

SUSTAINABILITY AT EPIC THE IRISH EMIGRATION MUSEUM

Sustainable tourism is tourism that takes full account of its current and future environmental, social and economic impacts, addressing the needs of the environment, host communities, visitors and the industry.

- UNWTO

At EPIC we adhere to the above definition of sustainability in tourism from the UNWTO. We see ourselves as custodians of the stories of the Irish diaspora and The chq Building we call home. It is our responsibility to behave sustainably - in a way that preserves, protects and strengthens these important cultural and built resources - to ensure their survival for future generations to enjoy.

Our focus on sustainability isn't just internal - we are committed to contributing to the flourishing of local organisations and the surrounding Docklands area. We do this by providing jobs, events, programming and increased footfall through our museum. We partner with local community initiatives to invest in the future of the tourism workforce by growing our business and with our student transition year and work experience programmes. We also regularly collaborate with and offer our spaces to external parties that provided a platform for local groups and the community to connect, and a vibrant local cultural scene for the surrounding neighbourhood.

We believe this journey is ongoing and are committed to continuous improvement of our carbon footprint and journey towards becoming more sustainable within the tourism industry.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 goals that provide a blueprint to address the economic, social, and environmental problems the world is currently facing. At EPIC we have aligned our sustainability action plan with five of the SDGs to follow international best practice and enhance our commitment to sustainability and responsible tourism.



OUR ACTION PLAN

EPIC is committed to embedding sustainability in the day to day running of our business. To that end, EPIC has outlined five key actions which we will use to guide our actions on our journey towards sustainability:

1. Reduce, reuse and recycle
2. Work with tenants to reduce food waste within CHQ
3. Reduce single use plastics across the organisation with the goal of eliminating completely
4. Reduce our carbon footprint per visitor
5. Monthly follow up and communication of key activities internally and externally

We hold ourselves accountable through our Sustainability Working Group. They meet monthly to help drive the implementation of our action plan, and report on regularly measured targets such as energy cost per visitor, waste usage, and total carbon footprint. We benchmark ourselves against other attractions in Ireland via Failte Ireland channels.

COMPANY WIDE COMMITMENTS

- Sustain the stories of and represent the Irish diaspora both now and for the future
- Membership of Green Tourism
- Make our sustainable actions transparent both onsite and on our website
- Encourage and educate our visitors and the local community on sustainable actions they can take e.g. clearly displaying public transport links to the building on our website and ticketing page and providing bicycle racks around the building
- Enable flexible and remote work from home to help reduce our carbon footprint
- Support our employees to upskill in the area of sustainability
- Analyse our print and digital footprints and make practical adjustments to improve both
- Work towards and introduce more circular economy elements to EPIC/CHQ such as grey water recycling and more sustainable options such as a public water fountain
- Collaborate with external groups to help build positive relationships and support local initiatives
- Monthly reporting of KPI's including carbon footprint and waste per visitor (waste in kilo/visitor and cost/visitor and electric for CHQ and EPIC) and remain committed to continuous improvement of waste/water/electric usage
- Work towards eliminating all single use plastics
- Use public transport when possible

COMPANY WIDE PURCHASING POLICY

- We champion local small businesses whenever we can to reduce emissions from delivery and supply chains
- We choose suppliers who treat their workers well, pay fair wages, and follow labour laws
- We say no to child labour and support diversity and inclusion
- We prefer products and services that are kind to the environment and ones that opt for eco-friendly packaging and a small carbon footprint.
- When purchasing new items to replace old, we seek to first donate or recycle items such as projectors, shelving and storage, and other electronic items.

Sustainable Development Goals Alignment:



MUSEUM

For the Museum Team, sustainability is linked to cultural heritage, and the daily operations of our exhibitions and galleries.

Commitments:

1. Engage, educate and inspire our visitors, to build awareness around what sustainability means, and to behave in a more sustainable manner in our museum and in the local area
2. Sustain the stories of and represent the Irish diaspora both now and for the future
3. Reduce waste and review new exhibition and programming additions using sustainability criteria, including environmental and economic impact and future legacy
4. Improve language around sustainability in communications with visitors, clearly benchmark, communicate and encourage sustainable choices, e.g. use of public transport
5. New exhibitions, initiatives, collaborations and public programming should clearly prioritise migration and diaspora heritage, and detail the legacy of the project in regards to sustaining these stories for future generations
6. Education programming must utilise sustainable skills and heritage practices

Long-term Goals:

- To improve the sustainability of our biannual exhibitions. While they are reusable in that we can reprint on the other side, and are often loaned to external collaborators, there are sustainability implications in that they only have a 5 year shelf life, and incur shipping and insurance costs. There is room for improvement with the materials, and ideally we would look towards implementing a digital solution utilising LED screens.
- To join the Museum standards programme

Sustainable Development Goals Alignment:



FACILITIES

Maintaining The chq Building and correct management of waste, electricity, gas and water are facilities top priority.

Commitments:

1. Have the best recycling, compost and waste facilities in place and easily accessible for all tenants and visitors, and work towards replacing facilities with sustainable alternatives as soon as practically possible.
2. Encourage all our food outlets and contractors to follow and implement best practice sustainability procedures
3. Consider all legacy aspects of new initiatives or hardware to be introduced. Prioritise donating materials and hardware once no longer needed
4. Complete energy audits of the building every quarter, and the installation of additional metres to measure energy use across the building, including extra thermostats
5. Encourage waste sorting by providing waste sorting bins in several spaces of the building - compost, recycling, glass, etc.
6. Reduce usage of water which is measured quarterly and electricity and waste materials per visitor which are measured monthly
7. From October 2023 we switched to a green energy supplier
8. Ensure each office has a recycling point and are actively using it

Long Term Goals:

- Encouragement of customer incentives for reusable cups and materials by all tenants
- Reduce waste by 5% through the provision of alternative options
- A new water heater system and more powerful air conditioner that runs more efficiently
- Remove gas water heater
- Addition of more plants in the building
- Focus on reduction of carbon footprint over a 12 month period and then consider carbon offsetting to achieve carbon neutrality for what usage cannot be eliminated
- Staffing to support more building-wide sustainability initiatives such as a functioning roof garden
- Increase promotion of biodiversity in the docklands and around The chq Building by looking into bee bricks for new build, planting local flowering plants for pollinators, and ensuring that native birds habitats are unbothered during nesting months.

Sustainable Development Goals Alignment:



PEOPLE & CULTURE

By adapting our ways of working to imbed and prioritise sustainable people practices we can ensure that our people are supported to grow, develop and continue to make a positive contribution to EPIC while playing to their strengths. We are committed to making EPIC a great place to work where people can build careers in tourism, hospitality, and culture.

Commitments:

1. Digitise all HR processes and move to paperless HR systems including Bamboo and CleverCards.
2. Add EPIC's Sustainability Policy to staff induction training.
3. Source additional training where valuable, to progress employee understanding of sustainability and sustainable actions
4. Tie sustainability to department and personal goals on Bamboo by January 2024
5. Promote awareness among EPIC staff to use sustainable transport options to come to work by providing access to schemes such as Bike to Work and Annual Travel cards
6. Provide staff with opportunity to contribute to local initiatives such as supporting charities and Docklands clean up days
7. Work with local youth groups, schools and programmes to provide employment opportunities and increase awareness of EPIC and its role in the Docklands area. For example, TY work experience programmes, giving talks at local schools and providing free entry to EPIC for local residents through schemes such as the DEIS schools entitlement to build awareness of the career options in the tourism industry.

Sustainable Development Goals Alignment:



EVENTS

EPIC/CHQ has already been recognized as an eco-friendly venue by several event planners and served as the venue for the 6th European Climate Change Adaptation Conference in June 2023

Commitments:

1. Encourage our guests to use our digital assets for all event signage, preventing single use printing. When strictly necessary, use recycled paper and vegetable ink.
2. Replace all single use utensils with bamboo, and phase out single use paper cups.
3. Highlight our sustainable partners and encourage clients to use local producers.
4. Ensure recycling and compost points are easily accessible to event partners and educate event clients on the benefits and how to properly avail of all the waste sorting bins including our glass, electrical waste bins and cardboard compactor.
5. Reduce food waste by properly advising clients on recommended portions and including sustainable takeaway boxes for guests to take home any leftovers.
6. Work closely with other departments to coordinate events, site-visits and VIP guests to maximise on heat and energy usage
7. Reinforcing the venue's central location as an USI, allowing our guests to use most of the public transportation and walking (walking distance from key points like the Convention Centre and several hotels). Providing car pools and safe modes of transportation options for staff when events end.

Long term goals:

- Individual control of the EPIC galleries exhibition screens and lights – at the moment, even if we have an event only in one gallery, the whole museum needs to be on, wasting a lot of energy
- Dedicated recycle and compost facilities for events
- Introduce ways of incentivising clients based on their sustainable behaviours
- Offer more digital alternatives to printing e.g. an iPad for running orders, and continue to look at ways of updating events technology
- Collaborate with third parties, attend industry conferences and training and meet with other businesses to learn from their sustainability practices, e.g. Croke Park

Sustainable Development Goals Alignment:



RETAIL

We are proud that 87% of our suppliers are Irish businesses, and we support and nurture local suppliers as this also reduces the need for transport and our overall carbon footprint.

Commitments:

1. Increase the visibility of our supplier's sustainability practices both in-store and online to follow our company wide purchasing policy
2. Work with small businesses and start-ups to champion smaller Irish brands and champion emerging Irish designers
3. Work with businesses that have established sustainability practices such as Hairy Baby in Cork, with materials certified by Oeko-Tex Confidence
4. Package all orders with recycled packaging and reuse any packaging that comes from our suppliers to minimise our overall waste levels.
5. Decrease our non-recyclable waste by reducing printed receipts
6. Use digital screens in the store that display our products and deals to reduce the need to print advertising materials
7. Follow the Sustainable Irish Retail Action Guide, an initiative from Retail Excellence, to guide our retail sustainability journey. For every item sold from our Mary Robinson collection we donate a portion of the proceeds to The Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice which works to secure global justice for the people most vulnerable to the impact of climate change.

Long term goals:

- Introduce more incentives for customers to shop more sustainably including charging for bags/reusable tote bags and promotions on sustainable products
- Implement a donation box for returning visitor passports and/or coffee cups, where the returned products will be recycled into new passports or paper bags
- Stock water, in paper-based, plastic free cartons.
- Adapt our main entrance and exit doors to automatically open and close which will retain heat and reduce our energy use while still being accessible to all visitors.

Sustainable Development Goals Alignment:



FINANCE

Sustainability impacts the Finance team mostly in their day to day activities rather than across financial processes, which have already been optimised. However, sustainability for them is ensuring that each member of their team has a wide array of sustainable actions they can opt to take, and providing support in financial choices and grants applications so that each department can run as efficiently as possible.

Commitments:

1. No single use cups in the department, introducing purified/filtered water and coffee pot recycling, and encouraging each member of the team to use public transport, cycling or walking to work, among others.
2. Maintaining a close working relationship with Technology and the CHQ project team by continuing dual-roles across both departments.
3. Ensure all departments work with their suppliers to be compliant with our purchasing policy, see page 2
4. Develop a guiding policy for suppliers e.g. electricity, so that the wider company is aware of the impact of their decisions, and develop reporting to reflect this.
5. Supporting grant applications for sustainable improvement company wide.
6. Only use print files and processes e.g. signatures, where dictated by external businesses, and having the conversation with them where possible to encourage departments and/or these businesses to reduce their requirements or go digital
 - a. Implementing a request for digital invoices with all suppliers and putting marketing into email signatures to request digital invoices and files only.
 - b. Developing a policy for paper record keeping, removing old files, and reducing the need for paper files where possible.

Long term goals:

- Assessing more grants for sustainability
- Developing a separate budget for sustainability and associated cost lines so that the company can track investment and report
- Create a sustainable supplier mandate and ensure all new suppliers fit standards of sustainability

Sustainable Development Goals Alignment:



TECH

For the Technology department, sustainability is ensuring that all of the company's software and hardware are operating as efficiently as possible, and that staff take into account their sustainability footprint.

Commitments:

1. Aim to repair or reuse all tech in the museum and for office staff, before replacing.
2. To keep up with industry standards and have most efficient technology in place and replace all screens with LED
3. Educate and support staff to be more sustainable in their habits when it comes to their digital footprint
4. Make all laptops standard, so that all accessories can be repurposed and reused by any staff member, e.g. chargers. Maximise reuse, the industry average is 5 years for a laptop but EPIC has a policy of up to 8 years reuse. Repurpose old laptops - one spare downstairs - 7/8 laptops disposed of in 7 years
5. Attend more conferences such as AIB Tech Summit, London Tech Summit and get proper metrics of industry standards in place for the company to compare to. Replace technology with more energy efficient and sustainable upgrades as soon as these are available, such as the move to LED.
6. Monitor and report on staff usage, have systems in place to help them with their digital footprint such as auto archiving emails after 6 months. Implement regular staff training and reminders on sustainable digital etiquette to reduce their footprint, such as not having your signature on reply emails and not sending emails to say thanks
7. Donate electronics to be reused in order to minimise electronic waste, which is more toxic than plastic

Long term goals:

- Hiring an onsite programmer, so EPIC does not have to rely on external companies to update software, which is costly and time consuming
- Be able to shut down certain galleries/programmer
- To lead EPIC in implementing offsetting projects by providing more detailed reporting on the technological impacts

Sustainable Development Goals Alignment:



OPERATIONS

Sustainability for the Operations department is all about the practicalities of the day-to-day running of the business. This means finding a way to balance both the needs of visitors and staff, all while supporting sustainable business growth.

Commitments:

1. Working alongside other departments, Operations will endeavour to
 - a. Always work to minimise museum operational hours, closely monitoring visitor habits to reduce energy usage e.g. by opening up the museum as close to first visitor time as possible and only starting the escalator when the first visitors have made it through the museum to the retail store.
 - b. Utilising timers wherever possible to minimise charging times for audio guides
 - c. Install recycling bins for visitors to use in the museum
 - d. Do an analysis of cleaning materials used in the museum and find alternative to/reduce usage of blue paper towels
2. Where printed or disposable elements are required, such as uniforms, museum maps and education materials, carefully analyse suppliers' sustainability policies and use suppliers that use and source their materials sustainably, such as recycled paper and vegetable ink. If there is a local option available, opt for local rather than global.
3. Operations will endeavour to support staff by working with other departments to provide the following (among more):
 - a. Opportunities to listen to, support, advocate and act on behalf of staff wellbeing, such as implementing longer periods at ticket desk in natural lighting during darker winter months
 - b. Act on staff queries, such as testing water quality from taps
 - c. Provide a social calendar for staff social wellbeing
 - d. Clear information on schemes available to staff, such as Bike to Work
 - e. Invest in training and tools for work through focused internal development programmes and our participation in the Failte Ireland Employer Excellence Programme, among others
 - f. Provide career development and progression opportunities across the company and support our people to try new things, cross-train in other department and sideways moves

Long term goals:

- Implement a clear leadership development programme alongside a detailed training programme for staff to broaden their understanding of sustainability
- In regards to visitor, education and exhibit materials, advocate for a move to digital versions, for example digital trails and a 'design a GAA uniform' touch screen game
- Reduce absenteeism and safeguard staff's mental and physical wellbeing in museum with increased presence of plants, chairs and working cooling system fans
- Implementing a system of recognition for staff e.g. WorkHuman or First Class card
- Improve staff safety, wellbeing and sustainable action taking further by providing electrical car charging and bike shed for staff

Sustainable Development Goals Alignment:



MARKETING

Sustainability is about managing and making the most of digital assets, making the move from print to digital, wherever possible while considering the impact of our digital footprint.

Commitments:

1. Marketing will work to actively decrease their print budget year on year by:
 - a. Relying more on digital signage, esp. including more in the Retail store fit out.
 - b. Reducing printed collateral by having QR codes at Trade shows that lead to digital brochures and moving any visitor collateral online.
2. Outsource printing of education materials to companies that use recycled paper and sustainable policies. Have a previous year's comparison of flyer/ brochure printing, in order to understand the impact of reducing production and advocate for further cuts.
3. Develop more sustainable routines in the Marketing department, including the following initiatives:
 - a. Switching off laptops at the end of day instead of putting them in sleep mode
 - b. Introducing a new file storage policy and file items in an efficient way
 - c. Have more offline meetings where employees turn off laptops during this time rather than leaving on sleep mode
4. Develop a policy for reuse of unused materials/brochures. Sort through Education materials every month, and donate those that are no longer required to charity

Long term goals:

- Acquiring new technology for screen proofing
- Updating museum technology to be more user friendly and require less software output
- Work with CHQ tenants to introduce sustainability marketing campaign to encourage reusable dishes

Sustainable Development Goals Alignment:



SALES

Sustainability for sales means tracking note of a carbon footprint and that for our partners and working to reduce our impact as well as highlight the sustainable actions of EPIC the Irish Emigration Museum to customers.

Commitments:

1. Our sales team recommends and promotes low-impact travel options to visitors, including eco-friendly transportation and accommodations that prioritise energy efficiency and waste reduction.
2. Commit to providing digital educational materials for travel agents to enhance their understanding of sustainable tourism practices. This empowers them to communicate the importance of responsible tourism to their client
3. Utilize digital or reusable assets for sales mission trips
4. Encourage and promote the use of environmentally friendly transportation options, such as electric vehicles, hybrid cars, or public transportation, for travel within destinations
5. Limit the number of sales trips to only those that are necessary, fly economy, seek to bundle trips and limit number of person on each trip and use public transport while travelling.

Long term goals:

- Promote EPIC as a sustainable tourist attraction and work with travel agents to create travel packages to highlight other destinations which also act in a sustainable manner
- Reduce number of flights overall
- Use TapiTag digital business cards to reduce the need for single use paper cards

Sustainable Development Goals Alignment:

