

McGill Sustainable Events Certification Program

Carbon Offsets

What?

Carbon offsets are voluntary payments to third-party organizations to compensate for harmful greenhouse gas emissions. In order to mitigate the effects of these emissions, carbon offsets can be used to fund developments like carbon sequestration (i.e., tree planting) and renewable energy infrastructure. Carbon offsets are measured in tonnes of CO₂-equivalents (or tCO₂e).

Why?

Nearly every aspect of your event can create greenhouse gas emissions in our shared atmosphere (i.e., travel, catering, energy production). The McGill Sustainable Events program emphasizes carbon emissions related to transportation. For details about the environmental impacts of travel and why it is important to reduce travel-related emissions, please read the [Sustainable Travel and Mobility Guide](#).

How?

Step 1: Use a carbon calculator to estimate your event's carbon emissions related to transportation.

For detailed calculations on travel-related emissions, event planners can use the [McGill Carbon Calculator](#) (Mc3Gill). The website offers a platform for event planners to create their own event page where event participants can “check in” to the event by entering their departure destination and mode of transportation. The Mc3Gill calculator will estimate the total carbon emissions generated by all participants checking in to your event. Talk to your Event Consultant for more details on how to set up an event on the Mc3Gill website or to inquire about other carbon calculator options.

Step 2 (Optional): Communicate the total estimated carbon emissions of your event in relatable terms during or after your event. [Natural Resources Canada](#) offers a greenhouse gas equivalencies calculator in which you can translate your emissions into the approximate equivalent number of litres of gasoline consumed, average homes' electricity use for one year, number of propane cylinders used for home barbecues, and other metrics. Use the “If You Have Emissions Data” tab and enter the amount of emissions calculated using the appropriate measuring unit.

Step 3: Purchase carbon offsets for your event through the [McGill Offsetting Program](#). The offsetting projects put forward by the McGill Offsetting Program were selected by an Offset Selection Committee composed of students, faculty, and staff at McGill. Project criteria were developed to fit our context and mission at McGill. You can learn more about each project by clicking on the “More Info” button for each offsetting project on the Offsetting Program website.