperature, turning off projector or equipment when not in use)		
E.7	Communication has been made to participants in the beginning and throughout the meeting to encourage green meeting practices (e.g. printing/ copying documents only when necessary, turning off laptops when not in use, disposing waste in appropriate bins, etc)		

Ref.	Recommendations	Y/N/Not Applicable	Remarks
<b>F.</b>	<b>Waste Management</b>		
F.1	Waste management plans and arrangements are made with service provider, and local communities when applicable, and executed accordingly		
F.2	Left meeting materials (banners, document folders, bags, gifts) are collected for re-use, recycling or donation (in coordination with service provider where applicable)		
F.3	Left documents or waste paper are collected for transfer to recycling facilities (in coordination with service provider where applicable)		
F.4	Food waste are disposed appropriately for composting (in coordination with service provider where applicable)		
F.5	Arrangements are made for any remaining food from meeting is sustainably consumed (e.g. takeaway, donated, in environmentally friendly packaging)		



ASEAN: A Community of Opportunities for All



ASEAN



@ASEAN



@ASEAN



[www.asean.org](http://www.asean.org)



this publication is printed on environment-friendly paper