

Sustainable Festivals Guidelines

2023



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Introduction

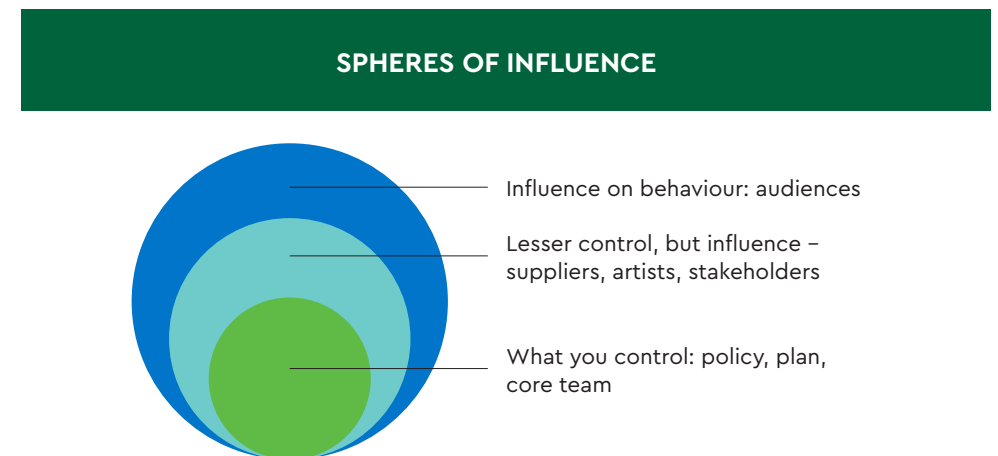
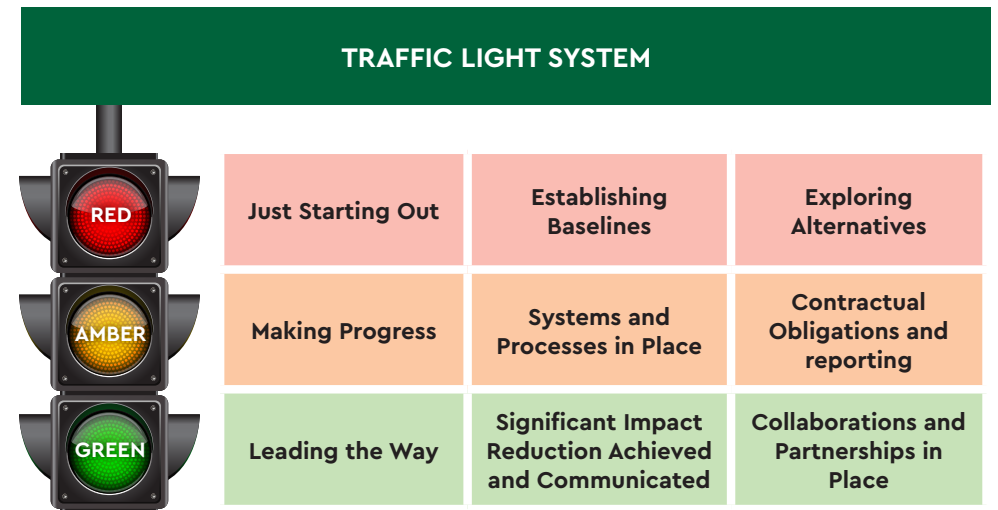
A key pillar of Fáilte Ireland's Operational plan is "Driving Climate Action" and the festival divisional activity under this pillar is to facilitate access and commitment of Fáilte Ireland supported festivals to the sustainability programme. An important element of this project is the creation of Sustainable Festivals Guidelines.

The following set of guidelines was created following an industry consultation with more than 80 of Ireland's festivals of varying size and scope. The results of the survey showed that Ireland's festivals have started to investigate more sustainable practices, have started to make changes in production, and are seeking to reduce their environmental impacts.

The results of the survey also showed that there are varying levels of engagement, knowledge, and expertise in sustainable festival management in Ireland. Some are just starting out, whereas others are making great progress. For this reason, we have designed this guide so that it can be used by anyone in the industry, regardless of where they are in their sustainability journey.

Throughout this guide, under each impact area, is a list of 5 – 10 steps a festival can take, using a tiered **Traffic Light System** as shown in the diagram on the right. So, if sustainability is new to you, or you've already made some inroads and you're keen to do more, or you're ready to take the big steps, this guide has something for you.

Further to this, each of the sections are designed to work in a step-by-step process, working outwards through the decision-makers within your **Spheres of Influence**. So, in each case, you'll see that the change starts within – with your core plan or policy, engaging your immediate team, working its way outward to your touchpoints with your suppliers and contractors, bringing your artists and other stakeholders on board, and then ultimately engaging your audience.



How to use this guide

The sustainable festivals guidelines are divided into seven impact areas, each of which incorporate actions towards the relevant UN Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs. Impact areas are Energy, Travel & Transport, Resources (previously called waste), Food & Beverage, Water, Nature & Biodiversity, and Governance. Each section lists 20 to 30 actions, in order of ease of implementation.

Making a switch to more sustainable practices can seem a daunting task, and requires energy, commitment, and resources. For this reason, it is hugely important to engage the entire festival team from the outset, to co-create the sustainability strategy and spread the workload.

Appointing an individual – a sustainability officer or manager – is a great step as it shows commitment and ensures that someone is holding all the threads BUT it is equally important that sustainability is threaded through all job descriptions and that everyone takes some responsibility and plays their part. In response to accelerating climate change, every job is a climate job.

It is worth noting that the challenges faced by large-scale, single destination outdoor festivals (camping festivals, sporting festivals, parades) are different from those held indoors, or multi-venue festivals (theatre and film festivals for example).

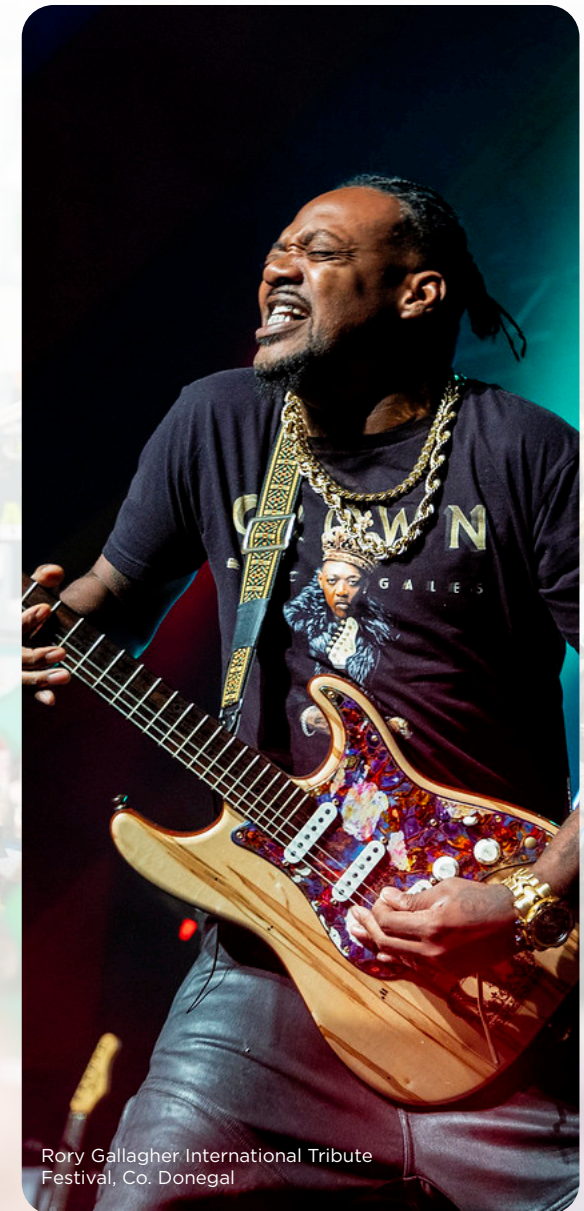
Larger, outdoor festivals have greater control and decision-making over suppliers, infrastructure and stakeholders than those dependent on the engagement of a range of venue owners. For this reason, the sustainable festivals guidelines are split in two, with areas of emphasis and approach designed to be more relevant to these two distinct festival types.

Most importantly, this guide is intended to inspire and empower festival organisers across the island in the transition to more sustainable practices. As we all know, every event is unique, and challenges and barriers are quite different in different regions across the country.

When exploring this guide, if there are actions in one section (i.e. Just Starting Out/making progress) that aren't achievable for your festival, but others that could be undertaken in another later section (i.e. Leading the Way) - even if it seems more advanced – feel free to skip ahead and go for it.

The actions as described in the following pages do not necessarily need to be undertaken sequentially. Keep an eye out for handy 'spotlight' sections – these contain more detailed information and some quick wins.

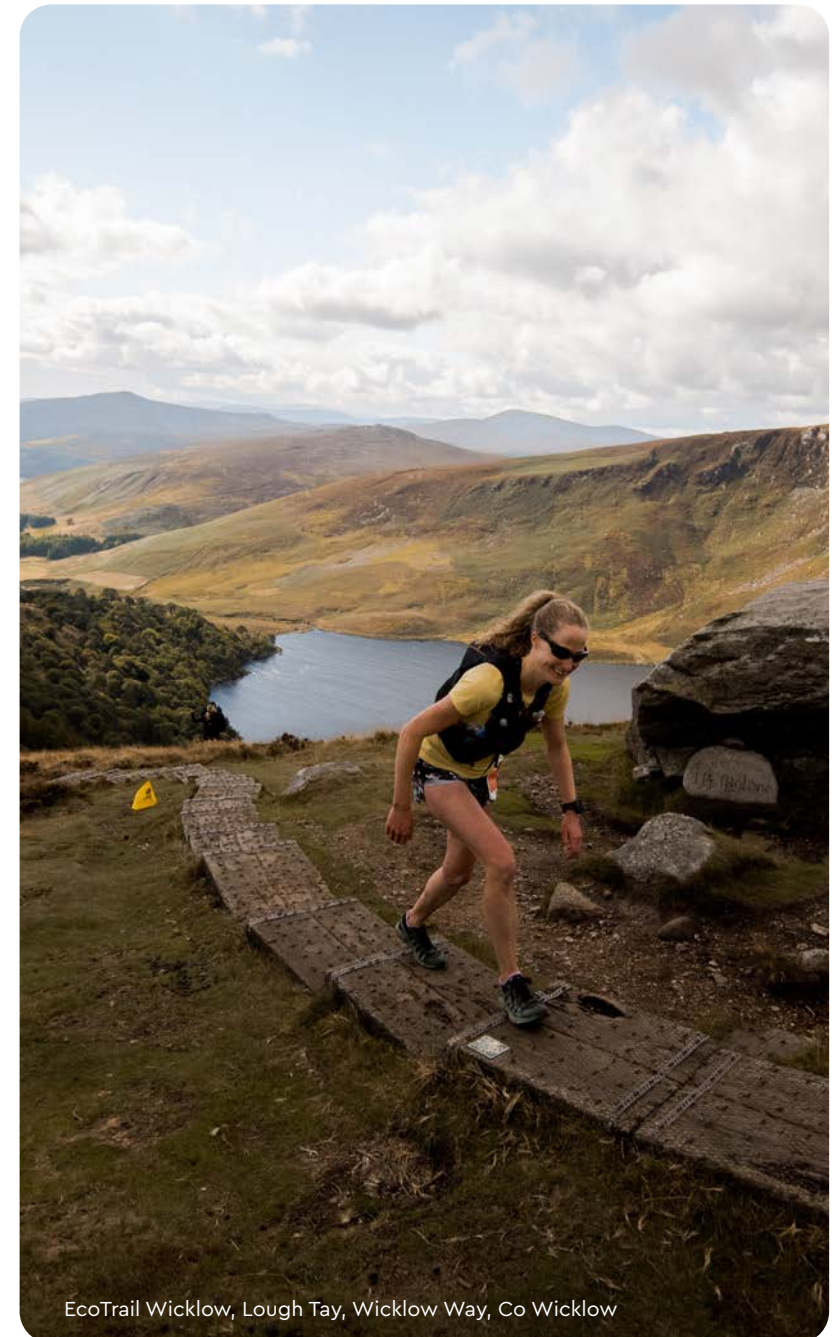
There's also lots of examples of actions and initiatives that Irish festivals are already taking, to serve as inspiration for what can be done. Customise your sustainability journey to the resources and relationships you can leverage – you will find that as you progress, more partnerships, opportunities and possibilities will arise. You only need to take the first step.



Rory Gallagher International Tribute Festival, Co. Donegal

How to use this guide - Step by Step

- STEP 01** Decide which type of festival is more applicable to your activities - either outdoor/single destination or indoor/multi-venue (or perhaps a blend of both).
- STEP 02** Read through the relevant sections of the guidelines and circle any activities that you have already undertaken – this will give you a sense of where you are on your journey, under that impact area.
- STEP 03** Circulate the marked-up guide to your core team and dedicate a session(s) to discussing the development of your sustainability strategy.
- STEP 04** Gain an understanding of where your team's priorities are, and what is achievable with the resources you currently have.
- STEP 05** As a guide, we recommend focussing on a maximum of three impact areas each year/each iteration of the show, to be built on the following iteration while also bringing a new focus. Trying to do too much from the outset often leads to resources being spread too thin, causing frustration and disappointment. Achieving actual results in one impact area is a big win for the team and provides motivation for the next action/next time around.
- STEP 06** When you and your team have decided on the actions you're going to take, allocate a responsible team member against them and agree on a deadline – you can use this guide as a workbook for this piece if you wish. This makes the commitment more definite.
- STEP 07** Ask the team member to keep notes of challenges and successes in the implementation of the action, so that these learnings can be captured and can inform further actions going forward.
- STEP 08** Include reporting on actions in debriefs after the festival.



EcoTrail Wicklow, Lough Tay, Wicklow Way, Co Wicklow

1. ENERGY



Fáilte
Ireland

ENERGY

Founded on the guiding principles of the Sustainable Development Goals 7 and 13

Global energy consumption has been on the rise since the industrial revolution, has seen a sharp increase since 2000 – by about a third – and is projected to continue growing in the foreseeable future. The annual global energy consumption is currently estimated at **580 million terajoules**¹. To help to visualise how much energy that is – A Boeing 737 can cross the Atlantic Ocean on one terajoule, and current global annual energy consumption corresponds to the energy released from the Hiroshima nuclear bomb *every four seconds*.

Globally, 83% of the energy we use comes from fossil fuels. Oil is the biggest energy source, followed by coal and natural gas. As we're all aware, this is a huge problem as this means that harmful emissions into the atmosphere of CO² **are on the rise** globally. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, emissions were very low, and growth in emissions was still relatively slow until the mid-20th century.

In 1950, the world emitted 6 billion tonnes of CO². By 1990, this had almost quadrupled, reaching more than 22 billion tonnes. Emissions have continued to grow rapidly; we now emit over 34 billion tonnes CO² each year. Emissions growth has slowed over the last few years, but they have yet to reach their peak².

There are two important responses to this situation – increased energy efficiency and a switch to renewables. Ireland's National Energy and Climate Plan sets a target of at least 32.5% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030, and the Climate Action Plan sets a target of 70% renewable electricity production by 2030 – aiming to achieve a **51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030**.

1 <https://www.theworldcounts.com/challenges/climate-change/energy/global-energy-consumption>
2 <https://www.theworldcounts.com/challenges/climate-change/energy/global-energy-consumption>
3 <https://www.vision2025.org.uk/the-show-must-go-on/>



To combat CO² emissions at events, we need to look at our energy use. Power can account for up to 70% of a festival's core (scope 1) carbon emissions³. All events require power. Greenfield sites can't connect to the mains – and often there isn't even enough power available to connect to the grid for urban events such as markets.

Multi-venue festivals also consume energy, and as many of our cultural venues are housed in older buildings, they often aren't very energy efficient. This means that the first step must be to work together to understand our energy consumption needs, aim to reduce them, and then make the switch to renewables wherever we can.

IMPORTANT LEGISLATION UNDERPINNING ENERGY IN IRELAND IS THE:

- Ireland: Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill (2021)
- EU: European Climate Law – Regulation (EU) 2021/1119



ENERGY – Just Starting Out



Outdoor/Single Destination Festivals

Try to create accurate power specifications – reach out to all power users individually to find out the power connection they need. A handy template for this is included in the appendix.

Create and work to a power switch on/off schedule. Communicate this to everyone using power at the event. With your power contractor, monitor your fuel usage and loads for generators.

If your event is primarily using diesel generators/ fossil fuels (most Irish festivals are), work closely with your suppliers to try to source more environmentally friendly power sources – there are more options becoming available in Ireland all the time.

Explore the availability of alternative, more environmentally friendly generators in your area, e.g. hybrid generators and sustainably sourced biofuels.

Explore the possibility of running activations (even smaller activations) on batteries or a combination of solar and batteries – as every emissions reduction helps.

Charge the power users at your event according to the power connection size they are using. If there are distribution board tripping or generators tripping, consider additional charges for extra connections – this will encourage better energy efficiency.

Use your electricity/diesel bill to tell you how much power/fuel was used at the event. Use this information to make a rough calculation as to CO² emissions. You can find conversion factors on the website of the Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland: <https://www.seai.ie/>

Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning



Irish Festivals doing their bit:

In 2022, The **Galway International Arts Festival** included a Festival Garden, powered by solar.



ENERGY – Just Starting Out



Indoor Multi-Venue Festivals

Work with your venues to implement a strict switch-off policy for all lighting and electrical equipment when not in use.

Create signage and messaging to remind all staff and crew of the switch-off policy.

Use your venues' electricity bills to tell you how much power was consumed at the event. Use this information to make a rough calculation as to CO² emissions.

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/Learning
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Create signage and messaging to remind all staff and crew of the switch-off policy.			
Use your venues' electricity bills to tell you how much power was consumed at the event. Use this information to make a rough calculation as to CO ² emissions.			



Irish Festivals doing their bit:

In 2022, **PRIDE LGBTQ+ Festival** in Dublin made the switch to 100% biofuel across the festival site, saving an estimated 1.3 tonnes of CO².



HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR BENCHMARK

A useful metric is fuel per person per day (fuel pppd) which is calculated using the following formula:



Fuel

$$\frac{\text{Number of attendees per day (ticket sales)} \times \text{number of days}}{\text{Litres of Fuel}}$$

This provides you with a useful benchmark to compare your performance year-on-year, even if the audience size changes. It may also allow you to compare performance against other festivals.

Source: "The Power Behind Festivals", Green Festival Alliance



ENERGY – Making Progress



Outdoor/Single Destination Festivals

Your energy supplier is the key to your success. Work with your supplier towards a plan to increase energy efficiency and reduce fuel usage.

Request, and make it a contractual obligation from your power supplier, a detailed post-event energy report. This should include energy monitoring data, and fuel consumption (ideally by area).

Aim to achieve a mix of energy provision. This might include hybrid generators, biofuel generators, solar and battery systems, and if possible, a connection to the national grid – as this reduces transport and therefore emissions.

Use power meters to monitor the key/largest energy users, e.g. catering, campsite facilities (showers etc), traders, production areas and PA/AV systems/large stages. Metering gives you the data you need to assess individual power usage – and potentially make reductions for the next iteration of the show.

Always aim towards gaining a good understanding of your GHG emissions profile – it seems complicated at first but becomes clearer with practice – and aim for ongoing reduction, year on year. Publish this information widely as part of your sustainability communications and campaign on climate action.

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SPOTLIGHT:

SPOTLIGHT ON TRADERS

- Create a more accurate power spec by asking traders and vendors to list the specific equipment they will use at the festival.
- Run traders' workshops and briefings, creating a community, and ensuring full buy-in and optimised energy usage across the festival site. Actively encourage the use of more energy efficient equipment, swapping out electrical catering appliances for those that run on alternative fuels like gas.
- Group traders together into power zones to spec generators correctly.
- Give traders and bars strict switch on/off times for cold rooms etc.
- Install energy meters at trader islands.
- Switch to charging for energy by kWh, using trader power data to successfully incentivise reductions with a pay-per-use model.

ENERGY – Making Progress



Indoor Multi-Venue Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Engage your venues in a plan to increase energy efficiency and reduce usage. Create a short questionnaire for venue managers/facilities managers.			
Request information from your venues around energy usage/meter readings before and after the festival.			
Request information from your venues around electrical equipment in use – lighting, heating, catering etc. Ask them to let you know when upgrades are planned.			
Request information from your venues around energy suppliers and tariffs. Ascertain how many are already on a green tariff, and gain an understanding of the barriers to switching.			
Always aim towards gaining a good understanding of your GHG emissions profile – it seems complicated at first but becomes clearer with practice – and aim for ongoing reduction, year on year. Publish this information widely as part of your sustainability communications and campaign on climate action.			



Irish Festivals doing their bit:

In 2022, the **Galway Christmas Market** undertook an in-depth audit of all electrical equipment onsite, to build a better, more detailed understanding of the energy requirements of individual trading units, and all other infrastructure. This information will inform a smart power plan for the market in 2023.



ENERGY – Leading the Way



Outdoor/Single Destination Festivals

Convene meetings and briefings sessions with all relevant stakeholders (both suppliers and users) on energy, to achieve good buy-in for a smart power plan, to be co-created with everyone's input.

Create a system to understand how many lights are energy efficient and/or LED – you could use your power specification sheet for this. With your supplier, make the switch to LED floodlights and festoon, and ask for circuit controls on lighting, activated by timers or sensors.

Establish strong working relationships with tech production staff and lighting engineers, including those of headline acts. The idea is to aim for most of the lighting at the festival to be fitted with low consumption/LED bulbs, from live stages to ambient lighting.

Within your public communications campaign, include that your festival is operating a low energy lighting policy and that this is in operation across the festival site.

Connect to grid power on a renewable energy tariff – you will need to work with your local authority to create a new grid connection to enable this – see the governance and communications section for further advice on how to do this.

Set new, more ambitious targets each year, using the data you gather at each show to provide a benchmark. It's hugely important to communicate openly about your challenges and successes, as part of your public sustainability communications campaign – as this can serve to provide inspiration for other festivals on their own sustainability journey.

At this stage, consider working with an external organisation such as a consultancy, university or accreditation body, to assess your GHG emissions. Link with the SEAI and/or research institutes on a nationwide energy efficiency campaign, gathering data on behaviour change and using your festival as a platform for communicating on climate action.

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SPOTLIGHT:

SPOTLIGHT ON BASE LOAD MANAGEMENT & HYBRIDISATION

- Try to plan accordingly for base load management – manage periods of low load from the energy stored in batteries, syncing smaller diesel generators with higher capacity ones and designing site layout so that applications that require 24-hour power are grouped in clusters.
- Work towards hybridisation, where batteries are connected in-line with generators to create a combined power and energy storage system. When the generator is running, it trickle charges the batteries by utilising any residual energy not required by the primary load.
- Typically, this is used for base load management such as overnight periods where the load significantly reduces.
- This helps reduce generator runtimes and improves efficiency by making the generator work harder through the introduction of a secondary load through battery charging.

ENERGY – Leading the Way



Outdoor/Single Destination Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Create a system to understand how many lights across the festival venues are energy efficient and/ or LED. For any outdoor lighting associated with the festival, make the switch with your supplier to LED floodlights and festoon.			
Establish strong working relationships with tech production staff and lighting engineers, including those of headline acts. The idea is to aim for most of the lighting at the festival to be fitted with low consumption/ LED bulbs, from live stages to ambient lighting.			
Within your public communications campaign, include that your festival is operating a low energy lighting policy and that this is in operation across the festival.			
Set new, more ambitious targets each year, using the data you gather at each show to provide a benchmark. It's hugely important to communicate openly about your challenges and successes, as part of your public sustainability communications campaign – as this can serve to provide inspiration for other festivals on their own sustainability journey.			
At this stage, consider working with an external organisation such as a consultancy, university, or accreditation body, to assess your GHG emissions. Link with the SEAI and/or research institutes on a nationwide energy efficiency campaign, gathering data on behaviour change and using your festival as a platform for communicating on climate action.			



Irish Festivals doing their bit:

Spraoi International Street Arts Festival in Waterford consulted with Waterford City and County Council – leading to the installation of national grid street-connections around the city, providing power for festival activities, without use of diesel generators.



ENERGY – Measuring Progress

Reducing environmental impacts of energy usage must start with improving energy efficiency. Decarbonising society cannot be achieved through making a switch to renewables alone – we must first understand and reduce our energy consumption. To do this, an education and behaviour change piece comes first, followed by engagement with all stakeholders. Below is an example of a progress measuring matrix – you will need to decide with your team how to measure your progress, using the actions from the guide provided above.

Key Indicator	Activity/Project	Outcomes
All stakeholders at the event are aware of and working towards energy consumption reduction.	Switch-off policy in place, energy efficient equipment being used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Energy consumption reduction. ■ Behaviour change.
Mix of technologies being used – biofuels, hybrid gensets, solar and batteries.	Identifying areas of the festival where alternatives could be used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increased use of alternatives across the festival site.
CO ² emissions (related to energy) reduction.	Consistent reporting and identifying areas for improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reduced carbon footprint. ■ Increased positive profile for the event.



2. TRAVEL & TRANSPORT



TRAVEL & TRANSPORT

Founded on the guiding principles of the Sustainable Development Goals 9, 11 and 13

Transportation is the fastest growing source of emissions worldwide, and now accounts for 17% or approximately 8.25Gt of annual global GHG emissions from the burning of petrol and diesel for cars, trucks, lorries, motorcycles, and buses⁴. 60% of road transport emissions come from passenger travel (cars, motorcycles and buses); and the remaining 40% from road freight (lorries and trucks). Although aviation represents only 2% of global annual CO² emissions, air transport generates 0.6 billion tonnes of CO² a year.

Transport is by far the largest source of energy-related CO² emissions in Ireland⁵. In 2018 it was responsible for 40% of our emissions profile. It is also the sector where CO² emissions have grown the most since the end of the recession in 2012. Whilst air pollution from transport has halved since 1990 due to new technologies and emission controls, the number of vehicles on the road is rising and the corresponding rise in carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, benzene, black smoke, and fine particle emissions continues to cause serious issues.

The Irish government has set a target of 936,000 electric vehicles on the road by 2030, and the sale of fossil fuel cars will be banned from 2030 onwards. A policy was put in place for all new public buses in urban areas to be hybrid since 2019, and a commitment has been made to build over 200km of new cycling network. Great news for Ireland!

To reduce emissions associated with events, we need to plan transportation with carbon efficiency in mind. It's worth noting here that, as we live on an island, tackling air travel as part of your CO² emissions reduction strategy is going to be tricky. Flying is of course the biggest culprit, on an individual level,

4 <https://www.statista.com/topics/7476/transportation-emissions-worldwide/>

5 <https://www.seai.ie/data-and-insights/seai-statistics/key-statistics/>

6 <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/carbon-footprint-travel-mode>



emitting roughly 255g of CO² per passenger for every kilometre travelled. But the second guilty culprit is the private car with just one occupant, emitting on average 192 g CO²/KM⁶. This mode of transport emits over 4 times more CO² than travelling by train, or 6 times more than travelling by coach. Equipment and infrastructure are transported to festival sites on heavy goods vehicles – and with emissions from road transport being a major contributor to our national carbon footprint, this is a great starting point.

IMPORTANT LEGISLATION UNDERPINNING TRANSPORT IN IRELAND IS THE:

- Ireland: Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill (2021), wherein sectoral targets have been set with an aim to reduce carbon emissions associated with transport by 50% by 2030
- EU: Regulation (EU) 2019/631, which sets CO² emission performance standards for new passenger cars and for new light commercial vehicles.



Sea Sessions, Music Festival, Co Donegal

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT – Just Starting Out



Outdoor/Single Destination Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/Learning
As a default, try to use video/conference calling to avoid unnecessary journeys.			
Research local contractors and suppliers – choose local wherever possible.			
Aim to minimise ground transport by organising shared vehicles and minibuses for staff, crew and performers wherever possible.			
Book local hotels.			
As part of your festival's communications, create environmental messaging regarding travel and share with your audience.			
Promote more sustainable travel options in communications, e.g. social media posts about carsharing/carpooling, bus and coach tickets.			
If feasible and in partnership with travel providers, set up different ticket types: provide options for dedicated coach travel, and links to public transport and car share platforms.			
In your communications, emphasise more sustainable travel options (walking, cycling, public transport, coach), BEFORE car/driving information.			
Try to gain an understanding of audience travel through quick surveys of arrivals, and counting cars/bus and coach passengers.			
As part of your sustainability communications campaign, actively promote your audience's positive experiences of carpooling and sustainable travel – this helps to change the narrative and inspire positive behaviour change.			



Irish Festivals doing their bit:

The annual **Rory Gallagher International Tribute Festival** provides free Shuttle Bus Service to and from their campsites for the duration of the festival, and they also part fund a shuttle bus service to bring festival visitors from neighbouring towns.



TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT – Just Starting Out



Indoor Multi-Venue Festivals

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As a default, try to use video/conference calling to avoid unnecessary journeys.			
Research local contractors and suppliers – choose local wherever possible.			
Aim to minimise ground transport by organising shared vehicles and minibuses for staff, crew and performers wherever possible.			
Book local hotels.			
As part of your festival's communications, create environmental messaging regarding travel and share with your audience.			
Promote more sustainable travel options in communications, e.g. social media posts about cycling, buses, car share options, trains, etc.			
Work with your venues to incentivise active travel – promote bike lockup facilities and public transport links.			
In your communications, emphasise more sustainable travel options (walking, cycling, public transport, coach), BEFORE car/driving information.			
Try to gain an understanding of audience travel through quick surveys at your venues to count of modes of transport – car/bus/coach/rail.			
As part of your sustainability communications campaign, actively promote your audience's positive experiences of carpooling and sustainable travel – this helps to change the narrative and inspire positive behaviour change.			



Irish Festivals doing their bit:

The **Dublin Horse show**, held annually in the RDS, works closely with Bus Eireann and Irish Rail to encourage people to take public transport to the event.



TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT – Making Progress



Outdoor/Single Destination Festivals

Create, and communicate to your staff, a sustainable travel policy. Aim to record all business/ organisational travel throughout the year, under the headings: mode of transport and distance travelled. Use this information to make rough annual GHG emissions calculations. Conversion rates can be found on the UK Govt DEFRA website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greenhouse-gas-reporting-conversion-factors-2021>.

As part of your sustainable travel policy, aim for reduced production and infrastructure journeys. This can be done paying particular attention to deliveries schedules during the planning phase.

Investigate, understand, and encourage fuel efficient driving to your contractors and site crew who use cars/vans.

Onsite, use electric buggies and cycling as modes of sustainable transport wherever possible.

Use electric plant vehicles where possible and work with your supplier towards using Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO) for diesel powered plant vehicles. HVO is becoming increasingly common in Ireland but do ensure that your supply is sustainably sourced and not produced from crops that have taken land from forests.

In communications with artists, encourage the consideration of GHG emissions associated with their travel plans.

Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning



Irish Festivals doing their bit:

Galway International Arts Festival promotes sustainable transport solutions during the festival period, including the use of public transport, the city bike, and Brite Mobility bike schemes. In 2022, GIAF and its energy partner partnered with electric bike company Brite Mobility to offer free e-bikes to organisers, artists, accredited staff, and ticket holders for the festival, with 35 electric bikes based at Brite Mobility's five central locations.



TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT – Making Progress

Encourage artists to use their platform and influence to raise their fans' awareness of the impacts of travel, and to promote the use of sustainable travel options.			
Make a percentage of festival tickets available as dedicated combined coach tickets only. Ensure that these tickets are the most prominent on your ticketing information, and wherever feasible, install partner transport activation stands within the festival.			
Encourage higher car occupancy at the festival by putting incentives or disincentives in place, e.g. increased car parking charges on arrival for cars that are not full occupancy, and rewards for fully occupied cars (reduced parking, parking closer to festival entrance gates, etc).			
Introduce carparking and campervan charges to encourage people to share or leave the car at home. This should be accompanied by communications around environmental impacts of festival audience travel, and that parking fees are collected to fund more sustainable travel initiatives.			
Engage with your audience around travel needs, through social media and post-festival surveys. Use Eircode data from your ticket agent to work out the total and average mileage travelled by your audience. Use survey results to better understand how you can help audiences to choose more sustainable travel, what barriers they face and what initiatives or incentives might work.			
Use an online carbon calculator to calculate emissions from all travel and transport associated with the event, and report on these. More resources for carbon calculators are included at the end of this handbook.			

Irish Festivals doing their bit:



In 2022, **PRIDE LGBTQ+ Parade** in Dublin undertook a survey of participants to understand how they were travelling to the city centre, to better understand the CO² emissions associated with the event. Results showed that 60% travelled by bus, with just 14% walking or cycling.



TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT – Making Progress



Indoor Multi-Venue Festivals

Create, and communicate to your staff, a sustainable travel policy. Aim to record all business/ organisational travel throughout the year, under the headings: mode of transport and distance travelled. Use this information to make rough annual GHG emissions calculations. Conversion rates can be found on the UK Govt DEFRA website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greenhouse-gas-reporting-conversion-factors-2021>.

As part of your sustainable travel policy, aim for reduced production and infrastructure journeys. This can be done paying particular attention to deliveries schedules during the planning phase.

Investigate, understand, and encourage fuel efficient driving to any crew or staff undertaking driving duties for the festival – think performer transport, runners etc.

In communications with artists, encourage the consideration of GHG emissions associated with their travel plans.

Encourage artists to use their platform and influence to raise their fans' awareness of the impacts of travel, and to promote the use of sustainable travel options.

Consider the needs of your audience, engage through social media and through post-festival surveys. Use Eircode data from your ticket agent to work out the total and average mileage travelled by your audience

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Create, and communicate to your staff, a sustainable travel policy. Aim to record all business/ organisational travel throughout the year, under the headings: mode of transport and distance travelled. Use this information to make rough annual GHG emissions calculations. Conversion rates can be found on the UK Govt DEFRA website: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greenhouse-gas-reporting-conversion-factors-2021 .			
As part of your sustainable travel policy, aim for reduced production and infrastructure journeys. This can be done paying particular attention to deliveries schedules during the planning phase.			
Investigate, understand, and encourage fuel efficient driving to any crew or staff undertaking driving duties for the festival – think performer transport, runners etc.			
In communications with artists, encourage the consideration of GHG emissions associated with their travel plans.			
Encourage artists to use their platform and influence to raise their fans' awareness of the impacts of travel, and to promote the use of sustainable travel options.			
Consider the needs of your audience, engage through social media and through post-festival surveys. Use Eircode data from your ticket agent to work out the total and average mileage travelled by your audience			



SPOTLIGHT:

SPOTLIGHT ON CAMPING FESTIVALS

- Provide free, regular shuttle buses from public transport stations to ease the transfer.
- Provide dedicated or reserved camping areas, with good facilities for coach travellers.
- Provide wheelbarrows or carts to assist with luggage between drop-off and campsite.
- Support your audience in having more positive travel experiences, e.g. by providing them with packing lists of essentials so they don't take more than they can carry on public transport.
- Work with tent companies that can provide and set up tents so that people don't need to purchase new tents.



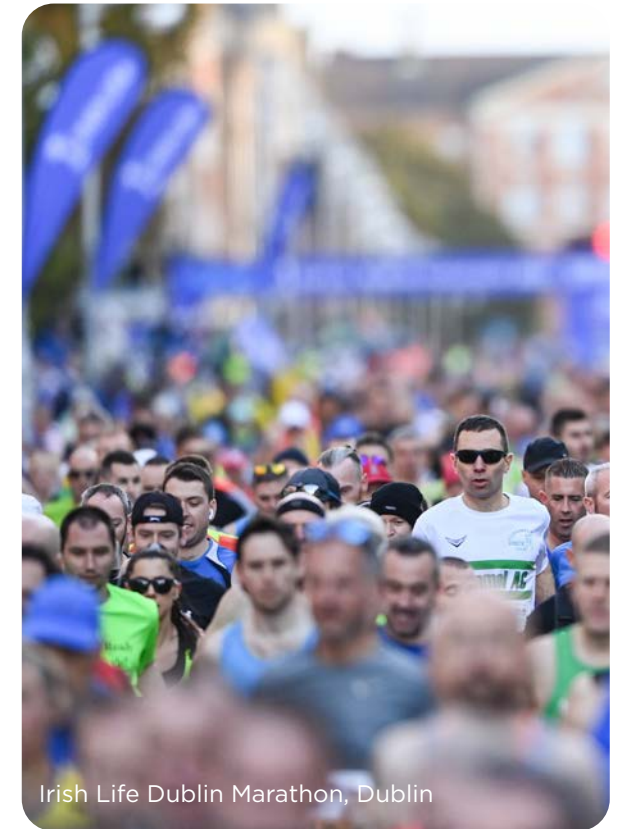
TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT – Making Progress

Use surveys to find out how your audience travels, either at the event/festival or as a follow-up online. Use survey results to better understand how you might help your audiences travel more sustainably, what barriers they face and what incentives might work.

Use an online carbon calculator to calculate emissions from all travel and transport associated with the event, and report on these.

Engage with your audience around travel needs, through social media and post-festival surveys. Use Eircode data from your ticket agent to work out the total and average mileage travelled by your audience. Use survey results to better understand how you can help audiences to choose more sustainable travel, what barriers they face and what initiatives or incentives might work.

Use an online carbon calculator to calculate emissions from all travel and transport associated with the event, and report on these. More resources for carbon calculators are included at the end of this handbook.



Irish Life Dublin Marathon, Dublin

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT – Leading the Way



Outdoor/Single Destination Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/Learning
If feasible, help your staff to travel more sustainably by offering flexible working hours to avoid peak hours. Work on incentives and facilities to encourage cycling, such as the bike to work scheme, and investigate opportunities to buy monthly public transport tickets within pay agreements (i.e. the organisation pays the cost upfront and deducts it from monthly payments).			
Consider or explore opportunities for partnerships with Electric Vehicle (EV) companies – resulting in promotional opportunities and discounted rates for your staff switching to EV. All onsite working vehicles should be electric including buggies and plant machinery.			
Require that all suppliers and stakeholders submit their transport data (e.g. mode of transport, mileage) for your festival, and provide them with a platform to record this, as part of your overall travel and transport impact measurement strategy.			
Provide clear travel information in advance on your event / festival website, e.g. a map of the site and the surrounding area with the nearest rail stations, bus stops, and other local transport links clearly marked. Include links to bus timetables, or a map of near-by electric car charging points. Provide maps of safe cycle routes on the website and provide secure cycle storage at the event.			
Work with a service provider to provide dedicated coaches to the festival site from key cities or towns. Partner with rail or bus operators for mutual benefits – increased advertising for the event through the operator and increased use of public transport. Consider running incentives and competitions with your travel service providers and partners.			
Using your data as a benchmark, set targets for travel and transport impact reductions and work with all suppliers and partners to achieve them. Reduce total mobility impacts as much as possible, understand your residual emissions profile and work to offset these.			
Engage with your transport providers to understand their fleet and their plans for upgrades. Working with your providers, investigate the potential of electric vehicles, hybrid buses, biofuel with Adblue 18 options, or Euro 6 emission buses. Use this information to inform your longer-term sustainable transport impacts reduction plan.			

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT – Leading the Way



Indoor Multi-Venue Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
If feasible, help your staff to travel more sustainably by offering flexible working hours to avoid peak hours. Work on incentives and facilities to encourage cycling, such as the bike to work scheme, and investigate opportunities to buy monthly public transport tickets within pay agreements (i.e. the organisation pays the cost upfront and deducts it from monthly payments).			
Consider or explore opportunities for partnerships with Electric Vehicle (EV) companies – resulting in promotional opportunities and discounted rates for your staff switching to EV.			
Require that all suppliers and stakeholders submit their transport data (e.g. mode of transport, mileage) for your festival, and provide them with a platform to record this, as part of your overall travel and transport impact measurement strategy.			
Provide clear travel information in advance on your event / festival website, e.g. a map of the site and the surrounding area with the nearest rail stations, bus stops, and other local transport links clearly marked. Include links to bus timetables, or a map of near-by electric car charging points. Provide maps of safe cycle routes, and secure cycle storage at venues, on the festival website.			
Work with a service provider to provide dedicated coaches to the festival site from key cities or towns. Partner with rail or bus operators for mutual benefits – increased advertising for the event through the operator and increased use of public transport. Consider running incentives and competitions with your travel service providers and partners.			
Using your data as a benchmark, set targets for travel and transport impact reductions and work with all suppliers and partners to achieve them. Reduce total mobility impacts as much as possible, understand your residual emissions profile and work to offset these.			
Engage with your transport providers to understand their fleet and their plans for upgrades. Working with your providers, investigate the potential of electric vehicles, hybrid buses, biofuel with Adblue 18 options, or Euro 6 emission buses. Use this information to inform your longer-term sustainable transport impacts reduction plan.			

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT – Measuring Progress

Reducing environmental impacts from transport is a tough nut to crack. Car travel is a major contributor to Ireland's GHG emissions, and public transport options are lacking. However, a good communications campaign can go a long way towards gaining buy-in and partnering with transport providers can also help. Below is an example of a progress measuring matrix – you will need to decide with your team how to measure your progress, using the actions from the guide provided above.

Key Indicator	Activity/Project	Outcomes
Staff and crew actively measuring and sharing their travel-related carbon footprint.	Provided a travel logging sheet for staff and crew, issued regular reminders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Understanding of travel-related CO² emissions for the organisation.
Partnerships established with several public transport providers.	Partnerships include cross-promotion and reporting on impact reduction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increased numbers of audience travelling by public transport.
Achieve (travel-related) emissions reductions and offset plan for emissions you cannot mitigate.	Annual carbon footprint reporting and partnership with offset provider.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Established a pathway to net zero emissions for the organisation.



3. RESOURCES (PREVIOUSLY CALLED WASTE)



RESOURCES (previously called waste)

Founded on the guiding principles of the Sustainable Development Goals 9, 11 and 12

Globally, we currently produce 400 million tonnes of plastic waste every year⁷ – that's the same weight as **67 million African elephants**. This production rate is **set to double by 2040**. Of the 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic manufactured to date, 91% of it hasn't been recycled. Most of it sits in landfills in Indonesia or Malaysia or is currently floating in our rivers and oceans. Plastic is incredibly dangerous, and toxic. When it breaks down in nature, it is eaten by fish and birds, and in turn ingested by human beings, causing reproductive disorders, cancers, diabetes, liver disease, the list goes on. Of course, plastics aren't the only materials we are over-producing and creating waste streams from. Textile waste is another huge man-made problem, with an estimated 92 million tonnes of textiles ending up in landfills each year⁸. Construction waste then is estimated to amount to a third of the world's waste each year and contributes 40% of global greenhouse gas emissions⁹. More than 50 million tons of e-waste is generated globally every year, averaging some seven kilograms of e-waste per capita. The figures are staggering.

Irish waste statistics are just as shocking. To focus just on plastic packaging – a prevalent problem at Irish festivals – the most recent figures from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) show us that Ireland generated 1.1 million tonnes of packaging waste in 2019, **an increase of 11%** on 2018¹⁰. Plastic and paper/cardboard showed the largest increases. Of the 319,000 tonnes of plastic packaging waste generated in Ireland in 2019, only 28% was recycled. Two-and-a-half times more plastic packaging waste was sent for energy recovery than was recycled in 2019. The share of plastic packaging waste incinerated for energy recovery has grown year on year from 44% in 2017 to 67% in 2019, contributing an estimated 350,110 tonnes of CO₂ to the atmosphere in 2019.

In Ireland, the recent enactment of the **Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022** defines the Circular Economy for the first time in Irish law and incentivises the use of reusable and recyclable alternatives. It also



provides for the introduction of levies on single-use cups, containers, and packaging – important to note for festival organisers! The forthcoming **National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy** will contain targets for reuse, repair, consumption, and contamination.

The first thing to note is that waste is a design flaw. Festivals create waste materials through building, eating, drinking, and temporary living, and the processing of all these mixed materials creates carbon emissions. Waste management is a real pain point for festival organisers, as this is the most visible impact for audiences, and dealing with waste materials incurs significant costs, and creates huge carbon emissions. There are many kinds of materials being turned into waste streams at festivals, and they're all mixed up together which makes it very difficult to manage. The most important piece to remember is the implementation of the waste hierarchy (shown below). This tells us that step one is prevention – what can we do to reduce our materials needs at Irish festivals, so that waste isn't created in the first place? What can we do to reduce waste, can we make a switch to reusables? Rethink the service proposition – can a product be reframed as a service? An example of circular economy thinking when a person buys takeaway food is in renting the service of a food container (durable enough for many reuses) rather than taking ownership of a disposable or degradable food container. These steps need to come first, before implementing different waste management practices.

IMPORTANT LEGISLATION UNDERPINNING RESOURCES IN IRELAND IS THE:

- Ireland: Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022.
- EU: Circular Economy Action Plan For a cleaner and more competitive Europe (2020).

⁷ <https://www.unep.org/interactives/beat-plastic-pollution/>

⁸ <https://earth.org/statistics-about-fast-fashion-waste/>

⁹ <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20211215-the-buildings-made-from-rubbish>

¹⁰ <https://www.epa.ie/news-releases/news-releases-2021/more-packaging-waste-falling-recycling-rates-for-plastic-and-a-heavy-reliance-on-export-mean-that-ireland-is-missing-opportunities-to-foster-a-circular-economy.php>

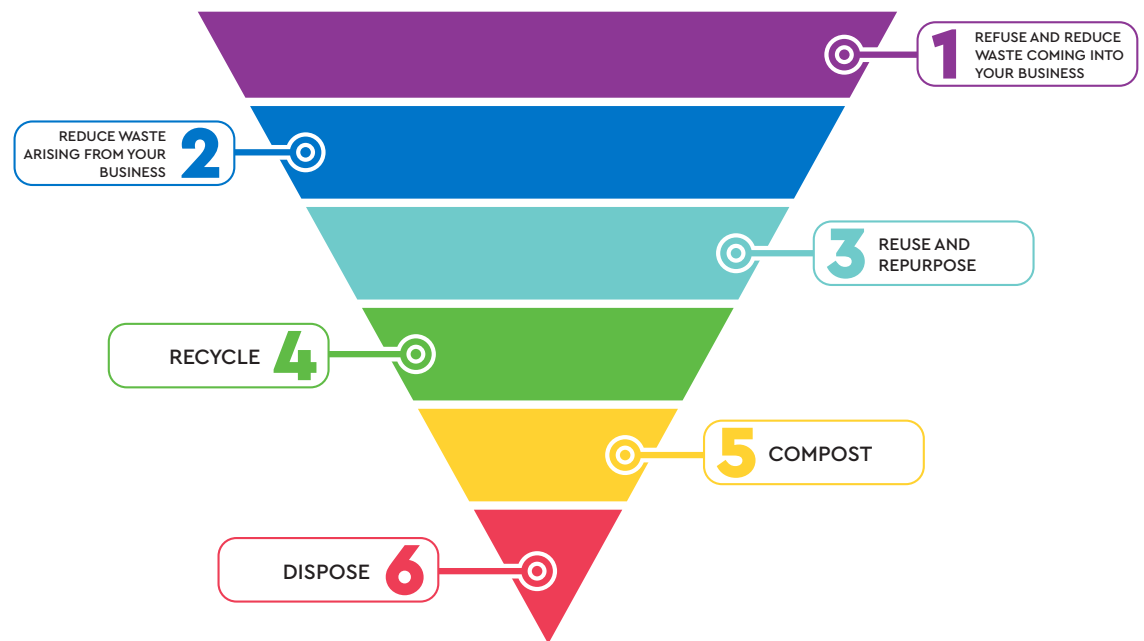
RESOURCES (previously called waste)

Using the **WASTE HIERARCHY** as the guiding principle, create a comprehensive waste management policy.

Waste Hierarchy

- 1 REFUSE** Consider how to prevent waste arriving at the festival venue in the first place. Consider a single-use plastics ban, for example.
- 2 REDUCE** Engage with stakeholders prior to the event – waste hauliers, litter-pickers, production teams, staff, traders, and the audience. Ask everyone to consider how they can reduce what they are bringing to the event.
- 3 REUSE** Actively encourage re-use in all elements of the show, especially water bottles, coffee cups and serveware.
- 4 RECYCLE** Capture good recycling rates by encouraging source separation. Through comprehensive advance planning, ensure there are an appropriate number of bins located strategically. Provide clear signage and consistent colourways and symbols for different types of bins.
- 5 COMPOST** Work with traders to implement effective food waste management systems and carry out spot checks.
- 6 DISPOSE** Stay on top of waste management on-site. Carry out spot checks and engage with all users of your bin systems (crew, litter-pickers, the audience) so they are choosing disposal only as the last resort.

WASTE HIERARCHY



RESOURCES (previously called waste) – Just Starting Out



Outdoor/Single Destination Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Understand waste being produced at your festival, by requesting tonnage reports by waste stream from your contractor. Set targets for annual waste reduction and for recycling rates and put a system in place for capturing clean recycling and composting streams.			
Pre-event, when engaging your waste contractor, make clear that you will require a breakdown of general waste and recycling rates in a final report.			
Ensure you have a relationship with your waste contractor about what materials can/can't currently be recycled			
Initiate a zero-waste-to-landfill policy – everything should be reused, recycled, composted, or as a last resort, sent for waste to energy.			
Ban polystyrene – particularly for food & beverage suppliers, but also packaging left behind by stakeholders and sponsors. Create a plan to reduce single-use plastics, and work with your waste contractor to understand what materials, and levels of contamination they can accept.			
Make a switch to compostable (not biodegradable) serve ware, cutlery, and cups – if your waste contractor can accept them. Handy tip – request information from traders and bars on the compostable items they're planning to use and send this info to your contractor to see if they can indeed be composted at their facility.			



Irish Festivals doing their bit:

In 2022, **Youghal Medieval Festival**, with support from Cork County Council, implemented a REFILL mobile hydration station at the event, eliminating the sale of plastic bottled water onsite.



RESOURCES (previously called waste) – Just Starting Out



Outdoor/Single Destination Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
As part of your waste reduction plan, put in place a minimum percentage of recycled content for rPET cups.			
Explore reusable cups for bars – introduce an initiative for cups, e.g. a cup return deposit scheme, reusable hard cups, a circular cup system.			
Include information in staff briefings and documents to educate festival staff on the recycling scheme.			
As part of pre-event messaging, promote the use of reusable water bottles and provide refill points throughout the festival.			
Communicate to your audience about recycling as an essential part of achieving impact reduction at the festival.			



Tradfest Temple Bar, Dublin

RESOURCES (previously called waste) – Just Starting Out



Indoor Multi-Venue Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/Learning
Engage your venues in a waste reduction and recycling plan. Create a short questionnaire for venue managers / facilities managers.			
Request information from your venues around waste streams and quantities after the festival.			
Ban polystyrene, put in place a plan for reducing single-use plastics.			
Make a switch to compostable (not biodegradable) serveware, cutlery, and cups – if your waste contractor can accept them. Handy tip – request information from venues on the compostable items they're planning to use and send this info to contractors to see if they can indeed be composted at their facility.			
As part of your waste reduction plan, put in place a minimum percentage of recycled content for rPET cups.			
Explore reusable cups for bars – introduce an initiative for cups, e.g. a cup return deposit scheme, reusable hard cups, a circular cup system.			
Via pre-event briefings, educate and inform venue staff to ensure recycling schemes work successfully.			
Reduce the number of printed materials used by the event – consider making a switch to online programmes and marketing.			
As part of pre-event messaging, promote the use of reusable water bottles and ask venues to provide refill points throughout the festival.			
Communicate to your audience about recycling as an essential part of achieving impact reduction at the festival.			

RESOURCES (previously called waste) – Making Progress



Outdoor / Single Destination Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Create a detailed, comprehensive waste management plan for the festival. Through clear reporting from your contractor, gain an understanding of what types and quantities of resource (waste) streams are produced at the event / festival, and at what point in the production cycle – e.g. tonnages of organic waste, Dried Mixed Recycling (DMR), aluminium, glass, steel, timber, Mixed Municipal Waste (MMW). Use this information to map out infrastructure – what bins go where and when.			
Build on your working relationship with your waste contractor so you can understand what materials can/ can't currently be recycled and the end destinations of the materials collected at the festival.			
Initiate a single-use plastic ban for those stakeholders you have direct control (contractual) over – concessions, bars and sponsors. Include a ban on the sale of single-use plastic bottled beverages and single-use sachets of condiments, for example.			
The single-use plastic ban should also include backstage areas and artists (typically high users of single-use plastics/ disposable items). As part of communications, make everyone aware of circular solutions and alternatives to plastic.			
During the festival, your sustainability team should undertake an audit of staff areas, concessions, sponsors, and bars onsite to ensure the single-use plastics ban is being followed.			



Irish Festivals doing their bit:

In 2014, **Body&Soul Festival** developed a waste management strategy to:

- Develop realistic overall waste management targets.
- Increase % of recycled materials.
- Provide necessary infrastructure.
- Plan to establish requirements.

Over the course of six years, the team worked closely with recycling partner to achieve unprecedented recycling figures – in 2018 they achieved the following:

- 52% onsite recycling.
- 96% recycling and recovery after processing.



RESOURCES (previously called waste) – Making Progress



Indoor Multi-Venue Festivals

Gain an understanding of the waste contractors your venues are using, and the end destinations of the materials collected.

Initiate a single-use plastic ban for those stakeholders you have direct control (contractual) over – concessions, bars, and sponsors. Include a ban on the sale of single-use plastic bottled beverages and single-use sachets of condiments, for example.

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During the festival, your sustainability team should undertake an audit of staff areas, concessions, sponsors and bars onsite to ensure the single-use plastics ban is being followed.			



SPOTLIGHT:

SPOTLIGHT ON REUSE / CIRCULAR SYSTEMS THINKING

- Avoid single use across the event / festival production e.g. signage and branding are reusable for a number of iterations of the show.
- Make a switch to hard cups or implement a circular cup system in all your bars and concessions, so that drinks are no longer served to visitors in disposable cups.
- Use reusable serve ware in crew catering e.g. ceramic or steel.
- Use reusable cable ties and take down hessian and dressing for reuse.
- All equipment and materials used at the event should be rental or second-hand, and all your builds of sets, stages and furniture should be either permanent installs or are designed for reuse.
- Salvage timber, furniture, signage, decor items and any leftover food and redistribute these to other organisations in the local area.

RESOURCES (previously called waste) – Leading the Way



Outdoor/Single Destination Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/Learning
Create a sustainable procurement policy for the festival. This should be based on the EU Waste Hierarchy – refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle: https://zerowasteurope.eu/2019/05/a-zero-waste-hierarchy-for-europe/			
Using your sustainable procurement policy as a guide, create specific purchasing and rental rules, with minimum environmental standards for key materials. This means that materials used at your festival are matched to your end-of-life options (e.g. if you use compostable serve ware, this is collected separately and sent to an appropriate facility for processing).			
Work with festival staff – especially those involved in procurement of any kind – to ensure that everyone understands the resource and waste management system in place. Have clear standards for the kind of materials your sponsors are permitted to use or bring onto the festival site.			
Create engaging onsite messaging and facilities at the festival for the separation of multiple resource (waste) materials - e.g. plastic, metals, food and compostable serve ware, cardboard and paper, glass – using public communications, staff intervention, signage and bin labelling, and/or an onsite sorting centre.			
Create strong partnerships with your wider network for sharing materials and resources that allows you to both source materials for the festival and to reintegrate them as part of a circular economy system afterwards.			



Irish Festivals doing their bit:

In 2022, **Clonakilty International Guitar Festival** took a decision not to purchase any new t-shirt merchandise, selling the previous editions instead.

Festival programmes were made available only in digital format. Implementing this for the first time brought about mixed reactions. Attendees expressed understanding but also disappointment in not having the physical programmes as they were seen as 'something to bond over' in the lead up to the festival. The town however, felt the benefits of their absence as litter was greatly reduced as a result.



RESOURCES (previously called waste) – Leading the Way



Indoor Multi-Venue Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/Learning
Create a sustainable procurement policy for the festival. This should be based on the EU Waste Hierarchy – refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle: https://zerowasteurope.eu/2019/05/a-zero-waste-hierarchy-for-europe/			
Using your sustainable procurement policy as a guide, create specific purchasing and rental rules, with minimum environmental standards for key materials. This means that materials used at your festival are matched to your end-of-life options (e.g. if you use compostable serve ware, this is collected separately and sent to an appropriate facility for processing).			
Work with festival staff – especially those involved in procurement of any kind – to ensure that everyone understands the resource and waste management system in place. Have clear standards for the kind of materials your sponsors are permitted to use or bring to the festival.			



Cork International Choral Festival, Co. Cork

RESOURCES (previously called waste) – Measuring Progress

Festivals use vast amounts of materials, and due to their very temporary nature, these materials are often designed to be used only once. However, to move towards a circular economy we need to try to change this and reduce the environmental impacts of waste and excess materials. Below is an example of a progress measuring matrix – you will need to decide with your team how to measure your progress, using the actions from the guide provided above.

Key Indicator	Activity/Project	Outcomes
3 to 5 separate waste streams successfully collected at the event.	Far-reaching communications campaign – briefings, messaging, signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Accurate, detailed waste reports received from haulier.
Waste tonnages per audience capita reduced year on year.	Reusables campaign throughout – staff and audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reduced carbon footprint from waste processing. ■ Reduced waste handling costs.
Actively sharing resources with other events and festivals.	Full inventory of festival's assets, creation of material bank.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reduced hire costs for festival equipment and materials. ■ Increased creative opportunities.



4. FOOD & BEVERAGE



FOOD & BEVERAGE

Founded on the guiding principles of the Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2 and 12

The global food system is a major driver of climate change, land use change, biodiversity loss, depletion of freshwater resources and pollution of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. Industrial agriculture leads to nutrient loading in rivers and waterways, and the use of pesticides has decimated insect populations all over the world – including pollinators, which is a huge problem. Currently, 1/3 of all food produced globally is wasted. Food waste also accounts for 1/3 of global GHG emissions.

In Ireland, over one million tonnes of food is wasted annually¹¹. That's enough food waste to fill Croke Park Stadium two and a half times over! This represents a carbon footprint of as high as 3.6 Mt CO₂. 80% of all food waste is generated by industry. This amounts to €2 billion in losses and costs for Irish businesses. In addition, agriculture in Ireland accounted for 37.5% of national Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) emissions in 2021, mainly methane from livestock, and nitrous oxide due to the use of nitrogen fertiliser and manure management¹². Agricultural practices are also impacting on water quality in Ireland – the main threat is the presence of too many nutrients, such as phosphorus and nitrogen, which come primarily from agriculture and wastewater. Over one third of our rivers, and a quarter of lakes are **failing to meet their environmental quality standards** for nutrients. Over one fifth of our groundwater, estuarine and coastal water bodies have high nitrogen concentrations¹³. To put it simply, on a national level, our island is using industrial practices to overproduce food, which is then going to waste. The environmental impacts of this situation are dire.

The Waste Management – Food Waste – Regulations came into effect in Ireland in July 2010. The Regulations require all major producers of food waste to place it into a dedicated bin and ensure that it is not mixed with other waste. A **brown bin collection service** must be used so that food waste is recycled by composting or other approved recycling process. An alternative option is



for businesses to treat it themselves by installing a composting unit on the premises where the waste is generated. However, a more efficient route to managing food waste is to avoid the production of it in the first place.

Festivals in Ireland have become synonymous with 'street food' type vendors over the course of the past decade. An estimated 5.09t of food is consumed by attendees at a 5,000-capacity event over the course of a three-day weekend, the preparation of which involves the procurement of ingredients, transport of goods, and the potential to create food waste. It is key to work closely with concessions and caterers to ensure they are producing enough food at the festival to feed everyone, but not too much. Aim for accurate and transparent communication of expected staff and audience numbers, and dietary requirements. Engaging stakeholders on sustainable food & beverage policies is a hugely important aspect of event production. With food & beverage, there lies great potential for sustainable impact with positive messaging, reducing transport miles and supporting local producers.

IMPORTANT LEGISLATION UNDERPINNING FOOD, AND SPECIFICALLY FOOD WASTE IN IRELAND IS THE:

- Ireland: Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022 - which commits to delivering the reductions necessary to halve our food waste by 2030, and promote our transition to a circular economy.
- EU: Waste Framework Directive (EU) 2018/851, which requires Member States to reduce food waste at each stage of the food supply chain, monitor food waste levels and report back regarding progress made.

¹¹ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-sdg12/>

¹² <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring-assessment/climate-change/ghg/agriculture/>

¹³ <https://www.epa.ie/news-releases/news-releases-2020/irelands-water-quality-needs-to-be-better-protected-.php>

Food and Beverage – Just Starting Out



Outdoor/Single Destination Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/Learning
Create a specific food and beverage sustainability policy. This should include recognised international and national standards around food sourcing, e.g. free range, certified organic, rainforest certified, and/or fairtrade products wherever possible.			
All caterers and food concessions, including artist and crew catering, should offer at least one vegetarian/vegan menu option.			
Circulate the food and beverage sustainability policy to all concessions and caterers. This should include a code of conduct for them to sign up to, to include local and seasonal sourcing wherever possible.			
Aim for a reduction in the amount of red and processed meat served at the festival and create opportunities to engage with your audience on this initiative.			
Research suggests that audiences are happy to pay more for better animal welfare food products, if they are made aware of it. In this vein, work with concessions to have their menus feature and promote higher-animal welfare products across the festival.			
All of your concessions should be actively aiming to reduce food waste. Provide food waste bins for composting both behind concessions, and in audience areas. Where feasible, put an initiative in place to collect edible food waste which is repurposed after the event, e.g. through a partnership with food cloud: https://food.cloud/			



Irish Festivals doing their bit:

St Patrick's Festival Dublin started their sustainability journey in 2019, and one of their first steps was the development of a Traders Sustainability Policy. This banned single-use plastic items and put rules in place around certified products including coffee, tea, sugar, tropical fruit, and chocolate, as well as procurement guidelines for meat, dairy and fish.



Food and Beverage – Just Starting Out



Indoor Multi-Venue Festivals

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Food and Beverage – Making Progress



Outdoor / Single Destination Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Create a sustainable food questionnaire and circulate to food concessions (including artist and crew catering) and suppliers – giving you all the information you need to plan for continued improvement.			
Create the opportunity for food concessions to purchase from food producers that guarantee minimum environmental standards, such as certified organic, and with a short supply chain wherever possible (e.g. choosing local produce first).			
Through your food and beverage sustainability policy, and followed through with onsite audits, ensure that meat, eggs, dairy products, and farmed fish are bought from food producers that guarantee higher standards of animal welfare.			
Set a minimum standard for meat and insist on the use of free-range eggs only.			
Establish an awards system for sustainability amongst concessions, artist, and crew catering. Offer incentives for efforts in sustainability such as a reduced (or free) pitch fee the next year. This should start with the circulation of the food and beverage sustainability policy, signing up to the code of conduct, filling in the questionnaire, and should be determined via the results of an onsite audit.			



Irish Festivals doing their bit:

In 2015, **Body&Soul Festival** started a 'Green Trader' initiative, whereby they audited each trading unit and gave prizes and incentives for the most environmentally conscious outfit. In 2016, the festival commenced running an annual pre-event traders briefing/ workshop, to get further buy-in to sustainability initiatives.



Food and Beverage – Making Progress



Outdoor / Single Destination Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Establish close working relationships with concessions. Include in contracts the responsibility to manage waste properly – with penalties for noncompliance. Prohibit certain materials such as some disposable items and require the use of correct packaging materials that can be recycled or composted by your local facility (see resources section for further information).			
Research food and compost waste management facilities near to the festival and work with your waste contractor on the correct disposal of food & beverage related items (see resources section for further information).			
To ensure uptake of your food and beverage sustainability policy, provide training and briefing sessions to concessions - and require that they relay the information to all their staff. Follow through on this via onsite audits at the festival.			
Require food stalls to collect waste oil in sealed drums (your waste contractor should be able to provide these) for recycling into biodiesel.			
Your sustainability team should monitor the waste and recycling scheme during the festival as part of their audit – e.g. monitor, record and report contamination of recycling and any other issues.			
As part of your sustainability communications campaign, publish your targets, progress and awards on your website and social media channels. Actively promote your audience's positive experiences of sustainable food & beverage- this helps to change the narrative and inspire positive behaviour change.			



EcoTrail, Co, Wicklow

Food and Beverage – Making Progress



Indoor Multi-Venue Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Create a sustainable food questionnaire and circulate to food concessions (including artist and crew catering) and suppliers – giving you all the information you need to plan for continued improvement.			
Create the opportunity for food concessions to purchase from food producers that guarantee minimum environmental standards, such as certified organic, and with a short supply chain wherever possible (e.g. choosing local produce first).			
Through your food and beverage sustainability policy, and followed through with audits at the festival, ensure that meat, eggs, dairy products, and farmed fish are bought from food producers that guarantee higher standards of animal welfare.			
Set a minimum standard for meat and insist on the use of free-range eggs only.			
Establish close working relationships with venues. Include in contracts the responsibility to manage waste properly – with penalties for non-compliance. Prohibit certain materials such as some disposable items and require the use of correct packaging materials that can be recycled or composted by your local facility (see resources section for further information).			
To ensure uptake of your food and beverage sustainability policy, provide training and briefing sessions to venues – and require that they relay the information to all their staff. Follow through on this via onsite audits at the festival.			
Publish your targets, progress and awards on your website and social media channels as part of your sustainability communications.			



SPOTLIGHT:

SPOTLIGHT ON SUSTAINABLE FISH

- Encourage the use of a variety of fish on menus, to take the pressure off 'overused' fish species (such as cod, haddock, salmon, tuna, prawns).
- Request assurances that any fish sold at the festival has been legally and sustainably caught.
- Sustainably-caught fish should be promoted on your menus – many customers now understand that seeing phrases such as 'line caught mackerel' and 'diver caught scallops' on a menu means an eatery is taking steps to make more sustainable choices.
- Your concessions should choose and promote fish with the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) logo, which is certified as coming from well-managed fisheries and not from endangered stocks.

Food and Beverage – Leading the Way



Outdoor/Single Destination Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/Learning
Your food and beverage sustainability policy should contain specific actions and targets for food-related impact reduction. All food concessions and artist and crew catering should expect a thorough audit and non-compliance should incur penalties.			
The audit should check each stallholder for certified products, and ratings applied for quantity/proportion of certified ingredients.			
Encourage concessions and artist and crew catering to use a seasonal food chart to plan food buying, and check and rate this as part of your audit. Where possible, link with nearby community food-growing projects, and actively support local community projects or charities.			
Targets for improvement should be set each year, using data from each show as a benchmark. Include targets for sourcing (e.g. 100% certified organic produce, short supply chain), targets for meat and dairy reduction, greater uptake of certifications etc.			
Promote relationships with local and small food and beverage producers, farms and markets, brewers and distillers to your concessions and caterers, and put in place specific targets around this. Work with concessions and caterers to design menus which reflect what's available and in season. Create purchasing agreements with locally based suppliers of key types of produce.			
Create a deal with a wholesaler that specialises in certified products.			
Use the festival as a platform to demonstrate innovative solutions to the issue of food waste. For example: install a biodigester at the festival (educating on food waste to energy), initiate collection and distribution with a local food charity, include a circular food court, or create a menu using solely waste foods – highlighting the issue.			

Irish Festivals doing their bit:



Killarney's Wander Wild Festival operates a food trail – highlighting locally sourced sustainable produce in collaboration with local restaurants.



Food and Beverage – Leading the Way



Indoor Multi-Venue Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Your food and beverage sustainability policy should contain specific actions and targets for food-related impact reduction. All venues serving food and caterers should expect a thorough audit and non-compliance should incur penalties.			
The audit should check each venue/ caterer for certified products, and ratings applied for quantity/ proportion of certified ingredients.			
Encourage venues and artist and crew catering to use a seasonal food chart to plan food buying, and check and rate this as part of your audit. Where possible, link with nearby community food-growing projects, and actively support local community projects or charities.			
Targets for improvement should be set each year, using data from each show as a benchmark. Include targets for sourcing (e.g. 100% certified organic produce, short supply chain), targets for meat and dairy reduction, greater uptake of certifications etc.			
Promote relationships with local and small food and beverage producers, farms and markets, brewers and distillers to your concessions and caterers, and put in place specific targets around this. Work with concessions and caterers to design menus which reflect what's available and in season. Create purchasing agreements with locally based suppliers of key types of produce.			
Create a deal with a wholesaler that specialises in certified products.			
Use the festival as a platform to demonstrate innovative solutions to the issue of food waste. For example: initiate collection and distribution with a local food charity, include a circular food court, or create a menu using solely waste foods – highlighting the issue.			



St. Patrick's Festival, Co. Cork

Food & Beverage – Measuring Progress

Reducing the environmental impacts from food offerings at your festival is hugely important for global GHG emissions and biodiversity but measuring progress in this area might be difficult to track. Below is an example of a progress measuring matrix – you will need to decide with your team how to measure your progress, using the actions from the guide provided above.

Key Indicator	Activity/Project	Outcomes
All food traders at the event are on board and compliant with sustainability policy.	Co-created sustainability policy with food traders and caterers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All food served at the event is certified, fair trade and organic.
Menus served by traders and caterers are heavily weighted towards in-season produce.	Collaborated with Bord Bia on the provision of an in-season produce information campaign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buy-in from traders and caterers. Increased use of local suppliers.
Food waste tonnage per audience member reduced.	Partnership with local food charity established.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced food waste costs. Reduced CO² emissions. Increased profile for event.



Galway International Oyster and Seafood Festival, Co. Galway

5. WATER



Cork County Council
Supporting Tourism in Cork
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí



MOBILE
HYDRATION
STATION

✓ PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT ✓ PROVIDING SUSTAINABLE HYDRATION ✓ SAVING

REFILL DRINKING WATER

@Refill.ie @Refill

WATER



Founded on the guiding principles of the Sustainable Development Goals 3, 6, 14 and 15

Freshwater makes up a very small fraction of all water on the planet. While nearly 70% of the world is covered by water, only 2.5% of it is fresh. The rest is saline and ocean-based. Even then, just 1% of our freshwater is easily accessible, with much of it trapped in glaciers and snowfields. In essence, only 0.007% of the planet's water is available to fuel and feed its 8 billion people¹⁴.

In Ireland, only 50% of rivers, 69% of lakes and 36% of estuaries are in satisfactory ecological health, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In the period from 2016–2021, there has been a marked decline in the water quality of our estuaries, with an additional 15.7% that are no longer in a satisfactory condition¹⁵. A number of human activities are responsible for water pollution. The most common in Ireland are agriculture, activities that result in physical changes being made to water bodies (e.g. flood defences, drainage works, etc.), discharges from wastewater treatment plants and forestry.

In Ireland, the control of water pollution is exercised through the Local Government (Water Pollution) Acts 1977–1990 and Water Services Act 2007–2013. It is for this reason that you may be required to submit details of wastewater treatment licences for your supplier, as part of the event licensing process. Water conservation in Ireland is not yet legislated for.

All events use clean water and produce wastewater and it's becoming an expensive necessary commodity. The conservation of water in Ireland is hugely important, despite the fact that it seems there's plenty of it around. But all water used at a festival has to come from somewhere.

There is a huge amount of embodied energy in the clean water you drink – it is harvested, filtered, processed, and transported, all of which uses energy and creates carbon emissions.

In addition, we need to consider the potential for water pollution at festivals. Common pollution sources for water include **cigarette butts**, cleaning products, personal shower products, diesel, paint and urine. Pollutants can contaminate local waterways which can harm aquatic biodiversity and habitats – which in turn makes them less resilient to climate change.

IMPORTANT LEGISLATION UNDERPINNING WATER IN IRELAND IS THE:

- Ireland: Local Government (Water Pollution) Acts 1977–1990 and Water Services Act 2007–2013.
- EU: Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC – which established a framework for community action in the field of water policy.

¹⁴ <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/freshwater-crisis#:~:text=While%20nearly%2070%20percent%20of,trapped%20in%20glaciers%20and%20snowfields>

¹⁵ <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring-assessment/assessment/irelands-environment/water/>

Water – Just Starting Out



Outdoor Single Destination Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Create a water conservation plan. Communicate this among crew and audience by including signage around water usage at water points, and work with plumbers to use push button taps and reduce leaks.			
Put in place a strict schedule for campsite showers.			
Create and communicate a pollution control / pollution incident response plan – a handy template for this is provided in the appendix.			
Implement a festival-wide cigarette butts collection policy, so that dangerous toxins and plastics from cigarette butts stay out of waterways.			
Map out all the local waterways – streams, rivers, lakes, ponds, ditches, drains – on the festival site or adjacent to it.			
Using information about local waterways, avoid impacting aquatic ecosystems. Policies here could include fencing them off and ensuring any facilities with a risk of spills are sited away from waterways.			
Request and review the wastewater management and treatment plan from your contractor if using portable toilets ('portaloo's'). Request information around any environmental initiatives they are undertaking in relation to wastewater disposal.			
To align with your single-use plastics reduction initiatives, ask crew and contractors to use reusable water bottles, and provide water refill points.			

Water – Just Starting Out



Indoor Multi-Venue Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/Learning
Engage your venues in a water conservation plan, including signage around water usage at water points, and work with them to reduce leaks.			
Create and communicate a pollution incident response plan – a handy template for this is provided in the appendix.			
Implement a festival-wide cigarette butts collection policy, so that dangerous toxins and plastics from cigarette butts stay out of waterways.			
Request and review the wastewater management and treatment plan from your contractor if using portable toilets ('portaloo's'). Request information around any environmental initiatives they are undertaking in relation to wastewater disposal.			
To align with your single-use plastics reduction initiatives, ask crew and contractors to use reusable water bottles, and provide water refill points.			

Water – Making Progress



Outdoor/Single Destination Festivals

Set water consumption reduction targets for the festival, and communicate your water conservation plan to all stakeholders - concessions, caterers, crew, and audience alike – via briefings and your sustainability communications plan.

Monitor your water usage.

If the festival site is connected to a mains water supply, use a meter to track water usage onsite, day by day. This practice will allow you to plan for usage reduction, and alert you to any problems/ unexpected spikes in water consumption (due to leaks or burst pipes).

For larger festivals bringing water supply in tankers – each tanker delivery should be signed for and logged, to give a rough estimate of usage by day.

Undertake regular walking site-checks of plumbing infrastructure to spot any leaks or issues, and monitor catering, trading, showers, and sanitary areas as part of the daily onsite sustainability audit.

Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning



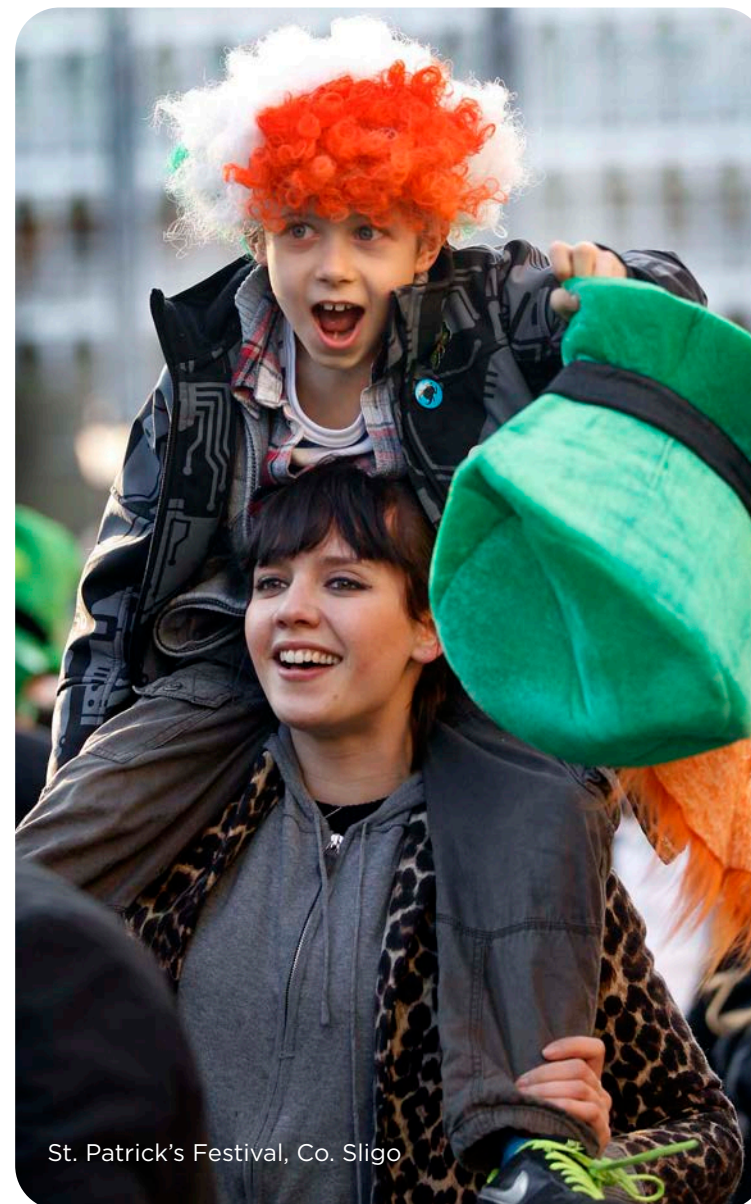
Irish Festivals doing their bit:

Body&Soul Festival has been undertaking water conservation measures as part of their sustainability strategy since 2015. Throughout the site, signage is erected at water points, asking attendees to conserve water / turn off taps etc. Shower times are restricted. A pollution response plan is in place and is included in the Event Management Plan and in steward's briefings. Before the show commences each year, a site walk takes place with the event plumber to ensure there are no leaks. In 2022, Body&Soul Festival made the switch to waterless, natural toilets sitewide.



Water – Making Progress

Ensure that all concessions, catering, shower, and sanitation facility managers are on board with your water management and anti-pollution initiatives.			
When choosing the toilet contractor, make water conservation a key consideration. Request and review the wastewater management and treatment plan and identify any water conservation initiatives they are putting in place.			
As part of your pollution control plan, and using your waterways map, design your plumbing system so that all wastewater collection is contained far from waterways and will not contaminate, even in a flooding incident.			
Make mulch / buckets readily available in different zones around the site to contain spillages quickly.			
Before the festival, take a small sample from waterways on or adjacent to the site and run simple tests for chemicals and nutrients, including ammonia.			
Repeat this process after the festival to ensure you haven't impacted on water in the area.			
Publish results of your water conservation activities annually as part of your sustainability communications campaign.			



St. Patrick's Festival, Co. Sligo

Water – Making Progress



Indoor Multi-Venue Festivals

Set water consumption reduction targets for the festival, and communicate your water conservation plan to all stakeholders - concessions, caterers, crew, and audience alike - via briefings and your sustainability communications plan.

Monitor your water usage.

Request water meter readings from your venues both before and after the festival.

Undertake regular walking site-checks of plumbing infrastructure to spot any leaks or issues, and monitor catering, trading, showers, and sanitary areas as part of the daily festival sustainability audit.

Publish results of your water conservation activities annually as part of your sustainability communications plan.

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
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Monitor your water usage.			
Request water meter readings from your venues both before and after the festival.			
Undertake regular walking site-checks of plumbing infrastructure to spot any leaks or issues, and monitor catering, trading, showers, and sanitary areas as part of the daily festival sustainability audit.			
Publish results of your water conservation activities annually as part of your sustainability communications plan.			



Water – Leading the Way



Outdoor/Single Destination Festivals

Investigate alternative sanitation solutions to portaloos. Explore the potential of using a few compost loos in key areas (eco-campsite for example). Other options might also be less chemically intensive sanitation, e.g. vacuum system dry toilets or, where possible, water-flush systems connected to a sewage point.

Include biodiversity impact monitoring as part of your sustainability policy and engage a local ecologist to work with you pre- and post-event to understand any impacts from the festival on species, habitats and ecosystems.

With your ecologist, identify 'biodiversity hotspots' in waterways on, or adjacent to, the site.

Taking a wider view, explore opportunities to partner with and raise money and awareness for international water charities undertaking work in more water-stressed areas, for example Water.org, Water Aid, H2O For Life etc.

Festivals beside beaches, rivers or lakes should ensure to take full responsibility for the protection of the waters and associated wildlife. If your crew or audience can access water for swimming, communicate clearly around the dangers of suncreams for aquatic habitats. Communicate your responsibility and actions publicly.

Work closely with Irish Water on an information campaign around water conservation or national water issues (e.g. awareness raising on flood or drought risks and national adaptation plans).

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Investigate alternative sanitation solutions to portaloos. Explore the potential of using a few compost loos in key areas (eco-campsite for example). Other options might also be less chemically intensive sanitation, e.g. vacuum system dry toilets or, where possible, water-flush systems connected to a sewage point.			
Include biodiversity impact monitoring as part of your sustainability policy and engage a local ecologist to work with you pre- and post-event to understand any impacts from the festival on species, habitats and ecosystems.			
With your ecologist, identify 'biodiversity hotspots' in waterways on, or adjacent to, the site.			
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Festivals beside beaches, rivers or lakes should ensure to take full responsibility for the protection of the waters and associated wildlife. If your crew or audience can access water for swimming, communicate clearly around the dangers of suncreams for aquatic habitats. Communicate your responsibility and actions publicly.			
Work closely with Irish Water on an information campaign around water conservation or national water issues (e.g. awareness raising on flood or drought risks and national adaptation plans).			



New Year's Festival, Dublin

Water – Leading the Way



Indoor Multi-Venue Festivals

Taking a wider view, explore opportunities to partner with and raise money and awareness for international water charities undertaking work in more water-stressed areas, for example Water.org, Water Aid, H2O For Life etc.

Festivals beside beaches, rivers or lakes should ensure to take full responsibility for the protection of the waters and associated wildlife. If your crew or audience can access water for swimming, communicate clearly around the dangers of suncreams for aquatic habitats. Communicate your responsibility and actions publicly.

Work closely with Irish Water on an information campaign around water conservation or national water issues (e.g. awareness raising on flood or drought risks and national adaptation plans).

Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning



St. Patrick's Festival, Co. Limerick

Water – Measuring Progress

As with energy, the first step towards reducing environmental impacts associated with water usage at your event is to aim for increasing efficiency and reducing water consumption. It is also essential to protect local waterways and aquatic habitats. Below is an example of a progress measuring matrix – you will need to decide with your team how to measure your progress, using the actions from the guide provided above.

Key Indicator	Activity/Project	Outcomes
Staff and crew are aware of the importance of water conservation.	Water conservation messaging included in briefings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorter showers, taps shut off. • Water consumption reduction.
Pollution control plan in place.	Wastewater processing reviewed; onsite waterways identified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure in place to manage spillages. • Wastewater collection situated away from waterways.
Transition to waterless toilets across the site.	Actively investigate provision of composting toilet facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced water use and wastewater. • Reduced CO² emissions associated with transport of sanitary facilities.



6. NATURE & BIODIVERSITY



NATURE & BIODIVERSITY



Founded on the guiding principles of the Sustainable Development Goals 3, 14 and 15

Both locally and globally, nature and biodiversity are in decline. In the most comprehensive index to date, tracking the health of nature over 50 years, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the ZSL (Zoological Society of London) Institute of Zoology, found an average **69% decline in wildlife populations around the world between 1970 and 2018**¹⁶. Land-use change is still the biggest current threat to nature, destroying or fragmenting the natural habitats of many plant and animal species on land, in freshwater and in the sea. However, if we are unable to limit warming to 1.5°C, climate change is likely to become the dominant cause of biodiversity loss in the coming decades.

In 2021, Ireland's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its 7th "State of Ireland's Environment" report. This report found that 85% of EU protected habitats, and 30% of EU protected species have an inadequate or a bad status in Ireland. Almost 20% of Ireland's breeding bird species are in long-term decline. The Irish Butterfly Monitoring Scheme also shows a long-term trend of decline. **The overall assessment for Ireland's nature and biodiversity was 'very poor'**¹⁷. Clearly there is much work to do.

Festivals and events, indoor and outdoor, offer a unique opportunity to engage with audiences and stakeholders on nature and biodiversity. Since the COVID19 public health crisis and associated lockdowns, Irish people have started to reconnect with nature and the outdoors. Awareness and appetite is growing for the protection of nature and biodiversity, as is a recognition of the public health benefits of a healthy environment.

This means that there are opportunities for integrating nature and environmental themes into programming and messaging and exploring the ecology of your local area as part of your sustainability journey. From an organisational perspective, festivals are often created by groups of hardworking, passionate people with a collective vision, so embedding nature and biodiversity initiatives into team-building sessions is a great first step.

IMPORTANT LEGISLATION UNDERPINNING BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE CONSERVATION IN IRELAND IS THE:

- Ireland: Wildlife Acts 1976 to 2022.
- EU: European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011–2021.

According to the legislation, there are specific activities that will require consent if undertaken on or near a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Area (SPA). SACs and SPAs are collectively termed 'European sites' or 'Natura 2000 sites'. You can find a list and a map of these sites at the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) website.

¹⁶ <https://www.wwf.eu/?7780966/WWF-Living-Planet-Report-Devastating-69-drop-in-wildlife-populations-since-1970>

¹⁷ <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring-assessment/assessment/irelands-environment/state-of-environment-report-/>

Nature & Biodiversity – Just Starting Out



Outdoor/Single Destination Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Allocate time with your core team to explore the concept of a nature and biodiversity strand to your sustainability policy.			
Spend time in nature with your team – host team meetings outdoors once a month, for example.			
Make biodiversity protection a part of your procurement policy – use environmentally friendly cleaning products wherever possible, make local, organic, in-season food choices.			
Engage with local wildlife groups to gain an understanding of biodiversity in your local area.			
Review and engage with Ireland's national Pollinator Plan.			
Create spaces for bird and bee populations at your place of work - ie window boxes, planters, green roofs etc.			
Include nature and biodiversity within programming – this can be educational and informative or creative and inspiring – or perhaps both!			
Include nature and biodiversity in sustainability communications to encourage audiences to be respectful of nature, particularly on greenfield sites.			



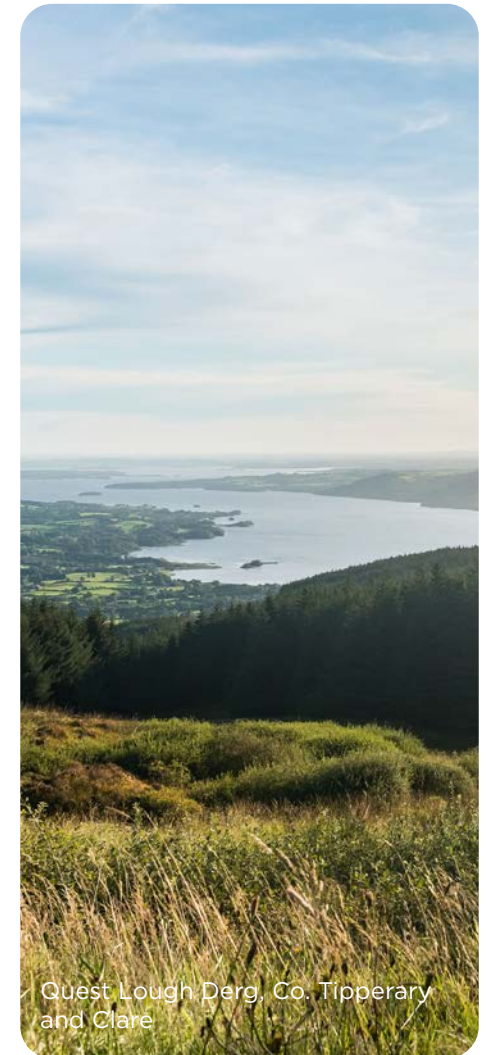
Bloomsday Festival, Dublin

Nature & Biodiversity – Just Starting Out



Indoor Multi-Venue Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Allocate time with your core team to explore the concept of a nature and biodiversity strand to your sustainability policy.			
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Include nature and biodiversity in sustainability communications to encourage audiences to be respectful of nature.			



Quest Lough Derg, Co. Tipperary and Clare

Nature & Biodiversity – Making Progress



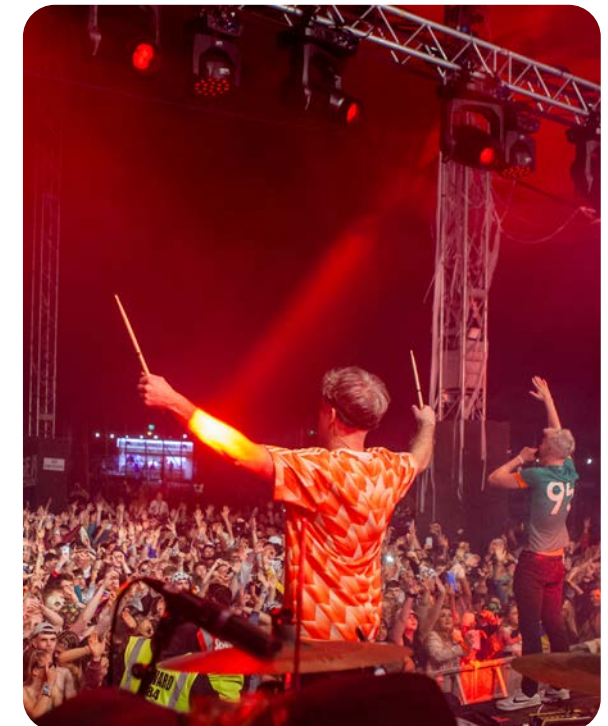
Outdoor/Single Destination Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Working with a local ecologist, undertake a biodiversity audit of your event site.			
Present the findings of the biodiversity audit to your team, with a map, so that everyone can visualise and become more familiar with the species and habitats in the area.			
Identify any sensitive areas and ensure that these are protected from impacts from the festival.			
Have a pollution response plan in place (refer to water guidelines for more info).			
Request that nature and biodiversity considerations are included in the environmental policies of your suppliers and stakeholders.			
Ensure all stakeholders – suppliers, artists, venue owners – are aware of the results of the biodiversity audit and any protection measures you are seeking to put in place.			
Include references to local ecology and history of land use in festival programming, embedding a sense of place and appreciation for nature throughout.			
Establish targets and goals for nature restoration and include these in your sustainability communications.			



Irish Festivals doing their bit:

Sea Sessions Festival, held annually in Bundoran, County Donegal, undertakes regular beach clean ups with Ireland's Environmental Charity, An Taisce.



Nature & Biodiversity – Making Progress



Indoor Multi-Venue Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Work with a local ecologist and with your venues to undertake biodiversity audits of their sites.			
Present the findings of the biodiversity audits to your team, with a map, so that everyone can visualise and become more familiar with the species and habitats in the area.			
Identify any sensitive areas and ensure that these are protected from impacts from the festival.			
Have a pollution response plan in place (refer to water guidelines for more info).			
Request that nature and biodiversity considerations are included in the environmental policies of your suppliers and stakeholders.			
Ensure all stakeholders – suppliers, artists, venue owners – are aware of the results of the biodiversity audit and any protection measures you are seeking to put in place.			
Include references to local ecology and history of land use in festival programming, embedding a sense of place and appreciation for nature throughout.			
Establish targets and goals for nature restoration and include these in your sustainability communications.			



Irish Festivals doing their bit:

Féile Brian Boru, in Ballina, organises events as part of the festival programme with the aim of highlighting and creating awareness of local biodiversity, such as pond dipping, nature walks, foraging, etc. The festival also hosts horticulture workshops providing tips on how to grow produce and be more self sufficient.



Nature & Biodiversity – Leading the Way



Outdoor/ Single Destination Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Working with an ecologist, landowners, and the local authorities, ensure that your biodiversity strategy is aligned with local and national biodiversity action plans.			
Identify key indicators for biodiversity enhancement – at your place of work, at the event site and in your locality – and actions that you and your team can take towards achieving these.			
Actively encourage your team to reconnect with nature through informative away-days, weekend retreats, digital detox etc.			
Actively encourage your team to take part in nature conservation and restoration activities, i.e. beach and river clean-ups, tree planting, peatland restoration etc.			
Monitor the environmental policies of your suppliers and stakeholders to ensure that they also include actions for biodiversity – make this a contractual requirement.			
Create a "Pledge for Nature" for all stakeholders, and work with artists to help them raise their fans' awareness of biodiversity impacts and to encourage them to engage with nature restoration projects.			
Partner with wildlife charities, local and global, and facilitate donations and contributions to these via initiatives at the festival.			
Create a forum for year-round audience engagement with nature conservation and restoration activities, i.e. beach and river clean-ups, tree-planting, peatland restoration via your festival website and social media channels.			
Monitor and report on biodiversity enhancement initiatives as part of your sustainability communications.			

Nature & Biodiversity – Leading the Way



Indoor Multi-Venue Festivals

Working with an ecologist, landowners, and the local authorities, ensure that your biodiversity strategy is aligned with local and national biodiversity action plans.

Identify key indicators for biodiversity enhancement – at your place of work, at your venues and in your locality - and actions that you and your team can take towards achieving these.

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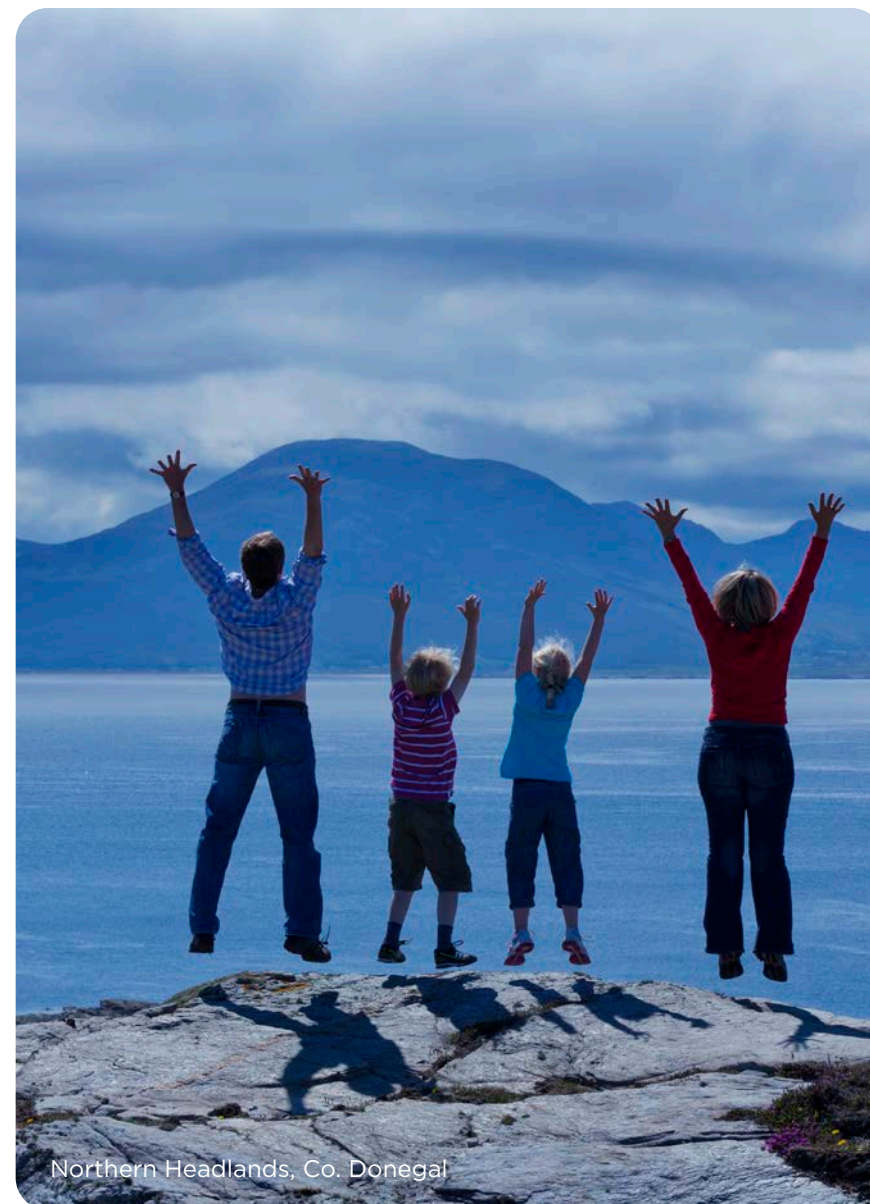
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Monitor the environmental policies of your suppliers and stakeholders to ensure that they also include actions for biodiversity – make this a contractual requirement.			
Create a "Pledge for Nature" for all stakeholders, and work with artists to help them raise their fans' awareness of biodiversity impacts and to encourage them to engage with nature restoration projects.			
Partner with wildlife charities, local and global, and facilitate donations and contributions to these via initiatives at the festival.			
Create a forum for year-round audience engagement with nature conservation and restoration activities, i.e. beach and river clean-ups, tree-planting, peatland restoration via your festival website and social media channels.			
Monitor and report on biodiversity enhancement initiatives as part of your sustainability communications.			

Nature & Biodiversity – Measuring Progress

Often neglected in sustainability strategies – perhaps understandable in a human-centric world – are issues of nature and biodiversity. However, making progress towards restoring our natural world has never been more urgent. Below is an example of a progress measuring matrix – you will need to decide with your team how to measure your progress, using the actions from the guide provided above.

Key Indicator	Activity/Project	Outcomes
Biodiversity included as key pillar of sustainability strategy.	Work with ecologist to understand habitats and species present at event site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team have gained basic level of ecological literacy. • Renewed connection with nature.
Nature and biodiversity included in festival programming.	New creative partnerships established around the theme of nature restoration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audiences aware of aspirations of festival in relation to nature restoration.
Festival staff are actively engaged in nature restoration activities.	Explored local wildlife groups activities, ie tree planting, river and beach clean-ups etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined targets for trees planted. • Audience engagement through ticket donations add-ons.



Northern Headlands, Co. Donegal

7. GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATIONS



GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATIONS



Founded on the guiding principles of the Sustainable Development Goals 1, 5, 8, 10 and 17

Global systemic inequality is a major, largely unseen driver of climate change and environmental degradation. Recent studies have provided evidence of unequal exchange as a persistent feature of the global economy. This allows high-income countries huge gains in resources and the generation of financial surplus through international trade. Currently, high-income countries achieve a trade surplus at not only the highest value added, but more than all other income groups, including China and India combined. In addition, high-income countries are net importers of almost all resources on the global trade market. Materials, food, energy, land, and labour all flow from low income to high income countries – which leads to extractive practices and exploitation on the one hand, and **overconsumption and the production of excess and waste on the other** ¹⁸.

This unfortunate situation – a running theme of global inequality – is compounded by current approaches to governance at both the macro and micro scale. **Ireland is the sixth richest country in the world** ¹⁹, so leaders here have a responsibility to ensure that governance practices are ethical, balanced and well-researched, from recruitment to communications, procurement to transparent reporting.

The EU is currently in the process of mandating reporting on sustainability, via the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). A set of reporting standards is due to be published in early 2023. This legislation will apply to large companies at first, i.e. those with more than 250 employees. However, although SMEs are not required to report for several years, it is vital that we all put best practice processes and policies in place now in anticipation of the CSRD.

There is also a strategic reason for SMEs to align earlier to sustainability reporting standards – such as access to finance, supply chain requirements or talent attraction.

Festivals have a huge role to play in the transition to a just, equal, low-carbon society. The very purpose of a festival is to bring people together for a collective experience, and these large-scale gatherings of anywhere from hundreds to thousands of people are an ideal platform to engage and inspire audiences. Taking all of these factors into account makes a festival an ideal space for taking social and environmental action – festival organisers can trial new engagement opportunities with audiences, work with innovative partners, suppliers and contractors, and apply influence and inspiration all the way along the value chain. As any festival organiser will tell you, large-scale production is an exercise in multi-stakeholder engagement. This means that your festival presents an excellent opportunity for raising awareness, integrating environmental values, and taking climate action.

IMPORTANT LEGISLATION UNDERPINNING GOVERNANCE IN IRELAND IS THE:

- Ireland: Companies Act 2014.
- EU: Directive (EU) 2022/2464 as regards corporate sustainability reporting.

¹⁸ Global patterns of ecologically unequal exchange: Implications for sustainability in the 21st century – <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0921800920300938>

¹⁹ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/richest-countries-in-the-world>

Governance – Just Starting Out



Outdoor/Single Destination Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Gather data in each of the impact areas – energy, travel & transport, resources (previously called waste), food & beverage, water, nature & biodiversity – the Irish Government's Climate Toolkit 4 Business, Julie's Bicycle Europe's CG Tools or similar, to create a report after the festival. This information can be used internally to set targets for improvement at the following iteration of the show.			
As well as gathering quantitative data, start to include key qualitative information. Create and circulate audience surveys, questionnaires for suppliers, concessions, artists, and sponsors/ partners, and include sustainability in staff and crew debriefs. This will help you to understand levels of engagement and priority areas for further communications and onboarding campaigns.			
Start to include environmental sustainability in budgets / financial planning, fundraising activities, partnerships, and procurement for goods and services.			
Request all of your contractors to provide documentation of their own environmental policies and action plans.			
Create a stand-alone 'green' staff handbook. Engage your team through various initiatives, for example meat-free Mondays or a switch-off policy.			
Sustainability should feature as a consideration across the organisation as part of both planning and debrief processes.			
The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an instantly recognisable international communication tool and provide a useful framework for action – map your actions and strategy against these.			
Clear messaging around sustainability and the festival's intentions to act should be included in team briefings and on public channels, e.g., a sustainability information page on your website.			

Governance – Just Starting Out



Indoor Multi-Venue Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Gather data in each of the impact areas – energy, travel & transport, resources (previously called waste), food & beverage, water, nature & biodiversity – the Irish Government's Climate Toolkit 4 Business, Julie's Bicycle Europe's CG Tools or similar, to create a report after the festival. This information can be used internally to set targets for improvement at the following iteration of the show.			
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Clear messaging around sustainability and the festival's intentions to act, should be included in team briefings and on public channels, e.g., a sustainability information page on your website.			

Governance – Making Progress



Outdoor/Single Destination Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Investigate a certification or assessment process from an external provider to assess the festival's sustainability performance. Examples include: ISO20120, A Greener Festival.			
Procurement policies should include environmental considerations for products and services – particularly in key areas such as energy, resources, and food & beverage. All bursaries, tenders and requests for proposals should include an environment category. The procurement policy for the festival should be more heavily weighted towards sustainable and circular supply chains than it is towards cost.			
All contracts should have environmental clauses and criteria, with some key contractors (e.g., power, waste – see relevant sections of these guidelines) expected to contribute substantially to the festival's environmental sustainability targets as set out in the policy and communications campaign.			
Evaluating costs of environmental initiatives should no longer be viewed in isolation but considered in the context of the bigger picture of the festival/ organisation's budget. Be mindful that higher costs in one area might be offset by lower costs in another area (e.g., higher cost on energy management = fuel bill reduction; reusable cups = lower clean-up or waste management costs).			
Explore the feasibility of putting a dedicated sustainability coordinator in place for the festival, who can oversee an audit team during the show, and ensure sustainability communication, action and accountability are consistent across the organisation.			
Gain an understanding of how sustainability initiatives impact upon different teams differently across the festival, and tailor environmental messaging and engagement for various groups – e.g., site management, volunteers, community liaison etc.			
Reach out to other festivals and events to create a network for skills, assets, and resource sharing, and collaborate with this network in reporting – for example by undergoing similar certification processes – to create a benchmark for the sector and to use the festival community as a driver for societal change.			



SPOTLIGHT:

SPOTLIGHT ON COMMUNICATIONS

Communicating around sustainability and getting buy-in from your stakeholders is the key to success.

You need to first identify your stakeholders – Who is the most influential? You'll need to design your messaging so that it lands with people. Pre-event, think about staff handbooks, contract agreements, social media and the website. On site, you've got signage and audience engagements to work with. It's a nice idea to partner with an NGO so you can both have a wider impact. Don't forget that as an event, you have a captive audience and you're in the ideal place to inspire change. However, don't 'green wash' – people are very aware of this. Be transparent – communicate your plans, goals and achievements, but also your mistakes! As others can then learn from these too.

Governance – Making Progress



Indoor Multi-Venue Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Investigate a certification or assessment process from an external provider to assess the festival's sustainability performance. Examples include: ISO20120, A Greener Festival/ A Greener Event.			
Procurement policies should include environmental considerations for products and services – particularly in key areas such as energy, resources, and food & beverage. All bursaries, tenders and requests for proposals should include an environment category. The procurement policy for the festival should be more heavily weighted towards sustainable and circular supply chains than it is towards cost.			
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STAKEHOLDERS

An event has so many stakeholders and a wide network, so the opportunity to create positive change is huge. Internal stakeholders include the whole team, from the Event Director to the Production Manager to the Guest and VIP Manager and the Volunteers – everyone has their part to play. External stakeholders include Sponsors, Media, Venue owner, Artists and last but not at all least, the Audience! The success of your sustainability initiatives depends on great communications with them all.

The festival stakeholder ecosystem:

Internal Stakeholders	External Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Event Director■ Event Manager■ Event Controllers■ Programming Manager■ Production Manager■ Site Manager■ Marshalls, Stewards, Security■ Artist Liaison■ Traffic Managers■ Safety, Medical, Welfare■ Guest and VIP Manager■ Sound and Lighting Crew■ Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Sponsors■ Media■ Regulating Authorities■ Venue Owner■ Traders■ Contractors and Suppliers■ Interest Groups and Organisations■ Artists■ Speakers■ Performers■ Audience

Irish Festivals doing their bit:



In 2021, **PRIDE LGBTQ+ Festival** in Dublin published their ambitious Climate Action Policy, making a public statement about their intentions to act – seeing climate justice as a human rights issue.



Governance – Leading the Way



Outdoor/ Single Destination Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Create bold mission and vision statements, communicated publicly, that include sustainability, climate action, equality, social diversity, and inclusion.			
Social and environmental challenges are combined - your organisation should show willingness to engage by creating environmental sustainability strategies and policies and linking these with your diversity and inclusion policy.			
Reports from each department – on successes and challenges in reaching the targets and goals of your sustainability policy – should be collated into one annual impact report. This should be published publicly to showcase your performance, highlight your ambition towards transparency, and to inspire others to do the same.			
Define, apply, and evaluate a sustainable and ethical sponsorship, partnership and fundraising policy.			
Make the switch from traditional pension funds that invest in negative industries such as tobacco, weapons, and fossil fuels without considering the environmental or social consequences of their investments, to a more ethical provider. Switch to banking services which do not invest in fossil fuels and/or have more ethical investment policies.			
Consistently apply socio-environmental principles to decision-making across the organisation and ensure that sustainability is a running theme in every contract, internal and external. Create a pathway towards becoming net planet positive within the organisation and all along your supply chain.			



SPOTLIGHT:

SPOTLIGHT ON ENGAGING WITH YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY

Local Authorities are our allies, as festivals transition to greener planning and event-delivery models. As mentioned in the introduction, greenfield site festivals tend to be self-contained – local authorities interact with them on issues such as licensing, traffic management and sanitation. Street festivals however, of any variety, are likely to generate an array of stakeholder considerations for local authorities, e.g. street closures, residents' impacts, access for trade deliveries, access for mass goers and so on. Some ideas to consider/ points to remember for festival organisers wishing to engage their local authorities are:

- Local authorities have different teams in charge of various aspects of their work. So, if roads access, or closure, is important to your festival, request an introduction to your council roads team. Their department head is often listed on their website. It is a win-win to meet and build trust, after all you have a shared vision to improve your city, town or county. (This is true of all council departments relevant to festivals, others include Environment, Economic Development, Tourism, Parks, and Public Spaces).
- Make contact in plenty of time, i.e. months ahead of the event. Council and festival teams need time to work-out bottlenecks.
- Frequently councils are planning upgrades of public realm areas, e.g. streets, squares or parks. This may involve pedestrianisation, paving and other civic improvements. Keep an eye on local media sources to stay aware of such plans, or simply ask your local councillor. Working with your council during the planning phases for work such as this is a fantastic opportunity to explore the installation of under-street power-points, or to ensure there is not a statue where your stage usually goes! Generally, planners are really open to hearing ideas that ensure spaces are user-friendly, especially ideas with an environmental bonus.

Governance – Leading the Way



Indoor Multi-Venue Festivals

	Who is responsible?	Date Completed	Outcome/ Learning
Create bold mission and vision statements, communicated publicly, that include sustainability, climate action, equality, social diversity, and inclusion.			
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Reports from each department – on successes and challenges in reaching the targets and goals of your sustainability policy - should be collated into one annual impact report. This should be published publicly to showcase your performance, highlight your ambition towards transparency, and to inspire others to do the same.			
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Consistently apply socio-environmental principles to decision-making across the organisation and ensure that sustainability is a running theme in every contract, internal and external. Create a pathway towards becoming net planet positive within the organisation and all along your supply chain.			



SPOTLIGHT:

SPOTLIGHT ON PROGRAMMING

- Environmental themes should be included in the event / festival programme through talks, public or creative programming, activities, artistic installations, etc.
- Run a specific pro-environmental campaign for audiences (and other stakeholders) every year, engaging people in specific actions to support environmental goals and / or related national campaigns.
- Allocate budget to undertake specific commissioning of environmentally themed programming or activations on site.
- Support climate and environmental justice campaigns and offer a platform to others working in this space through your event / festival.

Governance – Measuring Progress

Perhaps the most important aspect of the sustainability journey is the adoption of comprehensive governance in this space. With good governance comes strong leadership, clear actions, financial commitments and transparent results. Below is an example of a progress measuring matrix – you will need to decide with your team how to measure your progress, using the actions from the guide provided above.

Key Indicator	Activity/Project	Outcomes
Understanding of carbon emissions from festival activities.	Assigned responsibilities to a staff member to gather data required for carbon calculator.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon footprint report. Areas for improvement identified.
Environmental & Social Action Plan in place for organisation.	Co-created and defined priorities with team, based on high impact areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set targets and goals. Appointed actions and responsibilities.
Strategic partnerships in place with environmental charities.	Provide platform for environmental issues via promotion, messaging and programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mutual benefit for charity and festival, cross-promotion. Increased audience engagement with environmental actions.



CONCLUSION



Founded on the guiding principles of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, the Lancet Commission published the results of a major piece of interdisciplinary research, entitled “Safeguarding human health in the Anthropocene epoch: report of The Rockefeller Foundation–Lancet Commission on planetary health”. This report, authored by scientists in the diverse fields of biodiversity, medicine, genetics, and health, highlighted an important and previously somewhat overlooked consideration. It identified that the failure to date in meeting climate and environmental challenges is not in fact a failure of policy, or of financial mechanisms. It is ultimately a failure of imagination.

In March of 2022, the International Panel on Climate Change published the third part of their latest assessment cycle – the sixth set of assessment reports. For the first time, this IPCC WG3 report included a chapter dedicated to the “demand, services and social aspects of mitigation”, which explores the social science literature to assess how people’s behaviour – and the choices they are offered – can cut emissions. The report states that behavioural and cultural changes represent a “substantial overlooked strategy” that have been left out of many transition pathways and scenarios to date.

At COP27 in November 2022, a change in narrative was witnessed. For the first time, the parties to the UN Climate Convention have acknowledged the critical linkages between cultural heritage and climate change. Explicit attention was paid to cultural heritage in the COP27 cover decision, the Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan ²⁰. This follows increasing engagement by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) with culture and heritage and with the valorisation of diverse knowledge systems.

This growing focus and appreciation of the creative industries in the response to the climate crisis is of specific importance to **festivals because festival organisers are creators of culture**. We have a leading role to play in the great decarbonisation – connecting Irish hearts and minds to the issues and igniting our national imagination. This guide is intended to help festival organisers to act in a myriad of ways, but ultimately to help to set a path for Irish communities towards equality, justice and sustainability.

20 <https://www.climateheritage.org/press/culture-outcomes-at-cop27>

FURTHER RESOURCES



[NATIVE EVENTS](#)

Partners in the Fáilte Ireland Sustainable Festival Guidelines project. Work with an expanding community in the sector of events, festivals and cultural organisations but also with the wider network of industry suppliers, ensuring a systems-wide transition to sustainability and regeneration.



[FÁILTE IRELAND BUSINESS SUPPORTS HUB](#)

A comprehensive range of Climate Action and business supports and resources for the Irish tourism industry, including a guide on using the Irish Government's Climate Toolkit 4 Business.



CREATIVE • CLIMATE • ACTION

[JULIES BICYCLE EUROPE](#)

A fountain of information and resources for the creative industries, including a free-to-use carbon calculator, specifically designed for the arts and culture.



[RECREATE](#)

A national social enterprise protecting the environment by salvaging clean, reusable materials from businesses and distributing them to members for free and in unlimited quantities for creative reuse in all kinds of inventive ways.



[REDISCOVERY CENTRE](#)

The National Centre for the Circular Economy in Ireland – a creative movement connecting people, ideas and resources to support greener low-carbon living.



[FOOD CLOUD](#)

Food Cloud is a not-for-profit social enterprise working to tackle the twin issues of food waste and food security. It does this by matching businesses with surplus food to local charities and community groups.



[EVERY CAN COUNTS](#)

A partnership between drink can manufacturers, the recycling industry, and drink brands to promote the infinite recyclability of drink cans.



[CLIMATE JARGON BUSTER](#)

A website that explains common climate action terms in plain English. The explanations are designed to help describe ideas and concepts rather than to give strict scientific definitions.



[MYWASTE.IE](#)



[SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AUTHORITY OF IRELAND](#)



[UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS](#)



[CIRCULEIRE](#)

The National Platform for Circular Manufacturing's mission is to demystify, derisk, and deliver circular business model innovation by unlocking the value that resides in an Irish circular economy.