

# Circular Culture 2024/25

## Guide for the Proposal of Sustainable Operations at Cultural Festivals

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### Introduction

This document serves as a guide for cultural festival organisers to craft proposals for sustainable operations within the British Council's Circular Culture Programme.

Sustainability is progressively emerging as a focal point across all facets of society, including the arts and culture domain. By incorporating sustainable methodologies into cultural festivals, we can mitigate detrimental environmental effects, encourage community involvement, and advocate for long-term sustainability.

### 1. Understanding sustainable operations

Before drafting your proposal, it's crucial to have a clear understanding of what sustainable operations entail. Consider the environmental, social, and economic aspects of sustainability. Key elements include:

- **Environmental impact:** Assess the festival's carbon footprint, waste generation, and resource consumption.
- **Social responsibility:** Address community engagement, inclusivity, and cultural preservation.
- **Economic viability:** Explore revenue streams, cost-saving measures, and long-term financial sustainability.

Cultural festivals can have both positive and negative impacts on the environment, and the extent of these impacts can vary depending on various factors such as the scale of the festival, the location, the type of activities involved, and the measures taken to mitigate environmental impact. Festivals can generate significant amounts of waste, including food waste, packaging, and single-use items. For instance, a study on the Glastonbury Festival in the UK estimated that it produced around 1,850 tonnes of waste in 2019<sup>1</sup>. Other dimensions of environmental impact of festivals include carbon emissions, waste generation, excessive water usage.

### 2. Research and analysis

Carry out comprehensive research to comprehend the present condition of your festival and pinpoint areas for enhancement. Take into account the following:

- **Benchmarking:** Compare your festival's sustainability practices with industry standards and best practices.

- **Stakeholder Analysis:** Identify key stakeholders, including sponsors, vendors, attendees, and local communities, and understand their expectations and concerns regarding sustainability.
- **Environmental Impact Assessment:** Evaluate the festival's impact on the environment, including energy usage, waste generation, and transportation emissions.

### 3. Setting objectives and targets

Based on your research, establish clear objectives and targets for sustainable operations. Ensure that these goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Examples include:

- Reducing carbon emissions by X% compared to the previous year.
- Diverting X% of waste from landfills through recycling and composting initiatives.
- Increasing community participation by X% through outreach programs and inclusive activities.

### 4. Strategies and initiatives

Develop a comprehensive plan outlining specific strategies and initiatives to achieve your sustainability objectives. Consider the following areas:

1. **Waste Reduction and recycling:** Encourage the use of reusable or compostable items and implement a comprehensive recycling program.
  - **Example:** Glastonbury Festival (UK) has a robust recycling system, including separate bins for general waste, recycling, and compostable items. They also incentivize festival-goers to recycle by offering rewards. Read more [here](#).
2. **Energy efficiency:** Implement measures to reduce energy consumption, such as using renewable energy sources, LED lighting, and energy-efficient appliances.
3. **Transportation:** Encourage carpooling, provide shuttle services, or support public transportation options to reduce the carbon footprint of attendees.
  - **Example:** Shambhala Music Festival (Canada) provides shuttle services from nearby cities, reducing the need for individual vehicles and promoting a more sustainable mode of transportation. Read more [here](#).
4. **Local sourcing:** Source food, beverages, and merchandise locally to support the local economy and reduce transportation-related emissions.
  - **Example:** Latitude Festival (UK) emphasizes the use of local and organic food vendors, reducing the environmental impact associated with long-distance transportation. Read more [here](#).
5. **Water conservation:** Implement water-saving measures, such as the use of water stations instead of single-use plastic bottles.
  - **Example:** Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival (USA) encourages the use of reusable water bottles by providing free water refill stations throughout the festival grounds.
6. **Education and awareness:** Inform festival-goers about your festival's eco-friendly practices and encourage through various marketing and communications channels to take part in these practices.

7. **Green spaces and biodiversity:** Designate and protect green spaces within the festival grounds and promote biodiversity.
  - **Example:** WayHome Music & Arts Festival (Canada) preserved natural areas within the festival site and implemented measures to protect local wildlife habitats.
8. **Collaboration with environmental organizations:** Partner with environmental organizations to raise awareness and implement sustainable initiatives.
  - **Example:** Electric Forest (USA) collaborates with organizations like Leave No Trace to educate festival-goers on responsible waste disposal and environmental stewardship. Read more [here](#).
9. **Community engagement:** Foster community involvement through educational workshops, cultural exchanges, and volunteer opportunities.
10. **Innovation and technology:** Explore and adopt innovative, sustainable technologies to reduce environmental impact such as reducing printing, rather relying on QR codes and online platforms for patrons to access festival related information like maps, forms, FAQs, etc.

## 6. Monitoring and evaluation

Establish a framework for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of your sustainability initiatives. Track key performance indicators (KPIs), conduct regular audits, and ask for feedback from stakeholders. Use this data to identify areas for improvement and adjust your strategies accordingly.

## 7. Communication and transparency

Communicate your sustainability efforts transparently to stakeholders and the public. Develop a communication strategy to raise awareness, celebrate achievements, and encourage participation. Utilize various channels, including social media, websites, press releases, and on-site signage, to share information and engage with your audience.

## Conclusion

By integrating sustainability into cultural festivals, we can create more inclusive, resilient, and vibrant communities. This proposal provides a framework for developing sustainable operations that align with the Circular Culture program's objectives. Let's work together to create memorable experiences while minimizing our environmental footprint and maximizing our positive impact.

## Other suggested documents for reference:

- The GREEN FESTIVAL ROADMAP 2030, by the European Festival Association
- Green Events Code by Vision 2025
- Towards Zero Waste Festivals report by Vision 2025: <https://www.vision2025.org.uk/reports-guides/towards-zero-waste-festivals-report/>
- THE POWER BEHIND FESTIVALS - A guide to sustainable power at outdoor events – by Julie's Bicycle: [https://juliesbicycle.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Power\\_Behind\\_Festivals\\_Guide\\_2012.pdf](https://juliesbicycle.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Power_Behind_Festivals_Guide_2012.pdf)