



Green Meetings Are Achievable



As the global economic downturn and political turmoil in Bangkok continues, MICE industry operators are seeking ways to reduce operational costs while still satisfying the market needs. Organizations have grown more aware of the environmental consequences of their activities. This has led MICE operators to adopt a Green concept by introducing a **'Reduce, Reuse and Recycle'** element into their operations as a means of keeping their operating costs down while maintaining the vitality of their events. This point was addressed by Lorian White, Chairman and founder of the US-based Association for Green Meetings and Events. "Companies in various businesses may cut budgets for events as a result of the economic crisis, but they are learning to lower spending for events by incorporating environmental practices into their planning processes" she said.

Environmental concerns in the MICE industry have dramatically increased. Findings from the fourth annual focus group survey on the greening of business tourism, coordinated by the Frankfurt-based IMEX exhibition, reported in November 2007 that the proportion of buyers (at the show) who said they or colleagues "would deliberately avoid destinations/venues known to have poor environmental records" had significantly increased to nearly 73% from 66% in 2006. Respondents were unanimous in arguing that environmental concerns will matter more in forthcoming years (up from 80% in 2006), with an increased proportion (77% compared to 67%) acknowledging that MICE sector buyers will have to take the environment **"more seriously into account"**. A considerable number of respondents recognized that pressures for such action will escalate from both the general public and from shareholders concerned about company image. Poll participants included buyers representing 12 European countries, as well as Brazil, Egypt and Russia, all holding senior positions in their companies: PCO, general manager, business development director, agency appropriator, conference manager, travel purchasing manager, managing director, congress organizer, secretary-general, MICE manager and executive VP.

The MICE planners specified that the following green practices applied to their events, and ranked them in order of importance:

- Select a location close to attendees
- Recycle conference material
- Encourage delegates to ride-share and/or travel by public transport at the host destination
- View wilderness or animal conservation areas
- Select a hotel for its environmental programs

- Involve an inspirational speaker on the environment
- Undertake fund raising for a green cause
- Measure the environmental footprint, or impact, of the meeting
- Provide a carbon offset program to neutralize delegate travel emissions
- Select a transportation provider based on its green credentials
- Assess the ability of suppliers to measure environmental and social impacts/effects

In response to environmental concerns, a number of Green Meeting guides have been introduced, such as the Green Meeting Guide 2009 by the United Nations Environment Program, Environment Canada's Green Meeting Guide, It's Easy Being Green - A Guide to Planning and Conducting Environmentally Aware Meetings and Events by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and the Green Meeting Checklist by the Netherlands Board of Tourism & Conventions. In addition, the Meeting Professionals International Foundation is working in cooperation with AVW-TELAV Audio Visual Solutions on the Events for Communities of Sustainability (ECOS) Project. Focusing on four areas, including food, water, shelter and education, the project is a framework to support sustainability in the meetings and events industry and will conclude in March 2010. The program will be measured in volunteer hours, funds raised and the number of MPI members involved.

More Green meetings and meetings with a Green element are now being organized. Numerous sources of the Green guidelines have outlined the common benefits from "going Green", such as:

- Energy conservation or waste minimization that contribute to cost savings.
- Improved profitability from greater efficiency and less waste.
- An opportunity to increase knowledge and benefits of green meetings to participants, organizers and suppliers.
- A positive public image attached with being Green.
- A firm basis for reporting environmental improvements to stakeholders.
- Increased business opportunities, especially for exhibiting companies that use environmental technologies to improve their business.
- An opportunity to attract new customers looking for environmental conscious products and services.
- Even greater environmental and economic benefits as Green meetings can encourage organizations to establish their own environmental protection measures.
- Better employee attraction and retention.

In Thailand, the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) is the central body supporting and encouraging operators to meet environmental conservation standards. In 2009, TCEB introduced its Green Meeting Guidelines and strategy, the details and activities of which can be found at www.greenmeetingsthailand.com.

MICE venues, suppliers and organizers have increasingly demonstrated their intention of being Green not only by adopting environmentally friendly policies, but also through the introduction of systems that measure how successful their operations are in achieving "Green". For example, a number of corporations have received Green Globe certification from EC3 Global, an international environmental management and certification company with more than 1,000 clients in 60 countries.

The Green Globe standard was created following the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, where the principles of sustainable travel were defined and adopted by 182 governments.

Companies in Thailand that have achieved Green Globe Benchmarked or Certificate Status are listed below;

Organisation Name	Achievement
Centara Grand Beach Resort & Villas Krabi	Benchmarked Bronze
Centara Grand Beach Resort Samui	Benchmarked Bronze
Chiva-Som International Health Resorts Co., Ltd	Certified Silver
Evason Phuket	Certified Silver
Holiday Inn Bangkok	Benchmarked Bronze
Holiday Inn Cha-Am	Benchmarked Bronze
Holiday Inn Chiangmai	Benchmarked Bronze
Holiday Inn Resort Phuket	Benchmarked Bronze
Holiday Inn Silom	Benchmarked Bronze
InterContinental Bangkok	Benchmarked Bronze
Novotel Bangkok on Siam Square	Certified Silver
Novotel Bangna Bangkok	Certified Silver
Novotel Beach Resort Panwa Phuket	Certified Silver
Novotel Phuket Patong	Certified Silver
Novotel Rim Pae Rayong	Certified Silver
Novotel Suvarnabhumi Airport Hotel	Certified Silver

Organisation Name	Achievement
Rose Garden Riverside	Benchmarked Bronze
Six Senses Hideaway & Evason Hua Hin	Benchmarked Bronze
Six Senses Hideaway Samui	Benchmarked Bronze
Six Senses Hideaway Yao Noi	Benchmarked Bronze

Notes:

- Certified Platinum logo represents continued commitment to environmental performance and improvement. It is awarded to organizations after 10 years of continuous certification.
- Certified Gold logo represents continued commitment to environmental performance and improvement. It is awarded to organizations after 5 years of continuous improvement.
- Achieving Silver Certification involves completing all 6 key steps of the program:
 1. Policy - establishing a suitable Sustainability Policy;
 2. Benchmarking - completing a Benchmarking Assessment, incorporating key elements such as energy, water, waste, community, paper, cleaning, pesticides, etc.
 3. Compliance - comply with relevant legislation and policy requirements;
 4. Approach - implementation of environmental certification management systems;
 5. Performance - documentation of performance outcomes; and
 6. Communication - communication & consultation with key stakeholders including clients, suppliers and staff.
- The Bronze Benchmarked logo recognizes completion of the two key steps of the Green Globe Company Standard, being
 1. Policy - establishing a suitable Sustainability Policy
 2. Benchmarking - completing a Benchmarking Assessment, incorporating key elements such as energy, water, waste, community, paper, cleaning, pesticides, etc.

Details of environmental conscious policies and operations adopted by MICE venues and suppliers in Thailand are noted below.



Queen Sirikit National Convention Center (QSNCC)

N.C.C. Management and Development Co. Ltd., operator of QSNCC, has fully adopted TCEB's Green Meeting strategy by launching 3 main business policies to reduce global warming:

Procurement policy: NCC Group uses unbleached paper, construction materials that comply with ISO 14000 environmental standards and soy ink for printing.

Energy saving policy: NCC Group has organized the energy saving club, supporting its activities and encouraging staff to save power & energy, e.g. turn off lights and computer monitors during lunch break.

Recycle policy: NCC Group reuses materials for maximum value in both construction and catering sections. Waste water produced is used for watering plants, while boxes are provided for collecting documents, flyers and nametag holders for future use.

NCC Group also applies a Green concept in a social responsibility project in cooperation with Bangchak Petroleum PLC. The project aims to collect used oil from staff and the general public for producing biodiesel in order to reduce the amount of cooking oil entering the sewerage system. Additionally, discarded food scraps are fermented to make organic fertilizer for plants and to make bio-microbial water for biological wastewater treatment.

As many customers, especially those from Europe, have stressed their desire for environmentally friendly events, NCC Group promotes the Green Meeting concept among event organizers in Thailand.



Centara Grand and Bangkok Convention Center at Central World

At Centara Grand and Bangkok Convention Center, a two-year plan to support the management's commitment to environmental preservation in terms of hotel operation has been established by Mr. Michael Horn, General Manager. Part of the plan is to achieve a Green Globe Certificate (Silver) after previously receiving a Green Globe Benchmarked (Bronze). This means all the operations focus on the concept of being environmentally friendly in order to reduce global warming and promote more energy saving while, at the same time, maximizing the utilization of energy in house. In effect, the hotel has been able to cut a significant amount of energy-related expenses, including a 20% reduction in air conditioning costs.

In addition, Centara Grand and Bangkok Convention Center at Central World has implemented a program called **CEPPER**, a strategy to focus on the organization's internal operations. C is 'Community' and means everything done is for the greater benefit of society. E is 'Education' provided both to staff and guests. The first P is 'Partnership' as manufacturers, material suppliers and guests are the alliance to whom the hotel provides its services. The second P is 'Product' selected to use in the business. E means 'Eco-technology' whereby an investment in the hotel system enables energy consumption of each section to be utilized to the fullest. The final R is 'Recycling' which is the major key in the program. Activities in CEPPER include sending plastic bottles back to the manufacturer for recycling, while used paper is made into decorative items. On top of that, each department will be assigned a role in CEPPER to be evaluated with a perfect score of 200 points. Each department supervisor will consult his/her team to come up with an activity that fits into the CEPPER guideline in order to represent their true potential. The activity shall be conducted and a report submitted to the executive committee for public presentation every year.

CEPPER has enabled Centara to become a hotel that is quickly gaining acceptance from clients worldwide. However, the challenge to implement a Green concept, as cited by Mr. Horn, is that it can only be achieved if all parties are united in doing their part, from the manufacturer to end users. "We, as a person, are the key to unleash all of the conditions. If there is no cooperation, we will never get to the finish line. We attempt to create such awareness in our human resources so that they will understand the importance of it, then true cooperation will follow," Mr. Horn explains.

The Centara Hotels and Resorts Group is now starting to formulate a more consistent group-wide guideline for suppliers to share the Group's vision of sustainability and to ensure their cooperation. This means a procurement enhancement and new purchases criteria development taking into account energy saving, water-efficiency, durability and organic products. Another group-wide strategy is to work with 'Ecolab' to use biodegradable products and to reduce chemical use through adoption of products that require less energy and water for cleaning.



Novotel

With its long term concern for the environment as part of Accor Group's Earth Guest Program, Novotel has demonstrated its commitment to sustainable development based on three main activities:

1. Drawing up appropriate construction standards
2. Involving its employees in sustainable development on a daily basis, and
3. Involving its customers.

To affirm the operational commitment, Novotel began its association with Green Globe, the international environmental certification program for responsible travel and tourism, in July 2007. The program involves an initial pilot phase at 28 hotels in 12 countries across 5 continents. The countries involved are the United Kingdom, Switzerland, France, Brazil, Ivory Coast, India, China, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand. Each hotel is assessed according to eight performance criteria that will guarantee, among other things, better waste management, less pollution, and energy and waste consumption control. Each hotel will be audited in order to obtain Green Globe certification after 6 to 12 months, then every year in order to guarantee that the criteria are being maintained. By mid-2008, the 28 pilot hotels in the Green Globe program had passed the assessment stages for their certification.

Towards its long term commitment by extending this certification process to all its hotels, all Novotel hotels should have been committed to the Green Globe environmental certification program by the year 2010.



Holiday Inn Silom

In winning a leadership position for environmental responsibility in Bangkok's hospitality market, Holiday Inn Silom Bangkok confirms that it has successfully passed the Benchmarked Bronze status and is recognized as a Green Globe Benchmarked Company. In support of its status achievement, Holiday Inn Silom Bangkok is committed to benchmarking its energy and water consumption, total waste production and community commitment along with implementing an integrated environmental and social policy. This was addressed by a statement of Michael Horsburgh, General Manager of Holiday Inn Silom Bangkok: "Joining the Green Globe program is part of the organization's overall strategy to increase its commitment to an environmental solution. As the market continues to grow and expand in Thailand and worldwide, IHG hotels are going to be

judged on their ability to prove they have introduced methods to reduce their impact on the environment”.



Chiva-Som

Chiva-Som International Health Resorts Co., Ltd. has achieved Green Globe Certification in recognition of its commitment to operate at the world’s highest environmental standards. The resort has several initiatives, policies and practices in place for energy efficiency and conservation, waste water treatment and recycling, fresh water conservation, waste minimization and recycling, and community well-being. Their commitment is affirmed by Mr. Krip Rojanasatien, Chairman and CEO of Chiva-Som: “Chiva-Som remains committed to the preservation of our planet Earth and is proactively involved in conserving our precious natural resources. By engaging in the Green Globe program, annual benchmarking via Green Globe indicators and continual process improvement assist Chiva-Som in achieving international ‘best practice’ performance ratings in the travel and tourism industry.”



Pattaya Exhibition and Convention Hall

Pattaya Exhibition and Convention Hall has successfully implemented several Green guidelines and practices in the following areas of business:

- water conservation
- waste management
- chemical reduction
- environmental and ecological efficiency
- energy saving
- management of resources
- Green policy implementation

Being an active member of EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) and a voluntary member of Pattaya’s City Environmental Committee, PEACH has formed its own environmental committee that meets monthly and has set the following ‘savings’ target each year:

- Power consumption - 1% or 195,000 KWh
- Gas consumption - 5% or 12,000 m3

- Diesel - 3% or 34,000 litres
- Other fuels - 5% or 3,500 litres
- Waste - 15 tons
- Water consumption - 5% or 27,000,000 litres

The practices that highlight effective Green implementation include:

- Various environmental programs implemented on a regular basis at the Royal Cliff Beach Resort. The programs include a waste water treatment plant for treating and filtering waste water for use in the Resort's gardens as well as in the flushing system at Royal Cliff Grand & Spa.
- The installation of aerators on faucets at the Royal Cliff Grand & Spa has reduced water usage to 0.3 cubic metres per day per room.
- Usage of recycled waste water for watering extensive tropical gardens.
- Usage of left-over drinking water in guest rooms for watering decorative plants in rooms and suites.
- 261 badges recycled
- 306 lanyards recycled
- 114 registration pouches recycled
- 906 litres of water recycled. Leftover bottled water was collected in vats and used for watering the Resort's gardens.
- 19.5 kilos of paper and EUR 97.10 was saved by using an electronic evaluation method, which reduces paper program cards and puts all speakers' presentations in electronic format rather than on paper.
- 288 kilos of fruit and vegetable cuttings were mixed with molasses and "effective micro organisms". This mixture is fermented in a sealed container for approximately one month. One litre of the bio-fertilizer mixed with the 20 litres of water makes a cleaning deodorant for use in toilets or rubbish containers. One litre mixed with 200 litres of recycled water from the Resort's water treatment plant makes a fertilizer for plants and grass within the Resort.

These Green efforts have benefited both the general public and the environment. For example, each year the Resort recycles approximately 288,000 cubic metres of water and ensures that no waste water goes into Pattaya's sewerage systems. Un-recycled waste water is also sent to Pattaya's water treatment plant for recycling. In 2008, the Royal Cliff Beach Resort began the use of USB flash drives for PR and sales, resulting in a saving of approximately 5 fully grown trees that would have been cut down to produce 280 kilos of printed materials previously used by the Royal Cliff MICE team annually at trade shows and on roadshows, a carbon elimination of 11.88 tons produced by shipping the brochures to overseas shows each year, and a reduction in the amount of rejected and old printed materials produced by the travel industry.



Dusit International

Dusit International will advance its commitment to protecting the environment by undertaking benchmarking under the EC3 Green Globe Company Standard in order to receive independent and comprehensive proof of its environmental commitment and become Green Globe certified by 2010. This statement is confirmed by Mr. Octavo Gamara, Senior Vice President of Dusit International: “Not only do we realize that it is our priority to contribute to the well-being of the communities within which we operate as we prepare for the growth and development of our company, it is also imperative that we initiate programs to reduce the carbon footprint and ensure the sustainability of our exciting expansion. With our commitment to the Green Globe Certification Program as delivered by EC3 Global, we can assure our partners, staff and shareholders that we are building on our foundations to be recognized as one of Asia’s leading hotel brands.” In taking another step to become Green, the company conducted a workshop especially designed to train Dusit’s Green Globe coordinators and engineers from Dusit hotels and resorts on how to implement the environmental program to achieve Green Globe Certification.



Evason Phuket & Six Senses Spa

Evason Phuket & Six Senses Spa has developed environmental management systems in line with the Green Globe standard. The systems aim to provide sustainable environmental and social benefits through a policy that focuses on energy, water and waste management, social commitment, preservation of natural surroundings, air quality and noise control.

A number of sustainable initiatives have been undertaken, e.g. energy and water efficient design, waste water management and recycling as well as using local products that are natural and chemical free. The resort also demonstrates creativity in its sustainability such as using a waterfall to create insulation and cooling for the Kid’s Club, which then reduces the energy usage of the air-conditioning. The collection of rain water that falls on site ensures the resort has a self-sufficient water supply, the swimming pool is cleansed with saline solutions and ionization instead of chlorine, and leftover food is shredded for use as fertilizer in the gardens.

This Green beginning towards sustainability is best summed by Arnfinn Oines, a responsible conscience for Six Senses Spas, who wants us to understand that: “sustainability is the best way to increase profitability and satisfaction.”

kingsmen

A communications design and
production group in Asia Pacific

Kingsmen C.M.T.I. Ltd.

Established in 1989, Kingsmen C.M.T.I Ltd. is widely regarded in the exhibition industry for its prowess in interior design, booth design and event planning.

Mr. Chayawat Pisetsith, Managing Director and founder of the company, acknowledged that global warming is increasingly becoming a concern, especially with European clients, resulting in more requests to use environmental friendly materials, compared to the past methods of design. Mr. Prawit Sribunditmongkol, Executive Director, has noticed this trend over the past 6 years. As a result, the firm's designers adopt a Green approach to create structures that can be reused or recycled, which not only reduces costs but also enhances a corporate image of environmental care. Kingsmen C.M.T.I. Ltd has moved its office to Krungthep Kreetha Road to be near the trade fair center and BITEC in order to shorten transportation distances and reduce fuel consumption. It now utilizes an open warehouse to provide natural light for structure construction which in turn leads to lower electricity consumption.

The above examples of Green practices reveal the fundamentals of environmental meeting and event planning, composed of the following

1. Receive management or sponsor support
2. Set your environmental priorities
3. Translate your priorities into action
4. Evaluate the event, and
5. Celebrate its success

It can be concluded that the MICE sector has taken a step forward towards incorporating an environmentally friendly attitude into its planning. While this may represent only a small step towards comprehensive Green practices, it is nonetheless shows that MICE operators are trying to make a considerable difference both to the industry and to the world we are living in.

References:

1. Environment Canada's Green Meeting Guide, August 2007
2. The UNEP Green Meeting Guide 2009
3. The National Recycling Coalition's Green Meetings Policy
4. The Netherlands Board of Tourism & Conventions "*Green Meeting*" Checklist
5. It's Easy Being Green! A Guide To Planning and Conducting Environmentally Aware Meetings and Events
6. Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau Green Meetings case studies
7. Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau Newsletter issue 6/2009
8. Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau Green Meetings Guideline
9. <http://www.greenmeetingsthailand.com>
10. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EC3_Global
11. <http://www.centarahotelsresorts.com/CentaraSustainability.asp>
12. http://www.aseanaffairs.com/page/holiday_inn_silom_get_grteen_globe_bronze
13. IMEX Global Data Exchange, "*Meetings become Greener as planners acquire environmental expertise*" - IMEX poll shows conference organizers are becoming more receptive to eco-strategies, November 2007
14. IMEX Global Data Exchange, "*Climate change pushes Green issues up MICE agenda - IMEX poll shows increased support for eco-tax*", August 2006
15. <http://www.thaipr.net/nc/readnews.aspx?newsid=0AF4E10914CE80617F5F1B75E451A2AA>
16. www.peachthailand.com
17. <http://asia.businesstraveller.com/asia-pacific/news/green-meetings-six-eco-friendly-convention-centres>
18. <http://www.newswit.com/news/2009-09-16/1c4eb54e6e4e8c2e1028e79f94827fc0/>
19. <http://www.tourismthailand.org/marketplace/content-296.html>
20. <http://www.centarahotelsresorts.com/CentaraSustainability.asp>
21. http://www.aseanaffairs.com/page/holiday_inn_silom_get_green_globe_bronze
22. <http://www.chivasom/media-hub/press-releases/>
23. http://www.accor.com/fileadmin/user_upload/comtenus_Accor/Pressreleases/Brand/ENPressReleaseNovotelGreenGlobe.pdf
24. <http://www.ec3global.com/resources/news-room/enews/current/Six-Senses-Resorts-and-Spas-committed-to-Sustainability/Default.aspx>
25. <http://www.sustainablemeeting.org>
26. [Http://www.mpiweb.org/ECOS](http://www.mpiweb.org/ECOS)
27. <http://us1.campaign-archive.com/?u=8e376eab14191dccc96146954&id=a5f60aae68>