

The YEPP EUROPE & Songs for Rights

Sustainable Event Concept

We can contribute a lot towards climate protection and climate change mitigation by making our events more sustainable. With this Sustainable Event Concept, YEPP EUROPE & Songs for Rights provide a summary of guidelines and best practices to apply when planning and implementing events. It is structured according to pre-event, event proper, and after event guidelines. Through this concept, we hope that we can do our share of climate action through small, conscious, and actionable steps.



Pre-event

1. Accommodation and venue

- a. Pick accommodations near a central transportation hub. Not only does this make transportation more convenient, but it also minimizes the carbon emissions caused by using automobiles.
- b. Book with accommodation that is certified with [EMAS registration scheme](#), the [EU Eco Label](#), or one that actively practices ecologically friendly principles. When looking for possible accommodation, use booking portals such as [Bookdifferent](#), which searches for hotels based on sustainability criteria.
- c. Maximize room capacity if possible. Sharing rooms lessens the cost and also consumes less energy.
- d. If possible, optimize for natural light and choose venues that have several windows.

2. Food planning

- a. Participants are asked to bring their own water bottle to avoid plastic waste.
- b. Plan for [vegetarian, vegan meals](#), or [Fairtrade](#) products as much as possible. This dramatically reduces one's carbon footprint.
- c. When possible, opt for locally sourced and [seasonal food](#).
- d. When ordering food for takeout or catering, opt for more sustainable options for delivery trays, like banana leaf/bamboo trays, or trays that you can return back to the vendor. For example, [RefuEat](#) provides biodegradable delivery trays and a mostly vegan menu.

- e. Refrain from using plastic cups and cutlery. These can be easily replaced with ceramic or individual reusable water bottles. If this is not possible, opt for products with the [Blue Angel](#) (Blauer Engel) seal, which is a label that ensures environmentally friendly products.
- f. If possible, order snacks through [Too Good To Go](#), an app that minimizes food waste while making food more affordable. This may also be a means to support small and local bakeries/cafes.

3. Activity planning

- a. Plan activities centered around action and not materials. For example, instead of having an icebreaker that requires writing on paper, participants can be asked to act, speak, or move instead.
- b. Refrain from printing programs, flyers, presentations, agendas and digitalize instead; QR codes can be a quick way to direct the audience. Any paper used should be 100 percent recycled, with a minimum of 65 percent of post-consumer waste content and totally or elemental chlorine free. ([source](#))
- c. Use digital whiteboards or whiteboards instead of paper-based clipboards.
- d. Plan one activity that has to do with local ecology. For example, picking up trash in a local park, a tour of the local ecosystems, or planting trees. Similarly, check out sustainable events in the city. For example, there are several options in [Berlin](#).
- e. If possible, plan events in the summer or warmer seasons to save on energy consumption in the office and meeting spaces. Warmer seasons also provide more opportunities for outdoor activities.

4. Materials & Decorations

- a. Use recycled and/or upcycled materials, such as paper scraps, old posters, etc.
- b. Purchase new materials only if necessary.

5. Flights/Travel

- a. When planning the routes for arrivals, check the flight carbon emissions. Google Flights has a built-in option to compare the CO2 amount released. Book trains if possible.
- b. Establish to have a rule of thumb for the desirable mode of transportation. (*i.e. it makes sense to travel 8 hours on train for a 5 day event, but it doesn't for a 2-day workshop*)
- c. Provide public transport tickets in the event location to minimize car travel (e.g. BVG weekly ticket).
- d. If possible, avail of bike rental opportunities beforehand in order to get around the city.

6. Registration/Reminders to participants

- a. Communicate and inform participants about the sustainable event planning, if possible refer to the SDGs.

- b. Ask for food preferences or restrictions on the registration form to avoid food waste.
- c. Remind the participants to bring their own water bottle
- d. Ask that the participants bring their own tote or shopping bags. This helps to avoid additional waste.

7. Calculate the estimated carbon footprint

Make the calculation using the carbon footprint calculator [Myclimate](#), and either plan an activity during the event or donate money to an organization to offset this. Calculating the carbon footprint before the event also makes room to change some elements of the event to make it even more sustainable.



Event Proper

1. Arrival of participants

- a. For the arrival of the participants, arrange a group pick up from the airport/train station. Sometimes this would entail asking the participants to book flights/trains that would arrive around the same time.
- b. Otherwise, provide detailed instructions on how to get to the accommodation or meeting point via public transport (express trains, S-Bahn).

2. Site of the event and activities

- a. The recommended radius of activities is 5 km. This means that the accommodation should be rather close to the event site.
- b. Outdoor activities use less energy, so consider holding some parts of the event in a park or open space nearby.
- c. To use energy efficiently, do not heat spaces to more than 20 degrees or cool them to more than 6 degrees below the outside temperature.
- d. If possible, utilize equipment with the [Blue Angel seal](#).

3. Transportation/Public transport

When moving between sites, walk from venue to venue, rent a bike, or take public transportation instead of cars as much as possible.

4. Meals and snacks

- a. In all venues, provide a drinking water source such as a water carafe and describe which taps can be used for drinking water. In Berlin, the water quality in nearly every tap is safe.
- b. Provide stickers, glass markers, or label the drinking cups to avoid using new ones.

- c. You can provide a regional alternative to coffee like Caro or Getreidekaffee, as well as regional herbal teas. This relieves the long transportation journeys for coffee and tea, which are imported from South America, South Asia, and Africa.
- d. When ordering for take out, opt for services like [Rebowl](#) or [Recup](#), which allow customers to borrow food containers, reducing plastic and packaging waste.

5. Trash cans for separating waste

- a. Establish clearly visible waste sorting and recycling processes. The bins should be labeled as organic, plastics, paper, etc.
- b. Keep paper bags from supermarkets as trash bags for paper.



Post Event

1. Evaluation

- a. Evaluation activities should be done digitally, through an app or an online survey.
- b. Spend some time reflecting and sharing ideas on how the event could have been more sustainable.

2. Departure

- a. Similar to the arrivals, arrange a group pick up to the airport/train station if necessary.
- b. Preferably, provide detailed instructions on how to get to the airport/train station via public transport (express trains, S-Bahn).

3. Resource clean up and leftover materials

- a. Preserve all leftover materials like sheets of paper, markers, decorations, etc. in order to [reuse or upcycle](#) next time.
- b. Leftover perishables can be distributed amongst the organizers and local participants.

4. Offset the carbon footprint

- a. Consult the MyClimate report that was created before the event and include any other additional environmental impacts. Then, donate the calculated amount of money to a local NGO working on sustainability or decide on other ways to offset. In order for all organisations participating in an event to embrace this Sustainable Event Concept, its guidelines and measures when planning and implementing the event, and for them to collaborate in the offsetting of the events carbon footprint, this concept should be shared with them beforehand and they should agree to it so it becomes a collaborative effort for Climate Action.

Further Resources

Detailed Guidelines

1. [Guidelines on sustainable event organisation](#) by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety, and Consumer Protection
2. [Sustainable Event Guidelines](#) by the Berlin Convention Office
3. [Scorecard](#) for Sustainable Event Organization

Offsetting Carbon Emissions

1. [MyClimate](#) - use this tool for calculating the carbon footprint of the event.
2. [Compensating for Carbon Emissions](#) - other ways to offset emissions.
3. Additionally, **donations on the local level** according to societal needs targeting young people, youth workers, and communities at risk of exclusion.
 - a. [2000m2](#): an agriculture project that aims to inspire people to learn about the effects of agriculture on the environment. They have small patches of land of 2000m² all around Germany and in addition to directly farming
 - b. [Fridays for Future Germany](#) - a local NGO that fights for sustainable systemic change.

Long-term Impact

1. [Climate Neutral Now](#) - United Nations
2. [Sustainable Development Goals](#) - United Nations
3. [European Green Deal](#) - European Union
4. [European Youth Goals](#) - European Union
5. [Green Erasmus Project](#) - Erasmus+ Programmed funded by the European Union