

DESTINATION SPOTLIGHT

Whistler, BC, Canada



1. How do you communicate you city’s sustainability commitment to meeting organizers?

[Our website](#) offers comprehensive information regarding our commitment to sustainability for the Whistler Conference Centre and the community Whistler. It is part of our messaging during site visits and fam tours, our sales proposals and other collateral make reference our sustainability initiatives, and finally, through social media channels.

2. How does this support your ability to attract meetings into your area?

For those organizations with a strong culture of corporate social responsibility, it is a distinct point of difference.

3. What sustainable attribute are you most proud of within your city and sets your city apart from other cities?

Wow, where do you start?? If you look around, you will see that our community infrastructure allows for our guests the opportunity to do the right thing every time and our residents walk the talk, lead by example. Some highlights are that resident housing allows for over 82% of our workforce to live in the valley, concerted efforts are being made by local businesses to move towards sustainability, thus GHG levels are decreasing while business continues to grow. The result is a beautiful, clean thriving community.

4. How does your CVB/City support sustainable events (minimizing negative impacts and maximizing positive contributions in the local community) to help event organizers?

a. Describe the Sustainable transportation options available in your city for event organizers? (example, bicycling options, light rail, walkable convention zone)

Whistler has a Valley Trail system that winds its way through our residential areas, and parks. Maintained by the municipality, it allows for our residents and guests to bike, run, skate, ski to wherever they need to go without having to travel on the highway year round. Our village is pedestrian friendly allows for residents and visitors to park their cars and walk and offers a free shuttle. Whistler’s hydrogen bus fleet boasts the highest ridership per operating hour in the province of British Columbia.

b. What solutions do you provide to help event organizers with waste diversion (venue recycling, composting, donation programs, etc).

The Whistler Conference Centre is working towards Apex level one standards and in that we boast almost 90% landfill diversion through composting, extensive recycling. Our buffet tables do not require tablecloths or skirting, therefore decreasing amount of the linen we use. We provide our conference clients with a report card that itemizes everything we do and gives them an opportunity to do just a little bit more. (see attached report card) All of our official suppliers are on side with the Apex standards. We’re looking forward to our first truly green conference.

c. How do you support local community organizations and facility CSR project support for event organizers?

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www.whistler.com offers suggestions as to what groups can do and we also provide a full list of charitable/community organizations that planners can connect with directly.

d. How do you support local food or other procurement sourcing options for event organizers.

As we work closer to achieving our Apex level one standards, we constantly are looking for ways to incorporate our local farmers in our menu options. All site/fam dinners highlight local food producers. We serve only BC VQ A wines. The Whistler Conference Centre is also a certified Ocean Wise facility. Vancouver Aquarium's sustainable seafood program.

e. Does your bureau or major convention center have a green team?

Absolutely, we call ourselves TWIGGS (Tourism Whistler is Going Green Sustainably) Developed in 2008, TWIGGS, a grass roots employee group was developed to help Tourism Whistler to be more sustainable through awareness, spearheading initiatives, and providing leadership to our fellow staff members. Tourism Whistler supports the TWIGGS members through education. Dennis Ranada, Senior Building Operations Manager, recently completed the Certified Energy Manager training course. Jenny Pedersen, Conference Sales Associate, recently completed Sustainable Event Management at the British Columbia Institute for Technology.

f. Do you provide educational training programs for your region (venues, etc) about sustainable best practice? IF so in what format. Do you profile and/or promote sustainable hospitality partners?

We work closely with Whistler's Centre for Sustainability as a resource and community partner. We foster strong relationships with organizations like Resort Municipality of Whistler and Whistler Blackcomb to share best practices and improve processes resort wide. Last year we gathered a group of Whistler hotel conference service managers and catering managers to share best practices and invited Allana Williams, Environmental Coordinator for Whistler Blackcomb to speak to us about the adverse impact of bottled water. This year, led by Dan Wilson, Whistler's Centre for Sustainability, we are planning a "town hall" discussion with local farmers, chefs, F&B managers, and other interested individual to explore the topic of food miles, local vs organic, CO2 equivalents.

5. Describe the most impactful sustainable event experience/customer experience supported by your CVB?

Aside from incorporating local farmers menus, The Whistler Conference Centre does not use bottled water in any of its set ups and only upon request by its clients. In addition, all conference materials are electronic, all preconference meetings take place on laptops – no binders, conference packages, thus resulting in a 25% reduction in paper consumption.

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6. What advice would you provide to other CVB professionals seeking to head down the sustainable event pathway?

My advice would be to start to measure, track what you're doing and talk to your suppliers, staff, peer group, find out what they're up to. Share best practices.

7. When an event organizer comes to your city for a site inspection, what is your favorite sustainable activity, attribute, location or experience that you like to share with them?

Zip Trek Ecotours is an incredibly exhilarating experience that takes you through the tree tops of a true old growth forest on foot and by zip line. Simply gorgeous and they provide a sustainability learning program as well.

8. What value do you see being affiliated with the global GMIC community?

There is incredible benefit to being connected to like-minded people/organizations in our industry. As a GMIC member, we were impressed at last year's AGM in Montreal the scope of the knowledge of the attendees and presenters alike.

9. What support/resources do you need to continue on your sustainable path?

As Tourism Whistler continues down the path to Level One Apex Standards, we will certainly have many questions. Amy Spatrisano has been an amazing resource. Thank you!

10. Do you have links, testimonials, case studies etc. available that we can share with our community?

- http://meetings.whistler.com/conference_centre/sustainability/
- http://media.whistler.com/media_releases/?id=970
- www.whistler2020.ca
- www.oceanwise.ca
- [Green Meetings Report Card](#)
- [Whistler Case Study](#)