38. Environmental Sustainability

Updated 1 November 2023

Understanding environmental sustainability has become essential to all sectors of society and the economy to meet the challenges of the global ecological and climate crisis. All sectors need to adapt business models to manage changing supply chains, extreme weather, public opinion and new guidance and legislation.

This chapter of the Purple Guide advises event organisers on best practices for environmental sustainability at live outdoor events and provides a reference for local authorities and other stakeholders.

Disclaimer

Please note: The information contained in this chapter sets out good practice and provides pointers to legislation that should be considered by event organisers. However, it is industry guidance and does not necessarily cover everything that organisers need to consider for a particular event. Organisers should also check national legislation and local authority requirements.

This first edition of the guidance has been written for England. Readers should be aware that there may be variations to legislation, guidance and targets for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. We will work with partners in the regions to adapt the content for future editions.

This chapter will be updated regularly to acknowledge changes in best practice, guidance and legislation. Feedback is welcome to (mailto:admin@thepurpleguide.co.uk)admin@thepurpleguide.co.uk (mailto:admin@thepurpleguide.co.uk)

Glossary of Terms

The terminology, abbreviations and acronyms used to talk about sustainability can be a challenge for non-experts. We have made an effort to use accessible language in this chapter, but there may be terms that readers are not familiar with, or wish to understand better. For guidance, please refer to this glossary of sustainability terms (https://www.vision2025.org.uk/glossary-of-sustainability-terms/) on the Vision: 2025 website.

Key Points

Highlights from this chapter include:

- **Why to implement sustainable practices at outdoor events**
- **How to create an environmental strategy**
- **Practical actions event organisers can take to reduce environmental impacts in areas such as materials and waste, transport, food, and energy.**
- **Avoiding greenwashing in communications**
- **Working with partners and sponsors**
- **Protecting biodiversity and ecology**
- **Links to relevant guidance, legislation, and resources.**

Introduction

The Paris Agreement in 2015 (COP 21) committed the 196 participating governments to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, to ensure a liveable future.

UK Government legislation commits the UK to achieving net zero emissions by 2050 and cutting emissions by 78% by 2035. Every year there are new laws and guidance relating to practices such as plastics, other materials, and many other areas of business that affect live events.

In the UK music industry, all 14 association members of LIVE have ratified the Beyond Zero Declaration to deliver measurable and targeted action on climate change, with the ultimate aim of reaching net zero emissions by 2030.

Why consider environmental sustainability at live events?

- The global climate and ecological crisis require every sector and business to commit to changes that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prevent pollution and protect ecosystems to safeguard the environment for future generations.
- Current and future changes to UK legislation and the expectations of local authorities to demonstrate environmental practices and report emissions mean that event organisers will need to adapt to changing requirements relating to funding, tendering, site permissions and licensing.
- Audience expectations are changing: Industry surveys have shown that festival audiences increasingly expect events to take action to protect the environment.

- Risk mitigation: Extreme weather related to climate change is already affecting live events. In future, financing and insurance decisions are likely to involve environmental considerations.
- Reducing environmental impacts through the use of new technologies has other benefits for event organisers, such as cost savings, improved logistics and better audience experiences.
- Events can be a voice for positive change: they have a public profile, relationships with audiences, and the ability to model new ways of doing things and ideas.

Governance and Strategy

Introduction

Any organisation seeking to reduce environmental impacts needs a strategy to achieve change. The processes by which decisions are made and how they are implemented (or not implemented) will determine whether the strategy leads to positive results.

What you need to consider
The overall process you have in place for managing, measuring and reporting environmental impacts at your event(s).

Best Practices

- Publish an environmental policy online.
- Put an annual action plan in place.
- Identify a person responsible to lead on sustainability.
- Include sustainability as a key criterion in purchasing.
- Assess biodiversity impacts and necessary mitigation measures pre-event.
- Measure and report impacts (including CO2e emissions) annually or on a project basis, ideally using a third party who works with recognised standards.*

ISO20121 is the only international standard for sustainable event management (currently under review). It is considered inaccessible to many smaller businesses. Several voluntary certifications are available as paid-for services.

Taking Action

The most meaningful and successful environmental strategies are:

- Specific to the nature of an organisation and its activities and impacts.
- Genuinely supported by management and stakeholders.
- Based on engagement with staff.

Two key documents will help develop the foundation of a successful approach:

- **An Environmental Policy:** This is your statement of commitment to sustainability, setting overarching ambitions over several years.

- **An action plan:** This is a detailed annual plan that sets out what you're aiming to achieve, with targets i.e., what, who, how and when. The plan can be event-specific or company-wide.

Collecting data is the first step. Knowing your impacts establishes your starting point or 'baseline', informs your strategy and helps you track progress.

Note to local authority representatives: You may be able to refer to existing local authority strategies - such as net zero or green events plans - to use as the basis for event-specific action plans.

Measuring and reporting

Measurement is vital to understanding and reducing environmental impacts, and to assess the success of changes.
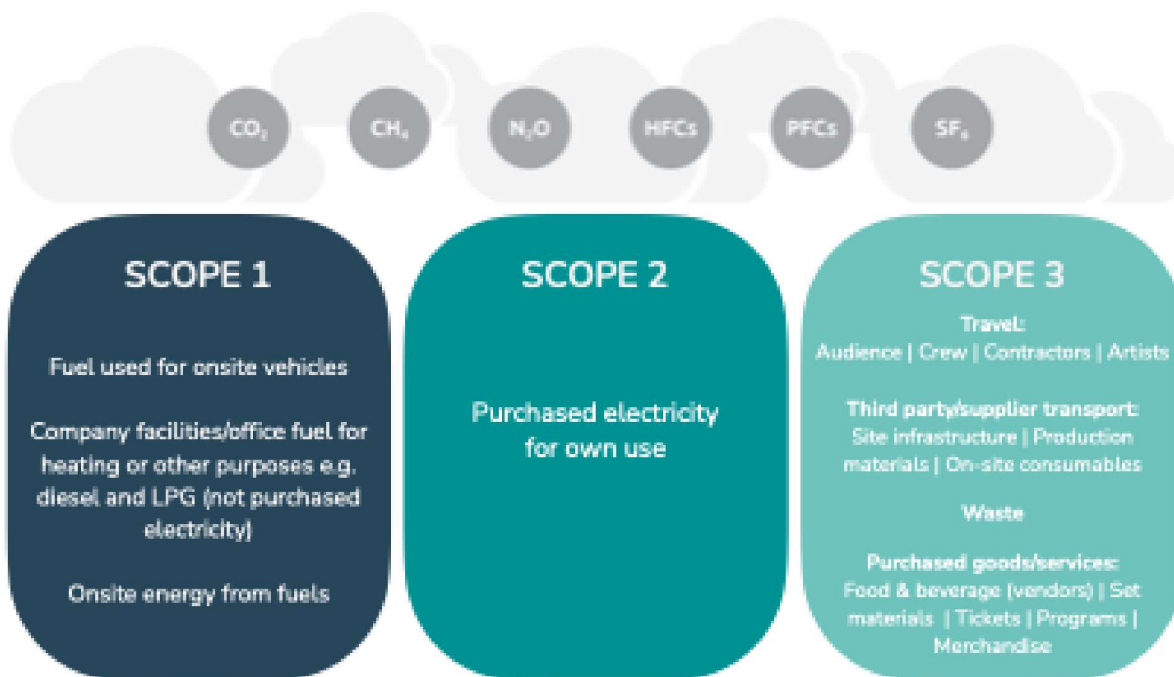
Organisations should measure their overall carbon footprint, which includes energy use, travel, materials and waste, food and drinks. Things to consider beyond carbon footprint are; the impact on ecology and biodiversity at festival sites, and direct pollution.

Some emissions are directly under festival organisers' control – for example, from onsite energy and company-owned vehicle travel – while others, such as from audience travel or supply chain impacts, are outside organisers' direct control but can be strongly influenced through incentives, contracts, communications and procurement choices.

Carbon accounting and reporting should be based on the internationally recognised system of scopes under the Global Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol, and nationally published carbon conversion factors for materials and activities (where available).

Note: Environmental impacts beyond emissions should also be considered and mitigated. See the Ecological Protection section of this chapter for guidance.

Greenhouse gas reporting scopes (GHG Protocol) and how they apply to the live events sector.

SCOPE 1
Fuel used for onsite vehicles

Company facilities/office fuel for heating or other purposes e.g. diesel and LPG (not purchased electricity)

Onsite energy from fuels

SCOPE 2
Purchased electricity for own use

SCOPE 3
Travel:
Audience | Crew | Contractors | Artists

Third party/supplier transport:
Site infrastructure | Production materials | On-site consumables

Waste

Purchased goods/services:
Food & beverage (vendors) | Set materials | Tickets | Programs | Merchandise

Scopes are defined in accordance with the Global Green House Gas Protocol. It is acknowledged that alongside carbon scopes, 'spheres' of influence' or 'degrees of control' play an important role in an organisation determining how to treat responsibility for emissions.

The GHG Protocol divides company emissions into 'scopes.' Scope 1 refers to emissions an organisation is directly responsible for releasing, Scope 2 emissions are those indirectly released, primarily through electricity use, and Scope 3 refers to all other emissions an organisation indirectly causes throughout the value chain.

Net Zero

In November 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a landmark report stating that urgent and unprecedented changes are needed, well before 2030, to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius and to avoid catastrophe due to climate change. To do this, we need to reach what is known as 'net zero' before 2050. Organisations across the world are setting net zero carbon emissions targets.

Best practice for net zero strategy in events:

- Measure and report at least scope 1 and 2 emissions (and aim to include scope 3) annually or for each event.
- Have a medium to long-term plan to substantially reduce emissions and set significant reduction targets.
- Responsibly invest in climate and nature to compensate for unavoidable emissions.

For further guidance refer to The Oxford Principles for Net Zero Aligned Carbon Offsetting. (https://www.smithschool.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2022-01/Oxford-Offsetting-Principles-2020.pdf) An ISO standard for net zero is currently under development.

Legislation and guidance

The UK has set legally binding targets to reach net zero by 2050, and an ambitious target to reduce national emissions by 78% by 2035 (compared to 1990 levels).

Currently, no legislation applies directly to live events, except reporting requirements for larger companies under the Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting Regulations (SECR), including greenhouse gas (GHG) reporting.

All 14 association members of LIVE have ratified the Beyond Zero Declaration to deliver measurable and targeted action on climate change, with the ultimate aim of reaching net zero emissions by 2030. Read more HERE (https://livemusic.biz/live-green/)

Further Resources

- Future Festival Tools e-learner module on creating an environmental strategy and guidelines on how to measure emissions from each key impact area HERE (https://www.futurefestivaltools.eu/courses/event-sustainability/).
- Guidance from Julie's Bicycle about Carbon Literacy (https://juliesbicycle.com/resource/briefing-report-putting-a-price-on-carbon/)
- Guidance for event organisers on what to measure and how to get started - Vision: 2025 webinar (https://youtu.be/X_AhYUFgFG8)
- Future Festival Tools Green Stories share case studies of best practices in creating environmental strategy (https://www.futurefestivaltools.eu/strategy/)

Note: There are many paid-for tools and services to support event organisers in measuring and reporting carbon emissions and other environmental impacts – search the Vision: 2025 Resources Hub HERE (https://www.vision2025.org.uk/resource-hub/) to find out more.

Impact Areas

ENERGY

Introduction

Our reliance on burning fossil fuels to generate energy is a key cause of climate change due to the greenhouse gas emissions they cause. Most outdoor temporary events currently use diesel generators as their main source of energy. As well as climate impacts, there is growing concern and awareness about the contribution burning diesel makes to localised air pollution issues. Pollution can increase the risk of respiratory diseases, strokes, learning disabilities, dementia and cancer.

What you need to consider

- Minimise energy use.
- Increase efficiency.
- Measure and understand energy use.
- Use more sustainable or low carbon energy sources.
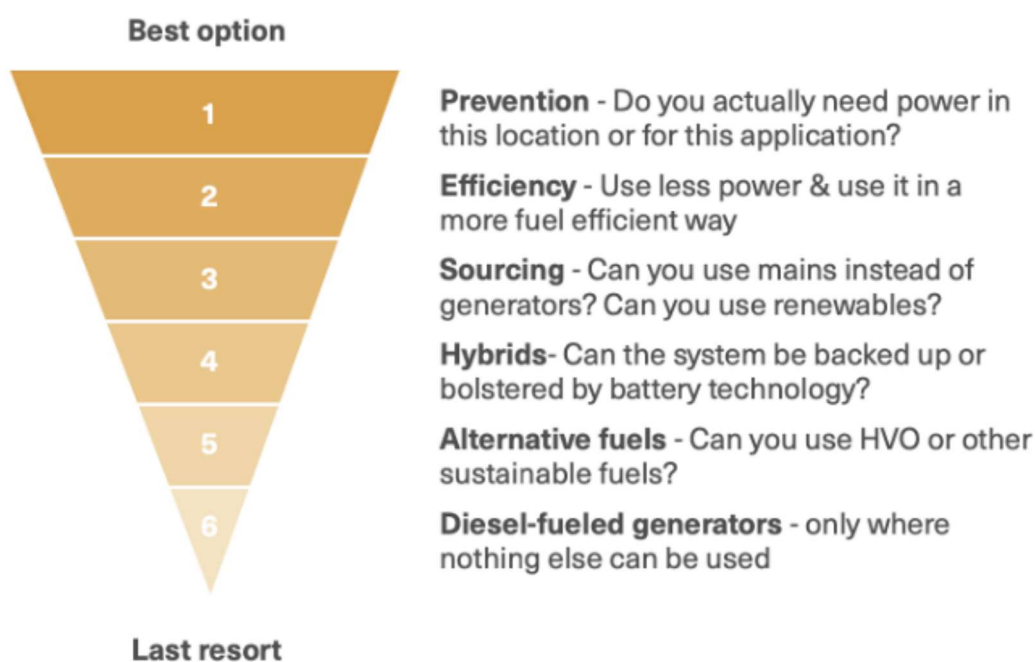
Best Practices

- Follow the Power Management Hierarchy when planning power at events (see below).
- Set targets to reduce fuel use and emissions (if there is no current data, make it your first action to measure fuel consumption in the next year).
- Work with key stakeholders to identify opportunities, e.g., lighting providers or catering providers.
- Agree on targets and actions in the contract with the energy provider, including providing a report.
- Work / communicate with power users to reduce demand.
- Work with all power users to accurately specify requirements in advance and match demand to generation onsite to avoid waste.
- Measure your energy and fuel usage (ask your power contractor to do this and provide a report).

Taking Action

The number one priority for any event looking to reduce their energy emissions is to reduce diesel consumption. A good starting point is to apply the principles of the Power Management Hierarchy to an event's power planning and procurement processes.

THE POWER MANAGEMENT HEIRARCHY

Best option

1	**Prevention** - Do you actually need power in this location or for this application?
2	**Efficiency** - Use less power & use it in a more fuel efficient way
3	**Sourcing** - Can you use mains instead of generators? Can you use renewables?
4	**Hybrids** - Can the system be backed up or bolstered by battery technology?
5	**Alternative fuels** - Can you use HVO or other sustainable fuels?
6	**Diesel-fueled generators** - only where nothing else can be used

Last resort

Energy sources at events: From best to worst for emissions.

1. Onsite renewable energy.
2. Grid connection, with a green tariff. *
3. Grid connection, with a standard tariff.
4. Generators using lower carbon fuel such as HVO, hybridised with batteries.
5. Generators using lower carbon fuel such as HVO.
6. Gas (LPG).
7. Generators using standard diesel.

*Green electricity tariffs vary in type and CO2e per kW hour - see guidance from the Centre for Sustainable Energy HERE (https://www.cse.org.uk/advice/green-electricity-tariffs/).

Measuring and reporting

All events need information to support good decision-making year to year. A post-event report from an energy provider should include as a minimum:

- Total fuel consumption (litres).
- Kilowatt-hours (kWh) – grid connection
- Power consumed versus total generation capacity of power source (%).
- Recommendation for future efficiency savings.

The comparable measure of an event's fuel efficiency is 'litres per person per day' because it can be used to compare events with different capacities. This can be worked out by dividing the total number of litres of fuel consumed by the event by the number of people attending and then dividing the resulting figure by the number of days.

Usually, the energy provider will collect data for an event organiser. They may use a software management system to collect information in real time or check generators at time intervals manually. For smaller events, the organiser may need to be responsible for this.

Legislation and guidance

There is no nationwide policy on energy sustainability that relates to events, so organisers generally must respond to specific guidance (if applicable) from each local authority, i.e., Low Emissions Zones (LEZs).

Further Resources

- Powerful Thinking's Smart Power Guide for Events HERE (https://www.vision2025.org.uk/reports-guides/the-smart-energy-guide-powerful-thinking/).
- Future Festival Tools e-Learner module on Energy HERE (https://www.futurefestivaltools.eu/courses/event-sustainability/).
- Future Festival Tools Green Stories: Case studies focused on best practice in Energy HERE (https://www.futurefestivaltools.eu/energy/).
- Fact sheets on the Powerful Thinking website (https://www.powerful-thinking.org.uk/resources/fact-sheets/)

Resources on Energy in Vision: 2025's Hub HERE. (https://www.vision2025.org.uk/resource-hub/energy/)

MATERIALS & WASTE

Introduction

At events, resources are brought in by different stakeholders: the organisation, suppliers, caterers, partners, and audiences. The main categories are typically:

- Production & decoration.
- Audience & campsite.
- Food & drinks serve ware.

What you need to consider

The choices you make about materials purchased and used onsite, and how waste is managed.

Best Practice(s)

- Incorporate circular economy principles when managing or selecting materials.
- Follow the Waste Management Hierarchy when managing waste.
- Put in place a sustainable purchasing/procurement policy.
- Get accurate information about what happens to your waste and require reports from contractors.

Taking Action

Under the UK Waste Regulations (2011) all businesses are required to apply the Waste Management Hierarchy when managing and disposing of resources.
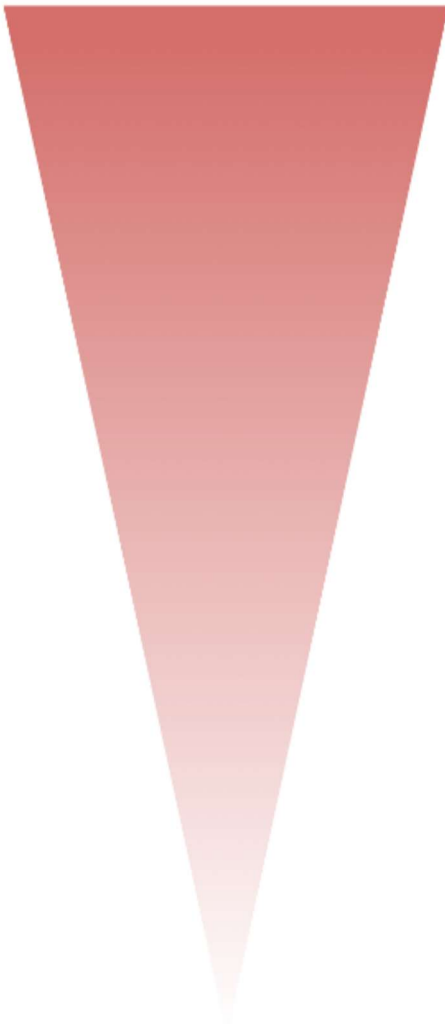
MINIMISATION AND PREVENTION

- Use less materials in design and manufacture.
- Keep products for longer and re-use.
- Re-use or re-purpose materials instead of sourcing new.
- Use less hazardous materials / materials with lower environmental impacts.

(PREPARING FOR) REUSE

- Check, clean, repair, refurbish – whole items or spare parts.
- Design for disassembly and re-use.

RECYCLING

- Includes composting.
- Not everything that is labelled as 'recyclable' can automatically be recycled at the majority of facilities or if it is in waste streams that are too contaminated - for example if something consists of two or more materials glued together.

OTHER RECOVERY

- Including anaerobic digestion for organic materials, and incineration with energy recovery / 'Energy from Waste' i.e. where materials are burned and the energy generated is captured.w

'DISPOSAL'

- Landfill and incineration without energy recovery.

Measuring and reporting

To manage, understand and reduce materials and waste (and their impacts), collecting data is vital. You need to know which materials are collected separately, and measure them in tonnes or kilograms, i.e.:

- Glass
- Paper/cardboard
- Plastic
- Aluminium
- Metals
- Organic/food waste
- Cooking oil
- Wood
- Building/demolition waste
- Other materials.

Also record the processing method for each material or mixed waste stream, i.e.:

- Recycling
- Composting/fermenting
- Refined to biofuel
- Incineration
- Landfill
- Other processing method.

Ask your waste contractor for proof of collection, waste material weights, and end of life processes in order to make a reliable overview of the results. For more guidance on what to ask your contractor read the Vision: 2025 Festival Industry Materials and Waste Briefing HERE (https://www.vision2025.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Vision2025_Materials-Waste-Briefing_2023.pdf).

Legislation and guidance

In October 2020, earbuds, stirrers and plastic straws were banned in the UK (https://www.gov.uk/government/news/start-of-ban-on-plastic-straws-stirrers-and-cotton-buds). From October 2023 there is a ban on the supply of single-use plastic:

- Plates
- Cutlery
- Balloon sticks
- Expanded and extruded polystyrene food and drinks containers.

The Environment Act 2021 states that food waste should be collected separately and not co-mingled:

"Food waste must be collected separately from other recyclable streams," and "recyclable relevant waste must be collected for recycling or composting."

In 2018, The Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs released statutory guidance with a specific waste hierarchy for food and drink: *Food and drink waste hierarchy: Dealing with surplus and waste food and drink.* The hierarchy shows how businesses should seek to manage food waste in an order or priority - see the detailed guidance HERE (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/food-and-drink-waste-hierarchy-deal-with-surplus-and-waste/food-and-drink-waste-hierarchy-deal-with-surplus-and-waste).

Since 2015, UK Waste Regulations have required businesses to separate recyclable materials from other waste. This means bins onsite (front and back of house) should reflect the waste and recycling streams onsite. Work with waste contractors to ensure you can recycle and compost (or anaerobically digest) these waste streams in appropriate onward facilities:

- Paper
- Cardboard
- Timber
- Plastic
- Glass
- Metal
- Food

The Waste Duty of Care Code of Practice (under the Environmental Protection Act 1990) sets out who is responsible for waste management by law. Read more HERE (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/waste-duty-of-care-code-of-practice).

With discarded vapes becoming a challenge for many event organisers, an awareness of waste, electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) regulations is useful - read more here (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulations-waste-electrical-and-electronic-equipment).

National Recycling Symbols

The UK has a variety of recycling symbols that are used to help consumers identify which items can be recycled. These symbols are usually found on packaging and can help determine the correct way to dispose of the products and packaging. It will be mandatory to have recycling labels on all packaging by 2026 as a result of the Environment Act 2021.

Check out the symbols on the Recycle Now website. (https://www.recyclenow.com/how-to-recycle/recycling-symbols)

Further Resources

- UK Circular Economy Package (UK Government legislation) HERE (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/circular-economy-package-policy-statement/circular-economy-package-policy-statement).
- WRAP waste stream icons for signage (Recycle Now symbols) HERE (https://wrap.org.uk/taking-action/citizen-behaviour-change/recycle-now/campaign-assets/material-stream-icons).
- Towards Zero Waste Festivals Report (Vision: 2025, Feb 2023) HERE (https://www.vision2025.org.uk/reports-guides/towards-zero-waste-festivals-report/).
- Festival Industry Waste and Materials Briefing (Vision: 2025, April 2023) HERE (https://www.vision2025.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Vision2025_Materials-Waste-Briefing_2023.pdf).
- Search the Vision: 2025 Hub for resources on Waste & Materials HERE (https://www.vision2025.org.uk/resource-hub/waste-resources/).
- Future Festival Tools e-Learner module on Waste & Materials HERE (https://www.futurefestivaltools.eu/courses/event-sustainability/).

TRAVEL & TRANSPORT

Introduction

Travel is *the* most significant source of emissions for a typical outdoor live event. However, it is important to acknowledge that audience travel and event-related transport does vary considerably between events due to demographics and location – for example, city-based events tend to receive a much higher percentage of their audience by public transport, so their audience travel carbon footprint is comparatively smaller.

What you need to consider

Reducing all types of travel and transport emissions where possible, including:

- Reducing total travel distances.
- Encouraging audiences and artists to choose lower-carbon travel options.
- Reducing supplier transport.

Best Practices

- Measure travel emissions and set targets for reductions.
- Provide clear information about lower carbon travel options to audiences.
- Use incentives and disincentives for higher/lower impact audience travel options.
- Work with suppliers to find ways to reduce transport journeys.
- Responsibly offset unavoidable emissions.

Taking Action

The first step is to put a plan in place to reduce direct and stakeholder travel & transport emissions. Work with stakeholders, including audiences, contractors, artists, traders and partners to provide and find lower-carbon ways to travel.

Some key indicators for reducing travel emissions for events are:

- Increase the percentage of audience travelling by shared transport, e.g., public transport and coaches – or walking and cycling (where possible).
- Increase car occupancy, e.g., by promoting car sharing or restricting passes.
- Reduce flights taken in favour of land-based travel.
- Fewer and shorter journeys for supplier deliveries, e.g., using local suppliers and combining loads.
- Increase the proportion of journeys taken by electric/hybrid vehicles, e.g., trucking and guest shuttles. Provide electric vehicle charging points to make this possible.

Measuring and reporting

To assess your event's travel impacts and reductions, it is essential to measure and record emissions year-on-year. This can be achieved simply by recording journey miles and vehicle types and/or fuel consumption and then using freely available tools to work out the emissions.

What you should aim to measure:

- Audience travel.
- Company travel staff & crew.
- Contractor travel: caterers, suppliers & traders.
- Artists / talent.
- Onsite vehicle fuel use.

Collecting data on all types of travel can be straightforward, for example:

- Suppliers can provide their information directly as part of contracts.
- Artists can be asked their travel plans as part of advancing / contracts.
- Staff can report their travel as part of company processes, e.g., by logging mileage or fuel receipts.

- Audience travel can be worked out from data collected as part of the ticketing process or on arrival in car parks.

Legislation and guidance

In the UK, The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) supplies information on CO2 per vehicle and passenger mile/km, which can be used to work out the average emissions created per passenger or vehicle mile. Find the figures HERE (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greenhouse-gas-reporting-conversion-factors-2023).

Further Resources

- Green Travel & Transport Guide for Live Events (ecolibrium, May 2023) HERE (https://ecolibrium.earth/the-ecolibrium-sustainable-travel-guide-for-festivals-and-events/).
- Future Festival Tools e-Learner module on Travel and Transport HERE (https://www.futurefestivaltools.eu/courses/event-sustainability/).
- Future Festival Tools Green Stories: Case studies focused on best practices in Travel & Transport HERE (https://www.futurefestivaltools.eu/travel-transport/).
- Search the Vision: 2025 Hub for resources on Travel & Transport (https://www.vision2025.org.uk/resource-hub/travel/)

Use the Julie's Bicycle free Creative Climate tools to record emissions HERE. (https://juliesbicycle.com/our-work/creative-green/creative-climate-tools/)

FOOD & BEVERAGES

Introduction

The way we are producing and consuming food and drink is causing irreversible damage to Earth's ecosystems. Modern agriculture is a significant cause of deforestation, air and water pollution, soil degradation and climate change, and threatens wildlife, plants and biodiversity.

- Between 21% and 37% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are estimated to be from food production. [1]
- Around one-third of all food in the world is lost or wasted. [2]
- 85% of global fisheries are now 'fully fished' or overexploited. [3]

We can minimise the environmental impact of food on offer to audiences and staff at our events by improving the standards we set for the ingredients procured in our supply chains and by working closely with food providers to build trust and meet our aspirations.

What you need to consider

The sustainability of the food and drink offering available at your event; for example:

- Offer low-carbon food options.
- Choose ethical and local suppliers.
- Minimise food waste.

Best Practices

- Put a food and drinks policy in place with stated standards.
- Reduce high impact food and drinks (see the table below for guidance).
- Reduce the environmental impact of packaging and serveware associated with food (also see the materials and waste section for details on this action):
- Reduce single-use packaging / increase reuse.
- Increase recycling of unavoidable packaging.
- Use certified compostable (not biodegradable) packaging (BS EN 13432) for food serveware.

Guidance on best practices for sourcing food and drink:

Food or Drink	Best practice for sourcing
Tea / coffee	Choose Fairtrade
Milk	Choose plant-based
Carbonated drinks	Bulk dispense rather than import in cans/bottles
Meat/fish	Make sure that the welfare of the animals is guaranteed
Vegetables	Choose local and seasonal

Taking Action

The most effective steps that can be taken to reduce food impacts are:

- Reducing high impact foods on the menu or event offering, such as animal-based products *.
- Increasing in-season produce and decreasing out-of-season produce.
- Purchasing products that are certified as sustainably grown, caught, reared, manufactured, brewed, and harvested etc..
- Reducing food waste by considering:
  - Menu design / choice of ingredients.
  - Service format, i.e., buffet vs. plated.
  - Ordering more accurate volumes of ingredients.
  - Repurposing edible leftover food.
- Using pricing as a lever for influencing audience food purchase choices.

Plant-based products are as much as 10-50 times lower in emissions than most animal-based products. Read more about this HERE (https://ourworldindata.org/food-choice-vs-eating-local).

A sustainable drink is a drink that has lower or low environmental impacts compared to other drinks. This could be any, or all, of the following, for example:

- Beer manufactured with energy and water-efficient processes.
- Drinks made from sustainably sourced ingredients.
- Locally sourced drinks, which reduces travel miles.
- Sustainable milk types e.g., plant-based in place of cow's milk.

For your drinks menu, think about the following:

- Choose sustainable beer and soda partners.
- As a minimum, offer more sustainable drinks options in addition to regular high-volume drinks, e.g., provide an organic beer or Fairtrade cola option.
- Serve sodas bulk-dispensed instead of in individual cans/bottles to reduce waste.
- Choose Fairtrade-certified tea and coffee.
- Choose plant-based milk as standard or at least offer it as an option.

To make changes, organisations need to establish a food and drinks policy with stated recognised standards, eliminate food waste and repurpose left-over edible food. It is also important to consider the serveware and packaging associated with providing food.

Measuring and Reporting

Organisations can collect information that provides key indicators of food sustainability such as:

- Percentage of meat, fish, vegetarian and vegan food stalls / meals served.
- Total amount and type of ingredients.
- Total amount of food waste.

An average meal in the UK currently has a footprint of 1.7 kg of CO_2e. To achieve the goals set in the Paris Agreement, an average meal must be 0.5 kg of CO_2e per dish.

Ideally, all organisations should measure carbon emissions that relate to food and drink consumption. Paid-for services also exist to measure and report food impacts.

Legislation and guidance

In 2018, the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) released statutory guidance with a specific waste hierarchy for food and drink: *Food and drink waste hierarchy: Dealing with surplus and waste food and drink.* The hierarchy shows how businesses should seek to manage food waste in an order or priority - see the detailed guidance HERE. (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/food-and-drink-waste-hierarchy-deal-with-surplus-and-waste/food-and-drink-waste-hierarchy-deal-with-surplus-and-waste)

The National Food Strategy: The Plan (2021) HERE (https://www.nationalfoodstrategy.org/).

Further Resources

- Information on different food labels and their meaning as well as best practices in sourcing various foods (Compassion in World Farming) HERE (https://www.ciwf.org.uk/your-food/know-your-labels/).
- Future Festival Tools e-Learner module on Food and Drink HERE (https://www.futurefestivaltools.eu/courses/event-sustainability/).
- Future Festival Tools Green Stories: Case studies focused on best practice in food and drink at events (https://www.futurefestivaltools.eu/food-and-drink/)
- Check the Vision: 2025 Hub for resources on Food & Drink HERE (https://www.vision2025.org.uk/resource-hub/water/).

Eighth Plate is a pioneering environmental initiative, set up by NCASS (https://www.ncass.org.uk/) and A Greener Future (https://www.agreenerfuture.com/)that sets out to help UK festivals salvage surplus food and redistribute it to local food charities, learn more about it HERE (https://www.vision2025.org.uk/guest-blog-eighthplate-a-food-waste-revolution).

WATER

Introduction

While the direct carbon emissions from water use are negligible in comparison to energy use and travel, for example, increasing water scarcity and other environmental impacts associated with how we provide water at event, means it deserves consideration.

What you need to consider

Reducing water usage through efficiency measures, and minimising the risk of negative impacts on local ecosystems.

The aim is *not* to reduce water use at all costs – we need to provide good access to water for event audiences for comfort and safety. Some measures, such as bottle refill initiatives to eliminate single-use plastic bottles may lead to an overall increase in water consumption recorded by events by encouraging good access – but there are the huge benefits of reducing plastic waste and CO2e emissions from the transport of bottled water.

Best Practices

- Minimise water waste.
- Prevent onsite pollution.
- Minimise packaging used to provide water and tinkering (i.e., prioritise mains supply).

Taking Action

Treating water like a precious resource means:

- Reducing water wastage e.g., keeping leaks to a minimum.
- Being aware and efficient in how we use water, for example in relation to taps, toilets and showers.

Water pollution is another important element to consider. The kinds of products we choose to use, like those for cleaning and personal care, will affect the chemical load of wastewater sent for treatment – and increase the risk of chemicals ending up in our waterways and soil when leaked onto event sites.

Measuring and reporting

A post-event report from a water provider/manager should include:

- Total water usage onsite (litres or m3).
- Amount of grey water tankered offsite.
- Amount of black water tankered offsite (toilet waste).
- Recommendations for future efficiency savings.

The best measure of an event's water efficiency is 'litres per person per day' because it can be used to compare events with different capacities and between years.

Usually, the water contractor/provider will collect data for an event organiser. They may use water metres to collect information in real time or keep a record of how much water is brought on and off-site. For smaller events, the organiser may need to be responsible for this.

Legislation and guidance
Please refer to Purple Guide Chapter 21: Food, Drink and Water Provision.

Further Resources

- Future Festival Tools e-Learner module on water HERE (https://www.futurefestivaltools.eu/courses/event-sustainability/).
- Future Festival Tools Green Stories: Case studies focused on best practices in food and drink at events (https://www.futurefestivaltools.eu/water/)
- Search the Vision: 2025 hub for resources on Water HERE (https://www.vision2025.org.uk/resource-hub/water/).

Ecological protection

Introduction
Outdoor events can create noise pollution, light pollution, soil and water pollution through drainage, ground compaction, and direct damage to flora, etc., which may impact local and surrounding biodiversity and ecology.

What you need to consider

Any potential impact to the ground, watercourses, or disturbance of wildlife and their habitats onsite.

Some events have been impacted by endangered species (plant or animal) on or near the site.

Best Practices

- Commission or refer to an existing Biodiversity Impact Assessment of the site before use. *
- Establish a plan to secure any areas that require protection.
- Put policy and procedures in place to prevent pollution of any kind, e.g., diesel spillages, collection, storage and removal of waste water, discouraging peeing onsite, and/or banning microplastics (glitter).
- Minimise noise and light pollution.

You may need expert advice as to what specific assessment is most suitable.

Taking Action

At the planning stage of the event, you may need an assessment of the potential biodiversity and ecosystem impacts. This may involve a site survey, or considering existing information.

Legislation and guidance

Where there are specific circumstances, conditions can be included in Premises Licenses that relate to protecting specific features, species or plants and trees that require protection.

England is bringing in Biodiversity Net Gain within planning compliance, which may affect outdoor live events. Learn more HERE (https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/biodiversity-net-gain-updating-planning-requirements).

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 HERE (https://www.hse.gov.uk/cleaning/topics/coshh.htm).

Communications

Introduction

Communication is essential to making change happen within an organisation and with stakeholders, to reputation, and in promoting positive change in wider society - events have a powerful role as influencers.

Having some knowledge and skills for communicating about the environment successfully is a good idea, even if you already have a brilliant marketing person or team.

What you need to consider

- How to communicate about sustainability effectively to different stakeholder groups, including sponsors, suppliers, venues, attendees, and staff.
- How to avoid greenwashing.

Best Practices

Measure your impacts and report / communicate at least annually with stakeholders. Share transparent figures, highlight success and 'work in progress'.

Here are some examples of best practice for communicating about green claims and sustainability in general that have been summarised from the Green Claims Code published by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).

1. The claim is accurate and clear for all to understand.

2. There is up-to-date, credible evidence to show that the green claim is true.

3. The claim tells the whole story.

4. Where general claims (eco-friendly, green or sustainable for example) are being made, the claim reflects the whole life cycle of the brand, product, business or service and is justified by the evidence.

5. The claim won't mislead customers or other suppliers.

Taking Action

In campaigns, provide the reasons for the actions, the change it will make, and focus language on the positive behaviours you aim to promote rather than highlighting the behaviours you wish to prevent.

To check your communications for greenwash, use the full Green Claims guide and checklist HERE (https://greenclaims.campaign.gov.uk).

Music Declares Emergency provide advice to organisations working in the events industry about how to communicate about climate change - read more HERE (https://musicdeclares.net/gb/take-action/industry).

Legislation and guidance

The Green Claims Code came into effect in January 2022 to avoid organisations greenwashing and misinforming or misleading customers by implying something has environmental credentials or is less harmful to the environment without being specific e.g., words like eco-friendly, sustainable, green, ethical, low-impact, or compostable. Anyone can report an organisation for making a green claim on their product or in advertising, which can lead to court proceedings.

Avoid vague claims using these words; eco-friendly, sustainable, green, ethical, low-impact, compostable and instead be specific.

See the Green Code Checklist see the Government website HERE (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/green-claims-code-making-environmental-claims/green-claims-and-your-business#advice-and-further-information), and see a Youtube video from the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) HERE (https://youtu.be/R9FwP_o9EuQ).

Further Resources

- Future Festival Tools e-Learner course. Every module has a section on successful communication HERE (https://www.futurefestivaltools.eu/green-festival-stories-a-collection-of-inspiring-examples-from-across-europe-en/).
- Sell the Sizzle: climate messages that actually change attitudes and behaviours. As seminal report on climate communication HERE (https://www.wearefuterra.com/thinks/sell-the-sizzle).
- Find tips on how to talk about climate action in Music Declares Emergency's Climate Action Packs HERE (https://www.musicdeclares.net/assets/documents/pdfs/MDE-Climate-Pack-2023.pdf).
- Green Claims Code - Avoid Greenwashing with this guide from ASA HERE (https://www.asa.org.uk/resource/advertising-guidance-misleading-environmental-claims-and-social-responsibility.html).

Partnerships

Introduction

Factoring sustainability into partnerships and sponsorship agreements is increasingly important as it becomes commonplace for organisations and brands to seek to promote environmental credentials.

What you need to consider

Is the partner aligned to your ethics and purpose? Do they represent a reputational risk due to their activity or stance on certain issues?
Also, events should consider what materials are used for activations / giveaways to ensure they are sustainable and meet with the event's policies.

Best Practices

- Ensure that sponsors and partners are aligned with the event in their stance and practices.
- Ensure that partners adhere to an event's policies.
- Minimise give-aways made with disposable or unsustainable materials.

Taking Action

There are various ways that sustainability can factor into partnerships;

- Talk to potential or existing partners about what you are aiming to achieve and what is needed to do that. Many organisations will be able to offer solutions or help fund the solution if it aligns with

their own sustainability goals.

- Invite partners to put forward their suggestions for solutions - these could be products or services they offer that could help enhance the delivery of your event sustainability strategy.
- Be clear at the outset about your environmental aspirations and standards: Create a summary of your sustainability strategy or policy that can be shared with partners to show them what is being done and share expectations.

This can take time, and that is okay if there is a shared vision and goal within a reasonable timeframe of improving the sustainability of partner activations.

Additional Information and Resources

Links to additional resources, guidance and services for UK outdoor events:

- Sustainable Event Management: A Practical Guide HERE (https://www.greeneventbook.com/)
- Future Festivals Tools self-assessment tools and eLearning courses HERE (https://www.futurefestivaltools.eu/).
- Sustainable Events Guides – Manchester City Council HERE (https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/7129/guides_to_organising_sustainable_events).
- Sport England sustainability guidance HERE (https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/sustainability).
- ISO20121 Standard for Sustainable Events HERE (https://www.iso.org/iso-20121-sustainable-events.html).
- LIVE Green HERE (https://livemusic.biz/live-green/).
- Julies Bicycle Environmental Resource Hub for the Arts HERE (https://juliesbicycle.com/resources/).
- A Greener Future HERE (https://www.agreenerfuture.com/)

To access a comprehensive list of reports, guides and case studies on sustainable events management, see the Vision: 2025 Resources Hub HERE (https://www.vision2025.org.uk/resource-hub/).

Find organisations that can help you on your sustainability journey HERE. (https://www.vision2025.org.uk/green-suppliers/)

Footnotes

[1] IPCC Special Report: Climate Change and Land, Technical Summary (2019) (https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/chapter/technical-summary/)https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/chapter/technical-summary/ (https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/chapter/technical-summary/)

[1] WRAP Food and Drink (http://www.wrap.org.uk/food-drink)http://www.wrap.org.uk/food-drink (http://www.wrap.org.uk/food-drink)

[1] IPCC Special Report: Climate Change and Land, Technical Summary (2019) (https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/chapter/technical-summary/)https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/chapter/technical-summary/ (https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/chapter/technical-summary/)