



F/262
FESTIVAL
INTERNACIONAL
DE FOTOGRAFIA

Photography Festival Sustainability Handbook



Author: João Carlos
Contributing Editor: Filipa Banza

Introduction & Philosophy

- Why festivals matter as cultural climate leaders
- Why sustainability is no longer optional (funding, audience, reputation, recognition, and urgency).
- Festivals as **living labs** (test ideas → showcase → inspire)





Part I: Governance & Strategy

1. Governance, Vision & Pledge

1. **Why:** Without top-level commitment, sustainability stays a “side project.”
2. **How:**
 1. Create a Sustainability Steering Group.
 2. Add sustainability to the board agenda.
 3. Publish a Sustainability Pledge.
3. **Checklist:**
 1. Steering group created
 2. Goals set (short + long term)
 3. Public pledge published
4. **Template:** *Sample Sustainability Pledge*

2. Carbon & Footprint Management

1. **Why:** You can't manage what you don't measure.
2. **How:**
 1. Calculate emissions across travel, freight, energy, food, materials, and waste.
 2. Use simple tools (carbon spreadsheet, attendee travel survey).
 3. Report publicly.
3. **Step by Step:**
 1. Gather data from venues (kWh, water, waste).
 2. Survey visitors (travel mode, distance).
 3. Estimate freight emissions.
 4. Publish results.
4. **Template:** *Audience Travel Survey*
5. **KPI Targets:**
 1. Year 1: Baseline only
 2. Year 2: Report footprint + reduction measures
 3. Year 3: 30–50% reduction goals



Part II: Operations

3. Venue & Infrastructure

1. **Why:** Venues lock in most of your environmental profile.
2. **How:**
 1. Choose venues accessible by public transport.
 2. Use modular/reusable builds.
 3. Opt for renewable power.
3. **Checklist:**
 1. Venue Selection
 1. Renewable energy
 2. Waste separation
 3. Bike parking
 4. Accessible transport links
4. **Beginner / Advanced / Next Level** tiers.

4. Travel & Freight

1. **Why:** Travel is usually 70–80% of emissions
2. **How:**
 1. Prioritise local/regional participants.
 2. Offer virtual alternatives.
 3. Bundle public transport into tickets.
 4. Use reusable crates and consolidate shipments.
3. **Template:** *Green Travel Guide for Guests*
4. **KPI:** % audience arriving by low-carbon modes.

5. Materials, Packaging & Printing

1. **Why:** Temporary materials = long-term waste.
2. **How:**
 1. Ban polystyrene and PVC.
 2. Reuse signage, design without year/date.
 3. Replace vinyl with QR codes/digital signage.
 4. Print only essential items (recycled paper, water-based inks).
3. **Template:** *Supplier Green Clause*
4. **Checklist:**
 1. Modular walls/frames
 2. No single-use vinyl
 3. Print only if essential

6. Food, Beverage & Water

1. **Why:** Food systems = major hidden emissions.
2. **How:**
 1. Prioritise vegetarian/plant-forward menus.
 2. Locally sourced food.



3. Eliminate bottled water.
4. Compost and donate surplus.
5. Ban single-use plastics.

3. **Checklist:**

1. Free refill points
2. Deposit/reusable cups.
3. Surplus donation plan.

4. **Template:** *Green Catering Contract Clause*

7. Waste & Circular Systems

1. **Why:** Festivals = massive short-term waste spikes.
2. **How:**
 1. Multi-stream bins everywhere.
 2. Green Teams help the audience sort.
 3. Post-event waste audit.
3. **Target:** 70% diversion from landfill within 3 editions.
4. **Checklist:**
 1. Waste stations (compost, recycle, landfill)
 2. Green Team training
 3. Post-event audit





Part III: Engagement

8. Communications & Transparency

1. **Why:** Audience learns and amplifies.
2. **How:**
 1. Communicate before, during, and after.
 2. Share impact numbers visually.
 3. Admit failures.
 4. Listen to suggestions from the public and experts
3. **Template:** *Impact Snapshot Post-Festival*

9. Certification & Verification

1. **Why:** Adds credibility for funders, audiences, and partners.
2. **How:**
 1. Select the appropriate certification (e.g., ISO 20121, EcoCompass, local Green Event labels).
 2. Require suppliers to have certifications.
 3. Document everything.

10. Community, Justice & Regeneration

1. **Why:** Sustainability without equity = incomplete.
2. **How:**
 1. Partner with local communities.
 2. Dedicate funds to local restoration projects.
 3. Commission work that explores climate/justice themes.



Part IV: Tools & Templates

- **Artist Sustainability Brief**
- **Supplier Green Contract Clauses**
- **Visitor Guide: How to Be a Green Festival Goer**
- **Post-Event Impact Report Template**
- **Green Team Volunteer Training Script**
- **Checklists** for travel, food, materials, waste

Appendices

- **Appendix A: Regional Suppliers Directory** (Europe / Americas / Asia):
 - Sustainable printers, packaging companies, and eco-merch suppliers.
- **Appendix B: Carbon Calculation Spreadsheet**
- **Appendix C: Sample Artist Rider** (green travel, no bottled water, sustainable printing).
- **Appendix D: Case Studies** (generalised so not festival-specific, but concrete: “Festival X reduced 30% emissions by...”)
- **Appendix E: Resources & Further Reading** (general sustainability orgs, no external festival links).



Photography Festival Sustainability Handbook

(Powered by F/262 & F/SOS – Stories of Solidarity — Portugal)

Introduction & Philosophy

Why festivals matter as cultural climate leaders

Photography festivals are more than exhibitions of images. They are gathering points for artists, audiences, and communities to reflect on the world we live in. Because of their visibility and their ability to shape narratives, festivals hold a unique responsibility: they can lead by example, proving that cultural events can be both powerful platforms for storytelling **and** models of sustainable practice. Every festival leaves an imprint — in the form of energy consumed, materials built, travel miles logged, and waste generated. When festivals make choices toward sustainability, they don't just reduce impact; they also amplify awareness by showing thousands of visitors that change is possible. A photography festival that eliminates single-use plastics, reuses exhibition materials, or powers its events with renewables sends a message that ripples far beyond the gallery walls.

Why sustainability is no longer optional

The days when sustainability was a “nice-to-have” are over. Funding bodies, cultural agencies, municipalities, and audiences increasingly demand evidence of environmental and social responsibility. Many grantmakers now require a sustainability strategy before releasing funds. Visitors, especially younger generations, expect festivals to demonstrate care for the planet as part of their identity. Ignoring sustainability risks, reputational damage, higher costs, and loss of support. Conversely, embracing it brings concrete benefits: reduced long-term expenses through efficiency, stronger alignment with funders’ priorities, better partnerships with conscious brands, and a loyal audience that values ethical choices. For photography festivals in particular, where the subject matter often deals with environment, society, and human impact, aligning production with those values is not just consistent — it’s essential.

Festivals as living labs

Festivals can become **living laboratories** of sustainable innovation. Because they happen periodically, with clear build-up and breakdown phases, they offer a unique chance to test new ideas: • **Experimentation:** trial low-carbon freight, modular exhibition systems, sustainable catering, or digital-only catalogues. • **Showcasing:** highlight artists and projects that engage with ecological, climate, or justice themes. • **Inspiration:** demonstrate to audiences, municipalities, and partners that cultural events can be run differently. By treating each edition as a cycle of learning, festivals can measure, adapt, and improve. Even small changes — banning single-use vinyl, integrating public transport into ticketing, or creating refill water points — accumulate into powerful long-term transformation. This handbook positions photography festivals as both **storytellers**



and **practitioners** of sustainability: not only presenting urgent images of climate, community, and change, but also embodying those values in the way they are produced and experienced. Inspiring brands, printing companies, and everyone involved in the photography industry to rethink the materials they use and the frequency with which they launch new products, perhaps even considering a return to recycling or equipment repair.



Part I: Governance & Strategy

1. Governance, Vision & Pledge

1. Why

1. Without top-level commitment, sustainability efforts risk becoming side projects run by volunteers or interns. For a photography festival, sustainability must be embedded into the **mission, structure, and leadership culture**. This ensures that eco-friendly practices are not abandoned when budgets tighten or staff rotate.

2. How

1. **Create a Sustainability Steering Group.** Form a small, dedicated team (3–6 people) that represents different areas: production, curation, communications, and local community. This group monitors sustainability goals, keeps records, and ensures accountability.
2. **Add sustainability to the board agenda.** Every board or senior meeting should include a sustainability update — progress against targets, problems encountered, and next steps.
3. **Publish a Sustainability Pledge.** A public declaration signals seriousness to audiences, funders, and partners. It doesn't have to be long — clarity and transparency matter more than length.

3. Checklist

1. Steering group created
2. Short- and long-term goals set (e.g., 25% reduction in single-use materials by next edition; net zero by 2035) • Sustainability pledge published and visible on the festival's website

4. Case Example (generalized)

A European photo biennale formed a Sustainability Council with local NGOs, artists, and municipal reps. Their first pledge: eliminate single-use plastics and cut exhibition shipping by 30%. Within two years, they reported reductions in cost and carbon, plus stronger ties with the community.

5. Template: Sample Sustainability Pledge

We, [Festival Name], commit to embedding sustainability at the core of our mission. We pledge to: . Measure our environmental impact across travel, energy, materials, and waste. . Reduce emissions and resource use in line with international climate goals. . Prioritise circular and regenerative practices in our festival production. . Be transparent by publishing our results and progress after each edition. . Inspire our artists, partners, and audiences to join us in shaping a sustainable cultural future.

2. Carbon & Footprint Management

- 1. Why** You can't manage what you don't measure. Most festivals underestimate their emissions until they track them. On average, **70–80% of an event's footprint comes from audience and artist travel**, with energy, catering, and materials making up the rest. Establishing a baseline allows you to set realistic goals and track progress year after year.

2. How

- 1. Calculate emissions across all major categories:**
 1. Travel (audience, artists, staff)
 2. Freight (artworks, equipment)
 3. Energy (venues, outdoor sites)
 4. Food & beverage
 5. Materials (builds, printing, signage)
 5. Waste (generated + diverted)
- 2. Use simple tools first**
 1. Excel spreadsheets for data entry
 2. Free calculators (Julie's Bicycle Creative Green Tools, GCC Carbon Calculator)
 3. Short audience travel survey (see template below)
- 3. Report publicly.** Sharing results builds trust. Even if numbers are high, transparency shows responsibility and creates a benchmark for improvement.

3. Step by Step

- 1. Gather data from venues:** ask for kWh consumed, water used, waste collected.
- 2. Survey visitors:** how they travelled, how far, if they stayed overnight.
- 3. Estimate freight emissions:** get mileage and transport mode from shippers.
- 4. Combine data:** calculate CO₂e using a standard calculator.
- 5. Publish results:** in annual report, website, press kit.

4. Template:

- 1. Audience Travel Survey** *Sample questions to include (digital or paper form at registration):*
 1. How did you travel to the festival? (walk, bike, bus, train, car, plane)
 2. Approximate distance travelled (km or city of origin)
 3. Did you share transport (carpool, group ticket)?
 4. Did you stay overnight? If yes, where (hotel, Airbnb, local host)?
- 2. KPI Targets**
 1. **Year 1:** Baseline only (collect and publish data)
 2. **Year 2:** Report footprint + list reduction measures (e.g., train ticket discounts, reusable cups)
 3. **Year 3:** 30–50% reduction in emissions compared to baseline
- 3. Case Example (generalised)** A mid-size urban photo festival discovered that 78% of its carbon footprint came from international visitors. By offering hybrid online participation and discouraging short-haul flights in favour of trains, they cut total travel emissions by 25% in the next edition.



Part II: Operations

3. Venue & Infrastructure

1. **Why** The choice of venue is one of the most important sustainability decisions a festival can make. Venues dictate energy use, waste systems, and accessibility for visitors. Once a venue is chosen, its infrastructure locks in much of the festival's environmental profile.

2. How

1. **Accessibility:** choose venues close to train/bus lines, encourage walking and cycling.
2. **Infrastructure:** ensure venues have waste separation, renewable power options, and accessible water points.
3. **Design:** use modular, reusable exhibition walls and lighting rigs. Avoid single-use builds.
4. **Energy:** negotiate with venues to use renewable energy sources or bring in portable renewable systems (solar/battery).

3. Beginner / Advanced / Next Level

1. **Beginner:** Pick a central venue, provide waste bins, and ensure basic recycling.
2. **Advanced:** Select venues with sustainability certification, LED lighting, waste separation, and renewable contracts.
3. **Next Level:** Co-host festivals with other events to share infrastructure, invest in venue upgrades (solar, green HVAC), or partner in community restoration projects linked to venue use.

4. Checklist:

1. Venue Selection

1. Accessible by public transport
2. Renewable energy contract or option available
3. Waste separation system in place
4. Bike parking nearby
5. Drinking water refill points

4. Travel & Freight

1. **Why** Audience and participant travel typically accounts for 70–80% of an event's total emissions. Freight (artwork shipping, exhibition builds) is also a major source of CO₂. Reducing these categories offers the biggest opportunity for impact.

2. How

1. **Prioritise local/regional participants:** program more regional artists and speakers to reduce international flights.
2. **Offer virtual alternatives:** hybrid programming allows global audiences and artists to join without travelling.



3. **Public transport integration:** bundle train/bus tickets with festival admission where possible.
4. **Freight reduction:** use reusable crates, consolidate shipments, and build locally when possible.

3. **Template:**

1. **Green Travel Guide for Guests**

1. *Dear Guest, We are committed to reducing the environmental impact of our festival. Please help us by choosing the most sustainable travel option available. We recommend:*
 - Train or bus for regional travel
 - Cycling or walking within the city
 - Carpooling if driving is necessary
 - Direct flights only, when unavoidable
 - Offsetting as a last resort*• Thank you for supporting a low-carbon festival experience.*

4. **KPI: % Audience arriving by low-carbon modes**

1. Year 1: Measure only
2. Year 2: Set 20% target for low-carbon arrivals
3. Year 3: 40%+ of audience using train, bus, cycling, or walking

5. Materials, Packaging & Printing

1. **Why** Temporary builds, banners, and printed materials create long-term waste. PVC vinyl and polystyrene are particularly damaging, often ending up in landfill after one use.

2. **How**

1. **Ban harmful materials:** no PVC, polystyrene, or bubble wrap.
2. **Reusable signage:** design without dates/logos so banners can be reused.
3. **Digital-first:** replace printed vinyl with QR codes and digital guides.
4. **Responsible printing:** when necessary, use recycled paper, FSC-certified stock, and water-based inks.

3. **Template:**

1. **Supplier Green Clause:** "All materials used in production must be recyclable, reusable, or compostable. The use of PVC, polystyrene, or single-use plastics is prohibited. Printing must use recycled or FSC-certified paper and water-based inks."

4. **Checklist**

1. Modular exhibition walls/frames
2. No single-use vinyl signage
3. Only essential printed materials are produced
4. All packaging is recyclable or reusable

6. Food, Beverage & Water

1. **Why** Catering is often overlooked, but food systems are one of the biggest sources of hidden emissions. Meat-heavy menus, bottled water, and disposable serviceware multiply a festival's footprint.

2. How

1. **Menus:** prioritise vegetarian/plant-based dishes; limit red meat.
2. **Water:** eliminate bottled water, install refill points, encourage reusable bottles.
3. **Serviceware:** deposit-return cups and plates, compostable items if reusables not feasible.
4. **Surplus:** partner with local charities to donate unused food.

3. Template:

1. **Green Catering Contract Clause:** "Catering providers must offer at least 50% vegetarian/vegan options, eliminate bottled water, use deposit-return systems or reusable serviceware, and establish a plan for donating or composting surplus food."

4. Checklist

1. Free refill water points installed
2. Deposit/reusable cups system in place
3. 50%+ vegetarian menu
4. Food surplus donation plan arranged

7. Waste & Circular Systems

1. **Why** Festivals generate huge amounts of waste in short bursts: cups, banners, packaging, flyers, and more. Without a plan, most end up in a landfill. Circular design can dramatically reduce this impact.

2. How

1. **Separation:** place multi-stream bins (compost, recycling, landfill) at every site.
2. **Green Teams:** volunteers/staff guide visitors to sort waste properly.
3. **Audits:** conduct a post-event waste audit to measure diversion rates.
4. **Reuse:** plan reuse of structures, decorations, and materials across editions.

3. Target

70% waste diversion from landfill within three editions.

4. Checklist

1. Waste stations are clearly signed and available
2. Green Team volunteers trained and deployed
3. Post-event waste audit completed and results published
4. Materials recovery/reuse plan in place



Part III: Engagement

8. Communications & Transparency

1. Why Sustainability isn't only about internal changes — it's also about how you share your actions. Audiences, funders, and partners want to know what you're doing and how you're improving. Communication builds credibility, educates your community, and turns visitors into allies. Silence creates suspicion; transparency builds trust.

2. How

1. Communicate before the festival:

1. Share your sustainability pledge and explain what audiences can do (bring bottles, use trains, separate waste).

2. Communicate during the festival:

1. Use info screens, signage, and volunteers to guide sustainable behavior.
2. Share live updates on social media (e.g., "We've already saved 5,000 bottles by using refill stations!").

3. Communicate after the festival:

1. Publish an *Impact Snapshot* with data and honest reflection.
2. Highlight both achievements and failures (and how you'll improve).

3. Template:

1. Impact Snapshot Post-Festival

1. [Festival Name] Sustainability Snapshot – [Year] Edition

1. Audience: 12,500 visitors
2. Travel: 42% arrived by train or bus (target 40%)
3. Waste: 65% diverted from landfill (up from 40% last edition)
4. Energy: 80% renewable electricity at venues
5. Catering: 55% vegetarian meals served
6. Bottled Water: Eliminated – 8 refill points installed
7. Challenges: Waste contamination at outdoor venues – new signage planned for next year
8. Next Steps: Aim for 70% waste diversion, expand regional artist programming to reduce travel footprint

9. Certification & Verification

1. Why Certifications and third-party verification add credibility. Funders, partners, and audiences increasingly look for proof, not just promises. Certification can also provide a framework for continuous improvement.

2. How

1. Choose the right certification:

1. ISO 20121: international standard for sustainable event management.
2. EcoCompass: a practical system used by many festivals.



3. A Greener Future or local equivalents for event sustainability.
4. Green Key: for hotels/restaurants partnered with the festival.
2. **Require suppliers to have certifications:** ask caterers, printers, and venues about environmental management systems (ISO 14001, EcoLabel, FSC for paper, etc.).
3. **Document everything:** keep detailed records (contracts, invoices, energy/waste reports, travel surveys). This makes certification audits easier and strengthens your funding applications.

3. Checklist:

1. Certification & Verification

1. Festival selected an appropriate certification framework
2. Suppliers provide certification or an environmental policy
3. Annual sustainability report prepared and archived
4. Communication of certifications made visible (website, press releases)

10. Community, Justice & Regeneration

1. Why

Sustainability without equity is incomplete. A truly sustainable festival is not only low-carbon and waste-conscious, but also inclusive, accessible, and regenerative. Festivals can give back to the communities and ecosystems that host them.

2. How

1. **Partner with local communities:** involve schools, NGOs, neighbourhood groups, and cultural associations in the festival. Offer free or discounted tickets, workshops, or volunteer opportunities.
2. **Dedicate funds to local restoration:** set aside a portion of ticket sales or sponsorship for reforestation, wetlands protection, or social projects in the host region.
3. **Commission artworks exploring climate/justice:** photography is a powerful tool for amplifying stories of environmental and social resilience. Feature artists whose work connects sustainability with human rights, community memory, and climate justice.
4. **Ensure accessibility:** provide free or sliding-scale entry for marginalised communities, virtual participation options, and inclusive programming.

3. Case Example (generalized)

A coastal photography festival partnered with a local marine NGO to restore a nearby wetland. Visitors could join guided tours to see the impact of their ticket contributions. The project created long-term community engagement and positioned the festival as both a cultural and ecological actor.

4. Checklist:

1. Community & Justice

1. Partnerships with local NGOs or schools
2. Budget allocation for local restoration/social projects
3. At least one exhibition or program addressing climate/justice themes
4. Accessibility plan in place (physical + economic)

Part IV: Tools & Templates

11. Artist Sustainability Brief

1. **Purpose:** To align artists with the festival's sustainability goals and reduce impact during production, installation, and participation.
2. **Sample Text (to send with artist invitation):** Dear [Artist], As part of our commitment to sustainability, we kindly ask you to follow these guidelines:
 1. Travel by train, bus, or shared transport when possible. Flights should be direct only, and offsets will be provided as a last resort.
 2. Avoid shipping large/heavy works when possible; consider digital or local production alternatives.
 3. Use recycled or locally sourced materials in installations.
 4. Do not use PVC, polystyrene, or non-recyclable plastics in artwork, packaging, or displays.
 5. Provide a short statement about the sustainable practices in your work for inclusion in our communications. Thank you for helping us ensure that creativity and care for the planet go hand in hand.

12. Supplier Green Contract Clauses

1. **Purpose:** To ensure vendors and contractors comply with sustainability standards.
2. **Sample Clause (to include in supplier contracts):** All suppliers working with [Festival Name] must commit to the following:
 1. Use recyclable, reusable, or compostable materials wherever possible.
 2. Prohibit single-use plastics, PVC, and polystyrene.
 3. Source food and beverages with at least 50% plant-based options; eliminate bottled water.
 4. Provide documentation of environmental policies or certifications (ISO 14001, EcoLabel, FSC, etc.).
 5. Ensure freight and logistics use consolidated shipments, reusable packaging, or low-emission vehicles where available. Failure to comply may result in termination of the contract.

13. Visitor Guide: How to Be a Green Festival Goer

1. **Purpose:** To educate and engage audiences in sustainability actions.
2. **Sample One-Pager (QR-code poster or PDF):**
 1. **Welcome to [Festival Name] — A Green Festival Experience.**
 1. Here's how you can help us reduce our impact:
 1. **Travel smart:** come by train, bus, bike, or on foot whenever possible.
 2. **Bring your own bottle:** refill at our free water stations.
 3. **Sort your waste:** follow the colour-coded bins for compost, recycling, and landfill.
 4. **Eat consciously:** try our plant-based food options — better for you and the planet.



5. **Reuse festival materials:** return cups, lanyards, and guides for next year.
6. **Stay connected:** share your own green actions with #GreenFestivals. Together we can shape a cultural future that respects both people and planet.

14. Post-Event Impact Report Template

1. **Purpose:** To provide funders, partners, and audiences with transparent sustainability results.
2. **Sample Structure:**
 1. **[Festival Name] Sustainability Report — [Year] Edition**
 1. **Overview**
 1. Total audience, venues, exhibitions
 2. Sustainability vision and goals
 2. **Carbon & Footprint Data**
 1. Travel emissions (audience + artists)
 2. Freight/shipping emissions
 3. Energy consumption (kWh + % renewable)
 4. Waste generation and diversion rate
 3. **Achievements**
 1. Eliminated bottled water (saved 10,000 bottles)
 2. 60% vegetarian meals
 3. 65% waste diversion (vs 40% last edition)
 4. **Challenges**
 1. Waste contamination at an outdoor venue
 2. Limited renewable power at the partner venue
 5. **Next Steps**
 1. Target 70% waste diversion next edition
 2. Expand hybrid programming to reduce travel

15. Green Team Volunteer Training Script

1. **Purpose:** To prepare volunteers to support sustainability goals on-site.
1. **Sample Briefing Script:** Welcome to the Green Team! You are the frontline of our sustainability efforts. Your role includes:
 1. Guiding visitors to correctly sort waste into compost, recycling, or landfill.
 2. Encouraging guests to use refill stations instead of bottled water.
 3. Answering questions about the festival's green initiatives.
 4. Monitoring venues for issues (overflowing bins, misplaced signage).
 5. Reporting challenges to the Sustainability Steering Group. Remember: be friendly, approachable, and positive. We're here to inspire, not police. Every small action makes a big difference.

16. Checklists

1. Travel & Freight

1. % audience travel by train, bus, or bike is measured





2. Artist travel plan collected
3. Reusable freight crates used
4. Shipments consolidated

2. Food & Beverage

1. 50%+ vegetarian/vegan menu
2. No bottled water
3. Compostable or reusable serviceware
4. Food surplus donation plan

3. Materials & Printing

1. No PVC, polystyrene, or single-use vinyl
2. Reusable signage (no dates/logos)
3. Minimal printing, on recycled/FSC paper
4. All packaging recyclable

4. Waste & Circularity

1. Multi-stream bins are visible across venues
2. Green Team volunteers deployed
3. Post-event waste audit completed
4. Reuse plan for structures, signage, and décor



Appendices

Appendix A: Regional Suppliers Directory

(Note: These are examples of categories and types of suppliers to include. The list should grow as festivals in each region contribute.)

Europe

- **Sustainable Printers:** FSC-certified, water-based inks, local production hubs in Germany, Portugal, Netherlands.
- **Packaging Companies:** eco-crates, recycled cardboard, reusable flight cases (examples: Tri Wall Europe, Smurfit Kappa).
- **Eco-Merch Suppliers:** organic cotton textiles, bamboo lanyards, refillable bottles, recycled tote bags.
- **Food & Beverage:** caterers offering 50%+ plant-based menus, Green Key-certified restaurants.
- **Transport & Freight:** low-emission logistics (DB Cargo, SNCF Green Freight, DPDgroup eco logistics).

Americas

- **Sustainable Printers:** soy-based inks, recycled stock (Greenerprinter, Hemlock).
- **Packaging Companies:** reusable shipping crates, compostable packaging (EcoEnclose, PacknWood).
- **Eco-Merch Suppliers:** recycled PET lanyards, fair-trade apparel, aluminium water bottles.
- **Food & Beverage:** zero-waste catering companies, plant-forward festival food trucks.
- **Transport & Freight:** Amtrak event shipping, EV van rentals, carbon-neutral freight companies.

Asia

- **Sustainable Printers:** soy-ink offset printers in Japan, FSC printers in Singapore and India.
- **Packaging Companies:** paper-based exhibition packaging, bamboo alternatives (Asia Pulp & Paper sustainability lines).
- **Eco-Merch Suppliers:** reusable steel bottles, biodegradable lanyards, hemp textiles.
- **Food & Beverage:** vegetarian/vegan catering companies in India, Taiwan, and Japan.
- **Transport & Freight:** Japan Rail event logistics, hybrid freight trucking (China, South Korea). *(Festivals should adapt by inserting verified local suppliers and build a shared "green directory.")*



Appendix B: Carbon Calculation Spreadsheet

Simple Categories to Track (Columns):

- Travel (audience/artists/staff) → mode, km, emissions factor.
- Freight (artworks, builds) → km, transport mode.
- Venue Energy → total kWh, % renewable.
- Materials → kg of printed matter, sqm of vinyl, # of banners.
- Waste → total kg generated, % recycled/composted.
- Catering → meals served, % vegetarian/vegan.

Output:

- Total emissions in CO₂e
- Breakdown by category (%)
- Year-to-year comparison (*Template can be Excel-based or adapted from Julie's Bicycle Creative Climate Tools.*)

Appendix C: Sample Artist Rider

Green Artist Rider (add to contracts)

The artist agrees to:

- Travel by low-carbon modes where possible (train, bus, direct flights only when necessary).
- No bottled water provided; refillable bottles available at festival refill points.
- Works produced/shipped should avoid PVC, polystyrene, and non-recyclable plastics.
- Printing must use recycled or FSC paper and water-based inks.
- Surplus materials from installation should be reused or recycled.

Festival provides:

- Public transport passes or bike rentals.
- Water refill points across venues.
- Green Team support during installation.



Appendix D: Case Studies

Case Study 1: Travel Reduction

Festival X discovered 75% of its footprint came from audience flights. By offering hybrid online events and giving train ticket discounts, it reduced travel emissions by 30% in two editions.

Case Study 2: Reusable Signage

Festival Y replaced all PVC banners with fabric signage without dates/logos. 85% of signage was reused in later editions, saving €12,000 and 4 tonnes of waste.

Case Study 3: Plant-Based Catering

Festival Z introduced a 60% vegetarian menu. Visitor feedback was positive, and emissions from catering dropped by 40% compared to the previous edition.

Case Study 4: Local Production

A biennial photo festival eliminated international shipping for frames and plinths by commissioning local carpenters. Freight emissions dropped by 45%, and costs were reduced.

Appendix E: Resources & Further Reading

Below is a curated list of organisations, tools, and frameworks across core sustainability domains. These are all general references (not festival-specific), to help festival organisers, artists, and teams deepen their knowledge and implement best practices.

Carbon & Energy

- **Julie's Bicycle — Creative Climate Tools** A free carbon calculator and environmental impact tracker for cultural organisations, tracking emissions across energy, travel, materials, waste and more. juliesbicycle.com
- **Gallery Climate Coalition Carbon Calculator (User Guide)** A detailed guide for calculating complex footprints, including freight (air, road, sea) with weight and route inputs. [Gallery Climate Coalition](http://galleryclimatecoalition.org)
- **SHIFT Culture — Carbon Calculators Fact Sheet** A practical summary of available carbon calculators applicable to events, venues, and cultural productions. [SHIFT Culture](http://shiftculture.org)
- **The Networked Condition Digital Carbon Calculator** Focused on digital emissions (streaming, servers, networks) to help cultural producers understand hidden impacts. [Abandon Normal Devices](http://abandonnormaldevices.com)



Circular Economy & Material Design

- **Creative Green / CC Tools “–Beyond Carbon” modules** Within Julie’s Bicycle’s platform, Beyond Carbon prompts guide cultural organisations to think beyond emissions — toward reuse, materials, ecosystem health. juliesbicycle.com
- **ISO 20121 & sustainable event guidance.** The standard isn’t a checklist but a systems framework: it encourages planning, supply chain management, operation control, and continual improvement. iso.org
- **BSI / SGS resources on ISO 20121** Certifications and step-by-step implementation guides for embedding sustainability in all decision points of an event. SGSCorp

Green Event Certifications & Standards

- **ISO 20121: Event Sustainability Management Systems.** The international standard for sustainable event systems requires organisations to integrate sustainability into planning, operations, and stakeholder engagement. [Positive Impact](#)
- **Green Key** An eco-label for hotels, conference venues, restaurants, and attractions. It certifies commitment to environmental responsibility, resource conservation, waste reduction, staff education, and more. [Green Key Global](#)
 - Green Key’s criteria are publicly available and cover many categories of operations (water, energy, waste, awareness). [Green Key](#)
 - The Green Key program is recognized by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) for its alignment with global standards. [GSTC](#)

Cultural Leadership, Justice & Regeneration

- **Beyond Carbon / CC Tools (Julie’s Bicycle)** The “Beyond Carbon” dimension encourages embedding equity, regeneration, ecosystem thinking, and cultural justice into strategy — not just emissions reduction. juliesbicycle.com
- **Standards & frameworks for equity in climate action.** While not from the festival domain, look to **climate justice networks**, **community-based participatory design**, and **Indigenous knowledge frameworks** for guiding how to embed justice and community regeneration into projects.

Communication & Engagement





- **Julie's Bicycle / CC Tools Reporting Guidance.** Their tools and platform include modules for reporting emissions, describing narratives around improvement and goals, and visualising data for stakeholders. juliesbicycle.com
- **"Standards in 10 Minutes" – ISO 20121 video:** A short video explaining how the ISO standard works and how sustainability needs to be integrated throughout event decisions. [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KuXWzXWzXW)
- **PC Nametag — Blog on ISO 20121** A friendly, practitioner-oriented explanation of how ISO 20121 works for events, covering best practices and core elements. blog.pcnametag.com
- **SGS / BSI event sustainability services.** They publish guidance on how to implement ISO 20121 in a way that optimises resources, reduces risk, and frames sustainability as performance improvement. [BSI Group](http://www.sgs.com/en/sustainability)
- <http://sdgs.un.org/goals>
- <https://ods.pt/ods/>

This handbook is released as an open community resource. Free to share and adapt with attribution.