

Cannes Lions Green Guide



CANNES LIONS

2024



Introduction

Over the past few years, we've been working to make our events more environmentally friendly and sustainable. From this year, we'll be raising the bar higher by setting a new company-wide set of standards for sustainable event operations, which align with our carbon reduction targets and set the blueprint for waste and carbon reductions across all events.

We've partnered with isla to develop these Sustainable Events Standards and set out the overall carbon reduction strategy and associated targets.

To achieve those targets, however, we need your help. We know we'll make greater strides if we're doing this together. This guide is here to support you in delivering a more sustainable Cannes Lions and begin to set the expectations that will be published in our Standards.

While the actions set out in this guide are not mandatory, we encourage you to use this Green Guide to help mitigate the environmental impact of your operations at Cannes Lions, which in turn will have a positive impact for us all.

We're using the following guiding principles to develop our work in this area:

- **Carbon footprint reduction:**
We're working to reduce our carbon footprint year on year at Cannes Lions in line with our carbon reduction strategy.
- **Resource efficiency:**
We'll implement practices that will reduce waste generation and embed a circular mindset into our planning and event design.
- **Partnerships:**
We'll actively seek out and collaborate with suppliers and partners who share our values, fostering a collective commitment and open-source knowledge sharing to reach our goals.
- **Innovation:**
We'll explore innovative technologies, materials and practices, such as efficient waste management, renewable energy integration and sustainable construction materials, to progressively reduce our carbon footprint.
- **Transparency:**
We value the input and feedback from stakeholders like you. We're committed to transparent reporting and will regularly update you on our progress.



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Before you get started

Our aim is to support you in making informed choices, so whether you're having design conversations with your suppliers or planning your menus, you're doing this in the most considered and impactful way.

In this guide, we provide top tips across the areas of event operations we've identified as having the biggest impact on the environment. In each section, you'll find practical actions you can take along with the reason why taking those actions matters.

The areas we cover are:



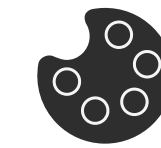
Food and drink



Single-use plastic and packaging



Exhibitor stands and materials



Graphics and prints



Event transport and staff travel



Merchandise

As we all know, partnership throughout the whole supply chain is key to making progress overall. So, throughout this guide, we provide key questions to ask your suppliers and guidance on how to consider sustainability so that you can help your supply chain help you.

Food and drink

Tackling the climate crisis requires a shift in global consumption habits, and science has proven that diets low in animal products and high in fruits, vegetables and pulses are better for our bodies and our planet. In addition to plant-based menus, look at how you can reduce your food waste pre- and post-production and evaluate the impact of your menus' travel footprint.



Best practice:

Initiative

Why

Actions

Increase plant-based options

Not only is 60% of global diversity loss due to land cleared for the farming and agriculture of meat-based diets, but cutting out one beef dinner per week over the course of a year saves the equivalent emissions of two round-trip flights from London to Nice.

- Consider increasing the number of plant-based menu options, either picking a couple of days during the week to go plant-based or having 50% plant-based menu options throughout the week.

Minimise food waste

Over one third of all food produced (2.5 billion tonnes) goes uneaten each year – contributing up to 6% of global emissions!

Designing your menu to reduce waste pre- and post-events is a significant action that will reduce the impact of waste at large-scale events like Cannes Lions.

- Root to shoot – use as much of an ingredient as possible to limit the amount of produce wasted. For example, keep skins on potatoes to create rustic fries, or use the green tops of carrots to make pesto instead.
- Only order what's required – don't over-stock foods.
- When you can't avoid waste, where possible, donate leftover food to suitable local charities.
- Ensure correct food waste bins are in place on event floors as well as in kitchen areas, using compost bins where applicable.

Eat seasonal and local

Eating in-season, local foods reduces the carbon footprint by avoiding chemically grown foods and reducing the travel footprint. An extra bonus is that it also supports the local economy!

- Enjoy the local, seasonal food for Cannes in June.
Fruit: apples, pears, peaches, cherries, apricots and plums.
Vegetables: fennel, broad beans, courgette, artichoke, summer squash.



Questions to ask your catering partner...

- Do they work with a network of local farmers and suppliers and can they offer certified organic or fair-trade produce?
- Are there any local delicacies and ingredients in season that can be celebrated and used to focus menu design?
- What practices do they implement to reduce food waste and how can these be applied for your event?

Answers to listen for...

- Food waste prevention practices like using odd-shaped ingredients, relationships with small-scale producers and growers, partnerships with food redistribution partners or charities, chefs trained up in food waste prevention techniques.
- Passion when talking about local growers and partners and celebrating local cuisine and foods, and excitement at being asked to respond to a brief focusing on this area.



Single-use plastics and packaging

Cannes Lions has made a commitment to eliminate all single use plastic and packaging from the event. We recognise that sustainable solutions to plastic aren't straightforward, but this guidance is here to help.

Best practice:

Initiative

Why

Actions

Avoid single-use plastics

Not only does 85% of plastic packaging and single-use food and beverage containers end up in landfill or as unregulated waste, but 98% of single-use plastic products are produced from fossil fuels or 'virgin' feedstock.

- Prioritise the use of reusable serveware, bottles and coffee cups.
- Implement a deposit return scheme for reusable drinks containers and serveware.
- Avoid single-use plastics for packaging products – for example, replace plastic stretch wrap with reusable strapping, or polystyrene filler with paper.

Carefully select materials

While some materials may be advertised as being sustainable, their ability to achieve this is in many cases limited by the recycling process in place. 'Biodegradable', 'bioplastic' and 'compostable' materials are only a better option if you have the right waste management system available.

- Make your purchasing choice based on your available waste stream. Nearer the event, we'll be providing clear instructions on all the recyclable waste streams available at Cannes and where the bins will be.
- Look at reusable options in the first instance, and if you can't use reusable items, then polyester (PET) plastic is the most easily recycled if plastic is essential.
- Avoid using PVC.

Avoid contamination

Many alternative plastics can't be recycled. Without separate bins in place, they're likely to be placed in the regular plastic recycling stream, causing contamination – driving up the time, costs and emissions associated with processing.

- If you're already committed to alternative plastics or materials, make sure there is an individual waste stream in place to collect these separately from regular plastics.

Make it clear

You'll need to engage your guests in making sure they put their waste in the right bins.

- Use clear signage, with pictures, at eye height to help your guests help you and the environment.

Carefully consider the packaging used

While packaging is essential in the transporting of goods to the event, make sure you keep this to the bare minimum so that less waste is produced.

- Always keep packaging to a minimum.
- Ensure that the same packaging can be used both to and from the event.
- Packaging materials should be recyclable, and ensure paper packaging is FSC- and PEFC-certified.
- Try to avoid plastic pallets, strapping and stretch wrap.



Single-use plastics and packaging

Questions to ask...

- What materials can you collect and process?
- Can you collect and process bioplastics or compostable materials?
- How should these materials be segregated from other waste and recycling, and can you help us to ensure we're doing this correctly?
- What sustainable alternatives are available for this material?
- Can you consolidate the packaging to reduce the amount of packaging being used?

Answers to listen for...

- What materials are most easily processed by your waste management partner.
- If your waste management partner doesn't ask you to segregate materials before they collect them, it's unlikely that they're correctly processing them, and they're likely to be going to landfill or incineration.
- What alternative materials your supplier can offer that suit the waste management streams provided at the venue.



Exhibitor stands and materials

As well as considering the packaging used for event activities, we also encourage you to take a circular economy approach when designing your built items, such as event sets, stands and props. The circular economy (CE) is modelled on the natural order of circularity, creating fewer problems than our current take, make, waste economy. The aim of the CE is to ensure resources maintain their maximum value for as long as possible and progress towards the zero waste to landfill goal.

Best practice:

Initiative

Why

Actions

Apply the circular economy approach

Whether you're in the design phase or making a purchasing decision, by applying the 'circular model', you can evaluate the full impact of your activity and take accountability for your choices.

- Rethink** the way we engage with products.
- Redesign** them to be less resource-intensive.
- Reduce** the volume of materials used.
- Recover** waste as a resource for remanufacturing.

See our process on the next page to assess your circular processes.

Carefully select materials

To support the CE approach, you should choose materials that are going to not only maintain their maximum value for as long as possible but also have the ability to be recycled or reused at end of life.

- Avoid virgin materials – can you re-use materials from an alternative project?
- Ensure the facilities are available for the materials that are being used.
- Ensure all paper and wood is FSC- or PEFC-certified.
- Avoid hard-to-recycle materials such as polystyrene and PVC.

Furniture

Our aim is to move away from furniture being produced or procured for the sole purpose of the event.

- Hire any decor and furniture where required.
- Donate any redundant furniture to local charities or organisations. For more information on these charities in Cannes, please email csr@ascential.com.

Paints and glues

Most commonly used paints contain chemicals that are hazardous air pollutants. Many alternatives are increasingly becoming available at a reduced impact to the environment.

- Use non-animal-based or non-toxic paints and glues, such as zero- or low-volatile-organic-compound (VOC) adhesives and coatings, or water-based and low-VOC paints.



Exhibitor stands and materials

Questions to ask your supply chain partners and venue managers...

- What kind of recycling streams are available, and can we use materials that can go into these to avoid waste to landfill or incineration?
- Can we design this to be easily separated during de-rig so that it can go into the right recycling stream?
- What kind of recycled materials are available to use in our designs?

Answers to listen for...

- Clear information about the recycling streams available (i.e. plastic, wood, metal) and whether these are onsite or offsite.
- How waste is separated on and offsite to ensure that your planning efforts aren't ineffective, and if staff are suitably trained to ensure this is happening.
- Whether the materials currently being proposed in design can go into these streams.
- Suggestions for suitable alternatives that can go into the recycling streams available and how this could/will be managed.



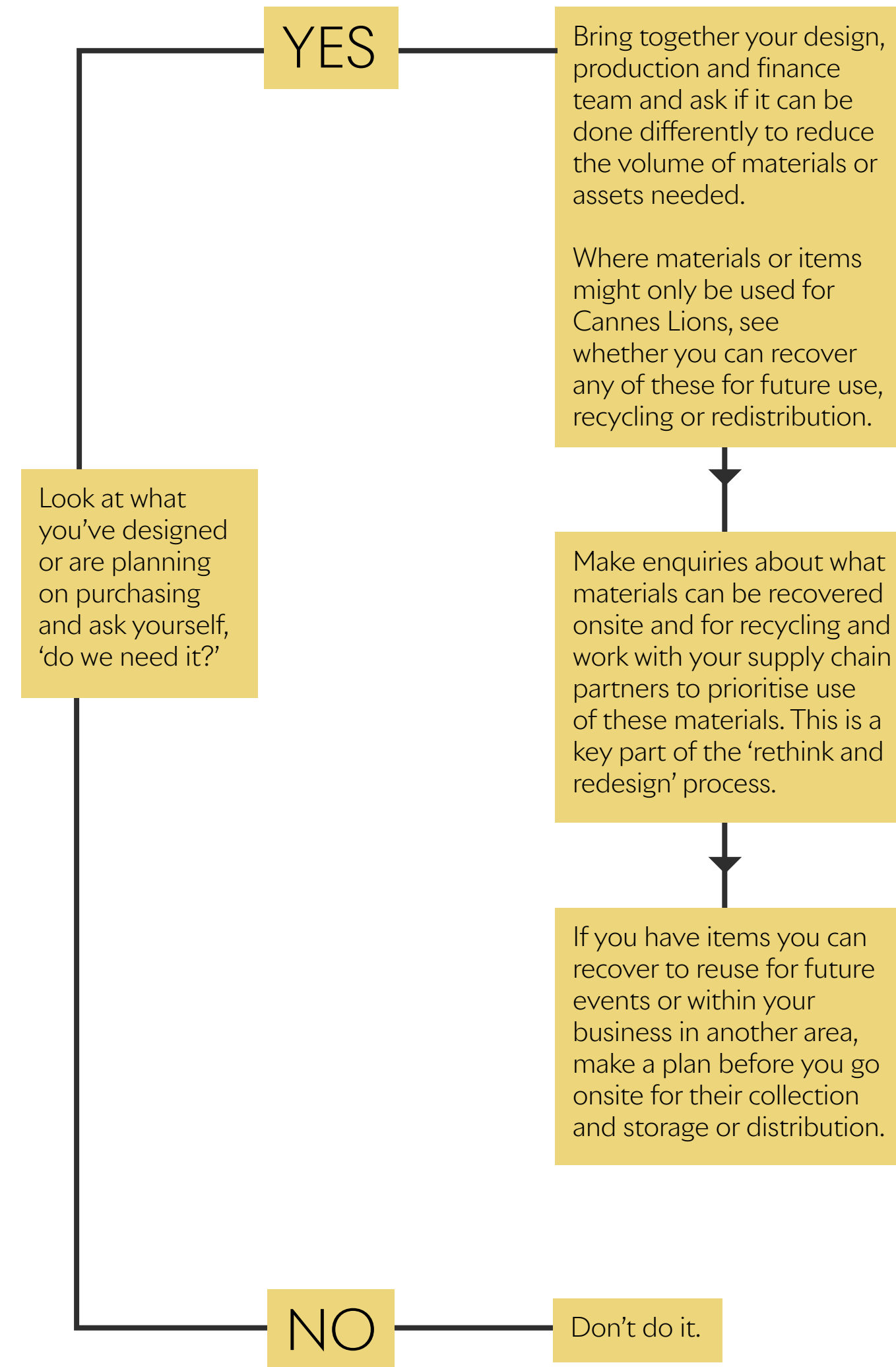
The circular economy (CE) is a bit more complicated than this when you get into the detail. But if you focus on minimising impact by rethinking what you need, re-designing to reduce and minimise potential waste and aiming to recover as much as possible for future reuse, you'll be practising circular economic thinking.

In events, big-ticket items like large format graphics and smaller items like props to dress a space can all be re-thought in the context of the CE.

Whether you're in the design phase or making a purchasing decision, by applying the 'circular model', you can evaluate the full impact of your activity and take accountability for your choices.

Follow the process on the right to see if you're thinking in a circular way.

Rethinking & redesign



Reduce

Now you've thought about how you can design with fewer resources in the first instance, opt for products made from recycled materials. This reduces the supply of virgin materials that may just end up in landfill or being incinerated.

Ask your delivery partners what recycled materials might exist to replace those you know you need to use. There is an increasing number of quality and affordable alternatives to graphic materials. You can look at [isla's Better Print Buying Guide](#).

Recover

Wherever possible, you want to avoid sending materials or assets to waste – whether that's landfill or incineration. In both scenarios, the resource is lost when it could be used again, either by someone else or through recycling into new product.

It's important to remember that just because a material is recyclable, it doesn't mean it will actually be recycled. This process needs to be managed onsite, whether that's by supply chain partners or part of the project management team. Materials may need to be separated into different waste streams to ensure they're recycled.

Where you have good quality products that aren't waste, but that you definitely won't use again, we recommend you donate them via our partner [Green Bee](#).

Graphics and prints

Promotion and displays are a crucial element of our events. We encourage you to switch up your physical signage for low-carbon digital solutions and minimise the waste associated with the event by reducing the number of printed materials.



Best practice:

Initiative

Why

Actions

Choose digital over printed

Not only would this significantly reduce the waste that arises, but it can also save you money in printing costs.

- Prioritise digital solutions, ideally those that are created using energy-efficient digital equipment.
- Only print where necessary.

Sustainable printed materials

If printed materials are essential, carefully considering the design and choice of material is essential.

- Avoid creating composite materials, as they're difficult to recycle and this can prevent reuse.
- Avoid PVC plastic and ensure paper and cardboard materials are FSC or PEFC.
- Avoid date-marking on promotional materials to allow for reuse.
- Where printing is required, print on recycled uncoated paper stock using vegetable inks.



Graphics and prints

Questions to ask...

- Is the promotional material essential, and can it be delivered digitally?
- What systems does the event have in place for digital promotional material?

Answers to listen for...

- An event that provides a digital method of delivering promotional materials to attendees, for example, through QR codes on event badges that provide the ability to email attendees post-event with promotional materials.



Event transport and staff travel

It is no secret that travel contributes the majority of an event's footprint. While we're proud that our five-day-long event provides business value to its attendees who would otherwise require further transport to multiple individual meetings, we want to ensure that we're minimising this impact as much as possible.

Best practice:

Initiative

Why

Actions

Prioritise trains, car sharing and public transport for staff travel

Travel to and from the events makes up a considerable amount of the tCO₂e associated with events. With Cannes located centrally in Europe, it's a great opportunity to utilise the well-connected international and local train links.

- Create an internal sustainable travel policy that states the priority of low-carbon transport like trains.
- Avoid business and first-class flights where not necessary.
- Prioritise public transport or car sharing at the event.

Prioritise low-carbon freight options for goods transportation

With exhibitors from all across the world, it's essential that we consider how goods are transported and what changes can be made to reduce the travel footprint.

- Avoid air freight.
- Consolidate journeys.
- Avoid diesel/petrol vehicles. Prioritise electric and biodiesel vehicles.
- Reduce package size, such as through using flatpack designs.



Event transport and staff travel

Questions to ask...

- Is there a local supplier that can provide the goods to reduce the travel footprint of materials?
- Is the event located near to public transport links that could be used to and from the event?
- Can you use a more renewable source of fuel in your vehicles? This year, we'll be using biodiesel for our directly sourced freight vehicles. The cost was only marginally higher, and the reduction in carbon is significant.

Answers to listen for...

- The event organiser may have links and knowledge of local suppliers that can provide the service you need.
- The supplier has renewable or alternative fuel options for their vehicles.



Merchandise

The impact of merchandise goes beyond the waste it imposes post-event but is hidden in the supply chain of the production of such goods.

Best practice:

Initiative

Only provide merchandise that has a clear purpose and that is practical

Why

A large proportion of merchandise and swag at events is either giveaway or thrown away, with a small percentage being kept by the intended consumer. Making practical merchandise increases the likelihood of the product being used.

Actions

- Assess whether the merchandise is necessary.
- Ensure the products are sustainably sourced and do not over-stock.

Ditch swag in favour of digital donations

Support a cause that is important to your prospect

- Response rates increase by 100% when professionals utilise helping communities in need into their outreach to connect with prospects.

Showcase your company's values

- Corporations that showcase that they're socially responsible have shown up to a 20% increase in revenue

Create a more sustainable way to connect

- On average, more than 40% of conference and event material ends up wasted and in landfill.

- We've partnered with Givvly this year to provide a sustainable alternative to material swag at the Festival. See below for further information on how you can use this.



Givsly

With only 20% of swag kept after events, it's time to take action against the waste created at our experiences. The Givsly Platform offers a sustainable gifting alternative for your clients and event attendees onsite at your Cannes Lions activation.

The tool provides a seamless donation option to incorporate into your experience, allowing attendees to opt out of receiving swag at an event and choose a nonprofit donation instead. Through easy-to-create landing pages, you can incorporate QR codes or a webpage into your experience to eliminate waste, make an impression on attendees and gain insights into those who opted for the donation. The landing pages are completely customisable to match your onsite experience and capture specific lead information if applicable.

Notable partners who have used this technology at past Cannes Lions Festivals include Reddit, Fox Ad Solutions, Equativ, Cognitiv and many more. It's an opportunity to take action towards your sustainable goals, stand out to attendees onsite and actually save time and money from shipping and storage of your traditional swag and gifts. One of Givsly's partners reported saving \$10,000 by reducing their swag onsite at events in favor of offering Givsly donations.

To find out how you can use Givsly tools during Cannes Lions, reach out to info@givsly.com.





Engaging guests & stakeholders

Engaging your guests

The good news is that most individuals want to do something about climate change! According to a Deloitte survey in 2023, one in three consumers have stopped purchasing certain brands or products because of ethical or sustainability concerns, demonstrating the increasing priority of sustainability for consumers. Cannes Lions, celebrating the power of communications, is a perfect opportunity to shout about all the steps you're taking to address climate challenges.

Getting your message across

Pre-event comms are a great place to start engaging your guests. By talking about your ambitions in pre-event communications, you can get guests involved in supporting, and being excited about, more sustainable practices before they even arrive at your event. Examples of this include things like sharing a dinner menu in advance and asking guests to pre-order. Not only can you talk up your delicious, local and seasonal menu, but you can prevent food waste by knowing exactly what you need to order in advance.

Brand Ambassadors are a great asset! Approachable, personable and trained to represent your brand, they need to be informed about actions you've taken to reduce the impact of your experience in their pre-event training. If you've got specialist waste segregation bins, BAs can engage with your guests to guide them in supporting your waste management practices. If you've designed a plant-based or local menu, BAs can highlight this to guests and raise awareness about this, inspiring intrigue and interest.

QR codes are a low-effort and low-impact way of sharing creative communications about your activities, big and small. Making these shareable on social media also helps to further amplify your message and spread awareness.

Engaging your internal clients

One of the biggest barriers to delivering a more sustainable event can be a lack of appetite from clients and stakeholders to release the budget necessary to enable certain reduction measures.

But what's great is that not every reduction measure will cost more money. Smart planning can be just as effective at reducing environmental impact and can help you find additional budget within your existing allocation:

- Plant-based options are often cheaper, or cost-equivalent.
- Working with local suppliers can save on overseas shipping costs.
- Reducing the volume of materials and products you're purchasing will create savings that can be redistributed to other measures that may cost more – like specialist waste contractors or carbon measurement.
- Electing not to give out physical swag immediately saves unnecessary spend on often unwanted items.

Where you do need to access additional budget, aligning your event's sustainability objectives with your brand's ESG strategy or environmental commitments will make it much easier to communicate to your clients and internal stakeholders why you're asking for this.

With sustainability being increasingly more important to consumers, tying sustainable event solutions into the marketing and communications strategy around your experience and activity, where consumers are directly interacting with your brand, should be a no-brainer for budget release!



Data collection

It's important we don't let perfection be the enemy of progress, or we'll never get anywhere. If we wait until we have the perfect solution, we'll never get started.

Transforming our expectations, behaviours and culture is a process, and every event stakeholder has the opportunity to be a part of this. Live events will always have an impact on the environment, but there are many ways we can minimise these impacts and create lasting positive change.

Alongside taking immediate action, the best way you can help improve your environmental performance is to learn from what you've done. Keeping track of what you're doing and the choices you're making is critical to supporting post-event debrief, reporting and learnings to move forward.

An essential part of progressing towards our goals is being able to measure our progress year on year. We have footprinted our event since 2022, with increased accuracy in 2023. Receiving the data from you, our suppliers, is key to this measurement.

In 2023, we collated data from across a range of suppliers. The data you inputted into the TRACE platform allowed us to measure our carbon and waste footprint of our five-day event in Cannes. We'll continue this process every year to allow us, and you, to see and celebrate the positive impact of the sustainable initiatives that have been implemented.

If you were not contacted to supply this data in 2023 but would like to be involved in the process, please let us know so that we can include you in the 2024 measurement.



Case Study: 2LK

2LK is a creative agency that has supported us and various clients to amplify their delegate activations at Cannes Lions. Having worked closely with 2LK to discuss new ideas around sustainability at our events, we've received insightful knowledge from its Client Manager & ESG Lead, Matt Fabian, about how it has considered sustainability in its work at the Festival.

How did you incorporate sustainability into your work for Cannes Lions in 2023?

Having worked for the same clients at Cannes for a number of years, we've been able to produce elements that can be reused and repurposed year on year. For example, we've reused our planter dividers and elements of bespoke furniture since 2019, and we've also invested in deck flooring that has been put into storage until next year.

We also appreciate that the transportation of materials has a significant role in the carbon footprint of a project. We therefore made a conscious effort this year of working with as many local contractors as possible. From suppliers and crew support to storage, this was our greatest year yet for local support.

Internally, we've implemented a number of basic steps within the whole process to act as 'tick boxes' to make sure we're thinking about sustainability throughout. Whether it's client conversations regarding the brief, designing the space, production or delivery, we are always checking in on whether there's a way to 'do better'.

What initiatives have you implemented to reduce the waste associated with the stands at the Festival?

We operate along the well-known phrase reduce, reuse, recycle. It's simple, but it works.

Reduce

Everything needs to be fit for purpose, but it doesn't need to be overengineered. Can simplicity and reducing elements improve the experience? We often look at empty space on a plan and want to fill it with built items or furniture, but this isn't always best for the flow and overall experience.

Reuse

For the elements that are produced, we look at whether they can be reused at future events. For example, walling, flooring and furniture can be reused multiple times. Also, don't underestimate the local community. If you don't need an item after the show, there's likely to be someone locally that will. From furniture to floristry to merchandise, it's worth asking the question locally.

Recycle

Finally, if we can't reduce or reuse, we recycle. For example, many graphics companies will now recycle a lot of what they produce. I recently saw a great collaboration between a graphics company and furniture supplier where old graphics were turned into protective bags for the furniture – saving the need for single-use plastic to be used instead.

Are there any 'easy wins' or lessons learnt that you've experienced that could be valuable to other exhibitors looking for opportunities to incorporate sustainable practices at the Festival?

I think one of the biggest and 'easiest wins' is with the hiring of elements where possible, and working with suppliers who are actively engaged on the journey of becoming more sustainable. Whether it is floral, furniture or other items, it's always worth checking if these items could be hired first.

One lesson learnt is that measurement is crucial to understanding if what we're doing is actually improving things from a sustainable and environmental perspective. It's challenging, but there are now some good measurement tools out there for projects in our industry, such as isla's TRACE. I've been surprised a number of times when I thought going down a particular route would be more sustainable from a carbon footprint angle, but then wrong once I input it into the software. With all the many variables, sustainability really is challenging, so it's important we understand this and collaborate as much as possible.



Closing statement

We hope that you find this guide a great place to start for thinking about how we can all take part in more sustainable event practices. The key to this change, both for a sustainable event and a sustainable world, is collaboration. If you've implemented any sustainable efforts at our events that you're proud of and would be willing to share amongst fellow exhibitors, we'd love to hear more about these.

If you're interested in measuring the carbon impact of your events and experiences – including your Festival footprint – we can recommend the carbon measurement and reduction platform TRACE by isla. Additional free guidance on sustainable event deliveries is also available via isla's best practice framework proseed.

We'd be grateful to hear your feedback and thoughts on implementing sustainability at the Festival, too, so don't hesitate to get in touch. Knowing what you've found useful helps us curate this information and improve this guidance for the future to create an increasingly sustainable Festival, year on year.

Useful Links

[We are isla](#)
[TRACE](#) – Event Carbon Measurement Tool