



development studies
association

Sustainability Policy

Climate change and environmental degradation are serious problems that will make it more difficult for everyone to achieve equitable, sustainable development. The burdens of both the problems themselves and many of the proposed solutions to them will fall disproportionately on already-marginalised populations, who have done little to create the problems. Our field of development studies helps us understand that the root causes of these problems lie in the structures of a capitalist political economy, exacerbated by the power-oriented and sometimes cynical efforts of national governments to solve them, collectively and at home. While proposals for individualised consumer-oriented solutions to such large, structural problems are not a substitute for more meaningful action, the collective consumption choices of wealthy populations in the global north do contribute to climate change and environmental degradation. Therefore, the DSA Council recommends members consider taking some of the following steps to reduce their own impact.

A. Recommendations for conference organisers

1. Avoid distributing individual plastic water bottles or straws. Conference materials should encourage participants to bring their own bottles. However, water should be available, perhaps in the form of large refillable water dispensers, if the university infrastructure does not already have such options. The conference giveaway could be a reusable water bottle.
2. Offer participants vegetarian and vegan options at all meals. Consider at least one lunch that is vegetarian and vegan only.
3. Consider sustainable food options, such as fair trade, locally sourced, organic, and certified products.
4. Ask caterers to minimise plastic and other waste in meal packaging.
5. Offer participants the choice (in registration) to opt out of receiving a printed programme and use an online version.
6. Encourage participants to choose low-carbon transportation options to the conference, such as trains.
7. Seek ways to enable people to engage remotely.
8. Seek green-certified accommodations.

9. Recycle badges.

10. Consider arrangements that allow for virtual participation.

B. Recommendations for DSA organisational policies

1. Encourage study groups and other subgroups to consider virtual as well as physical meetings, including webinars and other options.

2. Have NomadIT research virtual meeting software for general use by DSA members. New social and communications technologies are changing rapidly and may enable alternatives that were not possible only a short time before.

3. Encourage travel using public forms of transportation and shared journeys.

4. In conference evaluation, ask about how participants travelled to the conference. Follow up with possible policies depending on travel chosen.

5. Push the research councils to allow reimbursement for higher costs that reflect more sustainable approaches.

6. Encourage institutional members to consider their own sustainability policies and examine the best practices of others.

C. Recommendations for individual members

1. Encourage individuals to reduce the number of flights they make, by choosing trains and shared journeys or alternative communications.

2. Check your individual ecological footnote or carbon footprint.

3. Consider carbon offsets for official travel, especially flights.

4. Engage with relevant research and teaching to bring a critical perspective on the sources of unsustainability into our work and advance structural change.