1. Brief description of Event (50-100 words):

The Conference addressed the issue of sustainable solid waste management through the promotion of safe practices & energy-efficient technologies. With more than 200 participants from 68 countries, the event stimulated the interest of scientists and business practitioners and informed them about the latest developments in the field of municipal solid waste management. The main topics of the event were as follows: separation at source, biological treatment, treatment at central facilities, waste prevention, bio-waste utilization, recycling promotion, sludge management, agricultural and livestock waste, management of specific waste streams (construction and demolition waste, waste from electrical and electronic equipment, etc.).

2. What were the benefits of attending and what did you gain from the experience in terms of transferable skills and knowledge.

Apart from presenting my own paper on the implementation of landfill gas-to-energy technology in developing nations, I had a chance to exchange ideas and network with some prominent representatives of the European and broader international academia and businesses. Since the topic of my presentation – i.e. affordable sustainable technology – was directly related to my previous professional experience and current academic interest, I was particularly interested in receiving critical comments and potential suggestions for the improvement of my research findings. Having got both, I also obtained important skills of presenting scientific papers to a panel of international experts.

Listening to the professionals from all over the world helped me to get a broader insight into the subjects of waste management and sustainability. Since a number of presenters from Africa and Latin America covered similar topics, it also gave me additional ideas on how to make landfill gas-to-energy technology more affordable in developing nations by demonstrating the key challenges faced by the businesses implementing this technological solution.

In addition to that, a special workshop on the industrial operation and the support to the industries in order to improve their performance with parallel environmental and financial benefits (organized on the 24th of June) helped me to indicate the most crucial areas for potential activity in the future. Specifically, while planning to work for energy industries in developing nations straight after the graduation, I am particularly grateful for the data on the most technologically-developed countries and areas in terms of waste management. This will support me in finding business partners and establishing cooperation strategies.

3. What actions will you be taking as a result of attending or by making new networking contacts.

Having established firm contacts with a number of business and academic professionals, I will consider developing this rapport into a fully-fledged business partnership. This will be especially topical in the foreseeable future when I will be working for renewable energy industry in developing nations. Apart from that, my academic contacts obtained at the conference will help me to stay updated in terms of most
recent technological and scientific breakthroughs. Additionally, I might potentially consult these specialists while conducting my PhD research in the future.

4. Can you share any additional resources produced in connection with the event (e.g. feedback from participants, training resources, website links, and additional materials).

Apart from obtaining important feedback – i.e. constructive critics and suggestions for further improvement, I was given access to the online training resources of the National Technical University of Athens. Additionally, my paper was selected for publication in the Journal of Environmental Management, Environmental Science & Pollution Research:

https://link.springer.com/journal/11356#

5. Tips/experience learned from the event

Future participants should consider early applications as the ‘early bird fee’ is usually lower. This will allow saving additional funds for the participation. Early accommodation booking in Athens is also crucial because of the extreme popularity of this destination among the tourists.

6. Any additional comments or information regarding the event

The event organizers were extremely interested in establishing and broadening cooperation with the University of St Andrews in general, and the School of Geography and Geosciences, in particular.