



A Green Playbook for Events @ IIMB



***Sustainability is not an option; it's a mindset.
Think long-term to make choices that outlast the event.***

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This playbook builds on:

- *Project work developed as part of the Greening of Operations and Supply Chain (GOSC 2025) course by Yash Rawat (PGP), Atul Gupta (PGP), Palagani Preethi Vennila (EPGP), Manthan Pandey (EPGP), and Shraddha Narayanan (PGPEM), under the guidance of Professor Harita Saranga.*
- *An event pilot conducted by the PGPEM Batch of 2024 - 26 as a live case study during their flagship event, Drishti'25.*

Images: <https://www.architecturaldigest.in/story/inside-iim-bangalore-where-by-doshis-architecture-is-at-one-with-nature-bijoy-ramachandran-indian-institute-of-management-bangalore-gardens/>

Introduction: An Operational Guide to Sustainable Event Execution

Extensive student interviews and surveys across cohorts revealed that sustainable efforts fail not due to a lack of intent, but due to systemic operational barriers. The critical insight is that sustainability is the priority to be dropped when organizers face intense time pressure and logistical hurdles. This leads to a cycle of inherited waste, reliance on non-compliant vendors, and costly resource duplication.

A Student-Led Solution: The Playbook transforms sustainability from an optional "add-on" into a core operational requirement. It proposes a four-pillar system to remove barriers to compliance:

1. **Mandatory Sustainability Leads:** Institutionalizing accountability with dedicated roles in every program committee.
2. **The Green Playbook (Guidelines):** Providing a standardized, accessible checklist to make the sustainable choice the default option.
3. **The Green Vendor Network:** Establishing a "Greenlist" of pre-vetted suppliers to solve cost and compliance challenges.
4. **The Library of Things:** Creating a central inventory to formalize asset reuse and eliminate wasteful purchasing.

The Playbook operationalizes Indian Institute of Management Bangalore's commitment to Environmental, Social, and Governance principles, enhancing brand value and transforming every campus event into a measurable live case study in Supply Chain Management excellence.





The Green Events Playbook. What is it and how to use it?

Green event planning requires an early and integrated approach. Unlike conventional events where sustainability might be a last-minute consideration, this playbook mandates that green principles be embedded in the initial blueprint. This proactive strategy is essential to avoid the "Legacy Trap" of inherited waste and to navigate the vendor landscape effectively.

📍 CONTEXT & ORIGIN

This playbook was developed to address a consistent gap.

Sustainability intent exists. Execution systems do not.

It was piloted during **Drishti 2025 by the PGPEM class of 2026** to test whether sustainability can be embedded into event operations without increasing complexity. Insights from the pilot highlighted that constraints such as:

- Time pressure
- Vendor limitations
- Lack of standard processes

are the primary barriers to sustainable execution

🎯 PURPOSE

This playbook aims to:

- Standardize sustainable practices across events
- Reduce decision fatigue for organizing teams
- Enable measurable sustainability outcomes
- Build an institutional memory of what works

🔄 NOTE ON USAGE

This is a **living document**.

- It must be used **before, during, and after every event**
- It must be **updated continuously** based on learnings
- Each event must contribute back through reporting and vendor feedback

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SECTION 1: MANDATORY PRE-EVENT REQUIREMENTS

Purpose: To ensure sustainability is embedded at the **planning stage**, not retrofitted later.

All events MUST complete the following before approval:

1. Accountability: Appoint a Sustainability Lead

👉 *Why:* Sustainability fails without ownership

2. Target Setting: Define measurable goals (e.g. zero plastic, 70% waste diversion)

👉 *Why:* What gets measured gets implemented

3. Playbook Adoption: Review and adopt all checklist guidelines

👉 *Why:* Prevents last-minute trade-offs

4. Vendor Compliance: Use **Green Vendor Network** and Include sustainability clause in contracts

👉 *Why:* Vendors drive majority of event footprint

5. Resource Planning: Check **Library of Things before procurement**

👉 *Why:* Avoids duplicate purchases and waste

📌 **Note on Adoption**

Not all systems, resources, or enablers outlined in this playbook may be fully available at the time you begin planning your event. The objective is **not immediate perfection**, but **incremental progress**.

Each event should aim to:

- Implement what is feasible within its constraints
- Document gaps and challenges
- Build on what previous teams have already created

🎯 The goal is to ensure that **no event starts from scratch** and that every iteration moves the system forward.

🎯 **Start where you are. Improve what you can. Leave it better for the next team.**



SECTION 2: PLANNING & PROCUREMENT (PRE-EVENT CHECKLIST)

Purpose: To design the event such that sustainability is embedded into decisions early, avoiding last-minute trade-offs and operational inefficiencies. All teams SHOULD complete the following during the planning phase:

Leadership & Strategy

👉 Distributed ownership ensures execution does not depend on one individual

1. Assign supporting roles
 - Waste Manager Lead
 - Energy Measurement Lead
 - Vendor Manager Lead
 - Communications and Awareness Lead
2. Align sustainability goals with overall event design

Sustainable Procurement

👉 Vendor choices determine a significant portion of the event's environmental impact

3. Prioritise vendors from the Green Vendor Network
4. Ensure the sustainability clause is included in all vendor contracts
5. Prefer local and compliant vendors

Event Design & Materials

👉 Design decisions lock in most sustainability outcomes early

6. Eliminate single-use plastics
7. Use cloth banners / reusable materials instead of flex
8. Prioritise reusable infrastructure and decor

Food & Catering (Demand Forecasting)

👉 Over-ordering is the largest contributor to event waste

9. Order lower food than RSVP count (70% – 80%)
10. Confirm buffer capacity with caterer
11. Plan plant-forward menus
12. Avoid disposable cutlery and packaging
13. Create communication for responsible food consumption among attendees



Waste Management Setup

👉 Segregation requires both infrastructure and active management

- 14. Plan tri-bin stations (Wet / Dry / Reject)
- 15. Map bin locations across the venue
- 16. Allocate trained volunteers for monitoring
- 17. Coordinate composting/disposal
- 18. Create communication for responsible waste management among attendees

Energy & Water Planning

👉 Prevents resource overuse and last-minute inefficiencies

- 19. Use LED lighting and efficient equipment
- 20. Estimate energy consumption of vendor-procured lighting and gensets
- 21. Avoid bottled water; install refill stations
- 22. Estimate energy requirements in advance
- 23. Create internal communication for responsible energy management for team

Mobility & Travel Planning

👉 Travel is a significant but often overlooked contributor to emissions

- 24. Arrange shuttle / shared transport options on campus
- 25. Define pickup/drop points on campus to prevent overcrowding
- 26. Create communication encouraging carpooling among attendees

Print, Collateral & Communication Design

👉 Last-minute printing is one of the most common and avoidable sources of waste.

👉 Communication and identity design decisions can significantly reduce paper usage without impacting experience.

- 27. Plan all collateral requirements in advance (target a % and measure)
- 28. Adopt a digital-first approach for schedules, agendas, and event information
- 29. Use iPads / tablets for scripts, coordination, and on-ground management
- 30. Replace printed schedules with QR codes and digital screens
- 31. Design and send interactive, clickable invites instead of printed communication
- 32. Avoid paper-based signboards; use reusable or digital alternatives
- 33. Minimise printed badges and lanyards; use reusable or returnable formats
- 34. Use creative, reusable identification methods (e.g. cloth wristbands / tags)
- 35. Ensure all reusable identification materials are collected post-event



36. Prefer digital certificates instead of printed ones for participation

Experience Design

- 👉 Participant behaviour significantly impacts outcomes
- 👉 Good design reduces the need for enforcement and makes compliance effortless

37. Use clear, minimal, and well-placed signage to guide behaviour (waste, water, movement)
38. Provide simple behavioural cues for participants at entry points
39. Make refill stations, bins, and key utilities highly visible and easily accessible
40. Use volunteers or “Green Marshals” to guide participants during peak times
41. Replace generic swag with meaningful, consumable, or experience-based alternatives
42. Ensure accessibility (clear pathways, signage, inclusivity in design)
43. Design for comfort (shade, seating, water access) to prevent resource misuse
44. Nudge responsible behaviour through announcements, hosts, and anchors
45. Use clear, minimal, and well-placed signage to guide behaviour (waste, water, movement)

📌 **Note on Planning & Design**

Sustainability outcomes are largely determined during the **planning and design phase**. Decisions taken here, such as vendor selection, material choices, food estimation, and communication design, have a disproportionate impact on the event’s overall footprint.

However, not all elements may be fully achievable for every event.

Each event should aim to:

- Prioritise high-impact decisions early (vendors, food, materials, communication)
- Avoid last-minute compromises, especially around printing and procurement
- Leverage existing systems (vendor network, Library of Things, past learnings)
- Document constraints and trade-offs transparently

🎯 The objective is to ensure that sustainability is **designed into the event**, not added on during execution.

SECTION 3: EXECUTION (DURING EVENT CHECKLIST)

Purpose: To ensure that planned sustainability measures are effectively implemented on ground and not diluted during execution.


All teams SHOULD ensure the following during the event:

1. Ensure tri-bin waste stations (Wet / Dry / Reject) are not overflowing at any point
2. Deploy volunteers at waste stations during peak times (meals, breaks)
3. Actively guide participants to ensure proper waste segregation
4. Track surplus food and separate for donation
5. Ensure no plastic cutlery, packaging, or disposables are introduced
6. Use QR codes / digital screens instead of printed materials
7. Avoid any last-minute printing
8. Use devices (iPads/tablets) for scripts, schedules, and coordination
9. Use only reusable or pre-approved materials on ground
10. Ensure badges, lanyards, and tags are collected back
11. Ensure bins, refill stations, and key facilities are clearly visible and accessible
12. Ensure refill water stations are functional and used
13. Turn off non-essential lighting and equipment when not in use
14. Sustainability Lead conducts periodic walkthroughs across the venue
15. Identify and correct deviations in real-time

Note on Execution

Focus on **high-impact moments and areas:**

- Food counters
- Waste stations
- High footfall zones

 The objective is to ensure that **critical actions are executed consistently**, rather than attempting to monitor everything

SECTION 4: POST-EVENT (AUDIT, LEARNING & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT)

Purpose: To convert each event into a **measurable learning system**, enabling continuous improvement across events.

All teams MUST complete the following post-event:

✿ Pillar 1: Waste & Resource Outcomes

? Focus: Did our waste system work as intended?

- Measure total waste generated (estimate if exact measurement unavailable)
- Estimate waste diversion (Compost + Recycle vs Landfill)
- Capture photo evidence of waste streams and segregation quality
- Assess the effectiveness of waste stations and volunteer deployment

✿ Pillar 2: Communication & No-Print Execution

? Focus: Did we successfully eliminate avoidable printing?

- Evaluate adherence to digital-first communication (QR, screens, devices)
- Identify instances of last-minute printing and reasons
- Assess effectiveness of signage and participant instructions

✿ Pillar 3: Vendor Compliance & Procurement

? Focus: Which vendors enabled or constrained sustainability?

- Evaluate each vendor against sustainability commitments
- Record compliance with no-plastic, material, and waste clauses
- Document cost vs sustainability trade-offs observed
- Update vendor rating (Green / Transitional / Non-compliant)

Pillar 4: Participant Experience & Behaviour

Focus: Did design make sustainable behaviour easy?

Assess ease of access to bins, water, and facilities

Evaluate participant behaviour (segregation, waste, resource use)

Capture feedback on experience vs sustainability trade-offs



KPI SCORECARD (MANDATORY REPORTING TABLE)

KPI	Definition (How to Measure)	Planned Target	Actual	Notes / Reason for Deviation
Waste Diversion (%)	(Compost + Recycle) ÷ Total Waste			
Food Waste (kg or % of food ordered)	Total leftover food ÷ Total food prepared			
% Digital Execution	% of communication/collateral that was fully digital (no print)			
Print Avoidance (No. of items avoided)	No. of print items replaced by digital/reusable alternatives			
Vendor Compliance (%)	% vendors fully adhering to sustainability clause			
Reusable Materials Utilisation (%)	% of materials sourced from Library of Things / reused			
Participant Compliance (%)	% correct waste segregation (observational estimate/sample)			
Water Sustainability (%)	% attendees using refill stations vs bottled water			
Energy Efficiency (Qualitative/Units)	Adherence to planned energy use / major deviations			

SECTION 5: LEARNING & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Purpose: To ensure every event generates clear, actionable insights that improve future execution and strengthen institutional systems.

This section must be completed **after KPI reporting**.


1. Key Insights from Execution

What Worked Well (Replicable Practices)

 Focus: What should become **default practice** for future events?


1.
2.
3.

What Did Not Work (Gaps & Failures)

 Focus: Where did execution break and why?

1.
2.
3.

What Will Be Done Differently Next Time

 Focus: What specific changes will be made (not generic intent)


1.
2.
3.

2. KPI Missed / Partial Root Cause Fix for Next Event

 Focus: Move from **measurement** → **diagnosis** → **correction**

1.
2.
3.

3. System-Level Learnings

 Focus: What needs to change at a **system level**, not just event level

Area	Insight	Action Required (Next Team / Institute)
Vendors		
Waste Systems		
Communication		
Participant Behaviour		

4. Vendor Intelligence Update

 Focus: Build a **stronger vendor ecosystem over time**

Update the attached vendor list, against all vendors used and update their green ranking


5. Knowledge Contribution (MANDATORY)

- Prepare 1-page sustainability summary
- Update Green Vendor Network
- Submit updated learnings to repository/website
- Highlight 2–3 key improvements for next event teams

Note on Learning

This section is the **most critical part of the playbook**. Without structured learning:

- Good practices are lost
- Mistakes are repeated
- Each team starts from scratch

 The objective is to ensure that **every event leaves behind a clearer, stronger system than it inherited**.

CONCLUSION

Like the architecture of the Institute, this playbook is designed as a system of interconnected pathways, where each event is a step that builds on what came before it. Sustainability, much like this structure, cannot rely on isolated effort. It must be embedded, supported, and carried forward across teams and time. This playbook enables that shift by turning intent into process, process into practice, and practice into institutional memory.

Each event adds a layer of learning, whether through successes or gaps, and both are equally valuable. The strength of this system lies not in perfect execution, but in consistent iteration, where teams implement what is feasible, measure outcomes, and leave behind clearer guidance for those who follow. Over time, this creates a more efficient, reliable, and scalable approach to sustainable event management.

The goal is not perfection in a single event, but the creation of a system where:

- Each cohort inherits something stronger
- Each iteration reduces friction
- Each decision moves the Institute forward

Just as these staircases connect spaces seamlessly, this playbook connects **planning, execution, and learning into a continuous loop**. It is through this continuity that sustainability becomes not an effort, but a **way of operating**.

