**Forest Service Checklist for Planning Successful Virtual Events**

Federal policy, including [Executive Order 13693, *Planning for Federal Sustainability in the Next Decade*](https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/03/25/2015-07016/planning-for-federal-sustainability-in-the-next-decade), and Federal Travel Regulations, encourage sustainable events. Forest Service Handbook (FSH 6509.33 Chapter 300) also states,“It is the responsibility of the Forest Service Deputy Chiefs to…Ensure units manage resources in an environmentally positive way, which includes giving preference to virtual events and facilities which consume less energy.”

This checklist guides event planners in planning and hosting successful virtual events (i.e., all participants join remotely) by providing actions to consider and related resources. This also supports “Getting to YES” on the FS Climate Change Scorecard, Element 10 v2.0, Core Action 5, which asks units to: “Incorporate sustainable practices into onsite events and/or replace some onsite events that require travel with hybrid or virtual events.”

The [***Greening Your Events* Web site**](http://www.fs.fed.us/about-agency/greening-your-events) has more resources all event types and checklists for onsite and hybrid events.

Fill out the [Green Event Feedback Form](http://www.fs.fed.us/sites/default/files/green-event-feedback-form-v1.pdf) after your event so we can learn from your efforts.

| Actions for Successful Virtual Events | Resources  |
| --- | --- |
| * Train event organizers or technology hosts in how to effectively use virtual technologies to engage participants (e.g., VTC, LiveMeeting, Adobe Connect, Skype for Business, SharePoint, and AT&T).
 | [FSTEAMS Collaboration Site](https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/fs) (Adobe Connect, Skype for Business, and LiveMeeting resources)[FS Video TeleConference](https://ems-portal.usda.gov/sites/fs-cio/service-catalog/Pages/Video-Teleconferencing.aspx)  |
| * Arrange for a facilitator familiar with virtual events to ensure good pacing, transitions, polling, Q&A, and other interactive and engaging components.
 | Learn how: [Success Factors for Virtual Meetings](https://www.facilitate.com/support/facilitator-toolkit/docs/Six-Critical-Success-Factors-for-Successful-Virtual-Meetings.pdf) (see more resources on the [Greening Your Events Web site](http://www.fs.fed.us/about-agency/greening-your-events/resources-support)).OR Hire or [Digital Visions](https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/fs-rd-vms/SitePages/Home.aspx) or [InRe](http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/inre/index.shtml) Enterprise Team for virtual event hosting/facilitation. |
| * Switch up the format often (present, discuss, poll, etc.), show presenters on webcam, engage participants often, and take breaks.
 | [Guide for Effective Virtual Meetings](http://www.sae.org/standardsdev/virt_meetings.pdf)[FS Virtual Event Logistics Planning Template](http://www.fs.fed.us/sites/default/files/fs-virtual-event-logistics-planning-v1.docx) |
| * Ensure broadcast location(s) has adequate internet/phone line connections to host the virtual event component and complete a run-through to test the setup.
 | [Webinar Run-through Checklist](http://www.fs.fed.us/sites/default/files/webinar_runthrough_checklist.docx) |
| * Develop an environmental statement for the event and include that in event materials, so participants are aware of the green aspects.
 | [MeetGreen Sustainability Policy template](http://meetgreen.com/resources/sustainability-policy-template/) |
| * Use online media (Web sites, email, etc.) to market the event and, if relevant, for event registration (to minimize paper and printing).
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| * Provide handouts in the online platform, and instruct attendees to access the files electronically vs. printing.
 | [FSTEAMS Collaboration Site](https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/fs) (Adobe Connect, Skype for Business, and LiveMeeting resources) |
| * Encourage attendees to consider sustainable options for their lunch and snacks, e.g., locally sourced, organic, reusable container.
 | [Local Harvest](http://www.localharvest.org/) |
| * Use an electronic evaluation format for participants to provide feedback after the event (and to reduce paper evaluations).
 | [FS Virtual and Hybrid Event Participant Evaluation Form](http://www.fs.fed.us/sites/default/files/media_wysiwyg/virtual-hybrid-participant-evaluation.pdf) |
| * Provide accessibility features, such as live captions and keyboard commands for live event and recordings.
 | [Resources for accessibility on the *Greening Your Events* site](http://www.fs.fed.us/about-agency/greening-your-events/resources-support). [Tips for Accessible Virtual Events with focus on using Adobe Connect](http://www.fs.fed.us/sites/default/files/accessible-virtual-events-tips-april-2016.pdf). |
| * Calculate the cost- and travel time-savings and greenhouse gas emissions avoided from reduced travel to and from this event.
 | [FS Virtual and Hybrid Event GHG and Travel Cost Estimator Spreadsheet](http://www.fs.fed.us/sites/default/files/media_wysiwyg/virtual-hybrid-event-ghg-travel-cost-estimator-v1.xlsx) |
| * Share successes, barriers, and challenges to meet and implement the actions in this checklist, so others can learn from your efforts.
 | [FS Green Event Feedback Form](http://www.fs.fed.us/sites/default/files/green-event-feedback-form-v1.pdf) |