

Sustainability Ideas for Rafting Event Organisers

1. **Suggested Commitment Statement:** If an Organiser is committed to running a sustainable event they should write up a commitment statement which they can present to other stakeholders as they move forward in the planning.
“We are dedicated to actions that foster a sustainable future as well as lead to environmental, social and economic improvements in the community and region we are running the event.”

2. **Planning for Organisers:**
 - a. **Before the event** - good planning from the very beginning is essential to make this work. Most of the ecological footprint reduction can be completed through good planning from the very beginning as that is when you set in stone the overall framework of the event.
 - b. **During the event** - ensure strategies set out are properly implemented.
 - c. **After the event** - assess what worked and didn't work, and how to improve for next time. Communicate the results to relevant people (venue's managers, participants, etc) and especially the IRF so it can be shared far and wide to other event organisers.

3. **Take on as many of these ideas as possible:**
 - **Water bottles**
 - Participants can be given reusable water bottles in their registration packs or asked to bring their own bottles
 - Water tanks must be placed all over the race site and other locations for easy access to everyone at all times
 - Sell reusable water bottles to spectators and others at the locations so they can continue to refill at the tanks
 - **Recycle bins:** have clearly labelled recycle bins next to all rubbish bins and easily accessible
 - **Where food is being sold or served:**
 - Use re-usable dishes and cutlery. Ensure that dishwashing facilities are available. Or use disposables that are made from sustainable paper or compostable materials (which must then be composted)
 - Try use as much fresh foods and foods with minimum packaging as possible, and food in tins and glass rather than in plastic.
 - Try source as much of the food from the local area
 - Collect food scraps and organise collection for farm use or composting
 - **Sunblock:** ask everyone coming to the river to only bring sustainable sunblock i.e., ones that contain no aerosol spray(s), ones that don't wash off easily, ones that don't leave oily residues on the water
 - **Paths, viewing areas, etc:** if paths, roads, event or viewing areas need to be built ensure they only disturb the ground needed and are reusable and preferably enhance the location for locals
 - **Entry, exit and portages:** preferably don't slide rafts or kayaks into the water over rocks as this can leave plastic scrapings behind
 - **Access:** if possible, create a number of areas that are accessible by wheelchair and less able-bodied persons
 - Think about how you can improve the **diversity** amongst those you employ

- **Employ locals** as much as possible: the more they rely on the work you provide the more they will buy into protecting the location and the river for long term use for all in the region
- **Sustainable materials:** this is a very essential aspect and there are so many options of things you can do to increase your event's sustainability. Read the IOC's [Sustainable Sourcing in Sport](#) for more details on sustainable sourcing
- **Avoid using fossil fuels** where you can and try use renewables like solar
- **Travel and transport:**
 - Of people to the location: flights and long distances by road may be unavoidable in getting athletes, officials and supporters to the location. Try keep this to a minimum. Where practical, use high-speed trains rather than flights. Look at ways to offset what you can
 - For planning purposes: instead of travel use virtual meetings
 - For moving goods and materials to the location and during the activity/event: good planning is essential here so as to minimise this. Use companies that operate modern low-emission fleets. Use rail, rivers and sea instead of road and air
 - During the activity/event: walking, cycling and public transport are healthier and more sustainable ways to move around. Reduce numbers of journeys, plan carefully
 - Try to ensure accommodation is close by or on easily usable public transport routes
 - Use fuel-efficient or low emission vehicles where possible
- **Educate:**
 - Use clear signage to educate participants so they become aware of what is being done, why it is being done and what they should be doing to help. Hopefully they will take these newly formed habits away with them and introduce them into other parts of their lives:
 - Signs at recycling bins so they know where to throw away what
 - Where you are providing or selling reusable water bottles - explain why
 - At water tanks where they can refill their bottles - explain why
 - Signs near rivers about not throwing rubbish into river or on banks of river or anywhere. And about polluting with sunscreen.
 - Signs about not wasting tap water
 - Signs about not wasting energy - so turn off lights and equipment when not in use
 - Have volunteers wear brightly-coloured shirts (e.g. a Green Team), mingle among the crowd with garbage and/or recycling bags to collect litter before it hits the ground
 - Organise a river clean-up: get schools and other groups involved in doing river clean-ups. Use the opportunity to educate them on river pollution = seas pollution
 - Ensure your own staff understands why sustainability is essential in this day and age and that they understand and follow, guide and implement all the steps you have put in place
- **Leaving a legacy:** come up with ways you can leave a legacy for the local community and the region
- **Promote:** Ensure you tell everyone what you are doing towards making your event as sustainable as possible. This encourages others to work towards sustainability themselves.

This document is a supporting document to the IRF [Practical Guide to Sustainability](#) and can be read in conjunction with the IRF's [Sustainability ideas for operators, instructors, guides and recreational rafters](#) document.

If you have ideas that you feel would be a good addition to the above list, please email them to [IRF Admin](#).