

UNEP FI Global Roundtable Green Event Post Conference Report

In accordance with the 'Awareness to Action' theme of the 2007 Global Roundtable, UNEP FI's main Green Event aim was to measure and reduce the Ecological and Carbon Footprint of the Conference.

We initially wanted to commit to a 10% reduction target based on conducting a conference without taking any action, however, as we had not previously measured the Ecological and Carbon Footprint of our Global Roundtables and did not have a baseline to work from, we were unable to meaningfully measure the impact our reduction initiatives had, as it would have involved too many assumptions.

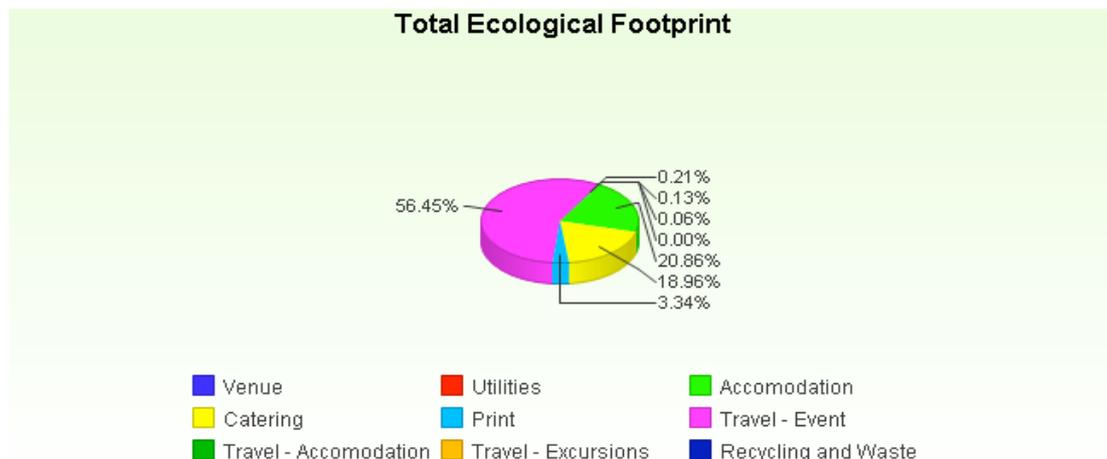
Instead, we used this Roundtable to inform us of the high impact areas that an event like this has so that UNEP FI and other organisations can be guided in managing the environmental impacts of future events. However, while we could not measure the impact that all of our reduction initiatives had, we felt that it was still important to reduce the environmental impact wherever possible, these activities are listed below.

Carbon and Ecological Footprint Measurement

The Carbon and Ecological Footprint Events Calculator measures the resource consumption across the life cycle of an event and converts this to the amount of productive area needed to supply the resources consumed and assimilate the waste generated by it. The Footprint tool also measures the greenhouse gasses emitted (GHG). You can access the calculator at <http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/ecologicalfootprint/calculators/event/introduction.asp>. A description of the data and assumptions used in the calculation of the Carbon and Ecological Footprint Calculator is provided below.



Our calculation of the Ecological Footprint of the Roundtable is 349.19 global hectares, which is the equivalent of 453 soccer fields. With 461 Roundtable participants, that is nearly 1 soccer field per delegate.



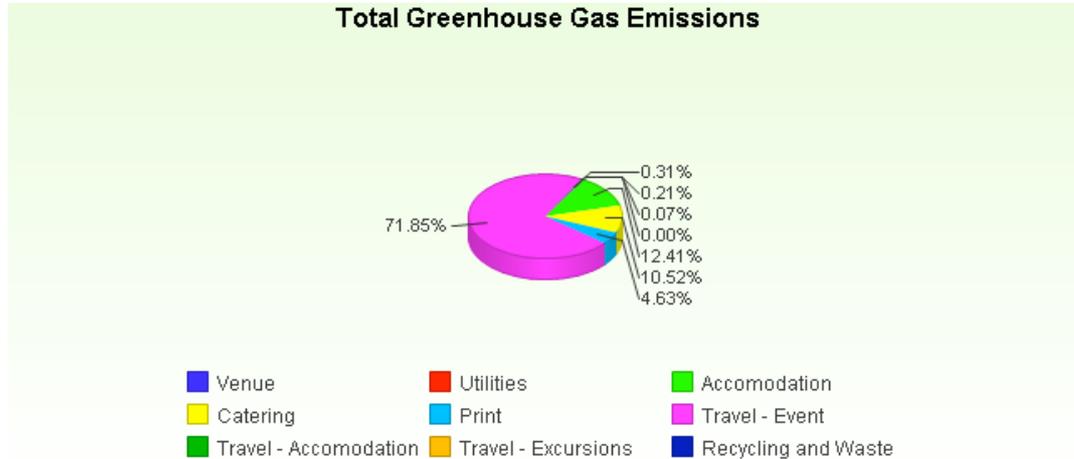
56% of the footprint is from the travel required to get to Melbourne for the Roundtable. Although 37% of the participants were international, the majority (92%) of the travel footprint comes from the international flights.

As it is an international event, reducing the amount of international travellers attending is not an objective of UNEP FI, but we aim to continually improve the event to ensure that it makes a valuable contribution in the movement of sustainable finance from awareness to action. This result is a reminder of the impact that travel has and that travelling should ideally only occur for key meetings where face-to-face communication is vital to achieve results.

The second largest impact of the event was accommodation (21%), closely followed by catering at 19%. Future reduction activities in these areas could focus on reducing the amount of resource intensive food provided, such as meat and alcohol, and promoting less resource intensive accommodation, such as lower star or "Green" hotels.



Our calculation of the Carbon Footprint was 842.48 tonnes CO₂-e, which is the equivalent of 195.92 cars off the road for a year. The average the GHG emissions per delegate are equivalent to 1.83 tonnes CO₂-e.



72% of GHG emissions were from the travel required to get to the Melbourne for the Roundtable, with 90% of that being from international travel (65% in total). Similar to the Ecological Footprint, the next largest impact activities were accommodation (21%), catering (12%) and printing (11%), however, with a 51% gap, it is clear that travel is the key GHG emitting activity.

Carbon Management

We worked to avoid and reduce the GHG emissions of our event through a number of reduction initiatives listed below and by purchasing 100% renewable energy for the Roundtable. However, as the Carbon Footprint shows, we could not avoid or reduce all of our lifecycle GHG emissions, in fact we calculated that purchasing renewable energy reduced GHG emissions by 1.44 tonnes or 1.7%.

And so, with the help of our Green Event Sponsor, Origin Energy, we have offset the entire event Carbon Footprint, including participant flights, unless we had been advised that they had already been offset. Details of the carbon credits purchased can be found at <http://www.originenergy.com.au/1963/Where-does-your-money-go>.

GHG emission reduction and avoidance initiatives:

- Reduced energy consumption during the event at Melbourne Park through thermostat adjustment of cooling and heating.
- Switched to renewable energy during the entire event, albeit this was acquired using estimated energy data for some venues due to data being unavailable.
- Increased walking and public transportation use: the results of our delegate survey shows that 19% of respondents intended to use the skybus airport transfer service from the airport and 85% intended to either walk or use public transport during the event, while there is obviously still more work to be done, we achieved this through:
 - Yarra Trams, Melbourne's local Tram operator, provided free Metcards for all delegates to use over the two days;
 - Promoted the Skybus airport transfer service, walking and public transport information on the event website;
 - Booked all of the conference venues and hotels so that they were within walking distance of each other and easily accessed by public transport;
 - Provided a walking map and public transport information in conference pack.

Resource consumption management

We reduced ecologically intensive resource consumption through:

- Minimised materials provided within the conference pack by having materials such as reports launched and sponsor material available on tables to those requiring them;
- Avoided resource intensive foods, such as beef, for all catering, and sourced local or organic products, where it was possible and within budget. At one venue, we were able to offset the cost of organic produce by providing more vegetarian food.
- Printed most conference material on FSC certified paper and using vegetable-based inks in Melbourne, so as not to fly the conference documents from Geneva.
- Uploaded all the conference presentations and session summaries on the UNEP FI website after the event instead of handing out at the conference.

Waste management

We achieved a **Silver Waste Wise Event Certification** by working with the venues to ensure that: production of waste was avoided, where possible; waste was diverted from landfill through recycling and composting, where the facilities were available; and waste generated was assessed, measured and reported on, when access was given. More details on Waste Wise certification can be found at <http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/www/html/1507-waste-wise.asp>.

Key lessons learned

We found that due to the nature of conference organising, having the support of the venues was vital in order to implement our reduction initiatives, particularly in the areas of energy, water and waste data collection, waste management and sourcing of local and/or organic foods. This would have been aided if we had made it clear at the outset that these aspects were key selection criteria when selecting venues and if we had included these requirements within the contracts.

We found that most conference venues outsource the event organising and catering exclusively to one catering company and because of this we were reliant on the catering companies capabilities and willingness to assist. Additionally, because of this outsourcing, there was a disconnect between the facilities management and the event organization responsibility, and so, implementing, managing and monitoring reduction initiatives was difficult, particularly when you are not allowed access to the back of house areas. In some instances, there was the additional complication of food being prepared offsite, which further restricts management opportunities.

We found that working with one venue, in particular, that had previous experience in providing “Green Events” was invaluable and they were able to contribute to the management and measurement of the environmental impacts. As more and more organisations require this of an event, venues capacity to assist will increase.

Feedback from our delegate survey has also provided more insight on how we can achieve greater use of public transport, such as posting public transport tickets to delegates prior to the event, providing the location of hotels and venues on one interactive map that includes detailed public transport information such as timetables and routes and maybe, as one respondent suggested, even providing bicycles for all delegates to use.

Carbon and Ecological Footprint Calculator Assumptions

A number of assumptions had to be made in the calculation of the Carbon and Ecological Footprint Calculator, and so the measurement is not perfect. However, where assumptions have been made, we have tried to over-estimate to ensure that we are not under-reporting. A brief outline of the assumptions used is provided below, however, if you would like more information on the assumptions used then please email unep.fi@epa.vic.gov.au and we will be happy to assist, within the boundaries of our confidentiality requirements.

We used delegate survey responses to calculate actual travel and accommodation data for those who responded, for those who did not respond we used the capital city of their country of origin to assume the distance and mode of travel used. We also used the delegate survey to extrapolate the data for accommodation and travel during the event.

As only one of our venues were able to provide us with actual energy and water data, we had to use this data to estimate the usage at the other venues, making adjustments for size of the venue, resource intensity of the venue and duration of the event. This is of course, far from perfect, as the events for each venue were different in nature. For our waste calculations, we were able to perform waste assessments for two venues, which we then used to calculate the final venue’s waste.

Conclusions

The objective of the bi-annual UNEP FI Global Roundtables means that we are unable to reduce the key Carbon and Ecological Footprint producing activity, which is international flight. However, we can try to ensure that the Roundtable contributes to advancing towards a sustainable world where international travel does not have the large environmental impact that it currently does.

In the mean time, we can obtain comfort from the fact that we have been able to offset the full carbon emissions of this event and have worked to reduce our other environmental impacts as well, such as use of ecological intensive resources and waste generation.

We would like to thank our conference venues, Green Event sponsor and conference participants for supporting our efforts in this, without your commitment we would not have been able to achieve what we have.